

How is art different at Mendota?

Nathan Stromberg finds alternative ways to teach in his new work space

BY PATRICK CULLINAN
Staff Writer

This has been a year of many changes, and the relocation to the Mendota Heights campus is especially disruptive for the day-to-day lives of the students and teachers. However, while many classes like Math and Spanish can easily be taught in a new space, the art classes, and their teacher, Nathan Stromberg, have faced many cumbersome changes to adjust to. And along with the challenges of a new space comes the nostalgia of missing the old space, which also affects Stromberg and his students.

Because Stromberg has a new space to work in, he has to work harder to manage his classes.

"It's been really tricky because I've learned how much what I teach is impacted by the environment of the classroom," he explained. "So when all of the sudden that environment is altered, things like how long it took to prepare things, and knowing where everything was, and knowing where people were going to store stuff, [that changed too]. All that is stuff that I didn't really have to think about at the old space because I was used to that room and I had it down. And now...it just involves a lot of thought, and multitasking, which I generally suck at. It's just made everything a lot more work, that's the best way to say it."

Part of the work Stromberg has to do is to remake his class while he's teaching it, because there was no space for the pottery wheels at the new campus, so his course on pottery changed drastically.

"One of the things we had to do was, in the span of three weeks, figure out a new unit, because we realized clay wasn't going to be a possibility," he said. "When you do clay, you have to have a properly

ventilated space. And you need a larger sink, and different plumbing. It's totally dependant on a proper studio setup, and I knew right away that was not going to happen. So I've kinda been writing a course while I was teaching it this fall, which has been the paper arts course—printmaking and collage. And you know, whenever you're doing something for the first time there are things that work, and things that you would do differently if you did it again, so I've learned a little from teaching it. It's been fun but it's been challenging."

Stromberg's room at north campus was incredibly cluttered with art, and so the relocation to a much cleaner, neater art room creates a sharp contrast between the two rooms. According to Stromberg, he intends not to purposefully clutter the new room.

"My opinion in the last room has always been: if there's an extra bit of paint in the sink, smear it on the wall somewhere; if there's a funny-looking picture on a piece of paper that someone threw away, cut it out and glue it to the ceiling," he said. "I want it to be ADD hell in there. I want it to be abundantly creative. And knowing that we're here for a limited time, I don't want to start gluing everything all over the wall, because we are technically leasing the building, and they'll have to repaint and everything. So I'll just let that room be that room, and this room be this room."

Stromberg misses his old room, but he can look forward to returning to it, while his Senior and Junior students are left only with their memories of the old room.

"It's the little things," said Grace Steinhagen, a senior student in AP studio art. "The figuration of the desks, in the old room, I liked better.



Photo by Will Berlin

Upper school art teacher Nathan Stromberg stands in front of a classroom wall that he created. Stromberg also had to create a new curriculum at the Mendota Heights campus due to the loss of the ability to create pottery.

You were able to kind of zone out, and be in your own zone, which I miss. I also really miss the speaker system, because Ella Fredrickson used to play some *really* good tunes. There were some good bops. [Also,

his old room, it had years worth of crazy stuff on the ceiling."

However, despite all the changes, Steinhagen said, the mood of Stromberg's class remains the same.

"The atmosphere, I would say, is

the same," she said. "I liked having [the art room] tucked in the back corner of the school. But when the Freshmen aren't outside yelling, it can be nice and quiet, and kind of in zen mode when you walk in."

Review: old book has new meaning

Brave New World reveals important issues in modern day society

BY ANNIKA JOHNSON
Staff Writer

Genetic modification, government corruption, substance abuse ... sounds familiar, right?

Aldous Huxley's *Brave New World* is a modern classic novel—perpetually relevant—delving into important issues that modern society faces. Generations of readers have identified with this book, but in the age of CRISPR,

Opioid epidemics, and Donald Trump, *Brave New World* may be more relevant than when it was originally written in 1932. CRISPR, in the book's tackling of genetic modification, Opioid epidemics in the substance abuse, and of course, Donald Trump in the question of leadership and discernment.

Huxley prophetically and accurately addresses many important aspects and fallbacks of modern so-

ciety (even though his novel takes place in 2540). It's almost difficult to believe the novel was written over 80 years ago.

The book chronicles the story of a social outcast and his struggle to relate to the people around him. This book importantly depicts negative effects a government instituted "caste system" had on society and individual freedoms.

"Everyone belongs to everyone else" was an important phrase, brought up again and again throughout the novel, in a sense that was the case in this book due to genetic modification and the novel's social climate.

It also portrays the issue of substance abuse by showing the result of a society primarily focused on living for entertainment. The "drugs" in the novel, which were called "soma," were meant to help people

"Not only do these books entertain, but it also has a world view smashing impact that simply can't be missed."

Annika Johnson

avoid negative feelings such as stress and pain, raising the question, "is life without pain really living?"

What really stuck with me was the issue of the society's selfishness and empty search for joy and meaning. Characters in the novel would constantly grasp for deeper meaning in their otherwise superfluous lives. Everyday their only goal was to

pass time without having to think for themselves. People with remote traces of uniqueness were outcasted.

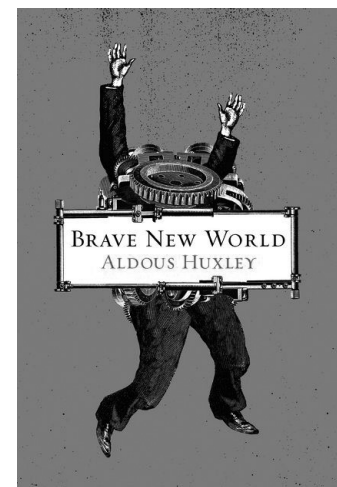
People didn't want to think for themselves, they wanted to live for themselves. They were so focused on stability that they eliminated individuality. That was the most troubling part.

In the words of Huxley, "Universal happiness keeps the wheels steadily turning, truth and beauty can not." Wow, that's convicting. What is the cost of happiness? If it means suppressing all of these things, is it worth achieving?

If you haven't read this novel, I would highly recommend it along with another classic dystopian novel *1984*, by Orwell. Not only do these books entertain, but it also has a world view smashing impact that simply can't be missed.

The beauty of *Brave New World*

lies in its complexity. Its clear, direct, and surprisingly beautiful language and storytelling methods discuss issues encountered by many people in today's social and political climate.



A Brave New World
By Aldous Huxley