

# A canvas of community: 35th annual Art Classic

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*Guests walk through an assortment of art works created by members of the Santa Clarita Artists Association during the 35th annual Art Classic on Sept. 27, 2025 at The Centre. Katherine Quezada/The Signal*



For some, art is a way to bring one's imagination to life, and for others it's how they channel their emotions and lay it out on a blank canvas.

Each person picks up a paintbrush for their own reasons, whether it's to practice a craft they've been honing since childhood, or to explore something for a fresh new challenge. Art brings people together and creates a space where each perspective is appreciated.

That artistic spirit came together on Saturday, as the Santa Clarita Artists Association welcomed guests to the Centre for its 35<sup>th</sup> annual Art Classic, a tradition meant to honor local artists and also award the up-and-coming young talent.

A hundred paintings made of acrylic, mixed media, oil, watercolor, and other mediums were on display inside the venue in a temporary art gallery for guests to view.

"This is our 35<sup>th</sup> year. We're very proud of it," said Naomi Young, co-chair of this year's event.

The Art Classic also serves as a fundraiser to support local high school students pursuing art in college and is meant to celebrate talent throughout the entire weekend. Guests were able to visit the Centre on both Saturday and Sunday to view the featured artworks.

"I had no connection with art," Anahid Baghdasarian said as she looked at her first original work titled "Within the Frame," up on display.



Artist Anahid Baghdasarian with her original acrylic art piece "Within the Frame" at the 35th annual Art Classic hosted by the Santa Clarita Artists Association on Sept. 27, 2025 at The Centre. Katherine Quezada/The Signal

After retiring from being a systems engineer, Baghdasarian wanted to pursue a new challenge that would allow her to tap into her creativity.

"I had no idea of painting and art or anything, but somehow I got into painting, and I loved it," she said. "I had a lot of fears, a lot of mental blockage like (saying to myself) 'I cannot draw. I cannot paint. I don't know colors.'" But, with time she began to take classes and practice constantly.

Baghdasarian wasn't looking to win first or second place.

"Within the Frame" hung up next to the other multicolored and textured pieces was enough of a win for her, she said, because, "Art is a beauty, makes your life beautiful. If not your whole life, you know, at least those hours that you're engaged with it."

Little did she know, about an hour or so later, she would win a merit badge for the acrylic category.

On the opposite side of the gallery, the photography section had photos of landscapes, flowers and other nature themed images.

One photograph of a raccoon peeking through a wooden frame caught the attention of guests in the midst of all the others.

Scott Parker was heading home after visiting his mother when he saw the critter wandering and immediately grabbed his camera to capture it.

"It was perfect timing," he said. Parker loves the art of photography because of its spontaneity and it has opened new doors for him in the military, where he used his skills to create an updated bunker system package that's now used military-wide, he said.

Throughout his 10 years as a SCAA member, his photographs have placed in the merit or second place categories, but on Saturday his raccoon photograph titled “Masked Bandit” took first.



Photographer Scott Parker with an image he captured of a raccoon and submitted for the 35 annual Art Classic hosted by the Santa Clarita Artists Association on Sept. 27, 2025 at The Centre. Katherine Quezada/The Signal

From the first time he picked up a camera in high school to every moment that's led him to the Art Classic, finally earning first was a testament to his love and passion for the art form.

For Parker, art and photography are a form of communication, good therapy, and “an expression of the soul.”

West Ranch High School alum Curtis Cho wanted to create an art piece that signified the emotional impact one local horrifying event had on him growing up.

That event was The Saugus High School shooting in 2019.

Cho was a lot younger then, but he remembers being under lockdown for about an hour and, “I was scared about it,” he said.

“I don't think Curtis was able to really process what was going on and it was something that was so close to our hometown,” his art teacher Youjin Shin said. “I had to share with him about what was going on, what happened, and what happened to the students. Eventually he realized, but he was sort of confused about why this had to happen.”



West Ranch High School alum Curtis Cho is awarded 1st place and a scholarship for his art piece titled "Fear I Carry," at the 35th annual Art Classic hosted by the Santa Clarita Artists Association on Sept. 27, 2025 at The Centre. Katherine Quezada/The Signal

Cho's anxiety grew due to constant fear of another school shooting taking place, and Shin encouraged him to express those personal thoughts on his canvas.

In his piece titled "Fear I Carry," Cho is seen looking into his school backpack but rather than having books inside of it, it's a set of hands, with one holding a firearm pointing straight at him.

The piece is about "the burdens he carries to school and takes home with him," Shin said, and the goal of him creating the piece was to "ease his anxiety a little bit and letting it out, instead of bottling it up."

Cho's work won first place for the student category, something he didn't expect.

"I feel proud," he said, adding that he hopes people see how much it's taken a toll on him and others in the community as well.

