

Young creatives: the mythology of Alex Jones



Brauer College Year 11 student Alex Jones with the work of his fellow art students behind him. Alex's work is part of the school's Art & Design exhibition at the Lighthouse Theatre.

Words and photos by Carol Altmann

[dropcap style="font-size: 60px; color: #DC943C;"] A [/dropcap]**lex Jones** is one of those young creatives who has been drawing for as long as he can remember and whose natural talent just oozes out of him, much like the images he creates.

The Year 11 Brauer College student from Bushfield is making his mark as a young artist to watch, with his exploration of life, death, mythology and the darker, surreal elements of fantasy and reality.

“Ever since I was little I have loved books about mythology and fantasy and using my own imagination to create those worlds,” Alex, 17, says.

“I have always drawn pretty dark stuff, much to the disgust of my grandmother,” he adds, laughing.



A digitally manipulated image – featuring Alex’s father and golden labradors.



Perhaps not one for Grandma, but the detail in Alex's drawing is remarkable and won the people and staff choice awards in the 2013 WRAD Art in Schools Competition

[dropcap style="font-size: 60px; color: #DC943C;"] A [/dropcap]lex works across a range of mediums, including pencil, paint, sculpture, photography and printing, to create images that are often morbid or foreboding, yet mesmerising.

"I like to convey messages about life and death and different ways of looking at life, while also making the work really detailed," he says.

Alex's favoured themes are a stark contrast to his cheerful

disposition and love of the sea, and he laughs as he admits that most of his work is not displayed at home (his mother, **Yvonne Lefebure**, is a textiles teacher at Brauer).

But his attention to detail and a willingness to explore different approaches and techniques is inspiring.

At an age when most young artists are still mimicking the work of others until they find their own style, Alex will take an idea and then push it, pull it and stretch it around until it becomes his own.



Alex's roadkill lantern, which is part of an installation at the Brauer Art & Design Exhibition.



Life, death and decay are common themes in Alex's work, including this photograph of a fungi that is reproduced in a scratch drawing.

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[dropcap]ail Higgins, head of the Brauer Art Department and one of Alex's teachers, tells a story of how he found some roadkill, let it dry out, and used the skull together with moulded, clay horns and bits of fur to create a new work.

"He puts a great deal of thought into how he approaches each piece," Gail says.

And Alex himself explains how he experimented with making his own paint pigments from wine, blueberries and raspberries which he then used for a printmaking piece on the crucifixion of Christ.

But perhaps his most striking work is one of three that are included in the **Brauer College Art & Design Exhibition** now showing at the Lighthouse Theatre, Warrnambool (until Nov 16).

It is a highly detailed eagle that has been etched onto

individual panes of painted perspex that are mounted into a vintage window frame.



Alex's winning work from the Portland Rotary Art Show: the eagle etched into panels of painted perspex (detail).

[dropcap style="font-size: 60px; color: #DC943C;"] T
[/dropcap]he majestic bird has its wings outstretched, as if in flight, but its head flops to one side and a medieval sword runs down the centre of its body.

"The window symbolises the interface between life and death," Alex explains.

"You only get to see glimpses from one side – not the whole picture. And the sword, well it symbolises mans killing of an innocent creature."

Gail is right: Alex puts a *lot* of thought into each of his pieces.

The eagle image recently won best contemporary painting at at

the **Portland Rotary Art Show** and Alex's work has also been recognised with a people's choice and staff choice award in the 2013 Western Region Drug and Alcohol Art in Schools competition.

Despite his talent and love of art, however, Alex intends to put his attention to detail and inquisitive mind to work in another career, as a scientist.

Given the synergies between science, life and death, it seems the perfect fit.



Alex experimented with making his own pigments using blueberries, wine and raspberries for this work on the crucifixion of Christ.

[box]The Brauer College Art & Design Exhibition is open until Sunday November 16, Lighthouse Theatre, Warrnambool. It was curated by Gareth Colliton, from the Warrnambool Art Gallery, with the assistance of two Brauer College students Gemma Stormer and Emily Bakic. Free entry.[/box]

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