



**BOYS & GIRLS CLUBS  
OF AMERICA**

**NATIONAL**  
**ARTS**  
**CONTEST**

SUPPORTED BY



**2020-21 National Arts Contest Guide**

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## Introduction

Boys & Girls Clubs of America seeks to provide innovative and high-quality arts programming for all youth that stimulates learning and academic success; inspires creativity; explores future careers; and engages in self-expression, critical thinking and problem solving. BGCA believes arts programming and activities are an essential part of the human experience.

We have witnessed the healing and unifying power of the arts during this COVID-19 pandemic. We have experienced it through works of art on sidewalks, shared musical moments on porches, in plays and dance performances, and many other art mediums.

Undoubtably, the pandemic has changed the way teaching and learning are accomplished locally and around the world. Even so, Boys & Girls Clubs of America maintains its commitment to providing youth with essential creative experiences. The arts have played an important role in these tumultuous times and will continue to do so for all youth, including those underrepresented, with special needs, or in families with low income.

### National Arts Contests

As states and their schools work through challenges in the years ahead, arts programming must remain central to youth development. To support youths' wellbeing in our Clubs and communities, we continue to offer our most highly utilized arts experiences for youth – ImageMakers National Photography Program and National Fine Arts Exhibit – culminating in the National Arts Contests.

National Arts Contests enable Club youth to develop their creativity and cultural awareness through visual arts. Youth are encouraged to share their creative expressions by participating in a series of art competitions. Youth artwork is exhibited and judged locally, regionally and nationally. Clubs can submit artwork in a variety of photography and visual arts categories. Participants ages 6-18 compete in four age groups, as follows:

- Ages 6-9
- Ages 10-12
- Ages 13-15
- Ages 16-18

This publication includes guidance and resources for conducting a high-quality local art show, as well as detailed instructions for submitting artwork to the regional and national levels of the National Arts Contests.

## Contest Overview

### Participation

The National Arts Contests are premier opportunities to recognize and highlight Club youths' creative accomplishments. Such culminating events are fundamental components of high-quality arts programs. In fact, Recognition is one of BGCA's Five Key Elements for Positive Youth Development.

The competition starts at the local level with a local art show. Such an event will:

- Demonstrate your Club or Youth Center's commitment to the arts
- Build youths' artistic and technological skills
- Provide a meaningful opportunity for youth to communicate and express themselves in creative ways
- Create opportunities for recognizing youths' work
- Encourage youth to join classes and field trips, and to participate in other arts and technology activities
- Help recruit new Club or Youth Center members
- Draw youth into the arts areas
- Showcase your Club's arts programs in your community
- Provide new avenues to develop local strategic partnerships
- Create public relations opportunities for your Club or Youth Center

In addition, your local art show will enable youth to have their artwork, images and digital designs professionally displayed. Plus, youth will earn recognition from their family, peers, artists and others in the community.

### Judging

Youth artwork will be judged in three successive levels.

- **Local Level** – An impartial panel of two or more qualified judges must be selected to evaluate artwork at the local art show. Youth, Club staff, board members and BGCA employees *may not* serve as judges. Competent judges can be found in every community. Art editors, supervisors of fine arts in schools or community arts councils, prominent local artists, curators of galleries or museums, and university art instructors make excellent judges.
- **Regional and National Levels** – Both regional and national judging will be conducted virtually. BGCA will identify an impartial panel of two to more professional artists to serve as judges at each level to evaluate youth artwork. All regional and national winners will be notified by BGCA.

All judges must consider two criteria when judging youths' works of art:

- Artists' age and skill
- Artistic sensibility expressed in the artwork

## Recognition

Youth artwork can be recognized in three successive levels.

- **Local Level** – While BGCA does not provide youth artist recognition at the local level, we encourage your organization to plan a unique local recognition opportunity. For example, consider:
  - Presenting a certificate of merit at a Club event (Please see the sample template at the end of this guide.)
  - Awarding art supplies, gift cards, etc., to local winners
- **Regional Level** – BGCA will provide each regional winner with a commemorative certificate of merit signed by BGCA’s President, Jim Clark.
- **National Level** – BGCA will provide national winners with a commemorative plaque celebrating their achievement. Scanned images of winning artwork will be displayed virtually on our public online arts community page at [Arts.BGCA.net](https://Arts.BGCA.net). Additionally, reproduced images of youths’ artwork will be displayed at the Boys & Girls Clubs of America National Headquarters.

