



## 2026 Entry Timeline

- Entry deadline**..... **Friday, May 15, by 6 p.m.**
- Entry acceptance email**..... Friday, June 5, by 6 p.m. *(check spam folders)*  
*Email will come from [sweb@fairsoftware](mailto:sweb@fairsoftware)*
- Entry delivery**..... **Friday & Saturday, June 19-20, 10 a.m. - 4 p.m.** 
- Award judging results**..... Viewable in person. Posted online by the second week of Fair.
- Fair dates**..... July 17 - Aug. 16 *(closed Mondays and Tuesdays)*
- Entry pick up**..... **Thursday, Aug. 20, 10 a.m. - 6 p.m.**  
Entries may be picked up by someone other than the exhibitor.

**BY ENTERING YOU ARE AGREEING TO THE TERMS AND RULES PRESENTED IN THIS GUIDEBOOK.**

All entries must be original, made by the artist and completed within the last two (2) years. Size and weight limitations and wiring guidelines will be strictly enforced. Entries will be turned away if they do not meet the requirements.

- Entry fees**..... **\$15 adult • \$6 youth (13-17) • Fees are non-refundable.**
- Entry limit**..... **Ten (10) per adult • Five (5) per youth (13-17)**
- Contact**..... **Visual Arts Department • Valeria Tinoco, Program Coordinator**  
[visualarts@ocfair.com](mailto:visualarts@ocfair.com) • Office 714-708-1718 • 714-708-1624 (during Fair)  
OC Fair & Event Center • 88 Fair Drive, Costa Mesa, CA 92626



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## RULES & GUIDELINES

1. [Local](#) and [State Rules](#) govern this competition.
2. Exhibitors are responsible for reading and abiding by the guidelines stated herein.
3. If assistance is needed to determine the division and/or class, please contact the Visual Arts Department at [visualarts@ocfair.com](mailto:visualarts@ocfair.com).
4. **Causes for disqualification.** Disqualified entries will not be displayed and must be picked up when notified.
  - Non-compliance to the competition and OC Fair guidelines will result in disqualification.
  - Entries over the maximum size will not be accepted.
  - Entries that differ from the uploaded image will be disqualified.
  - Entries that do not follow the rules of the division and/or class will be disqualified.
  - Entries that are a copy, or similar to, an existing artwork will be disqualified.
  - Work that is identical to one in another division or department of the OC Fair will be disqualified.
  - Submitting color and black-and-white versions of the same image is not allowed.
  - Items previously shown at OC Fair will be disqualified.
5. **Entry fees are non-refundable.** There will be no refunds for any reason. By entering the competition, the exhibitor is accepting the no-refund policy.
6. Photography is a juried competition. Not all entries will be accepted.
7. All entries must be original, made by the photographer and completed within the last two (2) years.
8. The display and location of the entry are at the discretion of the program coordinator. No entry will be accepted where an exhibitor describes the conditions under which they will exhibit or how the entry must be displayed.
9. Exhibitors are responsible for entering their items in the correct division and class.
10. Work composed of multiple separate pieces (diptychs, triptychs, etc.) are not allowed as one (1) entry unless framed together in one (1) frame within the stated size restrictions.
11. Basic color corrections and cropping of images to improve photographic quality and impact is allowed in most categories. See specific categories for further details.
12. Final acceptance of the entry will be left to the discretion of the program coordinator.
13. Due to the family-oriented theme of OC Fair, work dealing with: drug use, obscenity, defamatory statements, violence, gang activity, offensive or objectionable content will not be accepted. This is at the discretion of OC Fair staff.
14. **Hold harmless.** Although reasonable efforts will be taken to safeguard exhibitors' property against loss, damage or theft, neither the State of California nor OC Fair & Event Center will be responsible for any loss, damage or theft of exhibitors' property brought on the premises during the period of OC Fair.
15. Entries not picked up on entry pick up day become the property of OC Fair and will be disposed of promptly.
16. The use of AI-powered editing software to create or significantly modify an entry shall only be allowed in Division 526 - Class 03 and Youth Divisions 311/312 – Class 04.
17. The use of AI-powered editing software for basic adjustments, such as cropping or color correction, is permissible in all other non-analog categories. Examples of AI-powered software include but are not limited to Adobe Firefly, Adobe Photoshop, Canva, Luminar Neo, and Midjourney.



