

2026 IOWA STATE FAIR FINE ART EXHIBITION

Cultural Center - Third Level

Superintendent - Teri Templeton Cadman, Des Moines

FINE ART DIVISION CALENDAR

May 1	Entry system opens at https://iowastatefair.artcall.org/
June 1	Plein Air** entries accepted at https://iowastatefair.artcall.org/
June 12	Deadline for submitting entries at https://iowastatefair.artcall.org/
June 26	Entrants notified of judges' decisions via email
July 10	Deadline for accepted entries to be delivered by mail to the Iowa State Fair
July 11	9:00 a.m. to 1:00 p.m. - Accepted entries to be delivered to the Cultural Center
August 13	9:00 a.m. to 5:00 p.m. - Plein Air painting**
August 15	9:00 a.m. to 5:00 p.m. - Plein Air painting**
August 13-22	9:00 a.m. to 8:00 p.m. - Exhibition open to the public
August 23	9:00 a.m. to 7:00 p.m. - Exhibition open to the public 7:15 p.m. to 9:00 p.m. - Entrants may claim work at the Cultural Center *
August 24	Noon to 6:00 p.m. - Entrants may claim work at the Cultural Center *

* Entrant must present receipt or proof of identity to claim work.

** See Plein Air Painting Entry Procedures below.

SUBMISSION OF WORK INTO THIS EXHIBITION INDICATES ACCEPTANCE OF ALL CONDITIONS IN THIS ANNOUNCEMENT.

PLEIN AIR ENTRY PROCEDURES ELIGIBILITY & ENTRY RULES ENTRY BEGINS JUNE 1

PARTICIPANTS MUST ENTER ONLINE AT <https://iowastatefair.artcall.org/>

Two painting opportunities will be offered; August 13 from 9:00 a.m. to 5:00 p.m. and August 15 from 9:00 a.m. to 5:00 p.m.

- There will be fifteen painters allowed to paint at each session. The computer entry system will take the first 15 entries for each session.
- You may only enter into one painting session.
- Participants must be age 18 or older and an Iowa resident.
- The registration fee is \$25. Registration will include a Fair entry ticket and a parking pass.
- Artists must supply their own substrate, supplies and frame for displaying the art. The substrate must be blank at 9:00 a.m. on the painting day (August 13 or 15) and be no larger than 18 x 24.
- Artists must check in at the Fine Art Department, 3rd Floor Cultural Center, at 9:00 a.m. on the painting day.
- Upon completion, artists will be required to fill out a form with the artist's name, phone number, town of residence, title, medium and to assign a sale price or not for sale designation.
- Pieces must be completed and turned in by 5:00 p.m. at the Fine Art Office. They will be displayed for the remainder of the Fair.
- Artists must work from subject matter at their assigned location. Location will be drawn from specific Fair locations.
- **Artists must use caution in setting up their work as to not restrict the flow of Fair traffic.**
- If artwork is priced for sale, the Fine Art staff will provide the artist's contact information to interested parties. Delivery must take place after the work has been picked up from the Fairgrounds.
- Images of submitted works become the property of the Iowa State Fair as a permanent record of the exhibition and for promotional use relating to the exhibition.
- If the medium is pastel, watercolor or drawing, it must be framed and covered for protection.
- If the substrate is canvas, the canvas should be ready to hang prior to being submitted at 5:00 p.m.
- Adhere to all rules in the Return of Work section below.
- The submitted piece of work will be part of the "Plein Air at the Fair" Viewer's Choice. The Fair public will cast their votes from August 16- August 22, for their favorite piece. 1st place will be awarded \$125, 2nd place will be awarded \$75 and 3rd place will be awarded \$50.
- Each piece will be assigned a unique entry number, which will be the number used for voting.
- You may have two Fine Art entries and participate in one session of "Plein Air at the Fair".

