



The winner of the 2017 **CARICOM Young Energy Artist Competition** is eleven-year old **Naomi Allard**, a pupil at the St. Andrew’s Methodist School in Grenada; alongside her, Mr Kenson Baptiste, the school’s acting principal, was also rewarded for his role in promoting knowledge of the challenges relating to clean energy. The second prize went to eight-year old **Alyssa Blanco** of Belize’s Compassion School, while nine-year old **Siddharth Ramessar** of Ermsville Primary School in Guyana was awarded the third prize.



As part of the activities linked to the 2017 theme of RE-Thinking Energy, referring both to a new thought process and to renewable energy (RE) sources, the competition attracted submissions from 34 children aged between 6 and 12 years old, who were asked to produce an original artwork on “Energy, for the planet and for my community” accompanied by a short explanation of what it depicted and why. The elements taken into account by the panel of judges to designate the winners were the

artwork’s visual impact, the organisation of the elements composing it, the craftsmanship and creativity it reflected, and its relevance to the theme.

Coming from the Bahamas, Barbados, Belize, Grenada, Guyana, Jamaica, Montserrat, and St. Kitts and Nevis, the children’s drawings all translated an awakened awareness of the connection between polluting fossil fuels and the threat they pose to the environment by affecting the climate, which in turn imperils the everyday life of their parents and neighbours – but also their own future.

Naomi Allard’s drawing centres around our planet which, like a tree of life, grows in the middle of a clock face symbolising the passage of time and the urgency of taking action; the message is bold and clear: “time is ticking”! Around this central node, four islands in a sea of blue represent the existing and the ideal: coal- and oil-powered installations have bleached all colour from the land they dominate, in stark contrast to the other three where water, solar and wind power reign and contribute to scenes full of life: a chicken scratching the ground next to a thriving vegetable patch, a girl riding her bicycle towards a home running on clean energy, a boy on roller skates approaching his neighbourhood in the midst of a green habitat. The islands running on sustainable energy are all linked to the tree of life seemingly nurturing it and receiving life from it in exchange, whereas the cord linking the grey island to it has been detached and a hand is poised over a switch to turn off all the polluting forms of energy.

The message of the damage done is further stressed by the only notes of colour in the grey land: the polluting flames rising out of a factory do so through a thermometer already reading red as in “danger”. There is another message, too, for those who might take the drawing as the basis of a board game they have yet to discover and play: life is no game!

In fact, Naomi Allard achieves what French painter and sculptor Edgar Degas (1834-1917) said so very long ago: “Drawing is not what one sees, but what one can make others see.”

Here, then, is the artwork the 2017 jury appreciated as deserving the first prize:



which Naomi Allard, the Caribbean’s Young Energy Artist of the Year 2017, herself presented in these terms:

**Title: *It’s My Community, Your Community, Our Planet. Use Safe, Clean Energy***

“The artwork depicts (represents) four different communities and the impact each has on the planet based on the sources of energy used, solar, wind and water power being the most popular forms/sources used that are safe and clean. On the other hand, it shows the adverse effects of using energy sources like coal, oil and natural gas, which lead to destruction and death in many instances as a result of global warming. At the centre of the art piece, our solar planet is standing on a pedestal which represents a shift/imbalance as Earth is adversely affected by human activities. Time is ticking! Our planet’s collapse, or stability, depends on us. We all have to work together to save our planet (each community and nation). We need to disconnect or unplug the power sources which are negatively affecting our planet and use alternative energy sources that are clean and safe.”