ART CANADA INSTITUTE | INSTITUT DE L'ART CANADIEN

SEPTEMBER 3, 2021

OUR FUTURE ARTISTS
WINNERS OF THE CANADIAN ART INSPIRATION CONTEST

Last spring the Art Canada Institute asked students across Canada to offer a fresh interpretation of some of this country's greatest works of art. Today we are proud to share the results of our inaugural creative challenge.

Emily Carr, *Odds and Ends*, 1939, oil on canvas, 67.4 x 109.5 cm, Art Gallery of Greater Victoria.

Kate Kang, *Canada's Vivid Flowers*, 2021, painting.

How do we cultivate the next generation of changemakers? How do we creatively connect the past to our thinking about the future? These questions were at the heart of the ACI's Canadian Art Inspiration Contest, launched last spring. Our challenge asked students from kindergarten to grade 12 to create a work that was rooted in Canadian art and its history and write a statement about why. For inspiration, we pointed elementary-school and secondary-school educators to the Art Canada Institute's teacher resource guides. During an unprecedented year that limited opportunities to experience art, ACI's creative call for entries reaffirmed our education program's mission: to inspire students from coast to coast with the work of this country's artists, and to support teachers in their heroic task of fostering our leaders to come. We were blown away by the number of submissions as well as the creativity that was revealed—something we are proudly sharing in this week's newsletter as well as in our new online exhibition The Canadian Art Inspiration Contest: Celebrating Canada's Future Artists. The works below, made across the country, reveal the exceptional talent of young artists and their inventive—and often deeply personal—engagement with

Canadian art that not only connects the past with the present but also offers a vision for the future and an inspiration to us all.

Sara Angel
Founder and Executive Director, Art Canada Institute

First Place, Grades 10 – 12

SUBVERSION

by Solanne Bianchi Melchin

Prudence Heward, *Girl on a Hill*, 1928, oil on canvas, 101.8 x 94.6 cm, National Gallery of Canada, Ottawa.

Solanne Bianchi Melchin, *Subversion*, 2021, graphite on paper.

"Prudence Heward, reputed for her steadfast portraits, was the first Canadian artist who stimulated my passion for feminist paintings that are psychologically complex. I remember being drawn to her paintings at the Montreal Museum of Fine Arts from a young age, fascinated by the determination in the penetrating stares of her subjects, a revolt against the expected passivity of women at the beginning of the 20th century. Since then, Heward's works have been an important influence in my own work. The subject of my work is MLMA, an artist, stylist, model, and musician of Korean origin. She uses her body as a canvas, whether through photography and montage, body paint, or eccentric clothing. This utter disregard for western beauty standards captivates me, a reflection of my own struggles as a woman in the midst of finding her place in a world with such narrow beauty standards." —**Solanne Bianchi Melchin (Grade 11, École secondaire publique De La Salle, Ottawa, Ontario)**

Celebrated predominantly for her bold portraits of women, twentieth-century painter Prudence Heward (1896–1947) was a central figure in the Montreal art world, unmatched in her provocative, defiant depictions of modern women in the interwar years.

Visit the online exhibition

Honourable Mention, Grades 10 – 12

SOULAGEMENT

by Raven Martin

Alex Colville, *Couple on the Beach*, 1957, casein tempera on Masonite, 73.4 x 96.4 cm, National Gallery of Canada, Ottawa.

Raven Martin, *Soulagement*, 2021, watercolour on paper.

"I was inspired by the artist Alex Colville....For me, photography with the human figure is one of my main sources / ways of creating. Colville organizes his thoughts in sketches first and then creates his final works. In my creative process, I do the same thing. His process inspires me, but his works do also because I appreciate his use of detail...He demonstrates shading and texture in a way that is very unique. In my work I tried to demonstrate where the light hits the clothing to create a smooth texture as in the works of Colville. This technique demonstrates a delicacy and depth in the work." —**Raven Martin (Grade 11, École secondaire publique De La Salle, Ottawa, Ontario)**

Alex Colville (1920–2013) developed a signature style when he settled in his homes of New Brunswick and Nova Scotia after working as an official Canadian war artist. He is best known for his unusual use of perspective, his mastery of realism, and the interior worlds of his subjects.

Visit the online exhibition

Honourable Mention, Grades 10 – 12

A DAY IN MY LIFE AT CAMP

by Danielle Alexander

Molly Lamb, "A typical day in the life of a CWAC (Part I)," November 8, 1943, illustration from *W110278: The Personal War Records of Private Lamb, M.*, 1942–45, pencil and watercolour with pen and black ink on wove paper, Library and Archives Canada, Ottawa.

Danielle Alexander, *A Day in My Life At Camp*, 2021, digital drawing and pen.

