

January–March 2017

The Magazine of the International Child Art Foundation

# ChildArt



Transformative  
**EXPERIENCES**

# ChildArt

## Editor's Corner

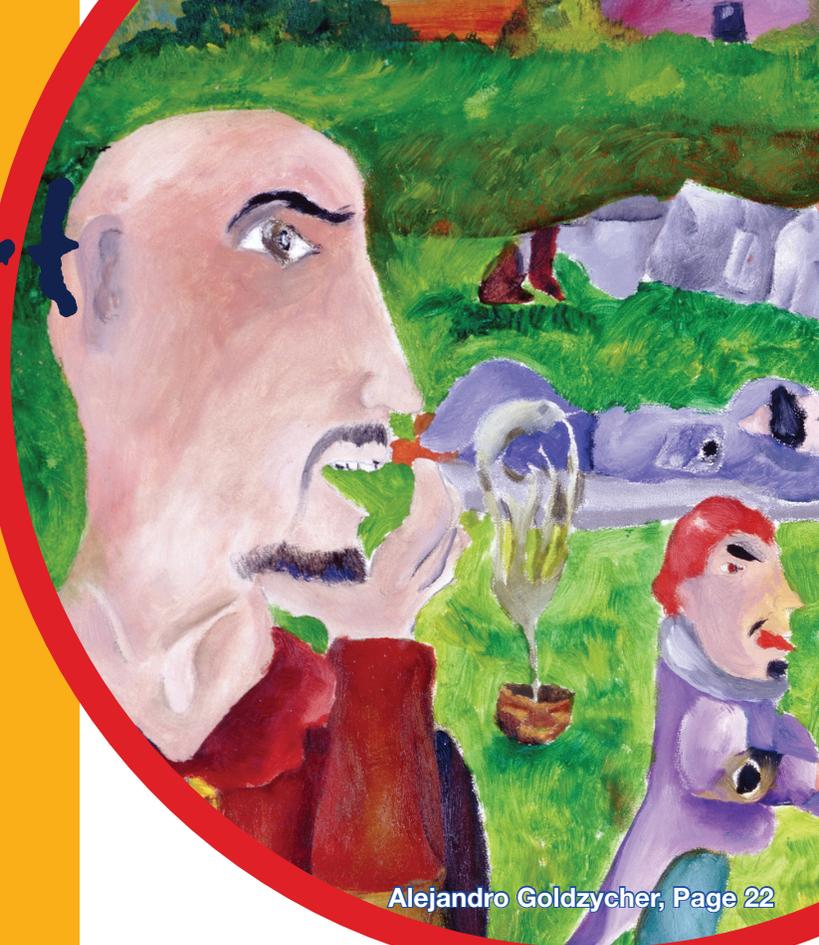
Every World Children's Festival has the quality of a miracle because of the hope that children bring and the new ideas they carry back to improve their lives and communities. At the 2019 WCF, a drizzle that could have drenched the festivities ended just as abruptly, clearing the skies to create a double-rainbow over The Ellipse next to The White House where the festival was being held. Everyone gasped at this rarest of sights.

Creativity and empathy, which the ICAF fosters, also comprise a double-rainbow, the twin preconditions for sustainable prosperity and peace. In this issue which celebrates the ICAF's twentieth anniversary you can gauge the lasting impact on those who participated in the ICAF's festivals. Since 1997 approximately five million children worldwide have taken part in the ICAF's programs, especially the Arts Olympiads, the nineteen "artists" featured in this issue represent the world's best hope for a new future. We thank them for sharing their stories and ideas.

Creatively yours,



Ashfaq Ishaq, Ph.D.  
Editor



Alejandro Goldzycher, Page 22

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When a child's creativity is ignored, it could be lost forever. Tax-deductible donations support children's creative and empathic development. You can donate online at [www.icaf.org](http://www.icaf.org) or make your check to ICAF and mail it to: ICAF, P. O. Box 58133, Washington, DC 20037.

## TRANSFORMATIVE EXPERIENCES

<b>Overview</b>	<b>2</b>
<b>2015WCF</b>	<b>4</b>
Michael Wong: Art to Entrepreneurship	4
Adelina Rupolo: Art to Discovery	6
Fiona Chung: Art to Exploration	7
<b>2011WCF</b>	<b>8</b>
Paarth Koushik: Art to Engineering	8
Teodora Lazar: Art to Actualization	9
Matovu Musana: Art to Meaning	10
<b>2007WCF</b>	<b>11</b>
Claudia Ligia Suteu: Art to Music	11
Sorasicha Nithikasem: Art to Empathy	12
Fadhil Ahmad Qamar: Art to Wind Turbines	14
<b>2003WCF</b>	<b>16</b>
Victoria Yin: Art to Fame	16
Viviana Astudillo-Clavijo: Art to Biology	18
<b>1999WCF</b>	<b>19</b>
Margaret Eloisa Ticlla Ccenhua: Art to Preservation	19
J. Ariuntuya: Art to Da Vinci	20
Chathura Sooriya-Arachchi: Art to Creativity Guru	21
Alejandro Goldzycher: Art to Literature	22
Dr. Hina Inam: Art to Surgery	24
<b>1998 ChildArt USA</b>	<b>25</b>
Eric Huber: Art in Bluff City	25
Camilla Cohen: Art to Law	26
Carson Beyl: Art to Design	28





This year, we celebrate the 20th anniversary of the founding of the **International Child Art Foundation (ICAF)** as the national arts organization for American children and the international arts organization for the world's children.

# Overview

Our flagship program remains the Arts Olympiad, which over the past twenty years has grown into the world's largest art program for schoolchildren. The idea behind the Olympiad was simple: Create an innovative lesson plan for schools worldwide so that every student can learn about creativity and empathy and then produce art on a single theme.

The students whose art is selected as masterpieces are invited as "official delegates" to the World Children's Festival (WCF) in Washington, D.C. The WCF is held every four years as the "Olympics" of children's imagination to honor the Arts Olympiad winners. It's an opportunity for American children to become more aware of the world, and for the children from around the world to make new friends and share their cultures. The three-day festival and the awards banquet on the fourth day comprise a transformative experience for the participants. The WCF changes them forever. They are no longer only creative but become empathic as well. They do not fear the world but embrace it instead.

The WCF brings the human race together through the children to celebrate "Creativity, Diversity, and Unity." The Arts Olympiad winners lead their own workshops, learn from their peers, and often also teach something useful to their parents and teachers. They become the champions for peace and social justice, the entrepreneurs for sustainable prosperity. Their stories and their art can be best told by them, so we invite you along on this journey with past and present WCF participants.

In this issue, we start with the 2015WCF, then journey back interviewing participants of all previous WCFs and finally the 1998 ChildArt USA, the first national art festival in U.S. history. You'll be introduced to school children, university students and finally a few working professionals. We

strongly believe that their stories will inspire you by transporting you to new places and creative spaces, where you can see how their creativity mirrors your own imagination. The journey begins in New York, with 13-year-old entrepreneur Michael Wong. After that, we hop over to Hong Kong and meet up with Fiona Chung, a twelve-year old world explorer. This journey ends with Carson Beyl, a designer, in Asheville, North Carolina.

This issue is not just about the WCF artists, but your own transformation as well. By taking in the arc of each creative youngster featured here, you can learn something deep about yourself. You can start your own journey to become a creative and empathic learner and leader.

## **HAPPY TRAVELS!**



# ▶ Michael Wong

## Art to Entrepreneurship

My greatest accomplishment was winning the Art Olympiad competition back in 2014. The painting portrayed the world joined together through playing squash, a racquet sport. Winning this competition allowed me to go to meet many international students at the 2015WCF and I was given the opportunity to teach origami.

I still remember seeing many large, white tents being set up that morning to prepare for the wonderful festival. By the afternoon, the tents were full of children of all ages from around the world. I met many students from around the world and shared my knowledge of origami. They were so talented, eager to learn, and drawn to new ideas and techniques. Teaching them reminded me of when I started origami when I was young.

