



Spotlight: Portsmouth Middle School: Vision, Verse & Verve

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Artist in Residence: In Ears 'n' Eyes

Portsmouth Middle School students grabbed a bunch of brushes and put them to canvas while In Ears 'n' Eyes (IENE) played in the background. The paintings that resulted kicked off the students' study of the Harlem Renaissance.

IENE, developed by Roger Goldenberg and Matt Langley, plays with other local artists to compose music based on what certain colors might "sound like," like in a painting, and how brush strokes vary with the music's rhythm. IENE set up their five-piece jazz band and played impromptu music based on opposing words, chosen by the students. As IENE played live, the students responded to the music by creating collaborative abstract paintings, which popped with movement and color.

Eighty-five students participated in this project and attended the Romare Bearden "A Black Odyssey" exhibit at the Currier Museum of Art in Manchester, NH. Vision, Verse & Verve: Timeless Themes of the Harlem Renaissance opened on Saturday, April 12, at the Seacoast African American Cultural Center, located at 10 Middle St., and will remain on display until the end of June.

Coordinated by AIR school coordinator and art educator Anna Nuttall.

This project was made possible by a \$4,500 Artists in Residence Grant from the [New Hampshire State Council on the Arts](#).

Quotes from Students:

"I've sketched before while listening to music, but it wasn't anything like this."
—AIR Participant

"You could see the relation between the music and the art. Now I understand the whole process of making a painting, too." —AIR Participant

"It's a conversation between two forms of art. They're similar languages." —AIR Volunteer Artist



Students paint what they think the music sounds like, while IENE plays live in the classroom



Students' completed paintings on display



In Ears 'n' Eyes (IENE) plays music in the background, while students paint what they think the music sounds like



Student paintings inspired by the different rhythms in the jazz music