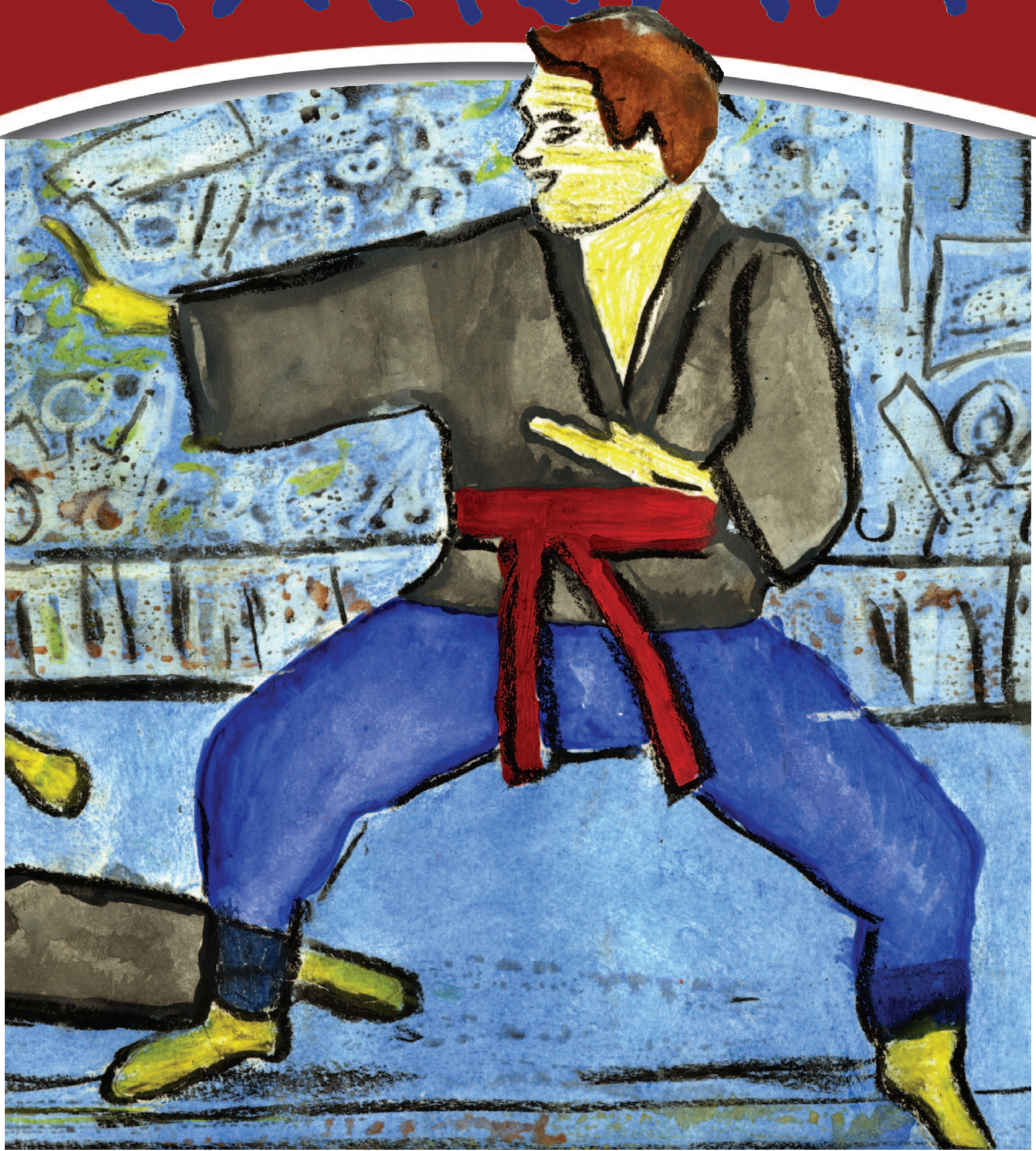
April–June 2006

The Magazine of the International Child Art Foundation

ChildArt



April—June 2006 Volume 9, Issue 2, Number 32

ChildArt

Editor's Corner

Dear Readers,

The third Arts Olympiad (2005–2008) is underway, and this issue presents a few highlights from across the globe on this largest and most prestigious arts initiative in the world. Our current Arts Olympiad leads to painting and digital art competitions on the theme "My Favorite Sport" to celebrate the artist–athlete ideal of a creative mind and healthy body.

We invite you to take a look at some of the entries from places where the Arts Olympiad competition results came in early. You see the digital art of Juraci, a 12 year old in Bahia, Brazil, who attends an institution that specializes in educating persons with mental disabilities. You see how the Shanghai Cultural Development Foundation got more than one million students in China to create art for the Arts Olympiad. You meet the First Lady of Croatia, whose support for the Arts Olympiad is greatly appreciated in her country and by the International Child Art Foundation.

You learn about the National Museum of Children's Art in Egypt and the Ethiopian Arts Olympiad. You meet Dr. Naomi Jaffe of the Israeli Ministry of Education and see how she innovatively executed the Arts Olympiad. You become acquainted with the Children's Art House Fund in New Zealand and see how the Arts Olympiad is helping children at the Palestinian Child Arts Center. You see how Russian children in the Republic of Komi express their favorite sport on silk. You imagine what the art of Nicolae from central Transylvania must be like when his peers in Romania paint so wonderfully. In the United Arab Emirates you meet talented young artists in Sharjah. Finally, you reach Texas where the Arts Olympiad inspired a teacher/coach couple to combine an Olympic sport event with making art for 44 students with physical and mental handicaps.

Happy reading!

Ashfaq Ishaq

Artwork by Chun Yat Wong
(See page 10)

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INTERNATIONAL CHILD ART FOUNDATION

The International Child Art Foundation (ICAF) is a 501(c)(3) nonprofit organization that prepares children for a creative and cooperative future. ICAF is the only national art and creativity organization for children in the United States. ICAF is also the only worldwide umbrella organization promoting children's creativity and imagination through the arts.