I began folding origami when I was seven and it has since been one of my main forms of art. Origami allows me to visualize how geometric shapes can interact with each other to create unique complex sculptures. Through years of experimentation, I have learned that the paper medium is highly flexible. Even complicated polyhedra such as icosahedron and dodecahedron are easily replicable. I won a Scholastic Art Awards National Gold Medal in the sculpture category through an origami piece.

Since the WCF I have become inspired to apply my origami skills into other fields such as sculpture and architecture. I had become fascinated with the transition of different styles of architecture. So I said to myself: Wouldn't it be great to create a piece to showcase such dramatic shifts? The sculpture I made I called "Old to New."

Instead of sticking with traditional forms of origami, I decided to break through the limitations and cut out each individual face to allow for an unlimited amount of shapes to be created. I was fortunate enough to win a Scholastic Art Awards National Silver Medal.

As children learn to make different forms of art, the more skills they will have in the future. Since the WCF encourages children to learn and embrace art, I believe that the WF is one step towards a future where art and the significance of art within other disciplines will be more widely embraced.



One challenge I currently face is trying to start my own clothing brand. The name of the brand is Bird of Prey and can be found online at [birdofpreystudios.com](http://birdofpreystudios.com). My main goal with this project is to create high quality apparel and accessories using a simplistic and minimalist design. This project is to prove to the world that children can also be creators and not just consumers. One of the main challenges aside from starting the brand is getting the name out to the public and differentiating my message from other brands. The competition within the clothing market is extremely high. This makes differentiation vital to growing my brand.

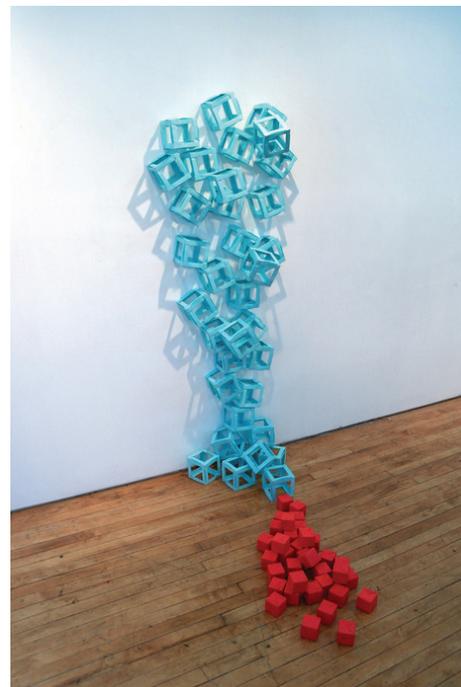
*Michael Wong is a freshman at Scarsdale High School in Scarsdale, New York. His favorite hobbies are graphic design, 3D design, origami, photography, video making... and squash! He is also an entrepreneur.*

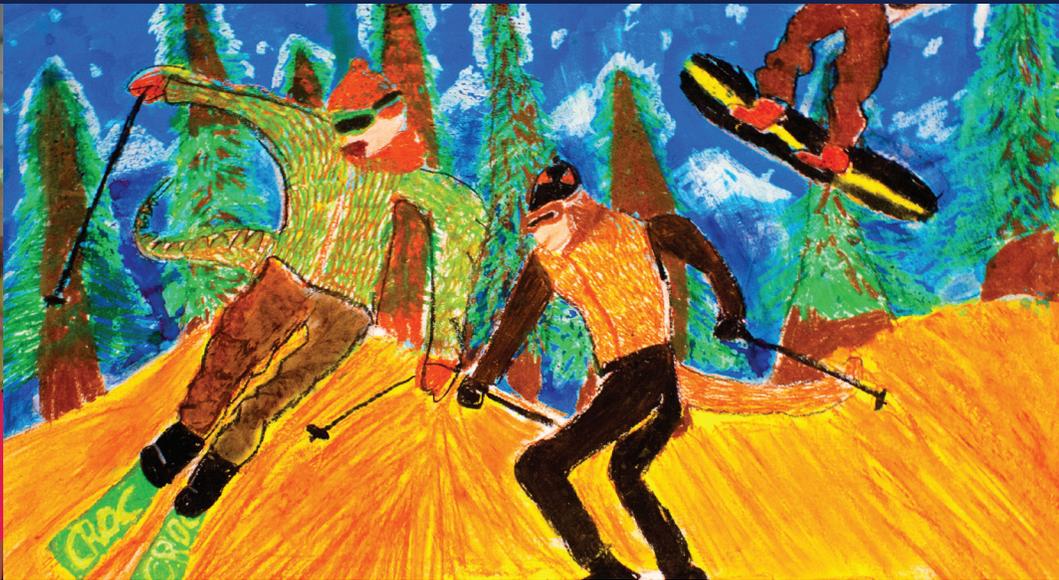




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The ICAF has had a large impact on my life because it allows me to have many new opportunities. The WCF provided me the opportunity to teach and learn. Every young person has his/her own way of taking in information. We are not just consumers. We are creators.”





## ► Adelina Rupolo *Art to Discovery*

It's not every day you get chosen to fly to America and experience a once in a life-time art extravaganza filled with color and contentment. Underneath sunbathed tents were piles of pencils, paint and pictures. Kids from all across the planet roamed the grassy field with smiles lighting up all of their faces. They were here for the same reason I was. **They were here for the ART.** The ICAF provided this for young children across the globe.

The WCF started off with a bang at the Ellipse Park in Washington. Children from all around the world were invited up on the stage to be greeted by the ICAF. Girls and boys were brought onto the stage to share their cultural songs and dances; their flamboyant outfits created whirlwinds of color.

Underneath each tent was a different activity station—watch art by Swatch, marble painting from Turkey, and paper doll self-portraits from the United States. Each

workshop was crowded with kids ready to try something new and fun. I went over to Ms. Eliot, my primary school art teacher. She had set up a postcard making station. I smiled when I looked up and saw pre-made postcards of Australia made by some of the kids from my school.

This buzzing routine went for three days and ended with a gala at the Marriott. The evening was a great opportunity to meet loads of people from around the world. I met a family from New Zealand and took photos with children from Japan and Pakistan. I met two girls from Florida and we traded emails. **Meeting and making friends at the WCF was one of the most memorable things for me.** At the dinner, we traded things like badges and flags that represented our countries and became memories of the exhilarating experience we all had.

*Adelina Rupolo, age 12, won the 5th Australia Arts Olympiad with her artwork titled "True Blue Australians."*

“

I will remember the memories of America and the fun I had forever. I'm sure the same goes for everyone else who was able to share the most wonderful experience with me at the WCF.”

# ► Fiona Chung

## Art to Exploration

I am 12 and I study at St. Paul's Co-educational College, a secondary school founded by the Anglican Church in 1915. The school has over 1,200 pupils.

My first visual arts teacher taught us that day-dreaming is a great way to expand our imagination. That we should be curious about things around us. Without imagination and curiosity, your piece of art will never be as good.

My uncle has influenced me the most. He always tells me different stories, takes me to discover the other side of Hong Kong, and draws with me. My six-year-old cousin influences me a lot, too. He's one of the most creative persons I've ever met. He is always asking questions that make me think all day and night.

**Winning the 5th Arts Olympiad in Hong Kong is definitely one of my greatest accomplishments.** During my trip to Washington, DC and at the WCF, I met a lot of nice people who love art like me. Talking to all the kids and looking at their paintings inspired me a lot. I learnt to never stop doing what I like. We do not know each other at first, but because of the program, we met, we shared our views and got inspired. Art is not just art, it is communication, inspiration, point of view, and a bridge that links us all up.

My personal ambition is to travel around the world. I want to meet different people and understand different cultures. I'll put all of my experience in a journal and publish a book to spread and share it with the world.

