



**FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE**

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## **State Charter School Students Recognized in Annual Art Exhibition**

**ATLANTA, GA – May 20, 2022** – The State Charter Schools Foundation of Georgia (SCSF), a nonprofit foundation dedicated to supporting high-quality state charter schools in Georgia, presents a juried virtual exhibition of visual art created by 220 students across the state. Students were invited to submit their 2-D art to the SCSF’s first annual Art of Connection – Exhibition of Student Art. State charter school students in grades K-12 were encouraged to express how they stay connected to their community and others. All entries are featured in the virtual art gallery located online at [scsfga.org/art](https://scsfga.org/art), and winners will receive an Amazon gift card and permanent exhibition of their art at the State Charter Schools Foundation office.

“Art gives us a way to process our experiences and emotions,” said Michele Neely, SCSF President. “These students have offered us a glimpse into their world and the ways that they have tried to find connections during a difficult time. These entries show resilience and hope, but they also display complex emotions and concerns.” expressed Neely.

Many entries focused on connections with nature and others represented ways that people help each other and their communities. Katilyn Lee, 1<sup>st</sup> place winner in the High School division and student at the Academy for Classical Education in Macon, wrote, “I implement societal change by empowering my community through volunteer work. On Halloween, I worked alongside fellow Maconites to clean up invasive species. To illustrate helping my community, a gloved hand is depicted pulling Chinese tallow, a common invasive species. Rather than showing my face, I opted

to paint a hand to emphasize the importance and value of anyone’s efforts toward their community. My efforts to rid a park of its invasive species may not seem significant, but by providing small acts of kindness, I give back to my community with the freedom to enjoy a cleaner, more welcoming environment.” Selini Karunanayake, a 3<sup>rd</sup> grader at Brookhaven Innovation Academy and winner of the Elementary division, stated simply, “Sometimes you have to look up from your screen and connect with the nature around you.”

The virtual art gallery will remain on the SCSF’s website through the end of the year ([scsfga.org/art](https://scsfga.org/art)), and winners and judges will be featured on the SCSF’s social media channels.

### **Winners by Division**

#### ***Junior Elementary (K-2<sup>nd</sup> grade)***

**1<sup>st</sup> Place:** Kenneth Sabeni, 1<sup>st</sup> grade, Yi Hwang Academy of Language Excellence (Duluth) – “Hand Picking Flowers”

**2<sup>nd</sup> Place:** Kaia Allen, Kindergarten, Brookhaven Innovation Academy (Norcross) – “The Life of the Flower”

**3<sup>rd</sup> Place:** Dori Moghaizel, 2<sup>nd</sup> grade, International Charter School of Atlanta (Roswell) – “Exploring Families in Nature”

#### ***Elementary (3<sup>rd</sup>-5<sup>th</sup> grades)***

**1<sup>st</sup> Place:** Selini Karunanayake, 3<sup>rd</sup> grade Brookhaven Innovation Academy (Norcross) – “We Grow Together”

**2<sup>nd</sup> Place:** Lynlee DiLeonardo, 5<sup>th</sup> grade, Southwest Georgia STEM Charter School (Shellman) – “Art Fun”

**3<sup>rd</sup> Place:** Collin Cowdis, 3<sup>rd</sup> grade, Southwest Georgia STEM Charter School (Shellman) – “The Morning Landscape”

***Middle School (6<sup>th</sup>-7<sup>th</sup> grades)***

**1<sup>st</sup> Place:** Dylan Porter, 7<sup>th</sup> grade, Liberty Tech Charter School (Brooks) – “Intrepid Dimension”

**2<sup>nd</sup> Place:** Addy Brown, 8<sup>th</sup> grade, Liberty Tech Charter School (Brooks) – “Father to Fighter”

**3<sup>rd</sup> Place:** Sterling Carroll IV, 8<sup>th</sup> grade, Utopian Academy for the Arts (Ellenwood) – “Life With/Out Art”

***High School (9<sup>th</sup>-12<sup>th</sup> grades)***

**1<sup>st</sup> Place:** Kaitlyn Lee, 11<sup>th</sup> grade, Academy for Classical Education (Macon) – “A Helping Hand”

**2<sup>nd</sup> Place:** Brandi Gilford, 9<sup>th</sup> grade, Georgia Cyber Academy (virtual) – “A Moment of Reflection”

**3<sup>rd</sup> Place:** Hallie Almon, 9<sup>th</sup> grade, Southwest Georgia STEM Charter School (Shellman) – “Mr. Wimble Wonkle”

**Judges**

The SCSF would like to thank the Georgia artists who donated their time to serve as judges for the exhibition. The bios for this diverse group of artists and art champions are below.

