



Call for Entry – 2026 En Plein Air Competition

What is En Plein Air?

En plein air, a French phrase meaning "in the open air," traditionally describes the process of painting a landscape outdoors. For the NPCC competition, we accept all mediums and encourage artists working in any mediums to join in the fun!

Project Description

Neilson Park Creative Centre is excited to announce its En Plein Air Competition on Saturday, July 11 at 11:30 a.m. to 4:00 p.m. with an awards ceremony at 4:30 p.m. Artists are invited to work outdoors in Neilson Park during the Creative Festival that features art and fine craft vendors and live music performances, food, free activities and more! We welcome all mediums such as painting, drawing, collage, fabric, fibre and 3D.

Artists may work in a location of their choice: in the woods, with the vendors or musicians – anywhere out-of-doors in Neilson Park or Markland Woods. This is a rain or shine event.

Artists must check-in, and may pick up their easels (if needed) inside the Neilson Park Creative Centre between 11:30 a.m. – 12:00 p.m. on July 11. Any time before 4:00 p.m., artists may return the easels and drop off their completed works at the same location inside the Centre. The jurying will take place at 4:15 p.m. sharp with an artists' reception and award ceremony at 4:30 p.m.

The artworks produced during the competition will belong to the artists. Neilson Park Creative Centre reserves the right to use images for promotional purposes.

Competition Categories and Entry Fee

There are two competition categories:

1. Youth, 13 – 17 years of age, free of charge to enter
2. Adults, 18+, \$5.00 (with H.S.T. \$5.65) entry fee

Awards

Youth category: First, \$100; Second, \$75; Third, \$50

Adult category: First, \$200; Second, \$100; Third, \$75

Registration

Participants are required to register online, by phone or by visiting in person. Registration is complete once registrant information and payment have been received and processed. Deadline to register is Friday, July 10 at 4:00 p.m. Adult entry fees are non-refundable.

- Online
To register on our website, click on the “Events & Exhibitions” tab and select “Call For Artists” in the drop-down menu. Under “Call For Entry - Plein Air Competition”, click the registration button to make your payment by credit card in the shopping cart. Youth participants must register although there is no cost.
- By phone
To register by phone, call 416-622-5294 to speak with a customer service representative. Credit card payments are accepted over the phone.
- In person
Please visit us in person to register. We accept payment by credit card, debit, cheque or cash.

Materials

Artists are responsible for bringing their own art supplies, umbrellas and seating, etc. Neilson Park will provide a full-sized easel to each artist, if needed. Access to water and public washrooms are available inside Neilson Park Creative Centre.

Size Restrictions and Medium

There are no size restrictions and artists may use any medium on the surface of their choice.

Juror

Helen McCusker

Image credit: Helen McCusker



A graduate of Sheridan’s Illustration Program, Helen has been making art for more than 40 years. Her practice is rooted in a deep engagement with the landscape, creating expressive drawings and paintings that explore atmosphere, movement, and an emotional connection to place.

Working both on-site and in the studio, Helen begins with direct observation—capturing the shifting qualities of light, weather, and terrain through drawing. She is drawn to the elusive qualities of the landscape that move beyond representation, seeking moments that convey energy, memory, and a sense of presence. Her work often evolves in layers, sometimes incorporating found imagery to build subtle narratives within the natural environment.

Alongside her landscape practice, Helen continues to explore form through drawing and paper engineering, creating abstract pop-up sculptures with hand-painted papers and collage. These works act as a counterpoint to her paintings, extending her interest in structure, space, and transformation.

Rules and Regulations

- Artists must be registered for the event to participate in the show and awards ceremony.
- Artists may apply grounds to their support of choice prior to check-in.
- Each work of art must be started and completed en plein air (outside). In case of inclement weather, artists may be invited to move inside the Centre in a specially designated studio area, subject to space availability.
- Artists must provide their own materials.
- Artists may depict any subject/scene outdoors throughout Neilson Park and Markland Woods. This includes the vendor and music areas, parking lot, etc.
- Artwork for the show must be submitted inside Neilson Park Creative Centre by 4:00 pm on Saturday, July 5.
- Artists may select up to 2 pieces of work they created en plein air during the festival for jurying.
- All artwork for the show must have an identifying label attached on the back. Labels can be found on this form and will also be available upon drop-off.
- NPCC staff will set up the artwork for the jurying process.
- Artists may take their work home after the awards ceremony which begins at 4:30 p.m.
- NPCC is not responsible for any artwork left on the premises after the awards ceremony.

Social Media

We encourage artists to share posts on their social media and websites and tag us @NPCCarts. Follow us @NPCCarts on Facebook and Instagram.

Visit us at www.neilsonparkcreativecentre.com

Questions? Email info@neilsonparkcreativecentre.com

PLEIN AIR ENTRY FORM

Artist's First and Last Name _____

Email _____ Phone _____

Submission checklist

- Complete and submit application form.
- Pay entry fee. Entry fees are non-refundable. Note: youth 13-17 years of age may participate free of charge but must register.

NPCC 2026 Plein Air Label

Please affix labels onto the back of the artwork when completed.

Artist Name: _____

Artist Phone: _____

Artwork Title: _____

Artwork Medium: _____

Price: _____ For Sale or Not For Sale

Youth Category (ages13-17) or Adult Category

NPCC 2026 Plein Air Label

Please affix labels onto the back of the artwork when completed.

Artist Name: _____

Artist Phone: _____

Artwork Title: _____

Artwork Medium: _____

Price: _____ For Sale or Not For Sale

Youth Category (ages13-18) or Adult Category