EDUCATION NEWSLETTER

VISUAL VISIONARIES PASSING THE TORCH

Now in its third year, ACI's Canadian Art Inspiration Student Challenge celebrates the future of art in Canada by connecting young makers with their trailblazing predecessors

Shaylah Shawongonabe with her work *Miijim*, 2023.

How can we find beauty in the everyday? What are your most cherished surroundings? How do you connect with your neighbours? What are the food traditions in your family? These questions were at the heart of this year's iteration of ACI's annual student challenge, which invites young artists in Grades 7 through 12 to create original works inspired by remarkable makers in Canadian art history. Above, Grade 10 student Shaylah Shawongonabe is pictured holding her work *Miijim*, a creation that explores food traditions in Ojibwe culture, inspired by the uniquely distinctive style of artist Daphne Odjig (1919–2016). The range of this year's visual responses to those who have come before is a reminder of the creative significance of Canadian art history—and its vital role in passing the torch to our next generation of visual visionaries.

Click here to see the 2023 winners of the Canadian Art Inspiration Student Challenge

— The Art Canada Institute Education Team

AVENUES TO EXPLORE

First Place Winner, Grades 7–9

DIASPORA

by Chantel Mei

Chantel Mei, *Diaspora*, mixed media on paper, 45.5 x 60.1 cm.

This student work was inspired by a Prudence Heward painting. View the online exhibition to learn more.

"Inspired by Prudence Heward's painting *The Emigrants*, *Diaspora* is a piece that connects the similarities of the struggles that refugees experience throughout time. In my personal interpretation of this piece, I view this as two women immigrating to a new country for better opportunities. [...] This is why I wanted to communicate the same message with Ukrainian mothers and women seeking refuge in Canada due to the recent war in their homeland. Especially as mothers, the traumatic complexities of war are far more overwhelming."

—Chantel Mei (Grade 9, Webber Academy, Calgary, Alberta)

Honourable Mention, Grades 7–9

BIBIMBAP

by Joanne Kim

Joanne Kim, *Bibimbap*, acrylic on stretched canvas, 30.5 x 22.9 cm.

This student work was inspired by an Ozias Leduc painting.
View the online exhibition to learn more.

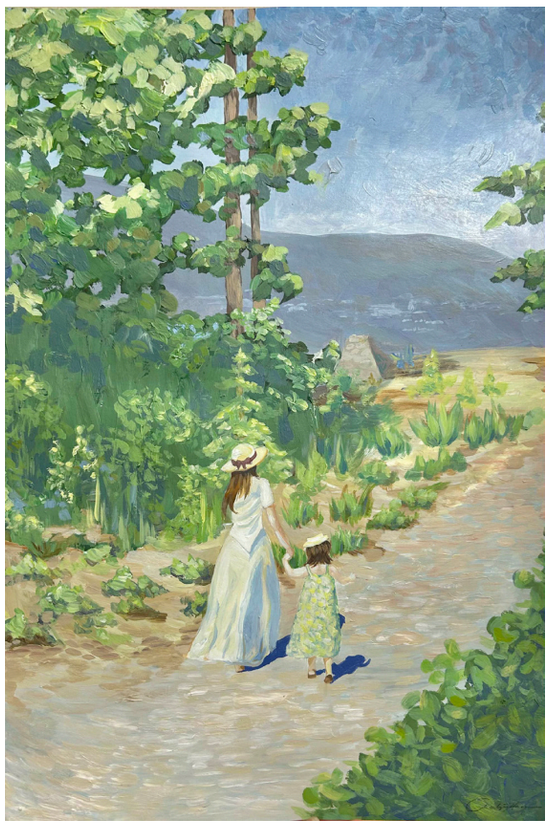
"[…] I wanted to draw one of my favorite foods inspired by [Ozias Leduc's] paintings. Bibimbap came to my mind since it is one of my favourite traditional Korean dishes. It is a dish made by adding various ingredients such as meat and vegetables to rice and mixing it with various seasonings, which results in a unique taste of flavours created by combining different ingredients. I think this is somehow similar to Canada, where diverse people live together to make combination and variety."

