

From the Classroom to Canada's Largest Art Stage

Student Artists to Showcase Winning Works at Art Toronto 2025

A selection of press images is available through the link at the end of this release.



Past winner Muying Deng, a grade 9 student from Regina, Saskatchewan, holds her work, *To My Vanished Childhood*, inspired by the art of Helen McNicoll.



The 2025 Canadian Art Inspiration Student Challenge.



Past winner Shayla Shawongonabe, a grade 10 student from Greater Sudbury, Ontario, holds her work, *Mijim*, inspired by the art of Daphne Odjig.

January 21, 2025, FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE—Submissions are now open for the Art Canada Institute's flagship educational initiative, the annual Canadian Art Inspiration Student Challenge. Now in its fifth year, this national competition invites young artists from coast to coast to coast to create original works that pay homage to this country's greatest historical and contemporary artists.

Special anniversary celebration at Art Toronto 2025

To celebrate this milestone, winning artworks from this year's student challenge will be showcased at Art Toronto 2025, Canada's largest contemporary art fair, in a special exhibition this October. Winners will also receive cash prizes and have their artworks included in an online exhibition hosted on the Art Canada Institute's website.

How it works

Open to students in grades 7 to 12 across Canada, the challenge calls for submissions inspired by or responding to key works by this nation's artistic trailblazers. These may include contemporary visionaries like Ojibwe activist artist Carl Beam (1943–2005) and British Columbia landscape artist Takao Tanabe (b.1926), as well as icons like Montreal-based printmaker Betty Goodwin (1923–2008) and Nova Scotia basket weaver Edith Clayton (1920–1989).

To support the creative process and help educators easily incorporate the challenge into their curricula, the Art Canada Institute offers a [Student Creativity Booklet](#) with ten classroom-ready activities designed to engage and inspire.



The Inspiration: Ozias Leduc, *L'enfant au pain*
(*Boy with Bread*), 1892–99.



The Student Work: *Boy with Junk* by grade 10 student Haeum Park of Calgary, Alberta, inspired by the art of Ozias Leduc.

“Canada’s art and its history are catalysts for creativity and innovation,” says Sara Angel, Founder and Executive Director of the Art Canada Institute. “This challenge highlights the incredible talent of young Canadians while deepening their connection to our country’s artistic legacy.”

How to participate

To participate, teachers and students can visit <https://www.aci-iac.ca/education/art-challenge/> to access submission guidelines, the Student Creativity Booklet, additional resources on Canadian art, and examples of previous years’ winning entries.

To explore the Art Canada Institute’s bilingual, open-access digital classroom resources, please visit <https://www.aci-iac.ca/education/>.

For **media requests** or for an **interview** with:

Sara Angel, Founder and Executive Director, Art Canada Institute, please contact: media@aci-iac.ca

About the Art Canada Institute

The Canadian Art Inspiration Student Challenge is central to the Art Canada Institute’s mission to make Canada’s art accessible to a twenty-first-century audience through our go-to online learning platform, which includes more than sixty expert-authored online art books that are available free of charge. As well, the ACI produces Canada’s only comprehensive art education guides for teachers and students from kindergarten to grade 12—content that is also free online and serves over 700,000 educators.

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, on a digital platform, and free of charge in both English and French, across Canada and internationally. To accomplish this, ACI works with Canada’s leading cultural institutions, art historians, curators, and visual culture experts, and is dedicated to the creation of authoritative original content on the people, themes, and topics that have defined Canadian art history.

To learn more about ACI and to access our free digital library, please visit us!
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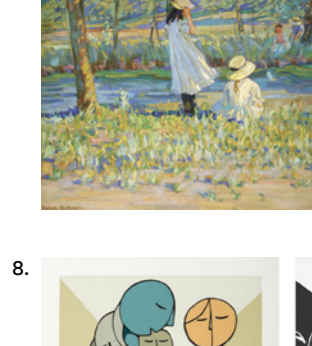
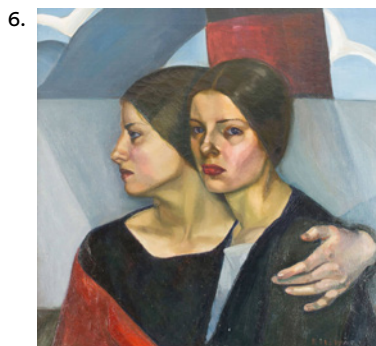


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1. The 2025 Canadian Art Inspiration Student Challenge. Courtesy of the Art Canada Institute.
2. Past winner Muying Deng, a grade 9 student from Regina, Saskatchewan, holds her work, *To My Vanished Childhood*, inspired by the art of Helen McNicoll. Courtesy of the Art Canada Institute.
3. Past winner Shayla Shawongonabe, a grade 10 student from Greater Sudbury, Ontario, holds her work, *Mijjim*, inspired by the art of Daphne Odjig. Courtesy of the Art Canada Institute.
4. Ozias Leduc, *L'enfant au pain (Boy with Bread)*, 1892–99 (*left*) inspired *Boy with Junk (right)* by past winner Haeum Park, a grade 10 student from Calgary, Alberta.
5. Kent Monkman, *The Scream*, 2017 (*left*), inspired *Ammaakulutché and Ihkulusshíia* (diptych, *right*) by past winner Amelia Picard, a grade 11 student from Ottawa, Ontario.
6. Prudence Heward, *The Emigrants*, c.1928 (*left*), inspired *Diaspora (right)* by past winner Chantel Mei, a grade 9 student from Calgary, Alberta.
7. Helen McNicoll, *Watching the Boat*, c.1912 (*left*), inspired *To My Vanished Childhood (right)* by past winner Muying Deng, a grade 9 student from Regina, Saskatchewan.
8. Daphne Odjig, *Husking Corn* (from the Childhood Remembrances Suite), 1981 (*left*) inspired *Mijjim (right)* by past winner Shayla Shawongonabe, a grade 10 student from Greater Sudbury, Ontario.