To subscribe to *ChildArt* magazine, call 202-530-1000, fax 202-530-1080, or email childart@icaf.org.

Childart is published quarterly by ICAF. Submissions may be edited even when accepted. Submissions of artwork and other material to *ChildArt* are made at the risk of the sender.

Childart quarterly magazine, published since 1998, is a commercial-free arts learning, self-discovery and global education periodical.

You can also make a donation to ICAF by sending a check to:

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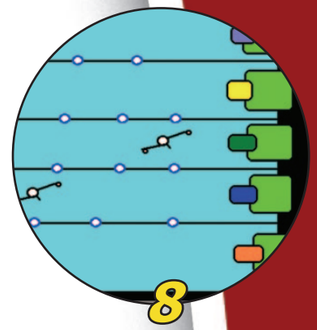
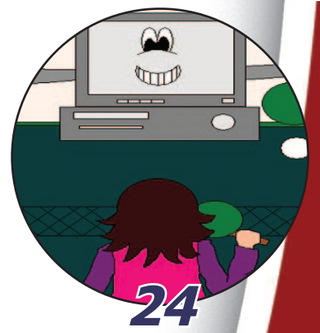




Cover Art by Eman Ali Ahmed (11) United Arab Emirates

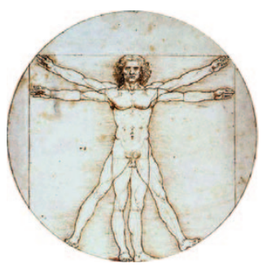
Next issue: Creating Peace

www.icaf.org

Movement and Art

Tyler McGillivary (11) Maryland, U.S.

George Bellows



Leonardo da Vinci

Edgar Degas

Sources: http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/George_Bellows; http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Vitruvian_Man; http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Degas.

Anatoly Hamidulin (12) Russia

Chances are you don't notice all the ways your body moves during a single day. Take for example walking; this simple movement takes a great amount of coordination between the transmission of signals from your brain, muscles, bones, joints and ligaments to work. Just imagine all the internal workings when you are jumping to shoot a basketball or sliding into home plate in baseball.

The internal and anatomical structure of the body has always fascinated artists. In the pursuit of depicting a realistic human form and its potential for movement, artists during the Renaissance, like Leonardo da Vinci and Michelangelo secretly dissected bodies to fully understand muscle structure. Today, artists still recognize the importance of studying the structure of the body in order to successfully capture its movement and gesture.

With their interest in the human form, many artists use the context of sport to showcase the pinnacle of the body's abilities. Engaged in movement, artists see the beauty of the internal coordination within the body and translate it through paint, marble, or any other medium. Artists such as 19th Century painter Edgar Degas used jockeys and graceful dancers as his subjects. George Bellows painted gritty boxing scenes in the early 20th Century. Jacob Lawrence depicted stylized runners for 1971 Olympic posters. Currently, the United States Sports Academy in Daphne, Alabama honors one artist every year with the Sport Artist of the Year Award. To find out more about this award and past recipients, visit www.ussa.edu.

With all the different sports in the world and all of the complexities of movement, there are unlimited opportunities for artists to continue rendering the human body in motion. The next time you kick a soccer ball or throw a football, think of all the muscles you are using and how your body is balanced—try to translate this coordination within your body onto paper. What does it look like to you?

Danielle Shen (12) Michigan, U.S.

Why Art and SPORT

As a recent Art Olympiad participant, Chanjuan Ma (12) from New Jersey explained her entry as an inspiration to others to spend more time playing sports rather than sitting indoors watching television. Most likely, Chanjuan does not know she shares a similar belief with many artists who have worked throughout the twentieth-century.

Key Term

Avant-Garde: any creative group active in the innovation and application of new concepts and techniques in the arts.

Beginning in the early 1900s, avant-garde (a French term meaning art that questions what is accepted in society) movements rejected the idea of being passive and inactive, especially when it came to viewing art. Just like the goals of Chanjuan, avant-garde artists did not want the viewer to turn off their brain like a couch potato. Instead, they wanted to engage them and inspire individual responses.

By combining art and sport for the third Arts Olympiad, the idea of passively viewing and making art has been transformed. Art is no longer separate from the everyday, nor is creativity disconnected from such common activities as sports. Roles such as artist or athlete are no longer limited to what is commonly accepted. Cultivating the imagination is dependent on the freedom of questioning and the redefining of what is and what could be.

"Art and sport have the power to change the world, the power to inspire, the power to unite people in a way that little else can. Art and sport speak to people in a language they understand. Art and sport can create hope where there was once only despair. They are instruments for peace, even more powerful than governments."

– Nobel Laureate Nelson R. Mandela

On the Road to the 2007 World Children's Festival:

The distribution and completion of Arts Olympiad lesson plans distributed to schools worldwide has passed, but each participating country has it's own story to tell, as does each child artist.

