

Photography Competition Handbook

ADULT

QUESTIONS?
CONTACT US!

BY PHONE AT
(813) 621-7821

BY EMAIL AT
CREATIVELIVING@FLORIDASTATEFAIR.COM

IMPORTANT DATES

Entry Deadline: Friday, December 5, 2025

Late Entry Deadline: Friday, December 12, 2025

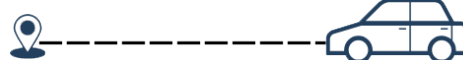
Item Delivery: Wednesday, January 7, 2026 - 11:00am-3:00pm
Thursday, January 8, 2026 - 11:00am-3:00pm
Friday, January 9, 2026 - 11:00am-6:00pm
Saturday, January 10, 2026 - 10:00am-4:00pm

Item Pickup: Wednesday, February 18, 2026 - 11:00am-3:00pm
Thursday, February 19, 2026 - 11:00am-3:00pm
Friday, February 20, 2026 - 11:00am-3:00pm
Saturday, February 21, 2026 - 10:00am-2:00pm

ENTRY DELIVERY & PICK-UP

Enter off of Orient Road through the Service Entrance on the west side of the fairgrounds.

A map with directions to the Florida Center is available on the Creative Living Website



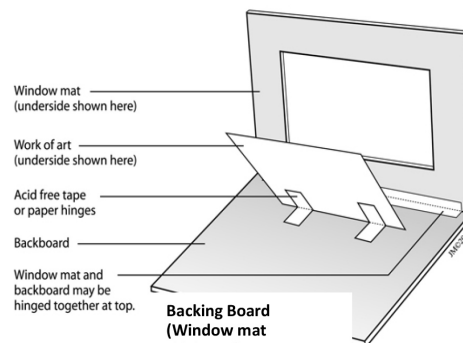
ENTRY FEES

Adult Divisions (Ages 18+): \$5 Per Entry
Late Entry: \$10 Per Entry

ENTRY FEES ARE NON-REFUNDABLE

GUIDELINES

- Each person may enter up to 3 photographs total. Photos can all be in the same class or different.
- All artwork must be labeled with the exhibitor's name on the back of the piece.
- Photographs must be printed on photo paper (gloss or matte), unless exhibiting in Alternative Process. No photos printed on canvas.
- All photographs must be matted in a standard single weight black or white mat board. NO Double Mats. The finished size of the mat board must be 11"x14"
- Do not frame your entry.
- Prints that are not matted will not be accepted.
- Each adult exhibitor will receive one (1) daily admission ticket to the Fair.
- Entries previously exhibited at the Florida State Fair may not be submitted for competition.
- Exhibited work must be completed within the last two (2) years.
- Entries must have been prepared/made/ processed by the exhibitor in whose name they are entered.
- All entries will be displayed, regardless of whether they win an award. To maintain a family-friendly environment, any items deemed offensive, controversial, or inappropriate will not be accepted.
- Print size can be any size as long they can be matted to fit to the 11" x 14" mat. Odd-size prints may need the mat window professionally cut to size.
- Prints can also be attached to a backing board (matboard or cardboard thickness – NO Foamcore) with a hinge mount; the method we recommend involvetaping the print into place with folded hinges. Doublestick tape can also be used to adhere the print to the backing board.
- The Florida State Fair will be inserting your photographs in clear sleeves to further protect them during Fair. That is why No foam core should be used to back the print.



JUDGING & AWARDS

- The Fair selects judges who are experienced and knowledgeable in the categories they are assigned. Judges are expected to be fair and unbiased. They may reassign an entry to a different division or class if they feel it's a better fit.
- All entries will be judged using a scorecard to help ensure fairness and consistency. Judges' decisions are final.
- If the judge feels that an entry does not meet the standards for an award, no ribbon or prize will be given, even if it is the only entry in the class.
- Winners and final displays will be announced during the Fair.

JUDGING CRITERIA

Originality (30%)

Unique approach to subject matter

Execution (30%)

Exposure, white balance, focus, depth of field, lighting, resolution, etc

Composition (30%)

Balanced arrangement of elements in photo.

Presentation (10%)

Matted properly, print condition, etc.

DEFINITIONS

All Black & White and Color photographs can be taken with any type of camera (film or digital). Most digital files will need to be adjusted to enhance the image in preparation for printing. This is not considered digital manipulation as in Class 25 of this contest.

