

# Visual Culture Art depicts never-ending journey

By Judy Kroeger

DAILY COURIER

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Beverly DeMotte has taught art at Uniontown Area High School for 33 years while still pursuing her own projects.

She is February's artist of the month in the Fayette County Law Library, located in the Fayette County Courthouse.

Assistant Librarian Barbara Pasqua invited DeMotte to exhibit her work in a glass display case just inside the entrance. Viewers have to get close to the 11 postcard-sized pieces that compose "Journey of Peace," the installation's name.

"We thought this was wonderful, to display artworks every month," Pasqua said.

The pieces are Visual Culture Art, a post-modern movement that reflects contemporary concerns, DeMotte said. The format involves taking "snippets of popular culture -- images and words -- it's art that's made from everyday experiences. Welcome to my never-ending journey of peace. Politics, religion, the environment, racism, literature, sports, philosophy are among my concerns. I'm all about a peaceful journey."

DeMotte paints the background of each piece with acrylics, then adds words and images.

"When I'm cutting out the materials, I have all sorts of words," she said. It's like making up the rules of the game as I go along."

The seventh piece in the series is called "Obama's Charge to the Children."

The president is featured, looking at the silhouette of a young man. The text reads, "Right the wrongs you see and work to give others the chances you've had."

"I wanted to integrate the quote with Obama looking at a reflection of himself as a young man," DeMotte said.

Since completing the works on display, DeMotte has continued with further pieces and plans on preparing a circular format compelling viewers to walk around to view the pieces. She does not know how many will constitute her "never-ending journey of peace," and plans to display the works at the Uniontown Art Club's summer show at Touchstone Center for Crafts in Farmington.

This is DeMotte's first foray into Visual Culture Art.

"My inspiration was Angie Capuzzi. Last year, she was a student teacher from California University of Pennsylvania. Before her, I hadn't thought much about it. As I started exploring the idea, Barb asked me to do this exhibit."

DeMotte has always been interested in art.

"A great influence was my mother, Ruth DeMotte. She had five kids and was an artist of sorts.

My mother always had art materials for us. We went to museums, to symphonies, learned to play music. We didn't have a TV from the year I was in sixth grade until my junior year in college," DeMotte said.

Before starting Visual Culture Art, she specialized in acrylic local scenes depicting

"vanishing or changing American landscapes. Landscapes change all the time. We're always in flux. Even if it's broken down, I give the building a sense of dignity. My work tends to be realistic."

She is the only art teacher at Uniontown Area High School and has spent her entire teaching career there.

She said she loves teaching and has students at four levels of art in one class at once.

"It's pretty daunting, but that's what I do," she said. "I teach for the kids."

In addition to teaching, DeMotte serves as co-director of the Scholastic Art and Writing Awards, which showcases extraordinary work from students in grades seven through 12. Her region includes Fayette, Washington and Greene counties. About 400 students submitted work for the most recent competition, which is both regional and national. The exhibits are juried, and 250 students moved to the next level.

Two years ago, one of DeMotte's students, Travis Perry, won an American Vision award, making him one of the finest young artists in the nation. An online gallery of this year's work is available at [www.scholastic.com](http://www.scholastic.com).

DeMotte's philosophy of art stresses practice.

"The importance of one's work lies in the ability to be absorbed in it and not keep track of time."



Uniontown

High School art teacher Beverly DeMotte is shown next to a display of her artwork entitled "Journey of Peace," which is on display at the Fayette County Courthouse in the Law Library for the Month of February.

Evan Sanders/Daily Courier