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Bringing art into the classroom

Teens celebrate the end of the semester with silk-screen printing demo.

By Jeannette Boner

The paint slides smoothly over the silk screens: blacks, yellows, blues and some reds squeeze through the artwork onto cotton T-shirts and canvas bags.

"Nailed it," Jay Berrones declares, as Jackson Hole Middle School students circle around him. He pulls up the silk-screen frame to reveal a delicate piece of work, wet and shining on a shirt.

Last Friday marked the final day of the semester when final course work is due. Students in Amy Aronowitz's art classes celebrated the semester's end by bringing in Berrones from the nonprofit pARTners. Coming up on its 30th anniversary, pARTners works with teachers to enhance art education in schools and introduce students to new mediums like silk-screening.

A Jackson artist, Berrones was approached by Ruth Moran-Rooks, executive director for pARTners. She asked if he would like to do some demonstrations with silk screens at the middle school.

Joyful about producing new work with students, Berrones said he was surprised by how much he delighted in working with teens — a departure from being in the studio with adults.

As students filtered in and out Friday, Berrones conversed with them in English and Spanish. A Texas native, Berrones studied and worked in Mexico City, Mexico, for years before moving to the West.

One student asked Berrones in Spanish what he likes about art. He



Local artist Jay Berrones helps Melissa Morales move ink across the silk screen to print the Mexican symbol of the golden eagle and the snake onto a T-shirt at Jackson Hole Middle School. The nonprofit pARTners arranged the demonstrations.

answered in both Spanish and English.

"Believe it or not, I like watching art being made," he told the class. "You can do the process over and over again and each time it's different."

The pARTners organization purchased the screen forms, T-shirts and bags for the classroom demonstrations. Berrones made screen prints for the two frames — one image was the Mexican symbol of the golden eagle and the snake while the other image featured three "calavera" or skulls typically representative of the Day of the Dead.

"This is a celebration day," said Aronowitz of welcoming a guest artist at the end of the semester.

Aronowitz's middle school class-

room was awash in an outpouring of creative expression, offering a glimpse into the hearts and minds of students on the cusp of their teenage years. The room was decorated with bright construction paper flowers and Van Gogh's "Starry Night," which was pinned to the wall next to color wheels and sinks full of ink stains and paint.

"I pride myself in giving students the ability to build their confidence," said Aronowitz, who has been an art teacher in the public school district for 10 years. "I make everything doable no matter how they feel about themselves coming into class. They will leave here with confidence."

Students settled into tall chairs as they talked and cut out calavera prints.

"I thought this was cool to see and use these different designs," said Millie McInnes, a student in the class. "I like art because it's really fun and a good environment."

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THIS WEEK

Page prizes

The Jackson Hole News&Guide won a number of awards at the Wyoming Press Association's annual convention in Casper. The list includes three of the association's highest honors: Journalist of the Year, Photographer of the Year and first place in General Excellence.

See Valley cover.

Court connoisseur

Amale Allen played for Lebanon's team at the first Olympics to feature women's basketball, the 1976 Summer Games in Montreal. Later she became a competitive tennis player. Now in Jackson Hole she's finding joy on another kind of court: pickleball.

See Valley, page 7B.

Stand-up comedy

Jackson Hole funny man, writer and director Andrew Munz is taking on the ubiquitous struggle in his new stand-up comedy special, "Almost Homeless." You can see it this weekend at Pierre's Theatre in Victor, Idaho, and Feb. 2 and 3 at the Pink Garter in Jackson.

See Scene, page 2B.

Stringdusters swing by

The Infamous Stringdusters will bring their contemporary bluegrass sound to Center for the Arts on Tuesday. Their set list will be a surprise. "The reality is we don't know what we're going to play until the day of the show," banjo player Chris Pandolfi said.

See Scene, page 3B.

Protect the neck

Jackson Youth Hockey became the first hockey program in the state of Wyoming to mandate neck guards last week. After an increase in concern throughout the hockey community following a high-profile incident, will USA Hockey and other programs follow?

See Sports cover.

Resilient basketball

The girls' and boys' Broncs basketball teams demonstrated their ability to bounce back in their

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ARTIST