

2026 Awards



NATIONAL ART HONOR SOCIETY

The National Art Education Association program was formed to inspire and recognize students who have shown an outstanding ability and interest in art. The program supports members in their efforts to attain the highest standards in art scholarship, character, and service, and to bring art education to the attention of the school and community.

NAHS celebrates students who are passionate about art and committed to excellence. Members demonstrate creativity, leadership, and dedication both in and out of the classroom while promoting the arts in our school and community through exhibits, events, and outreach. To be inducted, students must maintain a minimum 2.7 GPA (B average), complete Art Club lettering requirements, earn 250 points, and submit their candidate forms by March 1. Each spring, members are recognized at a formal Induction Ceremony, where they receive a pin, certificate, and society flower (Blue Ocean Chrysanthemum). Seniors earn a multi-colored honor cord and pin to wear at graduation and officer stole, recognizing their years of dedication to the arts.

Inductees: Aubrey Cotton, Audrey Theis, Avery Merck, Ayva McNamara, Brynn Spokely, Cameron Kittelson, Claire Grinde, Emmersyn Arends, Estella Rogenes, Grace Gilbertson, Justin Torroll, Keira Kozojed, Mya Oelrich

Honored Alumni: Amy Nielsen, Charlotte Johnson, Claire Torgerson, Elisa Jennen, Evelyn Willison, Layne Leiser, Paige Cotton, Sebastian Gaytan

ELECTED OFFICERS

25-26: Charlotte Johnson **President**, Evelyn Willison **Vice President**, Paige Cotton & Elisa Jennen **Secretary**, Amy Nielsen **Historian**, Emmersyn Arends **Treasurer**, Avery Merck **Public Relations**

26-27: Layne Leiser **President**, Claire Torgerson **Vice President**, Ayva McNamara **Secretary**, Estella Rogenes **Historian**, Mya Oelrich **Treasurer**, Brynn Spokely **Public Relations**

LETTERING

The following students earned a Hillsboro Varsity Letter by completing Art Club By-Laws and participating in North Dakota Art Competitions. Lettering is a traditional high school honor that recognizes a student's significant achievement, commitment, and contribution within a particular activity. Most commonly associated with athletics, earning a "letter" signifies that a student has gone above and beyond basic participation and has met established standards of excellence, dedication, and responsibility.

Art Club Lettering at Hillsboro High School represents that same level of distinction within the arts. Students earn this recognition by meeting specific bylaw requirements, which include active participation in club activities, completion of semester projects and artist statements, involvement in exhibitions and events, and contributions to service and leadership within the program.

Amy Nielsen, Aubrey Cotton, Audrey Theis, Avery Merck, Ayva McNamara, Brynn Spokely, Cameron Kittelson, Charlotte Johnson, Claire Grinde, Claire Torgerson, Elisa Jennen, Emily Kittelson, Emmersyn Arends, Estella Rogenes, Evelyn Willison, Grace Gilbertson, Jameson Lee, Justin Torroll, Keira Kozojed, Layne Leiser, Mya Oelrich, Paige Cotton, Sebastian Gaytan

ART CLUB MEMBERS

We had 45 Members enrolled in Art Club this year. The following students are enrolled members in Art Club for the school year, that did not letter, but still participated! They participated in field trips, studio days, events, or was enrolled in an Art Class. **Alana Arechigo, Andrew Job, Brekkyn Bjornson, Camila Cortez, Carlyn Jennen, Ethan Johnson, Gabriella McNamara, Hayden Wilson, Jack Short, Jacqueline Villarreal, Jameson Lee, Josephine Mau, Kara Mueller, Kiera Nelson, Lillie Drake, Luis Garza, Mason Stauss, Owen Holte, Sebastian Leal, Siri Williams, Westin Lee, Valentina Garza**

ARTIST IN SPOTLIGHT

Every season an artist is chosen to be the artist in spotlight! Artists are interviewed about their artistic passion and work is displayed. This talented artist is advertised on social media, Hillsboro Banner, and at the high school. They are chosen by work ethic, passion, talent, and spirit. They receive a medal, certificate, and a gift at Night of the Arts.

FALL: Amy Neilen WINTER: Elisa Jennen SPRING: Jacqueline Villarreal

UND JURIED HIGH SCHOOL ART COMPETITION

This exhibition took place in January. Artwork was displayed in the Colonel Eugene E. Myers Art Gallery at the Hughes Fine Arts Center.

1st Place Award: Charlotte Johnson: Vacillator, Acrylic

Amy Nielson: Rainbow Voyager, Acrylic

Ayva McNamara: Memories, Charcoal

Breklyn Bjornson: Tigerlilly, Acrylic

Cameron Kittelson: A Light in The Dark, Acrylic

Claire Grinde: Dr. Pepper Splash, Mixed Media

Claire Torgerson: Claire's Childhood, Charcoal

Elisa Jennen: Elisa's Soul, Acrylic

Emmersyn Arends: Demeter, Pencil

Estella Rogenes: Fall in a Jar, Color Pencils

Evelyn Willison: Best Friend in Pointillism, Pen and Ink

Layne Leiser: Oasis of Knowledge, Mixed Media

Mya Oelrich: Blue Eyed Baby, Graphite

North Dakota Scholastic Art & Writing Awards

This year, the North Dakota region received 273 submissions from talented middle and high school students, with only 45% earning recognition—making Charlotte's accomplishments even more impressive.