*Fiona Chung Kei Ting won the Hong Kong Arts Olympiad and represented Hong Kong at the 2015 WCF.*

“

I met a lot of awesome people from around the world and made a lot of new friends at the WCF. We may not speak the same language, we may not have the same religion, we may not like the same things. It may be hard to communicate and get along at first, but slowly we found our way. I learnt to respect different people, different cultures. “Respect”, a “Smile”, and a “Nice attitude” are the key to world peace.”





“

When I was chosen to be on the ICAF Youth Board at the 4th World's Children Festival, it bolstered my ability to find common good amongst people around the world”

As much as the prospect of living by myself is very exciting, it will be an immense challenge to live away from home for the first time in my life. I wish to be a successful Mechanical Engineer. The world has become a place filled with terror and strife therefore my aspiration for the world is that there will always be help for those in need.

My parents have always been the ones to encourage my sense of curiosity and as a result, my dreams and imagination are nurtured through compassionate people I meet in everyday life.

Being a part of the team at all the State level wins from Tennis to Robotics and being the cofounder of Student Investment Group (that we set up in my High School for the benefit of the School) has felt like the greatest accomplishment so far.

**ICAF helped me discover my inner creativity and use art to bring countries together.** It gave me an opportunity to divert my disappointments that came with losing a few competitive tennis matches to a positive energy as I engaged into creating my art piece. **When I was chosen to be on the ICAF Youth Board at the 4th World's Children Festival, it bolstered my ability to find common good amongst people around the world.**

*Winner of the Arts Olympiad from Texas, Paarth is a freshman at Rutgers University School of Engineering and ICAF Youth Board Member.*

► Paarth  
Koushik  
Art to Engineering



# ▶ Teodora Lazar

## Art as Actualization

A sheet, a pencil and a guitar outlining a vague silhouette according to the verses of a poem, I am a drawing in grayscale. My colors are out in the world waiting for me to find them.

I discovered my primary colors at my high school, where I was continuously crisscrossing between rooms, information, ideas so I could find my basic scale. Once I discovered it, most of my grays became colored, and I began striving for something else to complete my self-portrait. I started to volunteer. My education helped me find my basics, but what amazed me more than finding my colors, was giving them to others. Through the activities I was involved in as a volunteer, as a youth worker and as a tutor, I could share my reds, yellows and blues.

Even though my self-portrait was still incomplete,

I will make it my life purpose to help others finish theirs. That is my dream for the world, my personal ambition, because I know that, in a way, this is exactly how I will get my most beautiful shades.

As I became more conscious of the things I fear or the situations I run from, I do my best to face them directly. Probably, my shyness is and always was my worst enemy, because challenges that come from the inside are much harder to face than the ones forced from the outside. Since this little aspect became a real impediment at some point along the way, I decided to push myself to the limits in order to expand my horizons and grow.

I have had some accomplishments, those that made my family feel joyful, like winning art competitions, publishing articles,

getting accepted to multiple universities with scholarships, but regardless of how important these are for my evolution, I do not count them as the greatest. The moments that I call real accomplishments are those when I do something for others, for the community, for the world. My prizes and my education are of no help if I use them for myself alone.

Winning the Arts Olympiad proved to me that being passionate about something and working hard is the recipe to what people call success. As for me, passion for art was not something I chose, but rather something that chose me at some point in my life, and shaped me ever since. **The moment I stepped onto the National Mall and saw the World Children's Festival happen right in front of me, all of my insecurities and fears of being in that new place faded away. I realized that it wasn't a competition of talents anymore, it was a world of children, a place of knowledge and most of all, a nation of friendship. That festival helped me evolve as a young artist.**

Imagine my surprise when, a few years after the event that changed my artistic and personal life, I was invited to participate in the 2015WCF as a Youth Board Member and a workshop leader. I chose to teach children one of my dearest handicrafts, painting on ceramics. I had the unique opportunity to speak on the 'world stage'—where groups of talented musicians and dancers performed right in front of The White House. As for me, I realized that no story is the same, even if it is told twice. I had the opportunity to live the WCF experience in two distinct ways: as a participant and as a workshop leader and Youth Board Member. Each time, after the festival, I had to make a choice about my future, and I chose art every time.

I admit that I am not even halfway from where I want to be, but step by step I am building my own way. Some of the steps might be insecure and some decisions may not be the right ones, but I am sure that actions, hopes, passion and enthusiasm are more than just words and can influence our path in a great way.

Whether you want to finish your self-portrait first, or you feel like helping others create theirs, is your personal choice. What really matters is using all your creativity in order to make the ordinary exceptional, to shape the world how you like best.

*Winner of the 4th Arts Olympiad in Romania and ICAF Youth Board Member, Teodora Lazar is a freshman at University College London, studying history of art and material studies.*



# ▶ Matovu Musana

## Art to Meaning



I am a passionate performing artist and poet. I also love public speaking. I was the best overall performer at the 4th World Children's Festival and have received other awards as well.

I first attended Baby Jesus Infant School in a Kampala suburb known as "Zzana," then Mustard Seed Day Care and Nursery School in a town called "Najjanankumbi," and finally Harvard Junior School in a town called Gayaza, my family's hometown.

For primary education I joined the Uganda Martyrs' Junior Boys' School in the serene and humble village of Namilyango, where I learned stage arts. I was later admitted to Namilyango College,

which was the first ever secondary school established in East Africa. Later I moved to St. Cyprian High School located in Kyabakadde. Last year I was selected as one of two students for scholarship at GEMS, which without such support I could not afford to attend. I am in 12th year and majoring in Information Communication Technology, Literature, Business and Music Technology.

My personal ambition is to innovate a new form of performing arts that emphasizes human values. My dream for the world is to make it a place where people fully understand that our differences don't matter and the only way each of us can gain full satisfaction from our one life is by living with peace and love for all our neighbors, in total unity, with utmost concern and consideration for each other.

The legendary Beatles have shaped the way I choose the words which appear in the poems I compose because all their lyrics had a lot of influence on a great multitude of people. Also an American band called the "X ambassadors" helped me realize how beautiful it can be to tag a purpose onto every action. I was moved when they dedicated their song "renegades" to people with disabilities, which shows how relevant the band members' lives are.

Martin Luther King also developed my enthusiasm for public speaking and I like the great phrases he uses such as "the bank of justice is bankrupt."

The managers, producers, directors and professionals in my country's arts' industry are not very experienced. Hence I worry that the chances of my works getting great international recognition are likely to be narrowed by this bitter, unavoidable fact.

I did have the opportunity to present a poem dedicated to Queen Elizabeth of England on behalf of all lower primary pupils in Uganda at Hotel Africana during the celebrations of the Commonwealth Heads of Government Meeting in November 2007. At the 2015 World Children's Festival I presented a poem dedicated to the ICAF.

**The ICAF has tripled my esteem as an optimistic African artist and also it has tripled my hope as an artist.** It is thus with a sincere and grateful heart that I say, "Congratulations. Twenty years is a really long time."

*Matovu Martin Musana Sylver is a scholarship holder at the GEMS Cambridge International School in Kampala and the ICAF Youth Board Member.*



# ▶ Claudia Ligia Suteu

## Art to Music

Every day my schedule includes music and art which makes me feel very lucky. I am a classical pianist completing my Ph.D. in classical music and I have written and composed music for seven years. I remember when I was a child my mother would show me albums of great painters. I became interested in art and later I became very fond of music.

Mrs. Domnica Pepelea taught me how to play the piano, how to perform on a stage, how to control my feelings in a competition and then the Piano Olympics. She was my teacher for twelve years. We also prepared my recitals in Washington DC. I am very thankful to Mr. Ashfaq Ishaq, who gave me the chance to be a part of these major events. He surely influenced my career. My both American experiences—the 2003WCF and the 2007WCF—were life lessons and I still dream about those great festival days.

Challenges are everywhere but they require patience. When I started to produce my own music seven years ago, I also begun using the computer in a manner that amazed me more than my parents. To succeed I have to play music and then to produce it right, in complicated Digital Audio Workstations. After many tutorials and hours spent to achieve the perfect sound, exactly as with my instrument, I made my own studio now and there is nothing more beautiful than going to bed with your head full of your own lines and music.