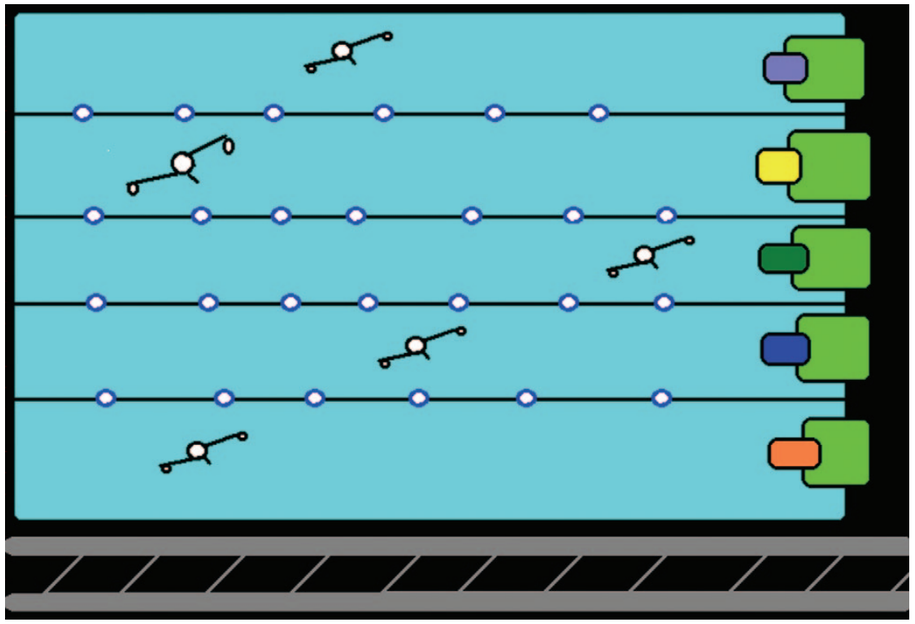
Implementing programs in nearly 100 countries is no small task, but thanks in part to the ICAF partner organizations, the positive influence of the Arts Olympiad was able to reach even the most unexpected places. By using the universality of sport, this creative program asked participants to look at its message and values that provide the foundations for Olympic ideals. With the intent on balancing the development of the mind, body and character of children, the Arts Olympiad translates into any language the global need for tolerance, friendship and creative problem solving.

The Arts Olympiad allows the celebration of different cultures—for each participating country has it's own identity and interpretation unique to its customs, ultimately influencing how each child approached the theme "My Favorite Sport". However, the diversity did not separate countries or children from each other. The simple task of picking up a pencil or paintbrush, no matter where, connected the imaginations of children in identifying a shared vision of coexistence.

In June 2007, the world's children will gather in Washington, DC for the World Children's Festival to live and experience the reality of the connections they imagined onto paper. Finding the empowerment to become leaders, the festival will lay the foundation for cultivating and inspiring the creative potential and tolerant minds of the world's next generation.

Klavdija Lakner (11) Slovenia

Futura Powers Brazil



Juraci Edvan Gomes Fonseca (12) Brazil

Canal (Channel) Futura, Brazil's educational television, has partnered with the ICAF since 2000 with the common goal of helping to educate children and promote creativity. Canal Futura's television programs reach more than fourteen million viewers throughout the vast country, many of them children.

The number of institutions that took part in the project reached 484 schools, and an estimated 29,000 students were involved in the schools' selection rounds. Canal Futura received the artwork of the school finalists, including 363 drawings in the drawing/painting category and 121 in the digital art category.

The schools received the ICAF lesson plan, translated into Portuguese, which helped educators optimize their students' experience of the Arts Olympiad. Through this study plan, educators and students learned about the Arts Olympiad and about ICAF's mission. The theme of "My Favorite Sport" offered students the chance to reflect on the value of art through sports.

Teachers like Andreia Heimback Silva said that developing the activity was beneficial because it sparked discussions that looked deeper into the message and values of sport, not just the actions themselves.

For the final selection, a jury of art educators, coaches and the staff of Canal Futura gathered to evaluate the work. More importantly, these professionals supported the Arts Olympiad's initiative of promoting art as a positive force in the lives of the children.

The winning artworks came from Bruna Dadão de Assis in the painting category and from Juraci Edvan Gomes Fonseca in the digital art category. Bruna is a 10 year-old fourth grader from State School Professor Sebastião Teixeira Pinto in São Paulo. Her drawing portrayed soccer and she said that she loves "to play it with her friends just for fun." Bruna said she has always been good at drawing, and she was so happy when she got the news she was one of the winners that she immediately started jumping with joy. Regarding the trip to Washington, Bruna said she can hardly wait to travel in an airplane and also said that she'll never forget the experience.

In addition to the partnership with the ICAF, Futura has support from American Airlines, Globo Publishers (Editora Globo) and the Art Room (Gabinete de Artes). These companies were also involved with the conceptual development of the project, and recognized the importance of investing in the promotion of education.

Canal Futura counts on a staff that promotes community mobilization. The staff also develops content for Futura's programming in locations throughout the country, reaching more than 12,000 institutions in Brazil. Futura's staff also played a significant role in the process of motivating people of numerous schools to take part in the Arts Olympiad.

Bruna Dadão de Assis (10) Brazil

Juraci is a 12 year-old third grader, who studies at Associñçao de Pais e Amigos dos Exceptionais (APAE) Educational Center in Bahia, an institution that specializes in educating persons with mental disabilities. The sport activity Juraci represented in his artwork was swimming because he considers it the "coolest one." Juraci was also motivated to enter the contest because he thought he could win. He said he was truly happy when he found out about his victory.

As a result of the Arts Olympiad, a virtual exhibition of the finalist's drawings can be found at the project Web site (www.frm.org.br/icaf). Through the online gallery, people will see the drawings of all the children that took part in the Olympiad. The gallery provides information such as names, age and school and how one can become involved in the project.

The Arts Olympiad in Brazil has been very positive and fulfilling. As a way to celebrate the positive results and give recognition to all the children that took part in the Arts Olympiad, Futura developed five animated shorts from a compilation of all the drawings received. The animations aired on Canal Futura, to promote the project, and generate excitement for the young artists.

Chun Yat Wong (12) Hong Kong

One Million Chinese Artists

Yu Kiu Chan (11) China

With the largest population in the world, there is enormous potential for artistic growth in China. As the ICAF partner in China, the Shanghai Cultural Development Foundation (SHCDF) initiated a program to help reach that potential. Now, looking back on this first endeavor, the executive director of SHCDF, Professor Shen Genlin, estimates more than one million Chinese children participated in the Arts Olympiad.

