

# 2025-26 National Arts Contest

## Introduction

At Boys and Girls Clubs of America, we believe the Arts are a vital part of our shared cultures and play an important role in shaping the future of our society. Our programs and activations are designed to foster self-expression, creativity, skill-building, and future career exploration. Youth can explore, build, and demonstrate artistic skills through Club experiences categorized in but not limited to our five Arts pillars: Applied, Digital, Literary, Performing, and Visual Arts.

Our goal is *Arts for All* – Creating safe and inclusive spaces for creative expression and exploration while providing authentic high-quality Arts experiences and opportunities to showcase talent and creativity.

This publication includes guidance and resources for conducting a high-quality local art show, as well as detailed instructions for submitting artwork to the 2024-25 National Arts Contest.

## 2024-25 National Arts Contest

To support young people's wellbeing in our Clubs and communities, we continue to offer a variety of high-quality Arts experiences for youth, culminating in the National Arts Contest.

The National Arts Contest enables youth and teens at Clubs and Youth Centers in year-long local and national programming to develop their artistry, creativity, and cultural awareness through the Arts in three levels of learning: exposure, skill-building/creative exploration, and demonstration. This year's theme, ***The Power of Us*** celebrates the strength, unity, and impact that comes from working together.

Participants are invited to reflect on the importance of community, connection, and collaboration, whether among friends, families, or broader groups. Youth are encouraged to submit work that creatively expresses how collective voices, shared experiences, and coming together can inspire change, build understanding, and create something greater than what any one person could achieve alone for judging in local and national competitions in one of the following contest categories:

- APPLIED ARTS
- DIGITAL ARTS
- LITERARY ARTS
- PERFORMING ARTS
- VISUAL ARTS

### Participants ages 6-18 will compete in:

- Ages 6-9
- Ages 10-12
- Ages 13-15
- Ages 16-18

# 2025-26 National Arts Contest

## **Contest Submission Categories**

The National Arts Contest will accept original work in five categories:

APPLIED ARTS	DIGITAL ARTS	LITERARY ARTS	PERFORMING ARTS	VISUAL ARTS
Jewelry Making Woodworking Fashion Design Furniture Design	Graphic Design Digital Music Digital Photography Digital Storytelling	Fiction Nonfiction Poetry Scriptwriting	Dance Music Spoken Word Theatre	Drawing Painting Sculpture Pastel

**Applied Arts** – artwork that applies design and decoration to everyday, practical objects to make them aesthetically pleasing. Examples include Jewelry, woodwork, fashion design, and furniture design.

- **Digital Arts** – artwork that uses digital technology as part of the creative or presentation process. It encompasses a wide range of techniques, from digital drawings, filmmaking, and illustration to photos and videos.
- **Literary Arts** – artwork in this category involves the creative expression of thoughts, ideas, and emotions through written formats. Examples of literary art forms are fiction, nonfiction (articles, essays, speeches, prose, etc.), poetry, and scriptwriting.
- **Performing Arts** – artwork that features a presentation to an audience and draws on voices, physical movement, and instruments to create sounds and movement. Examples of performance arts are such acting, poetry, music, and dance.
- **Visual Arts** – artwork that is primarily visual in nature drawing upon elements like colors, shapes, and textures. Examples of visual arts include ceramics, drawings, paintings, and sculptures.

## **Submission Category Examples**

All submissions must align with the overarching theme, “***The Power of Us***” which celebrates the strength, unity, and impact that comes from working together. Artwork should showcase youth unique personalities, ideas, interests, and passions.

# 2025-26 National Arts Contest

## Eligibility Requirements

The following rules govern all local and national contests:

- Only/up to one entry - per category, – will be accepted. ***Group submissions cannot exceed six members.***
- Artwork must be entered into the age group that corresponds to the artist's age when the work is submitted.
- A professional or parent/caregiver must verify that artwork created outside the Club was created entirely by the Club youth.
- Artwork must include an artist statement. An artist statement is a short-written explanation by an artist that helps people understand what their artwork means, why they created it, and what inspired them to make art. An artist statement can be 2 to 5 sentences. See examples of artist statements in the next section.

