

The San Diego County Fair's **Creative Youth Competition** invites young makers and collectors to showcase their skills and creative expression in a variety of mediums including quilting, fiber arts, needlework, decorative arts and crafts, tablescapes, collections, and many other hobbies. This competition provides creative enthusiasts under the age of 18 with the chance to win ribbons and donated awards as well as the unique opportunity to display their work for thousands of fair visitors.

2026 Creative Youth Exhibition Timeline

Entry Deadline	Monday, May 4, 2026, by 7:59pm
Entry Delivery	Friday, May 15, 2026, 3pm-8pm and Saturday, May 16, 2026, 9am-2pm
Awards Reception	Saturday, June 13, 2026, 2pm
Fair Dates	Wednesday, June 10 – Sunday, July 5, 2026 (closed Mondays and Tuesdays)
Entry Pickup	Tuesday, July 7, 2026, 10am-6pm

Eligibility

- Open to all youth aged 5-17 years old by the Entry Deadline listed above.
- Entries must be original work of the exhibitor and completed in the last two (2) years.
- Work by two (2) or more artists is *not* eligible.
- Work, or nearly identical work, previously shown at the Fair, regardless of title, is *not* eligible.
- Work created by *generative* Artificial Intelligence (AI), either partially or completely, is *not* eligible.



Contact Us

Veronica Navarro, [Coordinator](#)

Trish Bresser, [Assistant Coordinator](#)

San Diego County Fair Entry Office

2260 Jimmy Durante Blvd, Del Mar, CA 92014

Office (858) 792-4207 - Mon-Fri 10am-4pm

2026 Local Rules

1. Completion of online entry registration shall be deemed acceptance of all rules and permission to use your name, photograph, and images and description of entries in print, digital and other media.
2. Online registration is required for all competitions and one-day contests. Online entries and any required image/document uploads are accepted until the published deadline, which specifies a date and time. Late entries will not be accepted.
3. Once registered, the exhibitor name, entry description, title, and price may not be changed. Substitutions will only be allowed in accordance with current State Rules. Fair Management is not responsible for errors on entry forms which may lead to elimination or disqualification of an entry.
4. Processing fees must be paid online at the time of registration. Processing fees are non-refundable.
5. Exhibitors must be living at the time the online entry is submitted.
6. All non-livestock/non-agricultural entries must be the creative work of the exhibitor (whose name appears on the entry registration), be in good taste, and suitable for family viewing. Fair Management reserves the right to disqualify any entry/exhibit it deems objectionable or not in accordance with competition standards.
7. If an entry is disqualified after judging is complete, no changes will be made to the status of awards given for other entries.
8. Exhibitors are responsible for obtaining necessary permission from models and/or to use material in their entry that is considered copyrighted.
9. No entry will be accepted should the exhibitor describe the conditions under which he/she will exhibit, or the exhibit will be displayed.
10. Judges are selected for their expertise in the divisions or classes they evaluate. New judges may be appointed each year, and judging assignments may vary annually based on the needs of each competition.
11. If a coordinator or judge deems an entry to be in the incorrect category, division, class, etc., he or she may direct the Entry Office to move that entry as appropriate. The Entry Office may combine divisions or classes to create an adequate judging pool.



