Cambridge Art Student Celebrated by Minister for Disabled People Penny Mordaunt

Thursday 20 October, 2016

This week Penny Mordaunt, Minister of State for Disabled People, Health and Work, invited Matthew Dommett to Westminster to thank the young artist for loaning her one of his art works for her office at the Department for Work and Pensions. Matthew Dommett studied at Comberton Village College in the Cabin, a cutting edge provision for students on the Autistic spectrum and is currently taking his foundation course in Fine Art at Cambridge Regional College.

The Minister was pleased to celebrate the achievements of disabled young people by displaying new pieces of work in her London office. She was impressed by the quality and originality of Matthew's artwork, an abstract, multi-layered woodcut.

As a thank you to Matthew, Penny presented him with a watercolour painting from her own private collection by Portsmouth artist.

Minister for Disabled People, Work and Health, Penny Mordaunt said:

"I feel incredibly privileged to have such a beautiful piece of art in my Ministerial office. Matthew is a huge talent and a reminder of just what creativity and skill we will miss out on when education and employment opportunities aren't there for all. We must ensure they are. Every morning when I come into my office Matthew's art will remind me of that mission."

Matthew says about his artwork, ***"I much prefer doing abstract or non-figurative art, not only because I don't have to embarrass myself sketching out inaccurate forms, but also because I often prefer looking at art from a 'decorative' point of view, and I find figurative subjects, like maybe a person or a flower, very specific to what they are; with an abstract 'mash of stuff', I don't have to worry about the relevance of the image; even if some kind of meaning is strung into the work - the key focus is always whether or not it looks interesting, fun, or just 'generally nice'."***

The event was organised by Naomi Marek, from the disabled children's charity Sky Badger. She said,

"As soon as I was approached to find a great piece of work by a disabled young artist I immediately thought of Comberton Village College. CVC is outstanding at helping drive ambition for young people of all abilities. They fundamentally create brighter futures and I thought it was about time we celebrated these student's abilities. Matthew's art work is a wonderful example of what happens when you see the talent not disability."

The Cabin is an enhanced provision within the mainstream school that provides autistic students extra support. Peter Allcock, Head of Cabin at Comberton Village College says,

"We are very proud of what we do at Comberton's Cabin. We try to always show and provide understanding and maintain high expectations around what our autistic students can achieve. We know the families are proud of what their children achieve, and we want all our students to be able to contribute positively to our society."

-ends-

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