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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 to be the area's best young artists.

Nyah Boorman, 14, from St Hilda's Church of England High School and Aidan Owen from St Bede's Catholic Junior School, Widnes, were crowned the overall winners of Dot-Art Schools competition at a special prize-giving ceremony at St George's Hall on Thursday (26 May).

As the winners of the Year 6 and Year 9 categories, Nyah and Aidan's artwork will now be displayed in a special free exhibition at St George's Hall in Liverpool, which is open to the public between 10am until 5pm from 26 May to 11 June.

The inter-school art competition, which is now in its fourth year, attracted entries from 53 primary and secondary schools in Liverpool, Wirral, Sefton, Halton, Knowsley and St Helens, producing 930 eye-catching, creative and original submissions ranging from painting to drawing, collage and photography.

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 Merseyside's best-known arts and cultural institutions, including Liverpool Biennial, National Museums Liverpool and Metal Liverpool, 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 at a prize-giving ceremony by special guest judge Susan M Coles, a former president of the National Society for Education in Art & Design (NSEAD).

Each shortlisted student was also presented with a certificate by the Lord Mayor of Liverpool during the ceremony in the Concert Hall at St George's Hall.

Nyah and Aidan's artwork will feature alongside the 51 other shortlisted designs, making it the largest exhibition in the competition's history.



As the winner of the Year 9 category Nyah was also awarded a scholarship to Dot-Art, giving her a year's membership to Dot-Art's network, allowing her to showcase and sell her work alongside professional artists, while St Bede's student Aidan won the Year 6 category and was presented with vouchers for art materials as well as family tickets for the Albert Dock Experience and the latest Tate Liverpool exhibition.

Both Nyah and Aidan's schools were also recognised and each received a Golden Ticket worth £250 to spend on art materials at Cass Art.

The two runners up in both categories were presented with vouchers for art materials and tickets to the latest Tate Liverpool exhibition.

Dot-Art Schools project manager Carolyn Murray added: "The standard of work was outstanding again this year and it's thrilling to see we have many talented young artists in the region. Not very many young people have had the chance to have their artwork displayed in a public exhibition so everyone who was shortlisted should feel very proud.

"Nyah and Aidan demonstrated great flair, skill and attention to detail for such young artists. Their work captures the character of the subjects perfectly in bright, bold and colourful paintings that are full of texture and personality.

"The exhibition is a fantastic opportunity for the public to check out the best work by some of region's rising stars in one of Britain's most iconic buildings."

Following the exhibition at St George's Hall, artworks will be displayed in a special digital print exhibition at Lime Street lower level station between Friday 24 June and Sunday 24 July.

Launched in 2012, the contest gives both Year 6 and Year 9 pupils across the Liverpool city region the opportunity to showcase their artistic talents and have their work displayed in a public exhibition.

In the past four years the competition has received more than 2700 entries from 166 schools across the region, helping to nurture and celebrate talent, raise ambition and take art out of the classroom and in to the real world.

The contest will return for the fifth time this autumn when the primary school category will be opened to students in Year 5 for the first time.

Entry for next year's Dot-Art Schools competition opens in September but schools that register before 22 July 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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