

# 2026 Best of the West Art Exhibition & Competition

## Mission Statement

The Best of the West Exhibition aims to celebrate the diverse and creative talents of high school artists from our region, providing them with a platform to showcase their work in a professional gallery setting. The exhibition promotes learning, appreciation, and respectful engagement with culture, art history, and creative expression.

## Program Overview

The Best of the West exhibition offers an opportunity for high school students to submit their 2D and 3D artworks for display at the Dahl Arts Center. Awards are presented to recognize outstanding work, fostering a competitive and professional experience for young artists.

## Program Objectives

- Showcase and celebrate student artwork from the region.
- Promote understanding and respect for cultural diversity in the arts.
- Foster collaboration among local high schools and art educators.
- To promote art and partnerships between educators, students, and community partners

## Submission Guidelines

### General Requirements

#### Matting and Framing:

- If the artwork has a backing, foam core, or Masonite, a mat is not required.
- Artwork must be secured to a backing board. No hot glue or duct tape is permitted.
- Matted work is still encouraged, but if backing is applied, it is not required.

#### Hanging Requirements:

- Only plastic sawtooth hangers or wire hanging systems are acceptable.
- Sawtooth hangers must be centered at least 2" down from the top of the piece, without showing from the top of the artwork or mat.

#### 2D Size Limitations:

- Maximum framed size: 48" x 72".
- We encourage large-scale artworks, but space is limited. Final decisions are made by the RCAC curatorial staff. Please contact Noah at [noah.geiger@thedahl.org](mailto:noah.geiger@thedahl.org) if you have questions about the scale of the artwork.

#### 3D Artwork

- Maximum dimensions: 48" x 50" x 48".
- Include two or three high-quality photographs showing different angles of the 3D piece.

#### Safety and Transport:

- Pieces must be transportable and safe for display.
- Drop Zones for selected artworks are established throughout the Black Hills.
- Please contact us if you need to make special arrangements.

## Submission Process

Each student is responsible for their own submission.

- **Eligibility:** Open to all high school students (9-12 Grade) as well as homeschool students currently residing in the following Western South Dakota Counties: **Butte, Meade, Pennington, Lawrence, Custer, Oglala, and Fall River.**
- **Artwork Requirements:**
  - Exemplifies an original creative act
  - Artists may submit up to three (3) original works.
  - Must have been created during the 2025-2026 school year.

Please complete the following two steps to enter:

1. **Online Application:** Complete the official [Best of the West Exhibition Application 2026](#). You will need to provide:
  - Contact information
  - Parental/guardian consent
  - School and grade level
  - Artwork details: Title, medium/materials, dimensions (height x width), and price (if you wish to sell your work).
    - i. **Label Information Template**
      1. Title of Artwork
      2. Medium Used
      3. Dimensions
      4. Student Name
      5. Grade Level
2. **Photo Submission:** Email high-quality photographs of your submitted artwork to [entries@thedahl.org](mailto:entries@thedahl.org).
  - **Subject Line:** Must be formatted as: BOTW 26- [Your Last Name].

## Evaluation and Awards

- **Awards Categories:**
  - Best of Show
  - First, Second, and Third Place in 2D and 3D categories
  - Honorable Mentions
- **Jurors:** Jurors will evaluate artworks based on creativity, originality and quality

## Timeline

- Digital Submission Deadline: April 17, 2026
- Artwork Drop off: April 27th through May 1st, 2026
- Exhibition Dates: May 15th through July 18th, 2025
- Awards Ceremony: May 15th 6pm, 2025
- Artwork will be available to be picked up after July 20th.

## Program Values

- Creativity: Encourage students to explore their unique voice and vision.
- Excellence: Maintain high standards for artistic quality and presentation.
- Fairness: Ensure equitable participation and representation across schools.

## **Art Transportation**

If possible, please drop off artwork directly to the Dahl Arts Center.

Dahl Arts Center

713 7th St.

Rapid City, SD 57701

Hours are:

Monday- Saturday: 10-5

<https://www.thedahl.org/>

Matthew's Opera House

612 N. Main Street

Spearfish, SD 57783

Hours are:

Monday-Friday: 10-5

Saturday: 10-3

<https://www.matthewsopera.com/>

Art House Hot Springs

405 N River St,

Hot Springs, SD 57747

Hours are:

Thursday - Saturday 12-5

Sun. 11-3

<https://www.arthouseblackhills.com/exhibitions>

Mahpiya Luta- Heritage Center

100 Mission Drive Pine Ridge,

South Dakota 57770

Hours are:

Monday- Friday 10 – 5

<https://heritagecenter.mahpiyaluta.org/about/contact-hours/>

Custer County Library

447 Crook Street #4

Custer, SD 57730

Hours are:

M/T: 11am-5:30pm

Wed: 3-7pm

Th/F: 11am-5:30pm

Sat: 10am-3pm

<https://custercountylibrary.org/>

### **Risk Management**

**Original Creativity:** Artwork must be original ideas and not replications of another artist's work.

**Logistics:** All works must be submitted in compliance with the guidelines to ensure safe transport and exhibition.

The Best of the West Exhibition offers high school students the chance to display their talents while fostering a deep appreciation for cultural diversity and respect. By participating, students contribute to a celebration of art that reflects creativity, inclusivity, and integrity. Thank you for joining us in this journey to highlight the artistic excellence in our community!