



## Venice Arts Students Win Top National and Statewide Honors from YoungArts and Scholastic Art & Writing Awards

LOS ANGELES, CA – (FEBRUARY 24, 2014)

Angela Francis and Arthur Cooke, both age 17, two dedicated teen photographers at Venice Arts, were happy enough to have been selected as “Finalists” for the national YoungArts Awards. This meant that they were two of only eight teen photographers, and two of 170 teen artists—out of 10,000 applicants—selected as Finalists, nationwide. They received an all-expense-paid trip to Miami in January to study with master artists, meet other young artists, and exhibit their work. But the news gets better: Today Venice Arts learned that Angela was awarded the Gold Award, which gives her \$10,000 toward college, among other things. Arthur won the Silver, which gives him \$5,000. In addition to these impressive accolades, Angela has also been nominated for the US Presidential Scholar Program, and was nominated for the LOOKbetween program by an editor at the Aperture Books, who saw Angela’s work at YoungArts in Miami.



ANGELA FRANCIS, UNTITLED, 2013  
ARTHUR COOKE, UNTITLED, 2013

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
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These awards were just a few of recent accolades that Venice Arts’ students have garnered. Three students received the prestigious Scholastic Art & Writing Awards. Leo Cerutti is a Gold Key Winner in Photography in the Single Image category; Angela Francis is a Gold Key Winner in Photography in the Portfolio category; and Tal Day is a Gold Key Film Category Winner for his Documentary Film “Right Here on Venice Pier.” In addition to these awards, two student-made films, “Religious Debate” by Venice Arts’ students Jimmy Papik and Quaadir Slater and Tal Day’s “Right Here on Venice Pier” have been selected by juror Chris Strompolos to be included in the Extremely Young Film Festival. They will screen at the Museum of Fine Arts Houston on Saturday, March 1st.

These awards speak not only to the incredible talents to these students, but also to the dedication of the artists and mentors at Venice Arts, who work so hard to connect low-income kids to the opportunities that they deserve, and to support, cajole, and love them through the process!



LEO CERRUTI, UNTITLED, 2013  
TAL DAY, FILM STILL FROM RIGHT HERE, ON VENICE  
PIER, 2013

## About Venice Arts

Now in its twenty-first year, Venice Arts is a nonprofit arts organization that is committed to providing high-impact arts education for low-income youth in the areas of photography, filmmaking, and multimedia. In addition to its core Art Mentoring & Education Program, Venice Arts implements regional, statewide, and international Documentary Programs with both adults and children; presents exhibitions, public programs, and workshops for adults centered around documentary photography and film; and consults on media arts, visual storytelling, and arts education locally and internationally. It is the philosophy of Venice Arts that self-expression, particularly through the arts, has the potential to transform and empower young people to see greater possibilities for themselves and for their communities.

YoungArts identifies and supports the next generation of artists, and contributes to the cultural vitality of the nation by investing in the artistic development of talented young artists in the literary, performing, visual and design arts.

The Scholastic Art & Writing Awards began in 1923. Today, more than 90,000 teens in grades 7 through 12 from around the nation annually submit more than 185,000 works of art and writing in 28 categories. 1,911 individual artworks by California students, representing fifteen categories of visual arts, were selected as Gold or Silver Keys or Honorable Mentions awardees. 70 Senior Art Portfolios were selected for either Gold or Silver Keys or Honorable Mentions and 5 individual works were awarded California American Visions. California Gold Keys and American Visions will now be juried at the national level in NYC for medals.

The Awards, now presented by the nonprofit Alliance for Young Artists & Writers, not only celebrate the rich future of artistic America, but also document its past. The program has been credited with identifying early talent in generations of America's cultural icons, including Truman Capote (1932), Richard Avedon (1941), Andy Warhol (ca. 1945), Sylvia Plath (1947), Robert Redford (1954) and Zac Posen (1998), each of whom won the award when they were in high school. For most young winners, this recognition is their first experience of being identified as serious artists and writers, and the impact on their self-perception can be life-changing. Richard Avedon called winning his Scholastic Award, "the defining moment of my life." Student works are evaluated by industry leaders and exhibited in New York City venues as well as cities across the country through the traveling exhibit, ART.WRITE.NOW

The U.S. Presidential Scholars Program recognizes distinguished graduating high school seniors, including those who demonstrate exceptional talent in the visual, creative, and performing arts. The award is one of the highest honors in the nation for students, with only 141 students per year, nationwide, receiving nominations, and only 60 in the arts category.