

Youth Imagine the Future

January 2025 Newsletter

January 17, 2025



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YIF 2024 Ends with Awards and Celebration!



The Junior Art Award Winners!

On December 15, 2024 **Youth Imagine the Future** gave out 56 awards to some very worthy young people. We were awed and inspired by their stories and visual art. The festival received over 200 submissions, all very thoughtful creative works. It was not easy for the jurors to decide. A huge thank you to Max Manga, teen librarian, and the warm and friendly staff at KFPL for donating the venue for the ceremony and making it all possible.

Due to the overwhelming number of Eco Art Submissions, we divided art awards into two categories: Junior Art (grades 7-9) and Senior Art (grades 10-12). The Short Story Awards

remained a category of their own. The top winner in this category was a young writer in grade 8, Jessi Paul, whom you want to keep an eye out for in the future. **Her winning short story, “When It’s Colder Than it Should Be,” explores climate skepticism, family relationships, and loss.** Check it out on the [YIF website](#).



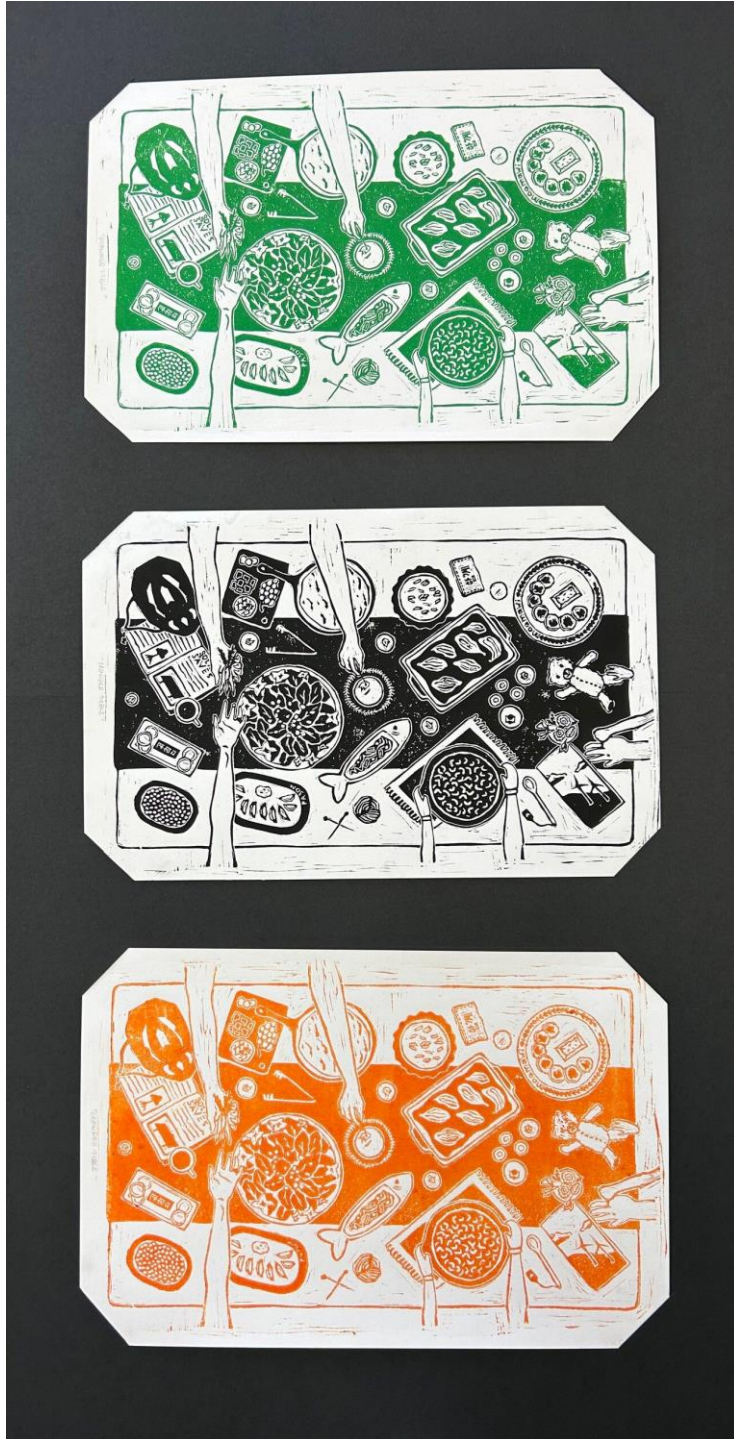
Senior Art and Writing Winners!