Film/Photographic Manipulation (Class 24) : Using darkroom to manipulate the original image.

Film/Photographic Compositing (Class 24): An image created from two or more source images combined into a single image. This includes multiple exposures and collage.

Digital Photographic Art (Class 25): Consists of photo painting, Photo-Bashing, and digital photo manipulation.

Photo Painting: Uses computer software to enhance and transform a digital photograph into a painting.

Photo-Bashing: Combines multiple digital photographs that are overlapped and blended to create a single work of art.

Alternative Printing Process (Class 26): The term alternative process refers to any non-traditional or non-commercial photographic printing process. These processes include, but are not limited to: cyanotype, light printing, salt printing, lifts and transfers, platinum prints, infrared, etc.

Alternative Capture Process (Class 27): Uses a variety of non-traditional cameras to create images; such as Pinhole camera, Toy Camera, Polaroid, etc.

Hand Colored Image (Class 28): refers to any method of manually adding color to a black-and white photograph, generally either to heighten the realism of the photograph or for artistic purposes.

DIVISIONS & CLASSES

Photography - Adult Division 55.101

Black & White OR Monochrome Photography

Class 1 B&W: People (Portraits & Figures)

Class 2 B&W: Scene (Land, Sea, Sky scapes)

Class 3 B&W: Scene (Architecture & City scapes)

Class 4 B&W: Still Life & Things

Class 5 B&W: Flowers, Plants & Trees

Class 6 B&W: Animals (Wildlife & Marine Life)

Class 7 B&W: Animals (Pets & Farm Animals)

Class 8 B&W: Abstract, Surreal

& Non-representational

Class 9 B&W: Close-up & Macro

Class 10 B&W: Other Not Listed

Photography - Adult Division 55.101

Color Photography

Class 11 Color: People (Portraits & Figures)

Class 12 Color: Culture & Travel

Class 13 Color: Scene (Land, Sea, Sky scapes)

Class 14 Color: Florida Scenery

Class 15 Color: Scene (Architecture & City scapes)

Class 16 Color: Still Life & Things

Class 17 Color: Flowers, Plants & Trees

Class 18 Color: Animals (Wildlife & Marine Life)

Class 19 Color: Animals (Birds)

Class 20 Color: Animals (Pets & Farm Animals)

Class 21 Color: Abstract, Surreal

& Non-representational

Class 22 Color: Close-up & Macro

Class 23 Color: Other Not Listed

DIVISIONS & CLASSES CONT.

Photography - Adult Division 55.101

Alternative process

Class 24 Film/Photographic Manipulation & Compositing

Class 25 Digital Photographic Art

Class 26 Alternative Printing Process

Class 27 Alternative Capture Process

Class 28 Hand-Colored Image

GENERAL RULES

DISCLAIMER

All entries are submitted at the exhibitor's own risk. The Florida State Fair is not responsible for any loss, damage, or theft of exhibits even if caused by staff, volunteers, contractors, or visitors. If you want insurance for your entry, you must arrange it through your personal insurance provider before the Fair. Reasonable care will be taken to protect exhibits. No unauthorized people are allowed in the building after closing hours.

DIVISION OR CLASS CANCELLATION

The Florida State Fair may cancel any division or class if there are not enough entries to ensure fair competition. Any affected entries will be returned.

ENTRY ERRORS

Exhibitors are responsible for making sure their entries are correct. This includes online forms and summary sheets. The Fair is not responsible for correcting mistakes, and no awards will be given for entries disqualified due to exhibitor error. If an award is later found to be ineligible, it will be withheld or recovered. You may appeal a disqualification in writing within 90 days of being notified. Include your name, address, full entry details, and your reason for requesting a review.

PREMIUM PAYMENTS

Prizes will be awarded based on the Judging Criteria Record Sheets. **Prize checks are void 6 months after the date on the check. No replacement checks will be issued after that, so please cash them promptly.**

SUBSTITUTIONS

If needed, substitutions must be made within the same department as the original entry. They must be completed by the last day of the entry delivery period. You may not transfer your entry to another person.

PREVIOUSLY ENTERED ITEMS

Entries that have been shown at past Florida State Fairs are not allowed, except for entries in Horticulture and Aquarium Beautiful.