- Artwork made from or containing the following is not eligible:
  1. Art kits
  2. Ready-made patterns
  3. Tracing
  4. Follow-the-dots
  5. Cartoon characters
  6. Copyrighted material (e.g., published literature, songs, films, images, or any other content produced by someone other than the youth)

*\*Submission category and artist statement examples start on next page*

# 2025-26 National Arts Contest

## Submission Category Examples

All submissions must align with the overarching theme, "The Power of Us," which celebrates the strength, unity, and impact that comes from working together. Artwork should showcase their unique personalities, ideas, interests, and passions.

## APPLIED ARTS

Artwork in this category demonstrates the use of artistic skill and design to create functional and aesthetically engaging objects. Creations such as jewelry, woodwork, fashion, and furniture design should reflect the artist's unique ideas, personal experiences, and creative expression, exploring how art can combine imagination with practical craftsmanship.



### Sample Artist Statement:

*"I call this piece "WITH MY OWN HANDS." I designed and built this custom wooden coffee table with help from my grandfather over summer break. It started as a sketch of a cool shape I came up with in my notebook. I love using art to create my own designs and make things that are useful."*

## DIGITAL ARTS



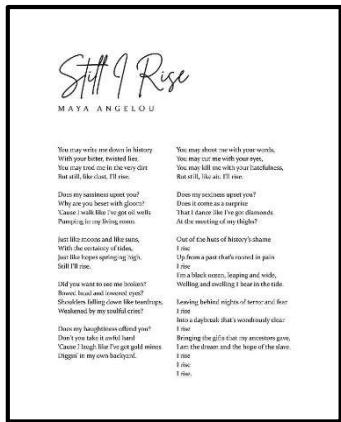
Original Artwork by Baylee P., Colorado

Digital art involves the use of technology to create images, designs, videos, and animations. Projects in this category, including graphic designs, digital music, photography, and other forms of digital storytelling, should reflect the artist's personal vision, exploring original concepts that push the boundaries of creativity. Films and other media submissions can be up to seven minutes in length.

### Sample Artist Statement:

*"We are digital storytellers, and the camera is our canvas. This multidimensional photo collage, titled 'U-N-I-T-Y,' represents our experiences and connections at the Club. The Club is a safe space where we learn, be authentic, express our ideas, and explore our passions in community."*

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## LITERARY ARTS

Literary arts involve the creative expression of thoughts, ideas, and emotions through writing. Literary pieces can include fiction, nonfiction (such as articles, essays, speeches, and prose), poetry, or scriptwriting. Each piece should highlight the artist's individuality, reflecting their unique personality, ideas, and passions. Literary works can be up to 2 pages, single-space.

### Sample Artist Statement:

"My poem, 'Wings of Thought,' explores the limitless power of imagination. It is inspired by my love of daydreaming and how creativity allows us to soar beyond reality. Writing is my way of expressing my inner world."

## PERFORMING ARTS

This category involves performances, where artists use their voices, bodies, or instruments to tell stories, express emotions, and communicate ideas. Whether through acting, dance, music, or spoken word, performances should showcase the artist's individuality and imagination, exploring themes that resonate with their unique perspective. Individual performances can be up to three minutes, while group performances can be up to five minutes.

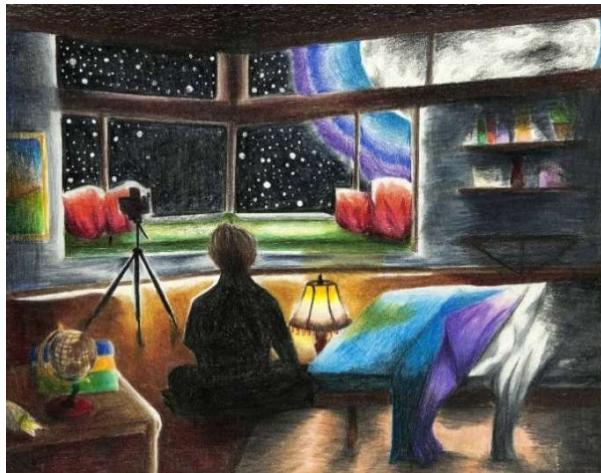
### Sample Artist Statement:

"My performance, 'Carried Away,' is a contemporary dance that tells the story of a young girl swept away by her curiosity. Through whimsical and courageous movements, I explore how imagination can lead us on unexpected journeys."