After contacting and sending the ICAF lesson plans to schools, the SHCDF also helped launch a series of activities on the themes "My Favorite Sport," starting in June 2005. These activities included a sport sketching summer camp and various community mural projects. Although many schools became involved and carried out the lessons, the SHCDF reached an even greater number through the use of television media.

Sports and athletic competitions have long been a part of Chinese culture, as ancient archeological relics have provided evidence of activities such as archery and competitive lifting as a part of everyday life over four thousand years ago. Today, with the upcoming 2008 Beijing Olympics, sports remain just as important to the Chinese culture. To mark contemporary time, children who participated in the Olympiad chose to depict sports that fill their lives, including swimming, rope skipping and running.

Vienca Wan Ka Chan (11) Hong Kong

In the concluding competition held in Shanghai, the entries went through three rounds to reach three finalists. The judges included nationally renowned artists, art critics, educators and child art experts. Along with the SHCDF, the co-sponsors helped support a successful competition, including the Shanghai Children International Culture Development Co., Children's Palace of China Welfare Institute and the Shanghai ToonMax television.

In the end, the chosen theme of sports helped boost the children's passion for creation but also encouraged them to try new activities and focus on a healthy lifestyle. From the exuberance of the imagination to observational study, the artworks represented colorful and meaningful lives shared by the participating children. After receiving a positive response from the child artists in this event, the SHCDF hopes to continue the Arts Olympiad with themes that strongly connect with children's lives, allowing the innovative spirit of a child's experience and vision reach new heights of creativity.

The Croatian First Lady Inspires

Croatia may seem like a distant country that has little in common with you; however, the third Arts Olympiad has helped connect children from all over the world through art making and sport.

The Croatian Arts Olympiad was organized by the Ministry of Science, Education and Sports. A national celebration was hosted at the Croatian Olympic Center outside the capital of Zagreb for 30 winners. For this two-day event, these young artists from all over the country gathered with their parents and teachers to compete and participate in art and sport activities and attend a culminating award ceremony.

The children got to know each other through the creation of group posters while their teachers headed to the classroom for a lesson from the Institute of Education. Afterward, the children celebrated their participation in the Arts Olympiad and their new friendships with an evening of dancing and karaoke. To rest up for the busy second day, the children were treated like true Olympians, staying in dorms normally reserved only for Olympic athletes.

Apolonjia Lucic (10) Croatia

The second day began with sports lessons for the children while the adults were treated by a visit from the Croatian First Lady Milka Mesic. Later in the day, there was much excitement from everyone as the Croatian star swimmer Gordan Kozulj arrived to show his support.

The closing ceremony brought together friends who had been strangers two days before, and celebrated the creativity of all the participants, encouraging them to continue to explore and develop their imagination and involvement in sports. The first lady congratulated the winner and all the children were awarded a certificate from the ICAF and the Croatian Ministry for their hard work, recognizing the importance of each individual child's creative expression.

To close the celebration, everyone gathered for photographs with the first lady and swimmer Gordan Kozulj—preserving these wonderful memories forever.

Agata Lucic (10) Croatia

Art and the Pharaohs

Home to Cairo, the largest city in Africa and to one of the most significant ancient civilizations, Egypt has also brought together an incredible number of 18,000 Art Olympiad participants to compete this past year. Under the executive patronage of Dr. Isaak Azmi and in cooperation with the Egyptian National Museum of Children's Art and the Ministry of Education, children from all governorships throughout the country became involved in the Arts Olympiad.

With a well-organized system, the ICAF lesson plan was distributed through the Ministry of Education with Dr. Azmi using a video conferencing system linking all educational administrations with nationally employed teachers. In addition, weekly student exhibits inaugurated by famous artists at the National Museum of Children's Art inspired many students to participate.

Due to the high number of submissions, the artists waited patiently while their artwork went through many elimination processes. When the number reached one thousand, a jury panel was elected to continue the selection process. The jury was headed by the famous Egyptian artist Adam Henen, along with the critic Kamal El-Geouli and artists Ezmeralda Hada, Sherif Kamal and Sara Fouad. After the juried selection, the number of works totaled 500 and were sent to the final round. Though very difficult, the judges decided on three winners, including Mohamed Amr (11), Perihane Omar (12) and Peter Patrick (9).

With the avid involvement of Egypt's First Lady Suzanne Mubarak, the success was overwhelming for many of the organizers and inspirational for the participating children.

According to one of the child artists, there is also a new found appreciation in his family for losing oneself in the act of play, allowing necessary time for expression and nurturing the imagination. Also, many children now have a new perspective and appreciation for the everyday activities like sports that fill their lives, connecting them with artistic possibilities and meaning. For, example, nine-year-old Hanan Bassem's experience with the Arts Olympiad has helped her realize her love of drawing, influencing her desire to become an engineer one day in the future.

Art from the Egyptian Arts Olympiad poster

In June, a ceremony was held to honor the participants and selected artists at the El Shona Art Center and Museum in Agamy Alexandria. Along with Egypt's First Lady, the Minister of Culture and Governor of Alexandria, many artists and critics gathered to celebrate with the Arts Olympiad winners and their families.

In a country known for its historical significance, Egypt is now able to see a bright and colorful future—and the importance that children play in reaching this achievement.

Eleni Hebtamu (12) Ethiopia

Tinsae Wubshet (11) Ethiopia

The Amharic Arts Olympiad

Through the African Child Policy Forum, children from all the states of Ethiopia took part in the Ethiopian Arts Olympiad. All together fifty schools participated in the competition facilitated by teachers of art and sport, with a total of 3,268 students.

Due to the remote locations of the participating schools, donkeys and mules had to be used to carry in the necessary art supplies. The arrival of these special deliveries signaled the link between the children of Ethiopia to the children of the world brought together by the Arts Olympiad. With the use of blackboards in schools, announcements in classrooms and the translation of ICAF's lesson plan into Amharic, (the national language of Ethiopia) students readily joined this global community of children.

