

Young artist delighted to design new Mayor's Arts Awards

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First, there was Joanna Drummond, and then there was Julie Hage. Now, 25-year-old Samantha Williams-Chapelsky gets the honour.

It was announced this week that the young artist has been chosen to design the prizes that will be given out at this year's third annual Mayor's Celebration of the Arts Awards Gala.

"It's very exciting!" Williams-Chapelsky exclaimed.

Every year, a different local artist is selected to create a new trophy. For the first two years, the awards were made of clay. Although Williams-Chapelsky has experience in pottery, she submitted her application based on another field of visual art that she's quite familiar with.

"It's something 2-D so it's a little different. It'll be abstracted but it's on a brushed aluminum surface so it gives it a really neat texture and shine."

She added that the group of seven paintings, called *Illuminate Series 1*, would pay tribute to the city itself.

"Obviously you're recognizing St. Albert artists, so it's nice to choose the city of St. Albert as inspiration ... the landscape, the architecture. I'll draw bits and pieces from that as well as even the pieces of public art that we have, the beautiful sculptures and bronze statues."

Despite her age, she has quickly established a curriculum vitae that all started with her winning an Emily Carr Young Artist Award when she was five years old. She studied Italian art, architecture, and history in Tuscany and graduated with her bachelor of fine arts degree with distinction from the University of Alberta two years ago.

Since then, she has been a visual arts instructor for the City of St. Albert and was recently hired at the Art Gallery of St. Albert as the exhibition installer.

Festival co-chair Peter Moloney stated the jury had its work cut out for them before selecting the winner.

"The choice is always hard," he stated, adding, "It is nice to see an emerging artist selected."

The Mayor's Gala at the Arden Theatre will kick off the third annual StArts Fest, which will be held from Sept. 30 to Oct. 2. The celebration of the local arts is meant to encourage citizens to discover, experience and celebrate the endeavours of local artists and performers.

For more information, visit www.startsfest.ca.

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