

ART CENTER SALMELA YOUNG ARTISTS' COMPETITION 2026

Rules and guidelines

March 24, 2025

Art Center Salmela is organizing its seventh Young Artists Competition in 2026. The competition takes place every three to four years (the latest installment was in 2023) with the objective of promoting Finnish contemporary art. It is open for artists and art students born 1990 or later and permanently living in Finland or of Finnish nationality. **The 2026 installment of the competition is also open for Ukrainian nationals living in Ukraine or displaced by the war in Ukraine, as was the case with the previous installment.**

The jury will choose 10-18 artists among the applicants for the Exhibition Class, whose works will be exhibited as part of Art Center Salmela's annual show June 6 – August 9, 2026. The jury will also allocate each member of the Exhibition Class their respective exhibition space.

The jury will choose the winners of the competition in July 2026 based on the exhibitions of the Exhibition Class. Members of the Exhibition class will be invited to participate in Art Center Salmela's annual shows between 2027 and 2029 as well as the winter residency program. The winners will be announced at Art Center Salmela in Mäntyharju, Finland in July 2026. First, second, and third places, as well as the audience favorite, will be awarded a total of 6000 € as decided by the jury.

The jury reserves the right to distribute the prize pool differently from the way described above, and to award other prizes and honorable mentions approved by the organizer. An application for Finnish income tax exemption has been submitted for the prize grants.

Jury:

President, professor and visual artist, Marika Mäkelä
Expert in Arts, Ph.D. Pauliina Laitinen
Experts in the Field of Arts, Wenzel Hagelstam
Visual artist Pekka Parviainen
Director, XAMK School of Business, D.A. Petteri Ikonen
Art Center Salmela Executive Director Tuomas Hoikkala

Competition Board:

Gabriel Hoikkala, Chairman of the Board
Hanna Hoikkala, Communications
Maarit Lavas, Competition Coordinator

APPLICATION AND MATERIALS

To apply to the competition, fill out and submit the online application form at www.taidekeskussalmela.fi/competition no later than Saturday, February 28, 2026. Applicants will need to include a resume with educational information, a list of their most important exhibitions, received grants and, optionally, recommendations, as well as a single PDF document with photographs of 5-10 works of art (up to five photos per work).

The photographs should show the contestant's artistic intentions, vision, and technical expression. The works depicted must be available for exhibition and sale, in the artist's sole possession, and no more than three years old. With the pictures, applicants will be asked to submit basic technical information about the works depicted (name, year, dimensions, medium).

ADDITIONAL REGULATIONS

By applying to the competition, the artist agrees to follow its rules and avows that all works submitted are in their sole possession and available for sale and exhibition in the summer 2026 show. Art Center Salmela will make a separate contract with the members of the Exhibition Class ahead of the exhibition. Members of the Exhibition Class will be allowed to exhibit works other than those submitted with their application, according to guidelines given later. All works used in the application must, however, be displayed in the exhibition.

Art Center Salmela will offer the exhibition space free of charge and cover transport costs for the works within Finland. (In special circumstances, Art Center Salmela may also cover all or part of international transport costs.) The organizer will also install the exhibition unless otherwise agreed with the artist (the artist may participate in the installation). The contestant will cover the cost of producing the works, framing and other auxiliary costs, as well as their personal travel costs.

The contestants must take into account the technical constraints of the space when planning the exhibition (details available upon request from the Competition Coordinator).

Members of the Exhibition Class must submit a photograph of themselves by email to the Competition Coordinator no later than two weeks after they have been selected. Contestants receiving prizes are required and other members of the Exhibition Class encouraged to be present at the award ceremony in Mäntyharju in July. (The participation requirement may under special circumstances be waived for contestants residing outside of Finland.)

Contestants must inform the Competition Coordinator of any unforeseen circumstances preventing their participation in the exhibition as soon as possible, whether they come up before or after the Exhibition Class has been selected.

The jury may request to go see the submitted works in person by visiting the artist or by arranging for the works to be picked up and delivered to them.

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The organizer reserves the right to produce a documentary film, video presentation, photographs and other recordings of the works submitted to and exhibited in the competition without compensation to the artist, as well as use said material for marketing, commercial and research purposes. These commercial purposes include but are not limited to the production of print products such as postcards and posters of the works to be sold during the exhibition of 2026. The Artist will receive approx. 100 copies / postcards and / or approx.. 20 copies / poster of each used art work, if print products are produced of their work. The organizer further reserves the right to record and photograph the award ceremony and use the material for marketing and commercial purposes.

COMPETITION TIMELINE

Application period	until February 28, 2026
Exhibition Class selection by jury	March 2026
Exhibition installation	April 2026
Exhibition open	June 6 – August 9, 2026
Award Ceremony	July 2026
Exhibition deinstallation, works returned to artists shipping may not be completed by the end of August)	August 2026 (international

CONTACT INFORMATION

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www.taidekeskussalmela.fi

The organizer reserves the right to change these rules.