—Joanne Kim (Grade 7, Bluenose Academy, Lunenburg, Nova Scotia)

Honourable Mention, Grades 7–9

INTO THE MOMENT

by Chaelyn Han



Chaelyn Han, *Into the Moment*,
acrylic on paper, 47 x 32.5 cm.

This student work was inspired by a Helen McNicoll painting.
View the online exhibition to learn more.

"The first time I discovered [Helen McNicoll's] art, I was amazed by her use of colour to create a quiet ambiance that invited me to engage with the paintings through more than just visual senses. […] I painted my mother and myself walking in Stanley Park because it is still one of my favourite memories. I wanted to cherish the moment by creating it in a painting in McNicoll's style, allowing me to invite anyone who views it to engage with the artwork […]."

—Chaelyn Han (Grade 9, Lord Byng Secondary School, Vancouver, British Columbia)

First Place Winner, Grades 10–12

LE RASSEMBLEMENT

by Maya Padlewska

Maya Padlewska, *Le Rassemblement*,
oil on canvas, 61 x 91.4 cm.

This student work was inspired by a Molly Lamb Bobak painting.
View the online exhibition to learn more.

"Molly Lamb Bobak is well known for her interior scenes and still-life paintings, which fascinate me the most within her body of work. [...] Bobak's distortions equally evoke the work of Paul Cézanne, who has always been a big source of inspiration for me. *Le rassemblement* represents the simplicity of daily routine that has always captivated me, particularly meal times. They demand to be observed and listened to, and I wanted to reflect the way in which food has the potential to assemble a group of people."

—Maya Padlewska (Grade 12, École secondaire publique De La Salle, Ottawa, Ontario)

Honourable Mention, Grades 10–12

AU CHALET

by Wafa Amrouche

Wafa Amrouche, *Au chalet*,
acrylic on canvas, 45.7 x 61 cm.

This student work was inspired by an Anne Savage painting.
View the online exhibition to learn more.

"Anne Douglas Savage always appreciated the beauty of the living and the harmony that can be found in nature—in its movements and rest. [...] In my work, we can see my little brother in the midst of undulating water, a moment altered by colour like a memory is being altered by my subconscious. This painting is a reflection of my gratitude towards this ephemeral moment transformed into a remnant of happiness."

—Wafa Amrouche (Grade 12, École publique secondaire De La Salle, Ottawa, Ontario)

Honourable Mention, Grades 10–12

KINDLING UNIQUE SPIRIT

by Aicer Galzote

Aicer Galzote, *Kindling Unique Spirit*,
acrylic on canvas, 48.3 x 40.6 cm.

This student work was inspired by an F.H. Varley painting.
View the online exhibition to learn more.

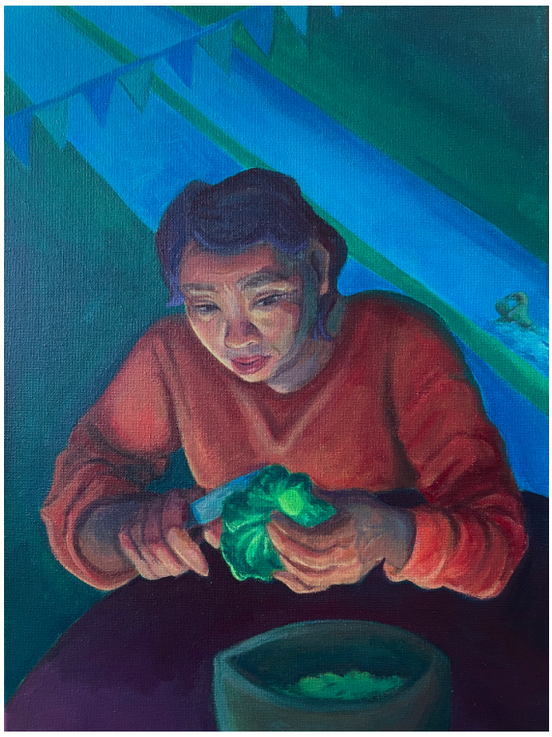
"From Canadian art history to the present day, I as a striving artist wanted to represent the new age of art for Canadians today. With this acrylic painting I wanted to express the passionate fire for art that past Canadian artists carried with them, that has been passed down to future artists today. [...] I was inspired by a self-portrait by Frederick Varley because of how he represented the messy but organized property that light creates with surfaces. I chose myself to be the subject holding a lit candle to represent that passionate fire Canadians carry that I adopted when I came to Canada. I hope to pass this fire down to inspire others to create art too, and ignite that fire within them."