FINE ART ENTRY PROCEDURES

ALL ENTRIES MUST BE SUBMITTED ONLINE AT <https://iowastatefair.artcall.org/>

- One image per work is permitted. Three-dimensional work may be represented by two images from different angles.
- **ALL images must be in .jpg format and Windows compatible.**
- **All image files should be high resolution (300 dpi).**
- **The ideal image size is 2700 px x 3600 px.**

- **Entry image may be used to represent your work online or in printed material.**
- **Please Note: The failure to provide a high resolution image will be taken into consideration by the judges when the piece is juried. It MAY be regarded as a probable negative factor. Entrants are encouraged to take photographs of their work (if two dimensional) prior to framing the work.**
- Entry fee is \$7.50 per work.
- An entry that is priced to sell will not be allowed to have the price altered after submitting the entry.

Images of submitted works become the property of the Iowa State Fair as a permanent record of the exhibition and for promotional use relating to the exhibition.

If an actual object does not “match” the digital image which has been accepted (i.e., if the digital image has been manipulated for appearance), then the actual object will not be accepted for exhibition.

FINE ART ELIGIBILITY RULES

Artist must be a resident of Iowa.

For work to be considered for this exhibition, it must meet the following requirements:

- It must not have been previously exhibited in the Fine Art Exhibition at the Iowa State Fair.
- It must have been executed since 2024.
- It must be original. This means that the entrant has used his or her own ideas. Copies of work created by other artists or photographers must not be used in any way, including downloading, reproducing, duplicating in exact form the ideas, techniques, or subject matter of other artists or photographers.
- Any work created in a classroom setting where all students produce the same or similar pieces derived from the teacher/artist's original work and is not original is not eligible for entry.

General rules listed on the Iowa State Fair website also apply in this department.

FINE ART PRESENTATION RULES

For work to be exhibited, it must meet these requirements:

- Be ready to display securely and safely. A sturdy wire must be attached to the back of the frame for hanging. We reserve the right to refuse work which has any of the following hanging devices: “sawtooth” hanging devices, cardboard backing materials with cardboard “cuts” for hanging, string, monofilament, scotch tape as a finishing material.
- Meet framed size limitations listed below:
 - Adult two dimensional work may not exceed 52 inches in either direction.
 - Adult three dimensional work may not be larger than 60 inches in any direction.
 - Adult three dimensional work must be mounted on a suitable base, or wired or have other hanging arrangements. Work may not be excessively heavy or fragile.
 - Junior, Youth and Children works may not exceed 30 inches in any direction.
- Surface finish and protection:
 - If the work is two dimensional and a pastel, watercolor, drawing or print, it must be framed and covered with plexi-glass for protection. Acetate is not a suitable protection.
 - All media must be dry when submitted for exhibition.

FINE ART TIPS FOR PREPARING ENTRIES

Tips for photographing artwork can be found here: <https://artcall.org/pages/tips-for-photographing-artwork-for-digital-submissions>.

A video tutorial on how to enter can be found here: <https://www.youtube.com/user/iastatefair/featured>.

FINE ART CATEGORIES BY AGE

Age needs to be **noted on all entry forms** along with name and address.

Exhibitor age is determined by age on the entry deadline.

ADULT – persons age 19 and over, high school graduates regardless of age enter as adult (limit two Fine Art entries)

YOUTH – persons age 14 to and including age 18 (limit two entries)

JUNIOR – persons age 9 to and including age 13 (limit two entries)

CHILDREN – persons age 3 to and including age 8 (limit one entry)

Please note: All work submitted by children between the ages of 3 and 8 will be displayed. However, due to space limitations these young entrants may submit only one piece of work.

FINE ART ADULT CATEGORIES BY MEDIA

(persons age 19 and over, high school graduates regardless of age enter as adult)

1. **ACRYLIC/ TEMPERA** - This category includes opaque mediums other than oil.
2. **DRAWING** - This category includes work rendered by hand with pencil, charcoal, ink, graphite or scratch board. It does NOT include digitally enhanced images or fluid ink.
3. **FIBER** - Handwoven and/or hand decorated textiles are eligible. All articles must be handcrafted by the entrant only. The category includes weaving, fiber construction, batik, tie dying, knotting, appliqué and trapunto. Work must be accompanied by a label for identification and ready to hang or install.
4. **GLASS** - The definition of this category has been expanded to include, but not to be limited to, hand blown glass, mouth blown glass or various forms of hot glass.

