

LOCAL NEWS

'PLAYscape' to make debut at The Art on Elm Thursday



The Fitchburg Art Museum, in collaboration with the Fitchburg Public Schools, will celebrate the unveiling of a new work of art just outside of The Art Place on Elm, named "PLAYscape," Thursday Sept. 1, at 5:30pm. (COURTESY CHRISTIAN LOPEZ)

By **JACOB VITALI** | jvitali@lowellsun.com | Sentinel & Enterprise

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FITCHBURG — A new piece of contemporary art is ready to be unveiled Thursday at 5:30 p.m. just outside of The Art Place on Elm.

“PLAYscape” is a collaboration between New England sculptor Roberley Bell, who designed the piece with input from teacher Britt Waseleski and her students during the Fitchburg Art Museum’s after school program at The Art on Elm, the museum’s primary art instruction studio. The after school program is a collaboration between FAM and Fitchburg Public Schools.

Launched in fall 2021, the FAM and FPS after school program started with a total of 20 children in the program. FAM and FPS were able to create an immersive program where attendees have access to supplies, studio space, and professionals in the arts community.

In a press release FAM said it believes this environment has a huge impact on how children learn, and the program reflects FAM’s mission as a catalyst for learning, creativity, and community building. The Art Place on Elm, its after school program, and “PLAYscape” are made possible through the generous support of Gale Simonds Hurd, the Clementi Family Charitable Trust, and the Cathedral Fund.

Working with the students in the after school program proved to be an impactful experience for Bell.



Berley Bell with
the new art piece.” The new art piece
was unveiled Sept. 1, 2022, at
The Art on Elm. (COURTESY
AN LOPEZ)

“As an artist working in the public realm, I try to engage the stakeholders and this includes children. They are in fact the long term stakeholder of a project in their neighborhood. I have been fortunate to have had the opportunity to engage young people on a number of projects. I find when you invite them in to participate, they are curious and keen,” Bell said in a press release. “The students in the FAM after school program were a delight. They were extremely engaged, excited, and enthusiastic — eager to achieve the goals of the project. Each child worked on drawings and clay models, taking the task seriously. At the end of the session each child

spoke about their ideas for creating a shared, playful space accommodating seating for everyone.”

Bell also extended his thanks to Waseleski, who had already been working with the students, believing her work allowed them to be “open to engaging, learning and sharing in a productive manner.”

FAM’s Director of Education Susan Diachisin also saw a profound benefit of having the students involved.

“By participating in the FAM/FPS after school program, the students reap the benefits of the museum’s resources such as access to contemporary artists, inspiring exhibitions, and creative learning spaces. Through their weekly visits to the museum the students become more comfortable and realize that FAM is their museum. Our after school program is just one of many ongoing collaborative programs between FAM and the Fitchburg Public Schools that provide educational enrichment for students and faculty, and stimulate their creativity,” Diachisin said.

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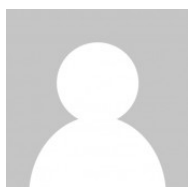
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Tags: **Fitchburg Art Museum,**
Fitchburg Public Schools



Jacob Vitali | City Editor

Jacob Vitali is the city editor of the Sentinel & Enterprise. A graduate of Massachusetts College of Liberal Arts, Vitali started his career with the Sentinel & Enterprise and its sister publications The Sun of Lowell and the Nashoba Valley Voice as a reporter in April 2021.

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