—Aicer Galzote (Grade 11, Dr. Martin LeBoldus Catholic High School, Regina, Saskatchewan)

Honourable Mention, Grades 10–12

BROCCOLI FLORETS AT SWIM PRACTICE

by Jamie Li



Jamie Li, *Broccoli Florets at Swim Practice*,
acrylic on canvas, 40 x 30 cm.

This student work was inspired by an Annie Pootoogook drawing.
View the online exhibition to learn more.

"My mother once told me a story about her experience as a new Chinese Canadian immigrant. While raising me and my brother, she would drop me off at home, and rush my brother to swim practice, cutting broccoli at the pool to prepare dinner. In this simple action, my mother illustrates the dedication and love she put into raising me and my brother. [...] I wanted to feature the compassionate normality of my mother cutting broccoli florets."

—Jamie Li (Grade 11, Pierre Elliott Trudeau High School, Markham, Ontario)

Honourable Mention, Grades 10–12

DOZING

by Vivian Chui

Vivian Chui, *Dozing*, acrylic on canvas, 50.8 x 40.6 cm.

This student work was inspired by a Lionel LeMoine FitzGerald painting. View the online exhibition to learn more.

"*Dozing*, a painting of the view from my bedroom window, conveys a stationary moment in life. It captures the essence of gloom and drowsiness through the intimate portrayals of bedsheets and curtain drapes. Through my artwork, I explore the hushed atmosphere and introspective moments that occur within private spaces. The play of light and shadow creates a somber mood, evoking a sense of rumination, tranquility, and lethargy. By focusing on everyday objects and their interaction with natural light and the eye, I invite viewers to reflect on the quietude and contemplative moments that occur within the confines of a bedroom. [...] *Dozing* is a painting of the peaceful state of mind."

—Vivian Chui (Grade 11, The Study, Montreal, Quebec)

Honourable Mention, Grades 10–12

THE TIPI'S VIEW

by Beautiful Crier Roan

Beautiful Crier Roan, *The Tipi's View*, acrylic on canvas, 61 x 76.2 cm.

This student work was inspired by a J.E.H. MacDonald painting.
View the online exhibition to learn more.

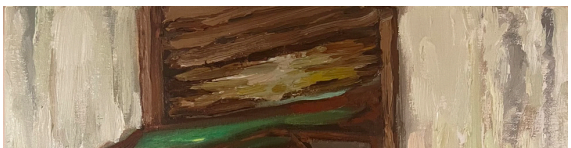
"[...] Growing up my grandfather was my inspiration to start painting. He taught me lots in the short time I had with him. The very first painting I did was a mountain when I was nine; at the same time, he introduced me to acrylic paints and how to use a knife to create the snow on top of a mountain. With this piece, I did it in my own way and added some of my culture [...]. On the tipi there is a red hand mark; with this touch it is representing the MMIW (Missing and Murdered Indigenous Women), and the orange piece of cloth tied around the tree is to also represent the residential school survivors. I wanted to bring awareness to important subjects and show some of my culture."

