



2024 Iona Blake Dobbins Scholarship Fund for the Visual Arts

Applications for the “2024 Iona Blake Dobbins Scholarship for the Visual Arts” are now being accepted by Art League Rhode Island.

Applicants must be 15 years of age or older in the 2023-24 school year and a Rhode Island resident to be eligible to apply for this scholarship. The amount of this year’s scholarship will be \$1,634. The scholarship can be used to support education in the field of visual arts, either through in-person or online learning, and all categories of visual arts are eligible.

Students interested in applying for the Iona Dobbins Scholarship should submit images of four works of art from a cohesive body of work. These works may explore an investigation of materials, processes, and ideas through a theme or personal vision. Work should be accompanied by a written statement identifying the inquiry or theme that guided the series of work.

About Iona Blake Dobbins

As a leading proponent of the arts in Rhode Island, Iona Blake Dobbins made extraordinary contributions both to the arts community and to the larger community. Her work spanned over 40 years. In the early years, as a volunteer, she developed significant and lasting volunteer programs at Planned Parenthood of Rhode Island and at Trinity Repertory Theater. Committed to arts in education, she worked to raise funds for Project Discovery, a program that to this day brings school-aged children to the theater to experience the magic of the stage. In 1977, she became the Development Officer of Puppet Workshop, where she established a board and provided publicity, fundraising, and program development. Soon afterwards, she was hired as the Rhode Island State Coordinator for the New England Foundation for the Arts, administering all touring programs in the performing arts. During these years, she was a board member of the Junior League, the League of Women Voters, Planned Parenthood, Providence Shelter for Colored Children, Lincoln School Parents' Association, and Bethany Home.

Iona came to public prominence in Rhode Island through her work at the Rhode Island State Council on the Arts. As Executive Director from 1984 -1994, she founded a wide array of new programs and traditions, fostered new arts venues, including AS220, and nurtured artists in every field. Iona played a pivotal part in establishing an Arts Fund at Rhode Island Foundation to support minority artists and small arts organizations. She founded the Business Volunteers for the Arts in Rhode Island and worked tirelessly to develop Rhode Island's Percent for the Arts law. She was instrumental in the formation of the Very Special Arts chapter in Rhode Island (now VSA Arts of Rhode Island) and in integrating art into the lives of children at Hasbro Children's Hospital. Her work supporting arts education continues to benefit students in classrooms throughout the Ocean State. Beyond her work at RISCA, Iona's vision enabled her to find myriad opportunities to bring the arts to Rhode Island, and Rhode Islanders to the arts. She was the original founder of First Night Providence, which gave rise to two ongoing arts festivals, Bright Night Providence, and First Works. Similarly, she sowed seeds in many institutions that will bloom for years to come. At the Redwood Library and Athenaeum in Newport, she chaired the 250th Anniversary Committee and played an important role in establishing the commemorative stamp issued in honor of this anniversary. At the Providence Art Club, Iona promoted similarly creative programs.

Iona also focused much of her work on Art League of Rhode Island. She spearheaded fundraising efforts for the Art League of Rhode Island and became its 4th president in 2008, in time to organize its 10th Anniversary Members Exhibit at the Rhode Island School of Design Museum. She devised a traveling "Gallery of Governors" exhibit to bring to local Rhode Island communities' information about Rhode Island Governors' portraits and their historical periods. She also served on the boards of many organizations, including WRNI public radio, the South County Center for the Arts, Perishable Theater, All Children's Theater, and Alias Stage, among others. In recognition of her extensive service to the arts and to the public, Iona was honored: in 1986 as a recipient of a Good Citizen Medal from the City of Providence in conjunction with its 350th anniversary celebration; in 2004, she received the Waterfire Community Arts Prometheus Award in tribute to her work for the arts in Rhode Island; and in 2011, she was presented with the Providence Art Club Medal. Many have benefited from Iona's extraordinary vision and generosity, and she left an extensive legacy to the arts community and to the Rhode Island public.

Successful Scholarship Recipients

Successful recipients must display a passion and talent to succeed in their area of choice in the visual arts. They must demonstrate how the scholarship is needed to begin or continue relevant studies. They must further demonstrate their scholastic achievements and position in the community.

Information Required

1. Completed application form.

2. A letter of recommendation letter from a teacher, counselor, or other community member who has no family relationship with the applicant.
3. A written statement from the applicant explaining their choice to study in the field of visual arts, how the applicant can personally promote arts education in the community, and why continuing an education in the visual arts is important to them.

Students should consider the following when writing their statements. Iona Dobbins volunteered extensively and promoted the arts in education. How have the visual arts helped you to understand your history, culture, your life, and identity, or the experience of others in your community? Or simply, how have the visual arts allowed you to investigate a topic or inquiry more deeply? (Maximum 250 words).

4. A digital portfolio of 4 pieces of recent artwork.

Submission Deadline

Completed applications, student statements, and artwork images must be received by **March 15, 2024**. Documents and images should be sent to Ellen Matesanz, Vice-President Board of Directors at office@artleagueri.org

The Selection Committee's decision will be final.

The recipients will receive written notification of their scholarship award at the end of March, 2024. The scholarship funds will be paid directly to the relevant institution.

Any questions regarding this scholarship can be directed to office@artleagueri.org, or 401-861-0500