## Eligibility Requirements

The following rules govern all local, regional and national contests.

- After local art show judges have completed the selection process, all winning entries for each contest **MUST** be submitted to the [Arts Submissions Portal](#). Artwork not submitted through the portal will **NOT** be accepted.
- Only one entry – per age group, per category, per organization – will be accepted. For example, if you have eight units (Clubhouses) within your organization, you can submit only one piece per age group per category as an organization, **not** per unit.
- Artwork must be entered in the age group that corresponds to the young person's age when the work was completed. However, the National Fine Arts' Group Project category has no age restrictions.
- A teacher or parent/guardian must verify that artwork created outside the Club was created entirely by a Club youth.
- Artwork made from or containing the following is not eligible:
  - Art kits
  - Ready-made patterns
  - Tracings
  - Follow-the-dots
  - Cartoon characters
  - Copyrighted material (e.g., songs, films or images)
- Artwork submitted in the wrong category will not be judged. So, please read the category descriptions thoroughly before submitting.

2021 National Arts Contest Timeline	
Arts Contests Submissions Portal Opens	March 30, 2021
Arts Contests Submissions Portal Closes	April 30, 2021
Regional Judging Events	May to July 2021
National Judging Event	August 2021

## Five Steps to National Art Contests Success

### Step 1: Create Artwork

Clubs should conduct year-round arts programs that can include class instruction, demonstrations, field trips, guest artists and special events. Youth should focus on drafting and dedicating time to completing a piece of artwork they would like to enter.

**2021 Note:** *To avoid contracting or spreading COVID-19, we recommend not including field trips, assemblies or other large-group gatherings this year.*

### Step 2: Conduct a Local Art Show

Once you have a collection of youth artwork from your organization, it is time to hold a local art show. The local event can be designed however you want. For example, you may choose to host an evening event where you invite local community artists to serve as judges, conduct a virtual viewing party, combine your art show with another Club activity, etc. Regardless of the method, your local art show should showcase youth artwork and determine projects to be submitted to the National Arts Contests.

Please see Conducting a Local Art Show, Tips for Conducting a Virtual Art Show and Tips for Conducting an In-Person Art Show During a Pandemic in this guide for more details.

### Step 3: Submit Local Winners to Arts Submissions Portal

**REQUIRED:** All sites interested in participating in the National Arts Contests – ImageMakers National Photography Program and National Fine Arts Exhibit – MUST register and submit their local winning artwork using the [Arts Submissions Portal](#). The portal will open in March 2021 for this contest period. Please see Tips for Submitting Digital Entries in the Appendix to ensure you upload the best images of youth artwork.

**Note:** *Organizations may participate without submitting entries in every category and/or age group. However, only submit one entry per age group in each category.*

### Step 4: Judge Artwork Regionally

Winning artwork submitted from local art shows are judged at the regional level. The 2020-21 regional contests will be judged virtually in each region – Northeast, Southeast, Midwest, Southwest, Pacific, Overseas Asia and Overseas Europe.

**2021 Note:** *Clubs are not required to mail artwork to regional host sites. However, all national winning artwork will need to be mailed to BGCA. Please plan to maintain and store all youth artwork submitted until notified.*

### Step 5: Judge Artwork Nationally

The BGCA Arts Team identifies professional artists to serve as national judges to review the winning regional artwork. Judges will select one submission from each category that best represents each respective age group. The 2020-21 national contest will also be judged virtually.

## **National Fine Arts Exhibit**

This program provides youth the opportunity to express themselves creatively, build confidence, learn new visual arts, and showcase their artwork in the community. The National Fine Arts Exhibit is based on the idea that every Club can run a visual arts program that gives every young person the chance to be an artist.

