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Photo 1 Students who took top honors in the 2023 Student Juried Art Show are (from left) Tori Blum, first place; Saboot Esho, third place; and Torrie Weems, second place. Photos by Levi Dade.

For immediate release

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By Kaelin Clay

May 15, 2023

For more information, contact Ouachita's Office of Communications & Marketing at comm-mark@obu.edu or (870) 245-5206.

ARKADELPHIA, Ark. — Ouachita Baptist University sophomore Tori Blum, a studio art major from McKinney, Texas, earned first place in the university's 2023 Student Juried Art Show. Winners were announced during a reception held April 26 in Mabee Fine Arts Center's Hammons Art Gallery to open the show. Sponsored by the Ouachita Art Club, the exhibit features the work of 15 students – including Blum – and will be on display in Hammons Gallery through Oct. 6. It is free and open to the public.

Blum created a ceramics piece titled "Balance" for her Ceramics I course in Fall 2022 and entered it in the show. Elements such as design and color scheme were incorporated to illustrate the meaning behind "Balance," which holds personal significance for Blum.



Photo 2 "Balance" by Tori Blum.

"The piece is a representation of me, and each side represents big parts of who I am," Blum said. "The darker half shows my current mental health struggles, and the colorful side shows how important music is for me. I wanted the cups to fit inside of the teapot to show that when one is taken away, the piece is incomplete and unbalanced."

When creating the piece, Blum found inspiration through music, which was reflected in her work.

"The process was frustrating, yet therapeutic. Getting everything out of my head is always difficult but pays off every time," Blum said. "I listened to a lot of Radiohead and Silversun Pickups and incorporated influences of album covers in the decorations, as well."

"I didn't even think it would get in the show, so I was very surprised and grateful to have even placed," she added. "This piece is very close and personal, so it's definitely weird to have it in a show for my school to see, but I'm deeply grateful for the opportunity to share my experiences and art with my peers."

There were 90 submissions for the competition, which was a record high. Saboot Esho, a senior graphic design and psychology double major from Erbil, Iraq, is the student chair for the show.

"Ninety works were submitted and 21 were selected, which speaks highly of our talented community and the students who got their work in," Esho said.

Torrie Weems, a sophomore graphic design and communications & media/visual media & film double major from Lumberton, Texas, placed second with "Eclipse" and Esho placed third with "Kelsey." Other artwork selected to be included in the exhibit are:

- "Armored Ensemble" by Jozie Burson, a junior studio art education major from Arkadelphia, Ark.
- "The Covid Doctor" and "Arabic Ligatures," also by Esho
- "Paper Cut Self Portrait" and "X-Ray" by Jubilee Collins, a freshman studio art major from Iron River, Mich.
- "Pick One!" by Hanna Craig, a senior studio art major from Cotton Center, Texas
- "Finite Beauty" series by Ashlyn Holt, a sophomore graphic design major from Rogers, Ark.
- "Captured Time" by Isabel King, a freshman graphic design major from Quinlan, Texas
- "Versace" by Jill Parsons, a senior communications & media/strategic communications and graphic design double major from Celina, Texas
- "Waves" and "Mess" by Maegan Royster, a sophomore art education major from Prosper, Texas
- "A Quiet Morning," "Untitled" and "Quiet" by Alyssa Strauss, a freshman art major from Euless, Texas
- "Kang Sae-byeok" by Chau Tran, a sophomore graphic design and business administration/marketing double major from North Little Rock, Ark.
- "Bridge to Terabithia" by Mallorie Warner, a sophomore graphic design and Christian studies/Christian missions double major from Benton, Ark.
- "Caught in the Motions" by Olivia Whitehead, a senior art education major from Rockford, Ill.
- "Cow Skull" and "Window" by Sydney Windorf, a sophomore studio art and graphic design double major from Beebe, Ark.

For more information on the Student Juried Art show, contact René Zimny, assistant professor of art and design, at zimnyr@obu.edu or (870) 245-5564.