The International Child Art Foundation had a sizable role in my education. I first met many other children coming from very different cultures and I learnt that the languages don't count. My best friend in the 2003WCF was a girl from Bahrain, who didn't speak English. Painting had brought us together and it was much stronger than words. After a great experience in 2003, I was so honored to be an ICAF Youth Board Member. **It is amazing that after so many years, I still stay in touch with children that I have met when I was a kid. Washington and ICAF are now a part of me.**

*As Romania's Arts Olympiad winner, Claudia participated in the 2003WCF and then as ICAF Youth Board Member the 2007WCF where she performed classical music.*





Growing up in New Jersey, I have always pursued my strong passions for both the arts and the sciences. From elementary school to high school, I always seemed to find myself with either a paintbrush or textbook in hand. My personal ambition and dream is to be able to spread the essentiality of global empathy—it is my personal belief that art is a medium through which we can create such a broadening of perspectives.

My parents truly fostered an environment that was enriching for my sense of imagination and curiosity. As a child, they constantly supported any ideas I had that seemed “out-of-the-box” or required any sort of imagination. To further this, they always took the family to visit interesting destinations that stimulated my curiosity, such as interactive museums and scientific laboratories. I still continue to challenge myself in my everyday life by implementing what I’ve learned from my parents.

One of my greatest accomplishments was working with children and adults from around the world at a workshop during the World Children’s Festival. Participants of the workshop worked together to create a large collage out of folded paper cranes, and on those cranes were messages of well-being to all those around the world. This was one of the key moments that seemed so tangible and real—it was one of the moments when I realized how creating art could truly bring many different people together to spread a kind message of empathy and friendship.

**The ICAF workshop truly opened my eyes to the power of art as a medium of spreading the message of empathy.** However, ICAF has also greatly impacted my sense of creativity when I was first brainstorming what kind of workshops to host. It was important to develop a creative way to unite people from different parts of the globe, allowing them to momentarily forget their differences and understand their common love for art and spreading empathy.



While you’re still young, broaden your knowledge and understanding of the world around you. It becomes so easy to forget that we inhabit the world with billions of others, all with different and vibrant backgrounds, cultures, and experiences. Because of this, know that it is never too early to be curious and learn so that you can help contribute to our global sense of empathy and cultural understanding.

*Sorasicha Nithikasem, a past winner of the Arts Olympiad is currently ICAF Youth Board Member. She has emceed the World Children’s Festivals, presented the World Children’s Award, and represented the ICAF at major events. She is a freshman at New York University studying Pre-Medicine as well as taking classes in Studio Art.*

## ► Sorasicha Nithikasem

### Art to Empathy





# ► Fadhil Ahmad Qamar

## Art to Engineering

These days I am doing research on the blade design of wind turbines to capture more wind energy. Yogyakarta, in the southern part of Java facing the Indian Ocean, has good potential for wind energy development in coastal area. Along with my professor, we build prototypes and test them. We are collaborating with local small enterprises to manufacture the turbine itself.

I want to make renewable technology more accessible, especially for those living in remote areas not connected by the power grid. I am picturing myself in the future as a researcher in this field, encouraging and empowering communities to start developing and innovating this technology.

My parents have always encourage me to read books, especially encyclopedias for children. Those were my Google in my childhood. They fostered my sense of curiosity. My parents are both architects and they draw a lot, which developed my interest in art.

One significant challenge I face is my poor communication skills. This became apparent when I was doing my final project at the university which require project management and interpersonal skills. I learned how to communicate from people around me and little by little I managed to coordinate between my teams and completed the project. I am still in a long way to have good communication skills and I think I just need to keep learning and trying my best.

My first experience joining ICAF was in 2003 when I was selected as the Arts Olympiad winner from Indonesia and invited to the World Children Festival. **This was my first experience of going abroad and that was one the best**

**experience I have ever had.** I made a lot of friends from around the world, some of them are still lasted until now and I met numerous inspiring

art instructors with various techniques and styles. In 2007 I had another opportunity to attend the WCF but now as ICAF Youth Board Member. We helped organize the WCF and were emcees on the stage. Being more involved provided me new experiences and knowledge of what happens behind the scene. **The WCF is a great opportunity not only just for learning about the arts, but to build connections between art enthusiasts and activists around the globe.**

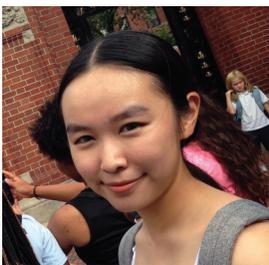
Besides the WCF, the ICAF has taken a part in several international forum where Youth Board Members serve as spokespersons and talk about creativity, peace and other topics. In 2008 I participated in the World Cultural Economic Forum in New Orleans, Louisiana where I made a presentation as part of ICAF's children's panel. In 2010, ICAF joined the Global Competitiveness Forum in Riyadh, Saudi Arabia for another children's panel. I had a chance to join Saudi and international child panelists to make an artwork as souvenir for the forum. I think such occasions allow youngsters to convey their thoughts to world leaders, policy makers and CEOs gathered for the event. Our speeches inspired people and made them aware about our thoughts on the world they had shaped for us. By having such an experience at this early age, I feel more confident and courageous.

It takes determination to be a champion. So we shouldn't stop and get satisfied too soon. Our motto should be: "Love for All, Hatred for None". Sir Isaac Newton's third law says that when a force is applied from one body to another, the second body at the same time applies the same exact force back to the first. Simply put, action equals to reaction. When you give something good, then good things will happen to you and the same goes when you do the opposite. Conflicts and disputes are inevitable as proof of how dynamic this world is, but war has never been and will never be the answer for a resolution. Humans are born different and these differences we must respect and understand. I think a world without war will come about when people put aside their hatreds and spread love instead. Maybe not every good deed is rewarded, but I believe that every action matters and will return to you someday in a way you might not expect.



*Fadhil Ahmad Qamar, graduated with honors in mechanical engineering from Universitas Gadjah Mada in Yogyakarta, a city in Indonesia known for its universities and tradition of tolerance.*





I am humbled and blessed to have been sharing my creative work with a worldwide community for a decade. In the future, I hope to further cultivate the themes in my work, communicate with an even wider audience, and shed

light on the depth and significance of artistic practice in contemporary society.

In the past I have worked primarily with surrealistic motifs. A lot of themes I have covered have to do with human civilization and where we human beings are headed in the future. I am really interested in seeing where humans and machines meet. I don't like to define a style I am working in because I feel I am always evolving and should be evolving and definition is a restriction in a way.

Perhaps surprisingly yet not at all that unsurprisingly, I find that the person who's challenged and stimulated me most intellectually and creatively over the years is my younger sister, Zoe [also a child prodigy attending the Phillips Academy Andover]. There is no one more familiar with and more willing to test and dispute my ideas than her.

The most significant challenge I've come against in my years as an artist is probably that the fine artist's role seems to be growing abstruse in contemporary society. Unlike the accountant, the engineer, the doctor, etc., whose roles and places in the world are more readily definable and acknowledged by the masses, the fine artist appears good for nothing more than producing pictures

## ▶ Victoria Yin Art as Fame

that might end up on someone's wall if lucky. Fine art as a practice is detached, useless, unfit, pretentious, and maybe even boring for an increasingly fast-paced, short-attention spanned consumer cultures and communities.

In addition, continuous new challenges to the infamous 'what is art' question and what seems an increasing subjectivity in the appreciation of art have watered down the contemporary public's respect for and interest in the artistic practice and its practitioners. As such, the result is little attention given to fine art in communities as well as limited encouragement and even doubt or scorn directed towards children and youth practicing or pursuing fine art because of its unpromising, impractical future.

This shadow of practicality and societal judgment is something that not only I, but majority of practicing artists, young, aspiring, or professional alike, must acknowledge and bear today.