The National Fine Arts Exhibit has nine categories that represent different art mediums:

- Monochromatic Drawing
- Multi-Colored Drawing
- Pastel
- Watercolor
- Oil & Acrylic
- Print Making
- Mixed Media
- Collage
- Group Project

Artwork must be entered in one of the nine categories and properly displayed in accordance with the National Arts Contest Rules. The artwork sample in each category on the following pages is a previous national winner.

## National Fine Arts Exhibit Submission Categories

### Monochromatic Drawing



Artwork in this category must be in one color tint. Artwork is created by one artist and uses pencil, pen and ink, or charcoal in at least 95% of the work. All work in this category must be matted and backed. All work in this category must be two-dimensional. If the work contains more than 5% of other materials or media, please consider the Mixed Media category.

### Multi-Colored Drawing



Artwork is created by one artist and uses pencil, pen and ink, or marker in multiple colors in at least 95% of the work. All work in this category must be matted and backed. All work in this category must be two-dimensional. If the artwork contains more than 5% of other materials or media, please consider the Mixed Media category.

### Pastel



Artwork is created by one artist and uses chalk pastel, oil pastel or charcoal in at least 95% of the work. All work in this category must be finished using a fixative, then matted and backed. All work in this category must be two-dimensional. If the work contains more than 5% of other materials or media, please consider the Mixed Media category.

### Watercolor



Artwork is created by one artist and uses tempura, pan-style or tube water-based paint in at least 95% of the work. All work in this category must be matted and backed. All work in this category must be two-dimensional. If the artwork contains more than 5% of other materials or media, please consider the Mixed Media category.

### Oil & Acrylic



Artwork is created by one artist and uses oil or acrylic-based paint in at least 95% of the work. Works in this category created on stretched canvas or wood board do not require matting or framing. Works on canvas board must be matted and backed. All work in this category must be two-dimensional. If the artwork contains more than 5% of other materials or media, please consider the Mixed Media category.

### Print Making



Artwork is created by one artist and uses a printmaking process to produce a two-dimensional work. Works in this category created on wood board do not require matting or framing. Works on paper, fabric, or other materials must be matted and backed. All work in this category must be two-dimensional. If the artwork contains non-printed materials, applique or other media, please consider the Mixed Media category.

### Mixed Media

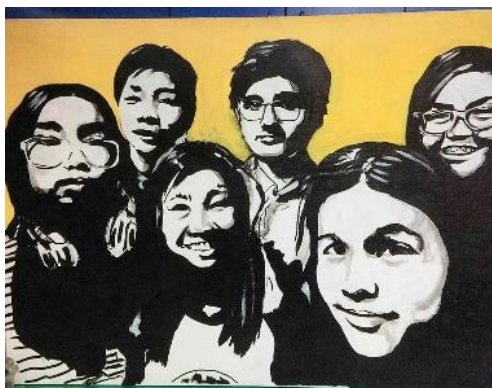


Artwork is created by one artist and uses multiple media in the same piece that may or may not be represented in the above categories, including ALL three-dimensional work. Works in this category created on stretched canvas or wood board do not require matting or framing. Works on any other two-dimensional surface must be matted and backed. Three-dimensional work should be submitted by providing two or three photographs of the piece.

### Collage



Artwork is created by one artist and uses cut or ripped paper arranged and adhered on a two-dimensional surface to create an image in at least 95% of the work. All work in this category must be matted and backed. All work in this category must be two-dimensional. If the artwork contains more than 5% of materials or media other than paper – which may include beads, applique, yarn, etc. – please consider the Mixed Media category.



### **Group Project**

Artwork in this category may be created using any media of choice and is created by two or more artists. Works in this category created on stretched canvas or wood board do not require matting or framing. Works on other two-dimensional surfaces must be matted and backed. Three-dimensional or installation work should be submitted by providing two or three photographs of the piece. It is strongly advised to not ship three-dimensional work to avoid damage to the piece. This category does not need to fall into any specific age group. One piece per organization will be judged.

