

<http://artintheillawarra.wordpress.com/>

## ART IN THE ILLAWARRA

Snapshots of Galleries, Curators, Artists, and Exhibitions

# ASPIRING ARTISTS LEARN FROM EXPERTS



*Students with their finished creations. PHOTO: Mai Nguyen-Long*

“Five minutes to go!” announces artist **Mai Nguyen-Long**. With this, it’s like someone has hit the fast forward button; the students cut and stick pieces of tape, fabric, straw, yarn and coloured papers with an increased sense of urgency. The group of 14, year nine and 10 students are placing the finishing touches on their sculpture.

The students are at **Wollongong Art Gallery** as part of the gallery’s **Enrichment Program**. The program was introduced almost three years ago, by Education Officer, Julie Danilov. “It’s to get students of the Illawarra engaged in the current exhibitions through full day workshops,” she said.

Both primary and high school students have turns coming in for the program. Only four students are nominated from each school and there are five different schools

that attend on the one day. "It's for students that are either excelling at visual arts or students that need some encouragement," she said.

At the workshop students do tasks related to the type of art making that's being shown in the current exhibition or tasks that involve the concepts being shown. The workshops are often run by the artist whose work is being featured at the gallery.

Last Tuesday, Wednesday and Friday students had the opportunity to learn from the artist, Mai Nguyen-Long, whose exhibition, *Beyogmos* is in Gallery 1. In the first exercise, an image of a heart was cut into four pieces and students had to upscale and copy it. The heart was then put back together and displayed.

They then pulled apart a calico toy bear each and transformed it into a mongrel creature, by reshaping the body parts and putting it back together and then decorating it with craft materials. "That exercise was about structure and using recycled materials, but it was also about the idea of hidden identities. I might look at one of those creatures and say, 'yep, that's definitely a dog', I'm not absolutely correct because there is a bear hidden in there," said Ms Nguyen-Long.

Ms Danilov hopes to add some technological elements to the program in the future. "Maybe set up some computers and printing stations where students can print out their work," she said. And why is it called the Enrichment Program? "It's to enrich their love or their interest in the visual arts," she said.

Janai Velez

1 April 2014

Posted in [Art Education](#) and tagged [Art gallery](#), [Wollongong](#), [Workshop](#) on [April 1, 2014](#). [Leave a comment](#)