



## Prairiewood art teacher's portraits to be exhibited at Woodstock Opera House

Chuck Jones's portraits of cultural icons have been featured in a New York City exhibition, but the Prairiewood Elementary School art teacher is eager to display his works at the Woodstock Opera House in July.

"I'm more excited about this show than I was for New York because I didn't know anybody there.

To show the work to the people who have always been so good to me in this community, it means a lot more," Jones said.

The bright, unique portraits feature a wide array of writers, musicians, actors and personalities who've fascinated Jones ranging from Edgar Allan Poe and Beethoven to Frank Zappa and Johnny Depp.

The works will be on display July 7 through Aug. 2 with an opening reception to be held from 5-7 p.m. on July 16 where Jones is hoping to see many of his friends, colleagues along with former and current students.

Jones said his subjects are people who've inspired him in some way, often through their own art forms. Once interested, he loves to dig into their biographies and other research which helps him approach the paintings.

"Mostly they're people who kind of live outside the norm. People who make their own rules and do it without compromise, especially in the case of someone like (Jim) Morrison. He was gonna do what he was gonna do whether he got rich off it or whether people liked it or not," Jones said.

Artists respect other artists across all mediums, Jones said, especially those who used art for political change. Jones has a long list of other subjects he plans to paint and is currently working on a portrait of recording artist Prince.

"Anyone who has an original idea and can put it out there and make it work, I have a great deal of respect for," he said.

Jones said he's made it a point to show his artwork to his elementary students and overheard one of his favorite compliments when a student relayed her pride to a parent.

"She said 'Mom, he's not just an art teacher, he's a real artist,'" Jones said.

"I think if you're going to teach the subject, even at the elementary level, you have to work the subject, too. You have to make it a part of your life. This was part of my life before I started teaching. Teaching is the icing on the cake," he said.