

## Student art show includes third-generation artist for Centre



**By Brock Weir**

The image of a figure drowning just below a murky surface is an image many people living with depression can relate to, according to Grade 12 artist Megan McClure.

Megan, a student at Dr. G.W. Williams Secondary School, says she found painting these images in acrylic on wood a liberating experience, as well as a new way to help her deal with her own stress.

“My inspiration was making a social statement about depression, and my own struggles with depression throughout my years at high school,” says Megan. “I used the image of drowning to represent common statements used by people who are experiencing symptoms of depression as being surrounded by something that is completely crushing and overwhelming.”

But, there is hope. Above her image of the drowning figure are a pair of intertwined hands. These hands represent strength, she says, as “We are held up by the people around us, we are held up by those who love us, and those who care for us.”



Megan McClure

That strength can remain, however, when the hands are no longer physically there to guide you.

Megan is a granddaughter of the late renowned Aurora artist Dorothy Clark McClure. Following in the artistic brushstrokes of her grandmother and her father Andy, an art teacher at Williams, Megan is the first third-generation artist to have his or her work on the

walls of the Aurora Cultural Centre, in a joint exhibition of art created by graduating students of Williams and Aurora High School.

The exhibition opened at the Centre last Wednesday, and the significance of exhibiting on walls that recently displayed a family-curated tribute to Ms. Clark-McClure was not lost on her granddaughter.

“It is a beautiful connection,” she says. “It is a feeling I can't describe, but knowing that she was here in the way that I am here is very important to me. It validates my art, it validates myself as an artist, and I find it an extremely beautiful experience.”

Dorothy and Megan share a love of the figure, particularly nudes, and this more raw form of art is typical of the work created by Williams students for the second floor gallery space, while students from AHS appear to approach their subjects from a different angle.

Both shows were curated by the students themselves, with guidance when needed provided by Stephanie Nicolo of the Centre. This is the fourth exhibition by AHS grads in the five years of the Centre, and a first for Williams, something that was a point of pride for Ms. Nicolo at Wednesday's gallery opening.

“You guys were the Grade Nines when we started this program,” she said. “You have grown up with us and we cannot be more proud of what you guys have accomplished over the four years. This is the first time to bring Williams into the Aurora Cultural Centre. It has been a pleasure working with Williams. Thank you for showing us what is available out in the Town, the spirit of the community is so involved with creative juices. You have such a great eye and your photography skills are through the roof. This has been such an inspiring four years and I can't wait to see what the future has in store.”

Added Mayor Geoff Dawe: “Thank you for sharing your art with us. It is a great gift that you have given to the Town.”