5. **MIXED MEDIA** - This category calls for art work which is created with more than one media, the use of which produces a fine art product that conveys a sense of depth and width but involves no actual physical depth, other than that created by illusion. Mixed media is art work that hangs on the wall. (If the product involves actual physical depth and is free standing, it may be submitted as a sculpture.)
6. **OIL PAINTING**
7. **PASTELS** - Includes both dry and oil based pastels.
8. **POTTERY** - Includes handmade earthenware, stoneware and porcelain. Delicately constructed work requiring more than normal careful handling should not be submitted.
9. **ORIGINAL HAND PULLED PRINTS** - This category refers to hand pulled prints in the traditional areas of printmaking such as relief printing, etching, intaglio, solarprints, monoprints and serigraphs. It does NOT refer to commercial reproduction processes such as the glicée print or computer enhanced prints.
10. **SCULPTURE**
11. **WATERCOLOR** - This category includes pieces created with transparent watercolor medium or other mediums used transparently.

FINE ART YOUTH CATEGORIES BY MEDIA

(persons age 14 to and including age 18)

1. **DRAWING** - This category is for work that was created by hand with pencil, charcoal, ink, graphite or scratch board. It does not include digitally created or enhanced images or fluid ink.
2. **PAINTING** - This category is for work created with oil, acrylic, tempera, gouache, pastels or watercolor. The work cannot contain more than one type of paint.
3. **THREE-DIMENSIONAL** - Entries in this category have three-dimensional physical characteristics.
4. **OTHER** - Artwork that does not fit into drawing, painting or three-dimensional categories. Examples would be computer generated, mixed media and jewelry.

FINE ART JUNIOR CATEGORIES BY MEDIA

(persons age 9 to and including age 13)

1. **DRAWING** - This category is for work that was created by hand with pencil, charcoal, ink, graphite or scratch board. It does not include digitally created or enhanced images or fluid ink.
2. **PAINTING** - This category is for work created with oil, acrylic, tempera, gouache, pastels or watercolor. The work cannot contain more than one type of paint.
3. **THREE-DIMENSIONAL** - Entries in this category have three-dimensional physical characteristics.
4. **OTHER** - Artwork that does not fit into drawing, painting or three-dimensional categories. Examples would be computer generated, mixed media and jewelry.

FINE ART NOTIFICATION OF JURY RESULTS

An email will be sent to entrants after the jury process is complete. Notification of results can be expected on June 26. Complete results, including prize awards, will be posted on the Iowa State Fair website at <https://www.iowastatefair.org/> on opening day of the Fair. The judges' decisions are final.

FINE ART ACCEPTED ENTRIES

SUBMITTING ACCEPTED WORK BY MAIL (DUE JULY 10)

- Print receipt and attach to the **upper left corner on the back** of your artwork. If the work is three dimensional, attach receipt to the bottom of the object. (Receipt can be printed from *My Submissions* when logged on to <https://iowastatefair.artcall.org/>.)
- Include return postage (please provide prepaid shipping label) in your package.
- Ship the accepted work with printed receipt attached to the following address. **Art must be received by Friday, July 10.**
Iowa State Fair
Fine Art Exhibition
Administration Building
3000 East Grand Avenue
Des Moines IA 50317
- Shipped entries must be securely packed in reusable packages. MASKING TAPE SHOULD BE USED TO PROTECT GLASS FROM BREAKAGE IN TRANSIT. Work shipped in foam pellets or beads will not be accepted. Entries must be shipped prepaid. Crated entries will be returned to the entrant after August 31, if shipping costs are provided by the exhibitor (please provide prepaid shipping label).

SUBMITTING ACCEPTED WORK IN PERSON (DUE JULY 11)

- Print receipt and attach to the **upper left corner on the back** of your artwork. If the work is three dimensional, attach receipt to the bottom of the object. (Receipt can be printed from *My Submissions* when logged on to <https://iowastatefair.artcall.org/>.)
- Deliver the work in person on **Saturday, July 11** between 9:00 a.m. and 1:00 p.m. to the **Cultural Center** on the Fairgrounds.