12. Fair Management reserves the right to limit entries, and display thereof, to facilities available and to cancel any division or class in which, in its judgment, the entries are insufficient to secure adequate competition.
13. Entries must be delivered on the date(s) and times specified. Entries will not be accepted before or after the stated entry delivery date. All accepted exhibits must remain on display and shall not be removed until the stated entry pick up date. Any exhibit not picked up on the specified date becomes the property of the San Diego County Fair and will be disposed of promptly.
14. All exhibits are entered and shown at the owner's risk. Reasonable care will be taken to prevent loss or damage to exhibits, but in no event will the 22nd District Agricultural Association (San Diego County Fair) be responsible for any injury or loss which may occur or for the actions of third parties. Insurance, if desired, should be obtained by the exhibitor at his/her own expense.
15. Any person who violates any Local, State, or Department rule or displays unethical conduct will forfeit all privileges and premiums and be subject to such penalty as the 22nd District Agricultural Association (San Diego County Fair) may order.
16. To ensure reliable award notification, exhibitors are responsible for submitting all address, phone number and email address updates promptly in writing to entry@sdfair.com or Entry Department, 2260 Jimmy Durante Blvd, Del Mar, CA 92014.
17. Premium money will be paid per the recorded placings in the official judging reports rather than the ribbon attached to the exhibit.
18. Donated Award recipients will be selected per the instructions given on the Donated Award Confirmation Form submitted by the donor.
19. Premium, donated cash award, and auction checks will be made payable to the exhibitor as listed on the online entry registration. Checks will be mailed within 30 days after the close of the Fair to the address shown on the online entry registration, or as updated by the exhibitor via written notification to the Entry Office. Checks not cashed within six (6) months from the date of issue will be forfeited. Replacement checks may be subject to a stop payment fee.
20. The 22nd District Agricultural Association (San Diego County Fair) is required by the Internal Revenue Service to report any premium payments totaling \$600 or more. Exhibitors whose awards meet or exceed this amount must submit a W-9 form before their check can be issued.
21. The 22nd District Agricultural Association (San Diego County Fair) management reserves the right to amend or add to these rules and assumes no liability or responsibility not herein expressed.

California State Rules apply and are available [here](#).



Entry Limit

Two (2) entries per exhibitor per class. Exhibitors may enter as many classes as desired. Collections may only be entered once.

Entry Fees

\$5 per entry

Entry fees are payable online with a credit card and are not refundable.

Fair Tickets

Each exhibitor will receive two (2) Fair Entry Tickets.

How to Enter

1. After reading all entry materials, click the “Enter Now” link below to go to the ShoWorks Entry Homepage.
2. Register as an **Exhibitor** (or **Quick Group** if entering for members of a club or guild and checking out with one cart).
3. Select the appropriate division and class and input the required information. (See “Divisions and Classes” below for a list of all divisions and classes.)
 - A. In the Exhibitor Name field, please enter the *youth* exhibitor’s name.
 - B. In the Description field, provide appropriate information, including the technique, so that the work can be identified if the entry tag becomes unattached. For example, “Child’s wool sweater, knit, original pattern,” or “San Diego Padres Bobblehead Collection – 27 pieces.” Character limit is 100 including spaces.
4. Review your entry before completing registration to ensure that you have entered the correct division and class for each entry.
5. Click the check-out button and pay for all entries.
6. Read the confirmation statement and type YES. **Do not click multiple times**, as it will charge you each time.
7. You will receive a confirmation email with a summary of your entry(ies).

If you plan to make changes to your entries or need to leave ShoWorks at any time, SAVE YOUR CART before exiting out.

For additional help with entering, review this detailed step-by-step guide: [Entry Tutorial](#)

Still have questions? Please call or [email the Entry Office](#).

Phone: (858) 792-4207, Monday-Friday, 10am-4pm



How to Prepare Your Entry for Delivery

Please see individual categories, divisions, and classes for specific entry requirements.

- Fabrics must be clean, reasonably odor-free, and free of pet hair and dander.
- Framed work must be able to stand on its own or be ready to hang with wire.
- Pillows and pillowcases must be finished and have forms inside.
- Wall Hangings, wreaths, and macramé must include a secure means for hanging. Exhibitors may provide a stand that will be returned at entry pick-up.
- Delivery bags, boxes and containers may be used for delivery but will not be saved in the exhibit. Exhibitors should take them away after delivery.
- 3-D artwork must be independent, freestanding, and viewed from all sides shall be no more than 7 feet (84 inches) tall and 5 feet (60 inches) wide or deep.

Entry Delivery & Pickup

Entries must be delivered to the Fairgrounds. Please refer to the Exhibition Timeline for in-person delivery dates. Exhibitors will be emailed delivery and pick up instructions including **a map** showing access to the Fairgrounds.

Fair staff will provide entry tags at entry delivery. Please allow time to attach entry tags to projects with materials and assistance provided by fair staff. Exhibitors will be responsible for attaching tag.

A claim check will be issued to each exhibitor upon entry delivery and must be presented at the time of entry pick up. If an exhibitor is unable to pick up their artwork, they may arrange for another person to bring in their claim check with a signed written authorization from the exhibitor.

