



2026 Entry Timeline

Entry deadline	Friday, May 15, by 6 p.m.
Acceptance notification	Friday, June 5, by 6 p.m. <i>(Check spam folders.)</i> <i>Email will come from sweb@fairsoftware</i>
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 <i>(closed Mondays and Tuesdays)</i>
Plein Air competition	<i>Sunday, July 26, 8 a.m. - 2 p.m.</i>
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
Contact	Visual Arts Department • Valeria Tinoco, Program Coordinator 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.
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 are incomplete, a work in progress or have a "wet" canvas will be disqualified.
 - 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.
 - 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. Fine Arts is a juried competition. Not all entries will be accepted.
7. All entries must be original, made by the artist, and completed within the last two (2) years.
8. All entries require a photo upload. **Excludes plein art.**
9. 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.
10. Exhibitors are responsible for entering their items in the correct division and class.
11. Two-dimensional (2D) works 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.
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: works 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 the OC Fair & Event Center will be responsible for any loss, damage or theft of exhibitors' property that is 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. Entries created using artificial intelligence or AI-powered editing software are not permitted. 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) fine arts entries per exhibitor

Youth divisions Five (5) fine arts 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 the 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 of the 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.

PHOTOGRAPHING YOUR WORK FOR ENTRY

Digital photo submission of your entry is required.


-  • Photo upload is limited to one per entry. It 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).

Tutorial [Photographing Your Work](#)



HOW TO ENTER

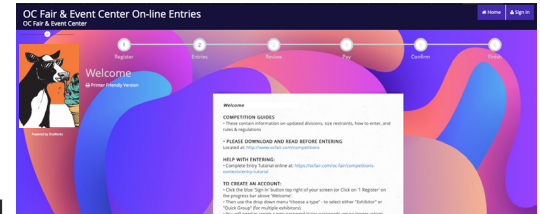
Online entry deadline: Friday, May 15, by 6 p.m.

Click on the link to go to the entry homepage: ocfair.fairwire.com

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 your progress



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. Do not re-enter to make corrections as you will be charged.



HELP ENTERING

For additional help, review these detailed step-by-step guides:

- [Entry Tutorial](#)
- [Photographing Your Work](#)

Phone: 714-708-1718 (during office hours) Email: 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 artwork 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

Fine Arts is a juried competition.

Qualified judges will be selected by the program coordinator to judge all exhibits. The judges are recognized authorities in the fine arts fields.

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

Fine Art 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 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. Please check your spam/junk folder. Results may also be viewed online at 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.

- 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



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 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 donors:

www.artsupplywarehouse.com



www.lagunaclay.com





AWARDS

Adult

2D Art Best of Show	\$400
Sculpture/Ceramic Best of Show.....	\$400
Division Winner.....	\$200
First Place.....	\$100
Second Place.....	\$75
Third Place	\$50
Judges' Award.....	\$25
Theme Award.....	\$25
Honorable Mention.....	Rosette

Youth

Best of Show.....	\$75
Division Winner.....	\$35
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.
- ***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 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 for the safe display and gallery standards for exhibiting your work. 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) 2D wall hanging work

- Work on canvas, board or paper.
- Stretched canvas should be back-stapled.
- Work must be relatively flat with no protruding elements.
- Any ratio within the minimum and maximum size is allowed.



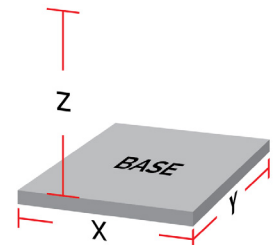
Portrait or landscape orientation
Maximum size 30-by-40 inches
Weight limit 20 pounds

Square orientation
Maximum size 30-by-30 inches
Weight limit 20 pounds

b) Sculpture

- Work must be well put together (no loose, fragile or sharp pieces that can easily break or are unsafe).
- Work will be placed on a plinth or pedestal.

