

**CHESTER  
FIELDS  
2020  
THE POLYGON  
GALLERY**

“

Not only will it  
develop the artist  
in you, it will allow  
you to put your

- Alia Youssef, Chester Fields Winner

stories  
into the  
world



# ABOUT CHESTER FIELDS



Chester Fields is an initiative of The Polygon Gallery that encourages the development of visionary young photographers and gives them an opportunity to show their work at a professional venue. Each year, The Polygon announces a new theme for Chester Fields. Teen artists from across the region are invited to submit original works of photographic art in response to that theme. All submittals are reviewed by a jury of artists and arts professionals, who select works to be shown in a week-long exhibition and fully illustrated catalogue!

You can get your class involved as a school project, offer extra credit, or simply spread the word. In any case, we'd love the opportunity to speak to your photo students about this unique opportunity.

To schedule a visit for your class with a member of The Polygon's curatorial team, email [j.ramsey@thepolygon.ca](mailto:j.ramsey@thepolygon.ca). After a half-hour presentation and Q&A session, artists can get to work! Submissions are due Friday, March 6. Finalists chosen by our jury will be on display at The Polygon during Capture Photography Festival, April 4-12

Justin Ramsey, Assistant Curator

# THE 2020 THEME

## GLOBAL WARNING

Long before photography became one of the most exciting art forms, it was used as a scientific tool – a way to make visual records of the natural phenomena around us. This continues to be one of the oldest challenges for photographers: finding ways to capture the dynamic forces of nature in still images.

This year, we invite you to take up this challenge of photography by thinking about nature, especially at this critical moment in our changing climate. The environment is often thought of as the backdrop against which our activities take place – but it's time to bring nature to the forefront.

Think about meteorological photographs that document different cloud formations and weather patterns. Or landscape photography that depicts how we're transforming the earth. Or even more personal shots that reflect your own memories, ideas, or observations about the forces at play around us. What aspect of the environment do you think people should be paying attention to in this day and age – and how can we, as artists, bring it to their attention?

We're looking for powerful, creative works of art that make the viewer re-examine their relationship to the natural world.



Anna Wang, *Unnatural Pipeline*, 2018 Finalist



“

It will take vision,  
it will take courage,  
it will take fierce  
determination.

- Greta Thunberg



Vincent Villwock, *The Last Run*, 2018 Finalist

## WHY SHOULD I GET INVOLVED IN CHESTER FIELDS?



### Expanded Learning

Each week that the program is running, new ideas, artwork examples, and educational content gets uploaded to the program's blog and The Polygon Gallery's app to get teens familiar with some photo facts and history!



### Big Opportunity

The world needs artists. Artists give us new ways of looking at the world and questioning what we see. The arts are vital to a critically thinking and socially engaged society. Chester Fields offers emerging photographers with a chance to show in a



### Easy Process

It's up to participants to think carefully about the theme and to create an amazing work of art – but it's up to The Polygon Gallery to put together the show! All finalists will have their works printed, mounted, and framed by the Gallery at no cost.



### Portfolio Piece

Every year, The Polygon Gallery also produces a commemorative book that catalogues all the finalists' works. It's a great takeaway for artists looking to start their portfolios, or senior students applying to university.



## FREQUENTLY ASKED QUESTIONS

### I WANT TO PARTICIPATE! WHAT DO I NEED TO DO?

**Wrap your head around the theme.** Each year's theme is different, but the goal is the same: to produce a compelling image that also makes the viewer think. The theme is also open-ended enough that participants are free to interpret it differently, allowing for countless creative responses. Don't worry too much about being "right" or "wrong" – just get creative!

**Make an artwork.** Once you've thought about the theme and come up with an idea, it might be as simple as pointing your camera and shooting. But you're welcome to work in any number of ways, as long as the basis of your image is photographic. Simply put, you could do a collage of photographs, or edit a photo using software, or come up with a different idea altogether!

**Tell us about it.** When you submit an artwork, include a write-up of about 2-3 sentences (50-100 words) telling us about your image, how you created it, and what your idea behind it was. This will help the jury as they choose their finalists.

### WHAT IS THE TIMELINE?

You can start working on your projects anytime. Submissions are due on Friday, March 6. The shortlist will be posted on Friday, March 13. The exhibition will then open with a reception at 1pm on Sunday, April 5!

### CAN I SUBMIT MORE THAN ONE IMAGE?

You can't submit more than one artwork. However, it's okay if your artwork is composed of multiple images – for example, a sequence of related images, a diptych, or a photomontage.

