

Artist Awards Descriptions and Application Requirements

Distinguished Artist Award Description

The Distinguished Artist Award recognizes established artists having a substantial body of work that display merit and excellence, as well as a history of contributions to their artistic field and the community. Prior winners of the Distinguished Artist Award have taught art classes, participated in shows or performances, and won awards for their work.

Applicants for the Distinguished Artist Award will be evaluated on their use of media, tools, design and composition of their submitted portfolio. The Commission will be looking to see if the artist has demonstrated a high level of skill and ability in the selected techniques for the pieces chosen for their submitted portfolio. Creativity and originality will also be observed and evaluated, including connection to the award program theme.

All applicants must include a written personal statement that includes goals, education, training, volunteerism, community involvement and any achievements or awards.

Applicants can participate in any of the following artistic categories: Visual Arts, Performing Arts, Literary Arts, or Digital Arts.

There is a cash award of \$1000 for the Distinguished Artist platinum winner (1st place). To receive funds, a completed W-9 will be requested.

How to Apply

- **Who may apply:** Artists must live in Cupertino or attend high school, college, or art school physically located within Cupertino.
- **Deadline:** Applications must be submitted by Thursday, October 1 at 4:30 p.m.
- **Complete Online Application [HERE](#)**

Online Application Requirements

1. Submitted Application
2. Personal Statement (maximum 1 page)
3. One letter of endorsement or support, which includes relationship to artist.
4. Digital portfolio: (saved as PDF, JPG, JPEG, or PNG)

*At least **one** piece in the portfolio must connect to the 2025 award program theme:

2026 Artist Awards Theme - "[INSERT HERE]"

Artists submitting visual art can include up to three pieces that best represent the artists' body

of work. Performing artists' may submit no more than five minutes worth of performances, film entries may submit no more than five minutes worth of film, and literary artists' may submit no more than a total of five pages. Artificial Intelligence (AI) generated art is strictly prohibited. Original artwork may be requested at a later date for public display.

Submitting pieces from a previous Artist Awards submission is highly discouraged.

5. Resume and exhibition record (if any and maximum 2 pages)

Winners who receive cash awards must:

- Be willing to work with the Arts and Culture Commission to promote the arts in the community through participation in one or more events designed for that purpose.
- Acknowledge the recognition of the City of Cupertino on any printed advertising, programs or brochures they produce related to the award.

Questions? Please email artistawards@cupertino.gov

Emerging Artist Award Description

The Emerging Artist Award was established to encourage and recognize demonstrations of artistic promise. This award recognizes younger artists as well as those rediscovering their love of artistic expression later in life.

Applicants for the Emerging Artist Award will be evaluated on their use of media, tools and working materials. The Commission will also be looking for evidence of creative thought and originality in the artists' submitted portfolio, including connection to the award program theme.

All applicants must include a written personal statement that includes goals, education, training, volunteerism, community involvement and any achievements or awards.

Applicants can participate in any of the following artistic categories: Visual Arts, Performing Arts, Literary Arts, or Digital Arts.

There is a cash award of \$750 for the Emerging Artist platinum winner (1st place). To receive funds, a completed W-9 will be requested.

How to Apply

- **Who may apply:** Artists must live in Cupertino or attend high school, college, or art school physically located within Cupertino.
- **Deadline:** Applications must be submitted by Thursday, October 1 at 4:30 p.m.
- **Complete Online Application [HERE](#)**

Online Application Requirements

1. Submitted Application
2. Personal Statement (maximum 1 page)
3. One letter of endorsement or support, which includes relationship to artist.
4. Digital portfolio: (saved as PDF, JPG, JPEG, or PNG file)

*At least **one** piece in the portfolio must connect to the 2025 award program theme:

2026 Artist Awards Theme - "[INSERT HERE]"

Artists submitting visual art can include up to three pieces that best represent the artists' body of work. Performing artists' may submit no more than five minutes worth of performances, film entries may submit no more than five minutes worth of film, and literary artists' may submit no more than a total of five pages. Artificial Intelligence (AI) generated art is strictly prohibited. Original artwork may be requested at a later date for public display.

Submitting pieces from a previous Artist Awards submission is highly discouraged.

5. Resume and exhibition record (if any and maximum 2 pages)

Winners who receive cash awards must:

- Be willing to work with the Arts and Culture Commission to promote the arts in the community through participation in one or more events designed for that purpose.
- Acknowledge the recognition of the City of Cupertino on any printed advertising, programs or brochures they produce related to the award.

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Young Artist Award Description

Each year the Commission presents awards to deserving young artists in recognition of local achievements in the visual arts in the following age groups:

Group A: 6-10 years old

Group B: 11-14 years old

Awards: Three awards (Platinum, Gold, and Silver) are given to each age group. Additionally, a cash prize of \$150 is awarded to the Platinum winner.

Rules:

- All applicants must live in Cupertino or attend an educational institution or art school physically located within Cupertino. Only one entry per artist will be allowed.
- Artwork must be completed by the young artists only – parents and teachers cannot assist or participate in the production of the art.
- Artwork that does not fit the contest theme and/or does not contest parameters will not be considered.
- Artists may use a medium of their choice including digitally created still art. Artificial Intelligence (AI) generated art is strictly prohibited. Original artwork may be requested at a later date for public display.
- Artwork and completed application must be submitted by Thursday, October 1 at 4:30 p.m.

Evaluation Criteria: The primary criteria for both age groups will be how effectively and/or creatively the applicant has communicated the contest theme. Evidence of originality as well as effective use of media and tools will also be considered.

The theme of the 2026 award program is:

“[INSERT HERE]”

Complete Online Application [HERE](#)

Questions? Please email artistawards@cupertino.gov