

ABOUT KENTUCK

The Kentuck Festival of the Arts and the Kentuck Art Center

The Kentuck Festival of the Arts is a juried show in its 55th year that attracts 15,000-18,000 visitors from across the United States. Along with more than 270 exhibiting artists, the Festival features educational demonstrations, interactive arts areas, children's arts activities, music, storytelling, craft beer, and food trucks. The U.S. Library of Congress has named the Festival a "Local Legacy." The Festival was featured on the National Endowment of the Arts website as one of the top arts programs in the state. Kentuck has also been featured in Smithsonian Magazine, Southern Living, American Style Magazine, and National Geographic Traveler. In 2018, the Festival was named 5th in the nation (based on artists' self-reported sales) in the category of Classic and Contemporary Craft Shows by Sunshine Artists Magazine, recognized by Alabama Department of Tourism as one of the top-ten events to attend in Alabama in 2018, and by Alabama Magazine as one of the "Best of Bama 2024."

Festival proceeds help support the funding of next year's Festival and the year-round programming of Kentuck Art Center in historic downtown Northport, Tuscaloosa, and throughout Tuscaloosa County. Kentuck Art Center provides year-round programming with the mission to perpetuate the arts, engage the community, and empower the artist. Kentuck's Northport campus is home to 6 artists' studios, 3 gallery spaces, 3 classroom spaces, the Courtyard of Wonders, and Kentuck's Gallery Shop. Kentuck at Queen City, located in the Historic Queen City Pool House, features gallery and event space, as well as The Deep End, Kentuck's Tuscaloosa shop. For more information on Kentuck's year-round programming, visit www.kentuck.org/about.

The Kentuck Festival Family

If you are new to the Festival this year, we welcome you with open arms and wish you great success. But don't just come to sell your work -- seek out our returning Festival artists and learn from their experience and passion for quality art and craft. Their wisdom, experience, creativity, and craftsmanship are invaluable.

IMPORTANT DATES FOR THE 55TH KENTUCK FESTIVAL OF THE ARTS

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| March 1, 2026 | Artist Applications open on zapplication.org |
| May 15, 2026 | Early Bird Deadline at 11:59 PM CST <i>After the early bird deadline, the jury fee will increase from \$35 to \$50.</i> |
| June 1, 2026 | Artist Applications due by 11:59 PM CST |
| July 6, 2026 | Artist Notifications of acceptance, wait list, and rejection |
| August 1, 2026 | Booth Payments due by 5 PM CST |
| August 10, 2026 | Deadline to cancel and receive a 100% booth fee refund <i>(minus \$40 administrative fee)</i> |
| August 17, 2026 | Deadline to cancel and receive a 50% booth fee refund <i>(minus \$40 administrative fee)</i> |
| September 30, 2026 | Tuscaloosa County Business License Deadline |
| October 15*-17, 2026 | Artist Load-In <small>*October 15, 2026 load-in is for Kentuck Artists in the Schools and local artists.</small> |
| October 17-18, 2026 | The 55 th Kentuck Festival of the Arts |

ARTIST SELECTION:

The Kentuck Festival of the Arts is a juried festival nationally recognized for its caliber, diversity, and celebration of artistic style ranging from folk to contemporary arts and traditional crafts. Artists who apply are numerically scored by a jury panel of arts professionals on the basis of Kentuck's standards of quality, originality, and creativity. Kentuck's jurors change yearly to maintain the anonymity of the jury process and to ensure a balanced breadth of artwork to keep our patrons coming back every year.

A limited number of artists per category are accepted to provide a diverse and balanced show. A score-based waiting list is maintained in each medium, and cancellations are filled with the highest scoring artists in that medium. Artists will find out their jury status on July 6, 2026 by 5:00pm. Jurors have the option to leave comments on applications, and we can share them upon request. We cannot guarantee that jurors will leave comments on applications.

