



ASUCLA Media Contact:  
Christina Manuel  
ASUCLA Communications Specialist  
(310) 794-8828  
[cmanuel@asucla.ucla.edu](mailto:cmanuel@asucla.ucla.edu)

ASUCLA Student Union Contact:  
Roy Champawat  
Director, ASUCLA Student Union  
(310) 206-0700  
[rchampawat@asucla.ucla.edu](mailto:rchampawat@asucla.ucla.edu)

## FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE

### **ASUCLA commissions four winning Art in the Union submissions**

*Formally awarded on May 11, four UCLA students are the winning recipients of the annual ASUCLA Student Union Art in the Union contest out of 35 student submissions.*

**Los Angeles, Calif., May 12, 2023** – Four winners were formally selected from a diverse pool of art entries to this year’s [Associated Students UCLA](#) (ASUCLA) Student Union [Art in the Union](#) contest. The winning UCLA students are receiving \$600 and now have the opportunity to have their artwork hung in ASUCLA facilities for generations to enjoy.

Awarding UCLA students Jang Lee for “Release,” Jaden Ji for “Veil,” Erin O’ Neil for “To the Powell Cat” and Harshit Ranjan for “Sleep Deprived Dreamer,” the Art in the Union recipients were honored at a ceremony on May 11 in the Kerckhoff Art Gallery.

“Art in the Union represents the depth and expanse of the Bruin community as our very own artists illustrate their journeys and experiences through the magic of artistic visual expressions,” said Pouria Abbassi, ASUCLA executive director and CEO. “As future Bruins engage in the activities of their student Union, their campus experience will be further graced through their exposure to the art of Bruins past and Bruins present.”

Art in the Union is held every year by the ASUCLA Student Union to encourage UCLA students to put their artistic talents forward for all to experience. This year’s contest received 35 student submissions from students representing 26 different majors at UCLA.

In its history, ASUCLA has commissioned up to five original pieces of work by UCLA students annually since 1972, selecting winners from as many as 150 applicants. In 2003, the program — then known as the Student Commissioned Art Program — was modernized to create Art in the Union as a way to honor excellence in student-made visual arts. Across the ASUCLA facilities of Ackerman Union, Kerckhoff Hall, North Campus Student Center and LuValle Commons, ASUCLA has more than 60 winning Art in the Union pieces on display.

Judging for this year’s contest included a panel of USAC Cultural Affairs Commission student representatives, ASUCLA executives and staff, and Mrs. Carol Block, between May 1-8; winners were notified of their award on May 8.

**About the 2023 Art in the Union winners**



#### “Release”

In his piece “Release,” Lee (UCLA community health sciences graduate student), took inspiration from the movie “Twilight’s Kiss” to depict the intimate touch of a face with oil paint on canvas. In his submission, Lee describes that the image stimulates “feelings of liberation and confinement, discovering love at an old age and the obligations we hold to our past lives.”

#### “To the Powell Cat”

Looking to O’Neil’s tribute “To the Powell Cat,” O’Neil (third-year UCLA mathematics student), put forward countless hours of preparation before taking her X-ACTO knife to carve every detail precisely, intended solely for an Art in the Union submission. Calling this a “valuable process,” O’Neil’s piece serves as a memorial of UCLA’s infamous Powell Cat that passed away in March, sitting in front of its frequented UCLA buildings on campus.

“This creation was made with the Art in the Union program in mind, so ASUCLA played a significant role in motivating me to produce something I am proud of,” O’Neil stated in her entry submission.

#### “Veil”

A repeat winner from the previous year, third-year microbiology, immunology and molecular genetics UCLA student Ji once again took home the prize with her new piece; titled “Veil,” Ji’s submission explores the use of oil and acrylic on canvas to create a Renaissance-inspired portrait of a veiled woman.

Challenging the idea that art value is contingent on a price tag, Ji became more attached to her piece as she worked on it, “and I wanted to display it as my work rather than a commodity I can trade,” she stated in her submission. “While I work to push myself to be better, there really is no meaning unless I give it meaning.”

#### “Sleep Deprived Dreamer”

And last but not least is the winning piece “Sleep Deprived Dreamer,” by Ranjan, materials science and engineering graduate UCLA student. Transforming an Apple Pencil into brush strokes and an iPad Pro into the canvas, Ranjan meshes the fascination of dreaming power into his sleepless passion pursuit nights to depict a “Sleep Deprived Dreamer.”

“This painting is a tribute to all the sleep deprived dreamers out there who are chasing their dreams with unrelenting passion and determination,” Ranjan stated in the submission.

To view the 2023 Art in the Union winning pieces and those of past years, visit [ASUCLA’s Art in the Union webpage here.](#)

###

#### **About ASUCLA:**

Founded in 1919, Associated Students UCLA (ASUCLA) is a nonprofit association that drives vitally essential student services and activities throughout the UCLA campus. ASUCLA boasts the largest college store in the U.S., an extensive food program, UCLA® brand licensing programming through UCLA Trademarks & Licensing, and other services and programs that include student government and student



media, which significantly enhances the quality of UCLA's campus life. For more information and to stay connected, follow [@asucla](#) on Instagram or visit [asucla.ucla.edu](http://asucla.ucla.edu).