

Budding artists in Oxnard learn basics in museum program

By Anne Kallas

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A group of Oxnard children is learning to recreate the colors and vibrancy of the seashore during the Building Blocks of Art series of classes at the Carnegie Museum in Oxnard.

During the four-week Tuesday sessions, Martha Jimenez, curator of education for the museum, is teaching about 12 children the fundamentals of art.

Jimenez was sitting in the museum's gallery Tuesday in the middle of Kevin Short's Paintings of Blinding Light exhibit, which Jimenez was using for inspiration for the class project.

Painting waves hitting the beach, Alexis Rangel, 11, of Oxnard, said he is interested in becoming an artist.

"I like art, and I wanted to do art. I don't paint, but I do draw. I do think of being an artist," Alexis said. "I like to imagine what I'm going to do and seeing how it's going to turn out."

Jimenez said the idea of the series is to provide art education, which has been cut in many schools. She said she creates her lessons using the basic art theories she learned in college.

"I just go back to what I did in school, and I apply it to children's levels," she said. "The Internet is very helpful."

The first lesson dealt with lines; the second focused on shapes and forms, the third explored color and the final session will deal with texture, which Jimenez, a fiber artist, said is her favorite medium — a term she explained to the children.

"'Medium' is a term artists use to mean paints or materials they use to create their work," she said.

She explained primary colors and how they combine to make secondary colors that can be used to create seascapes.

Cindy Avalos, of Santa Paula, sat with daughter Melony, 6, as her daughter debated what color she wanted to make her ocean.

Melony "loves art in general and in the classroom. I thought this would be perfect for her to do over vacation. It's a way to learn and enjoy it," Avalos said.

"I love the way the paints look and the colors," Melony said.

Valerie Magana, 9, of Oxnard, said she loves art.

“My mom has a guest room in our house where we put all my art. And my aunt is my teacher,” Valerie said, pointing to Jimenez, “which is awesome.”

Jimenez explained to the children that art is forgiving.

“We’re going to create a seascape, and it’s not exact. We’re here to pay attention to the colors. It doesn’t have to be perfect,” she said before demonstrating stippling with white paint to create waves breaking on the beach.

Lisa Horan, communications and membership coordinator, said the classes are part of the museum’s mission to reach out to everyone in the community.

“We want to get people to come to the museum,” she said, adding that it’s always fun to teach children. “They’re like little sponges. It’s good for us to remember that.”

The classes are for children ages 7-11 and are held on Tuesdays through July 30. There will be additional classes offered in the fall, Jimenez said.

The requested donation for the four-class series is \$24 for museum members; \$32 for general admission or \$10 per class. The museum is at 424 South C St., Oxnard.

Enrollment is limited. Reservations and prepayment are required.

For information or to register, call the Carnegie Museum education department at 385-8171 or email education@carnegieam.org.