Charlotte's Awards:

Gold Key – Arrow, Collard Woman, A Self Portrait (Mixed Media)

Silver Key – Scarred (Ceramic & Glass)

Honorable Mention – Nostalgia (Acrylic)

Honorable Mention – Lover (Acrylic)

Her Gold Key artwork will now advance to the national level, where it will be judged alongside top student work from across the country. National award recipients will be announced on March 25, with a celebration held at Carnegie Hall in New York City this June.

Being recognized in the Scholastic Art & Writing Awards is a remarkable achievement that highlights Charlotte's creativity, dedication, and artistic voice. She truly represents some of the very best of young artists in North Dakota and beyond.

VCSU Art Exhibition

The Valley City State University LJR Center for the Arts Gallery annual VCSU Juried Student Art Exhibit. This year's exhibition featured an outstanding collection of work. We were honored to have Jess Christy, Executive Director of the North Dakota Council on the Arts and a VCSU Art Department alum, and MFA, UND alum, serve as the juror.

1st Place (\$100 Gift Card+Certificate): Apathy, by Charlotte Johnson, Pencil

2nd Place (\$50 Gift Card+Certificate) Used, by Estella Rogenes, Oil Pastel

Honorable Mention Home in a Heart, by Estella Rogenes, Watercolor

Honorable Mention Highway 1009, by Jaqueline Villarreal, Acrylic

Claire, by Charlotte Johnson, Color Pencil

Tropic, by Emmersyn Arends, Acrylic

Yellowstone Hotsprings, by Elisa Jennen, Acrylic

Clockwork Crows, by Grace Gilbertson, Pen & Ink

Waiting for Our Return, by Avery Merck, Acrylic

Starburst, by Brekkyn Bjornson, Color Pencil

Coke, by Mya Oelrich Color Pencil

Brynnie, by Brynn Spokely, Charcoal

Highway 1009, by Jaqueline Villarreal, Acrylic

Loving the Big City, by Ayva McNamara, Pen & Ink

Beauty in Life Itself, by Cameron Kittelson, Color Pencil

NDSU Art Exhibition

NDSU invited high school students to a day of creativity at Renaissance Hall in the heart of downtown Fargo for Art Camp! This event was hosted by SoDAA (NDSU's School of Design, Architecture & Art). Students were immersed in 40 different

interactive workshops, learning with professional artists in studio sessions. The day ended with a Juried High School Exhibition at the Plains Art Museum.

Elisa Jennen	Mixed Media	Heart of Gold
Emmersyn Arends	Photography	Nature V1 & V2
Charlotte Johnson	Ceramic	Scared
Charlotte Johnson	Acrylic	Fruitfull
Stella Rogenes	Acrylic	Swans in Style

Celebrating Art Published Artists

This Nationwide contest only selects the best art to be published in the full-color hardbound art book, 'Celebrating Art'. This is not a contest where every entry is invited to be published.

Fall 2025 Charlotte Johnson Watercolor Lead Poisoning

TCAC Caboose Contest

This schoolwide contest was for designing the wrap that will go around the train caboose in Hillsboro.

\$200 Winners: Charlie Johnon, Elisa Jennen, Emmersyn Arends

STATE ART

The following artists' pieces were displayed in the 2025 North Dakota State Art Exhibition in April at Taube Art Museum. There are 32 Top Award Winners. Each of the top award winners received a set of ten color note cards featuring their artwork, courtesy of the Taube Museum of Art, and an award certificate.

Congressional Art Award

Sponsored by Representative Julie Fedorchak

One Sr High in Washington DC Corridor, One Elementary, Junior High, & Two Senior High in N.D. Office

Cameron Kittelson *Feeding the Fish* Watercolor 11 Congressional Award

Northern Visions Award

Sponsored By Senator John Hoeven

One Elementary, Junior High, & Two Senior High in N.D. Office

Charlotte Johnson *Fruitful* Acrylic 12 Northern Visions

People's Choice Award

Three works of art from the following categories, 9-12, 7-8, K-6, will be selected and will be posted on the Taube Museum of Art Facebook Page and at the Taube Museum, for the public to vote for the favorites in each category during the exhibition. They will be awarded 1st, 2nd, and 3rd place and included in the Traveling Exhibition.

