

Black Swan Arts Open Competition 2026 - Competition Guidelines

The Black Swan Arts Open demonstrates the ongoing and major commitment of Black Swan Arts (registered charity), to the development of artistic talent for all artists at whatever level and in whatever medium, locally, regionally and nationally.

This guide contains information to help you make a submission to the Art Open through our online portal. All applications and payment must be submitted online, no applications will be accepted in any other way. You can refer to this guidance as you complete your online application. If you need any help, you can contact us as follows:

For competition support go to office@blackswanarts.org.uk

Competition Overview

Black Swan Arts Open is an 'open submission' competition, so anyone can enter. Finalists will be selected by professionals from a broad range of disciplines who will select in the region of 150 pieces for the exhibition. Selectors and prize sponsors will choose the prize winners. The chosen work will be displayed on the walls and floors of Black Swan Arts centre in Frome.

What you can submit

- Only original artwork will be considered. Reproduction prints which are made to accurately reproduce an already created original image are not acceptable.
- Any medium will be considered, including applied arts and digital media.
- You can have a maximum of 1 square metre floor space for 3-dimensional work (e.g. sculpture).
- For 2-dimensional work wall-hung pieces the size limit is 1.5m on the longest edge, including the frame.
- We reserve the right to select but not display works. If you are in any doubt, then please contact us.

Before you enter

Title your work.

Identify the medium used (maximum 20 words).

Measure your work in centimetres (for film/media give the duration of film or time-based media).

Decide your selling price, up to a maximum of £1,250 (include in your total the 40% gallery commission).

Prepare a digital image of your work

We cannot stress enough how important it is that you submit good images of your work. Entries for the exhibition are selected via a digital image shown in a slide show on a large screen. If you are unfamiliar with taking or preparing digital images, then we suggest you find somebody to help you with this. We are unable to do this for you.

Here are some tips to help you take a successful digital photo:

- Place the artwork in an uncluttered, plain space or on a plain wall so that it is clearly visible.
- Make sure that only the artwork and frame appear in the photograph.

- If the item is very large or very small, put a tape measure next to the art to give an idea of the scale.
- Prepare a digital camera, or mobile phone or equivalent to take photographs.
- Your image should be in colour without enhancements or filters.
- Ensure the photograph you take is clear and in focus.
- Prepare your image for upload
- Save the image(s) as a high-quality jpg/jpeg file, less than 5MB in size. We suggest you ask for help if you are unsure about how to resize the image or upload it.
- Rename your image file to the correct format, 'lastname-firstname-titlewithnospaces' with words separated by hyphens e.g. 'vincent-vangogh-thestarrynight', regardless of how long the title is. Do not include spaces or special characters such as &.
- Have your image(s) ready to upload with your submission form before you continue.

Film & animations: Please upload a still and then contact us by email to arrange the delivery of the film. Please note that if equipment is required to show the work, we will expect you to provide this.

Online submission

Your entry should be submitted online by carefully following the instructions. A bar is shown at the top of the page which shows your progress.

progress bar, indicating 4 stages

Enter your information and submit images of your work

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Enter your information and submit images of your work

Complete the 'Registration Details' and 'Entry Details' to provide some information about yourself and your entry. Make sure you click to 'save & continue' after completing the fields on each screen.

You will receive an email to confirm that you have started your entry. This will be sent to the email address you use on the first screen. If you experience problems with the process, contact us as explained above.

You can upload a maximum of four artworks, with one image per artwork. Before you start, make sure you have the following information ready for each piece of work:

Title, medium, size, selling price (up to a maximum of £1,250) and image file (maximum 5MB). Large images will take longer to upload. If your connection is not strong, this may time out and you will get an error. If this occurs, you can either use a stronger connection or reduce the size of your image file.

You can edit the information about each artwork at any time, up to the competition deadline, even after you have submitted your payment.

Once payment has been submitted, we cannot refund your entry fee.

Payment

All payments must be made online.

From the artwork registration page you can review the work you are submitting and the total cost of your entry.

Once you click to complete entry and pay now you will be redirected to PayPal where you will pay securely using a debit/credit card or a PayPal account.

Either log in to your PayPal account or follow instructions that enable you to pay with a debit or credit card.

Selection

If you are selected for the exhibition, you will be notified by email. Instructions will be given on how to deliver your work.

For any further information or assistance, email us anytime, office@blackswanarts.org.uk.