

2026 Plein Air Competition at the Florida State Fair



The Florida State Fair is looking for talented artists to spend the day painting and drawing the exciting activities at this year's Fair. Nothing captures the essence of a place or an event like a painting!

Why Compete?

- ✓ \$25 registration fee to Enter
- ✓ 2 FREE Fair ticket to all contestants
- ✓ Get a gift bag of goodies!
- ✓ Easy Online registration or mail in registration
- ✓ Have your paintings on display throughout the Fair and you have the option to sell your painting
- ✓ Postcard Size (6" x 4") & Novice class

Who Can Enter?

- ✓ All Florida residents, ages 18 and older
- ✓ Open to professional, semi-professional and amateur artists
- ✓ Contest is limited to 50 participants

Contest Timeline

JAN 31, 2026 (Saturday)	Entry Form & Registration Fee Due
FEB 10, 2026 (Tuesday)	Plein Air Competition Day
8A – 10A	Check-In Tent outside Florida Center Building
8A – 8P	Painting time period in ticketed area of Florida State Fair grounds
FEB 12, 2026	Winners will be announced
FEB 12-16, 2026	All artwork will be displayed until the end of the Fair.

Painting Awards

Spirit of the Fair*	\$300
1 st Place	\$200
2 nd Place	\$150
3 rd place	\$100
4 th place	\$75
5 th place	\$50

Postcard Painting Awards

1 st Place	\$100
2 nd Place	\$75
3 rd place	\$50

Novice Painting Awards**

1 st Place	\$30
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Questions? Contact The Creative Living Department at CreativeLiving@floridastatefair.com

*The **Spirit of the Fair** painting that most exemplifies the traditions and spirit of the Florida State Fair.

** A **Novice painter** has been plein air painting for under 1 year.

Entry Rules

General Rules

1. The contest is limited to the first 50 artists to send in their entry form and fee (either online or by mail).

Artwork (check-in and painting)

2. This year we have a **new plein air postcard sized painting class** to compete in. These postcard sized paintings do not need to be framed as we will frame them and display them in a secure glass case. All postcard painting needs to measure exactly 4 x 6 inches (Horizontal or vertical format)
3. All paintings must be created on Florida State Fairgrounds on **Tuesday, February 10th, 2025, between 8A–8P.**
4. **Check-In and stamping of back of canvas must occur before the artist is allowed to paint.**
 - **Check-In instructions** will be sent along with parking information, prior to February 8th.
 - At Check-In you will receive a Fair ticket for you and a helper. If you want to come to the Fair prior to the Plein Air event to scout locations we can provide a ticket upon request.
5. Types of media may include oils, acrylics, water media, pastels & graphite
6. Types of surfaces may include Paper, wrapped canvas, & canvas board
7. No photographs or iPads can be used to create the paintings. They can be used to reference the lighting of the scene.

Submission & Sale of Paintings

8. **Contestants may submit a maximum of two signed paintings & two signed Postcard paintings.**
9. **Artists must drop off the framed or unframed wrapped canvases by 8P on Tuesday, February 10, 2026.**
 - **Check-in stamp must be visible on the back of each painting in order to be accepted.**
 - Paintings must be appropriately framed, mounted, and securely wired for hanging. Artwork with clip mounts, missing wires, string, scotch tape, or saw tooth hangers **WILL NOT BE ACCEPTED.**
 - All submitted exhibit art must be for sale and remain in the exhibit until the end of the Fair.
 - In keeping with the Florida State Fair's family orientation, items of an offensive, controversial, or objectionable nature or subject matter will not be accepted.
10. **Maximum Painting submission size:**
 - **Unframed Painting** - can be any size as long as it does not exceed 320 square inches (equivalent to a 16 x 20 inch canvas)
 - **Framed Painting** - can be any size if it does not exceed 480 square inches (includes outside dimension of frame - equivalent to a 20 x 24 inch)
11. **Postcard Painting submission size:**
 - **Unframed Postcard Painting** – Needs to be exactly 4 x 6 inch and can be done on paper or canvas.
12. **Selling, donating, and pickup of paintings**
 - **Pricing:** Artists can set the price of their painting but cannot change the price after painting has been submitted for judging.
 - **Voluntary Donation for the Foundation:** If your painting does not sell at the Fair you may wish to donate it to our Foundation. The Foundation provides educational scholarships for High School students. Your painting can be used in our silent auction we have at our annual fund raising event.
 - **Commission:** The Florida State Fair will retain a 20% commission on all paintings sold during the Fair. Artists will receive a payment within a month of the Fair ending.