**Even though it was years ago, I remember going to DC [for the ICAF festival] and being in such a global community and getting to interact with a lot of young artists who were united in the name of creativity and peace was definitely an experience of a lifetime.**

I came to realize that art is a versatile medium and a very empathetic medium and being in that diverse community has in a sense spurred me forward and introduced me to the potential of what I could possibly do with my own artwork. The spirit of the event is something I have worked to and am still working to spread through my artwork and establishment of the Victoria and Zoe Yin Global Foundation for Children's Arts with my younger sister.

*Once a child prodigy in the arts, Victoria Yin is on her way to becoming an acclaimed artist. Winner of the 2nd Arts Olympiad from Massachusetts at the age of 8, Victoria participated in the 2nd World Children's Festival in 2003. The ChildArt magazine's July-September 2005 issue featured her as spotlight artist. As a nine year old, she wrote that "through art, I learn to understand our knowledge of form, the science of color, and the harmony between man and manmade." She is currently a junior at Brown University, with a double major in fine arts and literary arts.*

# ▶ Viviana Astudillo-Clavijo

## Art to Biology



Art and nature have been two of my great loves since I was a child. I have made art for as long as I can remember and I continue to be an active member of the Toronto arts community by participating in group art shows and painting murals. My early love of nature also drove me to seek a Ph.D. at the University of Toronto and Royal Ontario Museum where I am studying the evolutionary history of South American riverine fishes. My ambition is to merge my natural history research and art in a way that allows me to effectively communicate the wonder of nature and the importance of preserving it through biological illustrations, paintings, and murals.

My mother encouraged me to make art and become involved in local and international art events from a very young age (I was 9 when I attended my first international art event—the ICAF festival) and was heavily involved in helping me find and pursue these opportunities. On the other hand, my father would take us on hikes and to explore nature, and his own bewilderment and curiosity was contagious. As I grew older, my parents were just as supportive of my bringing home dead animals to study and draw and of me going to the jungle to further my exploration.

Together, art and science taught me how to be more observant and curious. Early on in my studies my art and science took the form of reproduction. I painted from pictures and repeated what I was told in lecture. Now, as a graduate student, I exercise my imagination much more: I create my own scenes that depict an idea or feeling when I paint, and in my research I design approaches to expand our knowledge of the natural world.

A big challenge that I have faced up to this point is being a girl in two male-dominated fields. One day I was doing a group mural when an interviewer asked me, “How does it feel to be one of the only girls here today?” I actually had not noticed until it was pointed out to me, but I have not been able to “not notice” it again. When I started my Ph.D. I realized that, again, I was one of a few women fish biologists, especially among those who do research in the jungles of the tropics. Though I have not been outwardly discriminated against for being a woman by my male peers, the long history of men in both art and science have resulted in some challenges that are unique to women in these fields with regards to career development, personal awareness, and self-esteem.

**The ICAF gave me my first introduction to being a member of the International community. It gave me the opportunity to meet people from all over the world that shared my love of art, and in doing so, taught me at a very young age that creativity has no bounds and that ideas only get better when we share them with people with different world experiences.** Today I continue to take an international approach to my art and research by seeking inspiration from the human and natural world at large and by collaborating with educators and researchers at institutions in other countries.

*As winner from Canada of ICAF's very first art program, Viviana represented her country at the ICAF's very first festival. She then joined the ICAF Youth Board and was an emcee at two other World Children's Festivals. Now 26 years old, she is completing her Ph.D. in evolutionary biology of tropical freshwater fishes at the University of Toronto.*

# ► Margaret Eloisa Ticlla Ccenhua

## Art to Resoration

From the National School of Fine Arts of Peru, I obtained a bachelors in fine arts, with a specialization in painting. I work for the city art gallery “Pancho Fierro”—a non-commercial space to promote cultural activities in the historical center of Lima. These cultural activities include hosting art exhibitions, conferences and workshops. I am preparing my path for advanced studies in restoration and conservation of cultural patrimony.

I collaborated as a sculpture restorer of the Municipal Theater of Lima, which had been closed for many years due to a fire. The restored theater is one of the most beautiful theatres in Latin America and a venue for national and international artists.

When I was 12 years old, I had the opportunity to participate in the ICAF’s first World Children’s Festival in Washington D.C. This was the first time I traveled abroad, to a place far, far away. We were thousands of children from around the world. It was a wonderful experience even if we could not communicate through our mother tongues. I guess our paintings were our way to communicate with each other and the world.

**Meeting these children awakened my curiosity for other cultures and for learning other languages. I consider that this experience motivated me to study art. It made me see art as a way to express how much we love, care and respect what is surrounding us, nature and its multiple forms of life. I had the chance to visit a beautiful country, but above all, I had the opportunity to feel I was visiting every part of the world through the children I was meeting.**

I want to learn and speak many languages because I consider that they will open the gates for studying abroad, for learning about other cultures and for interacting with the people holding those cultures. And also because I would like to read poetry as it was written in the original language. I feel that part of the meaning is lost in translation. My motivation to learn other languages is



strong but it does not make the learning process easier. I still struggle every time I need to write in English or French.

I dream for the world to offer equal access to good education for every young girl or boy. Maybe it is too naive but I also dream, as someone has dreamt before, a world full of love, with no wars, a world where there aren’t inequalities due to religion, race, or social status.

*Margaret Eloisa Ticlla Ccenhua was the finalist from Peru and she participated in the ICAF’s first International festival. She has organized Peru Arts Olympiads as ICAF Youth Board Member.*

# ▶ J. Ariuntuya

## Art to Da Vinci



I was very curious as a child. Everything called my attention and understanding. I believed that there should be things more real, more live, more colorful than the things I could actually see around me. So I started touching everything, every material and felt them. I took them by hand, touched or tasted the materials, cut them or ripped them. Then my surroundings, people around me and nature became wonders to me and I started drawing on everything I could find—papers, notebooks, newspapers and even the walls and floors. Clothes, curtains, journals, everything I happily cut apart to make a new artistic creation. For my brothers and sisters it was obvious that I was an undisciplined child.

My sister was interested in paintings and would tell me about famous artists. When she told me Leonardo Da Vinci, I felt a passion to become someone like him and to make great artworks equivalent to his and within that dream I saw myself been called 'The Great Mongolian Artist Ariuntuya' in the history of arts. These things influenced my artistic career a lot. My father happily supported me when he heard I wanted to become a famous artist. Also when I won the Arts Olympiad, I was delighted because it encouraged me a lot.

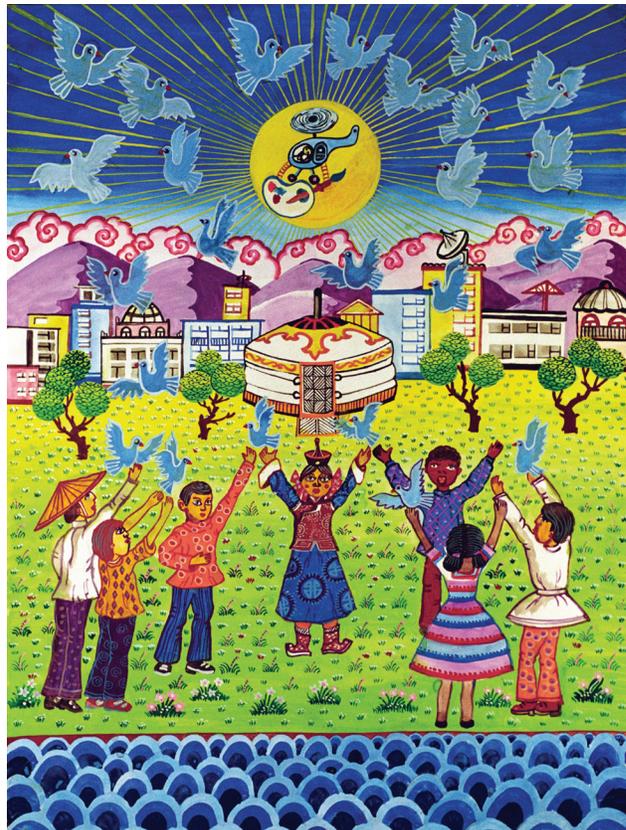
Children take things as they are and express themselves without wearing a mask. That is why their expressions convey pure, precise, and important messages to the world. On the other hand, experience of feeling and building art play important role for their future.