## ELIGIBILITY

### Adult divisions

Open to Southern California residents ages 18 or older.

### Youth divisions

Open to ages 13-17 (by July 17) who live in Southern California.

## ENTRY LIMIT

**Adult divisions ..... Ten (10) photography entries per exhibitor**

**Youth divisions ..... Five (5) photography entries per exhibitor**



The total number of accepted entries is limited to the space available.

## ENTRY FEES

**Adult divisions ..... \$15 per entry**

**Youth divisions ..... \$6 per entry**

- Entry fees are payable online with a credit card (Visa, Mastercard or American Express).
- Entry fees are non-refundable.

## OC FAIR EXHIBITOR TICKET

**Exhibitors will receive one (1) OC Fair admission ticket at the time of entry delivery.**

If none of the exhibitor's entries are accepted for exhibition, one (1) free admission ticket will be available for pick up at the Guest Relations booth located outside of the Blue Gate entrance when Fair is open.

- Please bring a photo ID to claim your ticket.
- One (1) ticket per exhibitor, not per entry.
- Ticket is good any day during OC Fair and does not require a reservation.
- Tickets are provided to participants to view the results of their efforts.
- Tickets must not be sold.

## PHOTO ENTRY PREPARATION

**Digital photo submission of your entry is required.**

- Digital image must be an accurate representation of the entry. Misrepresented entries will be disqualified and not exhibited.
- Please do not include a watermark or signature on the digital upload file; judging is to be blind.

### Image format

- JPEG, JPG or PNG file formats.
- iPhone users must change the default HEIC camera setting to JPEG or convert the image.
- RGB color space (CMYK files will be converted to RGB by the system).
- Be sure that the image is rotated to be in an upright position and orientation.
- Maximum file size: 8 MB (megabytes).



## HOW TO ENTER

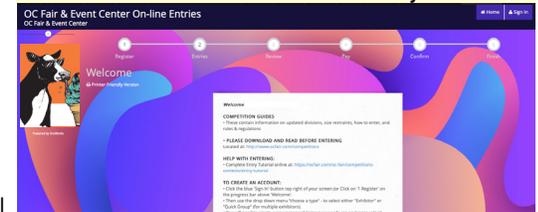
### **Online entry deadline: Friday, May 15, by 6 p.m.**

Click on the link to go to the entry homepage: [ocfair.fairwire.com](http://ocfair.fairwire.com)

#### **Step 1. Register**

- Last year's accounts are no longer valid. All exhibitors must create a new account.
- Entries must be submitted under the name of the individual who will be exhibiting.
- Do not use business or fictitious names.
- There are no team entries.
- Enter the information carefully and proofread the name, title and description of the entry for punctuation, capitalization and spelling to ensure accuracy on exhibit display labels.
- Descriptions are limited to 100 characters and should include a short statement about the work or the methods and techniques used.
- Email will be used to send important information. Check your spam folders and whitelist emails coming from @ocfair.com.

The numbered steps along top of page are clickable and show the current section you are on



fairwire.com welcome page

#### **Step 2. Entries**

- Input your entry (or entries) in the proper department, division and class along with other required information.

#### **Step 3. Cart review**

- Review your entries. You can add, edit, delete or save your entries.
- When satisfied, click the "CHECK OUT" button.

#### **Step 4. Payment**

- Enter your credit card information (Mastercard, Visa or American Express).
- An email notification and confirmation will be sent immediately after the online payment is received.
- Check your spam folder if the email confirmation does not arrive shortly after submitting payment.

#### **Step 5. Confirmation**

- Sign by typing "YES" in the "Agreement to Terms" box.
- DO NOT click the "SUBMIT" button multiple times as you will be charged.
- On the resulting confirmation page, you can print a receipt. A blue "UPLOAD FILES" button will also appear.

#### **Step 6. Image upload**

- Click on the "UPLOAD FILES" button to start uploading your images into the system.

