



MEDIA RELEASE

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Karen Israel of West Hartford Takes ‘Best in Show’ At National Arts Program Held at Capital Community College

Israel’s work tops field of more than 300 art pieces professionals, amateurs and youth

WEST HARTFORD—Karen Israel of West Hartford was awarded ‘Best in Show’ at the Community Renewal Team’s 21st Annual National Arts Program exhibit Saturday, Jan. 28 at Capital Community College. Judges for the work had to review more than 300 pieces in all media, from sketches on paper to sculpture and crafts. The exhibit of all works still hangs at Capital Community College on 960 Main St. in Hartford on the 1st and 11th floors through Feb. 4.

Israel’s work, titled “Early Bird,” wowed judges with its life-like representation of a young girl sitting in a window and enjoying a snack in the morning sun. A strong field of judges included Andres Chaparro, artist and Manager in the City of Hartford Cultural Affairs Office; Janice La Motta, Art Director at Charter Oak Cultural Center; Anne Rice, Educator at the Wadsworth Antheneum; Erin Monroe, Curator at the Wadsworth Antheneum.

Israel began getting serious about painting 10 years ago when she first dabbled in watercolor expressions before finding that the pastel medium was best suited to her natural talents. For her “Early Bird” painting, she recalled being inspired to create the painting after seeing a photograph.

“I was moved by the child’s intense gaze and by the beautiful light falling behind her from the windows onto the wooden table,” Israel said. “This painting then inspired me to create other paintings of children caught in unselfconscious moments.”

The contest was open to all Hartford and Middlesex County residents, age six and older, and the event showcased the common bond between art and the community.

“Art is a language that is wonderful to share with the community and competitions like the CRT National Arts Program provide a wonderful venue for this expression,” said Israel.

All of the following award winners were honored at the ceremony on Jan. 28 at Capital Community College:

Youth Under 12:

Chiu Yen Wang Vergara, Rocky Hill, My Pet Turtle "Deke", Honorable Mention
Symber Sutton, "Flower," Honorable Mention
Amani Sheriff, "Rainbow Explosion," Honorable Mention
Carter Pelham, "Birds of the Forest," Honorable Mention
Leander Wang Vergara, Rocky Hill, "Man at Bar & Grill," 3rd Prize
Nylah Perry, Middletown, "Happy Seasons," 2nd Prize
Owen Roberts, Hartford, "For Dad: In the Snow," 1st Prize

Teen:

Keosha Williams, Hartford, "Self Portrait," Honorable Mention
Alfonzo Knight, Hartford, "Shadey's Window," Honorable Mention
Natalia Gutierrez, Middletown, "Straight in the Eye," Honorable Mention
Anamarie Medina, Hartford, "Cardinal on a Snowy Bridge," 3rd Prize
Kevin Hernandez, Hartford, "Elephant Forehead," 2nd Prize
Andrew Walker, Hartford, "Chris Paul," 1st Prize

Adult Amateur:

Arthur Grimes, East Hartford, "Country Scene," Honorable Mention
Etta Bennett, Bloomfield, "Roots," Honorable Mention
Sanford Parisky, Hartford, "Garden Party," 3rd Prize
Anthony Oretade, New Britain, "Dance of Freedom," 2nd Prize
Milagros Cruz, South Glastonbury, "Woman in Jungle," 1st Prize

Adult Intermediate:

Shirley Karp, West Hartford, "Country Barn," Honorable Mention
Robert Karp, Hartford, "Gimp Creations," Honorable Mention
Vivian Grady, Hartford, "On the Road to Morocco," Honorable Mention
Chunli She, West Hartford, "Cranes," 3rd Prize
Wanda Seldon, Hartford, "Beyond Blue- Tribute to Miles Davis," 2nd Prize
Michelle Cloutier, Hartford, "Heaven," 1st Prize

Adult Professional:

Linda Tajirian, Hartford "Pasadena Dog Walker," Honorable Mention
Nancy McIntire, South Windsor, "Twilight Drama," Honorable Mention
Amanda Keating, West Hartford, "Bate's House," Honorable Mention
Jordan Deschene, Terryville, "Parliament of Del Rey," Honorable Mention
Avis Cherichetti, Granby, "Porcelain Bowl," Honorable Mention
James Armour, Hartford, "Three Cops and an Angel," Honorable Mention
Bill Healy, Hartford, "Face Plate," 3rd Prize
Ronald Thompson Sr., Hartford, "The Harp," 2nd Prize
Fernando Garcia, Hartford, "Self-Portrait" 1st Prize

Best in Show:

Karen Israel, West Hartford, "Early Bird"

This is an annual event and contest which is underwritten in part by the National Arts Foundation. There is no entry fee, and individuals at all levels of experience are encouraged to enter. CRT has been the local sponsor for 21 years.

To see more of Israel's work or to purchase her paintings, visit her Website: www.artkarenisrael.com.

For information regarding the 2011-2012 National Arts contest, contact Nancy Shapiro at (860) 560-5471 or by email at nancys@crtct.org.

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Community Renewal Team, Inc. is the designated Community Action Agency for Middlesex and Hartford Counties and is the largest non-profit provider of human services in Connecticut. The agency's mission is Preparing Our Community to Meet Life's Challenges. The mission is achieved each day by helping people and families become self-sufficient while making sure basic needs are met. CRT's programs include Head Start, Meals on Wheels, energy assistance, supportive housing and shelters, and many others, serving people in more than 60 cities and towns in both our core catchment area and throughout Connecticut. www.crtct.org