

'SPRING' competition 2021

The Stanley Spencer Gallery in collaboration with Claires Court Schools

The SSG was delighted to collaborate with the Art department at Claires Court Schools in a competition which celebrated Stanley Spencer's love of nature, the creative talents of Claires Court artists, together with the feeling of optimism which heralded the arrival of Spring, following the difficult period of lockdown.

The pupils were asked to study Stanley Spencer's paintings and to think about how his love of nature in his 'heavenly village of Cookham', inspired his work. They were then invited to reflect their own observations of nature and of the arrival of Spring in their local areas and then to produce a painting or a drawing. Flowers, gardens, landscapes, the river, their family house and the surrounding fields were ideas that were suggested as starting points.

We were delighted to receive an array of exciting artwork from the Claires Court boys and girls, from Reception up to Year 9. Some pupils demonstrated a real ability for close observation work and detail; others brought a great sense of design. Some had taken their own photographs and produced beautiful drawings and paintings from these, others had used their imagination to create colourful and original pieces. Some lively portrayals of flowers and gardens and of local areas featured in bright and colourful representations, from the youngest to the oldest pupils, across the board.

The winners were chosen notably on the basis of evidence of the following abilities; their creative and adventurous drawing or painting skills, their accurate and sensitive powers of observation, their handling of their chosen medium and their awareness of composition and understanding of tone, texture and pattern.

The winning acrylic painting of Maidenhead Bridge by Cagla Su Yarkutay demonstrated exceptional maturity and ability. The deft brush strokes in her rippling river and the splashes of water, together with the detail in the foliage, were all boldly and skilfully executed. In a contrasting style, we loved runner-up, Nephele Handy's sensitive watercolour painting of a garden shed. Her attention to detail had a magical and atmospheric quality.

The winning entries feature in this online exhibition, but we would like to congratulate ALL the entrants on their fabulous work.

Jan Price and Shez Courtenay-Smith, Stanley Spencer Gallery.