

FASS Artist FAQs

Why is the entry form deadline so early?

Why must I pay an entry fee?

Why do you charge a commission?

Why isn't there a theme this year? I like having a theme to spark my creativity.

OR

Why does there have to be a theme this year? I find it stifles my creativity.

Why can I not move my artwork in or out by myself?

My artwork requires special assembly. May I install my own work?

Why am I not permitted to display my own work where I think it best?

Why is (name of artwork) in the same category as my artwork? It is not the same medium.

Could you please expand the categories to include one especially for my medium?

Someone wants to buy my artwork privately "after the show". What should I do?

Why can't I remove my artwork at an earlier time?

Why do I have to wait outside for my artwork? If I am a volunteer, why can't I just remove it while I am on shift?

Why is the entry form deadline so early?

We do not require your artwork until the first day of the exhibit. We do expect that you will know the title, category, dimensions, and price of your artwork three weeks before the show.

Several sub-committees must prepare for a certain number of entries in each category. Entries are required to produce the art catalogue, the ballot tallying sheets, the art title cards, the trophy plates, the winner rosettes, the certificates, and so on. None of these can be produced less than three weeks before the show.

We also need to know the number of entries in each category early enough for our Decorating and Display teams to plan and measure out precisely the layout of the hall. These plans take many volunteer hours to arrange. There is a significant difference between having 80 works, 100 works, or 120 works entered.

Why must I pay an entry fee?

We incur many up-front expenses as we mount this show: printing costs, advertising, trophies, and reception, to name a few. Many expenses follow the show: venue rental, entertainment, and transportation. We work from a zero-neutral budget, and make every effort to trim our expenses. In 2016 for example we trimmed nearly \$1000 from our expenses to run a very tight show. Currently however, we rely on fees to pay about 50% of our expenses. The draw and art sales cover the other 50%. We are also committed to making the art show accessible to youth. Children enter free of charge. Teens enter with a reduced fee.

Why do you charge a commission?

We try to make our entry fees and commissions in keeping with similar kinds of events elsewhere. Granted, art sales form a small part of our revenue. However, the commission earned is often what is needed to keep the event in the black.

For artists who dislike the commission, we remind you that we welcome both works for sale and works “Not for Sale”. You are welcome to exhibit works you have already sold (as long as they are already identified on your entry form as “Not for Sale”). Another option is to price your work by accounting for the commission in your sale price.

Why isn't there a theme this year? I like having a theme to spark my creativity.

OR

Why does there have to be a theme this year? I find it stifles my creativity.

Yes, indeed, we receive both comments. Some artists excel when they are challenged by an idea. For example, it appeals to artists in our youth categories. Three-dimensional artists also often enjoy having a theme. Other artists prefer to submit “my best work”. In an effort to appeal to both kinds of artists, we now strike a balance by alternating between a theme year and a non-theme year.

When choosing a theme, we consider carefully what theme works well in all media, and which can be interpreted both literally and metaphorically.

We do not jury artwork based on theme. No artwork is excluded because they do not adhere to the theme chosen. We do reward work in a theme year based on their interpretation of the theme by changing the “Best in Show” award to “Best Interpretation of the Theme”. In all other categories, works are judged solely on artistic merit, not according to theme.

We do find that visitors enjoy having a theme. A theme often “sells” the show, which means more media attention and more traffic looking at your artwork. Visitors enjoy studying each piece to discover how the theme is presented. It allows people to engage more with what they are viewing and creates more discussion in the exhibit.

We have found no discernable correlation between number of entries and whether there is a theme.

Why can I not move my artwork in or out by myself?

On art intake day, there are many physical hazards in the hall as the display team sets up the exhibit. We must limit traffic while the team is working. This is also true as the exhibit is being dismantled when art work is picked up. We cannot risk injury.

Security: The more traffic there is through the exhibit, the harder it is to distinguish between authorized and unauthorized personnel. We make every attempt to keep everyone's work secure. Our art runners know where each category will be installed. They are quick and efficient.

My artwork requires special assembly. May I install my own work?

You can provide special instructions, a photograph or a diagram of the assembly if it is a simple diptych or triptych. In certain situations, especially where the piece is in several sections, is fragile, or has its own display (a plinth, dress form, etc.), you may be permitted to install your own work. This is typically reserved for artists in three-dimensional or fibre arts, and sometimes with artists who have a sectional work. However, in all cases an art runner must accompany the artist for the afore-mentioned reasons.

Why am I not permitted to display my own work where I think it best?

Assembly and display are different. You may assemble your own artwork if it arrives in sections. Artists may advise the Display Team about their artwork's correct installation, but the Display Team has the final say on where the assembled work will be displayed. The Display Team must

consider all artworks in competition fairly. The team has an overall creative design for the exhibit that includes more than the one work within it. They must also consider safety issues. Artists installing their own work cannot be perceived as having some advantage over an artist who leaves their artwork to be installed by the team. We will do our best to accommodate requests and take suggestions but cannot promise to arrange to every artist's complete satisfaction. If you have a talent for displaying art, you are welcome to join the committee! We'd love to have your expertise! OliverCAC@gmail.com

Why is (name of artwork) in the same category as my artwork? It is not the same medium.

