



The Monmouth County Library Commission takes great pleasure in announcing the Library will acquire *Identity*, an art collage created by teen artists from the Monmouth County Arts Council, to add to the Library's permanent art collection.

"The Library as a community anchor, a gathering place to sharpen our educational experience and a platform for creativity, is acquiring *Identity*, an artwork created by Monmouth County teen artists that speaks of joy, of youth, of energy and of imagination," said Renee B. Swartz, Monmouth County Library Commission Chair. "Come enjoy this home-grown Picasso now on permanent display at Eastern Branch and feel enriched by its inspiration!"

"The Library has been a staunch supporter of the Monmouth Arts Council and its Teen Arts Festival, and we are pleased to give *Identity* a permanent home," said Freeholder Lillian G. Burry, liaison to the Monmouth County Library. "The core theme of *Identity* is 'Art is not what you see, but what you make others see.' And it's encouraging to see the creativity and imagination and the talent of our teen artists on display."

Identity has been on display to the enjoyment and delight of patrons at the Eastern Branch Library in Shrewsbury for most of the past year, and the Eastern Branch will now have the artwork on permanent display.

Watch our video and read on for more:

{youtube}C7TvBMlo0_8{/youtube}

The collage of 12 canvases individually painted and lettered was created at the 2012 Teen Arts Festival, sponsored by the Arts Council in collaboration with Brookdale Community College.

The annual festival is an exceptional experience for emerging teen artists of all disciplines to come together in a creative atmosphere of workshops, evaluations and fun. In 2012, close to 1,900 teens registered to participate in the festival, according to Sandy Taylor, Arts Education Director for the Monmouth County Arts Council.

Each year, a theme is presented to the teen artists to explore in an art installation project that is created only during the two-day festival. Students from around the county mix and mingle, work along side each other, and share ideas in conversation and in painted images.

"Our artistic high school students come from almost 30 schools from around the county, from Allentown to Keyport and in between, and work together on each year's themed installation piece," Taylor said. "It has been a very fulfilling process, one that the students, teachers and the community have enjoyed immensely."

The theme for 2012 was *Identity*, a theme conducive to many interpretations which gave teen artists a direction for inquiry, exploration, inspiration and discussion, according to Taylor.

With the guidance of an artist facilitator, the teens painted canvases in six sessions during the two festival days. Their collaboration created a mixture of butterflies, inspiring words, and portraits that together expressed their individual and group concept of "identity". One of the guiding phrases was "Art is not what you see, but what you make others see."

Since 2009, the Monmouth County Library has displayed the teens' themed installation projects from the annual festivals throughout its branch libraries, enabling the public to view the art. The response has been overwhelmingly positive, according to Janet Kranis, branch librarian for the Eastern Branch library. "Our teen patrons in particular have been very interested in the pieces we display," she said.

Of the previous teen festival projects, only the *Identity* piece remained in the possession of the Monmouth County Arts Council, according to Taylor.

Come see this creative work of art! The piece will continue to be displayed in the main reading area of the Eastern Branch at 1001 Route 35, Shrewsbury 07702.