



The ceramic flamingo was a collaborative effort and will be on display from Sept. 22 - Oct. 29. (Photo provided by Mesa Community College)

FEATURES

Mesa Community College student ceramic piece recognized at Arizona State Fair

Diego Esquivel 10/18/2023

Longtime Mesa Community College ceramic student Gayle Belshe was recognized for her work by having one of her ceramic art pieces featured at the Arizona State Fair from Sept. 22 – Oct. 29.

Belshe's inspiration for the ceramic art piece began while participating in her other artistic hobby of crocheting.

While looking at a pattern for a crochet flamingo, she was fascinated by the barebone details and features of the bird, which led her to creating her own model of the animal.

Belshe expressed her love for the beautiful bird and also wanted to convey awareness for environmental change and how they could be harmful to species like the flamingo.

“Right now I keep thinking about global warming and what it’s doing to the ocean temperatures and all these beautiful birds live right around the coastline in most countries where they are. They feed off of very small krill and animals like that that live in the sand and silt and water there. You raise those temperatures and their food source is going to go away,” said Belshe.

The flamingo was also a collaborative effort as Belshe explained how finding someone to weld the legs of the sculpture was like pulling teeth.

For the piece displayed at the state fair, Belshe had her cousin, who happened to be a metal artist, assist her in creating the legs of the sculpture.

Belshe was also shocked to discover that she was the only ceramic artist represented in the fine art department when looking at other art pieces displayed at the state fair.

There were plenty of paintings, photographs, and even large metal sculptures on display, however there were no fellow ceramic artists that Belshe could compare and admire.

Despite this, Belshe mentioned how she felt pride in representing ceramic art and knowing it has a place in art shows after participating in the art department at MCC for over 20 years.

Belshe also expressed love for being in a community of creative artists no matter what type of art they create.

“I like creative people. I’m glad to see that they’re there and they’re doing those kinds of things. If I had \$700 I’d have an art

piece on my wall. It's just fun to see what they're doing and it challenges me, maybe I want to do painting or something like that as well," said Belse

Belse described the love she has been receiving from family and friends. Her ceramics instructor Guillermo Gutierrez also expressed joy for her student and discussed what it meant for the art program to have a student's work displayed at the biggest fair in Arizona.

"I think it's awesome, I think it's a wonderful opportunity for her to show her work. She's a very talented individual who deserves to be in such a show, and I think it just kind of highlights the massive talent that MCC fosters in all our programs, including ceramics," said Gutierrez.

Gutierrez also explained how having a student from the program find such success can affect the overall moral and enthusiasm of the students in the art department.

"Most of the student's see that and they get excited, like you were saying, they become enthusiastic about what they're making. It kind of just shows that anybody can be a part of the art world." said Gutierrez

As for Belse, she described having aspirations for expanding her art skills and practicing other mediums such as painting or drawing.

Belse stated that the next step in her journey is to produce a piece that wins best of show as she continues to grow as an artist each year she has been a part of the program.

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