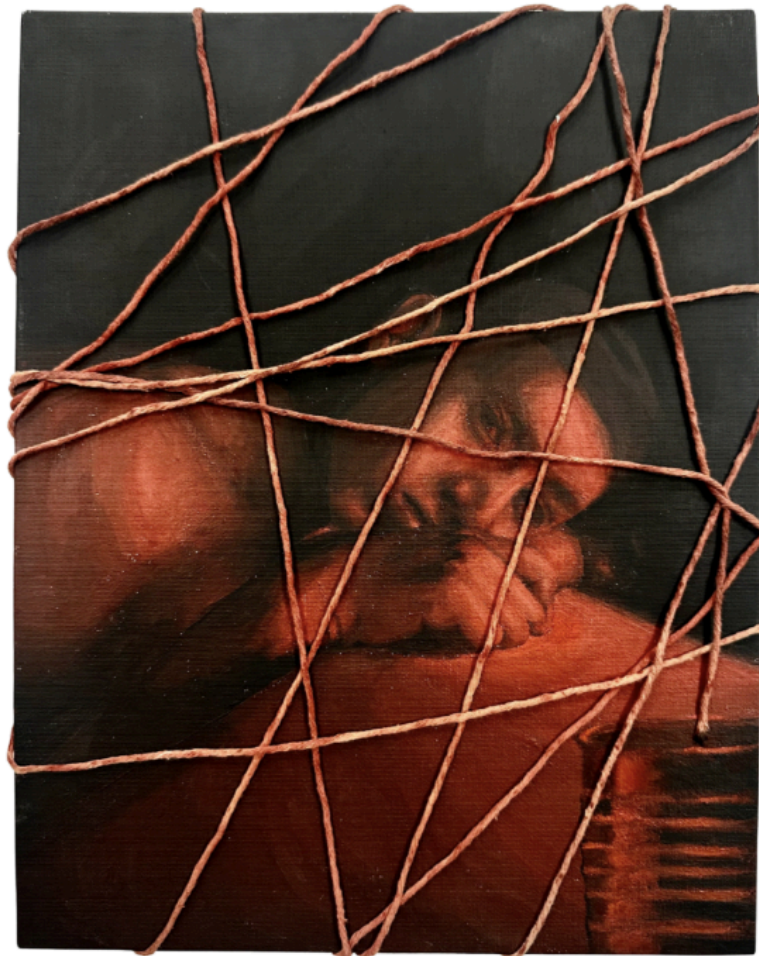


## **Solanco graduate, Kira Roark, Wins National Gold Medal and American Visions Award in 2026 National Scholastic Art Awards**

Congratulations to Kira Roark '26, whose emotionally compelling mixed-media artwork, *Crossed Wires*, was recognized with a National Gold Medal and the prestigious American Vision Award in the 2026 National Scholastic Art & Writing Awards. Kira's award-winning artwork is part of a larger portfolio series that uses both traditional and non-traditional painting materials to explore the psychological, sociocultural, and physical effects of abandonment through the lens of memory, relationships, and once-familiar spaces. In *Crossed Wires*, she examines how communication can deteriorate over time, leaving behind emotional distance and fragmented memories.



Founded in 1923, the Scholastic Art & Writing Awards are the nation's most prestigious recognition program for creative teens. Works in 28 categories are judged nationally by the foremost leaders in the visual and literary arts for excellence in originality, skill, and the emergence of a personal voice or vision. This year, more than 110,000 students submitted over 335,000 works, with just over 2,500 earning national medals. Kira Roark is among this distinguished group, joining the ranks of notable alumni such as Stephen King, Sylvia Plath, Amanda Gorman, and Andy Warhol.

In addition to Kira's National Gold Medal, she was awarded the prestigious American Visions Award, which recognizes exceptional originality, technical skill, and the development of a compelling personal voice. Supported by Dav and Sayuri Pilkey, American Voices & Visions Awards offer \$500 scholarships to approximately 150 works representing each region of the Scholastic Awards.



Kira and her art teacher, Shannon VanGyzen, were invited to attend the National Ceremony at Carnegie Hall in New York City, where they celebrated her achievement alongside her family. Her artwork is featured in the Alliance for Young Artists & Writers' online gallery, and her name appears in *Yearbook 2026*, a companion publication highlighting National Medalists from across the country.

Kira Roark joins the ranks of outstanding Solanco young artists, who have been honored with 28 national awards in the visual arts since 2001. Congratulations, again, to Kira for her accomplishments in the 2026 National Scholastic Art & Writing Awards!