***You can log back into your account to see your entry (or entries) and replace images and descriptions. For any other changes, contact us: [entries@ocfair.com](mailto:entries@ocfair.com). Do not re-enter to make corrections as you will be charged.***



## HELP ENTERING

For additional help, review this detailed step-by-step guide:

- [Entry Tutorial](#)

Phone: 714-708-1718 (during office hours)      Email: [entries@ocfair.com](mailto:entries@ocfair.com)

## PRICE & SELL ENTRIES

### Pricing

Entries may be marked NFS (not for sale) or for sale by indicating the selling price \$\_\_\_\_\_.

### Prospective buyers

No sale or acceptance of fees for items will be made by OC Fair. Prospective buyers may fill out a **Purchase Interest Form** that will be forwarded to the artist at the close of OC Fair. OC Fair does not take commission on artwork sold as a result of exhibition in the Visual Arts Competition.

## JUDGES

### Photography is a juried competition.

Qualified judges will be selected by the program coordinator to judge all exhibits. The judges are recognized authorities in the photography field.

### Reassignment of entry division or class

Judges and/or the program coordinator have the option of reassigning an entry to a more appropriate division or class, or may combine divisions or classes to create an adequate judging pool. Nevertheless, it is the responsibility of exhibitors to enter work in the appropriate class. Failure to enter the appropriate class may result in disqualification.

## FIRST-ROUND ONLINE JUDGING

**Photography entries will be judged first from your uploaded images** to determine if the submitted entry meets the requirements for participation in this competition and the subjective standards for the exhibition.

- The number of accepted entries is also based on the amount of exhibition space available.
- Judges' decisions are final and cannot be protested.

### The exhibitor will be notified by email with the results of the first-round judging.

An email will be sent for each entry. The email will come from [sweb@fairsoftware](mailto:sweb@fairsoftware). Please check your spam/junk folder. Results may also be viewed online at [ocfair.com/results](http://ocfair.com/results).

### Acceptance for exhibition

Only accepted artwork should be delivered on the entry delivery day. First-round judging acceptance does not guarantee acceptance for exhibition. The delivered entry may still be judged out for not complying with the competition rules and guidelines concerning size, weight, framing, and proper hanging hardware or image quality.

- Not all entries will be accepted. Due to the high number of entries and limited display space, OC Fair cannot accept all the work submitted. Please understand that this competition is highly competitive.



## ENTRY DELIVERY OF ACCEPTED ENTRIES

**NEW TIME**

### **Delivery date: Friday & Saturday, June 19-20, 10 a.m. - 4 p.m.**

- Make sure work is properly prepared for exhibition; see pages 8-9. Entries will be turned away if they do not meet the requirements and limitations.
- One (1) participation ribbon will be given to each exhibitor on entry delivery day.
- Late deliveries will not be accepted.
- Entries may be delivered by someone other than the exhibitor.

### **Entry delivery**

- Enter Gate 1 and follow the marked route.
- Drop off is located on the east side of the Los Alamitos Building/Visual Arts Gallery (building 6 on the map).
- Email alerts will be sent prior to the delivery date with detailed information. Check your spam folder for emails.



### **Claim checks**

- Will be provided when exhibits are delivered.
- Are required to pick up your entry on entry pick up day.
- Entries may be picked up by someone other than the exhibitor.

## ENTRY PICK UP

### **Pick up date: Thursday, Aug. 20, 10 a.m. - 6 p.m.**

- An email alert will be sent prior to the pick up date with detailed information. Check your spam folder for emails.
- Claim check or photo ID is required for pick up.
- If you are unable to pick up your items, please arrange for someone to pick them up for you.
- Unclaimed items and ribbons become the property of OC Fair and will be discarded.

### **Entry pick up**

- Pick up entries at the Visual Arts Gallery/Los Alamitos Building (building 6 on the map).
- Enter through Gate 1 (Main Gate) and follow the directional signs.



## SECOND-ROUND JUDGING

**After delivery of accepted entries, all entries will then be checked for compliance with the entry guidelines including size/weight limits, framing, proper hanging hardware and quality of the entry.**

Judges may, at their discretion, jury out works that do not meet their subjective artistic standards. If your delivered entry is judged out or disqualified, the exhibitor will receive a notification by phone or email to pick up their entry at the Visual Arts Gallery. Claim check or photo ID is required for pick up.