As new techniques emerge, artwork media are always undergoing change. More artists now blur the lines between media. We have to strike a balance between welcoming new developments in media within a single category and creating new categories to describe it. Frankly, we cannot accommodate narrowly-defined categories. It would make several sub-committees more laborious and costly: cataloguing, voting, tallying ballots, and issuing trophies. As our expenses go up, we then have to find new sources of revenue.

Art is always in flux. For example, the trend is towards artists using mixed media, or in the case of photography, using digital manipulation as a form of graphic art. Many new techniques and materials blur the lines between watercolour and acrylic. Watercolour may use ingredients that appear more opaque and yet are still considered water-based materials. Other arts have always been extremely diverse within a single category: fibre arts, three-dimensional, mixed media.

At present, we welcome the diversity within categories. They challenge the viewer and the artist to redefine for themselves: what is a photo? what is a watercolour? what is fibre art? Surfaces and substrates also change -- paper, canvas, brushed metal, glass -- and these also challenge our notions of where the "artwork" begins and ends.

Because we first view the artwork on the day of the exhibit, and do not jury, we must trust the artist to choose the category that best describes their work. We trust that they are choosing the category to the best of their ability, and with the true representation of their media. It becomes very complicated and conflictual to try to re-categorize a work on the day of the exhibit.

Could you please expand the categories to include one especially for my medium?

Often people suggest a further refinement of a category. Under "Three-Dimensional": pottery, woodworking, jewelry have been suggested as independent categories. Under "Other Media": pen and ink, and collage have come up as possible stand-alone categories. Under "Fibre Arts": we are asked why not have a separate category for just quilts? And for "Photography", many suggest we divide the category into "classic" and "photo-shopped".

Adding more categories, or sub-dividing the ones we have, creates many problems for volunteers down the line. Here are some of them:

- number of entries: The more specific the category, the fewer submissions are received. If less than five enter, we cannot award prizes for 1st, 2nd, and 3rd.
- number of categories to vote for: Visitors vote for their favourite in each category. It is a fun way for the public to cast a ballot. Ballots already have ten fill-in-the-blanks (9

categories and one Best-in-Show). Many ballots are left only partially completed, which drives down the reliability of scoring the further down the ballots we count. Having a long list of categories to complete makes it more work and less fun for visitors. We don't want voting to be a chore, and more than ten is pushing it.

- time taken to count ballots: Every time we add a category, it means much longer for the balloting team to count. It is already a stretch to get everything tallied by 8:15 p.m. We could not finish tallying and awarding if we added even one more category
- cost of trophies: Every new category means purchasing more trophies, and relying on a volunteer to make the trophy bases.

Someone wants to buy my artwork privately “after the show”. What should I do?

Standard protocol for sales of artwork in a show is to run all sales through the organizing body. If artwork receives attention from a buyer because of previous exposure at a public exhibition, it is courteous to sell the artwork at the marked price and return the commission to the organizer. Ethical practice is to honour this regardless of the time that has elapsed after the exhibit. Obviously this is left to the conscience of the artist.

Anyone wishing to purchase art they see in the show should visit our information / business table. Sometimes prospective purchasers wish to have a work commissioned, rather than purchase what they see in the show. They can also approach the information table to make that request.

Why can't I remove my artwork at an earlier time?

Visitors come to see all the art. Removing artwork early can become “contagious”, with other artists wanting to follow suit. This deprives visitors coming later in the day of the privilege of seeing your artwork, and those of others.

We are very concerned about keeping artwork secure. There is much traffic at times. Trained volunteers act as docents, greeters and security during the show and sale. Anyone removing artwork will be stopped. This is for every artist's security. It can be very difficult for a docent to identify who is an artist, another volunteer, a purchaser, or someone unauthorized. To make their job easier, it is best to leave artwork in place until we have all our art return personnel on site at the close of the show ready to return your work to you safely.

The only artwork removed early is an out-of-town sale, or when the purchaser is unable to return at the end of the show. Even with sales, we do try to encourage the purchaser to return at the close of the show when they may have a chance to meet the artist.

Why do I have to wait outside for my artwork? If I am a volunteer, why can't I just remove it when I finish my shift?

The end of the art show coincides with the conclusion of the Festival of the Grape. This creates a lot of traffic: a volunteer shift change, docents escorting visitors out, Festival visitors wanting to use the washroom while security is trying to lock the doors, and so on. Each year, the 30 minutes around closing time and art return is the most stressful part of the event.

We keep track of every piece of art that leaves the venue. Every piece must be signed off. This ensures that nothing is missing, damaged, or stolen. It can be very distressing to our **volunteers** when a piece cannot be located. We do everything we can to dispel stress and confusion.