## **ImageMakers National Photography Program**

ImageMakers National Photography Program is designed to help youth go beyond snapshots and develop their skills to take impactful photographs. The current popularity and accessibility of photography makes it a powerful activity to engage youth of all ages, simultaneously teaching skills they will use for the rest of their lives. The program offers five categories:

- Nature & Surroundings
- Culture & Tradition
- Portraits
- Editing & Filter
- Fashion & Design

Images must be entered into one of the five categories and properly displayed in accordance with the National Arts Contest rules. The artwork sample in each category on the following pages is a previous national winner.

## **ImageMakers National Photography Program Submission Categories**

### **Nature & Surroundings**



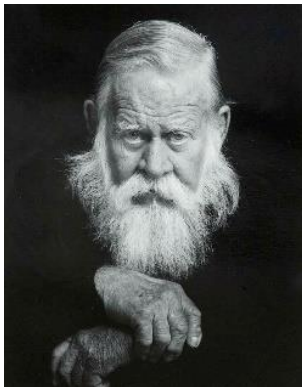
These photographs are created by one artist and depict our physical surroundings, whether it's natural beauty or the streets outside. These photographs may be modified to full color or grey scale. If further intentional editing or filters are applied, please consider the Editing & Filter category.

### **Culture & Tradition**



These photographs are created by one artist and depict the events, activities, stories and social gatherings that make up our world. These photographs might show the daily life of a family, or the traditions or emerging trends that define a group. These photographs may be modified to full color or grey scale. If further editing or filters are applied, please consider the Editing & Filter category.

### **Portraits**



These photographs are created by one artist and are a representation of a person or people in which the facial expression is predominant, providing insight into personality, mood and style. These photographs may be modified to full color or grey scale. If further intentional editing or filters are applied, consider the Editing & Filter category.

### **Editing & Filter**



These photographs are created by one artist who intentionally edits and applies filters to a photo to enhance or change the original image. All images used must be taken by the artist. Pre-existing photographs may not be used. Photographer's choice on editing software!



### **Fashion & Design**

These photographs are created by one artist and provide insight into personality and character utilizing fashion and style choices. These photos capture unique style and fashion trends of today.

## Conducting a Local Art Show

**2021 Note:** *Some of the ideas presented below may not be appropriate during the pandemic. Please use your discretion and keep safety top of mind when planning your event. See Tips for Conducting a Virtual Art Show and Tips for Conducting an In-Person Art Show During a Pandemic in the Appendix for modifications to consider this year.*

### Find a Site

A quality art show requires a space where artwork may be displayed in an uncluttered, professional way. A Club may have adequate space to house an exhibit, but if the goal is to reach a wider audience, or if there is no space to hang the exhibit without disrupting regular programs, consider holding the art show outside the Clubhouse. Art galleries, department stores, malls, banks, museums, office buildings, theater lobbies and airports make excellent sites. Many of these public spaces have arrangements with commercial display firms that may help set up the art show.

Secure a site with the greatest potential for publicity and reserve the dates for the local art show months in advance. Determine the hours the site is available. Assess and secure equipment you might need, such as tables, easels and lights.

### Hang the Show

Artwork and photos should be matted and backed (stretch canvases excluded). Many arts supply stores provide discounts to non-profits for supplies. Artwork may be displayed on easels or directly on walls. If possible, display the artwork at eye level while concealing the means of support. If this is the first time you have hung artwork for an exhibit, try to enlist the help of an experienced volunteer.

To best facilitate judging, display the artwork by category and age group. For example, try to hang all pastels together and keep the work organized by age group.

### Promote Your Local Art Show

Enhance your program by hosting a brief ceremony to kick off your local art show. Consider hosting other promotional events and printing an art show guide or artwork scavenger hunt. Here are some suggestions to make your event a success.

**Ribbon Cutting Ceremony:** Invite judges, your Club's board president, local artists and other leaders in your community to open the art show. A young artist can hand the scissors to a VIP who will cut the ribbon. Members of your Club's photography club could photograph the event.

**Luncheon:** Ask a civic organization in your community to hold one of its regularly scheduled meetings at the site of your local art show. Invite VIPs to attend and ask a speaker to comment briefly on topics such as, "Why We Need Art" or "The Importance of Being Creative." Youth exhibiting artwork can attend as guests.