## AWARD JUDGING

### Adult divisions

Entries are placed using the American Judging System, where exhibits are ranked one against another.

- First, second, third place and honorable mention may be awarded in each class if judges so determine.
- More than one honorable mention per class may be awarded.
- First place winners will compete for "Division Winner."
- Division Winners will compete for "Best of Show."

### Youth divisions

Entries are placed using the Danish Judging System, where each entry is judged on how well it meets a standard rather than how it compares to other entries.

- Entries are judged first, second or third place.
- There may be more than one first, second or third place award per class.
- All first place awards will then compete, using the American Judging System, for "Best of Class."
- Best of Class winners will compete for "Division Winner."
- Division Winners will compete for "Best of Show."

### Judging criteria

Entries are judged on originality, creativity, composition, technique and presentation.

### Judges' Award

Additional awards may be made at the discretion of each judge for outstanding entries that exhibit special qualities that the judges feel deserve to be recognized.

### Industry awards

Awarded by a community guild or organization.

### Theme Award

Awarded to an entry that best represents the annual OC Fair theme.

### Disqualified entries

If an entry is disqualified after judging is complete, the judge will not change the status of awards given for other entries. Judges reserve the right to remove or disqualify any entry in violation of the rules, in poor taste, or not in accordance with the competition standards.

**Thank you to our 2025 industry award donor:**

<https://psaphotoworldwide.org/>





## AWARDS

### Adult

Black & White Best of Show...	\$400
Color Photo Best of Show.....	\$400
Division Winner.....	\$200
First Place.....	\$100
Second Place.....	\$75
Third Place.....	\$50
Humor Award.....	\$50
Art of Movement Award.....	\$50
Judges' Award.....	\$25
Theme Award.....	\$25
Honorable Mention.....	Rosette



### Youth

Best of Show.....	\$75
Division Winner.....	\$35
Best of Class.....	\$25
Judges' Award.....	\$25
Theme Award.....	\$25
First, Second, Third.....	Ribbon



- Exhibitors will receive awarded ribbons on entry pick up day.
- Award checks will be made payable to the exhibitor whose name is indicated on the entry form and mailed within 30 business days after the close of the 2026 OC Fair.
- Total premiums of \$600 or more to any individual will be paid only after a completed *Payee Data Record* form has been received.
- All accepted entries will be displayed in the Visual Arts Gallery with any awards received.
- Results will be posted online around the second week of OC Fair at [ocfair.com/results](http://ocfair.com/results).
- ***Please do not call, email or message OC Fair social media for competition results. We receive a high volume of inquiries daily.***

## AWARDS CEREMONY

### Sunday, Aug. 16, at Noon.

- Hosted on the OC Promenade Main Stage.
- Best of Show and Division Winner award recipients will be invited, given two (2) tickets to attend and recognized at the ceremony.
- Invitations will be sent to the email provided at entry registration.
- All exhibitors and the general public are welcome to attend the ceremony.
- Additional guests should purchase Fair admission tickets in advance.





## PRESENTATION & DISPLAY OF ACCEPTED ARTWORK

Proper presentation is critical to meet safety and gallery standards for the displaying of artwork. Upon delivery, any accepted work that is deemed unsafe to display and/or is poorly presented will be turned away. Size and weight limitations and wiring guidelines will be strictly enforced.

### 1. Size and weight requirements

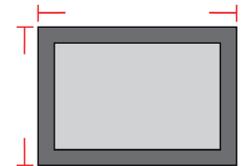
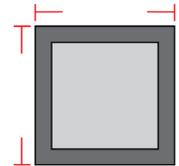
Size is measured by the outside dimensions of the frame.

**A) Square pieces.** Any equal ratio of size within the minimum and maximum is allowed.

- Minimum size.....13-by-13 inches - including frame
- Maximum size .....26-by-26 inches - including frame
- Weight limit.....20 pounds

**B) Rectangular pieces.** Portrait or landscape orientation. Any vertical or horizontal ratio of size within the minimum and maximum is allowed.

- Short-side minimum.....13 inches - including frame
- Long-side maximum .....26 inches - including frame
- Weight limit.....20 pounds



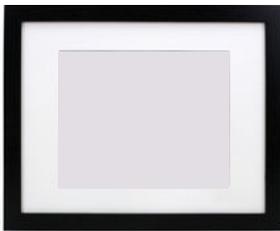
### 2. Framing and Mats

All accepted images must be framed.

