Written by Jeff Ignatius
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What had been MidCoast's Pastel Exhibition & Competition has been transformed through addition into something altogether different: a multifaceted arts-in-education event for teens that creates a link to workforce development and retention. It's now called the MidCoast Art Works Expo, and beyond the serious-sounding description, the Saturday event at the Family Museum of Arts & Science should be a lot of fun for all ages.

"The Pastel Competition was a great start, but we wanted to make it multidisciplinary," said Rachael Mullins, the event's co-chairperson. Beyond expanding the event itself, MidCoast is using it essentially as a kickoff celebration. "This is a campaign, not an event," Mullins said.

The shift has been more than a year in the making, but it took time and planning. "It was a great idea last year," Mullins said. "It became a more realistic option about nine months ago."

Winners of various competitions will have the potential to participate in professional-development activities. Participants in the graphic-design contest will receive professional critiques, and winners will get job-shadowing opportunities. Winning bands will have the chance to play at the August 1 ArtStroll event in downtown Davenport and upcoming Gallery Hops in The District of Rock Island. And selected video entrants will be showcased in a half-hour special on WQPT and be able to participate in the October MidCoast film and arts festival.

Nancy Senn of the Family Museum will also present "It's a Living: How to Support Myself in the Arts" at 11 a.m., 2 p.m., and 5 p.m. The half-hour presentation is ideal for students considering careers in the arts. People who attend the expo will also have the opportunity to interact with professionals in the fields of welding, journalistic photography, graphic design, airbrushing, and museum education.

Mullins said the event also aims to explore dynamics among different disciplines, for example having graphic designers work with bands.

Teens not in competition can enjoy a full complement of bands from 10 a.m. to 7:30 p.m., and they can also participate in any of three "video diaries" (at 10:30 a.m., 1:30 p.m., and 4:30 p.m.) discussing creativity. Other attractions include street galleries featuring student art, student-produced video and film projects, and a graphic-design gallery. Awards for music, graphics, and video will be awarded at 4 p.m. Awards for the late-afternoon music competition (featuring garage bands) will be held at 7:30 p.m. The Pastel Competition will feature 10 teams from area high schools working from 10 a.m. to 3:30 p.m. on eight-foot-by-eight-foot murals, with an awards ceremony at 4:15 p.m.

The feature-length *Crimson Duel*, a film by Davenport West High School students, will be screened at 11:30 a.m., 3:30 p.m., and 6:30 p.m. in the Family Museum's theatre.

Mullins said she expects between 200 and 300 youth to participate in the event, with 400 to 500 people attending overall.

The MidCoast Fine Arts Artworks Expo will be held Saturday from 10 a.m. to 8 p.m. at the

Family Museum of Arts & Science at the Bettendorf Learning Campus. For more information, visit (http://www.midcoast.org) or call (309)786-2430.