

[ARTS & THEATER](#)

Combining art with food, 4th Annual Chrysler Bake Off sees some awfully sweet and creative cooking

By [Colin Warren-Hicks](#)
The Virginian-Pilot

•

Dec 18, 2022 at 5:41 pm

ExpandAutoplay

Image1 of 13

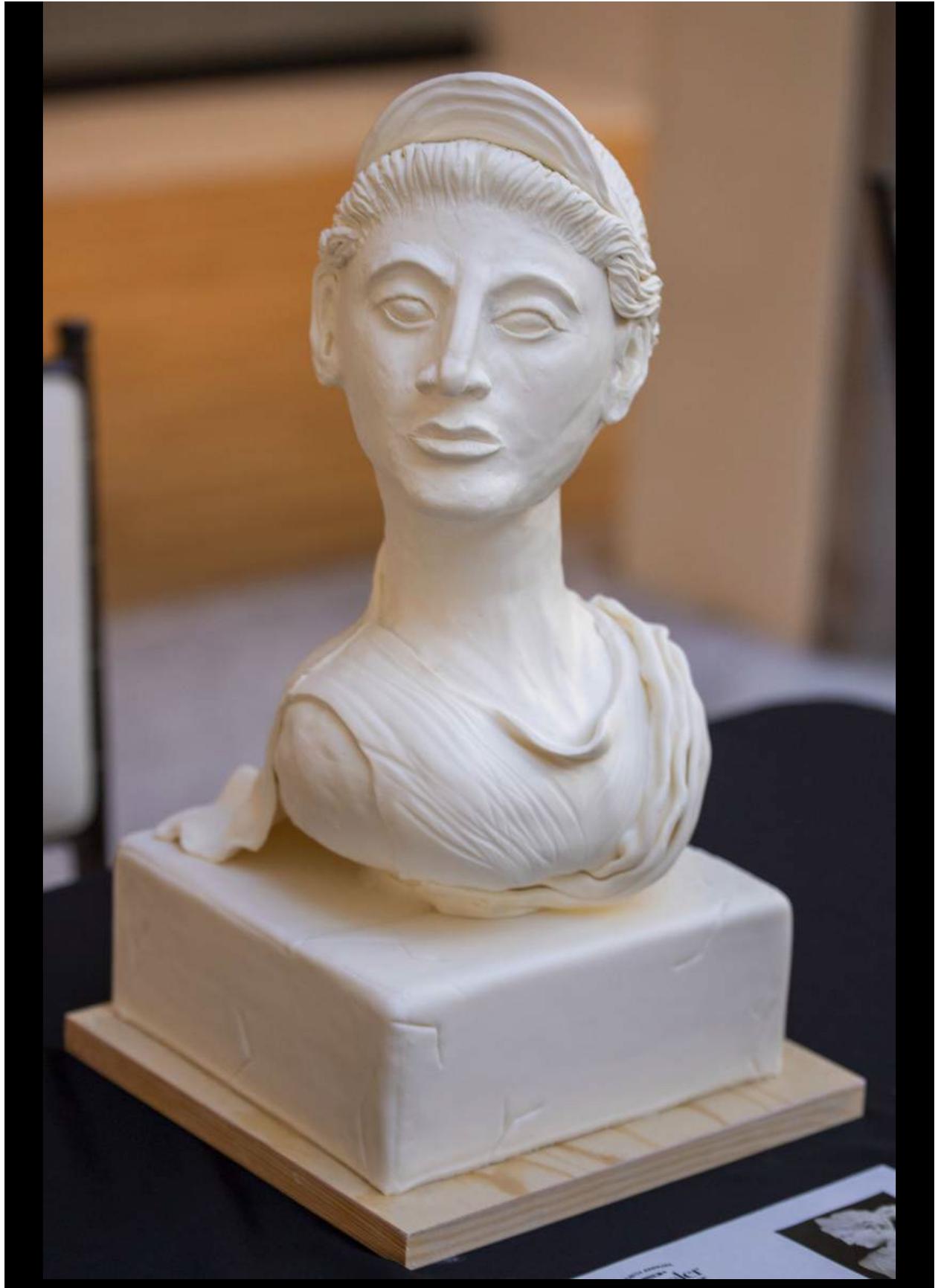




















An art piece created by Charlotte Stillman, and inspired by the art “Woman in Pergola with Wisteria” is displayed during the Chrysler museum bake off event on Sunday, Dec. 18, 2022, in Norfolk, Va. (Mike Caudill / The Virginian-Pilot)

Mhmmm ... yummy ... scrumptious ... Art.

