



WATERCOLOR USA 2026 PROSPECTUS/ENTRY PROCEDURE

George A. Spiva Center for the Arts

Online Entry: Jan 9 – Feb 16, 2026

Exhibiting: May 30 – July 25, 2026

PURPOSE

Watercolor USA 2026 is a national competitive exhibition sponsored by Spiva Center for the Arts, continuing a tradition established by the Springfield Art Museum, Springfield, Missouri, since 1962. The primary purpose of the exhibition is to recognize and encourage excellence in watercolor and water media painting.

ENTRY FEE & SUBMISSION MINIMUM

Due to CaFÉ system requirements, the \$40 entry fee is associated with a two-entry minimum. Artists must submit at least two entries to complete checkout. **Artists who have only one artwork available may submit the same piece twice to meet this requirement.** Submitting duplicate entries does not affect jury consideration and is simply a technical workaround required by the platform. *Current members of the Watercolor USA Honor Society will be charged \$30.00. Contact WHS for PROMO code used at check out.*

ELIGIBILITY

Watercolor USA 2026 may be entered online by any artist, 18 years of age or older, currently living in the United States of America.

WORK ELIGIBLE

All artworks must be original—conceived and executed by the artist using their own inspiration and source material—completed within the last three years (new work) and not previously shown at Spiva Center for the Arts or in a past Watercolor USA exhibition. Artists may submit up to two works for consideration. This allows the juror to thoughtfully curate a cohesive and balanced exhibition.

Watercolor media may be executed on a variety of traditional and nontraditional substrates, including but not limited to watercolor paper (any type or weight), Yupo, Aquaboard, cradled wooden panel, stretched watercolor or watermedia canvas, and other comparable surfaces appropriate for watercolor techniques. Water-soluble paint must be the primary medium and used in a traditional watercolor-like manner.

All paintings must be framed, wired, ready to hang -including all canvases - and covered with plexiglass **or** can be sealed or varnished for surface protection. No glass is allowed unless the artwork is hand-delivered.

Spiva reserves the right to determine final eligibility, presentation requirements, and installation methods to ensure the safety of the artwork, the gallery environment, and visitors.

Spiva is particularly interested in artists who utilize watercolor in intriguing ways, both in terms of imagery and process. Three-dimensional watercolor-painted paper sculpture is permitted. Prints, reproductions, and giclées are not allowed.

DEFINITION OF “NEW WORK”

For Watercolor USA 2026, all submitted artwork must be original and created within the past three (3) years of the exhibition’s opening date.

Works completed outside this timeframe are not eligible unless they have undergone a substantial transformation, including major compositional changes or new visual elements that clearly reimagine the original work. Minor revisions or surface adjustments do not qualify.

Artists submitting reworked pieces must disclose original and revised creation dates and may be asked to provide additional documentation. Submissions that do not meet these criteria may be disqualified.

This policy ensures fairness and maintains the integrity of the exhibition as a showcase for recent work. Artists may contact Spiva Center for the Arts for the full “New Work” policy or with questions prior to submission.

SIZE RESTRICTIONS

- All 2-D work must be exhibition-ready and professionally presented, using appropriate hanging hardware such as D-rings, brackets, and/or wire. Sawtooth hangers are not permitted. Maximum physical size is 6’ x 6’, including frame or mounting.
- Three-dimensional work is limited to 75 lbs., with maximum dimensions of 6’ x 5’, and must fit through a standard double-entry door.

METHOD OF SELECTION AND IMAGE SIZE REQUIREMENTS

Watercolor USA 2026 will be selected from digital image files. Digital images should accurately represent the artworks entered. No detail views. It is the intention of Spiva that all acceptances will be considered final. However, Spiva reserves the right to delete from the exhibition any artwork that does not conform to the entry specifications.

Digital images must be high quality JPEGs with a resolution of 300 dpi.

* Size and label images before uploading to entry form.

NOTIFICATION

Once the jury process is complete, check your acceptance status by going to www.callforentry.org after March 16, 2026. Acceptance notification will include name of artist, and the name of artwork(s) accepted.

* Ship only the artwork(s) on the acceptance list.

Everyone who enters will receive either an acceptance letter or declined letter by email. Check your SPAM or JUNK email after the notification date above. If there is an error with your email address, you will not receive the letter.