Maximum base size (X, Y) 24-by-30 inches
Maximum height (Z) 60 inches
Weight limit 100 pounds



c) Ceramics

- A maximum of three (3) pieces can be entered as a set and count as one (1) entry. Multiple pieces must not exceed the maximum dimensions below.
- Work will be placed on a pedestal with plexi vitrine top. Note: there are a limited number of pedestals on hand.

Minimum size 3 inches; short side
Maximum base Size (X, Y) 14-by-24 inches
Maximum height (Z) 24 inches
Weight limit 30 pounds

No excessive mat sizes. Image should dominate the frame

2. Framing 2D wall-hung artwork

Work may be professionally framed or framed by the artist. Please follow these guidelines:

a) Work on paper must be framed.

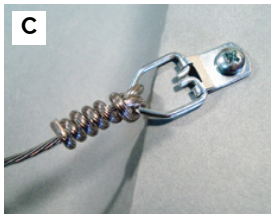
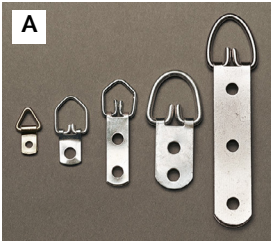
- Drawing, collage, printmaking and digital artworks on any paper-based media must be framed.
- Plexiglass is preferred over glass.
- Black frames with white mats are highly recommended.



b) Work on canvas is frame optional.

- Paintings, collage/mixed media works on canvas need to be stretched on stretcher bars or backed with wood, board or other solid substrate that can be properly wired for hanging.
- If framed, glass or plexiglass is not needed.





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 California residents ages 18 or older. Original work created within the last 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 "Photographing Your Work" on page 2 for more information.
- Work should be safe to move.
- If accepted, see "Presentation & Display of Accepted Artwork" on pages 8-9. Size and weight limitations and wiring guidelines will be strictly enforced. Entries will be turned away if they do not meet requirements.

DIVISION 501

Painting

Class 01: Oil

Class 02: Acrylic

Class 03: Watercolor

Class 04: Mixed media

Combination of media and use of cut materials: paper, fabric and found objects adhered to the piece.

Class 05: Digital illustration/painting

Images created using digital technology. The use of generative AI tools is not permitted.

- Upcycled and functional work: see: Division 418 Upcycled Handcrafts in the Handcrafts Competition Guide.

Class 01: Traditional/representative

Realistic portraits, human figures, animals, etc. made without the use of digital technology.

Class 02: Contemporary/abstract

Non-representational made without the use of digital technology.

Class 03: 3D printed art

3D objects created using computer-aided design (CAD) with 'additive manufacturing' printers. Sculptures created using a 3D printing pen, such as the 3Doodler, should be submitted under Class 01 or 02.

DIVISION 502

Drawing

Class 01: Pencil/charcoal

Class 02: Ink

Class 03: Pastel/colored pencil

DIVISION 505

Ceramics

- Maximum size 14-by-24 inches, no taller than 24 inches. Details on page 8.
- Work must be clay based.
- Work must be fired.
- A maximum of three (3) pieces can be entered as a set and count as one (1) entry.
- Polymer clay: see Division 400: Polymer Clay in the Handcrafts Competition Guide..
- Mixed media works where clay is not the dominant material: see Division 410: More Handcrafts in the Handcrafts Competition Guide.
- Please provide handling instructions if artwork has loose pieces.

DIVISION 503

Printmaking

Class 01: Relief prints and intaglio

Can be woodcut, line art, engraving and etching.

Class 02: Planography and screen printing

Must be an original design or piece. Monotypes may be included in this class.

Class 01: Hand-built ceramics

Class 02: Wheel-thrown ceramics

Made primarily with the use of a potter's wheel.

DIVISION 504

Sculpture

- Maximum size 24-by-30 inches, no taller than 60 inches. Details on page 8.
- Work is to be freestanding.
- All designs must be original.



Youth Divisions

Eligibility Open to youth ages 13-17 (by July 17) who live in Southern California.
Original work created within the last two (2) years.

