



BOYS & GIRLS CLUBS
OF AMERICA

NATIONAL ARTS CONTEST

2023 National Arts Contest FAQs

Will artwork be judged in-person or virtually?

All entries will be submitted and judged virtually on MyFuture.net for the 2023 contest period. Be sure to download the [2023 National Arts Contest Staff Guide](#) for a complete overview of this year's contest.

Who is my regional host site?

There are no regional host sites for 2023. Club organizations can opt to judge artwork in-person at a local level, then virtually submit local winning pieces to the National Arts Contest. The 2023 National Arts Contest will be conducted virtually on MyFuture.net and managed by BGCA.

How do I register for the 2023 National Arts Contest?

Club staff must first ensure their members are registered on MyFuture.net. We recommend that Club staff bulk register your members. More information and guidance on bulk registration can be found in [this resource](#). You can find additional guidance by visiting the [MyFuture Staff Dashboard](#) and in this [online tutorial](#).

How do I submit artwork?

All Club members participating in the National Arts Contest **must first create a MyFuture account to submit** their artwork. Once registered on MyFuture, young artists can submit their artwork virtually on MyFuture.net. Artwork should include the appropriate age category (6-9, 10-12, 13-15, 16-18) and use one of the four contest themes:

- 1) Setting Expectations – Being Your Best Self
- 2) Speaking Up – Youth Voice & Leadership
- 3) Social Justice Through the Arts
- 4) Wellness Inside & Out – Personal and Community Wellbeing

What are the contest categories?

The 2023 National Arts Contest will accept ALL art forms!

At Boys & Girls Clubs, art forms are categorized into the following four pillars:

Visual Arts

Drawing
Painting
Sculpture
Pastel

Performing Arts

Drama
Dance
Music
Spoken Word

Digital Arts

Graphic Design
Digital Music
Digital Photography
Digital Storytelling

Applied Arts

Jewelry Making
Woodworking
Fashion Design
Furniture Design

To help you guide youth in creating art pieces to submit to the 2023 National Arts Contests, see the [Arts Experience Map](#).

How many pieces can be submitted?

Only one entry per Club member can be submitted. Contest Submission will open in **January 2023**. Please review the steps on registering before submitting. More detailed guidance can be found in the [2023 National Arts Contest Staff Guide](#).

Where do I mail my artwork?

No artwork will be mailed for the 2023 National Arts Contest. All submissions must be made online at [MyFuture.net](#). Please plan to display and showcase youth artwork as you wish in your own organization or community. For more guidance on youth exhibitions, please see the [2023 National Arts Contest Staff Guide](#).

When will local or regional judging take place?

Local judging is to be conducted on your own. For more guidance on how to conduct local judging, please see the [2023 National Arts Contest Staff Guide](#). Regional judging will not take place in 2023. Judging will take place only at a national level on MyFuture.net.

2023 National Arts Contest Timeline	
MyFuture member registration	ongoing
MyFuture National Arts Contest submissions open	January 2023
MyFuture National Arts Contest submissions close	March 1, 2023
National judging	March 1-24, 2023
National Arts Contest live event and announcement of national winners	March 28, 2023

What happens if my artwork is named a national winner?

All national winners will be announced and recognized on MyFuture.net. Winners will also receive a certificate from BGCA National Headquarters recognizing their accomplishments, which will arrive in late April or May.

Club Experience Blog

A Youth Development Resource From Boys & Girls Clubs of America

Keeping Art Inclusive and Responsive



KEEPING ART INCLUSIVE AND RESPONSIVE

**FEATURING THE BGCA 2023
NATIONAL ARTS CONTEST THEMES**

BGCA's [Ashley Payton](#) and [Briana Boyd](#) are BACK to introduce the INCREDIBLE themes for the 2023 BGCA National Arts Contest! We are already feeling inspired.

There are many ways to explore artistic styles and art forms. Boys & Girls Club of America approaches Arts learning in three different ways: 1) *Arts Specific*, also known as “arts for art’s sake,” 2) *Arts Enhanced*, and 3) *Arts Integrated*.

Different Levels of Integration

Arts Specific

These activities help youth develop knowledge and skill in a particular art form. Most art education programming is art-specific and often builds a base set of knowledge and skills one can continue to build on.

Arts Enhanced

These activities enable youth to use the arts as a device or strategy to support another program area, but there are no specific objectives in the arts.