—Beautiful Crier Roan (Grade 11, Kisiko Awasis Learning Society, Maskwacis, Alberta)

Honourable Mention, Grades 10–12

ACCOMPANY

by Yitong Wang



Yitong Wang, *Accompany*,
oil paint on canvas, 40.6 x 50.8 cm.

This student work was inspired by a C.D. Hoy photograph.
View the online exhibition to learn more.

"In the crowded but cozy alleys of Jiangnan, neighbours are close to each other. I once lived in a neighbourhood in Jiangnan, a city located in the southern part of China, during a summer vacation when I was little. This oil painting, named *Accompany*, is inspired by an old photograph my father took when we stayed there. The boy and his dog in the picture were our neighbours, and we used to go biking together. I created this painting to reminisce about the harmony between neighbours and my happy childhood. [...] The subtle colors immersed in the white wall and on each object convey the richness of neighbourhood life."

—Yitong Wang (Grade 11, The Study, Montreal, Quebec)

Honourable Mention, Grades 10–12

MIIJIM

by Shaylah Shawongonabe

Shaylah Shawongonabe, *Miijim*, acrylic, watercolour,
coloured pencil, and ink, 30.5 x 22.9 cm.

This student work was inspired by the work of Daphne Odjig.
View the online exhibition to learn more.

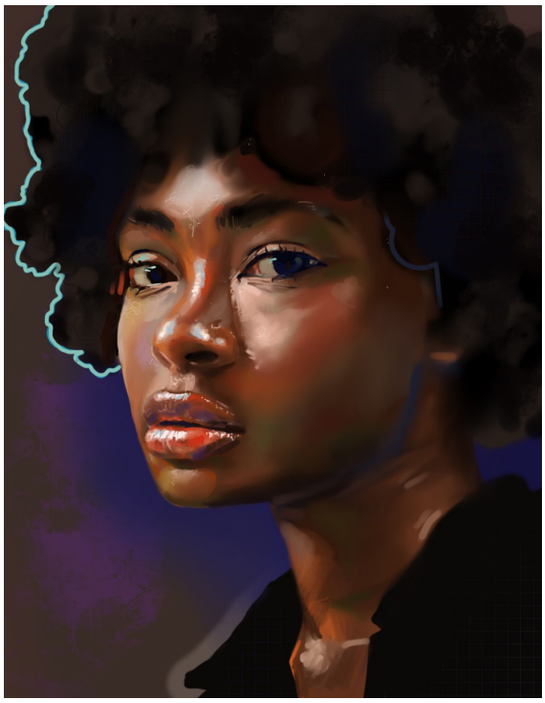
"This artwork reflects the significance of nourishing the spirit through food in Ojibwe culture. In the hands that hold the food are the three vegetables squash, beans, and corn. These vegetables are important [...] because they are the Three Sisters. The Three Sisters depict harmony and cooperation and grow exceptionally well when planted together. The Three Sisters are important to the diet of many Indigenous nations across Turtle Island. In the background, the four colours on the Medicine Wheel can be seen. These four colours, white, yellow, red, and black, represent the spiritual, emotional, mental, and physical states of being, respectively, all of which are nourished by food. [...] Overall, this artwork celebrates and emphasizes the connections between the land and food and how each plays a harmonious role in nourishing the spirit."

—Shaylah Shawongonabe (Grade 10, Sudbury Secondary School, Greater Sudbury, Ontario)

Honourable Mention, Grades 10–12

REGARD PERÇANT

by Naomi van de Hoef



Naomi van de Hoef, *Regard Perçant*, digital illustration, 2700 x 2100 px.

This student work was inspired by an F.H. Varley painting. View the online exhibition to learn more.