When it comes to art, everyone’s got their own tastes, and it turns out that sometimes, works of art do indeed truly and literally have their own unique, sweet flavors.



This weekend’s contestants in the Fourth Annual Chrysler Bake Off turned flour, sugar, butter and their own specialized ingredients into baked goods inspired by works of art found within the Chrysler Museum of Art’s collection.

The bakers sliced, stacked and sculpted ingredients like Rice Krispies treats, ganache, layers of cake and modeling chocolate to construct, forge and fashion cakes into representations of the museum's works, and on Sunday, a team of four judges assessed and ranked the results.

It took about 20 minutes for the judges — Del. Jackie Glass of Norfolk, Norfolk Councilwoman Courtney Doyle, Chrysler Museum Executive Director Erik Neil and Chris Young, who will be the executive chef of the Chrysler Museum's Zinnia Cafe when it reopens next month — to reach a consensus.

In previous years, the event has been divided into two categories, with contestants entering either an amateur or professional field of competition.

However, this year for the fourth incarnation of the annual event, the competing bakers — amateur and pro cake designers and working pastry chefs alike — all entered the same pool with judges deciding on a single first, second and third place winner in addition to a "People's Choice Award" voted on by attendees.

But experience proved to be less of a factor than some had anticipated as the first place prize was handed to the youngest baker in the room on Sunday.

Charlotte Stillman, 17, a high school student, won first place for her baked representation of the stainless portrait "Woman in Pergola with Wisteria." Stillman said her friend and fellow student Katie Drotar contributed to the win but was unable to stick around for the award ceremony.

"There were so many more professional looking ones. but I'm happy I won," Stillman said.

Stillman used gingerbread to to create the wooden frame in which the stained glass is set in the museum. Amazingly, the gingerbread had the same color as the dark wood.

"I was watching a video for instructions, and the lady said, 'four to nine minutes.' But I thought she said 49 minutes," Stillman said, about her baking on the gingerbread. "But it worked out because it turned it actually ended up making it turn really dark."

Stillman said that she drew the outline of the stain glass window's picture on a dish using icing, and on the glass itself, she used Dum Dum lollipops.

Stillman and Doyle crushed the lollipops into a powdery substance before melting them down and applying them to her kitchen counter canvas, and it was the crushed candy that gave her baked good the illusion of being glass.

“I think the coolest thing would be to lift it up and put a light behind it,” Stillman said. “We haven’t tried that. I’m kind of afraid to pick it up.”

Second place went to Crystal Camacho-Gomez who replicated a bust “Head of Diana” by molding rice Krispy treat onto a PVC pipe and wooden structure shaped like a woman’s head.

Next, she removed the edible mold from the structure and coated it in chocolate.

“I make my own modeling chocolate,” Camacho-Gomez said. “So, I covered it in the chocolate and then sculpted it by hand.”

Jaimie Saratella took third place for her representation of “Mosaic with Camel.”

Saratella used a cinnamon crumb cake with a cinnamon icing as a base on top of which she placed small gelatin squares to design an image of a camel.

“I thought it would a fun experiment to make my own tiles and I practiced for the first time yesterday morning,” So, I didn’t know how it would turn out. but I thought it would be fun either way and it was.”

The People’s Choice Award went Czaja Silvasi for her representation of the painting “Juno Placing the Eyes of Argus in the Peacock’s Tail.”

The judges selected winners based on the visual presentation and creative of the bakers’ works and did not actually taste them.

Colin Warren-Hicks, 919-818-8138, colin.warrenhicks@virginiamedia.com