NEW ENGLAND WATERCOLOR SOCIETY

Founded in 1885

2026 North American Open Exhibition

A biennial juried exhibition of contemporary water media

November 5 – December 5, 2026

Hosted by Plymouth Center for the Arts • 11 North Street, Plymouth, MA • artsplymouth.org

Gallery hours: Wednesday – Saturday, 10am – 4pm • Sunday, 1 – 4pm

Welcome to the 2026 North American Open Exhibition, sponsored by the New England Watercolor Society.

OPEN FOR ENTRIES	ENTRY DEADLINE	SHOW RUNS
June 26	August 28	Nov 5 – Dec 5
2026	*2026*	*2026*

CALENDAR

Date	Event
Friday, June 26	Entries open
Friday, August 28	Submission deadline
Thursday, September 24	Accepted artists posted on NEWS website
Friday, October 23	Shipped works due at PCA
Sunday, October 25	Hand delivery of accepted paintings, 11am – 2pm
Thursday, October 29	Artist Demo with Geoff Allen, 6 – 8 pm
Friday, October 30 – Sunday, Nov 1	Workshop with Geoff Allen
Thursday, November 5	Show opens
Sunday, November 15	Reception & Awards Presentation, 2 – 4pm
Saturday, December 5	Show closes
Sunday, December 6	Pick up of paintings, 12 – 3pm
After Dec 7	Return shipping of works

GENERAL ELIGIBILITY

The 2026 NAOS is open to artists 18 and older residing in North America.

Work must be original to you — created from your own ideas and reference material and painted entirely by your own hand. That means no work made in a class or workshop under a teacher's supervision, and no work derived from another artist's work, including another artist's photos (even if used with permission).

Work must not have been exhibited in a previous New England Watercolor Society show and must have been completed within the past 10 years.

Framed work must measure 46" wide or less, as measured by the outside of the frame.

All work must be for sale at the price you list on entry. No P.O.R., no N.F.S.

Once you enter, the painting and price you submit are final — no swaps or edits after acceptance, and accepted work must stay up through the close of the show.

NEWS reserves the right to disqualify any entry, revoke acceptance, or rescind awards if it is determined that the work does not comply with the stated eligibility requirements. Be sure to consult the full eligibility requirements at https://newenglandwatercolorsociety.org/exhibitions-howto.html.

SURFACES AND MEDIUMS

Acceptable surfaces: Watercolor paper; toned watercolor paper; Yupo and similar synthetic papers such as Duralar; paper coated with water-based varnish or gesso; textured paper; illustration board; watercolor board; rice paper.

Acceptable media: Watercolor; gouache; acrylic; acrylic inks; acrylic and watercolor mediums; water-based ink; casein; egg tempera — all applied in the manner of watercolor.

Artwork must be dominantly water-based. The following are allowed as accents only: line and wash; watercolor pencils; water-based collage on or of paper; charcoal; graphite; wax accents and resists; embossing; metallic water-based paint; water-based iridescent paints or powders (not glitter).

Not accepted: Pastels; colored pencil other than watercolor pencil; impasto (thickly applied) acrylic or water media; fabrics; digital or digitally enhanced images; multiple-edition prints; sand; glitter; gold or metal leaf; collage from printed materials such as newspapers or magazines; water-miscible oil paints; photography; reproductions; alcohol inks; composite paper with embedded materials; wood or composite panels; gallery-wrapped or stretched canvas; canvas board, paper, or sheets; Aquaboard, Clayboard, or other coated wood or composite panels; canvas or other fabrics; metal; glass.

FRAMING YOUR WORK

Work must be presented in a professional manner — no broken or damaged frames. Frames must be rectangular, with the bottom edge square to the floor. All work must be glazed under Plexiglas or similar clear acrylic; no glass, and no unglazed work will be accepted.

Work may be floated within the frame or presented with a single or double mat of not less than 2 inches all around. White or off-white mats only; a liner mat less than 3/8" may be colored.