AWARDS

Selection of artwork for awards will be made from the actual accepted paintings. Top cash prizes will be awarded in the amounts of \$3000, \$2000, \$1500, and \$1000 as well as Watercolor USA Honor Society cash and merchandise awards. Spiva supplied cash awards will be made at the Juror’s discretion. Awards provided by WHS will be selected by WHS-appointed jurors and are

independent of Spiva's awards. For a full listing of awards please see the official [Watercolor USA website](#). Awards will be updated as more information becomes available.

CATALOGUE

Each exhibiting artist will receive a copy of the exhibition catalogue. Additional catalogues are available for purchase.

SHIPPING AND HAND DELIVERY FOR SELECTED ENTRIES

SHIPPED accepted entries for *Watercolor USA 2026* must arrive prepaid at Spiva between March 9 – April 18, 2026. Participants may use the carrier of their choice, or work may be hand delivered (see below). Obtain a tracking number from your shipper. Please DO NOT contact Spiva to inquire about package arrival. You will be contacted only if your artwork has not arrived on time or if damage has occurred that needs to be addressed.

SHIP TO:

Spiva Center for the Arts
c/o Shaun Conroy Watercolor USA
212 W. 7th St.
Joplin, MO 64801

ENCLOSING A PREPAID RETURN SHIPPING LABEL WITH YOUR ARTWORK IS REQUIRED

Entries shipped without a prepaid return label will be returned COD. A physical address is required for shipping. No PO boxes allowed. Shipping will commence within one week of exhibition close. Please do not request a special return date.

HAND DELIVERIES will be accepted between 10:00 am – 4:00 pm, April 14 –18, 2026

INSURANCE & LIABILITY

Accepted artists are responsible for the cost of shipping and insurance of work to and from Spiva. The Center is not responsible for damage or loss during transit. Spiva Center for the Arts will exercise all due care in handling work, but will not be responsible for loss, damage, or replacement except for loss by theft or fire. If complete loss or damage occurs in such a situation, artist shall receive the insurance value stated on inventory form. Damage due to normal wear and tear, gradual deterioration, natural disaster, or resulting from any artist-approved restoration or retouching process, etc., is not covered under Spiva's "all risk" policy. Artist agrees to release and to hold harmless George A. Spiva Center for the Arts, its officers, directors, employees, volunteers and agents from any and all liabilities and damages to artwork and/or persons as a result of any part of artist's participation in the exhibit.

SALE OF ARTWORK

Accepted work is not required to be for sale. Artist will set prices for pieces that are for sale and will receive sixty percent (60%) of the retail price; Spiva will retain the balance. Spiva, in Spiva's sole discretion, may discount items no greater than ten percent (10%) of the retail price. Spiva will absorb any discount, unless otherwise agreed by the parties. Artist agrees that: purchasers may be allowed payment terms not to exceed ninety (90) days; items will not be released to buyer until full payment is received by Spiva; and Spiva will remit payment to the artist after the purchase is paid in full.

RIGHT TO REPRODUCE IMAGES

Spiva Center for the Arts reserves the right to photograph and reproduce, in color or black & white, all artworks accepted for the exhibition regardless of copyright. Digital images will be used for the exhibition catalogue, educational, and/or publicity purposes only.

AGREEMENT

The receipt of an entry for Watercolor USA 2026 will be understood to imply agreement on the part of the entrant with all conditions set forth in this prospectus.

QUESTIONS

Kearstin Mattox, Engagement Director
417-681-9801 | kmatttox@spivaarts.org

CALENDAR 2026 – IMPORTANT DATES AND DEADLINES

January 9	Online entry begins on www.callforentry.org
Feb 16	Entry deadline midnight CST.
March 16	Juror results notifications via email from Spiva and on CaFÉ • Every artist receives an email notification of acceptance or non-acceptance. Check your inbox, junk, or spam folder, or (better) check online at www.callforentry.org
March 19 – April 18	Shipped artwork may arrive at Spiva.
April 14 – 18	Hand delivered artwork may arrive at Spiva between 10:00 AM – 4:00 PM
May 29	Opening reception and awards
May 30	Watercolor USA 2026 opens to public
July 25	Exhibition closes, 5:00 PM
July 28 – 29	Hand deliveries may be picked up between 10:00 AM – 4:00 PM
July 28 – 29	Shipped artwork is packed and shipping in process.