



2026 Plein Air Competition and Exhibition Guidelines

Call for Entries:

Now in its seventh year, WBCA's Into Nature Plein Air Competition celebrates the beauty of a Minnesota summer through the eyes of our community. Artists of all levels—from beginners to experienced painters—are invited to paint “en plein air” (outdoors) in the White Bear Lake and surrounding areas, including during the Manitou Days festivities.

The Into Nature Plein Air Competition takes place in White Bear Lake and surrounding areas. Artists are invited to register Friday, May 1 - Saturday, May 30, 2026. After reading the guidelines, click [here](#) to register.

New this year, extended competition dates and a longer exhibition which will include all submitted artwork and will be on display in the Ford Family Gallery for the full duration of the show. Artists are welcome to sell their art at a 40% commission to WBCA.

This year's judge, who will be announced at a later date, will award \$4,750 in prizes during the Community Reception on Thursday, July 23, 2026.

Registration:

Participants may pick up their lanyard on Friday, June 5 during Lisa Stauffer's [Plein Air Demo](#) or on Saturday, June 6 during the WBCA Summer Community Day. Lanyards can also be picked up anytime after this during [regular business hours](#).

- The online [registration form](#) must be submitted by Saturday, May 30, 2026.
- Registration fee: \$50 (this includes up to three submissions).
- Payment must be received no later than Friday, June 5, 2026.

Scholarships are available for those who need it. Please call 651-407-0597 to inquire.

Schedule & Events:

Participants may pick up their lanyard on Friday, June 5 during Lisa Stauffer's [Plein Air Demo](#) or on Saturday, June 6 during the WBCA Summer Community Day. Lanyards can also be picked up anytime after this during [regular business hours](#).

Check out all of WBCA's Plein Air classes and events here.

Competition Dates: Saturday, June 6–Thursday, July 16, 2026

"Paint the summer!" with new extended competition dates. Artists are welcome to paint where permitted throughout the White Bear Lake community and surrounding areas, including during the Manitou Days festivities. A list of possible locations will be posted at WhiteBearArts.org prior to the contest start date.

Drop off work:

Artists will bring framed entries to the Ford Family Gallery located inside WBCA.

Friday, July 17, 10:30 AM-2:30 PM

Saturday, July 18, 10:30 AM-2:30 PM

Reception and Award Ceremony: Thursday, July 23, 6:00-8:00 PM,
Award Ceremony at 7:00 PM

Come and view the results of the Into Nature Plein Air Competition. This year's judge will award \$4,750 in prizes and will talk about their selection process.

*Notification of selected works will also be sent via email.

Into Nature Plein Air Exhibition

All submissions, including award winners and selected pieces, will be on display Thursday, July 23-Friday, August 27, 2026.

Artwork Pick Up

All artwork must be picked up during one of the following times:

Friday, August 28, 10:30 AM-2:30 PM

Saturday, August 29, 10:30 AM-2:30 PM

Eligibility:

- Paintings (oil, acrylic, pastel, watercolor or any 2-D medium) must originate from a plein air experience during the contest dates noted above and must be painted in White Bear Lake or nearby, surrounding areas.
- Works finished in a home or studio, will not be disqualified.
- Submitted pieces should be framed and ready for display at the drop off.
- All works must have a proper wire for hanging.
- Floater frames are also acceptable and spacers can be used.

- Frames are strongly encouraged, however unframed pieces will not be disqualified. If work is unframed, canvas edges should be painted and must have a suitable wire attached for hanging.
- Maximum artwork size not to exceed 24" x 36."
- Participants must be 17 years or older. Artists, 16 years of age or younger, are welcome to participate in our Into Nature Jr. Exhibition. See WhiteBearArts.org for more information.
- WBCA reserves the right to refuse any artwork for any reason.

Prizes - Cash awards will total \$4,750!

- \$1,500 - Best of Show
- \$1,000 - Award of Excellence
- \$750 - Award of Merit
- \$500 - Honorable Mention
- \$250 - Best Oil
- \$250 - Best Acrylic
- \$250 - Best Pastel
- \$250 - Best Watercolor

Sales:

Artists can choose to sell their work while being exhibited at WBCA. There is a 40% commission to WBCA.

Waiver:

Reasonable care will be taken in handling and displaying artwork, but no responsibility is assumed by White Bear Center for the Arts (WBCA) for loss or damage of any kind. Submission of work indicates acceptance of these conditions and agreement that digital or photographic images may be used for publicity purposes by WBCA, including on social media and the WBCA website.

Questions?

Call (651) 407-0597 or email gallery@whitebeararts.org if you need assistance.