Work must be wired, with no wire or hanger visible when hung. No sawtooth hangers. Frame, Plexiglas, and mat must be clean and in excellent condition.

HOW TO ENTER

Submit your entries through Smarter Entry, our online entry platform: https://client.smarterentry.com/NEWS

- Submit up to 3 images as JPG, TIF, or PNG files (4 MB max, at least 800 pixels on the shortest side). One image may be selected for the show.
- File names should be alphanumeric, with no special characters.
- The painting you ship must match the digital image you submit, in both appearance and size.

ENTRY FEES

Membership Status	1 Entry	2 Entries	3 Entries
NEWS Signature & Associate Members	$30	$35	$40
Non-Members	$40	$45	$50

NEWS Signature and Associate Members: a discount code will arrive by email — be sure to enter it at checkout to get the member rate. (Member dues need to be current for 2026; otherwise, the non-member rate applies.) Entry fees are paid by credit card when you submit.

GETTING YOUR WORK TO PLYMOUTH

Once you're accepted, we'll send shipping instructions. The deadlines are:

- Shipped work: must arrive at PCA by Friday, October 23, 2026.
- Hand delivery: Sunday, October 25, 2026, between 11am and 2pm at PCA.

A list of accepted artists will be posted online, so you can coordinate carpools, drop-offs, or pick-ups with artists in your area.

Because we can't be responsible for shipping damage, please pack with care. We recommend reusable cartons with rigid foam padding designed for protecting your work. We cannot accept work shipped with Styrofoam peanuts or other loose packing material.

SALES & COMMISSION

All work must be for sale at the price you listed on your entry. NEWS and the Plymouth Center for the Arts retain a 40% commission on any sales, split evenly between the two organizations.

PICKING UP YOUR WORK

Hand-delivered work can be picked up at PCA on Sunday, December 6, 2026, between 12 and 3pm. Shipped work will be repacked and returned starting December 7. Please plan to leave your work up through the close of the show — pulling it early creates a gap on the wall and means another artist couldn't take the spot.

JUROR OF SELECTION & AWARDS

Geoff Allen

Geoff Allen is a nationally recognized watercolor artist and instructor whose work captures the spirit of place through expressive plein air and studio paintings. His teaching emphasizes confident brushwork, value structure, and disciplined use of color, and he has led workshops and demonstrations for societies and ateliers across the country.

Geoff will serve as Juror of Selection and Juror of Awards for the 2026 exhibition.

WORKSHOP WITH GEOFF ALLEN

October 30 – November 1, 2026

Geoff will lead a three-day watercolor workshop at the Plymouth Center for the Arts, immediately preceding the show's opening. Registration details, pricing, and the supply list will be posted at https://newenglandwatercolorsociety.org/learn-workshops.html.

Space is limited and NEWS members have priority registration.

Geoff will also give a *free artist demo* on Thursday, October 29, from 6 – 8 pm, open to the public.

BECOMING A MEMBER

Signature Membership is open to New England artists who have been accepted into four NEWS juried Open shows (Regional or North American), at least one of which must be a North American Open. See the NEWS website for full requirements.

Associate Memberships are available for artists living outside New England.

See https://newenglandwatercolorsociety.org/mw/about-join.html for more information.

THE FINE PRINT

By submitting work, you agree to the terms in this prospectus. NEWS and PCA may photograph accepted paintings and use the images for publicity, education, and the catalog — you keep the copyright. While we'll take good care of your work, neither NEWS nor PCA can be held responsible for loss or damage, so please carry your own insurance during the exhibition and transit.

DONATE TO NEWS

Donations help NEWS put on the NAOS and fund the awards that recognize outstanding work. If you've enjoyed past exhibitions, or want to help us keep the tradition going, please consider making a tax-deductible contribution. Any amount is appreciated.

https://newenglandwatercolorsociety.org/mw/about-donations.html