

Capturing creativity

by Ariella Cohen and Megan Lacritz

From December 7 through 11, the Fine Arts Department collaborated to produce a multimedia installation called “Mindburst.” Presented in the atrium, this display features artwork, poems, a video with musical productions on repeat and a loop of the Film Club’s creations. The exhibit was held in lieu of Winter Arts Night, an annual event featuring various artistic productions. Art Teacher Monica Ribald proposed the idea as a collaborative effort. Creative Writing Instructor Lisa Huffaker, Music Ensemble Instructor Kim Corbet and Film Club Supervisor Ari Dembo united to present their classes’ works. Students walking to class are bombarded with sound and color as they climb the staircase or head toward the Student Lounge.

The teachers hope that the display, interactive by design, will attract students to add to it. Onlookers are encouraged to make chalk drawings on long stretches of black paper, complete unfinished tales on typewriters, arrange magnetic words into poetic verses and write their thoughts on strings of colored paper hanging from the stairwell.

“You can walk around and get engrossed,” Corbet said. “You can get pulled into the various art there, and you can be part of it.”



From left: Amit Gurman [10], Lisa Huffaker and Kim Corbet view cut-out poems made by the creative writing class.

“Art means that human beings can respond to what life gives us and make meaning of it so that we’re not just victims of what happened to us; we get to create meaning and interpret it, own it and have power over it.”
-Lisa Huffaker

“I find that the arts program at Yavneh doesn’t get enough credit, that they’re just there in the background. This is us showing up, saying, ‘Hey, we exist. Look how talented we are. Look what we can do.’”
-Denise Folz [12]



The music corner features Huffaker’s keyboard and videos produced by the music ensemble.



Angelica Groysman [10] and Evie Dunskey [10] draw on an open chalk board.

“I hope that people will actually write on [the various boards] and get involved. Hopefully people will want to showcase that they have an artistic side.”
-Lydia Elieff [12]



A typewriter is set up next to a portrait by Carolyn Smith [12], for students to continue writing a story based on the painting.



As people enter from the parking lot, this hand-drawn sign welcomes participants to the exhibition.

“I like drawing because it lets me express myself. The beauty of it is that it can be interpreted differently by different people.”
-Jordan Lax [10]

In life, we encounter obstacles and adventures. Some accept them and move on, while others may dwell upon them.

Artists take these experiences as inspiration for their artwork.

“[Art] means that whatever you are using as your material, whether it’s pieces you find or making art out of our experiences, you are taking those pieces and making them into more than they used to be,” Huffaker said.

The “Mindburst” installation demonstrated Huffaker’s understanding of art. Random words line the walls, and students are encouraged to arrange them poetically. Phrases have been cut from various magazines and placed side by side in lyrical unison. Yarn, string and beads have been placed decoratively, hanging from exhibits. Though they lack a pattern, they capture the essence of art. These artists have taken disparate pieces of information, material and words, and turned those elements into something beautiful. However, their end product often does not reflect what they had originally envisioned. But that’s what makes it art.

Art is unpredictable. It is a process, not a product. And through this process, something changes — not just the artist’s vision, but the artists themselves.

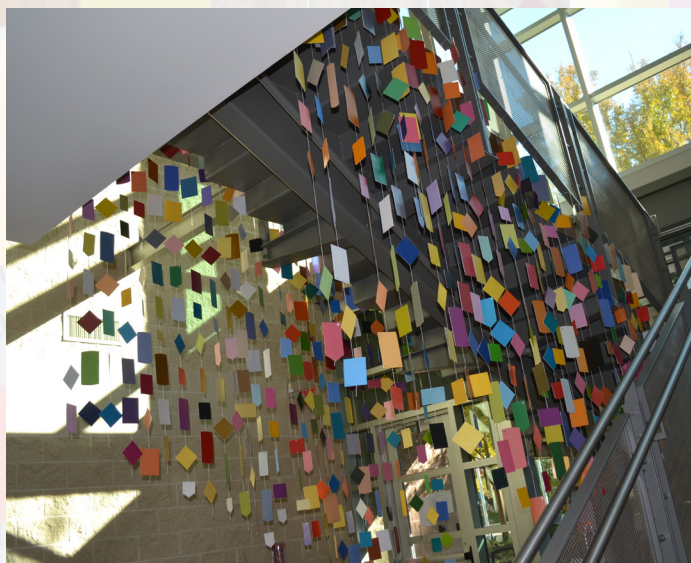
“The act of expression, the act of creation, gives us a way of saying who we are and [lets us] vent and get all that stuff out,” Corbet said. “It’s great to have some way of reacting to the world that releases us from anxiety.”

That is the ultimate goal of “Mindburst” — for students to find a part of themselves they didn’t know existed: their inner artist.

“I know everybody knows the arts are going on at Yavneh in these separate rooms, but we want to immerse everyone and empower people to think that this is not something only a few talented people can do,” Huffaker said.

Providing an interactive setting, the exhibit’s central location drives home this message. Its flashy decor draws onlookers into a new world.

“Although I am not involved in the fine arts at Yavneh, seeing this installation showed me all they have to offer,” Amanda Steinborn [11] said. “I wanted to add and contribute to the different displays be a part of this as well.”



Multi-colored paper on string hangs from the stairwell. Denise Folz [12] hopes students will look at the poetry as they walk upstairs.

photos by Alan Presburger