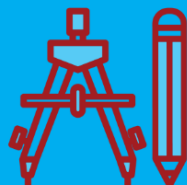


FINE ARTS EXHIBITION



OHIO ARTISTS EXHIBIT AND COMPETITION

ENTRY DEADLINE
JUNE 3 AT 1 PM

MONETARY & IN-KIND AWARDS OFFERED



FOR MORE INFORMATION SCAN QR CODE
OHIOSTATEFAIR.COM



STATE FAIR
JULY 29 - AUGUST 9, 2026

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Important Dates

Entry Deadline

June 3 at 1 p.m.

All entry information, payment, and uploaded images must be received by this time. No late entries accepted.

June 9 - Accepted/Declined notification email sent.

Tiny Art Deadline

June 10 at 1 p.m.

If accepted into the Exhibit, you may sign up for the Tiny Art Show for no additional fee.

Late Entry not accepted. See [page \[11\]](#) for more information.

Plein Air Competition Sign-up Deadline

June 21 at 1 p.m.

Artists do not need to enter or be accepted in the primary exhibit to enter the Plein Air Competition. See [page \[12\]](#) for more information.

Artwork Delivery Dates

Friday, June 12, 12 p.m. - 8 p.m.

Saturday, June 13, 12 p.m. - 8 p.m.

Sunday, June 14, 9 a.m. - 12 p.m.

To be announced - Opening Reception and Award Ceremony (invite only).

July 29 - August 9 - Exhibit Open 10 a.m. - 9 p.m. (Closes 6 p.m. Aug. 9th).

On-site Plein Air Painting Competition

July 29 - 30 - 9 a.m. - 8 p.m.

July 31 - 9 a.m. - 4:30 p.m.

July 31 - Award Presentation at 6 p.m.

Artwork Pick-Up Dates

August 9, 7 p.m. - 9 p.m. Carry-out only, must be within Fairgrounds before 6 p.m.

Fair will not permit entry after 6 p.m.

August 10, 10 a.m. - 8 p.m.

August 11, 10 a.m. - 2 p.m.

Important: If you are unable to pick up your entry on Pick-Up day between these hours, your entry MAY be held until Thursday, August 13th at 5 p.m., depending on space availability.

- You MUST arrange a pickup day and time with the Fine Arts Coordinator in advance.
- Unclaimed entries will be disposed of or donated.

2026 Theme Announcement

Made Here: 250 Years of American Innovation in Art

In recognition of America 250, this year's Fine Arts Exhibition celebrates the creative innovations that have shaped the American artistic landscape over the past 250 years. From early folk traditions and landscape painting to abstraction, assemblage, studio craft, and new media, American artists have continually expanded what art can be by experimenting with materials, techniques, and ideas.

Made Here invites artists to reflect on the movements, processes, and approaches that were developed in the United States or became central to American art practice. Artists are encouraged to draw inspiration from the techniques, philosophies, and experimental spirit that define American art, whether through direct reference or contemporary reinterpretation. All media and styles are welcome, with an emphasis on originality, craftsmanship, and creative exploration.

GENERAL RULES & REQUIREMENTS



Age Requirement: Artist must be 17 years or older.

Residency Requirement: Artist must be a current Ohio Resident.

Display Duration: Accepted artworks must remain within the Cox Fine Art Center after drop-off until the close of the exhibition. Artwork cannot be picked up early.

Entry Limit: There are unlimited entries.

Entry Tags: Instructions to print entry tags will be emailed upon acceptance. Print two tags for each entry accepted into the exhibit; attach one entry tag to the upper right back corner of 2D work, or the bottom/side of 3D work. The second tag will be required at artwork pickup. Artwork will not be released without the entry tag or proof of identity (i.e. driver's license).

Original Work: Only original artworks may be entered. Reproductions, copies, work that has been created by a commercial mold, work created under the direct instruction of another artist, or that has been completed via tutorial, are ineligible. Works deemed "unoriginal" by these standards are subject to rejection from the exhibition at the discretion of the Ohio State fair and are not eligible for refund or negotiation.

A.I. Artwork Policy: Entries must primarily showcase the artist's own skill, craftsmanship, and distinct artistic voice. The use of artificial intelligence tools is permitted only as a supporting element within an artist's creative workflow and must be clearly disclosed in the medium description during the entry process. Artwork created primarily or entirely through A.I. generation, or entries that fail to accurately disclose or represent the use of A.I. or other media, may be disqualified. Division and eligibility determinations related to A.I. use are final.