Generously hosted by the Bulgarian Embassy in the capitol city of Addis Ababa, the Arts Olympiad took place on December 15, 2005. During this time a jury selected the two Ethiopian finalists from the pool of entries. The jury comprised of a well-known artist who shared her inspiring experiences creating art as a child, while others included art teachers and educators. Ethiopia's Arts Olympiad was well attended and covered by Ethiopian Television and Radio.

Tinsae Wubshet, the eleven-year-old finalist from Addis Ababa depicted his favorite sport as running. He attends Hope Enterprises School. Eleni Habtamu, a twelve-year-old girl from Guente Primary School chose volleyball as her favorite sport. Other students depicted basketball, tennis, swimming and jump rope as their favorite sport.

Following the successful finalist selection, the African Child Policy Forum (http://www.africanchildforum.org) now hopes to hold a national exhibition of all the children's works. In order to involve the children from the most remote locations, the organization is now raising funds to bring Ethiopian children together, giving them the chance for more creative and inspired futures.

Israel Gives a Lesson in Integration

Yarden Arditi (9) Israel

In order to introduce the Arts Olympiad in Israel, a conference was organized for art and sport instructors at the Israeli Sport Institute
by the Ministry of Education, Culture, and Sport. Lectures presented art and sport in history, including ancient Greek vase paintings, early photography and a visual history of the grace of human athleticism and movement. Also, along with the ICAF curricula, teachers were encouraged to brainstorm integrative and engaging classroom activities.

Upon conclusion, the instructors left the conference with new inspiration to implement the Arts Olympiad in their schools across Israel. The 200 participating schools within six regions held individual exhibitions of submitted artwork, encouraging both digital and two-dimensional entries. For each region, a committee chose twenty artworks that were sent to the national exhibition at the Ministry of Education in Tel Aviv and then onto the Ministry in Jerusalem.

In May 2006, the opening of the exhibition welcomed the artists, their teachers, art and sport inspectors, educational leaders of the six regions and the Ministry of Education Director. Of all the entries, a panel of judges that included artists, museum educators and teachers selected two finalists.

From the perspective of Dr. Naomi Jaffe, the Arts Olympiad has become a great national celebration in Israel. Combining the elements of art and sport has helped unite children through shared ideas that are supported by history and the positive development of the future.

New Zealand's Art Houses

Matthew Bastion (9) New Zealand

As the ICAF partner, the Children's Art House Fund arranged the Arts Olympiad in the island nation of New Zealand. The Art House Fund seeks to ensure the right for all children to explore their creativity with safe and valued community projects, supporting the development of creative children in assuring creative communities. Through the use of community art centers called art houses, twenty-five separate competitions were held before the final round of judging and exhibition. A majority of the art houses used the ICAF lesson plan, organizing activities integrating sport and art.

In New Zealand sports take center stage. In fact, it is known as one of the world's best countries for extreme sports. However, through the Arts Olympiad, children of New Zealand gained a new perspective on the importance of the arts. They also recognized a need for new policies related to public funding of arts programs in their schools. In helping to open a dialogue between the Children's Art House Fund and the government, the participating children voiced their words and expressed their feelings about the lack of art programs available to them.

Another remarkable story emerged in Parawera, a small school in the Waikato Region, where children created exceptional wire sculptures for the competition. The school has a small population of thirty-seven students of Maori descent (the indigenous people of New Zealand) and drew on a long tradition of sculpture carving and art making for their entries. Parawera is an example of how connecting children from remote areas to global ideas and goals in very much within reach.

Once each art house finished their individual exhibit and voting process, the art works were sent to the National Conference of the New Zealand Children's Art House Fund. An exhibition of 100 finalists took place at Kihikihi Town Hall, on the North Island in Central New Zealand in November 2005. A panel of judges comprised of professors, principals and art house artists and coordinators that made the final decision on the winning work. The exhibition was opened by Maori leader Kaumatua Koro Maikuku and Dr. Ian Hassall, former Commissioner for Children. The Second Arts Olympiad winner, Ella Gordon Latty, who participated in the ICAF 2003 festival in Washington, D.C., also addressed the gathering and advocated arts education.

With the help of the Children's Art House Fund, the New Zealand Arts Olympiad has established a stronger voice for arts advocacy and its impact on children's creative futures. Importantly, the Olympiad has inspired New Zealand's children to take interest in their educational opportunities, taking charge of ensuring the necessary tools for a better tomorrow.

Beezer Sohan (12) Palestine

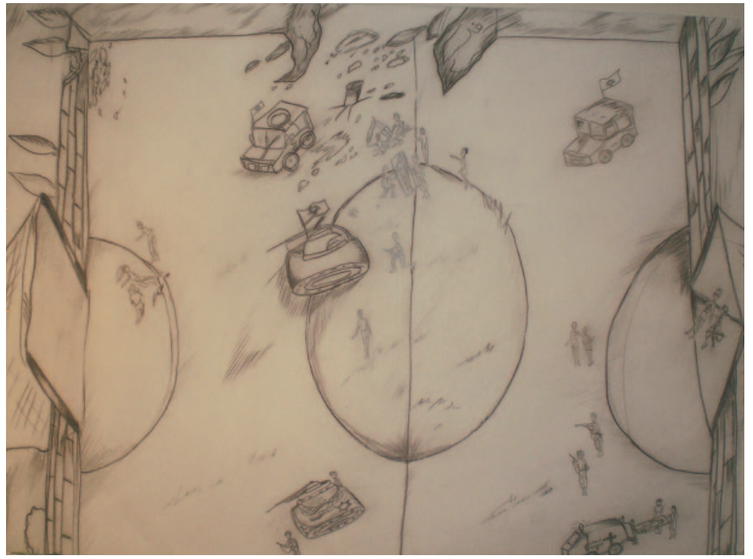
Pushing for Creativity in Palestine

In the eyes of the Palestinian Child Arts Center (PCAC) located in Hebron, the Arts Olympiad was an opportunity for the children of Palestine to visually report and express their lives to the outside world.