### IS THERE A WINNER AMONG THE FINALISTS?

Yes! The jury gets to pick 3-4 artworks of exceptional merit, and award those artists with cash prizes. There are also cool door prizes at the Chester Fields reception.

### HOW MUCH IS THE CASH PRIZE?

That depends on whether the jury decides to split up the prize money evenly – i.e., all the works are equally outstanding – or if they decide to tier the winners first place, second place, and so on. Last year, there were two awards of \$250 and two awards of \$350. The year before, there were four awards ranging \$200-\$500 each.

### HOW MANY WORKS GET CHOSEN FOR THE EXHIBITION?

About 30 works.

### WHAT HAPPENS IF MY WORK DOESN'T GET CHOSEN?

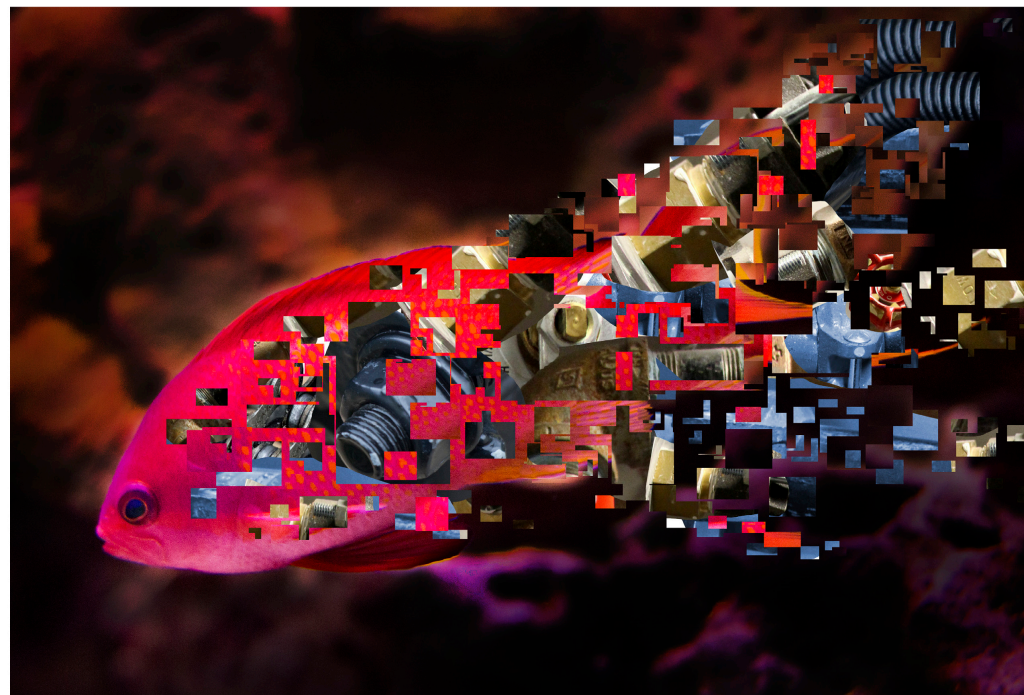
Trust us: rejection is part of being an artist. Give yourself credit, seek feedback if you want it, and know that if we had the space to show everyone's work, we would. There are so many amazing artworks that come in every year that our jury has a tough time narrowing down the shortlist.

### HOW BIG SHOULD MY IMAGE FILE BE?

As big as possible!

### MORE QUESTIONS?

Contact Justin Ramsey at [j.ramsey@thepolygon.ca](mailto:j.ramsey@thepolygon.ca)



Andy Shin, *Unnatural*, 2017 Finalist

# PAST EXHIBITION FINALISTS

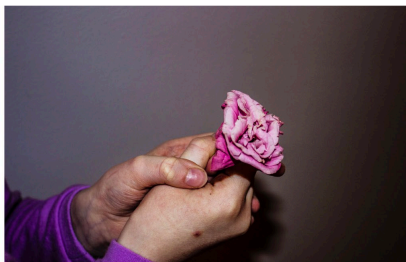
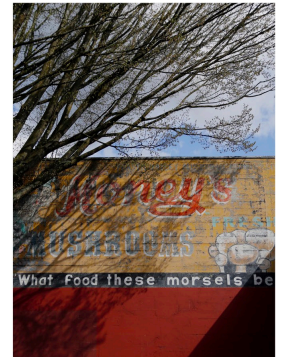
Luca Papini  
*Tenebris*  
2018 Finalist



Jason Ross  
*Return*  
2019 Finalist



Mia Xu  
*Hidden Beauties*  
2018 Finalist



Sarah Doolan  
*Wilted Innocence*  
2017 Finalist

Kayli Koonar  
*Convenience*  
2018 Finalist





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