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# The Minneapolis College of Art and Design Announces PitchFest 2021, an Arts Entrepreneurship Competition

**Public Invited to View Online Gallery and Vote for Audience Favorite Award**

**Virtual Awards Night on April 14 Open to All**

Minneapolis, MN—March 25, 2021—The Minneapolis College of Art and Design (MCAD) is proud to announce the finalists for PitchFest 2021, an Arts Entrepreneurship Competition. Projects are presented in a public online gallery and will be celebrated at an Awards Night on April 14, 5:00–6:30 p.m.



PitchFest brings together MCAD students' ideas for creative ventures with the opportunity to present them to industry leaders and win prize money totaling \$10,000. This is the only competition of its kind in the upper Midwest specifically for artists and designers. MCAD launched PitchFest in 2019 to celebrate and encourage creativity innate to the entrepreneurial spirit.

Eleven student teams have posted creative businesses ideas in an online gallery at [mcad.edu/pitchfestgallery](https://mcad.edu/pitchfestgallery), where the public is invited to vote for their favorite venture. Projects range from mobile apps and sustainable businesses to new publications and community-led services. Finalists were paired with creative professionals, who mentored the students to hone their business ventures.

Awards will be determined by an international panel of jurors that includes entrepreneurs, authors, artists, alumni, and supporters of MCAD. Prizes totaling \$10,000 will be given at a virtual event on April 14 that is open to the public at [mcad.edu/attendpitchfest](https://mcad.edu/attendpitchfest). Jurors will select the three top creative business ventures and award prizes of \$5,000, \$2,500 and 1,500. The public vote from the online gallery will determine the Audience Favorite Award of \$1,000.

MCAD is dedicated to educating innovative artists and designers while developing the next generation of cultural leaders. PitchFest 2021 projects will be evaluated on community engagement, environmental impacts, and financial sustainability, as well as the role of artists and designers in developing the idea.

## **ONLINE GALLERY AND PUBLIC VOTING**

**When:** Friday, March 26—Tuesday, April 13

**Where:** [mcad.edu/pitchfestgallery](https://mcad.edu/pitchfestgallery)

## **AWARDS NIGHT**

**When:** Wednesday, April 14, 5:00–6:30 p.m.

**Where:** [mcad.edu/attendpitchfest](https://mcad.edu/attendpitchfest)

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## PITCHFEST JURORS

- Robert Blake, executive director, Native Sun Community Power Development
- Alice Loy, cofounder and CEO of Creative Startups
- Todd Paulson, CCO and partner at KNOCK, Inc.
- Krystal Persaud, founder of Grouphug Solar
- Diane Ragsdale, director of cultural leadership at Banff Centre for Arts and Creativity and founder of Global Arts Think Tank
- Craig Rice, MCAD alum '76 and award-winning producer and director
- Jovan Speller, McKnight Fellow, artist and curator

## PITCHFEST FINALISTS

**The Clothing Collective** is a community-driven application for like-minded individuals who want to easily revamp their wardrobe while also lessening the environmental and social impacts of fast fashion.

Finalist: Hannah Schulte

Mentor: Caitlin Sidey, '12 ES, Account Director at KNOCK Inc.

**Crone & Company Metaphysical** creates small-batch handmade spell candles in reusable vessels crafted by local artists.

Finalist: Rylan Poldberg

Mentor: Aneela Idnani, Cofounder, HabitAware

**Fellow Feeling** is a small business focused on hand-making objects for the home, fostering a sense of community as well as sustainable artisan-made creations.

Finalists: Sydney Abbott and Avery Beltrand

Mentor: Tim Brunelle, Director, Content & Production, Land O'Lakes, Inc.

**Kyle Viker Photo Co** helps to create a strong brand identity for businesses who want to convey a powerful visual impression through creative photography and expertise in color science.

Finalist: Kyle Viker

Mentor: Mac Plumstead, McCarty Quinn

**Magkaisa** is a community-led service that fosters social relations across multiple Asian-American ethnic groups through pop-up art galleries in local restaurants. Encouraging intergenerational conversation, Magkaisa highlights artists while celebrating heritage.

Finalist: Aaron Matthew Panaligan

Mentor: Marcq Sung, Director of Program Strategy & Development at Community Reinvestment Fund

**Mixed Bag Studio** is an art gallery and studio that features minorities and people with marginalized identities, offering an accessible entrance point for younger artists and artists of color.

Finalists: Rosa Gastelum, Jori Walton, and Roxy Montoya

Mentor: Elliott Payne, Sense Datum, LLC

**MotherBeth** is part of a larger vision that began with the podcast "Let's Figure This Shit Out Together" and follows a mission to encourage others to find beauty and strength in healing through vulnerability. It's a bracelet designed with grounding stones to bring you down—in a good way.

Finalist: Alyssa Cavanaugh

Mentor: Jes Rosenberg, President, Founder, and Creative Designer: The Adventures of Super Stretch

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**Outlier Studio** is an atypical production space that features immersive, experiential set designs and provides an opportunity for creatives of all backgrounds and abilities to produce work that stands out. Through rotating set designs, accessible pricing, memberships, and workshops, Outlier also fosters a network of diverse, collaborative, cutting-edge creators.

Finalist: Madison Mead

Mentor: Madelin Snyder, Product Manager, Chalkboard (Manchester, England)

**SABER Magazine** is a platform for all artists to display their talents and passions. We release a seasonal arts and culture magazine featuring work from contemporary creatives, as well as creating original content, hosting events, and sharing compelling stories to promote any and all types of art!

Finalist: Andres Nelson

Mentor: Mike Jackson, Owner, Black Tech Talent

**Scout Bennet Art** is a solopreneurship selling pins, charms, stickers, washi tape, stationery, and apparel inspired by Japanese street fashion, character design, and cute-culture.

Finalist: Scout Bennett

Mentor: Monica Larson, Owner, Sister Black Press

**Wizard Marley and the Search for the Blue Crystal** is a whimsical search-and-find book for children and parents to enjoy together. Featuring charming and humorous fantasy illustrations, the book encourages imagination and a love of the arts.

Finalist: Logan Beecher

Mentor: John Bivens, '16 MFA, Illustrator

## **ABOUT MCAD'S ARTS ENTREPRENEURSHIP DEPARTMENT**

The Arts Entrepreneurship Department serves as a talent incubator for the creative sector, building on the students' creative and artistic skills and steeping them in the foundational principles of sustainability, marketing, advertising, and business.

## **ABOUT THE MINNEAPOLIS COLLEGE OF ART AND DESIGN**

Recognized nationally and internationally for its innovative and interdisciplinary approaches to visual arts education, the Minneapolis College of Art and Design is home to 800 students and offers professional certificates, bachelor of fine arts and bachelor of science degrees, and graduate degrees.

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