2017 Visual Arts Achievement Program

Montgomery, Ala. – On Friday, April 28, at 1:00 p.m., one hundred and one (101) students from across the state will be invited onstage at the State Capitol auditorium to receive an award for their creativity as visual artists. By submitting a painting, drawing, print, mixed media, sculpture, photography or digital art, each of these students won an award in their hometown district. Their work then traveled to Montgomery to be exhibited at the Georgine Clarke Alabama Artists Gallery, from April 1-28. The state exhibit will culminate with an award ceremony to honor these exceptional students, their teachers and their schools. Every student who placed in the state exhibition will receive a Blue Ribbon Award. There will also be awards given for Best of District, Best of Category, and Best of Show.

This year’s Best of Show will go to Youngho Kwon, a 12th grade student at Prattville High School, Montgomery, for Fruit Still-Life, a Prisma colored pencil drawing. Jessica Rape is Youngho Kwon’s teacher. The Teacher Award will go to Felicia Olds of St. Paul’s Episcopal School in Mobile. The School System Award will go to Tuscaloosa County Schools; Dr. Walter W. Davie, Superintendent.

All visual arts achievement winners have their work photographed and their images will be showcased on the website: www.artsALABAMA.org.

The Visual Arts Achievement Program, which is in its thirty-first year, is designed to provide local and state recognition for quality visual arts programs in both public and private school systems. The program is limited to students in grades 6-12. In addition to the district and state exhibitions, the program involves a portfolio competition for senior students who wish to pursue their arts training in higher education. The portfolios are adjudicated by professional artists and professors from the art departments of partnering institutions. Five students from the portfolio competition are selected to receive a $500 scholarship from the State Arts Council. Partner institutions match that award, providing a total of $1,000 if a student chooses to attend the partnering institution. This year our partners are: Auburn University Montgomery; Birmingham-Southern College; Jacksonville State University; Savannah College of Art & Design; Samford University; Troy University; University of Alabama Huntsville; University of Alabama Birmingham; University of Montevallo; University of North Alabama.
This year’s artist/speaker at the award ceremony will be Michael Vaughn Sims. Sims is a fine artist and theatrical designer currently active in Lowndes County, Alabama. He holds a BFA from Auburn University Department of Theatre and an MFA from Yale School of Drama. A professional theatrical designer since 1992, Sims began painting full-time in Alabama’s Blackbelt in 2008. He is a signature member of the Watercolor Society of Alabama and the Montgomery Art Guild.

Sims finds inspiration in the study of art history, architecture and the natural world. Classical drawing and painting techniques provide the foundation of his work. Although his work is often full of intricate details, Sims strives to engage the viewer by presenting his subjects in a clear and direct manner.

**THE CEREMONY:**
State Capitol Auditorium, Montgomery; 1 p.m. – 2 p.m., Friday, April 28

**BEST OF SHOW:**
(Prisma colored pencil drawing), Fruit Still-Life by Youngho Kwon, a 12th grade student at Prattville High School, Jessica Rape is Youngho Kwon’s teacher.

**PORTFOLIO SCHOLARSHIP WINNERS:**
Emily Wells Kent, Saint James School, Montgomery
Jim Gunter, Teacher

Jeb Milling, St. Paul’s Episcopal School, Mobile
Felicia Olds, Teacher

Caroline Myers, St. Paul’s Episcopal School, Mobile
Felicia Olds, Teacher

Mairyn Diane Rojas, Oak Mountain High School, Birmingham
Ashleigh Nicole McKinney, Teacher

Sydney Williams, St. Paul’s Episcopal School, Mobile
Felicia Olds, Teacher

**RECEPTION:**
Georgine Clarke Alabama Artists Gallery located within the Alabama State Council on the Arts; 2 – 3 p.m.

The Alabama State Council on the Arts, located in the RSA Tower in downtown Montgomery at 201 Monroe Street, Suite 110, Montgomery, is the official state arts agency of Alabama. The staff of the Council, directed by Al Head, administers the grants program and provides financial assistance in arts education and programming.

The Council receives its support through an annual appropriation from the Alabama Legislature and funding from the National Endowment for the Arts, a federal agency.

For further information about the Visual Arts Achievement Program, contact Diana F. Green at 334-242-4076, extension 241.