LIABILITY

The Management will use diligence in caring for the safety of entries after their arrival and placement, but in no case will they be responsible for any loss or damage that may occur before, during or after the Fair. This also applies to work **NOT PICKED UP** on Monday, August 24 between stated hours.

FINE ART JUDGING

A panel of three judges will jury the work for the Fine Art Exhibition. Each has been selected for their broad range of competency and knowledge about the artwork being done in today's world of art. The first step in selecting the work for the 2026 Fine Art Exhibition will be done via electronic submissions. All submitted work will be reviewed by each judge working independently. All work in the Iowa State Fair Fine Art Competition is juried on the basis of the work alone. Adult entries are juried with other pieces in the same media category initially. The criteria of effective composition, skillful use of the media, and evocative power are kept in mind.

The judges and management may decide that an entry is better suited in a different category within the Fine Art Department. If this is decided, the entry will be moved into the other category.

Selection of prize winners will occur from the physical pieces after they have been delivered to the Cultural Center.

AMERICA 250 AWARD

All entries that showcase the patriotic spirit of America 250 (i.e. flags, Red, White, and Blue, etc.) will be eligible for a special America 250 premium of \$25 in addition to regular premiums. Awards will be selected by a panel of judges from blue ribbon recipients. Entries will be designated as America 250 award eligible by exhibitors at check in. Departments eligible for the America 250 Award include: Creative Arts & Crafts, Doll Houses & Miniature Rooms, Fabric & Threads, Fine Art, Floriculture, Food, Photography and Wood Projects.

FINE ART AWARDS

Prize values listed below will be fulfilled with cash and/or merchandise of equal value.

In the Adult category the following prizes will be offered:

- \$1,000 Best of Show

In each of the 11 media categories for Adults, the following three prizes will be offered:

- \$125 First Prize
- \$75 Second Prize
- \$50 Third Prize

In each of the 4 media categories for Youth, the following three prizes will be offered:

- \$50 First Prize
- \$30 Second Prize
- \$20 Third Prize

In each of the 4 media categories for Juniors, the following three prizes will be offered:

- \$50 First Prize
- \$30 Second Prize
- \$20 Third Prize

SPONSORS

A special THANK YOU to the following sponsors of the Fine Art Department:

Jerry & Margie Ranch: Adult Watercolor - First Prize

Iowa Watercolor Society: Adult Watercolor - Second Prize; Adult Watercolor - Third Prize

Becky & Gil Wigeland: Youth Drawings - First Prize; Youth Paintings - First Prize; Youth Three-Dimensional - First Prize; Youth Other - First Prize

RETURN OF WORK

To claim a work of art submitted to this exhibition, the claimant must present their receipt. A designated substitute individual may claim work for the entrant if that person presents both the receipt and a proper form of identification with photo id, such as a drivers' license.

NO WORK can be picked up during the exhibition so that the integrity of the show remains intact.

Work can be claimed at the **Cultural Center** on **Sunday, August 23 between 7:15 p.m. and 9:00 p.m.** Admission will be charged at the gate on Sunday, August 23 with no on-site ticket sales and no entry/re-entry allowed after 7:00 p.m. You must be on the Fairgrounds by 7:00 p.m. on Sunday, August 23.

Work can also be claimed at the **Cultural Center** on **Monday, August 24 between Noon and 6:00 p.m.**

Note: At both times listed above the entrant, or his/her designated representative, must provide proof of identity to claim the artwork.

As an alternative beginning on Wednesday, August 26 and until Friday, September 4, entries can be picked up in the **Entry Department located on the lower east side of the Administration Building**. Hours are 9:00 a.m. to 4:00 p.m. on weekdays and 11:00 a.m. until 2:00 p.m. on Saturday August 29 and Sunday August 30. (**Note: Entries will NOT be available for pick up on Tuesday, August 25.**)

After Friday, September 4, all unclaimed entries become the property of the Iowa State Fair and will be disposed of as deemed necessary.

For questions, please contact the Iowa State Fair Entry Department at
515-262-3111 ext. 240 or entryintern4@iowastatefair.org.