

CONGRESSWOMAN ALMA S. ADAMS ANNOUNCES WINNER OF THE 2026 CONGRESSIONAL ART COMPETITION



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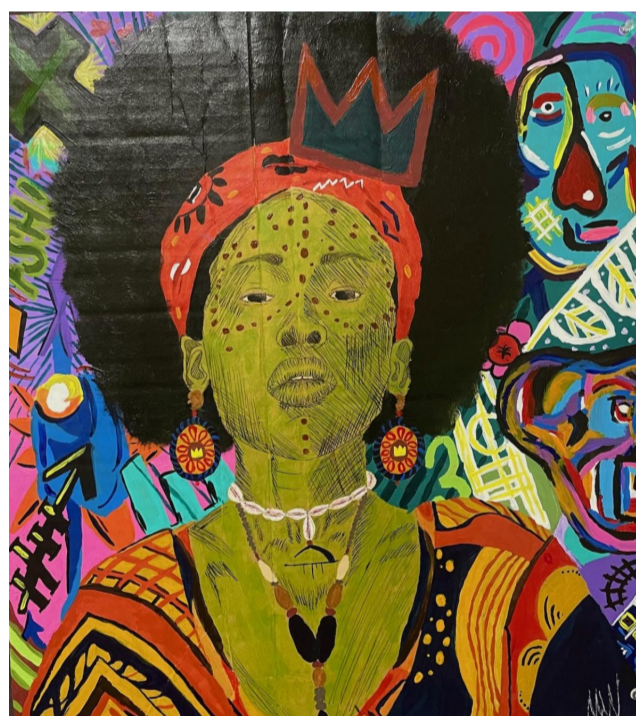
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Reps. Adams Announces Winner of the 2026 Congressional Art Competition



CHARLOTTE, NC – **Congresswoman Alma S. Adams, Ph.D.** is proud to announce Morgan Wade, a sophomore at West Charlotte High School, as the winner of the 2026 Congressional Art Competition representing North Carolina’s 12th Congressional District. Wade’s award-winning piece, African Basquiat, an Acrylic and Polly paint masterpiece was unveiled during the Grand Opening Exhibition held on Sunday, May 17, 2026, at Mint Museum Uptown at Levine Center for the Arts in Charlotte.



Wade describes African Basquiat as a bold fusion of abstract expressionism and African cultural influence. At the center of the piece stands an afro-headed woman rendered in green — a deliberate and powerful symbol of Black empowerment. Inspired by the raw, layered energy of Jean-Michel Basquiat, the artwork roots itself firmly in African aesthetic traditions, creating a striking visual dialogue between contemporary art and ancestral identity.

Morgan beautifully embraced this year’s Congressional Institute theme, “Celebrating 250 Years of America,” by creating a powerful vision of American beauty through the lens of Black empowerment, cultural evolution, and the embrace of one’s roots and identity — all of which contribute to the richness and diversity that make our nation truly beautiful.

“Morgan is a phenomenally talented young woman,” **said Congresswoman Adams.** “She is exactly the kind of young artist this competition was created to uplift — fearless, intentional, and deeply connected to her community and culture. Her piece, African Basquiat, is not only visually stunning, but it also speaks to the viewer. That is what great art does.”

During the exhibition and award presentation, Congresswoman Adams also discovered a meaningful personal connection to Morgan’s artistic journey. Morgan shared that her aunt — a former student of Congresswoman Adams during her time teaching at Bennett College — helped inspire and nurture her passion for art. Morgan now hopes to continue that legacy by pursuing admission to Massachusetts Institute of Technology to study artificial intelligence and emerging technologies.

The Congressional Art Competition is an annual nationwide program that invites high school students from each congressional district to submit original artwork for consideration. As the NC-12 winner, Morgan Wade’s artwork will travel to Washington, D.C., where it will be displayed in the U.S. Capitol Cannon Tunnel for one year alongside winning entries from across the country.

The first- and second-place runners-up will have their artwork displayed for one year in Congresswoman Adams’ Washington, D.C., and district offices, respectively.

The exhibition will remain on display at the Mint Museum Uptown in Charlotte from May 17, 2026, through June 7, 2026. The exhibit is free and open to the public.

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ABOUT THE CONGRESSIONAL ART COMPETITION Established in 1982, the Congressional Art Competition provides an opportunity for members of Congress to encourage and recognize the artistic talent of their young constituents. One winner per congressional district is selected annually. Once a winner is selected, their artwork is displayed for 11 months in the Cannon Tunnel that leads into the U.S. Capitol – a path frequented by Members of Congress, staff, and visitors from around the world. With millions passing by the exhibit each year, it is one of the most-viewed art installations in the country.

For press inquiries, contact Congresswoman Adams' Chief of Staff, Adrienne Christian, at adrienne.christian@mail.house.gov or (202) 225-1510.

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Congresswoman Alma S. Adams, Ph.D. represents North Carolina's 12th Congressional District (Charlotte, Mecklenburg County) and serves on the House Committee on Agriculture and the House Committee on Education & Workforce, where she serves as ranking member of the Higher Education and Workforce Development (HEWD) Subcommittee.

A lifelong educator and advocate, she has been a leading voice in Congress on HBCUs, maternal health, food insecurity, affordable housing, and economic opportunity.

For more information about Congresswoman Adams’ work in Congress, visit www.Adams.House.gov.

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