"I was very drawn to Molly Lamb Bobak's work when I first saw her visual journals.... Her handwritten excerpts and small watercolour paintings capture the spirit and people of the Canadian Women's Army Corps. She was able to share her experiences in the military in a humorous way, while bringing a spotlight to the hardworking women around her." —**Danielle Alexander (Grade 12, O'Neill CVI, Oshawa, Ontario)**

Molly Lamb Bobak (1920–2014) was Canada's first official woman war artist, serving in the Canadian Women's Army Corps. She created a diverse visual record of her experiences in service, including her remarkable autobiographical oeuvre W110278: The Personal War Records of Private Lamb, M.

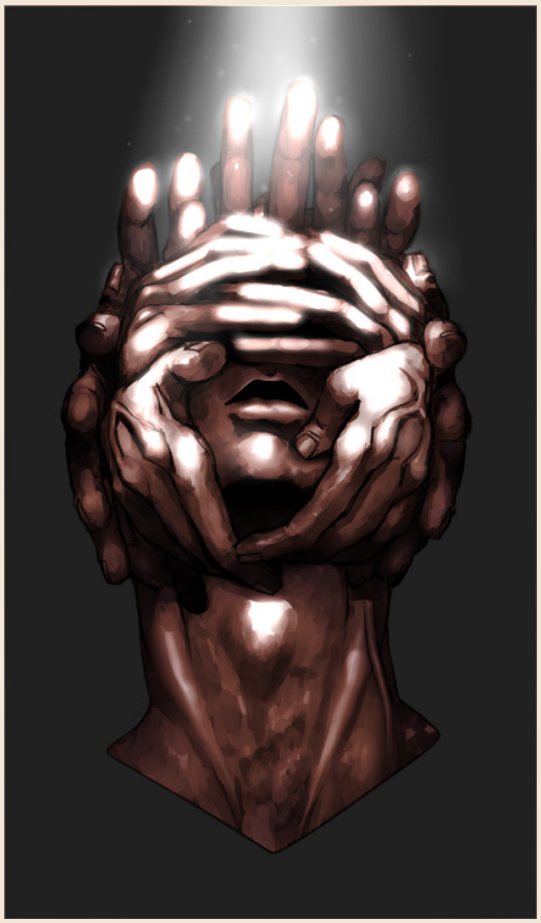
Visit the online exhibition

Honourable Mention, Grades 10 – 12

WATCHER OF MONTREAL

by Sammy Keeb Rich

David Altmejd, *The Eye*, 2010–11, bronze, 355 x 248 x 235 cm, Montreal Museum of Fine Arts.



Sammy Keeb Rich, *Watcher of Montreal,* 2021, digital illustration.

"For years I have driven by the sculpture *The Eye* by David Altmejd and admired it….I admire the odd physique and the distorted wings—the sculpture felt angelic to me. I illustrated my favorite part, the head of hands. I found the placement of the hands around the head comforting—it made the figure look mysterious. I see this statue as a guardian of Montreal, being called *The Eye* and having an angelic presence. I feel it resembles a Watcher. I feel safe around this statue." —**Sammy Keeb Rich (Grade 11, Westmount High School, Montreal, Quebec)**

A star in the international art world, contemporary Montreal-born artist David Altmejd (b.1974) works predominantly in large-scale sculpture, creating uncanny works that engage with different conceptions of reality, transformation, and perception.

Visit the online exhibition

Honourable Mention, Grades 10 – 12

ROOTS

by Angel Frimpong

Pitseolak Ashoona, drawing for print *Summer Camp Scene*, c.1966–76, wax crayon and coloured felt-tip pen on paper, 45.7 x 61.2 cm, West Baffin Eskimo Co-operative Ltd.

Angel Frimpong, *Roots*, 2021, oil on canvas.

"Just as Pitseolak Ashoona based her art on her culture and community background, I decided to also find my meaning by researching my culture back in Africa. The art work is based on the symbols (Adinkra) of my country, Ghana, with significant meanings and teachings. They are important in the way of life of my people. The title *Roots* is 'finding my meaning through my ancestors.' Finding all the beauty and even the history of war which led to an even brighter culture and way of art. The colours in the art work signify that. And the woman in the painting signifies me or any other person looking at one of the symbols which means harmony, faithfulness, love and loyalty. Sometimes finding a place gives you all these things." —**Angel Frimpong (Grade 12, Louis St. Laurent, Edmonton, Alberta)**

Community and cultural knowledge are at the heart of the work of Inuk artist Pitseolak Ashoona (c.1904–1983), a seminal figure in the establishment of modern Inuit art and the visual transmission of Inuit knowledge for future generations.

Visit the online exhibition

Honourable Mention, Grades 10 – 12

C'EST ENFIN LA SAISON D'AUTOMNE

by Sydney Lunde-Ingrey

Alex Colville, *To Prince Edward Island*, 1965, acrylic emulsion on Masonite, 61.9 x 92.5 cm, National Gallery of Canada, Ottawa.