The guideline to create artwork was based on the theme of "My Favorite Sport," however, the Palestinian children's submissions were influenced by the current conflict and violent realities of their daily lives. Their visual expressions were invaded by fear. Soccer fields transformed into battlegrounds filled with barbed wire and tanks, while the use of red and black disrupted the portrayal of green playing grounds.

Samih Abu Zakieh, an artist and a founder of PCAC, says the Palestinian children's ability to play and learn from sports is in danger, as opportunities and activities are being taken away as the issues of safety worsen.

"Look at our drawings to see the tragedy we live in," says a child artist.



Wafer Abu-Alyaraiz (12) Palestine

Anwar Al-Atras (12) Palestine

Eli Abu-Jandia (12) Palestine

Wisal Aieida (12) Palestine

The PCAC was founded in 1994 as the first Palestinian network for children to provide activities and programs for the intellectual and creative development of Palestine's children. In the first years of PCAC, the importance of bringing smiles back to the faces of the children was the key goal—to create an environment where they could freely play, dance, sing and learn. Now PCAC has expanded to include opportunities for festivals, art workshops and children's rights education.

Although the PCAC has faced hardships in funding, the founders remain passionate and dedicated to their original goals to serve and cultivate the minds of children. This commitment has given hope to the children who have had the rare opportunity to freely express themselves. The optimism that fuels PCAC continues to rest on the open possibilities of children creating a better, more peaceful future.

Art and Silk in Siberia

Katya Ivanova (11) Russia

Dasha Kot (12) Russia

Darya Kremlevskaya (12) Russia

With your atlas in hand, find the Republic of Komi. What do you think this small Federal Subject of Russia is like?

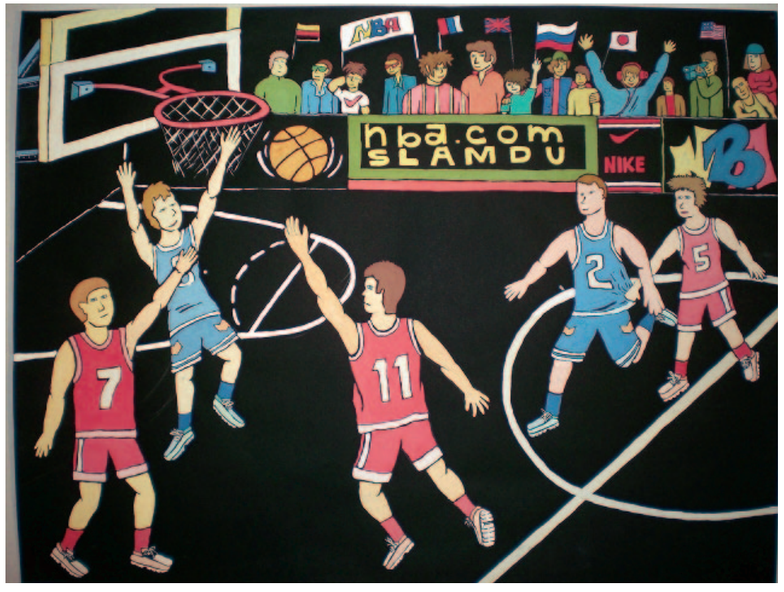
In the Republic of Komi, art plays an important role in the early development of children and nurturing their creative potential, as art programs begin in school at age five. The variety of available media includes painting and photography but also extends to experimental methods, such as silk painting. Teachers have observed that silk painting creates colorful, emotional responses and an increased desire to be engaged in the art making process. It has become a beneficial tool in opening the imagination and helping children express their own perceptions.

Olga Rudzey (12) Russia

Ildar Ibragimov (10) Russia

With its location in the Arctic Circle, weather influences all aspects of life, including the favorite sports depicted in the third Arts Olympiad. Some of these favorite sports included hockey, ice-skating and skiing. From the participation of over 5,000 children, a majority of the entries came from the Children's Art School in Vorkuta under the direction of Sergey Gagauzoy.

As under previous Arts Olympiads, a special jury was chosen to select the winning artworks. After many difficult decisions, the artworks were narrowed down and for some, the dream of participating in the World Children's Festival became a possibility.



Anton Chervinsky (12) Russia

Gheorghita Petru (10) Romania

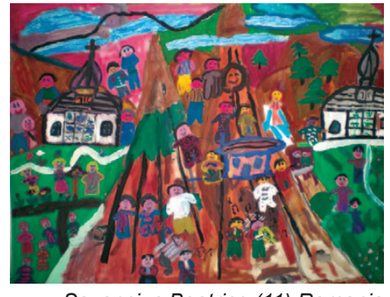
Olympic Rainbow in Romania

Held in Brasov, the Romanian Arts Olympiad Exhibition took place in November 2005. As sponsors, the Euro–Asia Promotion and Cultural Foundation, the European Literature Circle and Brasov County's Federation of Youth NGO's supported the last stages of the competition, including the final selection from 33 regional finalists. As a truly national event, from the widespread involvement of schools to the national media coverage of the Olympiad, the winning artwork helped bridged local and global ideals together with a multinational vision and message to the world.

As head juror, professor and President of the Romanian Artist Union, Nicolae Daicu declared Cosmin Moga (12) from central Transylvania the official winner. His painting, Olympic Rainbow, communicated a discovery of the Olympic spirit through a child's eye, unifying diverse color and shapes while capturing the gesture and grace of movement.