To create new things, to be able to see from different perspectives, to enjoy beauty and to adapt to new circumstances with distinct impressions are the abilities we can learn from art and this makes life more rich and more interesting and helps us to be positive.

Art is a universal and eternal language that has a power to touch any human in any country. Art is a unique instrument that can convey feeling, emotion, concepts as well as values and symbols which cannot be expressed through words, actions, and ordinary communication between persons.

To share interesting things such as one's views, feelings, or experiences, to question the audience and invite their reflection, and to influence our environment and social consciousness through art is the duty of the artist.

I think art influences a children a lot. Not only does it teach technical work, harmony, and history, it reaches into their hearts and creates positive and creative personalities. When children are exposed to art, their creativity, capabilities of freethinking, altruism and love for things, nature, and people develops, and gradually they learn to express themselves freely. Furthermore



they learn to appreciate beauty and to understand aesthetics, so their view of the world becomes brighter. When one is conscious, positive and full of enthusiasm, one always creates goodness filled with brightness. Development of the city, country and furthermore of the whole world depends on the level of consciousness of each and every person.

I feel I am getting closer to peace, happiness and freedom. People usually attribute happiness to fame and affluence. But the world is rich with more meaningful and precious things. When an artist exhibits his or her artwork, a seed is planted in every spectator. That seed could grow into anything. So I look forward to spreading everything I want and sharing with others through art.

*Ariuntuya Jambaldorj, winner of the 2nd Arts Olympiad in Mongolia, graduated in fine arts and is a professional painter in Ulaanbaatar. Her works have been exhibited in many countries and she has won several awards. She is a teaching artist, inspiring kids to realize their potential and build their future.*



# ▶ Alejandro Goldzycher

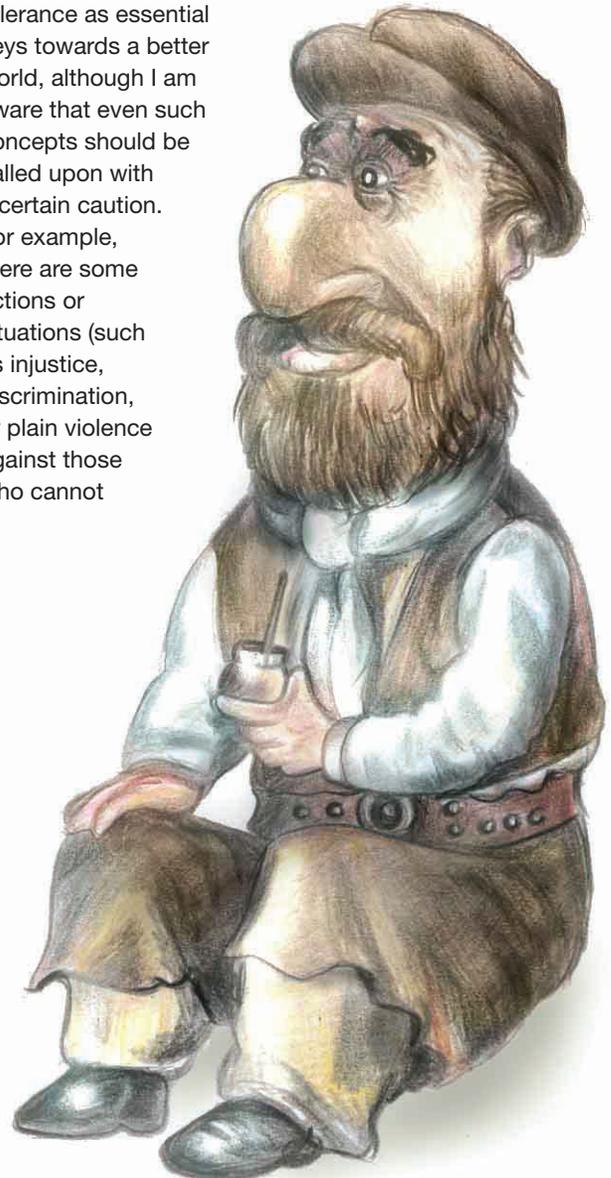
## Art to Literature

I was only nine years old when I took part in the 1st World Children's Festival, which directly shaped my creative development and my understanding of the role of art in my own life as well as in today's society in general. It was within its context that I began to recognize the institutional dimension of art and to feel the sense of responsibility that emanates from it. This experience also strengthened my conviction that art does not need to be 'political' in an obvious and naïvely moralistic way to have a transforming effect on reality.

The capacity to imagine possible worlds through art (even, if not especially, the most 'fantastic' ones) undoubtedly carries with it the power to conceive reality in unconventional ways, along with the prospect of recreating this same gesture outside the specific frame of artistic creation. In this way, art also reinforces our sense of being actors in a world that may sometimes seem too far away and dehumanized to even try to intervene in it. It makes us reassess the very idea of possibility while inviting us to find and build other ways of living in community, maybe even more so when each one's individuality is more strongly implicated in the creative process. **The fact that children from all the world are expressly invited to contemplate these horizons, to channel their creative energy and their most personal interests within a frame of international collaborative work, is, I believe, one of ICAF's key contributions, for which we should be immensely grateful.**

When asked about my dream for the world, I have the impulse to express it in terms of an imagined utopia.

However, at the same time I feel it may sometimes be preferable not to suggest a finished idea of that hypothetical state, as it can be a tricky exercise to perform. The calamities of the last century, which were often caused or justified in the name of great ideals, are still fresh in our memories, or at least they should be so. Nevertheless, I would find it hard not to mention empathy, solidarity, education, equal opportunities, and tolerance as essential keys towards a better world, although I am aware that even such concepts should be called upon with a certain caution. For example, there are some actions or situations (such as injustice, discrimination, or plain violence against those who cannot



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You should not give in to the pressure to be 'normal', nor pressure others to be so.”



defend themselves) that should not be tolerated; education should not be confused with indoctrination or standardization, and even the concept of 'peace' should not be made synonymous (as it may sometimes happen) with mere 'passivity'.

The challenges I face are to rise to the occasion when meeting the responsibilities entailed by adult life. To keep following my career in academic teaching and research and to know how to make the most of those competences, for me and for others. To carry on with artistic creation as a key part (and not as simple complement) of my personal and professional growth.

You should not give in to the pressure to be 'normal', nor pressure others to be so. Understand that actual reality is not all there is. That there is also the world of possibility, which is open (or should be demanded to be so) for you to do something with it. That creativity is not a prerogative of art, but can be exercised in the most diverse occasions of everyday life. In this sense, you can be the 'artist' in some way or another, even if you do not paint, dance, play music, or perform any other of the activities which are traditionally recognized as 'art'. I believe, however, that art offers a specific kind of experience, one I strongly encourage you to try either as creators or as spectators (being both of these roles, in fact, less distinct from each other than they seem to be at first).

On the other hand, if you are used to living within a context where you feel your fundamental rights are observed, keep in mind that these circumstances have never been inevitable, and that they may not go on forever. That it is only because others have struggled to make them real that you are now able to enjoy them, and that it is your right and your duty to do them justice day-to-day.

You are lucky enough not to know the urges of need and have been given the power to choose, even if it is in an extent according to your age. With respect to those children who have not been granted such conditions (a privilege that should not be so, though in practice it certainly is), neither well-meant apologies nor a sentiment of pity will be of any use to them if not accompanied by concrete actions. And although not everybody may be in a position to take part in such actions directly, the power of each of us to express her or his convictions, to address one's government, to raise awareness, should not be underestimated. The resolution not to get involved is as much a political stance as to do so. It is, in any case, a matter of responsibility, and it is up to you to decide what to do about it.