Recent Work: Artwork must have been completed in the last two years, and the year completed must be included in the entry information or visibly dated on the front or back of the work.

Re-entry: Artwork previously accepted and displayed in the Ohio State Fair Fine Arts Exhibition in either division may not be re-entered.

Image Selection: Work is first entered as a digital upload. When submitting, it is required that the artist's name is covered or censored to ensure a blind jury.



“Do I enter the Professional or Amateur Division?”

Professional Division Criteria

- Previously accepted into the Professional Division at the Cox Fine Arts Center, or have been juried into at least three professional exhibitions at other venues (galleries, juried shows, etc.)
- Artists who regularly sell their work to the public, participate as art vendors, are represented by a gallery, or regularly monetize their artistic practice through paid promotional or sponsored activity related to their artwork should submit as a Professional.

Amateur Division Criteria

- Does not meet the professional division criteria.
- The artist is in the early or developing stages of working in a particular medium.
- The Amateur division is intended for artists who engage in art primarily as a hobby and do not regularly monetize their artistic practice through sales, gallery representation, or paid promotional activity related to their artwork.
- **NOTE:** If an artist has won multiple awards in the Amateur Division, it is *strongly* recommended that they enter as a professional.

“Can I enter both Amateur and Professional Divisions?”

- Artists may enter **either** the Amateur **or** Professional division, but not both.
- **Division placement is determined at the artist level, not by individual medium.** Artists who consider themselves professional in one medium must enter all work in the Professional division, even when submitting work in a new or developing medium.
- Once an artist enters and is accepted into the Professional division, they will continue to enter as Professional in future Cox Fine Arts Center exhibitions.
- This policy ensures consistent division placement and fair judging.



Artwork Condition & Display Requirements: Artwork must meet all criteria for proper display. Artwork that fails to meet condition or display requirements may be rejected at drop-off without refund. Please see [page \[7\]](#) for information regarding hanging requirements or special assistance.

Artwork Content: The Ohio State Fair is committed to maintaining a family-friendly atmosphere. Submissions deemed inappropriate or not suitable for all ages, as determined by exhibition staff and directors, may be disqualified. This decision is final and non-negotiable. Disqualified works due to content or other considerations will not have entry or processing fees refunded.

Social Media: Accepted artists will have the opportunity to include art-specific social media for display during the exhibition. The Ohio State Fair reserves the right to remove any social media deemed inappropriate or not suitable for all ages, as determined by exhibition staff and directors. Social media that is not specifically related to the artist's work may also be removed.

Artwork Placement: The Fine Arts Coordinator will make the final decision regarding placement of artworks.

Entry Fees & Refunds: Unlimited entries. Processing and entry fees will not be refunded if artwork is not accepted, or disqualified.

Insurance: The Ohio State Fair and Expo Center do not offer insurance for artworks in the exhibition. Artists assume all liability.

Lighting & Climate: When preparing artworks for display, please take into consideration: The Cox Fine Arts Center features large windows that provide natural lighting, as well as track lighting and overhead lights. Large fans circulate air within the facility. This historic building does *not* offer central air as climate control.

Awards: Awards will not be announced until the Awards Ceremony. After the ceremony, awards will be posted online to the [Ohio State Fair Website](#).

Prize Money: All entrants must register as a supplier at Ohiopays.ohio.gov to receive payment.

Opening Reception/Awards Ceremony: The Opening Reception and Awards Ceremony is an invitation-only event and not open to the public. Accepted artists will receive an email with event information and instructions on RSVPing, separate from their original acceptance email.

Additional Information: For any information not found in the Program Book, please refer to the [Arts General Information and Guidelines](#) or email: FineArts@expo.ohio.gov

Accessibility

The Ohio State Fair is disability inclusive and welcomes all interested parties to enter competitions at the Ohio State Fair. To request a reasonable accommodation due to disability, please contact Fine Arts Leadership at FineArts@expo.ohio.gov. Requests made by June 22 will allow us to provide reasonable access, but we will make every effort to meet requests made after that date.



These requirements describe the display, size, and eligibility standards for exhibited artwork. Artists should review this section prior to entry to confirm their work can meet these requirements, even if final display preparation will be completed later.

