

Sixth-graders usually don't talk about Realism or Abstract.

But it only takes a few minutes with Triston Abrams to tell he isn't your typical student. That's because the New Hope Middle Schooler *loves* art.

One look at Abrams' sketchbook or the paintings in his backpack is enough to convince you he is advanced beyond his years.

"Mark my words, he will be the next Picasso of his generation," New Hope Middle School art teacher Nikki Carlson said. "His art abilities will one day be famous! Having him in my art class this year has been the highlight of my year, watching him grow as an artist and create new works brings so much joy to my artist heart!"

More than 40 pieces of Abrams' Abstract work will be on display from 5:30-7 tonight as part of the Columbus Arts Council opening reception in downtown Columbus. The event will feature Abrams' work in Artist Alley and work from students at Columbus High School and Columbus Middle School in the main gallery.

"It has been my dream to become a major artist," Abrams said. "I have been looking forward to this."

In addition to being blessed with artistic ability, Abrams knows how to make his skills work for him. This past summer, Abrams and Caledonia Elementary School fifth-grader Parker Peacock completed about 25 paintings each and then visited several neighborhoods to raise money for a trampoline. Some of those first paintings were in a Realistic style, which focused on precisely and truly depicting the world as it actually exists, before Abrams shifted to an Abstract style, which he said "is a lot more fun" because he can "let all his feelings out." Abstract art doesn't attempt to represent an accurate description of a visual reality but

instead uses shapes, colors, forms and gestural marks to achieve its effect.

All told, Abrams and Peacock raised \$163 for a trampoline that currently resides at Peacock's house.

Abrams said a lot of his Abstract work involves the use of eyes because he enjoys creating them in different sizes and shapes and colors.

Carlson said she was "amazed" by Abrams' artistic skills when she first met him. She said it wasn't surprising that he recently was named "Most Artistic" in the sixth grade.

"I'm super excited and proud of him for achieving this honor of showcasing his work at the Columbus Arts Council," Carlson said. "He has worked incredibly hard to organize this, and it shows through his masterpieces."

Carlson said Abrams' sketchbook is filled with amazing portraits that he is able to complete in a short amount of time. She said Abrams creates using a shading method that is layered, which makes his artwork pop out from the paper.

Abrams said he didn't start painting until about three years ago but that he has been interested in art ever since he was little. He attributes his love for art to being in an "artsy" family, which includes a grandmother who paints and another grandmother who makes crafts. Abrams said his mother also used to paint and his father loves to draw, and that all of them serve as his inspirations.

Abrams said the opportunity to showcase his work at the Columbus Arts Council came as a result of his appearance at Under the Oaks Art Festival in November 2023. Mississippi University for Women partnered with the Columbus Arts Council to allow local artisans a chance to display their work. Abrams said he received a lot of positive feedback

and was asked to participate in the Columbus Arts Council's 2024 series of showcases for up-and-coming local artists.

Abrams hopes to pursue a career in art when he gets older or study architecture. Tonight, three of Abrams' paintings will be available through a raffle. You can follow Abrams on Instagram at: [tristonsacrylics](#).

Abrams credited his grandmother who does Realism for supplying him with plenty of canvas so he can capture all of the "monstrous" images and eyes and lips that are dancing around in his brain.

"This is pretty cool," Abrams said when asked about being part of tonight's show. "I like talking to people, too, so I am going to love talking to people who want to look at my art. I try to attend all of the opening nights for the artists because I like to get to know them, look at their art, compare their work to mine, learn from them and teach them about some of my stuff."