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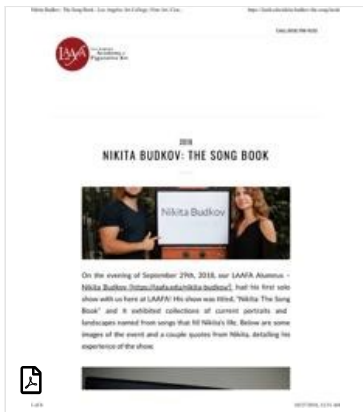
Cotter graduate making an artistic splash in Los Angeles

Larry Price For the Winona Daily News 5 hrs ago



Nikita Budkov, an international student from Russia who graduated from Cotter High School in 2014, has made a name for himself in the Los Angeles art scene.

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Nikita Budkov, a 2014 graduate of Cotter High School, is getting rave reviews as an artist in the highly competitive Los Angeles art scene.

An exchange student from Russia, Budkov lived in the Winona area for two years. He played football for the Ramblers and also was elected Homecoming king.

After graduating from Cotter, his passion for the visual arts led him to take the bold step of relocating in Los Angeles despite having no connections there. He studied at the famous Los Angeles Academy of Figurative Art (LAAFA) for three years. His talent was recognized almost immediately; Peter Adams, the president of the prestigious California Art Club said, “They (the LAAFA) thought he was one of the best students they ever had. ... It’s amazing he already had that much talent at the young age of 20.”

Since completing the LAAFA program, his notoriety as an L.A. artist has steadily grown because of the display of his work in high profile venues such as the American Legacy Fine Arts gallery in Pasadena, Calif., the Annual Gold Medal Exhibition at the National History Museum of LA County, The Hive in Downtown LA, and Hillside Fine Art in Claremont, Calif.

Most recently, Budkov presented a solo showing of his art pieces entitled “The Songbook” at the LAAFA, which was a signature art event for the academy and drew a large crowd from all over

Los Angeles.

In addition to painting, Budkov is an art instructor and has been selected to the California Art Club.

Upon seeing his work, the viewer is immediately struck by his attention to detail and his wonderful use of color. Budkov describes his art as based on “contemporary realism” and he is quick to cite the influence which living in rural Minnesota and its landscapes have had on his art. He is truly a rising star which Winona can be proud of.

Nikita Budkov lived with the author’s family his senior year at Cotter.