**Local Art Show Reception:** Invite board members, donors, community leaders and groups who have an interest in the arts. Your alumni, Keystone Club members or members of other Club service groups can serve refreshments.

**Sneak Preview:** Invite a select list of VIPs to attend a special preview of the art show. Ask board members to suggest names of people to invite. Serve refreshments and have a leading artist in your community or a representative of an arts organization speak about an arts-related topic relevant to the community, or another topic of their choice.

**Art Show Guide:** Add a professional touch to your art show by printing a guide to distribute at the show. This will provide an opportunity to highlight the Club's programs in the arts and give recognition to the young artists. The guide should include a list of the artists and the titles of their works. It should acknowledge individuals and groups that have contributed to the success of the art show.

## Arts Awareness

### It Starts in the Club

Club staff should be educated about all arts programs, and they should encourage youth to enter their artwork for display. To help build excitement, display the National Arts Contests poster and Club youth artwork from previous years. Offer year-round classes, demonstrations from guest artists or field trips focusing on visual arts. As the date of your local art show approaches, conduct special classes and events to stimulate interest in the arts. Here are a few suggestions.

- Conduct in-person and/or virtual field trips to museums, galleries, or artist studios where youth can see works of art on display or in progress.
- Provide opportunities to attend in-person and/or virtual classes and demonstrations by local artists.
- Conduct classes and demonstrations on preparing works for exhibits that show youth how to mount, mat and frame artwork.
- Promote your local art show on the Club bulletin board. Make flyers and program brochures. Include program information in newsletters and announcements during Club events.

### Club Arts Program Awareness in the Community

Your community needs to know about the local art show! Send a press release to TV networks, radio stations and newspapers. A sample press release can be found in the Appendix of this guide. You can customize this template for your local art show and local news media. Once you have established these media contacts, be sure to let them know if your Club's youth work is selected for regional or national exhibits.

### Upcoming Opportunities

View the [Arts Opportunities 2020-21](#) resource guide to learn how to enrich arts programming at your Club.

Interested in receiving the latest information about everything arts at Boys & Girls Clubs? Join our [BGCA Creates](#) newsletter.

## **Appendix: National Arts Contest Documents**

Please review the following important documents:

- National Arts Contest Checklist
- Tips for Submitting Digital Entries
- National Arts Contest Label
- Certificate of Merit: National Arts Contests
- National Arts Contest Matting Instructions (for local events)
- Tips for Conducting a Virtual Art Show
- Tips for Conducting an In-Person Art Show During a Pandemic
- Sample Press Release – This press release template can be used to promote your local art show.

## National Arts Contest Checklist

- ☐ Conduct art classes, guest master class demonstrations, field trips and special events throughout the year.
- ☐ Identify and secure a site (or virtual process) for your local art show.
- ☐ Identify and secure a panel of judges.
- ☐ Promote the local art show to local news media.
- ☐ Encourage youth to enter their work in the local art show.
- ☐ Mat the art and photographs (for in-person local event or to mail to BGCA Headquarters if piece wins at national level).
- ☐ Display the art/photographs in a professional manner.
- ☐ Plan the art show opening or virtual viewing event.
- ☐ Produce a guide for the art show opening.
- ☐ Judge the art from all participating units, and photograph the pieces selected by the judges.
- ☐ Take a great image of each piece of artwork.
- ☐ Register all winning pieces on the [Arts Submission Portal](#).
- ☐ Hold onto youth artwork. Please retain and store all artwork submitted in the portal in case it advances to the regional or national level. All national winning artwork will need to be shipped to BGCA National Headquarters.
- ☐ Wait for BGCA to provide information about the results of regional and national judging. If your Club youths' artwork is selected for the national arts judging, BGCA will contact you regarding next steps.
- ☐ Update the local news media if your Club youths' artwork is selected for regional or national recognition.

## Tips for Conducting a Virtual Art Show

It is up to your organization to determine the best way to present your art show this year, during the COVID-19 pandemic. The safety and well-being of our youth, teen members, staff and judges is of utmost importance. If you choose to conduct your local art show virtually, consider the following ideas to help you plan a robust virtual viewing and judging event.

