

Young Londoners Use Art to Voice their Climate Dreams

Press release

Over 1,500 young Londoners will use art to express their personal response to climate change, as the third Young London Print Prize launches today (Thursday 23 June). The competition started during the pandemic as a response to a surging demand for arts education and ways for young people to express their response to the climate crisis. By the time the winners are announced in November, more than 3,000 young London artists between the ages of 9 and 11 will have taken part, from neighbourhoods across the capital.

Last year marked a radical shift in the conversation around climate change in the UK as COP26 headed to Glasgow. The recent IPCC report painted a sobering picture of the future of climate change and the scale of action needed to tackle it, with young people now taking a much more active role in the debate – from school protests to influencing the agenda for the next UN conference, COP27 in Egypt.

All the work showcased by the Young London Print Prize will be created, judged and curated by young people themselves. The competition is driven by the idea that all young people can be artists in their own right. It aims to write a new future for contemporary art in the capital that reflects the real diversity of young Londoners.

In 2021, the Prize was won by Meryl Basoa, a year 6 pupil at Heronsgate Primary School in Thamestead for a print called 'Climate Love'. This year's entries and winners will be displayed at Woolwich Contemporary Print Fair from 3-7 November, alongside some of the world's finest printmakers.



Over 25 schools will take part in this year's Prize, with free teacher training sessions and more than 40 workshops delivered across the capital from Plumstead and Walthamstow to the Isle of Dogs, where pupils are taught how to make art using a technique known as relief printing and prepare their submission to the prize.

The winners of this year's print prize will be announced on November 3rd and showcased on the Piccadilly Lights, three days before the start of this year's COP27 conference, challenging the delegates to recognise the role of culture, creativity and young people in tackling the climate emergency.

"Throughout history, printmaking has been the most revolutionary and democratic form of art. It's the medium through which ideas have flowed to address the big societal issues of the day," said Jack Bullen, co-founder of Woolwich Contemporary Print Fair. "Now, in the middle of a climate crisis, we're using printmaking once more to shape the world. And the art you'll see from these young people could be just as revolutionary."

Reflecting on their school's involvement, the art team at St Paul's Way Trust said: "Taking part is an amazing experience for our Y12 students. The Young Curators workshops allow the students to critically discuss and judge submissions for the Young London Print Prize and discuss themes they are passionate about, such as the climate emergency and art's role in this crisis. The workshops have given these young people a new perspective on careers in arts and inspired their interest in curation, printmaking and protest art."

The Young London Print Prize is run by Woolwich Contemporary Print Fair, with support from Peabody, Anthesis, Landsec, Boodle Hatfield and the Foundation for Future London. For more information, please visit www.woolwichprintfair.com. If you or your school is interested in taking part in the Prize, please contact: margo@woolwichprintfair.com.

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Woolwich Contemporary Print Fair showcases the best contemporary printmaking from across the globe. It nurtures emerging talent and inspires people of all ages to learn and collect. This is now the largest print fair of its kind in Europe today. www.woolwichprintfair.com