Size and Weight Limits

- Hanging (2D) work may not exceed 8 ft x 8 ft or 100 lbs.
- 3D installation or sculptural work may not exceed 10 ft x 10 ft x 17 ft.

Display and Hanging Standards

- Hanging work must be wired and ready to display. Saw-tooth hangers, clip frames, pushpins, T-pins, or similar hanging methods are not accepted.
- Glass or plexiglass is required for 2D water media, drawings, prints, photographs, and 2D mixed media for the safety of the artwork.

Installation and Special Requirements

- **3D Installation and Sculpture:** 3D installation or sculptural works must be installed by the artist after arranging an installation time with the Fine Arts Coordinator. Fine Arts staff must be present at the time of installation.
- **Installation and Video Art Components:** Accepted installation works or video art must include all necessary components (including monitors, speakers, extension cords, and mounting or display solutions). Installation must be coordinated with the Fine Arts Coordinator. Artists are encouraged to install their work within five business days following drop-off.
- **Special Display Requirements:** Other artwork with special hanging or display needs must be dropped off with necessary hardware and detailed instructions. Artist assistance may be requested at the discretion of the Fine Arts Coordinator.

Originality and Authorship

- Giclee prints or reproductions of original works are not accepted.
- All ceramic or similar sculptural works must be handmade. Works created using commercial molds are not eligible.

Content and A.I. Compliance

- All artwork must comply with the family-friendly content standards and originality and A.I. disclosure requirements outlined in the General Rules & Requirements and Disclaimers.

Exceptions and Enforcement

- Any deviation from these display or installation requirements must be approved by the Fine Arts Coordinator prior to drop-off.
- Artwork that does not meet these requirements may be rejected at any stage. Entry and processing fees are non-refundable. All decisions are final.



All entries must be submitted online through the ShoWorks system. Artists should review entry requirements and prepare images and artwork information prior to beginning the entry process. Detailed, step-by-step instructions for using FairVault are available through the [Online Entry Tutorial](#) linked on the entry page.

Account Accuracy Requirements

A valid email address is required for all exhibition communications, including entry confirmation and acceptance or non-acceptance notifications. Artists are responsible for ensuring their email address is entered correctly and for monitoring spam or junk folders. Confirmation and notification emails are sent separately for each entry and may be filtered by some email providers.

Artists must enter both a first and last name in the appropriate fields. If a middle name is included, it must be entered in the first name field following the first name and a comma (for example: First, Middle). Artist names are not visible to jurors during the selection process.

Online Entry System

- Entries must be submitted online through ShoWorks.
- A new ShoWorks account is required each year.
- Artists must complete and submit each entry before the posted deadline.

Before You Begin

- Determine how many works you plan to enter.
- Prepare required artwork information (title, size, medium, year completed).
- Prepare digital images that meet the *Image Upload Requirements* on the next page.
- **Fees & Payment:** Fees must be paid before images can be uploaded. A \$10 processing fee applies per artist, with entry fees of \$10 per Amateur entry and \$15 per Professional entry.

Submitting Entries

- Follow all prompts in the order provided within ShoWorks.
- Entries are submitted one at a time. Each entry requires its own image(s) and information.
- Artists may review and edit entries until the deadline closes.

Returning to Your ShoWorks Account

Artists who have created a ShoWorks account but plan to complete or review entries at a later time should log in using their existing account information prior to the deadline. Once logged in, confirm that the screen displays “Hello (your name)” in the upper right-hand corner to ensure you are in the correct account.

Select “**Past Transactions**” to view submitted entries and confirm uploaded titles, WEN numbers, and image files.

Artwork Information

- **Titles:** Titles must match the uploaded images. Titles are visible to jurors.
- **Descriptions:** Use the description field for materials, process explanations, or required A.I. disclosure. Do not include identifying information.
- **Artwork Size:** List dimensions using height x width x depth (if applicable) and include units (inches, feet, centimeters, etc.). See [page \[7\]](#) for size limits.
- **Artwork Date:** Work must have been completed within the last two years.
- **Gallery Affiliation:** Artists may list up to two representing galleries. This information is not visible to jurors.



Image Upload Requirements

Images must show the artwork clearly against a neutral background, with proper lighting and no shadows. Screenshots showing device borders are not accepted.