Arts Integrated

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These activities help accomplish specific objectives when youth engage in the creative process by exploring connections between an art form and another subject area with the goal of better understanding both subjects.

Let's dive deeper into the *Arts Integrated* approach. Integration is the act of combining two or more parts to make a unified whole. Think about dessert- different ingredients are integrated to form that good ol' apple pie. Or R&B music, the integration of both rhythm and blues. Similarly, within the Arts Integrated approach, youth are engaged in the creative process by exploring connections between specific art forms (Applied, Visual, Digital, and Performing) and another subject area to deepen their understanding of both the art form and the other subject area. An example of the Arts Integrated approach in programming is [Lyricism 101](#), which helps youth explore and build technical skills in the arts through hip-hop and musical composition and literacy through storytelling.

The [2023 National Arts Contest](#) is taking the Arts Integrated approach as we introduce new thematic categories. They feature some of the key elements for positive youth development and other important subjects youth and staff across the Movement have expressed interest in. The new thematic categories for the 2023 National Arts Contest are:

- Setting Expectations: Being Your Best Self
- Speaking Up: Youth Voice & Leadership
- Social Justice Through the Arts
- Wellness Inside & Out: Personal and Community Wellbeing

Why now? These new categories are a part of a larger strategy to make BGCA's National Arts Contest more inclusive and responsive to what youth and their communities find value in. Connecting these themes with our four art forms- visual, applied, digital, and performing- is in perfect alignment with BGCA's values. We know we are going to see not

just creative and stunning pieces of art, but that we will see youth engage in critical conversations about the powerful impact of positive self-concept, youth leadership, social transformation, personal and communal healing, and joy.



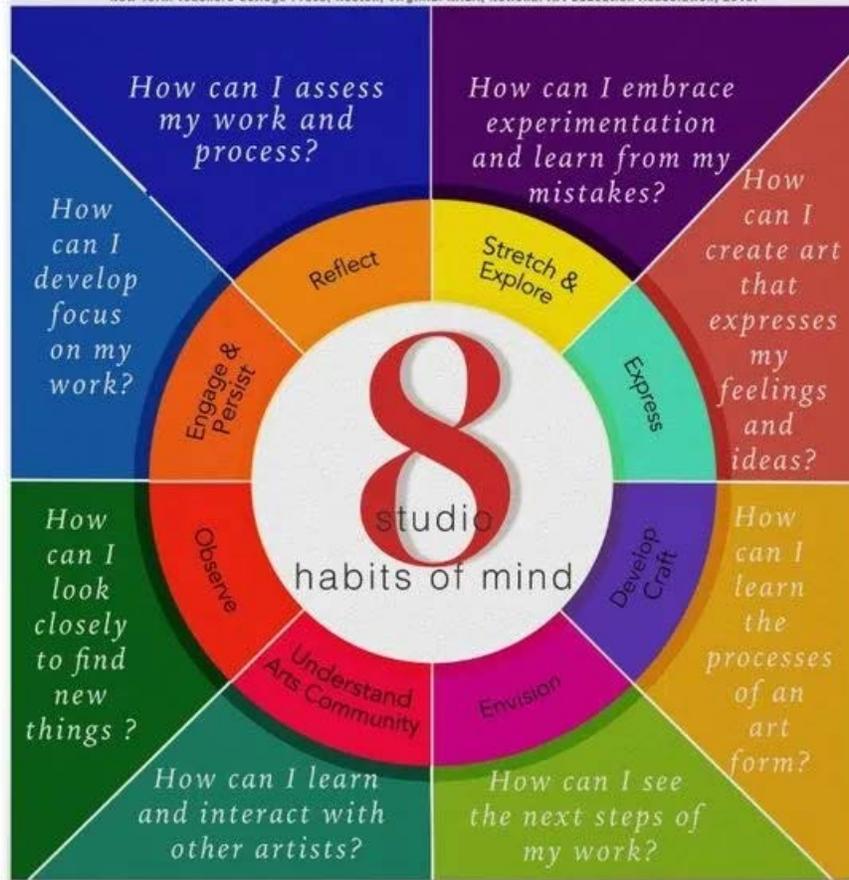
Let's take a closer look at the four themes and some guiding questions you can use to help youth as they make decisions about their projects. And even if you aren't planning to participate in the National Arts Contest, you can use these to inspire events and projects all year long.

Theme #1 Setting Expectations: Being Your Best Self

We can support youth in their journey to discovering positive self-identity and self-efficacy by creating environments and expectations that normalize excellence and authenticity through . . . you guessed it . . . arts integration!

