

Flowers and kites relax and stimulate Paul Roosers

Research shows that just a few minutes of looking at a work of art can have a positive effect on the pleasure centres of the brain and can even change thought patterns. Visual arts can also be used as a valuable tool to increase productivity and well-being at a school.

A study by Edward Fiske and Champions of Change researchers (Champions of Change, 1999) found that learners can reach higher levels of achievement through their involvement in the arts. One of the critical research findings is that learning in and through the arts can help level the playing field for young people from disadvantaged backgrounds. When taught well, the arts offer young people authentic learning experiences that engage their minds, hearts and bodies.

It is for this reason that the well-known artist, Portchie, donated a 2m x 1.5m artwork, "Brotherhood", to Paul Roos Gymnasium. The artwork is on display in the Media Centre as inspiration for the Paul Roos learners. The bright flowers, cheerful Paul Roos kites and youngsters enjoying themselves are just the right medicine for a learner who feels overwhelmed before a test. This friendly art space is there for learners to unwind and build up courage. "Cheerful themes and bright colours are especially effective in encouraging relaxation," explains Portchie, Paul Roos Gymnasium alumnus (matric 1981) and suggests that you pick up a pencil and draw something to divert your attention from any worries.

Michael Jordaan (Paul Roos Gymnasium alumnus, matric, 1985) and angel investor in innovative ideas, is convinced of the strong relationship between creativity, critical thinking and entrepreneurship. "It is extremely important in today's learning environment that learners are exposed to opportunities that foster creativity, especially in the 21st century."

The University of Arkansas' Faculty of Education conducted research among a large number of students who visited the Crystal Bridges Museum of Art. They found that there are lasting intellectual and emotional benefits to exposing students to the visual arts in a museum setting. Greater capacity for empathy, tolerance and critical thinking are considered to be among the main benefits (Education Next, 2013).

Paul Roos Gymnasium's "See and Be Seen" Art Exhibition and Auction is presented by Investec and includes an outreach project in collaboration with the Rupert Museum. This outreach project was launched to broaden learners' experiences, expand their capacity for empathy and tolerance through art. In the spirit of Heritage Month and the celebration of diversity, learners from local schools will have the opportunity to experience a guided museum tour, get to know learners from different backgrounds, take part in art activities and refine their critical thinking.

Artworks from the participating learners will form part of the See and Be Seen Art Exhibition and Auction which will be presented from 19 to 30 October at Paul Roos Gymnasium. Portchie encourages learner participation by making cash prizes available to the three most popular works of art, as well as a prize for the learner who was able to correctly predict the most popular works of art.

In this way, Portchie also encourages art appreciation among Paul Roos learners. See and Be Seen Art Exhibition and Auction is further proudly supported by SMAC Gallery, Strauss & Co Fine Art Auctioneers, Spier Arts Trust, Stellenbosch Visio and artists.

It is claimed that the incorporation of art and creative stimulation in the learning environment of a child can increase productivity by as much as 30%. It is with this in mind that Paul Roos Gymnasium and surrounding schools want to ensure that learners' love of art and exposure to it will be nurtured.

Visit the Paul Roos Gymnasium website for more information on See and Be Seen Art Exhibition and Auction including a formal opening tea on 19 October at 10:00 and auction on 20 October at 17:30 or contact kwinter@paulroos.co.za for more information.

Photo credit: Jacques Vermooten

Pictured from left: André van Staden (Rector), Portchie (old boy/ ex Paul-Rooser), Devon Milne (head boy) and deputy head boys Janneman Slabbert and Reghard van Wyk

(HIGH RES WILL BE ATTACHED IN EMAIL TO PRESS)

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