- Artist names must not appear on uploaded images to maintain a blind jury.
- Images must be under 8 MB and saved in JPEG, JPG, GIF, BMP, or PNG format.
- Images must be in RGB color format.
- **2D work:** Submit one image per entry.
- **3D work:** Multiple images may be submitted to show different views.
- **Video or motion-based work:** Submit a working video link within the artwork description field.

After Submission

Judging Information

Jurors for this exhibition are selected for their professional experience in the visual arts and their ability to evaluate work across a wide range of styles, media, and approaches. Juror selections are final, except in cases where artwork is rejected at drop-off due to content, display, or eligibility requirements.

When reviewing submissions, jurors will consider the overall artistic merit of each work. Evaluation criteria may include, but are not limited to, the following:

- Concept and visual impact
- Craftsmanship and technical execution
- Composition, form, and use of materials
- Presentation and finish

Communication & Notification

- After the jurying process concludes, artists will receive one email per submitted artwork indicating whether the work has been accepted or not accepted into the exhibition.
- Notifications will be sent to the email address used during registration approximately two weeks after the entry submission deadline.
- Because multiple emails may be generated, artists are encouraged to check spam, junk, or filtered folders (including “Promotions” or “Social” in Gmail). Some email providers may flag a high volume of messages as spam.

Communication & Notification continued

- If notification emails have not been received by June 19, artists should contact the Fine Arts Coordinator, Grace Collins, at G.Collins@expo.ohio.gov and include the registered artist name, WEN number(s), and title(s) of the artwork(s) being referenced.
- Accepted artists will receive a separate email with details regarding the Fine Arts Opening Reception, including invitation and RSVP information.

Additional Exhibition Opportunities

In addition to the Fine Arts Exhibition, artists may be eligible to participate in the following special exhibitions offered during the Ohio State Fair.

Tiny Art Show

A small-scale “show within a show” featuring works no larger than 6 inches. Open to artists accepted into the Fine Arts Exhibition, the Tiny Art Show invites creative interpretations of a shared theme and offers artists the opportunity to sell their work. See [page \[11\]](#) for details.

Plein Air Competition

An on-site painting and drawing competition held on the Ohio Expo Center and State Fairgrounds. Open to Ohio artists regardless of Fine Arts Exhibition acceptance, this event emphasizes working directly from life and concludes with an awards presentation. See [page \[12\]](#) for details.

Delivery Instructions



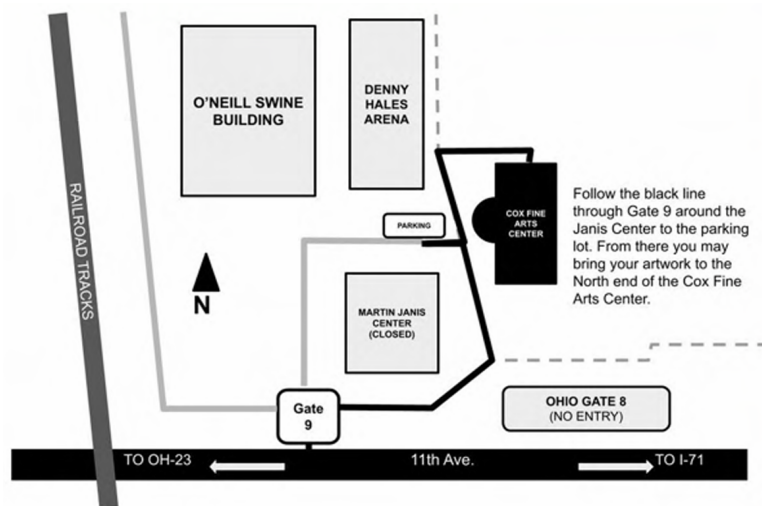
Delivery Schedule

Artwork must be delivered to the Cox Fine Arts Center during the following designated times:

- **Friday, June 12:** 12 p.m. – 8 p.m.
- **Saturday, June 13:** 12 p.m. – 8 p.m.
- **Sunday, June 14:** 9 a.m. – 12 p.m.

Hand-Delivered Artwork

Hand-delivered artwork must enter the Ohio Expo Center from **11th Avenue via Gate 9**. Once on the grounds, follow posted signage directing you to the **Cox Fine Arts Center**. A map and on-site signage will be available to assist with navigation.