Chisalita Roxana (11) Romania

Croitor Monica (11) Romania

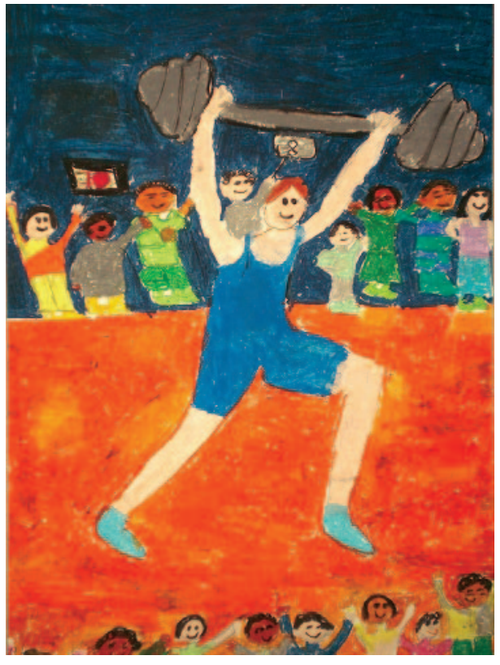


Savanciuc Beatrice (11) Romania

Constantinescu Cosmina (10) Romania

Noura Mohammed Ahmed (7) UAE

Art, Sport, and Culture in Sharjah

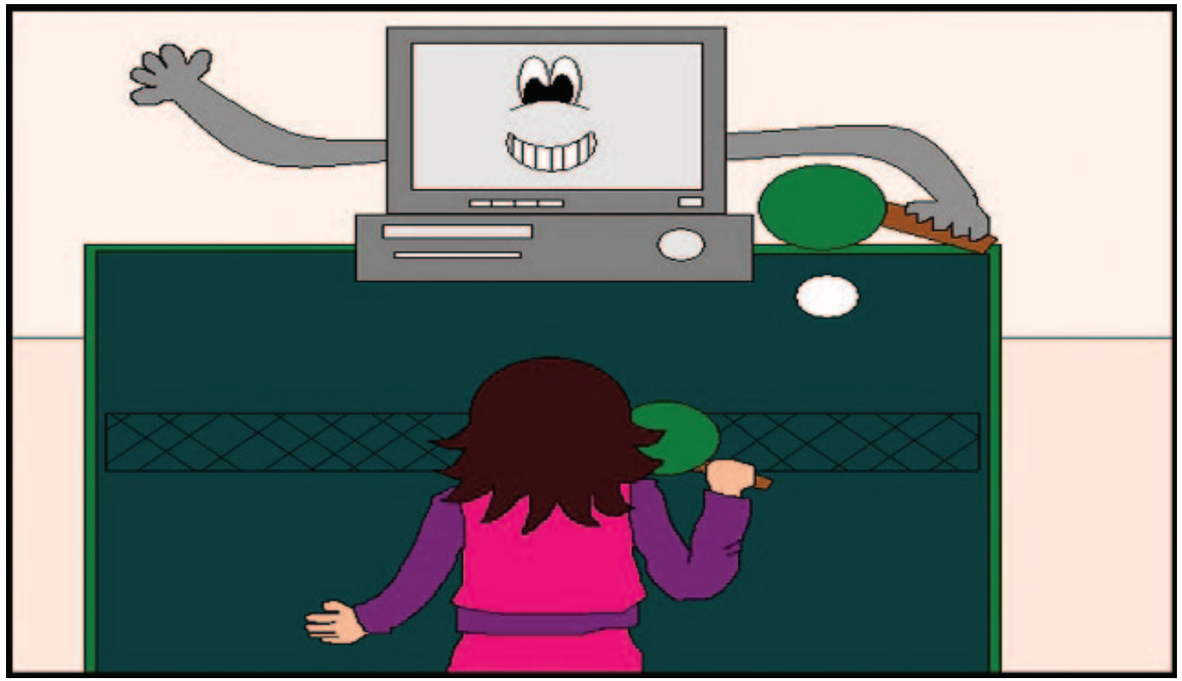


Maitha Ahmed Ali (11) UAE

October 12, 2005 was unlike any other day in the urban square of the Sharjah Art Museum in the United Arab Emirates. Set against the dramatic lighting of the setting sun, the final selections for the third Arts Olympiad were displayed in the square and attended carefully by a panel of judges. From a total of 275 entries, eighteen had been selected for this exhibition and for the final round of judging.

While the child artists and their families eagerly waited in the square, the light highlighted the radiant vitality of the artworks, creating glowing colors throughout the space. This special moment, just before the sunset, brought stillness to the busy urban square, and brought all attention towards the children's creations.

As the UAE partner of the ICAF, the Supreme Council of Family Affairs brought the Olympiad to life through its Children and Girls Centers. As an educational, non-profit organization that supports the development of a critical mind and adventurous spirit, the collaboration with the ICAF helped to successfully spread the competition throughout the country. By providing a safe and nurturing environment for children and especially young girls, the Children and Girls Centers look to instill not only a strong cultural identity but also an open international exchange.



Fatima Ali Saif (15) UAE

To launch the Arts Olympiad, classes in digital art and painting workshops were held throughout the country, as were bicycle races and other sports.

Upon completion of the workshops and once the entries had been narrowed down, it was time for the final exhibit and round of judging in Sharjan. Judging the remaining eighteen artworks were three members from the Ministry of Education, Dr. Nagat Meky, head of education techniques, Mr. Saleh al Ostaz head of students activities and Mrs. Wafaa al Khazendar head of local & international art competitions.

With a clipboard in hand, the judges visited each easel, taking notes and carefully making their selections.

With a wide variety of sports represented, the winning artwork by Noura Mohammed Ahmed depicts a unique sport specific to desert countries: a camel race. The commotion and excitement depicted in Noura's drawing helps paint a picture for viewers and sparks their interest experiencing unique activities that take place around the world.