The Kentuck Staff has no influence on jury scoring or artist selection. Regardless of past attendance, all artists* must apply and jury into the ~270 available spots at the Kentuck Festival of the Arts.

Exceptions to the Jury Process and Fee*: *Artists who are exempt from the jury process are not eligible to receive awards. However, they may elect to apply, pay the jury fee, & go through the jury process. Jurying in makes them eligible for judging at the Kentuck Festival of the Arts.*

- **Guest Artists** - Notable folk, traditional, and contemporary craft artists who would otherwise not exhibit at a festival without receiving an invitation.
- **Demonstrating Artists** - Artists demonstrating their process at the Festival in their booth space. If you are interested in participating, please indicate this in the appropriate application question.
- **Kentuck Artists in the Schools** - Artists who spend Friday morning before the Festival in an area school providing workshops, demonstrations, or presentations to students. In return, artists receive a \$100 stipend for supplies, lunch on Friday, and may check-in early.
- **Back by Special Invitation Awards** - Members of the Kentuck Board of Directors who have purchased a VIP Benefactor ticket have the privilege of inviting an artist of their choice to attend the next Festival without going through the jury process.
- **2025 Award Winning Artists** - \$12,200 total was awarded by judges Alison Amick (Chicago, IL) and Kellee Reinhart (Tuscaloosa, AL). These winners are automatically invited to the 2026 Festival. Again, congratulations!

Best In Show

Wilber Quispe Huaman and Gwendi Raymond, Fiber, B-49

Award of Distinction

Carrie Johnson, Clay, H-01

Benjamin Peterson, Sculpture, D-36

Merit Award

Paul Albritton, Jewelry, B-37 | Kent Ambler, Printmaking, G-13

Reagan Beers, Two-Dimensional, F-03 | Alexander Brown, Mixed Media, G-24

Mary Anna Brown, Mixed Media, E-13 | Brinda Cockburn, Fiber, B-44

Jackie Haliburton, Mixed Media, B-48 | Dennis Heckler, Two-Dimensional, D-32

Paul Hofrenning, Clay, E-02 | Andrew McCall, Natural Materials, D-02

Jeffrey Mead, Wood, B-11 | Mishell Theriot, Jewelry, D-45

MEDIUM CATEGORIES:

Artists wishing to enter in more than one medium must submit separate applications, fees, and images in each category. If only one application is accepted, only work in that medium may be exhibited. Artists may enter in no more than three categories. All work must be original and signed handcrafted work. The Kentuck Festival of the Arts reserves the right to re-categorize an artist's application. Artists will be notified of recategorization.

Clay: Original clay and porcelain work, functional or sculptural. Machine-made, mass-produced work is not permitted. Use of molds, unless molds are of the artists' creation, are prohibited.

Fiber: Includes wearable and non-wearable. No machine-tooled, machine-screen printing, or other forms of mass production are accepted. Machine stitching is permissible.

Glass: Functional and sculptural work is accepted. Kiln forming, blowing, molding, or casting, as well as all cold working processes are permitted.

Jewelry: **Only those artists accepted in the jewelry category will be able to display jewelry in more than 10% of their booth.** Items made from commercial parts may not be exhibited. If artists are found to be exhibiting items made from commercial parts, they will be asked to leave the Festival.

Metal: Sculptural or decorative work made from metal. No jewelry will be accepted in this category.

Mixed Media: Work which combines materials from two or more mediums in one piece.

Natural Materials: This includes basket weaving, chair caning, brooms, gourds, and other works made from materials found in nature. Leather items should be submitted under the fiber category.

Photography: Includes traditional film photography, hand-colored images, emulsion transfers, and digital photography. Only artist's original source material is acceptable.

Printmaking: Only hand-pulled original prints are allowed. Prints must be in limited editions, signed, and numbered.

Sculpture: Three-dimensional work using additive or subtractive processes in a single medium.

