OIL PAINTERS of AMERICA SUBMISSION RULES & POLICIES

The Oil Painters of America upholds the highest standards of integrity in traditional oil painting. Only original oil paintings on traditional substrates are eligible for entry into OPA exhibitions. Working from life is a time-honored, traditional method of painting and is strongly encouraged.

GENERAL RULES

I. ORIGINALITY.

SUMMARY Paintings must be original in concept and execution. Paintings from instructional settings are disqualified. Digital or mechanical transfer to the substrate is not allowed. The use of Artificial Intelligence (A.I.) at any stage is strictly prohibited. Any reference photos used must be shot by the artist; however, third-party images may be consulted for research, and secondary inclusion of copyrighted material is allowed. Digital photo-editing applications may be used to adjust or crop reference images or studies.

Ia. Class and Shared Studio Work

Paintings created in an instructional setting—including in-person or online workshops, classes, expert critique, or private tuition—are ineligible for entry. Because these works are strongly influenced or directly altered by an instructor, they fail the standard for originality.

Work created in a studio alongside other artists using a shared model or still-life setup is acceptable, provided there is no instruction or instructor present.

Ib. Drawing Transfer v Mechanical Image Transfer

Artists must draw or paint directly on the canvas. Traditional methods to transfer your own drawing, like projection and tracing, are permissible. Digital or mechanical transfer (e.g., giclee printing) of any image, whether it's your own or that of a third party, bypasses the spirit of original draftsmanship and is strictly prohibited.

Ic. Artificial Intelligence

The use of A.I. tools or agents at any stage is strictly prohibited, including but not limited to use for generating reference images, designing compositions, or visualizing ideas.

Id. Reference Images

Artists may use only their own observation, photography, or studies to develop an original concept for a painting.

Use of third-party images. A painting fails the requirement for original concept if it is a literal, close, or 1-to-1 adaptation of a third-party photograph or artwork, regardless of whether that source photo is copyrighted or public domain. The consultation of such images is permitted solely for education or to ensure secondary accuracy (e.g., anatomy or the drape of a historical garment), but not as the primary basis for a painting. Artists are allowed to synthesize multiple separate resources alongside their own imagination and direct observation to create something new. *See FAQ below.*

Permitted Secondary Inclusion. Painting an original scene that contains a copyrighted or public domain item (e.g., a famous sculpture or someone else's painting) is permitted, as this is fundamentally different from copying the material itself.

II. SUBSTRATES.

One flat substrate only. Diptychs, triptychs, and other multiples are not allowed. *See the Prospectus for size requirements, which change with the venue*.

Traditional primed or gessoed substrates are acceptable, including: canvas or linen (stretched or on panel), wood panel, masonite, dibond or aluminum composite panel, paper archivally adhered to a substrate.

Not acceptable: Carved/textured surfaces, three-dimensional objects, stone, barn wood, or any substrate bearing a printed image or photograph.

III. MEDIUMS.

Oil paints, alkyd oil colors, water-soluble oils, and oil sticks/bars are all acceptable. Metal leaf (e.g., gold, silver) is acceptable if it covers less than 20 percent of the surface.

Not acceptable: all non-oil media, including watercolor, gouache, acrylics, mixed media, Genesis paints, and oil pastels.

IV. FRAMING

Physical Shows Only. Paintings must be framed and wired with D-rings and picture wire. Floater frames are acceptable. Glass is not acceptable.

For deep-edged paintings, the frame must be deep enough that the substrate does not extend more than half an inch beyond the back of the frame.

V. TIME OF CREATION.

Paintings must have been created within the last five years.

VI. SALES & PRICING

Physical Shows Only. All works must be for sale at the artist's current pricing. NFS is not permitted.

VII. SUBMITTED IMAGES

Images must represent the artist's final, completed work. Digital editing of images for submission is permissible only insofar as necessary to honestly represent the painting.

VIII. WITHDRAWAL POST ACCEPTANCE.

An artist who withdraws an accepted entry is ineligible for any OPA exhibition for the next two years.

IX. COPYRIGHT.

Artists retain copyright of their work. Accepted images may be used by OPA for archival and promotional purposes.

X. AWARDS.

U.S. award winners must complete a W-9 if the award value is $600 or more. Awards will be sent to winners after the conclusion of the show.

OIL PAINTERS of AMERICA SUBMISSION RULES & POLICIES

XI. ELIGIBILITY ACROSS SHOWS.

A painting accepted into an OPA National Exhibition may not be entered into any other subsequent OPA exhibition or Online Showcase.

A painting accepted into a Virtuosos or Salon Show, or which receives an award or Finalist designation in an Online Showcase, may be entered into an OPA National Exhibition.

A painting that has a) been entered but not accepted into a physical OPA exhibition or b) has been in an Online Showcase but has not received an award or Finalist designation, may be resubmitted to any OPA show or Online Showcase.

XII. NORTH AMERICAN RESIDENCY

All Associate, Student, Student Associate, Signature and Master Signature members are required to reside in North America; International Associate, and Collectors Circle members may reside anywhere.

Citizens of the United States, Canada, Mexico, or the Dominican Republic qualify. Nonresident aliens also qualify if the address registered with OPA has been their permanent domicile for at least eight of the last twelve months.

OPA may request proof of residency. False residency claims will result in being asked to resign; the Board's decision is final.

FAQ

Most questions we receive about originality come down to reference images and instructional context. When you're wondering whether a painting meets the originality standard, ask yourself: *Did I make this painting with my own idea, my own skill, and my own hand?*

If you're unsure, reach out to OPA staff. We're glad to help you figure out where your piece stands.

- *Can I enter a landscape painted from my own photo?* Yes: original in both concept and execution.
- *Can I submit a portrait I painted from an historical photo or from a free, public-domain reference site with my own stylistic interpretation?* No: fails original concept.
- *Can I consult a free, public-domain reference image for a figure that is part of a scene I'm creating?* Yes: meets synthesis concept.
- *Can I enter a copy of a famous painting I made to study technique?* No: Master studies are of course allowed for practice, but excluded from shows.
- *I saw a great photo on Instagram. Can I paint from that?* No: fails original concept.
- *I did a painting in a workshop and the instructor only fixed one thing for me. Is that ok?* No: fails original execution. Any painting done in a workshop is ineligible.
- *I did a painting in an online class. Can I enter it?* No: fails our originality standard due to instructor influence.
- *I got a critique from an expert and made recommended changes to my painting. Can I enter it?* No: fails due to instructor influence.
- *Can I include a famous artwork as part of a painting—for example, a scene in a museum?* Yes: secondary inclusion is allowed.

ONLINE SHOWCASE RULES

All general rules listed above apply except Framing *and* Sales & Pricing*. These additional rules apply as well:*

Member Eligibility

Associate and Student Associate members may enter the Spring, Summer, and Fall Online Showcases.

Signature members may enter the Fall Online Showcase and are judged in their own category.

International Associate members may enter the Spring and Summer Online Showcases, competing with Associate and Student Associate entrants.

New members must meet the posted membership deadline or wait for the next Showcase.

Entries & Awards

Artists may enter as many paintings as they wish, but may win only one of the awards in any given Showcase.

Eligible Works

Paintings accepted into a physical OPA exhibition are not eligible.

A painting may be submitted to multiple Online Showcases until it receives an award or Finalist designation, after which it may not be submitted to another Showcase.

Physical possession is not required. Paintings may be listed for sale or NFS. No size restriction.

Any questions about eligibility are best addressed by contacting OPA prior to submission.

(815) 356-5987 | mail@oilpaintersofamerica.com