Important Note on GPS Directions

The Cox Fine Arts Center does not have a unique street address, and GPS directions to buildings within the fairgrounds may be inaccurate.

When using GPS, enter the address of **Interior Supply Inc. (481 E. 11th Ave, Columbus, OH 43211)**. This location is directly across the street from **Gate 9**, the correct entrance to the fairgrounds for artwork drop-off.

Upon reaching 11th Avenue, **enter Gate 9 rather than turning into the business**, then follow on-site signage to the Cox Fine Arts Center.

Shipped Artwork

Artwork may be shipped to the address below. Shipped artwork must be postmarked no later than **June 14**. Include the entry tag inside the shipping container prior to sending. Artists are responsible for all shipping costs and in-transit insurance. Shipped artwork must be prepaid and packed in a substantial, reusable container.

Shipped artwork must arrive no later than **June 21**. Artwork arriving after this date is not guaranteed space in the exhibition, even if previously accepted.

If artwork is to be shipped back after the Fair, prepaid return shipping labels and special shipping instructions must accompany each piece. The Ohio State Fair will not pay shipping differences, ship on the artist's behalf, or ship to a P.O. Box.

Shipping Address for Accepted Artwork

Ohio State Fair & Expo Center
c/o Special Events Department
717 East 17th Avenue
Columbus, OH 43211-2698



The Tiny Art Show returns as a miniature “show within a show,” featuring small-scale artworks created by artists accepted into the Fine Arts Exhibition.

Eligibility

- Artists accepted into the Fine Arts Exhibition for the current year are eligible to participate.
- There is no additional entry fee to participate in the Tiny Art Show.
- Each eligible artist may submit one artwork.

Theme: America (Special 2026 Focus)

In recognition of America’s 250th anniversary, the Tiny Art Show theme for this year is America. Artists are invited to interpret this theme broadly through subject matter, history, culture, landscapes, symbols, or personal experiences connected to the United States.

Artwork Requirements

- Artwork may not exceed 6 inches on any side (6" x 6" x 6").
- All 2D and 3D media are accepted. Functional or wearable works are encouraged (for example: mugs, small ceramics, jewelry).
- Artwork must meet all display requirements of the Fine Arts Exhibition. Refer to [page \[7\]](#) *Artwork Display & Installation*.

Sales & Commission

- All Tiny Art Show works must be for sale to be eligible.
- Artwork may not be priced above **\$250**.
- The Ohio Expo Center retains a 30 percent commission on all artwork sales. See [page \[13\]](#) *Artwork Sales & Commission* for details.

How to Submit

- After an artist receives confirmation that their work has been accepted into the Fine Arts Exhibition, they will receive an email invitation with a link to a Google Form to submit work for the Tiny Art Show.
- Artists must complete all required fields and upload an image of the artwork to be considered.
- Artists will receive a separate notification regarding acceptance into the Tiny Art Show.

Drop-Off

Accepted Tiny Art Show artwork must be delivered during the official Fine Arts **Exhibition drop-off times**, alongside any other accepted Fine Arts Exhibition work. Refer to [page \[10\]](#) *Delivery Instructions* for specific times.



The Plein Air Competition invites artists to create original work on-site at the Ohio Expo Center and State Fairgrounds during designated competition dates.

Eligibility

Artists must be 17 years of age or older and a current Ohio resident. Acceptance into the Fine Arts Exhibition is not required to participate.

Entry & Fees

- **Entry Deadline:** June 21 at 1 p.m. (late entries will not be accepted)
- **Fees:** \$10 non-refundable processing fee and \$40 entry fee.
- The entry fee includes submission of up to two artworks, a vehicle unloading pass, and three single-day fair admission tickets.

Competition Dates & Times

- **Dates:** Wed. July 29 through Friday, July 31
- **Times:**
Wednesday and Thursday, 9 a.m. to 8 p.m.
Friday, 9 a.m. to 4:30 p.m.
- **Weather:** No rain dates. Artists should plan accordingly.

Check-In & Daily Procedures

Artists must check in at the Cox Fine Arts Center between **9 a.m. and 10 a.m.** on Wednesday, July 29, or on their first day of participation. All canvases or drawing surfaces must be **blank at check-in** and will be stamped or signed by Fine Arts staff. Unstamped work may be disqualified.

