

THE BOYANG TWINS: 10-YEAR-OLD ARTISTIC PRODIGIES

Max and Louis Boyang aren't your typical 10-year-old twin boys. Sure, they enjoy basketball, video games and Tae Kwon Do, but one of their favorite pastimes is art; their work, and their hearts, have captured the attention of many in the community.

Heidi Ma, the boys' mother, and her husband, Hongbing Wang, had noticed Max and Louis's talent at a young age. It wasn't until March 2015 when the parents decided to find art classes for the boys. By circumstance, they found Vivian Dwyer, one of the teaching artists at Arty Party, an art studio in Okemos.

"I heard about these classes from a friend," said Heidi Ma. "He told me that his daughter was in one of the classes at Arty Party and so I went to talk to them."

Arty Party, a studio, showroom and party room, is run by Vivian Dwyer and Leslie Raven, two local artists who wanted a space to work, a space to show their work and a space to help others with their art.

Dwyer said that having Max and Louis working with her was "meant to be," after Ma had stopped in to ask about classes.

"Leslie was teaching a class that day and I am usually not here if Leslie is teaching a class," said Dwyer. "I just happened to be in the studio when Heidi stopped in. I told her I would take the boys as students. It was meant to be."

After Max and Louis's first class with Dwyer, she knew that they were talented.

"I got chills," said Dwyer. "I've taught other fifth graders and none of them know how to do what those boys were doing. It was just natural."

The Boyang brothers and their mom noted that Dwyer's unconventional methods of teaching were exactly what they wanted in an art teacher.

"As a child, I hated listening to lectures," said Dwyer. "It's boring. If you want to make art, you just have to start, and that's what I do with my students. I just let them go and I correct technical things as they work. That's the best way to learn."

While undeniably talented, each of the twins are vastly different in terms of both subject matter and style. Both boys work mainly in the paint medium, using both acrylics and watercolors, however, both also like to draw. Louis creates bright, beautiful images of flowers, while Max paints insects, landscapes and abstracts.

Ma started posting pictures on Facebook and soon after, she was getting inquiries from all over about purchasing the boy's work. Dwyer had also posted pictures on Facebook of the boy's work, with the same response.


"I was getting comments from people from all over," said Dwyer. "'If you're selling, I'm buying,' they would say."

After talking about it with Max and Louis, Dwyer decided to put together a show and sale, which will feature all of Max and Louis's finished artwork from the past year. Max and Louis had one stipulation: all of the proceeds go to Joey's Wings Childhood Cancer Foundation.

"We wanted to help," said Louis.

"One of my friends, her son was diagnosed with Leukemia a while back," explained Ma. "We were researching the Joey's Wings foundation a while back and the boys were really touched by the stories and by our family friend so they decided they wanted to donate the money to the foundation."

The show and sale will take place on Sunday, May 15 from noon to 6 p.m. at Arty Party Studio, 6441 Okemos Road, and the sale will continue through Thursday, May 19.

"We never thought that art would be a part of our family," said Ma, who works as an engineer. "I never knew art could be something that people pursue, I'm glad the boys can use their talent." 



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