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Merseyside's best young artists crowned at St George's Hall

Two budding young artists are celebrating after battling it out with more than 900 pupils from schools across the Liverpool City Region to be named the area's best young artists.

Erin Gerrard, a Year 9 student from The Sutton Academy and Grace McKeown a Year 5 student from Knotty Ash Primary School, were crowned the overall winners of the dot-art Schools competition at a special prize-giving ceremony at St George's Hall on Thursday 15th June.

Erin's winning pen drawing titled "Intergalactic" and Grace's charcoal drawing titled "Lost Soul" both feature alongside the other shortlisted artworks, in the fifth exhibition in the dot-art Schools competition's history. This free exhibition at St George's Hall is open to the public between 10am and 4.30pm from Friday 16th June to Saturday 1st July. Following the exhibition at St George's Hall, prints of the artworks will also be displayed at Merseyrail's Lime Street Lower Level train station from 6th July – 6th August.

dot-art Schools is already a well-established fixture in the academic calendar for many Merseyside schools; since its inception almost 4000 students from over 200 schools have taken part. This is the fifth year it will take place in the Liverpool City Region and due to its success and a new partnership with Liverpool John Moores University, a pilot scheme for Cheshire was launched this year.

Entrants are asked to produce a piece of artwork that reflects themes they are already exploring at school and best showcases their skills and interests. Schools initially submitted up to 25 student pieces of art, which were then shortlisted by a judging panel made up of representatives from some of the region's best-known arts and cultural institutions, including Liverpool Biennial, National Museums Liverpool and LJMU Liverpool School of Art & Design, who selected their top three entries from each school for a public vote. The public were then encouraged to vote online for their favourite piece of work from each school to form part of the exhibition.

The overall winners and runners-up for both primary and secondary categories were chosen and announced by guest judge Susan M Coles, past president of NSEAD the National Society for Education in Art and Design at the prize-giving ceremony and launch of the exhibition. Each shortlisted student was also presented with a certificate by the Lord Mayor of Liverpool Cllr. Malcolm Kennedy during the ceremony.



A wonderful new LJMU Scholarship prize was announced by Professor Caroline Wilkinson, which will provide £1000 per year for 3 years toward course fees for the Year 9 winner and two runners up if they take up a course within the Arts Faculty.

Professor Caroline Wilkinson the Director, Liverpool School of Art and Design, said: “ I am delighted to be involved in the dot-art Schools competition and offer this new prize. It is incredibly important for school children to see the value of art and to be awarded for artistic potential. If creative talent can be recognised at an early age, then some of these winners may be inspired to progress to a creative art career and have a positive impact on future innovation in the UK.”

dot-art Services who manage the schools competition are delighted that Liverpool John Moores University is the project partner and world famous hairbrush brand Tangle Teezer is the principal sponsor of the programme for the second year running. Tangle Teezer joins other supporters including Cass Art, Morecrofts Solicitors, St George’s Hall, and Merseyrail to support the initiative.

As the winner of the Year 9 category, Erin Gerrard was also awarded a scholarship giving her a year's membership to dot-art's network, allowing her to showcase and sell her work alongside professional artists, while Grace McKeown won the Year 5 category and was presented with prizes donated by Tangle Teezer and Cass Art.

The runners up in the secondary category were Luke Hinton of Maghull High School for his ink drawing Portrait of Joshua; and Cheyenne Gaskin of Ormiston Bolingbroke Academy for her mixed media artwork Architecture Project 3. The primary category runners up were Georgia Parry-Growney of Arnot St. Mary C of E Primary School for her pencil drawing Looking up at the moonlight and Marcia Nicholl of St Bede's Catholic Junior School for her pen and ink drawing Pink City. The runners up were also presented with prizes including Rennies vouchers for art materials, Albert Dock experience and tickets to Tate Liverpool's summer exhibition.

dot-art Schools project manager Carolyn Murray commented: “The standard of work was outstanding again this year and it’s thrilling to see we have so many talented young artists in the region. The exhibition is a fantastic opportunity for the public to check out the best work by some of region’s rising stars. We’re also excited to be staging our first Creative Careers event, an inspirational day of advocacy to help teachers champion the impact and value of the arts in school, on Friday 23rd June”.

The day includes a tour of Liverpool John Moores University School of Art and Design, tour of dot-art Schools exhibition at St George's Hall, Liverpool and a seminar with three expert speakers in County Sessions House. To find out more and reserve a FREE place visit <https://championcreativecareers.eventbrite.com> or contact dot-art Schools.

Entry for next year’s dot-art Schools competition opens in September but schools that register before the end of term will receive a discounted rate. For more information and to enter, visit <http://schools.dot-art.com> or contact Carolyn Murray on schools@dot-art.com.



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