**Morgan Boszilkov** is a self-taught artist using clay, fabric, and paint to create two-dimensional and sculptural vibrant works of art. She has created an innovative form of fine art: ceramics sewn onto canvas. Her work captures the beauty and richness of the natural world amidst our changing climate, reflecting her core values of conservation and sustainability. Her eclectic travels and self-taught craftsmanship culminated into a successful line of eco-friendly wedding gowns, Natural Bridal Collection by Morgan Boszilkov. Her sustainable gown designs were featured in *Brides Magazine*, Skirt!, CNN, OneWed, and Style Me Pretty, and she designed a dress for Melissa Rivers during TLC’s “Who are you wearing?” design challenge, winning the

competition. Her current ceramic work featuring handmade tiles has been highlighted in the *Atlanta Journal Constitution* and HGTV. <https://www.boszilkov.com/>

**AnnaLee Burnstein** is a mixed-media artist and graduate of SCAD. Her work has been featured in exhibits across Georgia. <https://annaleeburnstein.com/>

**Elizabeth Lide** creates meditative drawings, objects, and installations that explore the contradictions in accumulation and the making of multiples, the distillation of surroundings into shapes and grids as repositories for color and mood, and the placement of ordinary objects in new contexts. She has been awarded residences at Moulin à Nef in Auvillar, France; MASS MoCA in North Adams, MA; MacDowell in Peterborough, NH; Virginia Center for the Creative Arts (VCCA); The Hambidge Center in Rabun Gap, GA; Tyrone Guthrie Centre in Annaghmakerrig, Ireland; and with The University of Georgia Lamar Dodd School of Art in Cortona, Italy. She was the recipient of a Working Artist Project Fellowship from the Museum of Contemporary Art of Georgia (MOCA GA), selected by Saisha M. Grayson, Assistant Curator at the Center for Feminist Art at the Brooklyn Museum. Her work has been featured in exhibits and added to collections around the country, and her artists' books have been collected by multiple institutions. Elizabeth is a native of Winston-Salem and has a BFA from Lamar Dodd School of Art at the University of Georgia and an MFA from Ernest G. Welch School of Art and Design at Georgia State University. She is represented by Whitespace in Atlanta. <https://elizabethlide.com/>

**Melvin Toledo** is an artist originally from Nicaragua, living in the United States since 2007. While his work in the past has focused mostly on still life painting, he has recently been working on landscape and portraiture. He is working on a new series of portraits depicting immigrants living in the United States, aiming to celebrate their lives and to bring attention to their contribution to society. He lives and works in Tucker, GA. <http://www.melvintoledo.com/>

**Dr. Monika Wiley** has been in education for 24 years and served as a magnet teacher and principal. She currently holds two titles with Georgia's Clayton County Public Schools - Director of Fine Arts and School Choice which includes Strategic Planning. Monika serves as an educational leadership consultant for various agencies and a member of the Board of Directors for Magnet Schools of America. Monika's education includes the University of West Georgia, Doctor of School Improvement; University of West Georgia, Specialist in Education; Nova Southeastern University, Master of Science in Mathematics Education; Florida Agricultural & Mechanical University, Bachelor of Science in Mathematics Education. Dr. Wiley is also an educational advisor for the High Museum of Art and Cobb Performing Arts Center's ArtsBridge Foundation.

[www.clayton.k12.ga.us](http://www.clayton.k12.ga.us)

#### **About the State Charter Schools Foundation**

The State Charter Schools Foundation of Georgia (SCSF) is a nonprofit foundation dedicated to supporting high-quality state charter schools serving children throughout Georgia by leveraging resources to help schools launch, build capacity and grow. Currently, there are 39 state charter schools in Georgia serving more than 40,000 students throughout the state. For more information about the State Charter Schools Foundation and to get involved, visit [www.scsfga.org](http://www.scsfga.org).