

Student's Portrait To Hang in Capitol

by Jim Cronin

A Boston Arts Academy (BAA) student's self-portrait has been selected to hang in the nation's capital for one year.

BAA senior Jaleela Browder's pastel drawing was the winning entry in the federally funded Artistic Discovery competition, which Congress created in 1982 to feature the artistic work of high school students from the country's 435 congressional districts. Congressman Michael Capuano chose Browder's work to represent the Massachusetts Eighth Congressional District in the program's annual exhibit in the Cannon Tunnel that connects congressional offices to the U.S. Capitol in Washington, D.C.

"Jaleela's artwork is impressive, and I found her self-portrait to be very moving," Capuano said in a prepared statement. "Her artistic talent will be on display for all who travel through the Capitol complex, and I know that her obvious creativity will make an impression."

Browder, 17, will attend UMass Dartmouth and major in biology in the fall. Although she thinks art can be therapeutic, she hopes to become a nurse to provide care directly to those in need, she said.

"I see art as more of expression and communication, and that's not something that can be taught in a classroom," said

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Balliro said.

Balliro noted that Browder created the drawing two years ago and that it was a reflection of herself at the time. Since then, Browder has developed as an artist



PHOTO: MONIKA ALDARONDO

Browder, who enrolled in the BAA to improve her technical skills. "Art will always be something that I have. When you are young and find what your talent is, you should keep it a part of you, even if you don't go to school for it."

Beth Balliro, who is on the school's visual arts faculty, has been instructing Browder since she was a freshman.

"She is a very quiet, dedicated artist, and it's always exciting when an introvert is honored for their careful reflection,"

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and as a person.

"The drawing is really a record of a moment in her own experience," Balliro said. "She's been able to chart her personal growth through studies of her own anatomy."

Browder will bring her sister, also a graduate of the BAA, to the capital for the unveiling ceremony on Thursday, June 28.