### Will Your Event Be Live or Prerecorded?

A live event is often worth the extra work and planning it takes to set up. Current technology makes this easier than ever, especially with platforms like Zoom, Google Hangouts and Facebook Live. If you choose to prerecord your event, YouTube, Vimeo, and social media hosts like Facebook and Instagram are easy ways to share prerecorded videos or links.

In order for youth to participate in any interactive virtual programming, you will need to attain parent or guardian permission from each youth attendee. Traditional Club internet policies do not cover the same permissions that are required for this kind of interaction. To download editable templates, visit [BGCA.net/VirtualProgramming](https://bgca.net/VirtualProgramming).

### Follow Virtual Event Best Practices

Conducting and implementing a quality virtual experience is critical. It is possible with a little creativity and planning. Your Club may use whatever technology platform you feel is best for your event. However, Zoom is recommended for security purposes.

For everyone's safety, be sure any live event is by invitation only and password protected. All virtual events with youth must have the chat function disabled. Consider a few other safety best practices:

- Be sure VPN is turned off for all users.
- Make sure your sound is on.
- No filming or photographing young artists.
- No screen grabs or recordings.

For the latest BGCA programming and training resources, visit [BGCA.net/VirtualProgramming](https://bgca.net/VirtualProgramming).

Finally, remember to make your event FUN! Your enthusiasm is contagious, so spread it – not COVID!

## Tips for Conducting an In-Person Art Show During a Pandemic

This year is unlike any other. It comes with new challenges, along with new opportunities. BGCA maintains its commitment to providing youth with memorable experiences that encourage creative expression and recognition for their hard work. We do this while maintaining safety as our top priority.

Whether you choose to conduct your local art show virtually or in-person, be sure to put safety first. This tip sheet highlights CDC guidelines to help you determine what type of event to host, and it provides recommendations to keep attendees as safe as possible during an in-person event.

### CDC Guiding Principles

The CDC recommends avoiding events and gatherings in order to decrease the risk of contracting and spreading COVID-19. If your organization chooses to host an in-person event, the CDC offers guidelines to keep staff and attendees as safe as possible.

The risk of spreading COVID-19 at events and gatherings falls into one of the following four categories.

- Lowest risk: Virtual-only activities, events and gatherings
- More risk: Smaller outdoor and in-person gatherings in which individuals remain at least six feet apart, wear masks, do not share objects, and come from the same area
- Higher Risk: Medium-sized in-person gatherings adapted to allow individuals to remain spaced at least six feet apart with attendees coming from outside the local area
- Highest risk: Large in-person gatherings where it is difficult for individuals to remain spaced six feet apart and attendees travel from outside the local area

### Protect Staff and Attendees

To reduce your risk of getting and spreading COVID-19, always follow these precautions. Promote the same at any event you sponsor. Provide the appropriate materials and reminders to any facilitators and attendees. These precautions will go a long way to promoting a safe environment for your local art show.

- Wear a face covering over your nose and mouth.
  - Mandate masks and encourage attendees to bring them to the event.
  - Have a supply of masks available for those who may not have one on hand.
- Maintain at least six feet distance from anyone outside your household: See the Promote Social Distancing subheading below.
- Avoid crowds: Limit the amount of people in the event space at any time.
- Avoid poorly ventilated indoor spaces: Open doors or windows if possible.

- Stay home when you are sick.
  - Advise staff and attendees to stay home if tested positive for COVID-19.
  - Encourage those to stay home if experiencing symptoms, or if in close contact with someone who has experienced symptoms in the last 14 days.
- Wash your hands frequently or use hand sanitizer.
  - Ensure sinks are accessible.
  - Supply adequate soap, water, paper towels or hand dryer, tissues, hand sanitizer, disinfectant wipes, and no-touch covered trash cans.
- Clean and disinfect frequently touched surfaces regularly.
  - Never use cleaning supplies near children, and ensure adequate ventilation.
  - Use disposable gloves when handling and disposing of trash.

