

YOUNG LONDON PRINT PRIZE

Young Curators Exhibition Text

We, the Young Curators, are Art and Photography students from different parts of London who were given the privilege of judging submissions to the Young London Print Prize 2023. The winners make up a collection of prints called Dear Earth, which was exhibited at the Woolwich Contemporary Print Fair.

Dear Earth is a collection of prints created by young artists from primary schools across London. All the artists are from Years 5 & 6, aged 9-11. The students explored themes representing the reality of climate change in many different ways. Some artworks are explicit images of things related to the themes. Others are abstract representations of ecological ideas.

The selection process involved narrowing down nearly 2000 prints to a winner from each of the 34 schools that entered. Out of the winners from each school, we then selected what we thought was the top 3.

The criteria for choosing our school winners and overall winners were three main things:

1. A clear show of artistic intention in the skill and ideas.
2. A strong relationship to the theme of the environment and ecology.
3. And finally, the visual appeal of the print – i.e. how we, the Young Curators, felt on an emotional level towards the artworks.

We love the collection of all the winners and found the decision-making process incredibly difficult because there was so much amazing work. The top 3 winners showcased a strong understanding of printmaking and the environment, and beautifully conveyed those strong, emotive feelings we were looking for.

1st

Afsana Miah

Alone, Darkness (2023)



This print, made with a carved and painted lino sheet, depicts a lone jellyfish surrounded by a dark mist. The simple use of two colours allowed for an intense central focus, with the red accents summoning a heavy feeling of danger. We thought it was interesting how Afsana portrayed this ominous atmosphere with black patches and negative space.

Marine life is in constant threat due to sea temperatures rising and plastics invading their homes. To us, this piece reminded us of the problem of pollution, which is poisoning the already endangered lives of marine life. This is something we feel deserves more attention as it is an issue we can't fully realise without proper media coverage unless we live in areas that are affected by pollution in the sea. Prints like these allow our society to become exposed to these issues with the use of a more emotional and visceral presentation, such as what Afsana has shown here, which is why we chose him as our first choice.

2nd

Hanna Jelonkiewicz

The Crashing World (2023)



lino sheet print where the artist shows a person holding a balloon in the shape of our planet: the Earth. If you fill up a balloon with too much air, it will explode. If you fill up the Earth with too much CO₂, it too will explode too. We thought this was a very powerful message of the artwork.

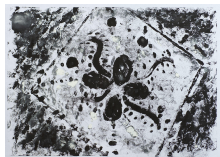
We also chose this print because of how the focus in the painting is shown, which is done by using negative space around the key bits of the image. It is gentle on the eyes, making it easy for the audience to see the main subject.

Even though this is a very harrowing image in some ways, it also has hope. Ultimately, the person holding the balloon is a symbol of us being in control of our own actions. We believe that it encourages everyone to take action to prevent the world from 'crashing'.

3rd

Jayden Rodriguez Kent

The Beetle Bug (2023)



Like bees, beetles are natural pollinators. They are just as important to the ecosystem, bringing required nutrients to flowers for growth. This print displays an abstract version of a beetle with monochrome colours. We liked the chaotic shapes, bringing a symmetrical look to the beetle itself, which appears to be mid-flight.

We thought that we, as viewers, were given an opportunity for different interpretations. The artwork prompts us to ask questions – why are beetles important for the environment? Why did the artist choose black and white instead of colour? Why do we value our own human lives more than the lives of insects that keep us alive?