Sydney Lunde-Ingrey, *C'est enfin la saison d'automne*, 2021, graphite on paper.

"My art has always incorporated realism and precise proportions, but this drawing allowed me to concentrate on the specific characteristics of the face. In fact, this not only allowed me to explore facial expressions, but also allowed me to recreate the emotions of my little brother playing outside during the autumn. The art of Alex Colville inspired my drawing because of the personality that characterizes his work. He was capable of creating an interior world that captures the public, all while releasing intense emotions, but contained emotions at the same time." —**Sydney Lunde-Ingrey (Grade 11, École secondaire publique De La Salle, Ottawa, Ontario)**

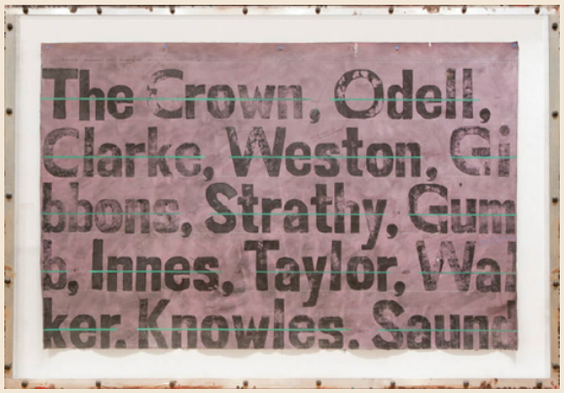
Imbued with a unique emotional intensity, Alex Colville's (1920–2013) images of figures and faces are both restrained and revealing.

Visit the online exhibition

First Place, Grades 7 – 9

LUMIÈRE

by Khadijat Dairo



Greg Curnoe, *(Mis)deeds #1*, December 5, 1990–January 9, 1991, stamp pad ink, gouache, blueprint pencil, 108 x 162.6 cm, private collection.

Khadijat Dairo, *Lumière*, 2021, painting.

"I wanted to highlight how wearing the hijab gave me power and courage when I made this. The hijab acts as a source of light and identity for me, pulling me away from the darkness. The hijab is your crown, and no one should take it away from you, my hijabies….My painting was inspired by Greg Curnoe, especially the colour choice and wordings around the painting….When the recent incident in London, Ontario occurred, it broke my heart to watch these inhumane attacks on my fellow Muslims. I wanted to use my artwork to show how Islamophobia must end. 'Say No to Islamophobia.'" —**Khadijat Dairo (Grade 9, Fort McMurray Islamic School, Fort McMurray, Alberta)**

Greg Curnoe (1936–1992) used words and text in powerful ways throughout

his body of work to challenge aspects of Canadian society, from Indigenous land rights to national identity.

Visit the online exhibition

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Honourable Mention, Grades 7 – 9

MEMORIES OF LONG RIVER

by Anna Stocker

Edward Mitchell Bannister, *Untitled (Rhode Island Seascape)*, c.1856, oil on canvas, 45.7 x 55.9 cm, Kenkeleba House, New York.

Anna Stocker, *Memories of Long River*, 2021, oil on canvas.

"The location of my painting is Kouchibouguac, New Brunswick. I chose to paint this place because we go camping there every summer and I have great family memories of it. Edward Mitchell Bannister grew up on the coast of New Brunswick, which is where I live, so in a way I am connected to the artist both in location and style." —**Anna Stocker (Grade 8, Riverview Middle School, Riverview, New Brunswick)**

New Brunswick-born Edward Mitchell Bannister (1828–1901) was a Black Canadian-American artist whose coastal scenes made him the most well-known painter in his eventual home of Rhode Island, at a time when slavery and racial segregation were realities in America.

Visit the online exhibition

Honourable Mention, Grades 7 – 9

IN THE RICE PADDY

by Cianna Chin

Helen McNicoll, *The Apple Gatherer*, c.1911, oil on canvas, 106.8 x 92.2 cm, Art Gallery of Hamilton.

Cianna Chin, *In the Rice Paddy*, 2021, acrylic on canvas.

"I was inspired by Helen McNicoll's work depicting many female subjects placed in an array of settings. In my piece, I wanted to do something similar but instead it would reflect my own Chinese culture. Back when my mom's family lived in China, life was very different. My painting depicts a young woman working in the middle of a rice paddy, surrounded by a beautiful landscape of terraces to grow the number one staple for billions of people. While the landscape is stunning, this piece also conveys the deeper meaning of the backbreaking hard work in the sweltering heat of the sun many women in China had to endure."
—Cianna Chin (Grade 8, Argyll Centre, Edmonton, Alberta)

Nineteenth-century Impressionist painter Helen McNicoll (1879–1915) captured the lives of girls and women in her luminous scenes depicting the Canadian countryside, childhood hobbies, and rural female labour. Picking berries, gleaning, and gathering apples are examples of the countryside tasks represented in her work.