*Winner of the ICAF's first competition in Argentina, Alejandro Goldzycher represented his country at the 1999 festival. He is an ICAF Youth Board Member. He is working towards a PhD in Literature at the University of Buenos Aires.*

# ▶ Dr. Hina Inam

## Art to Surgery

As a shy girl with lots of dreams in her eyes I entered an arts competition and never did I think I'd win. And not just win, but fly all the way to America and meet people from all over the world. **This was life changing. Not only did the experience give me confidence, it brought a realization that even wildest of dreams can come true. And it further flourished my love for art.**

I still remember the evening when the results were to be announced. My teacher took me along to "The Point" (place where the announcement was to be made). I had no clue what was going on. I was thrilled. When I went home, the expressions on the faces of my parents were priceless when I told them I had won and would be travelling to America. It was a great moment of my life. **The ICAF has had a significant effect in making me more confident, more creative. I cannot thank ICAF enough.**

I had always wanted to be a doctor. The first time I saw the beating heart and the lungs in action, I was in love and in awe with the masterpiece that God had created. Once I had ended my internship, I knew surgery was what I will do for the rest of my life. I love working with my hands. I could not just prescribe medications and be happy. So surgery was it. But what type of surgery? I loved neurosurgery and cardiac surgery, but had to select one. My love for the heart and the lungs won me over, so I am becoming a cardiac surgeon. I love the idea that I can save a life.

My love for arts has led me to where I am. Losing oneself in something other than your academics is essential in keeping ones sanity during the rigorous curriculum of medical study. The observation of artwork, studying each line, color, and the particular details which make the work intricate in itself not only gives one a more firm grasp of the art, but can also build upon examination skills. Medicine is also an art form, with each intricate detail essential to the welfare of individuals in the care of doctors.

Working in a men oriented department is an everyday challenge. But we have many aspiring young women here in all fields of medicine: urology, general surgery, neurosurgery, pediatric surgery, breast surgery, vascular



surgery, anesthesia, cardiology—you name it and we have them. My two best women friends are trauma surgeon and neurosurgeon.

I have four siblings. My sister Sumera obtained a master's degree in statistics and teaches at Dow Medical University. Farah is a textile designer. My brother is an aeronautical engineer, and Ayesha, the youngest, is an undergrad studying commerce.

For years Karachi's walls have been spattered with the bloodstains of murder victims and scrawled with graffiti. Art has helped here, too. A group of artists and volunteers are reclaiming the walls by painting them with cheerful designs aimed at bringing some happiness and pride back to my violent, chaotic, and corrupt city.

**Festivals like the ICAF's can bring world peace by convening artist from all over the world to share ideas and rid the world of hatred.**

*As the winner from Pakistan, Hina participated in the 1999 festival in Washington. She is now a doctor who is completing her surgical residency in cardiothoracic surgery at the Agha Khan University Hospital in Karachi.*

# ▶ Eric Huber

## Art in Bluff City

My dream for the world is to somehow bring to everyone a common understanding and open-mindedness to everyone else in the world. My greatest accomplishment thus far has probably been my work with my writing partner, Josh McLane, and our creative venture, Stanley Justice Productions. We've hosted film showcases and have gotten a few films into some local film festivals. Most recently, we started creating our own super hero short films and plan on expanding our own little hero universe. The greatest influence on my imagination and sense of curiosity has definitely been my teachers and fellow art-makers. While my parents were definitely always my greatest encouragers and role models, my teachers and friends have pointed me in the direction of countless fascinations and curiosities.

I never had anything happen to me like my experience with the ICAF (and haven't since). With a drawing I did in 5th grade, I won a trip to Washington D.C. for "ChildArt USA," not only for me, but also for my father, art teacher, and her husband. That event may have also been what planted the seed in my parents' and my head that art was a thing that I could one day do for my livelihood. I was always drawing Batman and Ninja Turtles, but from that point art making became "what I did".

I'm at a pretty challenging moment currently. I recently left a stable 9-5 day job and am currently one month into striking out on my own. I'm freelancing, part-time teaching, and even picking up a few shifts at a local restaurant. Even with all of that, I have more time for my creative work and I'm liking it so far.

My message to the younger folks would be, Kids, the world constantly needs help understanding itself. Get smart. No matter what you decide to be as you grow up,

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knowing as much as possible about as many things as possible helps you to make as many connections as you can. And the world needs as much connection as it can get. Be into things. Don't worry about who thinks what is lame. If you're into it, be into it and connect it to other stuff. And read.

*With three art degrees, all from Memphis, his hometown, Eric Huber is a graphic designer and videographer who is on track to become a successful filmmaker.*





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To receive an invitation at that age and that time to go to Washington DC, have my artwork exhibited, meet other artists from around the country, see the National Monuments; it was an incredible experience for so many different reasons as an artist but also as a person.”

# ▶ Camilla Cohen

## Art to Law

When I first found out that I had won the ICAF competition I was in middle school, and at that time my family had recently emigrated from South Africa to Florida. One of the main reasons why my family left and came to America, like so many other people, was to provide us with opportunities. **To receive an invitation at that age and that time to go to Washington DC, have my artwork exhibited, meet other artists from around the country, see the National Monuments; it was an incredible experience for so many different reasons as an artist but also as a person.**

It definitely left an impression on me for the rest of my life and also for my family. At that time my mom, grandmother, and brother had come with me to Washington and it was really special. I definitely still remember it and art has always been a part of my life. When I was younger, I did it as a way to express myself and as I grew older it was also an expression but a passion as well. Even though I didn't end up doing art as a career, it's still a part of my life. I still paint, I still draw, I still discuss art with my mom, I visit exhibitions, and I go to museums. It's like the love of my life.

Once I graduated from college I ended up with Teach for America in Spanish Harlem, New York City. For those two years it was interesting to see what the teenagers were going through at that time. My favorite moments of teaching were the times I had to interact with students and be a voice of reason in their lives, when maybe they felt like they couldn't speak to their parents or didn't have anyone to talk to about their fears or dreams. It was a great experience. Eventually I decided that I wanted to pursue my other dream which was going to law school. I did that after teaching for two years and now practice law.

And I love it! The creativity never ends. It's funny because I think as an artist I bring a different perspective to law in a profession that most people would think is filled with people who are much more linear in their thinking. My background in art has given me a different perspective on how I approach situations and analyze issues. Law is challenging in a different way than art. Everyday I'm learning, and everyday I'm growing. Until it stops being rewarding, I won't do law, but for right now it's rewarding in a different way. Art feeds my creative passion, and law feeds a different curiosity that I always had as well.

As a child, and still as an adult, you have hope that we're progressing and moving towards a better good. I remember that the rose colored glasses represented that and I was looking through them and there was a rainbow. I also remember the picture had a lot of realistic concerns we had in the world at that time and unfortunately that we still have. Issues like HIV. I came from a country where the aids epidemic was disastrous and the average life expectancy of someone was dramatically lower than it is in more developed countries. So for me, that was a very real

issue and I think that the interplay between being hopeful, but also being cognizant of the challenges was kind of the purpose of that painting and where I was going with it. This kind of sounds depressing for maybe a 9 year old, but I remember thinking at the time being very aware of what was going on in the world but, hopeful that we were moving toward a better world.

**Camilla's message for you:** I think enjoying art and doing art is a very special thing and if it's something that you're passionate about put all of your energy into it and do everything you can to foster and nurture that talent. Don't let anyone tell you that you shouldn't be an artist or you shouldn't pursue that because people that are successful in this would pursue things that make them most happy. If art is that for you, than that is something you should devote every hour of your life to. What I took away from my experience with the International Child Art Foundation was that there are other people out there all around the world from different countries that love art just as much as you do and also have something to say about it which is really incredible. So if sometimes you think you are different just remember that there are thousands of other people out there all across the world that are just like you.