The work may be professionally framed or framed by the artist.

- **Works on any media must be framed.** Black frames with white mats are highly recommended.
- **Due to safety and handling, metal prints have to be framed.**
- **Proper presentation and framing are part of the judging criteria.**
- **Due to limited gallery space, photographs with excessive mats will not be accepted.**

No excessive mat sizes. Image should dominate the frame



Black frame with white mat



Metal print in a shadow-box frame



### **3. Hardware for hanging**

Please adhere to the following guidelines so your work will be prepared to safely hang in a busy public venue like OC Fair.



#### **a) D-Ring hangers**

D-ring hangers are preferred and are available in several standard sizes and weight ratings.

Make sure the frame moulding is thick enough to screw in the D-rings. Drill a small pilot hole for the screw so as not to split the wood frame when fastening the D-ring.

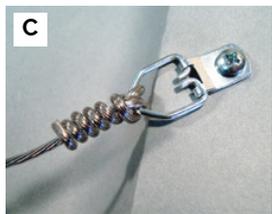


**No sawtooth hangers.**

#### **b) Hanging wire**

A multi-strand braided galvanized steel wire is required (weight-rated for at least four [4] times the weight of the artwork and frame). The ends of the wire should be secured so they do not poke into the back of the image.

- String, thread, fishing line or material other than wire will not be accepted.



**c) Hanging wire is looped through the D-ring hangers**, wrapped several times around itself and securely knotted using a lark's head knot.

**d) Check that the apex of the wire is at least two (2) inches below the top of the frame.**

- The wire cannot extend outside the frame.



### **4. Frames containing glass**

- Framing with plastic or plexiglass is preferred.
- Artists framing their entry with glass assume responsibility for damage to their own artwork and the artwork of others should the glass break.
- OC Fair staff uses extreme care in handling artwork but assumes no responsibility for damage.

### **5. Framing tips and informational links**

- [the-artists-magazine/framing-tips-hardware-facts](#)
- [install-picture-frame-wire](#)
- [an-expert-guide-to-matting-and-framing-a-photo--photo-9001](#)
- [mounting-matting-and-framing](#)
- [how-to-make-a-large-picture-frame-budget/](#)

### **6. Signature**

- Artists may sign the front of the work. Please be discreet. No logos.
- For useful information concerning signatures, visit [making-fine-art-prints-signing](#).

### **7. Labeling**

Artwork must be securely labeled on the back of each entry with a printout of the acceptance notification media entry tag.

*(The label will be sent in acceptance emails. Check your spam folder.)*





## Adult Divisions

**Eligibility** ..... Open to Southern California residents ages 18 or older. Original work created within two (2) years.

**Entry limit** ..... Ten (10) per exhibitor in all classes combined.

**Entry fee** ..... \$15 per entry

- All rules and guidelines apply.
- Entries require a photo upload. See "Photo Entry Preparation" on page 2 for more information.
- Unless otherwise noted, only basic color corrections and cropping are allowed. No elements may be added or removed from the original image. See Division 526: Manipulated Image.
- If accepted, see "Presentation and Display" on pages 8-9.

### DIVISION 520

#### Black & White Photos

- Must be a black & white digital or film print.
- Sepia-toned prints are acceptable.

**Class 01: People**

Portraits and groups.

**Class 02: Scenic**

Landscapes, seascapes, skyscapes, cityscapes, etc.

**Class 03: Plants & flowers**

**Class 04: Domestic animals**

Pets and livestock.

**Class 05: Non-domestic animals**

Birds, reptiles, sea-life and other wildlife.

**Class 06: Things**

Architecture, vehicles, interior settings, still life, etc.

**Class 07: Manipulated image**

Heavily digitally edited images: multiple image composites, element removal, etc., for artistic purposes.

**Class 08: Analog**

Any subject matter created by non-digital film photography.



**Class 09: Americana, celebrating 250 years.**

### DIVISION 521

#### Color Photos: People

- Model releases are at the discretion of the exhibitor.
- Person or people are the main subject.

**Class 01: Travel**

Interesting people, foreign or domestic.