Quick Group Delivery Appointments - If you registered as a Quick Group (clubs, guilds, organizations) and plan to deliver all entries in the group together, please [CLICK HERE](#) to request an appointment time on one of the in-person delivery dates.



Judging

The Creative Youth Competition uses the Danish system of judging to award 1st, 2nd and 3rd Places. In Danish judging, each entry is evaluated according to a recognized standard, rather than in comparison to other entries. and awards given as merited.

- **1st Place (blue ribbon):** Meets or exceeds standards; high quality.
- **2nd Place (red ribbon):** Meets standards; good quality. Some minor improvements needed.
- **3rd Place (white ribbon):** Average or satisfactory; significant improvements needed.

Judging Results

Results will be announced at the Home Arts & Hobbies Awards Reception and posted on the San Diego County Fair's website by the second week of the fair.

Awards

Award checks will be mailed within two (2) weeks of the last day of the Fair. Please submit address updates to [the Entry Office](#) in a timely manner.

Award-winning exhibitors will receive an invitation to our Home Arts & Hobbies Awards Reception and free Fair admission for the day of the event.

The following will be awarded in each class:

1 st , 2 nd , or 3 rd Place	Ribbon
Best of Class – Chosen from 1 st Place winners in each class	\$25 and Rosette

The following will be awarded in each division or category:

Best of Show - Chosen from Best of Class winners	\$50 and Rosette
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CREATIVE YOUTH DIVISIONS AND CLASSES

See [Glossary](#) for all definitions

DIVISION 200: SEWING AND NEEDLEWORK, AGES 5-10

DIVISION 201: SEWING AND NEEDLEWORK, AGES 11-17

JUDGING CRITERIA: Workmanship (40%), Design (40%), Difficulty (20%)

- Class 001** Quilts, including quilted décor. 74" maximum length/width.
- Class 002** Clothing, Costumes, and Cosplay. Submission may include a photograph of a model wearing the entry, complete with make-up, props, and a backdrop as applicable. Garments must be delivered on hangers. Hangers may not be returned.
- Class 003** Knitting and Crochet
- Class 004** Embroidery, Cross Stitch, and Needlepoint.
- Class 005** Fair Theme "Once Upon a Fair"
- Class 006** Other Sewing and Needlework not listed. Specify technique.

DIVISION 202: CRAFTS, AGES 5-10

DIVISION 203: CRAFTS, AGES 11-17

JUDGING CRITERIA: Craftsmanship (40%), Creativity (40%), Difficulty (20%)

- Class 001** Ceramics, Clay, and Polymer Clay
- Class 002** Recycled or Repurposed Material
- Class 003** Jewelry and Beading
- Class 004** Paper Crafts
- Class 005** Dolls and Toys
- Class 006** Holiday Decorations
- Class 007** Fair Theme "Once Upon a Fair"
- Class 008** Other Craft Items

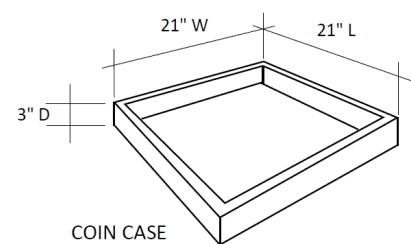
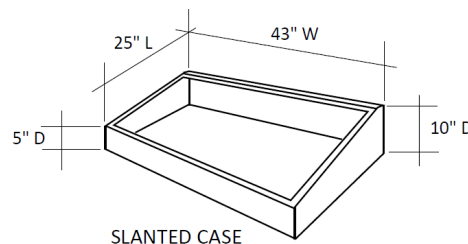
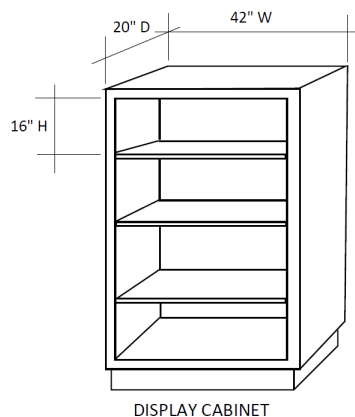
Please enter 2-D art projects in [Fine Art](#) (Youth Division) or [Student Showcase](#).

