Nick Oates’ video *Time* has been nominated for ARTEXPRESS, an annual exhibition of year 12 visual arts works from across NSW.

Viv Duck and her photographic work showing how the environment affects different people.

Maddi Langlands with her piece, which represents the pressure of the final year of school. Pictures: JOHN RUSSELL

**Good for ‘mind, soul’**

**BY ASHLEY ARGOON**

FOR anyone yet to study year 12, these students have a little advice — consider studying visual arts.

While most year 12 subjects require students to come to certain conclusions, the recent Xavier High graduates said exploring your own creativity with an art subject was good for the mind and soul in the most stressful year of school.

"In every other subject you’re told what to think and when to think it, but this is your own thing," Viv Duck, 18, said.

"And (visual arts) is a break from other things."

Along with students Maddi Langlands and Nick Oates, the trio said after leaving school and entering the real world they would have to be able to think independently.

Through their final visual art pieces, now displayed at Albury Art Gallery as part of an HSC exhibit, they said they were pushed to explore ideas they had every day but never expressed.

Maddi explored her thoughts on the pressure of the final year of school with a painting incorporating flaming trees and hidden text, representing a nightmare, something you have no control over.

Viv liked the idea of how the environment impacted the individual, rather than the other way round, and used photography to express it.

Nick, however, used a different medium altogether.

He used a program to create a three-minute moving text video, with the words from a monologue in the film *The Curious Case of Benjamin Button*, voiced by Brad Pitt.

"It’s about time and how it’s very fragile, how one small thing can have a ripple effect,” he said of the concept, which he often considered but never fleshed out before the project.

His video has now been nominated for ARTEXPRESS, an annual exhibition of year 12 visual arts works from across NSW.

Nick said “it’s a bit disappointing” that there would be so much potential in ideas that every person had, but rarely expressed.

“We think about these things but when we had to put them into an artwork, we had to define them,” he said.

Entry is free to the year 12 art exhibition, at the Albury Art Gallery, which runs until December 16.

Up to 20 pieces of art by HSC students from Xavier High, Albury High, Murray High, Border Christian College, James Fallon High, The Scots School Albury and Trinity College will be on display.