10 BCPS students named 2023 YoungArts award winners

Two students honored as finalists, invited to participate in National YoungArts Week

Towson, MD – Ten Baltimore County Public Schools students have been named 2023 YoungArts winners. Two of the 10 – singer/songwriter Sophia Bryter and photographer Britney Simbana-J, both students at George Washington Carver Center for Arts and Technology – earned finalist honors, the highest award level.

The remaining eight BCPS students honored were recognized with merit awards. Those students are:

- **Joshua Bowden**, voice/classical: tenor, Carver Center
- **Iyana Brumfield**, dance/modern-contemporary, Carver Center
- **Nia Simone Clark**, visual arts, Carver Center
- **Hahmini Lewis**, visual arts, Carver Center
- **Runa Matsushita**, classical music/violin, Towson High School
- **Victoire Polsky**, film/experimental, Carver Center
- **Camryn Sydnor**, photography, Carver Center
- **Isabela Vallar**, visual arts, Carver Center

Nationally, 702 accomplished young visual, literary, and performing artists were named YoungArts winners.

As finalists, Bryter and Simbana-J will be invited to participate in National YoungArts Week in January 2023 and to learn from notable artists such as architect Germane Barnes, author Richard Blanco, actor and playwright Taylor Mac, jazz alto saxophonist Charles McPherson, costume designer Machine Dazzle.
and actor BD Wong. In addition, Bryter and Simbana-J’s work will be further evaluated and eligible to earn prizes ranging from $1,000 to $10,000. If they attend National YoungArts Week and meet eligibility requirements, they also will be considered for nomination to the U.S. Presidential Scholars Program.

As merit winners, the other eight BCPS students will receive cash awards of $100.

All winners become part of a professional network of over 20,000 alumni artists and are eligible to participate in YoungArts’ regional programs, including YoungArts Miami in February, YoungArts Los Angeles in March, and YoungArts New York in April.

Quoted in a YoungArts press release, Artistic Director Lauren Snelling said, “Every year we are inspired anew by the talent, dedication, and creativity of extraordinary early career artists. YoungArts is proud to support artists at critical junctures throughout their lives, and we look forward to providing community and professional and creative development opportunities that will empower the 2023 award winners as they embark on exciting careers in the arts. Now more than ever, it is essential to support artists so that their voices can be heard long into the future.”

Past YoungArts award winners include contemporary artists Daniel Arsham, Grammy award-winning trumpeter and composer Terence Blanchard, dancer/choreographer Camille A. Brown, Golden Globe-winning actor Timothée Chalamet, Academy Award-winning actress and producer Viola Davis, former National Youth Poet Laureate Amanda Gorman, singer-songwriter Judith Hill, violinist Jennifer Koh, Academy Award-winning screenwriter and playwright Tarell Alvin McCraney, Grammy Award-winning actor Andrew Rannells, dancer/artistic director Desmond Richardson, model/actress/activist Hunter Schafer, and portrait painter Kehinde Wiley.

(Editor’s note: A photograph by Simbana-J can be found on Flickr.)

# # #

Baltimore County Public Schools, the nation’s 22nd largest school system, is focused on raising the bar and closing gaps to prepare our students for the future. Thanks to innovative and talented leaders, teachers, staff, and students, BCPS celebrates many honors.