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

Entry Fee..... \$6 per entry

Parents/guardians: Youth Fine Arts 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 "Photographing Your Work" on page 2 for more information
- If accepted, see "Presentation & Display of Accepted Artwork" on pages 8-9.
- For youth ages 9-12, 3D art, clay and ceramics, see the Handcrafts Competition Guide in [Hobbies & Handcrafts](#).

DIVISION 313

2D Art, Ages 13-15

- Maximum size 30-by-40 inches. Details page 8.
- See framing & hanging guidelines on pages 8-9.

Class 01: Drawing

Pencil, charcoal, ink, pastel, and markers

Class 02: Painting

Oil, acrylic, watercolor, tempera, and gouache

Class 03: Mixed media/collage

Combination of media and materials, paper, fabric, found objects glued to a surface

Class 04: Digital art

Artwork created with the use of a computer.

DIVISION 314

2D Art, Ages 16-17

- Maximum size 30-by-40 inches. See details on page 8.
- See framing & hanging guidelines on pages 8-9.

Class 01: Drawing

Pencil, charcoal, ink, pastel, and markers

Class 02: Painting

Oil, acrylic, watercolor, tempera, and gouache

Class 03: Mixed media/collage

Combination of media and materials, paper, fabric or found objects glued to a surface

Class 04: Digital art

Artwork created with the use of a computer.



Portfolio development
awards provided from LCAD



NEW

PLEIN AIR AT THE FAIR

A ONE-DAY JUDGED CONTEST HELD ON-SITE DURING THE OC FAIR!



Bring your art supplies and artistic talent to paint on location within the fairgrounds during the OC Fair.

En plein air is a French expression meaning "in the open air," and refers to the act of painting outdoors with the artist's subject in full view. Plein air artists capture the spirit and essence of a landscape or subject by incorporating natural light, color and movement into their works.

DATES TO REMEMBER:

Entry deadline.....Friday, June 26, 6 p.m.

Contest date.....**Sunday, July 26, 8 - 2 p.m.**

Check-in8 - 10 a.m.

Return finished work by2 p.m.

Judging.....2:30 p.m.

Awards3:30 p.m.

Entry pick up.....Thursday, Aug. 20, 10 a.m. - 6 p.m.

Rules

1. Open to all artists ages 18 or over.
2. Artists may bring up to three (3) blank canvases, paper or other surfaces to create on.
3. Maximum size of 16-by-20 inches. (Does not include frame provided by the artist.)
4. Surfaces must be blank and cannot have any prior sketches or markings.
5. No working from photographs.
6. The back of the surfaces will be stamped upon check-in by Fair staff.
7. Artists must bring their own art supplies: easel, paints, brushes, etc. No oil paints.
8. Only one (1) artwork per artist may be submitted into the contest for judging.
9. Submitted entry must be framed and have wire on the back for proper hanging. See page 8-9 for details.
10. All entries must be unsigned for judging.
11. Submitted entries must remain on view during the remainder of OC Fair.
12. We reserve the right to disqualify works deemed objectionable.

Registration

- Register online at ocfair.fairwire.com
- \$15 per individual. Fees are payable online with a credit card.
- Fees are non-refundable.
- Maximum of 20 participants accepted on a first-come, first-served basis.
- Participants will receive one (1) Fair admission ticket and one (1) parking pass for the day of event.
- Parking, Fair admission ticket and detailed Information will be sent prior to contest date.



PLEIN AIR AT THE FAIR

Exhibitors are welcome to visit the Fair (at their own expense) prior to contest day to choose the subject area. However, no photos or sketches of the subject will be allowed on or during the contest day.

Awards

- First Place\$100
- Second Place.....\$75
- Third Place.....\$50
- Honorable MentionRosette

Sales

- Works may be listed for sale.
- No commission will be taken by OC Fair.
- All sales will be handled by referral to the artist.



DIVISION 506

Plein Air Competition

- Maximum size 16-by-20 inches. Details page 8.
- See framing & hanging guidelines on pages 8-9.

Class 01: Any media

No oil paintings.