**DIVISION 204: COLLECTIONS AND TABLESCAPES, AGES 5-10****DIVISION 205: COLLECTIONS AND TABLESCAPES, AGES 11-17****Collections Requirements:**

- The exhibitor whose name appears on the entry must set up their display on the delivery date(s) and within the delivery times listed in the Exhibit Timeline.
- Collections must be curated to fit into the assigned space. Items must be secured by the exhibitor. Museum tack will be provided by Fair staff. No tape or glue may be applied to display cases.
- **The display must include a write-up describing how the exhibitor acquired the collection.** Additional information or narratives may be displayed.

At entry registration, select one of the following display options that will BEST fit your collection:

- One (1) 42"W x 20"D x 16"H shelf in a display cabinet
- Two (2) 42"W x 20"D x 16"H shelves in a display cabinet
- One (1) 43"W x 25"L x 5-10"D slanted case
- One (1) 21"W x 21"L x 3"D coin case



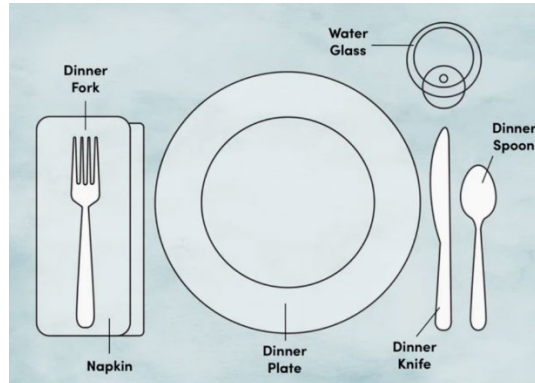
The exhibit coordinator will make the final display assignments.

JUDGING CRITERIA: Cohesion (40%), Documentation/Story (40%), Rarity (20%)

- Class 001** Collections – Man-made items
Class 002 Collections – Natural items
Class 003 Collections – Fair Theme “Once Upon a Fair”

**Tablescapes Requirements:**

- One (1) 34" x 34" table with a black linen tablecloth table will be provided.
- The exhibitor whose name appears on the entry must set up their display on the delivery date(s) and within the delivery times listed in the Exhibit Timeline.
- Entries must include at least one (1) place setting with a minimum of the items shown.



- Decor may consist of linens, centerpieces, themed decorations, and place cards.
- Décor must fit on the table provided and may not exceed 72" in overall height from floor level.
- Real food, lit candles, fresh flowers, glue/glitter on eating surfaces, and disposable plates/plasticware are **not** permitted.

JUDGING CRITERIA: Design (35%), Technical Accuracy (35%), Functionality (30%)

Class 004 Tablescapes - Any style

Class 005 Tablescapes - Fair Theme "Once Upon a Fair"

**DIVISION 206: MODELS, MINIATURES, AND LEGO, AGES 5-10****DIVISION 207: MODELS, MINIATURES, AND LEGO, AGES 11-17**

Entries consist of one item with maximum dimensions: 24" wide, 24" long and 42" tall. Please specify scale in description, if applicable. Kits are allowed in classes other than LEGO and Brick-builds. Purchased components are allowed in all classes.

JUDGING CRITERIA: Craftmanship (35%), Creativity (35%), Difficulty (30%)

- Class 001** Models - Buildings, and Transportation
- Class 002** Models - Animals, Plants, and People
- Class 003** Fairy Houses* (no live plants)
- Class 004** Original LEGO and Brick-builds
- Class 005** Fair Theme "Once Upon a Fair"

*Please enter Fairy Gardens in the [Garden Show](#).

SHOEBOX ROOM ON-THE-SPOT CONTEST

Join Us Opening Day – Wednesday, June 10, 2026, for this special On-the-Spot Contest! Check out our [On-the-Spot Contest](#) page for more information.

DIVISION 208: KITCHEN CRAFTS, AGES 5-10**DIVISION 209: KITCHEN CRAFTS, AGES 11-17**

JUDGING CRITERIA: Technique (35%), Design (35%), Level of Difficulty (30%)

- Class 001** Decorated Cookies, six (6) pieces
- Class 002** Recipe in a Jar. Provide ingredients and instructions for preparing.
- Class 003** Cookie and Cracker Houses
- Class 004** Edible Art and Kitchen Crafts
- Class 005** Fair Theme "Once Upon a Fair"