There were so many startling and thought-provoking art pieces. **The first place winner in the Junior Art category was Rhea Hollingsworth, grade 9, for “Hope Lies Ahead,”** which is an antidote to the far right in politics and needs to hang above our computers. Notice the green and solar rooftops, colourful solar panels made from vegetable waste (look those up), and the small vertical wind turbines.



Rhea Hollingsworth, grade 9, for “Hope Lies Ahead,

*In the Senior Art category first place was awarded to “Crowded Table” a linocut by **Caitlin Ball, grade 11 student at Sydenham High school.***



Caitlin Ball's Winning Linocut Prints

Here is Caitlin's shortened artist statement:

"I tried to capture a feeling of warmth and community. The piece depicts a welcoming dinner table filled with diverse foods and helping hands. I was inspired by my experience at the Wild Center's youth climate program, sitting at the dinner table sharing food and conversation with people I had never met before. I was fascinated by how like-minded we were even though we all came from different backgrounds. I felt the the immense hope that community can offer.

The pamphlet about windmills, and article titled "Solar Saves" are representative of the shift to renewable energies that being made currently. A bike helmet shows sustainable forms of transportation.

In the top right there is a bouquet of flowers, including zinnia flowers. This is meant to imply that the table is made from 3d printed wood made from the zinnia flower, as discovered by a study at MIT. Also in the top right is a wooden spoon with a tag on it. This is meant to display a value in local and handmade goods. A hand is passing homegrown vegetables to another hand to represent local farming.

The most important idea to me was community and inclusion. There is a Punjabi dish called chole bhature, Ukrainian perogies, Korean kimchi and, above that, manoomin rice cakes, made by the Anishinaabe people. Near each of these dishes, the word "together" is written in the language of the respective culture of the dish. In

Hindi: एक साथ(ek saath), Ukrainian: разом (razom), Korean: 함께(hamkke), and in Ojibwe/Anishinabek: maamawi.

The key is community and connection. It's often forgotten that climate change is a deeply humanitarian issue. It's not the earth that's in danger, it's us. Considering this, we all need to collaborate in this fight. Our contributions do not need to be huge technological advances, they can be as simple as riding your bike to school instead of driving or eating by candlelight instead of electrical light. Together (एक साथ, разом, 함께, maamawi) our small advances can become large ones."

Second place in Senior art went to Clara Vanderlaan, grade 12, for "Quilt of the Future," all hand sewn with thoughtfulness and care. Both the Kingston Quilters Guild and the Fabric Art Guild wrote encouraging letters to Clara for this beautiful work. The woman and girl represent the community of humans who need to work at making a better future and they are sewing what we need onto circles. The circles represent Black Lives Matter, Truth and Reconciliation, global peace, Pride, caring for forests and underwater life and pollinators,

[illegible]

Lisa Luckas received 3rd place (Senior Art award) for 6 connected drawings entitled “Future Fashion”. Three designs represent alternative energy from water, sun, and wind. Three others represent the importance of protecting and restoring biodiversity with a nod to ocean life, plant life, and birds/pollinators. The models represent diversity and a more just society in the future. One has a prosthetic arm and two of the designs play with gender stereotypes with a male wearing a wedding veil and flowers and a female wearing the suit for a wedding. Our youth can think!



Ron Vandewal presenting an award



Joe Shaw (L) and Wendy Stephen presenting an award

A special thank you to all of our sponsors, local supporters, and individual donors without whom this festival would not be possible: KCCU, Queen's Faculty of Education, PCJPIC, 350 Kingston, The Limestone District School Board, The Algonquin and Lakeshore Catholic District School Board, Trailhead Kingston Inc., Retired Teachers of Ontario (RTOERO), Minotaur Gifts, Black Dog Hospitality, Harlowe Green, The Cookery, Novel Idea, Improbable Escapes, Montreal Street Collective, The Screening Room, Sustainable Kingston, Judith Wyatt (SCAN), Mary Jane Philp, Mike Scrannage, Mark Sibley, and Jim Brown & Joan Lee. **We are also extremely grateful to the Community Foundation of Kingston & Area for the grant we received and to the Kingston School of Art for partnering with us to make the grant possible.**

The Exhibition

With 170 pieces of art this fall, it took three days and several volunteers to hang the Kingston School of Art's beautiful art gallery. Thank you to Walt, Nikki, Haven JP, John C, Kate T, Jen A, Monica M, Michele and people who wandered through and made suggestions. It was stunning with colours and visions of better futures from ceiling to floor!