Two-Dimensional: Drawing, painting, and digital works. All digital works must be printed on archival quality paper and be signed and number as a limited edition of no more than 250. Reproduction prints are not allowed to be submitted for jury. Work generated by or with the aid of Artificial intelligence is prohibited.

Wood: Original works that are hand-tooled, machine-worked, turned or carved.

RESTRICTIONS ON WORK THAT YOU MAY DISPLAY:

Up to 10% of your work may differ from what you sent for jurying. The remainder must be representative of what you sent in for jurying. All works must have the year they were created. Commercially manufactured items, or items made from commercial molds or parts may not be exhibited. Work generated by or with the aid of Artificial intelligence is prohibited. All items exhibited and/or offered for sale must be original work, designed and executed by the exhibiting artist(s). Representatives of Kentuck review displays throughout the Festival; we reserve the right to require removal of any work that differs from the images submitted, as well as

any inappropriate work or display. Failure to remove such work or abide by other rules set forth will result in applicant's removal from the Festival and/or applicant being prohibited from future application.

Reproductions of your original work may ONLY be displayed in a portfolio, with clear distinctions between originals and reproductions. Postcards and notecards bearing photo-offset reproductions of your work may be displayed and sold, but not as primary items of display. T-shirts may not be displayed or sold, except with prior approval by the Executive Director. Your booth must be filled with your original work. If you have any questions about whether work may be displayed, please check with the Kentuck staff for clarification. In the case of ambiguity, the decision of the Executive Director is final.

BOOTH SHARING/COLLABORATIVE WORK:

Artists working together may apply as one if they collaborate on every piece of work. All co-artists must describe the collaboration. In this case, only one booth fee will be charged. Other artists must pay the full fee even if they choose to share a booth with another artist. Kentuck must approve all non-individual booth set-ups, and approval is not guaranteed.

ART VEHICLES:

Space in the Festival grounds is extremely limited, but we love art cars! Please contact the Kentuck Deputy Director at 205-758-1257 by August 1 if you wish to have a vehicle considered for parking in the booths area. All vehicles not authorized to stay by the director are required to be out of the park by 7:00 a.m. Saturday and 8:00 a.m. Sunday for the safety of all. **Artists are not permitted to park behind their booth spaces.**

ARTIST AMENITIES:

- \$12,200 in awards: Best of Show (\$2,000), 2 Awards of Distinction (\$1,500 each), and 12 Merit Awards (\$600 each). Award winners are automatically invited to the 2027 Festival.
- Qualified buyers. Admission per day is \$15, with children 12 and under free with a ticketed adult.
- Booth sitters. Text the number in your artist packet to request a booth sitter.
- Bottled water available at check-in.
- An artists' hospitality tent at the Festival. Fresh doughnuts and hot coffee are available at 7:00 a.m. Saturday and Sunday morning. Drinks and snacks are served throughout the Festival. **Hours for Artist Hospitality are 7 a.m.-4 p.m. on Saturday and 7 a.m.-3 p.m. on Sunday.**
- Drive up unload/load available in most locations. Where drive up unload/load is not available, accommodations may be made for the use of ATVs/golf carts and staff to help transport an artist's set up to their booth space. We will notify you if this option is available at your booth location.
- Overnight and security during the Festival is provided by City of Tuscaloosa Police Department.
- ATM on site. Credit card processing is also available for a 6% processing fee at the Information Building. (Taxes are NOT charged by Kentuck while processing credit cards. Any artist processing a credit card at the Information Building will need to include taxes in the price given to the customer for processing, and the artist is responsible for paying taxes to the City of Tuscaloosa, Tuscaloosa County, and Alabama.)
- VIP program featuring pre-paid Kentuck Bucks that can only be used to purchase art from artists at the Kentuck Festival of the Arts.
- An artists' party with dinner and live music Saturday night at Kentuck Art Center. Judges are introduced, and awards are announced.
- More than \$60,000 spent annually on publicity and advertising (print, radio, TV, social media, and digital) for the Festival.