Elisa Jennen *Elisa's Soul* Acrylic 12 People's Choice

State of the Arts Award

Sponsored by Senator Kevin Cramer

1 Elementary, Junior High, 1 Senior High in ND Office and 1 in DC Office

Elisa Jennen *Heart of Gold* Sculpture 12 State of the Arts

Traveling Exhibit

Jurors select an additional 84 pieces from all categories for a total of 100 artworks for the Traveling Exhibit. Current Schedule: ND State Fair - July, Cando - September, Barnes County - October, Kindred - November and December, Williston - January, Dickinson - March. Hosting Agency pays shipping to their destination.

Emmersyn Arends	<i>Tropic</i>	Acrylic	12
Charlotte Johnson	<i>Lead Poisoning</i>	Watercolor	12
Claire Grinde	<i>Claire in Pieces</i>	Mixed Media	12

Qualified Artists

These artists were accepted into the state competition and displayed.

Avery Merck	Acrylic	<i>Painting the Way</i>
Elisa Jennen	Mixed	<i>Starry Souls</i>
Emmersyn Arends	Graphic	<i>Demeter</i>
	Photography	<i>Scotland V1 & V2</i>
Charlotte Johnson	Watercolor	<i>Lead Poisoning</i>
	Sculpture	<i>Scarred</i>
Amy Nielsen	Acrylic	<i>Rainbow Voyager</i>
Claire Torgerson	Graphite	<i>Memories</i>
Sebastian Gaytan	Acrylic	<i>Conical Peak</i>
Estella Rogenes	Color Pencil	<i>Apples</i>

	Acrylic	<i>Swans in Style</i>
Mya Olerich	Mixed	<i>Blue Eyes</i>
Cameron Kittelson	Acrylic	<i>A Light in the Dark</i>
	Watercolor	<i>Feeding the Fish</i>
	Color Pencil	<i>A Flash to the Past</i>
Grace Gilbertson	Graphite	<i>Plush Bunnies and Paper Flowers</i>

MEDIA RIBBON AWARDS

BEST IN GRAPHITE

1. CAMERON KITTELSON (GUIDING LIGHT) 2. MYA OELRICH (BLUE EYED BABY) 3.

BEST IN COLOR PENCIL

1. AVERY MERCK (PEEL BACK) 2. CHARLOTTEE JOHNSON (333) 3.

BEST IN DIGITAL ART

1. JACQUELINE VILLERREAL (STARGAZING) 2. CHARLOTTE JOHNSON (ROSE COLORED GLASSES) 3. GRACE GILBERTSON (DIGITAL ME)

BEST IN ACRYLIC

1. EMMERSYN ARENDS (FIREFLIES) 2. AMY NIELSEN (BLUE WIDE OPEN) 3. SEBASTIAN GAYTON (CONICAL PARK)

BEST IN WATERCOLOR

1. AMY NIELSEN (FLOATING FRIENDS) 2. AYVA MCNAMARA (GROWING SOMETHING BEAUTIFUL) 3. EMILY KITTELSON (WHEN JELLYFISH FLY)

BEST IN MIXED MEDIA

1. JACK SHORT 2. AYVA MCNAMARA 3.

BEST IN SCULPTURE

1. LAYNE LEISER (SMISKI PALACE) 2.

BEST IN LANDON'S LIGHT

1. 2. PAIGE COTTON (EVANGELINE) 3.

A+A MASTER PALETTE AWARDS

VINCENT VAN GOGH AWARD: THE BEST IN USE OF COLOR TO EXPRESS EMOTIONS - AMY NIELSEN - RAINBOW VOYAGER in ACRYLIC

MONET AWARD: THE BEST USE OF LIGHT - CLAIRE GRINDE - LANDON'S LIGHT AVENUE in MIXED MEDIA

SALVADOR DALI AWARD: THE BEST IN IMAGINATIVE WORK - ESTELLA ROGENES - WHEN WE HAD ALL THE TIME - WATERCOLOR

GEORGIA O'KEEFFE AWARD: THE BEST THEME - JACQUELINE VILLARREAL - CHROMATIC ECHOES

MICHELANGELO AWARD: THE BEST IN SCULPTURE - ELISA JENNEN - MOSAIC FIELDS

LEONARDO DA VINCI AWARD: THE MOST INVENTIVE - CHARLOTTE JOHNSON - 1

JOHN D. HERZ AWARD: THE BEST IN DRAWING - CHARLOTTE JOHNSON - ME & EM in GRAPHITE

PABLO PICASSO AWARD: THE MOST DIVERSE ARTIST - EMMERSYN ARENDS

FRANCISCO DE GOYA AWARD: THE CRUELLY REALISTIC AWARD - EMMERSYN ARENDS - OUR SAVIOR in GRAPHITE

FRIDA KAHLO AWARD: THE BEST IN SELF-PORTRAITS - CHARLOTTE JOHNSON

RENOIR AWARD: THE BEST IN PERSONAL EXPRESSION - AVERY MERCK - A LIGHT OF MY OWN in ACRYLIC

JAMIE WORDEN AWARD: THE KIND & CREATIVE AWARD - PAIGE COTTON & EVELYN WILLISON