

Foxcroft School Student Helen Ventikos Awarded Prestigious National Gold Medal in Scholastic Art & Writing Award Contest

Ventikos is one of fewer than 900 students nationwide to receive this honor.

MIDDLEBURG, VA, USA, July 14, 2022 /EINPresswire.com/ -- Purcellville resident and [Foxcroft Boarding School](#) student Helen Ventikos '23 was recently awarded a National Gold Medal in the Photography category of the Scholastic Art & Writing Award contest for her photograph titled "Kafes." Along with her family and Fine Arts Department Chair Julie Fisher, Helen traveled to New York City in June for the award ceremony at Carnegie Hall.



Helen's National Gold Medal is quite an accomplishment. Fewer than 900 of the more than 260,000 works of art and writing submitted to the Scholastic Art & Writing Awards this year, in 28 categories ranging from memoirs and critical essays to sculpture and photography, were awarded this prestigious honor. Helen is eligible for scholarships of up to \$10,000, and her artwork may also be featured in exhibitions in New York City, Washington, DC, and throughout the country, as well as highlighted in Best Teen Art and Best Teen Writing. A list of all National Medalists is also included in the Yearbook.

“

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Helen Ventikos

Making a cup of coffee is a simple part of a morning routine, not typically something that would inspire an award-winning photograph steeped in culture and heritage. Yet for Helen, this came to be with her captivating

piece, “Καφές/Coffee” or “Kafes” (Greek for coffee). “Being Greek is a part of me,” explains Helen.

“It is really meaningful to share that part of me throughout my work.”

Because Greek coffee must be watched to prevent it from overflowing, Helen has had the advantage of observing this process many times from various perspectives. She had the idea to capture this from a bird's eye view, standing on a kitchen step stool with her camera in hand. Fascinated by its symmetry, abstract vantage point, and varying textures, Helen discovered an interesting approach that would lead to a technique used on all of her photos, unexpectedly deciding to showcase them all in black and white.

With an interest in biology and engineering and as Club Head of [Robotics and Cyberpatriots](#) at Foxcroft, Helen plans to study STEM in college. Photography, however, remains an outlet for her creative side — it has become one of her passions. “After taking multiple photography classes at Foxcroft, I learned that I love using my camera as a tool for expression.”

Foxcroft had a strong showing in this year's Scholastic competition, with 16 works from ten students earning regional recognition. Four submissions, including Helen's “Kafes,” received Gold Keys, the highest regional distinction, and advanced to the national level.

All of the art and writing submissions are blindly judged — first locally through the more than 100 affiliates of the Alliance and then nationally by panels of judges comprised of renowned artists, authors, educators, and industry experts — based on the same three criteria that have been in place since the program's founding in 1928: originality, technical skill, and emergence of personal vision or voice. As a Gold Medalist, Helen shares the same title as other National Gold Award alumni including artists Andy Warhol and Cy Twombly, actors Robert Redford and John Lithgow, director Ken Burns, authors Stephen King and Joyce Carol Oates, and poets Sylvia Plath and Amanda Gorman.

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