# 2025-26 National Arts Contest

## VISUAL ARTS



Original Artwork by Nicole B., Connecticut

Artwork in this category uses visual elements such as colors, shapes, and textures to create pieces that can be seen and touched. Visual artists are encouraged to use mediums like drawings, paintings, sculptures, and pastels to craft images or objects that express their unique personalities, stories, experiences, and perspectives.

### Sample Artist Statement:

*"I created 'Midnight Stargaze,' a multicolored drawing that captures the wonder and mystery of the galaxy. Through stargazing in his room, the boy in my drawing imagines traveling through time and dimensions, reflecting my own fascination with the universe."*

# 2026 Boys & Girls Club Local Art Show

## Information Sheet & Entry Form

Camp Zama Child & Youth Services, recognizes the importance of the Arts in fostering creativity, self-expression, and skill development in young people. This year, we are excited to host a local art show in preparation for the Boys & Girls Club of America (BGCA) 2026 National Arts Contest, where youth will have the opportunity to showcase their talents and creativity.

This year's theme, "***The Power of Us***" celebrates the strength, unity, and impact that comes from working together. Overview:

**Art Entries accepted:** Now – 30 January 2026

**Drop off location:** Parent Central Services, Camp Zama Youth Center or School Age Center (SHA)

**Event: POCs:** *Nicholas J. Andrews, Parent Central Services Director  
Hannah L. Maza, Camp Zama Youth Center Director  
Catrice D. Bolden, School Age Center Director*

*Video Submissions can be uploaded to YouTube and submitted to:*

*[nicholas.j.andrews2.naf@army.mil](mailto:nicholas.j.andrews2.naf@army.mil)*

**with Subject line:** "BGCA Arts contest submission, Last, Name"

*entry form attached must be attached*

**Judging:** 9 February 2026 (Closed to Public)

**Art Exhibition at Kazuna Hall:** 12 February 2026: 11 A.M. - 1 P.M. (*Open to the General Public*)

**Art Gallery & Awards presentation-Kazuna Hall:** 12 February 2026: 6:30 P.M. - 8 P.M.  
Doors Open at 17:00 (*Open to all participants, families, & friends*)

# 2026 BGCA National Arts Contest

## USAG-J Camp Zama Child & Youth Services

Youth Name: \_\_\_\_\_ Youth Age (Age when artwork was created): \_\_\_\_\_

Parent Name: \_\_\_\_\_ Parent Email: \_\_\_\_\_

Parent Number: \_\_\_\_\_

If currently enrolled in any of the following programs, please select all that apply:

Camp Zama CDC  Sagamihara (SHA) CDC  School Age Center  Camp Zama Youth Center  
 Arnn Elementary School  Zama American Middle/High School  
 My youth is not registered in any of the above programs  
 Home School  Japanese School

Statements of Understanding, please initial each statement:

I understand that if my youth wins, in order to have their work submitted to the National Level, my youth must be registered as a MyFuture.net Member through BGCA (*This process will be completed by Camp Zama CYS*)

I understand the following work is not eligible to be entered into the Art Contest:  
-Art Kits, Ready-made patterns, tracings, follow-the-dots, cartoon characters, and copyrighted materials (e.g., songs, films, or any other content produced by someone other than the youth)

I understand that my Youths artwork may be used by CYS/MWR and/or the BGCA for marketing, promotional, or other purposes without the need for further permission. I will not receive any monetary compensation for such use. I will retain ownership if my artwork and will be credited where possible.

Parent/Guardian Print Name: \_\_\_\_\_ Parent/Guardian Signature: \_\_\_\_\_

Youth may submit works with one of the following Categories:

APPLIED ARTS	DIGITAL ARTS	LITERARY ARTS	PERFORMING ARTS	VISUAL ARTS
Jewelry Making Woodworking Fashion Design Furniture Design	Graphic Design Digital Music Digital Photography Digital Storytelling	Fiction Nonfiction Poetry Scriptwriting	Dance Music Spoken Word Theatre	Drawing Painting Sculpture Pastel

Selection: \_\_\_\_\_ (Submit this page with your artwork)