"Frederick Varley was a painter known for his landscape paintings, but he also completed numerous portraits. *Vera* intrigued me because of its use of colour. The greens, blues, yellows, and pinks are dispersed everywhere on the subject. These are the colours that certain portraitists do not emphasize, but that Varley wanted to reinforce. [...] My digital illustration represents a woman looking at the spectator from the corner of her eye. What is she thinking? Her thoughts are surrounding her in lines and colours. They dance, mix, and melt together. Finally, without being able to decipher them, we find ourselves fixed by her piercing gaze."

—Naomi van de Hoef (Grade 12, École publique secondaire De La Salle, Ottawa, Ontario)

Honourable Mention, Grades 10–12

I'M HAPPY TO SEE YOU!

by Tatyanna Wilke

Tatyanna Wilke, *I'm happy to see you!* (detail), photography, wooden spool, steel and iron hardware, 2.5 x 38.1 cm.

This student work was inspired by a Joyce Wieland work on paper. View the online exhibition to learn more.

"Drawing reference from vintage silent film, I created a storyboard of emotions to illustrate the lost language of facial expression during the rise of COVID-19. The pandemic has been incredibly impactful in how it's changed the way society communicates with one another, relying solely on words rather than facial expressions. By contrast, silent films depend on expression to convey their message. This reversal of situations led me to create a historic, timeless statement, as did Canadian artist Joyce Wieland [...]. Inspired by Wieland's visuals of "mouth art," I aimed to capture the concept of a silent but universal message."

—Tatyanna Wilke (Grade 12, Arts Umbrella, Vancouver, British Columbia)

Honourable Mention, Grades 10–12

TWO FIGURES IN A

POOL CHANGE ROOM

by Sophia De Graaf

Sophia De Graaf, *Two figures in a pool change room*,
acrylic on posterboard, 38.1 x 53.3 cm.

This student work was inspired by an Alex Colville painting.
View the online exhibition to learn more.

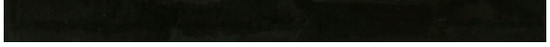
"Inherently, pool change rooms are uncomfortable spaces, both in their grime, their hard benches, and the inherent vulnerability of their purpose. As someone who grew up regularly going to public pools, the subtle yet distinct uneasiness within a change room environment, especially as a young person, has long captured my imagination. Using a compositional style inspired by Alex Colville, with one figure looking away and the other glancing back at the viewer, I wanted to address the timeless embarrassment, liminality, and above all unease of the adolescent experience."

—Sophia De Graaf (Grade 12, Glenforest Secondary School, Mississauga, Ontario)

Honourable Mention, Grades 10–12

BEAUTÉ MODERNE

by Phung Duc Anne



Phung Duc Anne, *Beauté moderne*, lead and marker on paper, 21.7 x 28 cm.

This student work was inspired by a Prudence Heward painting. View the online exhibition to learn more.

"The painting *The Bather* by Prudence Heward was often critiqued for its representation of the woman's body. For me, I remarked that the body, although depicted with "rough features," looked like Aphrodite's. My interpretation is purely ironic: the goddess of beauty, in a vulnerable position and folding in on herself, looks insecure in her own body. Why should we seek to alter the appearance of the emblem of beauty? With this work, I wanted to denounce the way in which bodies, in particular those belonging to women, have become fashion "accessories," fluctuating relentlessly. [...]"

—Phung Duc Anne (Grade 10, Collège Jean-de-Brébeuf, Montreal, Quebec)

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Launched in 2013, the Art Canada Institute is the only national institution whose mandate is to promote the study of an inclusive multi-vocal Canadian art history to as broad an audience as possible, in both English and French, within Canada and internationally. The ACI works with more than fifty of Canada's leading art historians, curators, and visual culture experts who are dedicated to the creation of authoritative original content on the people, themes, and topics that have defined Canadian art history.

We are creating a central digital resource to tell the world about Canada's most important works of art and where they are located. By functioning as an online art museum, a digital library, and an interactive Canadian art encyclopedia, the ACI is an indispensable resource on Canada's visual heritage.

Visit us at aci-iac.ca

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