In the end, the child artists were able to take away a new sense of self-discovery, uncovering unknown capabilities and learning more about themselves, redefining their self-image and confidence.

Students from Spring Branch Independent School District in Houston Texas participate in the Arts Olympiad. They participated in a torch lighting ceremony, archery, and other activities. All students received medals presented by 2000 USA Olympian Eric Thomas.

Art and Handicap in Texas

Unlike other Arts Olympiads held around the world, the Spring Branch Independent School District in Houston, Texas created a unique format for students to actively combine an Olympic sport competition with making art.

With the help of volunteers, 44 students with physical and mental handicaps participated in twelve events that combined art and sport, including: boxing with painted gloves, painted feet hurdles, archery with painted nerf arrows, and shot put with foam Frisbees.

Of course, an Olympic event would not be complete without a torch lighting ceremony, and the children of Spring Branch were treated with the world's first neon torch made by two Houston area artists. Once in place, the torch filled the gymnasium with a glowing bright orange light, and signaled the beginning of the games.

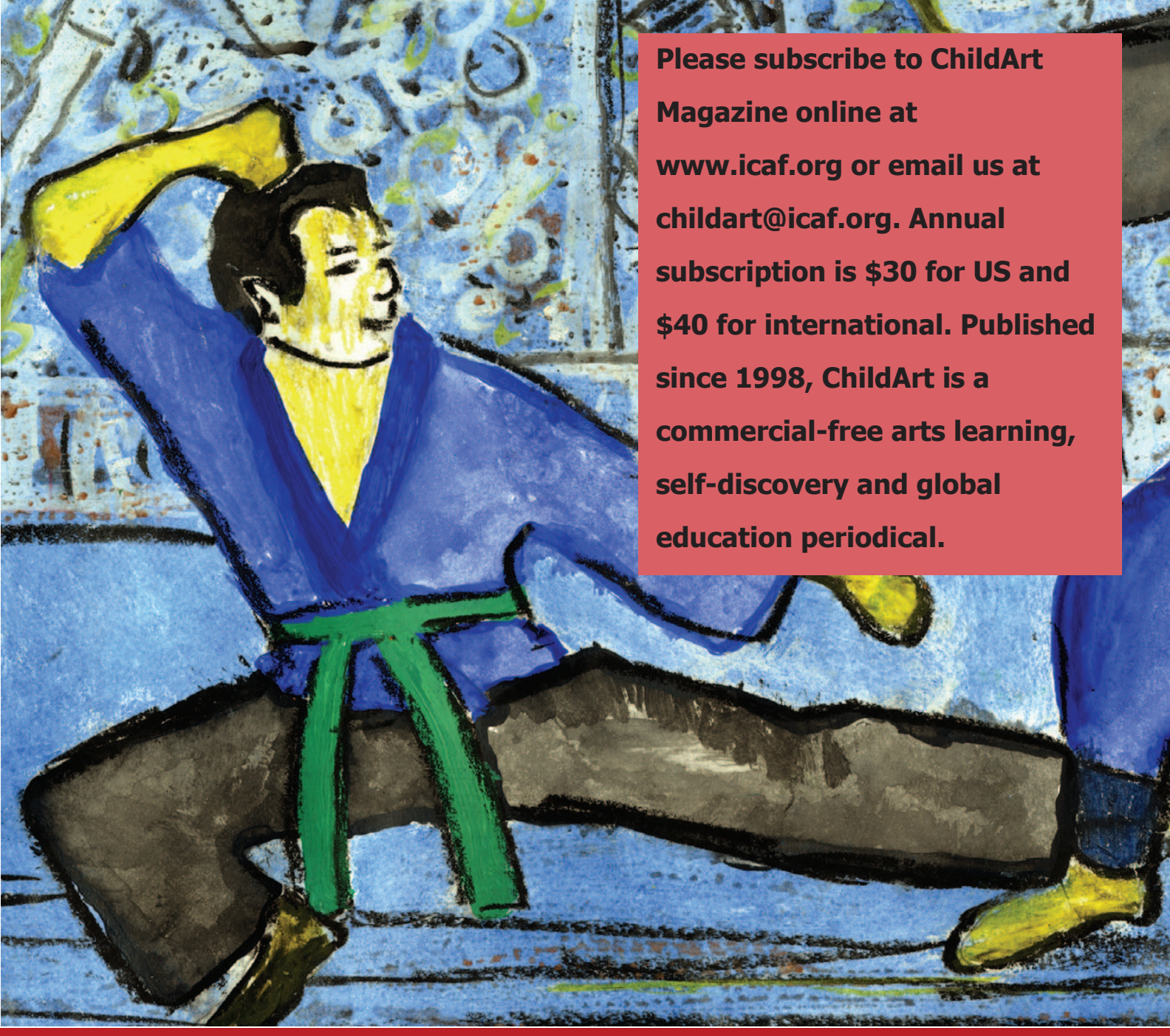
Activity and color soon filled the gym, as each event created a "whirlwind of action, abstraction, laughter and joy." The finished result: sixteen canvases that captured the activity of each event, best described as "wild splashes and Olympic explosions of color."

In the closing ceremony, Eric Thomas, a 2000 USA Olympian in Track and Field awarded the artistic athletes with a medal, as the surrounding torchlight highlighted the "thrill and pride in their wide eyes."

With teaching and coaching backgrounds, the organizers Jody and David Butler were inspired to create this unique Arts Olympiad from a fellowship they earned to travel to Greece and Italy to study ancient sculptures and their relationship to the modern Olympic Games.

Naomi Malyar (7) Texas, U.S.

After meeting with archaeologists, artists, athletes and traveling to Olympia, the site of the first Olympic Games, they were inspired by their experiences and an article in ChildArt Magazine to arrange the Arts Olympiad for the children of Spring Branch.



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