



ALBANY MUSEUM OF ART

## FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE

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### WINNERS ANNOUNCED IN ALBANY MUSEUM OF ART ESSAY CONTEST

#### Lee County High and GSW students Win Top Awards in 7<sup>th</sup> Annual Contest

**[For Release Oct 15, 2021 – Albany, GA]** — Both of the top winners in the 7<sup>th</sup> annual *A Picture is Worth a Thousand Words* essay contest were inspired by the same work of art—*Still Life*, a 1657 oil on oak panel painting by Dutch artist Pieter Claesz.

Aleesa Kruse, a student at Lee County High School, took first place in the High School Division with her essay *The Feast*. The same artwork inspired Tasmyn McCauley, a student at Georgia Southwestern State University in Americus, to write *Sharp Edges*, which won first place in the College Division.

The top three essayists and three honorable mentions in each division were announced Thursday evening during an awards ceremony at the Albany Museum of Art. First-, second- and third-place winners in each category received cash prizes of \$250, \$150 and \$100, respectively.

"I am always so excited to look at our works of art through the eyes of the students through their creative writing," AMA Director of Education and Public Programming Annie Vanoteghem said. "Having students come into the museum to spend time looking and using critical thinking skills to discern what a work of art means to them is such an important part of our role in the community. I am looking forward to watching this program continue to grow!"

Between Aug 30 and Oct 1, high school and college students in Southwest Georgia were able to view seven designated artworks on exhibition at the AMA and write essays of up to 1,000 words for the contest. Submissions could be from any point of view, and factual or fictional. Essays could be in prose or poetry form.

All identifying information was scrubbed from the submissions before they were given to judges, who only saw a unique number for each essay. Judges selected first-, second- and third-place winners, as well as up to three honorable mentions. A numeric value was given to each essay depending on where the judge ranked it, with the highest value for first place and lowest for honorable mention. Scores were then tallied, with essays placing according to the total points they earned from judges' combined scores.

In addition to *Still Life*, one of 29 works on display in *European Splendors: Old Master Paintings from the Kress Collection*, designated objects for the contest included the paintings *A Bacchanal* by Giulio Carpioni, *Pulcinella Singing with His Many Children* by Alessandro Magnasco and *Virgin and Christ Child* by Francesco Francia from that exhibition. *Jockey Cigars* and *Saltville Virginia*, two paintings by Cedric Smith in his *Horse Power* exhibition were designated for the contest, as was Sanaz Haghani's screen-print *Essay Topic: Write Down the Word WOMAN One Hundred Times* from her exhibition of the same name.

*Still Life* proved to be the most popular source material for high school writers. It also inspired the essays by second-place winner Sophia Scardino, a student at Sherwood Christian Academy in Albany, and third-place winner Clara Lee, a student from Terrell Academy in Dawson who titled her submission *The Fascinating Feast*.

Two of the three high school honorable mention winners also were inspired by *Still Life*—Amelia Taylor, a student at Lee County High, and Shivani Yadavalli, a student at Deerfield-Windsor School who submitted a poem. Sammy James, a homeschool student, won honorable mention for his essay *Wretches Alike*, which was inspired by *Pulcinella Singing with His Many Children*.

*Pulcinella Singing with His Many Children* also inspired the second-place winner in the college division, Darnell Chen, an Albany State University student who wrote *An Ugly Superstition*. The third-place winner in the college division was Georgia Southwestern State student Alexis Conley, who found inspiration from Cedric Smith's *Jockey Cigars*.

All three honorable mentions in the college division went to Georgia Southwestern State students—Braylea Phillips, whose essay *The Crooked Ones* was inspired by *Still Life*; Rachel Gilmer, whose untitled essay was inspired by *Pulcinella Singing with His Many Children*, and Maggie Cox, whose essay *The Adventures of a Soldier* was inspired by Smith's *Saltville Virginia*.

The essays will be available to read on the AMA website page [www.albanymuseum.com/1000-words-essay-contest](http://www.albanymuseum.com/1000-words-essay-contest).

"After having an online awards event last year because of the pandemic, I am thrilled that we were able to conduct it in-person again this year," Vanoteghem said. "If anyone has missed seeing these beautiful works of art that these young students wrote about, all three exhibitions will continue through Dec 23. Come out and see what will inspire you!"

The Albany Museum of Art is open to the public 10 am-5 pm Tuesdays through Saturdays, and admission is free.

## CURRENT AMA EXHIBITIONS

- *European Splendors: Old Master Paintings from the Kress Collection* is in the Haley Gallery Aug 26-Dec 23, 2021.
- *Horse Power: Works by Cedric Smith* is in the East Gallery July 10-Dec 23, 2021.
- *Essay Topic: Write Down the Word WOMAN One Hundred Times, New works by Sanaz Haghani* is in the McCormack Gallery July 10-Dec 23, 2021
- *Escape Plan*, installation by Elinor Saragoussi, is in the West Gallery.

## ABOUT THE ALBANY MUSEUM OF ART

The Albany Museum of Art is located at 311 Meadowlark Drive in Albany, Ga., adjacent to Albany State University West Campus just off Gillionville Road. The museum is accredited by the American Alliance of Museums. The Albany Museum of Art is open to the public 10 am-5 pm Tuesdays through Saturdays. Admission is free.

For more information about the AMA please visit our website, [www.albanymuseum.com](http://www.albanymuseum.com) or call 229.439.8400. Be sure to follow the @AlbanyArtMuseum on Twitter, AlbanyMuseum on Instagram and AlbanyMuseumOfArt on Facebook.

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