**Class 02: Portrait**

Studio shots, character studies, etc.

**Class 03: Sports**

**Class 04: Children, family**



**Class 05: Street photography**

### DIVISION 522

#### Color Photos: Scenic

**Class 01: Landscape**

Vistas, mountains, deserts, forests, national parks, rural scenes, etc.

**Class 02: Seascape, waterscape**

Oceans, lakes, waterways, boats (in water), waterfalls, piers, etc. Foreign or domestic.

**Class 03: Urban scene**

Cityscapes, foreign or domestic.

**Class 04: Skyscapes**

Clouds, night sky, astrophotography, solar eclipse, etc.

### DIVISION 523

#### Color Photos: Plants

**Class 01: Flowers**

Single blooms, bouquets, studio shots, garden scenes.

**Class 02: Trees, other plant life**

Leaves, vegetables, underwater plant life, crops, algae.

**Class 03: Macro**

Macro shots of any plant life.

### DIVISION 524

#### Color Photos: Animals

**Class 01: Zoo animals**

**Class 02: Insects, bats, and reptiles**

**Class 03: Aquatic animals**

**Class 04: Birds**

**Class 05: Domestic pets, farm animals**

**Class 06: Wildlife-other**



## Adult Divisions

**Eligibility** ..... Open to Southern California residents ages 18 or older. Original work created within two (2) years.

**Entry limit** ..... Ten (10) per exhibitor in all classes combined.

**Entry fee** ..... \$15 per entry

- All rules and guidelines apply.
- Entries require a photo upload. See "Photo Entry Preparation" on page 2 for more information.
- Unless otherwise noted, only basic color corrections and cropping are allowed. No elements may be added or removed from the original image. See Division 526: Manipulated Image.
- If accepted, see "Presentation and Display" on pages 8-9.

### DIVISION 525

#### Color Photos: Things

**Class 01: Vehicles, machinery**

Airplanes, cars, railroads, industrial scenes, etc.

**Class 02: Architecture**

Interiors and exteriors, city or rural buildings, etc.

**Class 03: Still life**

### DIVISION 526

#### Manipulated Image

- Images must contain original photographic elements created by the photographer.

**Class 01: Optical special effects**

Images, modified without the use of a computer, using creative image-making, darkroom, or printing processes.

**Class 02: Digital special effects**

Heavily digitally edited images: multiple image composites, element removal, unnatural color alteration, etc.

**Class 03: AI-enhanced special effects**

Digitally edited photographs using AI-powered editing software. Entries must identify the software used in the artwork description.



## Youth Divisions

**Eligibility** ..... Open to youth ages 13-17 (by July 17) who live in Southern California.  
..... Original work created within two years.

**NEW** **Entry limit** ..... Five (5) per exhibitor.

**Entry fee** ..... \$6 per entry

**Parents/guardians:** The youth Photography Competition is a juried exhibition. Not all entries will be accepted. Due to the high number of entries and limited space we cannot accept all of the work submitted. Please understand that this competition is highly competitive.

- All rules and guidelines apply.
- Entries require a photo upload. See "Photo Entry Preparation" on page 2 for more information.
- Must be a digital or film print.
- Unless otherwise noted, basic color corrections and cropping are allowed. No elements may be added or removed from the original image.
- If accepted, see "Presentation & Display" on pages 8-9.

### DIVISION 311

#### Photography, Ages 13-15

**Class 01: Black & white Photos**

Sepia-toned prints are acceptable.  
Digital color photos changed to black & white are acceptable.

**Class 02: Color photos - people, animals**

**Class 03: Color photos - places and things**

**Class 04: Manipulated image**

Heavily digitally edited images: multiple image composites, element removal, unnatural color alteration, etc.  
Images must contain original photographic elements created by the photographer.

### DIVISION 312

#### Photography, Ages 16-17

**Class 01: Black & white photos**

Sepia-toned prints are acceptable.  
Digital color photos changed to black & white are acceptable.

**Class 02: Color photos - people, animals**

**Class 03: Color photos - places and things**

**Class 04: Manipulated image**

Heavily digitally edited images: multiple image composites, element removal, unnatural color alteration, etc.  
Images must contain original photographic elements created by the photographer.