### Promote Social Distancing

Encourage all participants and attendees to maintain the CDC’s recommendation of staying at least six feet apart at all times. This will involve some thoughtful planning and coordination. Once you have selected a venue for your local art show, use the [Social Distance Calculator](#) to determine how many people to allow in the building at any time.

Find creative ways to physically separate attendees and ensure they stay six feet apart.

- Arrange works of art so they are spaced at an adequate distance from each other, and turn them to face the same direction.
- Use visual reminders and markings, such as floor tape, dots, or footprints and signs to designate keeping six feet apart.

For more information about hosting events during the COVID-19 pandemic, please visit the CDC’s [Considerations for Events and Gatherings](#) as well as the [Social Distancing in the Club](#) publication.

## Tips for Submitting Digital Entries

**2021 Note:** All artwork will be submitted virtually this year. Therefore, submitting the best possible digital image of youth artwork will be key in the judging process. Consider the following tips to help you submit quality entries.

### National Fine Arts Exhibit

- Be sure to display artwork in a space with good lighting. Natural lighting, studio lighting or a well-lit room are good choices.
- Place artwork on a solid backdrop to eliminate any distracting surroundings.
- It is best to capture the entire piece of art in one photo. If the piece is too large, take one image of the entire piece of art and another image that focuses on the category requirements.
- For best results, crop any unnecessary elements surrounding the piece of art, such as chairs, cups, other artwork, etc.
- For safety and unbiased judging, do not submit entries with youth holding their artwork.



The image above is an example of a well-photographed piece of art.

### ImageMakers National Photography Contest



All digital submissions for the ImageMakers National Photography Contest should be downloaded from the device/camera and saved as a .jpeg or .png file. Next upload the file to the portal. Do not take pictures of photographs, unless they were processed with film or the original file no longer exists.

The image to the left is an example of a digital file.

## National Arts Contest Labels

All artwork submitted in the portal must have a personal, completed label attached on the back of each project. ALL fields should be typed. Hold onto youth artwork. BGCA will notify all regional and national winners and provide instructions on next steps.

**2021 Note:** *This is only required when sending national winning pieces to BGCA headquarters. However, you may choose to also use these labels when displaying artwork at local or regional art shows.*

National Arts Contests	National Arts Contests
Region: _____	Region: _____
Artist Full Name: _____	Artist Full Name: _____
Organization Name: _____	Organization Name: _____
Club Name: _____	Club Name: _____
Address ( <i>Shipping</i> ): _____ _____	Address ( <i>Shipping</i> ): _____ _____
City/State/ZIP: _____ _____	City/State/ZIP: _____ _____
Artwork Title: _____	Artwork Title: _____
Category: _____	Category: _____
Age: _____	Age: _____
Contact Full Name: _____	Contact Full Name: _____
Contact Email: _____ _____	Contact Email: _____ _____
Camera Type (for photo entries only): _____ _____	Camera Type (for photo entries only): _____ _____



**National Arts Contests**



# **2021 LOCAL ARTIST**

**CERTIFICATE OF MERIT**  
*presented to*

**[INSERT FULL NAME OF YOUTH ARTIST]**

**of**

**[INSERT ORGANIZATION NAME]**

**for artistic achievement in the  
2021 National Arts Contests**

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Arts Director

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Chief Professional Officer

## National Arts Contest Matting Instructions

For your local art show, all artwork – other than those created on stretched canvas – should be matted and backed. In addition, spray any artwork created using pencil, pastel or chalk with a fixative, or cover it with transparent wrapping to prevent smudging.

### Materials Needed

- X-acto knife, utility knife or mat cutter
- Framing square, T-square or steel straight-edged ruler
- Masking tape
- Double-sided tape
- Mat board<sup>1</sup>
- Backing, such as heavy cardboard or leftover mat board<sup>2</sup>

### How to Do It

1. Measure the artwork/photograph.
  - For ImageMakers, all photographs should be printed 8"x10".
  - For National Fine Arts, maximum artwork dimensions are 48"x48".
2. Do a little MATH!
  - Add a minimum of 4" to each of the dimensions of the work. This will give you a mat with a 2" border around the outside of the work.<sup>3</sup>
  - Consider this example:
    - The artwork is 10"x12" and you need a 2" mat border.
    - Add 4 inches to each of the dimensions to get the total size: 10+4=14, 12+4=16.
    - The total size of the mat will be 14"x16".
3. Cut the mat board.
  - Place the mat board front side down on a clean surface, and mark the overall measurement on the back.
  - Cut down the mat board to the correct overall size.