Artwork must be checked in with Fine Arts staff at the end of each day before leaving the grounds. Limited storage space for artwork and materials is available on-site.

Competition Rules

Artwork must be created entirely on-site during the competition dates. Artists may work indoors or outdoors, provided subject matter reflects traditional plein air themes such as landscapes or outdoor events. Artwork **may not leave the fairgrounds** at any time during the competition. Photographs may not be used as reference material.

Artwork Submission & Display

- Up to two artworks may be submitted for judging.
- Artwork must be turned in **ready to hang by 4:30 p.m. on Friday, July 31.**
- Artwork may not exceed 30 inches on the longest side, including frame.
- All submitted works must be wired and meet Fine Arts Exhibition display requirements.
Artists set their own sale prices. Sales are subject to the commission policies outlined in *Artwork Sales & Commission*, [page \[13\]](#).
- A designated area will be available for final artwork preparation.

Materials

Artists must supply all materials. Ohio Expo Center staff cannot assist with transporting materials.

Judging & Awards

- **Judging:** Friday, July 31 at 5 p.m. (artists may not be present)
- **Awards Ceremony:** Friday, July 31 at 6 p.m. at the Cox Fine Arts Center. The ceremony is open to the public.



Artwork Sales & Commission

The Ohio Expo Center and State Fair provides artists with the opportunity to sell their work during the Fine Arts Exhibition. Artists participating in artwork sales should review the following information carefully.

- **Pricing:** Artists are responsible for setting the sale price of their artwork.
- **Works Not for Sale:** Artwork that is not intended for sale must be clearly marked **NFS** at the time of entry.
- **Commission:** The Ohio Expo Center retains a **30 percent commission** on all artwork sales. Artists should consider this commission when determining pricing.
- **Patron Preview Sales:** Patrons of the Arts from the past four years are invited to preview and purchase artwork prior to the exhibition opening. Artwork sold during this preview will be identified with a placard recognizing the Patrons of the Arts. Invitations to this event are sent directly to patrons using the email address provided at the time of their most recent purchase.
- **All entrants must register as a supplier at Ohiopays.ohio.gov to receive payment.**

Awards & Supporters

Professional Division Awards

<u>Award</u>	<u>Value</u>
Best of Show	\$2000
2nd Best of Show	\$1,400
3rd Best of Show	\$1,000
Juror's Choice (2 Awards)	\$600 each

Amateur Division Awards

<u>Award</u>	<u>Value</u>
Best of Show	\$1,000
2nd Best of Show	\$700
3rd Best of Show	\$500
Juror's Choice (2 Awards)	\$400 each

Plein Air Competition Awards

<u>Award</u>	<u>Value</u>
Best of Show	\$500
2nd Best of Show	\$300
3rd Best of Show	\$100

Additional awards for the Ohio State Fair Fine Arts Exhibition are provided by Ohio arts organizations and individual donors.

Organizations or individuals interested in supporting the Fine Arts at the Ohio State Fair may contact the Arts Director, Heather Belew, at H.Belew@expo.ohio.gov for information on supporter opportunities and benefits.

Mural Competition information is available on its own page on our website under *Get Involved > Arts Competitions > [Mural Competition](#)*.



The Cox Fine Arts Center is a historic exhibition space housed in a nearly 100-year-old building known for its character and charm. Located in the heart of Columbus, Ohio, the Center features abundant natural light, providing a professional and inviting setting for both visual art exhibitions and performances.

Spanning more than 20,000 square feet, the facility offers extensive wall space, including movable walls standing 10 feet tall, along with open gallery areas designed to accommodate both 2D and 3D artworks. Electrical outlets are available for works requiring power, and the Center includes well-lit, wall-mounted permanent display cases as well as free-standing movable cases for smaller works in both the Amateur and Professional Divisions.

High ceilings enhance the gallery's atmosphere and acoustics, supporting both exhibitions and live performances. The Center is equipped with an on-site sound system for scheduled events, as well as spotlighting and overhead interior lighting to highlight displayed artwork.

The Cox Fine Arts Center also houses the **All Ohio Arts Gift Shop**, which features work from invited Ohio arts organizations, leagues, and guilds during the Ohio State Fair. Participation in the Gift Shop is separate from the Fine Arts Exhibition. Additional information is available on the [Fine Arts webpage](#).