RULES & REGULATIONS:

Festival Hours:

8:00 a.m. – 5:00 p.m. Saturday, October 17*

9:00 a.m. to 4:00 p.m. Sunday, October 18

*Participants in the Festival VIP Program have early bird shopping privileges from 8 a.m. until 9 a.m. on Saturday. The park opens to the public at 9 a.m.

- **All artists are required to open their booths and be on site at 8 a.m. Saturday and 9 a.m. Sunday. All artists are required to keep their booths open until 5:00 p.m. on Saturday & 4:00 p.m. on Sunday.**
- **Juried artists must be on-site for the duration of the show. Artist Assistants and booth sitters are only allowed as support staff.** If you open late, allow another artist to share your space, display work which promotes copyright/trademark infringement, is not representative of your application images, close early, or leave early, you will be banned from participation in future Festivals. If extreme weather causes the Festival to close early, staff will inform all artists that they may leave early.
- The Kentuck Festival is a rain or shine outdoor event. Please plan accordingly.
- Kentuck assumes no responsibility for damage or loss while at the Festival. Artists must be prepared to adequately secure their work and personal property.

NoNos of the Festival:

- All tents must be weighted. **Absolutely no staking is allowed. We recommend 40 pounds of weight per leg.**
- To keep the aural environment uncluttered, personal/individual music is not permitted on Festival grounds.
- No tobacco use, including smoking, chewing, or vaping.
- No alcohol is permitted, other than the craft beer sold at the Festival.
- No firearms or weapons are allowed in the park.
- No pets of any kind are allowed in the park during the days of the Festival. If you need information on local kennels, please let us know prior to Festival weekend. Service dogs require a separate check-in process.
- No work generated by or with the aid of Artificial intelligence is allowed. All work displayed at the Festival must be representative of the work submitted for jury.
- Please keep in mind that the Kentuck Festival is family-friendly, and work or displays deemed inappropriate will not be permitted.
- **BE NICE OR LEAVE:** No profanity or unkind behavior is allowed. Respect everybody, celebrate and see everybody, and help us live up to our founder Georgine Clarke's intentions that Kentuck is a Heaven of a Place. Kentuck reserves the right to ask artists to leave, and this is left to the discretion of the Executive Director.

APPLICATION REQUIREMENTS:

1. Fill out the online application completely.

By submitting this application, you consent to and authorize the use of any and/or all images of works in promotional literature and other promotional endeavors by the Kentuck Museum Association including but not limited to brochure, print, billboards, television advertisements, and internet display. Kentuck will keep all images of accepted work for publicity and Festival archival files.

2. You will be required to submit four images. Three will be professional-quality digital images of your work, and one will be a high-quality image of your booth set up. All images must include a description of your work as specified below. Quality of images can affect acceptance. No artist names, trade names, faces, or likenesses should be visible. Please blur these out, including your signature on works of art.

- For the first three images, fill in the space provided on the application to describe materials, process used, and dimensions. These descriptions will be read during the jury process.
- Images 1-3 must show the range of the work you will be displaying.
- Image 4 must represent how your work will be displayed. Applications submitted without a booth display image will be considered incomplete. Remember...The booth shot is the last thing the juror sees before scoring your work. Many artists stage a booth shot, with emphasis on showing off their work more than an actual booth shot taken at a festival night.

See <https://artisthelp.zapplication.org/> or call 303-629-1166 to help troubleshoot any issues you may run into during applying. As always the Kentuck staff is here to help, so you can also give us a call at 205-758-1257.

3. Pay the non-refundable application fee.

\$35 for "early bird" applications submitted before 11:59 PM CDT/10:59 PM MDT May 15

\$50 for applications submitted from May 16 to June 1

Entry Deadline & Acceptance Notification:

Entries must be received by 11:59 PM CDT/10:59 PM MDT on the night of June 1, 2026. Artists will be notified of their jury status by July 6, 2026.