THANK YOU to KSOA for donating the gallery space for the two weeks and to the volunteers - Mark, Deb, Garrett, Gina, Gisele, Heather, Jenn, Michele, Gemma, Mary Jane, and Bob B. who greeted visitors and helped promote the festival. **Four local teachers brought their classes in for a visit** so Jen Anderson created a Scavenger Hunt on a Bingo card to lead the students around the gallery and helped them notice things they might not have otherwise. These were a big hit with visiting families as well. Thank you, Jen!



One of the walls at the YIF Exhibition

The People's Choice Award

A fun addition this year was a tiny mailbox in the gallery where visitors could vote for their favourite piece of art. The People's Choice Award went to "The Future of Agricultural Biotechnology" by Joyce Pu, grade 12, for her hand painted picture of young scientists experimenting with food crops to adapt to the changing climate. She used a "bubble" or "fish eye" perspective. Interestingly, if we looked at the large pile of paper slips voting for this artwork, about half appeared to be printed by students, and half by adults, often in cursive.



“The Future of Agricultural Biotechnology” by Joyce Pu

The Postcard Project

One of our jurors from Queen’s University, Becca Carnevale, had a brilliant idea. She created a fun postcard for participants to take home to their families. One side was blank, inviting them to draw or jot down their vision of a hopeful climate future. The other side offered suggestions on what they could actively do next. We hope they enjoyed drawing their own ideas and some will share their drawing or note on Instagram and tag us @youthimaginethefuture!

IF YOU'RE ASKING "WHAT'S NEXT?" HERE ARE A FEW IDEAS TO GET STARTED!

- Create a Pocket Forest on your lawn or in your community with littleforests.org.
- Apartment dweller? Invite some neighbours to write a letter asking the landlord to support a **community food garden** on the property!
- Reduce plastic - visit the **Harlowe Green Refillery** on Brock St!
- Reduce your energy bills - explore a cold climate heat pump for your home and get an energy audit from **Better Homes Kingston**.
- Plant **native pollinators** like Black-Eyed Susans, Canada Goldenrod, and Purple-stemmed aster in your yard or balcony!
- Try plant-based meals 2-3 times a week.
- **Take the bus** to work once a week! Rural? Arrange a **carpool**!
- Reach out to your **local councillor, MP and MPP** to share that a just climate future is a priority for your family!
- Join a local group like 350kingston.org!
- Get out in **nature** - remember what we have to protect!

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Storytime

We had our annual Storytime evening on December 6th inviting the top ten short story writers to read their stories aloud to a small audience in the KSOA gallery. It was lovely to see the youth, nervous and brave, reading their stories gallantly.



Jessi Paul reading at the Storytime event

Eco-Art Activity at the Awards Ceremony

Thanks to local artist Gwen Smith for hosting an eco-art activity for our youth at as they waited for the award ceremony. She brought old books destined for the landfill, paint, and beet ink and coffee ink, then invited youth to repaint the covers of these old books and even paint on the pages. What a fascinating activity! Thank you Gwen!



Gwen Smith's art supplies ready for the youth!

YIF @ The Kingston Climate Symposium

This year the theme of the [Kingston Climate Symposium](#) is “Youth.” To our delight, Youth Imagine the Future director, Jerri Jerreat, has been invited to be on the panel. Mostly, she is thrilled to be able to see one of her heroes, **Autumn Peltier**, at the Symposium this year, as the Keynote Speaker. Come if you are able to! Monday January 20th at the Grand Theatre, Kingston, 1 - 5 pm. Purchase a ticket through the Grand Theatre. They are running out!

YIF in the News

The Kingstonist, December 2, 2024: [Youth Imagine the Future Festival showcases solutions and futures imagined by local youth 2025](#)

The Whig, December 12, 2024: [Festival sees youths envision a fossil-free future through art](#)

Travelling YIF Show 2025

We had so much success with this last year that we decided to do it again. We invited a dozen of our artists to lend us their art for several months to show at local shopfront windows or at conferences. Our first showing will be at the Kingston Climate Symposium, January 20th, 2025. We tried to choose art that was not too fragile for being carted around. Then next showing will be at the Seniors' Centre in downtown Kingston, Feb. 20th at an Intergenerational "Open Mic" event. Come and sing, play, or enjoy some homegrown music!

Goodbye "X"! Hello Bluesky!

We will remain on [Facebook](#) and [Instagram](#) for now, but like various school boards, we are leaving "X" behind.

Come find us at Bluesky [@youthimaginefuture.bsky.social](https://youthimaginefuture.bsky.social).