Visit the online exhibition

Honourable Mention, Grades 7 – 9

PLAYING WITH THE NIGHT

by Krisetianna King

Kazuo Nakamura, *Blue Reflections, B.C.*, 1964, oil on canvas, 127 x 160 cm, MacLaren Art Centre, Barrie.

Krisetianna King, *Playing with the Night*, 2021, acrylic painting.

"My painting was inspired by Kazuo Nakamura and it revolves around the Japanese phrase '木漏れ日 (こもれび),' which in English is komorebi, meaning 'sunlight filtering through the trees'. Instead of sunlight that is shining through the trees, it is moonlight. The reason why I named my artwork 'playing with the night' is because the white lights that are playing through the trees are spirits of light that are keeping a little girl company who lost her way and are guiding her back home where she will be safe. The colours that I used are Copenhagen blue, black, and white—a minimal amount of colour but it tells a story just as Kazuo Nakamura's painting *Blue Reflections* does." —**Krisetianna King (Grade 9, Encompass, Coquitlam, British Columbia)**

Born in Vancouver, Kazuo Nakamura (1926–2002) was a co-founder of the revered Painters Eleven group, and one of the great Canadian artists of the twentieth century. His paintings invite deep reflection, and his unique exploration of the abstracted landscape is without parallel in Canadian art.

Visit the online exhibition

Honourable Mention, Grades 7 – 9

CANADA'S VIVID FLOWERS

by Kate Kang

Emily Carr, *Odds and Ends*, 1939, oil on canvas, 67.4 x 109.5 cm, Art Gallery of Greater Victoria.

Kate Kang, *Canada's Vivid Flowers*, 2021, painting.

"As a young artist, I have always found Emily Carr's art absolutely marvelous…. Her ability to establish texture and control in her artworks were what made her stand out to me and helped me grow as an artist. To exhibit Canada, a diverse and beautiful country, I painted each brilliant provincial flower of Canada, scattered throughout my painting. The sky and the mountains inspired by Emily Carr provide background to the bright flowers in the foreground." —**Kate Kang (Grade 9, St Joan of Arc School, Calgary, Alberta)**

Beloved Canadian painter Emily Carr (1871–1945) communicated a deep love and respect for the natural world through her colourful modernist landscapes, which both celebrated the majesty of nature, and engaged with the ecological issues of the day.

Visit the online exhibition

First Place, Grades 4 – 6

ACROBAT IN THE PARK

by Max Shniger

Greg Curnoe, *Self-Portrait with Galen on 1951 CCM*, 1971, acrylic on plywood, 731 x 666 cm, President's Art Collection, University of Regina.

Max Shniger, *Acrobat In The Park*, 2021, painting and collage.

"I really liked seeing a painting by Greg Curnoe called *Self-Portrait with Galen on 1951 CCM*. I like how clean-cut shapes painted with bright colours make up the painting and I wanted to try to make a work that I could construct from scraps of cardboards that my teacher offered me. What I love to do is circus and I hope I get really good at it. So I tried to show an acrobat with a hoop. I can imagine myself spinning inside it, throwing it, bouncing it and doing all sorts of fun stuff with it in the park." —**Max Shniger (Grade 4, My Artlab, Toronto, Ontario)**

A critical artistic leader in London, Ontario, Greg Curnoe (1936–1992) used intense colours in his work and explored subjects ranging from Canadian politics to his own family and home.

Visit the online exhibition

First Place, Kindergarten – Grade 3

PASKWÂW (PRAIRIE/ PLAINS CREE)

by Maxwell Stone

Linus Woods, *Lakota Sunset*, n.d., mixed media on canvas, 121.92 x 182.88 cm, Courtesy of the artist and Bearclaw Gallery, Edmonton.

Maxwell Stone, *Paskwâw (Prairie/ Plains Cree)*, 2021, acrylic on canvas.

"*Paskwâw* (prairie or plains in Cree) is inspired by Linus Woods's work. I love his use of colour and little squares. I used stencils for the tipi and the bison. I added texture with gesso. I wanted to show what the land was like a long time ago on the prairies here in Alberta. It is the Rocky Mountains in the background. Now Indigenous plains peoples live in houses. The bison are few. The tipi and the bison are still very important to Indigenous culture today. Nimosom (my grandfather in Cree) taught me the Cree word for prairie for my title of my painting." —**Maxwell Stone (Grade 2, Argyll Learning Centre, Edmonton, Alberta)**

Linus Woods (b.1967) is a contemporary Dakota/Ojibway artist from the Long Plain First Nation in Southern Manitoba, and creates expressive works that often incorporate colourful schemes, geometric patterns, and collage.

Visit the online exhibition

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