

ALL THE WORLD'S A STAGE

Elaine Thomas previews the International Child Art Foundation (ICAF) Third Arts Olympiad.

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

With its upcoming Third Arts Olympiad, the International Child Art Foundation (ICAF) will be offering children the chance to have their work exhibited on a world stage. It is anticipated that three million children will participate in the free global programme, which will be organised throughout 2006 and 2007 in approximately 100 countries around the world.

ICAF believes that artistic expression and athletic accomplishment are two natural ways in which children gain and apply life skills. The Third Arts Olympiad combines these two themes in order to encourage young artists to develop their physical abilities, and to inspire young athletes to express themselves through art. It is hoped that by developing the empathy invoked through art, and the team spirit instilled by sport, the Arts Olympiad can help to promote the Olympic ideals of mutual respect and tolerance. With London selected to host the Olympic Games in 2012, the Third Arts Olympiad aims to provide British teachers with an opportunity to discuss the role of sport and its interaction with our wider culture through the arts.

In participating countries across the globe, ICAF's national partners are encouraging schools and individual students to create imaginative artwork based upon the theme "My Favourite Sport". Work selected to represent the United Kingdom will be exhibited at ICAF's European Children's Festival in Munich, Germany, in May 2006, and then at ICAF's World Children's Festival, to be held on the National Mall in Washington, DC, in 2007. These festivals will involve children from around the world in a programme of art-based events. Schools are also encouraged to host their own exhibitions of their pupils' work, and ICAF would love to see photos of these displays.

The national competition is open to children aged 8 to 12 years old, and features two categories of work – traditional art created in a choice of 2D media, and digital art. Teachers from around the UK are encouraged to submit up to three pieces of work in each category to represent their school, which will then be considered in the national judging process. Individual students are also welcome to submit artwork for consideration if their school is not participating.

ICAF's UK representatives will form an independent panel of artists and educators to select one piece of representative national artwork from each of the two categories. The two student finalists will each receive an award from ICAF and gifts of art supplies. These finalists, their teachers and parents are also invited to attend the European and World Children's Festivals as the UK's delegates if they



wish, provided that they can arrange for their travel and accommodation expenses. ICAF does not charge delegates any participation fee, but as a charity, is hard pressed to fund travel and hotel expenses. Often, winning schools in other countries have collected the funds to send their students and teachers to ICAF's festivals, and efforts of this kind are always valued for the spirit of national and global co-operation that they help to foster.

Competition

All entries for the competition should be submitted by 15 April 2006. Entries in the traditional arts category may be a painting or drawing on paper, canvas, silk or any other two-dimensional medium, approximately 18" x 24" (45cm x 60cm) in size. Entries for the digital art category may be created using any software the artist wishes, so long as the final piece is a static image saved in one of the following formats: tiff, jpg or bitmap. Digital entries should also be created at a suitably high resolution for print purposes (300dpi or greater).

All entries should be accompanied by a completed copy of the UK entry form, which can be downloaded from ICAF's website, www.icaf.org (please take care to download the UK version of the form, as there is also a separate international version). Details of how to submit your entry can be found on the form.



About ICAF

Headquartered in Washington, DC and registered in 1997, ICAF focuses on creative development in children and promotes cross-cultural co-operation. The Arts Olympiad is its flagship programme. Since the Asian Tsunami, ICAF has developed healing arts programmes to aid children affected by natural disasters. It also conducts Peace Through Art programmes for children in conflict zones. To request further details of the UK's involvement with ICAF, please contact Elaine Thomas, ICAF representative for the UK, on 01454 614209.