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<sup>1</sup> To showcase youth work in a professional manner, mat board should be used. Use of other framing materials such as cardstock, poster board or paper is discouraged. It is suggested to use a white or black mat, though not required. Local arts and crafts stores or framing shops will often donate scrap mat board or off-sized mats.

<sup>2</sup> Backing should be heavy weight. The use of paper, cardstock or poster board as backing is discouraged.

<sup>3</sup> For larger work, consider adding a thicker border.

4. Cut the backing board.
  - Use another piece of mat board or a piece of cardboard.
  - Repeat Step 3 with your backing board.
5. Measure the frame.
  - Place your matboard front side down onto a clean surface.
  - On the back, use a ruler to find the mid-point of your mat board.
  - From the mid-point mark the measurements for the frame you will cut out.
  - Refer to this video tutorial for more details:  
[youtube.com/watch?v=mTI4sG6MPy4](https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=mTI4sG6MPy4)
6. Cut the frame.
  - Hold a steel ruler or T-square along your cut line for the frame.
  - Hold a knife on the waste side of the mat board (the inside of the frame) and guide it toward you along the edge of the steel ruler.
  - Several cuts will work better than one hard stroke and will give a cleaner edge. Two or more passes may be needed to cut completely through the board.
  - Refer to this video tutorial for more details:  
[youtube.com/watch?v=mTI4sG6MPy4](https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=mTI4sG6MPy4)
7. Mount the artwork.
  - Align the work in the opening you cut.
  - Apply a strip of masking tape to the top of the artwork.
  - If the artwork is pencil, pastel or chalk, apply a fixative before matting OR tape a transparent film into the frame before taping the artwork in place.
  - Never use glue to mount the artwork to the mat.
8. Apply the backing.
  - Apply double-sided tape around the edges of the mat board frame, paying careful attention not to apply tape to the artwork.
  - Position the backing board over the mat board frame and apply even pressure around all sides to secure.
9. Don't forget to apply the official NAC label to the back! Official National Arts Contest Labels should be completely filled out and attached to the back top left corner of the artwork.

## Sample Press Release

**Note:** Replace items in parentheses with local information and print on Boys & Girls Club news release stationery or letterhead.

**Contact:** (Name)      (Phone Number)

### FOR IMMEDIATE PRESS RELEASE

#### BOYS & GIRLS CLUBS OF (YOUR CITY) TO PARTICIPATE IN NATIONAL ARTS CONTESTS

##### Annual Search for Top Youth Artists

(City), (Date) – The Boys & Girls Club of (Your City) is one of thousands of Clubs across the country joining in a search to identify talented young artists. The competition is part of Boys & Girls Clubs of America’s (BGCA) National Arts Program, a comprehensive initiative promoting young people’s creativity, and encouraging artistic skills and cultural enrichment.

As a participant in the National Arts Contests, the Boys & Girls Club of (Your City) may submit members’ artwork and photographs in two contest areas: National Fine Arts and ImageMakers Photography. Selected artwork will be screened at the regional level, and a limited number will be sent to BGCA’s Atlanta headquarters for judging at the national level.

National winners’ artwork will be displayed at special events throughout the year. Winning artists will also receive engraved plaques and letters of congratulations from BGCA President and CEO Jim Clark. Regional finalists will receive a certificate of participation.

*(Use this paragraph to describe your participation in past competitions and other distinctions that could include participation in community art celebrations, college/university volunteers assisting with the program, etc.)*

Located at (Address), the Boys & Girls Club has served the youth of (Your City) for (Number) years. The Club provides programs for more than (Number) boys and girls in three priority outcome areas: Academic Success, Good Character and Citizenship, and Healthy Lifestyles.

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