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CAMBRIDGE EDUCATION NEWS

Students embrace the art of science



Third prize winner Charlotte Donald with her entry

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Young artists from across Cambridgeshire have combined science with art for an annual creative challenge.

Organised by Cambridge's prestigious Medical Research Council Laboratory of Molecular Biology (MRC-LMB), the Imagining the Brain project is an open exhibition designed to encourage students across the county to communicate scientific concepts through art.

This year, students were challenged to think differently and use art to communicate Different Ways of Thinking, a theme which explored autism spectrum conditions and also looked at how different information systems are co-ordinated in complex organisms.

Luke Woodhouse, from Cambridge Regional College, won first prize with his work, The Complex Dynamic of Thought, based around how neural activity leads to thought and then action. Besides winning a cash prize of £100, Luke has also been awarded the position of artist in residence at the neurobiology department of the (MRC-LMB). He will use his talents to communicate science at the forefront of research.

Chelsey Bishop, of The Leys School, won second prize with her beautiful and sensitive artwork of a young boy with autism, and Charlotte Donald of Netherhall Sixth Form College was awarded third prize for her work on the same subject. Highly commended awards were also awarded to Emma Horsfall of CRC and Eildh Macallum of Netherhall Sixth Form College.

The 2012 KPMG Schools Award for Science Communication goes to the art department of Cambridge Regional College. "This is the second year CRC art students have participated in Imagining the Brain and their commitment, professionalism and talent has shone through," said Yvonne Vallis, who organises the event.

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"We look forward to working closely with CRC students again in the future."

The judges were thrilled with the quality of the work.

Karen Thomas, arts development manager for Swavesey and the surrounding area, said: "I found the standard of work produced truly astounding."

"The young artists engaged well with the subjects and approached them sensitively and creatively. The work produced encapsulated a broad range of media and a variety of approaches to challenging subject matters."

"Imagining the Brain is an inspiring project. It welcomes young artists and offers them the opportunity to creatively engage and interpret the challenging concepts and research areas which the MRC-LMB spearheads."

"It is a 'real-world' insight into how artists work as they must respond to brief, research a topic thoroughly and apply their own artistic practice to create an outcome which engages strongly."

Rosie O'Donovan, assistant education officer at Kettle's Yard, also on the judging panel, shared these views: "The quality of work that the students produced was fantastic and I was really impressed by how thoughtfully and creatively they had engaged with the given subjects."

I very much appreciate the LMB's commitment to the project and the organiser's obvious joy in working with young people to bring art and science together."

The exhibition is open to the public until the end of August in the Max Perutz Foyer of the Laboratory of Molecular Biology at the Addenbrooke's site and is also available to view online at <http://tinyurl.com/bwqg8p9>.

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