

The Paradise Center Presents

Catherine Shear

Thompson Falls Jr. High School Spotlight on the Arts – February 2024



Interviewed by Karen Thorson

“Spotlight on the Arts” by The Paradise Center honors and encourages students in the arts by highlighting their talent and acknowledging the support they receive through their schools and teachers.

At 13 years-of-age and in the 7th grade at Thompson Falls Jr. High School, Catherine Shear has artistic talent well beyond her years. Largely self-taught, Shear draws, using graphite, color pencils, and colored markers. And she paints, using both watercolor and acrylic paint. Her artistic journey began in 2018 and continues today with new artworks in varying media.

Like many artists, Shear has a sketchbook in which she captures things that interest her. Her subject matter mostly includes people and animals. With two cats at home as willing models, Shear indicates she has an interest in feline figures.

Inspiration comes from both parents. Her father is an oil painter, and her mother writes and illustrates children’s books. Although she has sisters, she seems to be the one following in her parent’s artistic footsteps.

When asked about a single artwork that she feels represents her best efforts, she notes a piece drawn from folklore that represents an encounter between a wolf and a deer. The work is not intended to tell a single story but is instead intended to be open to interpretation by viewers. The work itself is a combination of representational depictions accompanied by elements of carefully developed design. The overall composition can be viewed from both the landscape and portrait page orientation, although Shear prefers the portrait view.

Although most artists have preferred mediums, Shear advises others interested in art to both focus on a medium that resonates with the individual but not to be limited by that medium. Trying new approaches, she notes, can reveal undiscovered artistic treasures.

Most of Shear's artwork is personal, done on-her-own and in her free time, but she is also contributing to school projects as opportunities arise. Her intent is to engage in art throughout her entire life. As an observer, I am anxious to see how she progresses and pleased that she has discovered her talent at such a young age.