Cancellations:

Cancellations must be made in writing and received prior to August 10, 2026 to receive a 100% refund minus \$40 in admin fees. To receive a 50% refund (less \$40 fee), artists must cancel before 5 PM CDT on August 17, 2026. After that date, no refunds will be given for cancellations. **Email mbell@kentuck.org with the subject line ATTN: FESTIVAL CANCELLATION.** No phone calls, please. We look forward to having many of our long-time artists and many "undiscovered" artists exhibiting in 2026!

BOOTH INFORMATION:

Booth Fees:

Single Booths

- \$350 for a premium (along main walkways; Booths on A, B, C, D, E, & G) booth 10'x12'
- \$410 for a premium corner booth 10'x12'
- \$300 for non-premium (booths on F) booth 10' x 12'
- \$360 for a non-premium corner booth 10'x12'

Double Deep or Double Wide Booths

- \$535 for a premium double deep booth 10' x 24' (\$485 for a premium double deep)
- \$700 for a premium double wide booth 20' x 12' (\$600 for a premium double wide)

IMPORTANT NOTE: You will be informed of your booth space, the type of space, and the booth fee due in a separate email from your Zapp acceptance e-mail.

After you receive your booth space, you may pay for your booth by:

- Sending a check payable to Kentuck to: Kentuck Art Center, 503 Main Avenue, Northport, AL 35476. If sending by mail, payments must be postmarked by the deadline date.
- Calling Kentuck at 205-758-1257 during regular business hours with your payment information.
- Paying through Zapplication

Please do not pay for your booth before receiving your assignment. If you pay for a booth type that is not the type of booth you were assigned, you may **not** be refunded the difference. When paying online through Zapplication, you will be charged a convenience fee automatically added by the processing agent.

All requests may not be honored but we do our best to place artists in their requested space. Requests for booth spaces are processed by time of application, first-come first-served.

Booth fees must be paid by August 1, 2026.

Equipment may be available to rent through Kentuck at a later date, but there are no guarantees that we will have tents, tables, and chairs for rent available in 2026. We recommend all artists plan on providing their own equipment.

Booth Particulars:

- Limited storage space behind booth.
- Limited number of double & corner booths available; booth assignments and requests are based on time of application.

- Drive-up unloading for most booth spaces, off-site parking in adjacent lot. All vehicles must be off the grounds by 7:00 a.m. Saturday and 8:00 a.m. Sunday, unless you have special permission from the Executive Director.
- Number of Booths: 250+
- Exhibitors must provide their own booth structures, which should be flexible to accommodate trees and irregularities in the park's terrain and must be properly anchored. **We recommend 40 pounds of weight per leg. Absolutely no staking is allowed!** Please make sure your tent or display is secure. Safety first!

BUSINESS LICENSE REQUIRED:

A combined license from Tuscaloosa County and the State of Alabama (\$35) are required. Kentuck purchases a license for the City of Tuscaloosa; however, if you are in the City of Tuscaloosa, you must have your own City of Tuscaloosa business license. Information will be sent to participating artists after their acceptance.

SALES TAX:

10% sales tax on all sales at the Festival are due before you leave the Festival. Tax forms and envelopes for city, county, and state taxes will be in the packet you receive at check-in. The tax folks will be onsite from 3:00-5:00 PM. Sunday, October 18 behind the Artist Hospitality Tent to collect taxes. **They do not come to your booth. You must go to them. They do not give change or accept credit cards so tax payments must be made in exact change or by three separate checks.** Artists who are delinquent in sales taxes will not be allowed to exhibit at the Festival.

ACCOMMODATIONS:

This is **not** a home game weekend for the University of Alabama football team. There are numerous hotels/motels in the area. We strongly recommend that you book a room if you are accepted. Hotel recommendations: <https://www.kentuck.org/visitkentuck>.

If you can't find or can't afford a hotel, Kentuck will attempt to find host families in the area. Information to apply for the Kentuck Host Home Program will be available July 6, 2026.