A painting representing the artist's experience as a person on the autism spectrum has won the top prize in the 13th annual "On Our Own Time" art exhibition and competition.

The painting by Sergio Castrezana, research technician in the Department of Entomology, won best in show in the exhibition. The colorful, surrealistic piece depicts various fantastical creatures navigating a bright blue waterway.

“For those of us who do not have artistic training, the space created by 'On Our Own Time' gives us a place to express our ideas,” Castrezana said. “Art is therapeutic and healing. It allows us to capture life as we feel it daily. In each stroke, a bit of our feelings is trapped in the paint, which allows us to constantly self-correct.”

"On Our Own Time" is open to University employees, retirees, volunteers and their family members. This year’s exhibit drew more than 50 entries spanning artistic avenues including paintings, drawings, sculptures – and even a jean jacket – created by artists as young as 7 years old. It is coordinated by the University's Employee Recognition Committee [1] and is sponsored by the National Arts Program, which provides materials and funding for awards.

The best in show award comes with a $400 prize. First-, second- and third-place winners in the professional, intermediate and amateur categories won $350, $250 and $150, respectively. First-, second- and third-place winners in the teen and youth categories won $150, $100 and $50, respectively.

2023 Winning Entries

Best in Show
"Not all of us who travel on this ship have the same direction"
Sergio Castrezana, research technician, Department of Entomology

Art Education Award (given to an artist in the teen or youth category, includes a $200 prize to be used for an arts class or materials)
"Wearing Wayne Thiebaud"
Sonali Coan, family of Andrew Coan, associate dean and professor, James E. Rogers College of Law

Professional
- First place: "Power of Presence" by Jennie Norris, graphic designer, Facilities Management
- Second place: "Adornment" by Kay Ross, director (retired), Graduate Programs-Academic Affairs, Department of Finance
- Third place: "The Marigold Dance" by Ruben Moreno, senior exhibit specialist, Arizona State Museum

Intermediate
- First place: "My Sweet Little Donkey, 'Mario’" by Sue Chacon, instructional technology technician, College of Veterinary Medicine
- Second place: "Time" by Dietlinde Duplessis, communications specialist, School of Mining and Mineral Resources
- Third place: "Drive in…to the Stars" by Rhonda Royse, assistant director, University Identity and Access Management, University Information Technology Services

Amateur
- First place: "Christmas in the City" by Anna Alkozei, clinical assistant professor, Department of Family and Community Medicine
- Second place: "The Big One" by Samantha Wanlass, family of Pamela Foltik, accountant, Athletics
- Third place: "Thunder Rolls" by Dottie Cannons, family of Pamela Wagner, operations coordinator, Department of Family and Community Medicine

Teen
- First place: "right-handed" by Avery Maland, family of Lia Falco, associate professor, Department of Disability and Psychoeducational Studies
- Second place: "Kaida’s Den" by Victoria Escamilla, family of Sonya Lopez-Escamilla, senior accountant assistant, University Identity and Access Management, University Information Technology Services
- Third place: "The Stars" by Anthony Son, family of Hyewon Shin, senior program coordinator, College of Nursing

Youth

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First place: "Golden Eggs" by Sophia Todd, family of Michaela Todd, faculty appointments coordinator, Department of Surgery, College of Medicine – Tucson
Second place: "Mush-room" by Katherine Wang, family of Steven Wang, chair, Department of Otolaryngology, College of Medicine – Tucson
Third place: "Still Life" by Ezra Coan, family of Andrew Coan, associate dean and professor, James E. Rogers College of Law

Honorable Mentions

"Saguaro Ribs and Needles shadow study in B&W" by Sarah Moore, intellectual property manager, Tech Launch Arizona
"The Final Pose" by Winona Esher, family of Melanie Esher, senior program manager, Arizona Telemedicine Program
"Lonesome George" by Jacqueline Brailey, assistant staff scientist (retired), Department of Chemistry and Biochemistry
"White Lightning" by Pamela Wagner, operations coordinator, Department of Family and Community Medicine
"Growth" by Lori Coan, family of Andrew Coan, associate dean and professor, James E. Rogers College of Law
"Aqua Caliente Plein Aire" by Niko Sanchez, digital design and fabrication specialist, University Libraries
"Heartstopper Diorama" by Sabina Coan, family of Andrew Coan, associate dean and professor, James E. Rogers College of Law
"Fire Kitty" by Jacquelyn Escamilla, family of Sonya Lopez-Escamilla, senior accountant assistant, University Identity and Access Management, University Information Technology Services
"Japanese Koi Rock Set" by Sophia Todd, family of Michaela Todd, faculty appointments coordinator, Department of Surgery, College of Medicine – Tucson
"Lunch" by Emery Maland, family of Lia Falco, associate professor, Department of Disability and Psychoeducational Studies


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