The Creative Process

Source: Hetland, Lois. *Studio Thinking 2: The Real Benefits of Visual Arts Education*. New York: Teachers College Press; Reston, Virginia: NAEA, National Art Education Association, 2013.



Click [here](#) for a deeper dive into this image, which features the various processes and structures that can support youth and teens with both holistic and creative self-development. Remember, being and giving your best self might look different depending on the day and the situation. Similarly, art showcasing youths' best and authentic selves can take on various forms and artistic expression.

Guiding Questions for this category:

- What does my art say about what I value or believe in?
- How does my creativity express my interests and personality?
- How does my creative process demonstrate my diligence and commitment?

Theme #2 Speaking up: Youth Voice & Leadership

Recently while visiting the Edward H. White High School Club at Boys & Girls Clubs of Northeast Florida in Jacksonville, I was able to be in the company of empowered teens, and it was truly one of those feel-good moments that you think only happens on TV. Two teen Club members led the tour, and it was evident that they are forces to be reckoned with. It wasn't just because of their eye contact and firm handshakes, but they spoke passionately and clearly articulated their Club experiences in a way that demonstrated exercising their voice is a practice that has been normalized and encouraged. The teen members are under the guidance of a Club Director who thinks of youth voice and leadership with a "yes, and" mindset and how to problem solve with a "yes, but" mindset. This not only positively impacts the teens' Club experience, but it allows them to critically think, amplify their voices, and strengthen their leadership skills. How powerful is that?

We often think of youth voice and leadership as only being about serious matters, but it can be fun too! The same Club shared the story of how the teens wanted to host a haunted house event for Halloween. Even though the director has only been in her position for less than a year, her response was followed by a series of "yes, and..." and "yes, but..." statements that required the teens to take leadership responsibility for the project while also supporting their teen voices! They set a theme of *Icons of Terror*, and did everything from marketing to designing a layout that optimized their Club's space. Art was integrated as they used their resources, creativity, and imagination to create a haunted house they were proud of and an experience they will never forget.



Guiding Questions for this category:

- How can I use art to amplify my voice?
- What creative product can I create that demonstrates my expertise and thought leadership?
- How can I use art to educate others and be a positive role model?

Theme #3 Social Justice Through the Arts

As youth development professionals, we must identify approaches for supporting youth to be agents of change for themselves and their community by integrating arts-based and cultural activities with justice-minded practices. Social justice protests in 2020 struck a chord that continues to resound today. People across the Movement expressed interest in more social justice and arts-integrated content which has allowed youth to take action as they grow in their critical consciousness of self, social, and global awareness.

Examples of social awareness for social justice that youth can engage in might include communication and collaboration, recognizing and appreciating diversity, and building empathy and respect for others. These could manifest through a voting campaign or

hosting an art show highlighting BIPOC artists. Reflecting both inward and outward about our personal stances on justice issues is a daunting task for adults, so imagine the magnitude this has on growing and developing youth! It might be easier for youth to understand, express, and advocate through an artistic lens, so let's allow them to lean into creativity-based experiences that support their current and future-led social action.



Guiding Questions for this category:

- How can I use art to imagine a better world?
- Who does my art speak to and for?
- How does my creativity reflect the times?

Theme #4 Wellness Inside & Out: Personal and Community Wellbeing

The [Global Wellness Institute](#) defines wellness as the active pursuit of activities, choices and lifestyles that lead to a state of overall health. Now that we know what wellness is, I want to talk about vacuuming. Sometimes it serves as a calming retreat as I become more mindful of my breathing...inhale on the forward pulls and exhale on the reverse. Other

times, I get a burst of energy and I'm moved to put on a performance! Is it a far reach to say that the act (*art*) of vacuuming presents an opportunity for me to practice wellness?

