

Digital Arts Student Competition

“Connecting Futures”

Co-sponsored by Zayed University

Submission Deadline: 10th March 2026

Location: ISEA2026, Dubai

Eligibility: Undergraduate students (individuals or groups of up to 3)

Submission form: <https://form.typeform.com/to/gWNkzqp8>

About the Student Competition

As part of ISEA2026, students are invited to participate in the **Connecting Futures International Digital Arts Student Competition**, responding to the symposium theme “**ELVAH: Constellating Place, Data, and Identity.**”

This open call invites students to imagine how acts of connection—between people, cultures, environments, and technologies—can shape futures yet to come. The use of futures in the plural recognizes that there is no single future, but many—shaped by place, identity, access, and collaboration.

Students are encouraged to submit playful, speculative, experimental, and poetic digital works that explore connection as a creative force

Who can apply

- Currently enrolled undergraduate students
- Open to international applicants
- Individual submissions or small teams (maximum 3 students)

Relevant disciplines include:

Animation, Motion Graphics, Digital Art & Illustration, Interactive Media, Game Design, New Media Art, and Digital-focused Visual Communication.

What to submit

Students may submit work to the following exhibition formats, depending on the nature of their project:

Interactive Projection Installation

- **Animation:**
 - o A short looping animation of 30-60 seconds that can cycle continuously without a visible start or end.
 - **Visual Considerations:**
 - o Clear readability when projected on the floor (avoid excessive small detail).
 - o Avoid extremely high-brightness white backgrounds to prevent glare.
 - o Submissions should consider that the work will react to footsteps/motion visuals must allow interactive elements to be layered.
 - **Accompanying Materials:**
 - o Contact and institutional affiliation information.
 - o Concept/artist statement (up to 250 words)
 - o A brief bio (up to 75 words) and the university / institution name
 - o We will only accept fully completed works for submission
- Online Exhibition
Other digital formats: Digital images, videos, or other digital formats can be submitted

Online Exhibition

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How to submit

Format & file Specifications for moving images:

- File type: MP4 or PNG sequence
- Dimensions: Sized to a floor projection canvas (final aspect ratio and size will be provided to selected participants).
- Frame Rate: 24-30 FPS
- For other Digital Media file Type: JPG, PNG or MP4

Final File Delivery: Selected students will be provided with instructions that include various documents.

Interactive Projection Installation (On-site at ISEA2026, Dubai)

Selected works will be presented within a large-scale interactive projection installation, where visitor movement activates and transforms the visuals in real time.

- Designed for silent, looping digital animations
- Works respond visually to footsteps and motion
- Installed as part of the ISEA2026 exhibition experience

Online Exhibition (Global Presentation)

Students may also submit digital works to be featured in a curated online exhibition, designed as an interactive, constellation-based environment accessible worldwide.

- Supports audiovisual, sound-based, and time-based works
- Allows participation without physical presence in Dubai
- Works are linked to thematic concepts related to connection and futures

Selection:

The number of works presented online will be determined by curatorial and technical considerations.

Selection Overview

All submissions are reviewed by the ISEA2026 team based on:

- Conceptual strength and relevance to the theme
- Creativity and originality
- Technical clarity and suitability for the chosen exhibition format

Selected students will receive further guidance on formatting and presentation.

Notification:

Selected students will be notified and provided with a final asset formatting guide for integration into the interactive system.

How to apply

Students submit using the link to the form:

- A fully completed digital artwork
- Concept statement (up to 250 words)
- Short bio (up to 75 words) and institutional affiliation

Connecting Futures – Student FAQs

Who can apply?

Any undergraduate student currently enrolled in an accredited institution.

Can I apply as a group?

Yes, up to three students per submission.

Do I need to attend ISEA2026 in person?

Only if selected for the on-site interactive projection installation.

Can I submit existing work?

Yes, provided it aligns with the theme and technical requirements.

Are AI and creative coding allowed?

Yes. Please describe the tools or processes used.

Are copyrighted materials allowed?

No. You must own or have permission for all materials used.