If a painting is purchased during the fair it will not be allowed to be removed by the purchaser until after the fair.

- **Pick-Up artwork:** Sold and un-sold paintings can be picked up between **February 17-20, 2026 (hours: 11A – 3P) & February 21nd (10A – 2P)**. Special arrangements can be made with the Creative Living Office if you are unable to pick up your items on those dates or times.
- All entries not claimed by **April 1st** of the same year will be recycled, disposed or donated through our program department.

How to Enter Online

We encourage you to enter online, using ShoWorks. The Florida State Fair has implemented ShoWorks, an online entry program. ShoWorks is an industry standard used by over 50 fairs nationally. This user-friendly program can be trusted to accurately enter you into our competitions and allows for efficient communications via e-mail. We are excited to have ShoWorks to better facilitate entering Florida State Fair competitions.

- **To Enter Online using ShoWorks.**
Go to **www.floridastatefair.com** and at the top of the home page select the **PARTICIPANTS** TAB and you will see in the dropdown list a link for **CREATIVE LIVING**. Select the **ENTER ONLINE** link on the left side of the page.
- **Everyone must register as a new exhibitor each year.**
- **Note that sessions expire after 20 minutes** of inactivity, so “save the cart” if you plan on leaving the computer for more than 20 minutes.
- When registering, please verify that all information that you entered into ShoWorks is correct. Please pay special attention to capitalization, and full names of cities/counties, and use proper spelling (no abbreviations).
- If you **ENTER ONLINE** you will need to pay with a credit card at that time. You will not be able to delay payment as were able to do in the past.

Mailing Paper Entry Forms

Entry Forms must be postmarked by Friday, January 31, 2026.

Failure to complete any portion of entry form may result in disqualification.

Contest is limited to the first 50 artists to send in their entry form and registration fee.

Mail Entry Form to:

Creative Living Competitions – Plein Air Competition

Florida State Fair

P.O. Box 11766

Tampa, FL 33680

Make checks payable to: Florida State Fair Authority

Frequently Asked Questions

Do I have to be a professional artist to participate?

No, all levels and experience are welcome

How old do you need to be to participate? *At least 18 years of age or older.*

Can I sell my work?

Yes. The artist sets the price of their piece. A 20% commission on all pieces sold goes to the Florida State Fair. You do not need to list your work for sale.

Do I have to get model releases? *The Florida State Fair is not requiring model releases.*

Plein Air Competition Entry Form

Office Use

☐ Entered into
ShoWorks

☐ Date
Received

Entry Forms must be postmarked by Friday, January 31, 2026.

Online Entry Form (see page 3 for instructions).

Please print legibly

Name (First, Last)			
Mailing Address			
City	State	Zip Code	<input type="checkbox"/> Check if you are a new exhibitor
Cell Phone while at the Fair ()			
Email			
<p>Registration Fee \$25 due with the entry form.</p> <p><input type="checkbox"/> Are you a Novice painter who has been plein air painting for under 1 year?</p>			

Agreement

I hereby certify that I have read the Florida State Fair Rules for the Plein Air Competition at the Florida State Fair. I also agree that the Florida State Fair may use my name, likeness, or photographs (including, but not limited to the photographs and video images of my final painting submission), for use in marketing materials, free of charge and without further notice or consultation. Regardless of cause, the artist agrees to bear all risk and expense for any loss, theft, or damage to their artwork or other personal property or injury to their person. The artist agrees to be responsible for insuring their artwork, and all necessary shipping costs if item is not picked up.

I understand that the 2026 Creative Living Competitions & Exhibits are held in conjunction with the 2026 Florida State Fair and agree that the Florida State Fair is not liable or responsible for any delay, change of dates, or cancellation of the 2026 Florida State Fair due to the following unforeseeable circumstances: (a) acts of God; (b) flood, fire, earthquake; or (c) other potential disaster(s) or catastrophe(s), such as epidemics, pandemics, or explosion.

Signature of Contestant

Date

Mail Entry Form to:

Creative Living Competitions – Plein Air Competition
Florida State Fair
Tampa, FL 33680

Make checks payable to: Florida State Fair Authority