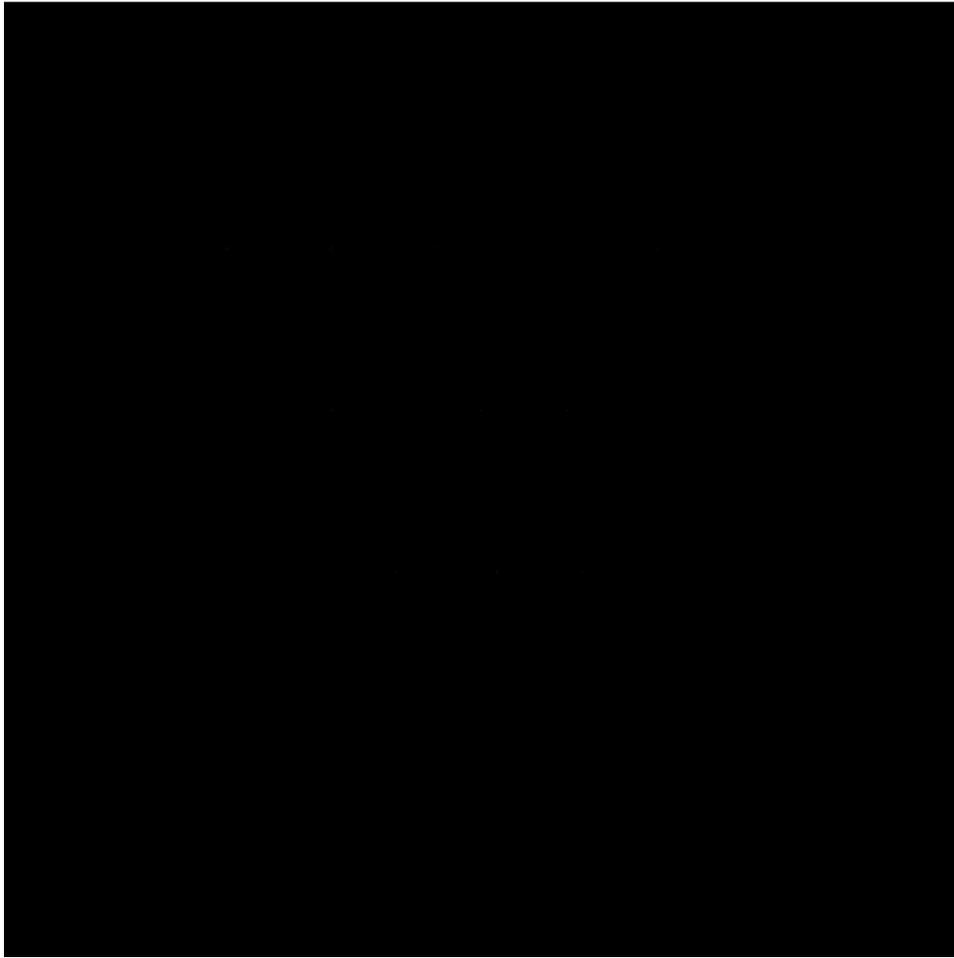


There are seven different types of wellness: intellectual, physical, emotional, social, occupational, spiritual, and environmental. When I vacuum, I can experience about three or four different types of wellness. And we are not going to overlook the line art that was created in the process- you'd pay big bucks to see my handmade, crisp, symmetric, vertical lines! Wellness is an active term that includes all the intentions, choices, and actions we take toward optimal health and well-being, and we can tap into arts-based strategies to bring about wellness in ways that we might not have expected. Wellness and art are all around us, and I challenge you to help youth see that.

There are several resources that can help get you started, including [Silk](#), an interactive generative art experience that supports emotional wellness. [Bomomo](#) allows users to choose between various shapes and motions to create abstract designs that can represent spiritual wellness. You can also check out this [list](#) of 100 Art Therapy Exercises to incorporate into your life, home, classroom, Club, and community.

Guiding Questions for this category:

- How can I experience joy and healing when engaging in the arts?
- How does the creative process cultivate my intellectual and social consciousness?
- How does my art contribute to others' joy and healing?



Arts learning is a dynamic experience and practice as it can be utilized for pure leisure, exploration, self-actualization, and as a tool that deepens our understanding of other subject areas. There are many entry points and outcomes (download the [BGCA Arts Experience Map](#) for information on arts entry points), but one consistent fact is that arts are demonstrative and impactful. The new 2023 thematic categories facilitate a unique experience for youth across the movement to explore, appreciate, and elevate themselves as well as cultivate a more just and joyful world.

To learn more about the [2023 National Arts Contest](#) and our other Arts resources, check out these links!

- [2023 National Arts Contest Staff Guidelines](#)
- [2023 National Arts Contest FAQs](#)
- Book an Arts consultation [here!](#)
- Click [here](#) to join BGCACreates, our online community for teaching artists!
- Visit [Spillett Leadership University](#) and search, “Arts Learning Journey” to access a collection of trainings offered to support youth development professionals leading Arts programming