

# HEART *of* ART

The Northern School of Art's prestigious Foundation Art Prize is a fantastic platform for emerging talent – but hurry, this year's deadline for entries is May 1

**W**inning a major art prize can be the moment everything changes – the line on your CV that makes universities look twice, the confidence boost that says, ‘yes, this could be your career’. That is exactly the kind of springboard The Northern School of Art’s newly-expanded Foundation Art Prize 2026 is setting out to be for young creatives across the region.

## A bigger, bolder prize

For 2026, the Foundation Art Prize has grown, opening up to even more emerging artists with two age bands: Years 9–11 (around 14–16) and Years 12–13 (around 16–18). The younger category is open to those living in the Tees Valley, while the older category welcomes entries from the Tees Valley, the wider North East, Yorkshire and the Humber. It is a clear message that serious talent can develop early – and deserves a serious platform.

The prize celebrates creativity in its broadest sense, inviting work in any medium or discipline, from wild, experimental pieces to intricate, finely-detailed studies. Finalists will see their work hung as part of the Northern School of Art’s prestigious Summer Show at the Middlesbrough campus, with winners revealed at a dedicated awards ceremony on Thursday, June 18.

## Why you should enter now

Firstly, there is a very practical incentive. The 9–11 winner will receive £250 in cash, while the older category winner will take home £300, with two runners-up in each category receiving £50 creative materials vouchers. Each winner’s school or college also benefits, with a £100 contribution towards art materials to help nurture the next wave of talent.

But the real prize is visibility. Shortlisted artists will have their work seen by tutors,



2025 winner Poppy Davison and Opulence

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industry professionals and visitors to the Summer Show – people who can spot potential and offer guidance at a pivotal time in a young artist’s life. With the competition designed to reward originality, experimentation and artistic excellence, this is about more than “pretty pictures”: it is about pushing your practice further and showing what you can really do.

Entries are open now, but the deadline is 11.59pm on Friday, May 1 – so if you have a piece you are proud of, now is the moment to

submit it. (Not GCSE/A-level final work).

This year’s judging panel includes Tees Valley-based artist and Northern School of Art alumna Rachel Laycock, a kiln glass specialist who has run her own creative glass business since 2006. As co-director of BloomInArt NorthEast CIC and creative producer of Hartlepool’s Wintertide Festival, she brings a working artist’s eye to the submissions, looking for ideas that are ready to grow. ‘As an alumni of The Northern School of Art, it is close to my heart to support and champion opportunities for local creatives that strengthen a portfolio and could kickstart a career in the arts. Remember, you’ve got to be in it to win it!’

## The Northern School of Art

At the heart of the prize is The Northern School of Art itself, a specialist institution with deep roots in the region’s cultural life and a reputation for nurturing boundary-pushing creatives. From its Middlesbrough campus, the school’s Foundation team oversees the prize, mirroring the exploratory, individual nature of its UAL Foundation Diploma in Art & Design. The annual Summer Show has become a highlight of the North East calendar, showcasing work by students who routinely go on to top universities, studios, studios and creative employers across the UK.

See website for full details of how to enter the 2026 Foundation Art Prize competition.

[northernart.ac.uk](http://northernart.ac.uk)