**The making of the America Mural was incredible! There was this moment when we all had different perspectives, but we were all coming together, unified. In that moment, while there were among difference amongst us, what was common was art. It was a really cool experience.**

*Camilla Cohen, Esq. works with a law firm in Florida. She represents policyholders against insurance companies who show bad faith and sues them for contractual damages. In 1998, Camilla represented Florida at the first national arts festival in US history hosted by the ICAF on The National Mall and the Ronald Reagan Building and International Trade Center.*



# ▶ Carson Beyl Art to Design

After graduating from college I spent several years in New York City as a designer for Comedy Central & MTV Networks. This past summer I decided to leave New York and travel south to pursue my own design projects—creating a limited-edition line of hats and a newsprint magazine. These projects led me to my current job as graphic designer for a small company called Seltzer Goods located in Asheville, North Carolina.

Right now I am trying to find happiness and beauty in simplicity. I think that would also be my dream for the world.

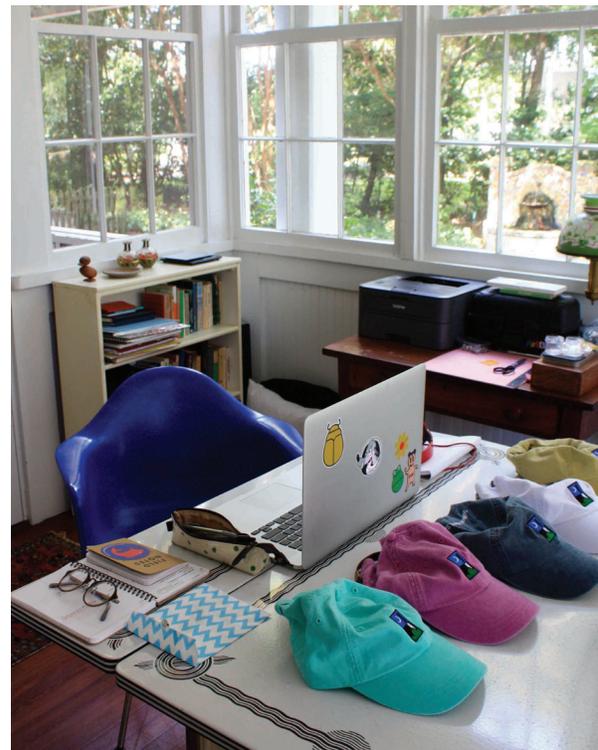
My greatest accomplishment is that I am able to create and design things for a living. It is what I loved most when I was little, and it is still what I love most in life.

My own personal challenge has been that I have always been quiet and most comfortable observing the world rather than speaking up. As I get older I am learning to value these qualities while still pushing myself to speak my mind when something needs to be said.

**The ICAF inspired my first thoughts on politics and things beyond my very insular 8 year old world. It helped to teach me that art and design have the power to deliver important messages to the world.**

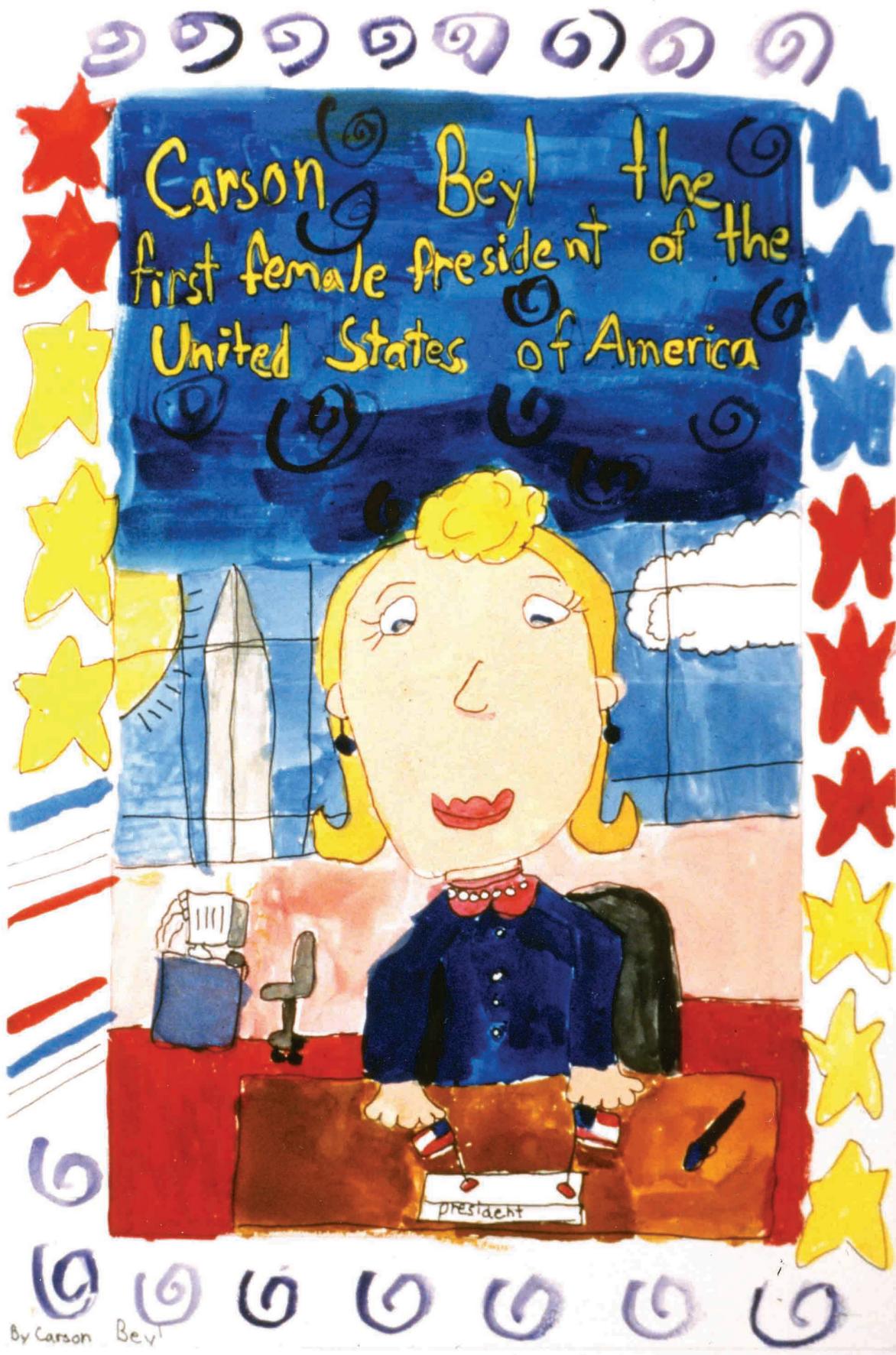
You should never stop making things and never stop coming up with ideas. Everyone is happiest when they are creating!

*At the ICAF we always remembered her for her foresight at the age of 8 about the first woman president in The White House. We finally found Carson, thanks to the Internet and her own website, [www.CarsonBeyl.com](http://www.CarsonBeyl.com). She was the winner from Pennsylvania, studied Communication Design at Carnegie Mellon University and is now living in Asheville, North Carolina.*



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# ChildArt

The Magazine of the International Child Art Foundation

Our twenty years of experience working with children across the United States and around the world reaffirms the belief that all children are creative, that their imagination is seeded for discovery or innovation, and that the art they produce is the most honest and purest form of human creative expression.

*Children's America Mural* produced by child artists from 49 U.S. states and the District of Columbia at ChildArt USA—the national children's art festival produced by ICAF in 1998. The mural is on display at the 1999 WCF as an inspiration to child artists from 76 countries (including the U.S.) who collaboratively produced the *Children's World Mural* which was on display at the 2003 World Bank/IMF Annual Meetings in Dubai.

Today's world still treats children merely as pupils or consumers, places zero value on their imagination, and makes no room for their masterpieces, even in the so-called contemporary art museums.

You can help change the world by supporting the ICAF > <https://ICAF.org/support>



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