VERIFICATION OF ENTRY

To confirm that your mailed entry form and fees were received, include a self-addressed stamped envelope with your submission. Online entries will receive a confirmation code after submitting.

RESPONSIBILITY FOR EXHIBITS

The Fair is not responsible for exhibits left behind after the scheduled pick-up time. **Anything left after that time will be treated as abandoned and discarded by April 1st of the same year.**

ENTRY REMOVAL

Once accepted, entries cannot be removed until the official release date listed in the Competition Handbook. Early removal is only allowed in cases like serious illness, emergencies, or at the Fair's discretion.

RETURNED OR BOUNCED CHECKS

A \$25 fee applies to any returned checks. This must be paid with cash, a certified check, or a money order.

MAILING PAPER ENTRY FORMS

Entry Forms must be postmarked by Friday, December 5, 2025. Failure to complete any portion of the entry form may result in disqualification. Late entries must be postmarked before December 12, 2025. If you're submitting a late entry form, you must include the extra \$5 per entry fee. **Make checks payable to: Florida State Fair Authority**

Mail Entry Form to:

Creative Living Competitions – Photography
Florida State Fair
P.O. Box 11766
Tampa, FL 33680

SHIPPING ENTRIES

Shipped entries must arrive no later than January 6, 2026. **Packages MUST include Shipping form and prepaid shipping label.** Entries will be shipped back to the exhibitors after the fair in the same container. Return shipping costs are the responsibility of the entrant.

Ship Entry Form to:

Florida State Fair Authority
Photography competition
4800 US HWY 301 North
Tampa, FL 33610

RETRIEVING ENTRIES

All entries not claimed by April 1st of the same year will be recycled, disposed or donated through our program department. Entries not picked up on designated dates can be arranged for a special pick-up appointment by emailing CreativeLiving@floridastatefair.com.

EXHIBIT DESIGN & SET UP

The Florida State Fair controls how exhibits are displayed. If your entry is meant to be hung but isn't ready to hang, the Fair will display it as they see fit. No changes can be made once items are on display. Exhibitors cannot handle their entries after drop-off. Fair staff will handle final placement and assembly, using any instructions you provide. If your item needs assembly or disassembly, include clear instructions and diagrams. The Fair may use pins or other tools to secure your exhibit for display. Online entries will receive a confirmation code after submitting.

AWARD PREMIUMS

First Place - State Fair Ribbon **\$20**

Second Place - State Fair Ribbon **\$15**

Third Place - State Fair Ribbon **\$10**

Best of Show - State Fair Ribbon **\$30**

Best of Show award will be chosen from the first place winners in B&W, Color & Alternative Process

Director's Choice Award - State Fair Ribbon **\$35**

Honorable Mention Ribbons may be awarded at the discretion of the judge(s).

2026 Florida State Fair

Photography Competition Entry Form

Entry Forms must be postmarked by Friday, December 5, 2025.

Late Entry Period: December 6-12, 2025 (Double Entry Fees)

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

OFFICE USE ONLY

Exhibitor # _____

Late Entry ☐ YES ☐ NO

Total Fee _____

Paid ☐ YES ☐ NO

Type ☐ Cash ☐ MO ☐ Check

Check No. _____

Please print legibly

Exhibitors Name (First, Last)			
Mailing Address		County	
City	State	Zip Code	<input type="checkbox"/> Check if you are a new exhibitor
Phone ()		Email	

Entry Fee: Adult Division \$5 per entry | Late entry \$10 per entry

Exhibitors may enter up to three (3) entries for judging.

Late Entry

☐ YES ☐ NO

#	DIVISION #	CLASS #	Enter Title of Photograph	FEE
1				
2				
3				
Total Amount Due				\$

I hereby certify that I have read the Florida State Fair General Rules for the Competitive Exhibits Program and the above item(s) is/are entered for exhibition strictly in accordance with these rules, by which I agree to be governed. I also agree that the Florida State Fair may use my name, likeness, or photograph (including, but not limited to photographs of my entry), in any manner relating to my participation in the Competitive Exhibits Program, free of charge and without further notice or consultation.

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 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 exhibitor _____

Date _____

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Creative Living Competitions – Photography
Florida State Fair
P.O. Box 11766
Tampa, FL 33680

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