



Syracuse Poster Project – FAQ for Artists

1. How does the call for art work?

- We reach out to artists from mid-August through September.
- We publicize the invitation in local media and by sending direct mail to registered artists.
- Artists register to participate by sending us an email with their contact information.
- We then direct them to an online Google form where they sign an agreement, make a formal commitment, and write a few comments about themselves.
- In October, we send each registered artist a unique allotment of four to five short poems. The artist selects one poem to illustrate.
- Artists submit their work by a deadline in November.
- In December a panel of judges selects approximately 10 posters for production.
- We announce selected artist and poet pairs by the end of December.

2. Can I submit photography, sculpture, or textiles?

- Although we admire all forms of art, we only accept illustrations.

3. What is illustration?

- Illustration is the graphic organization of design elements that tell a story or communicate a message in an understandable and aesthetically pleasing way.
- Illustrations can be created through a variety of media, such as (but not limited to) acrylic paints, watercolor, oil paints, gouache, colored pencil, pencil, charcoal, collage, printmaking, or with digital tools.

4. If I want to participate as an artist, can I also submit poetry?

- Yes, but you cannot illustrate your own poem. If your poem is selected for artists' consideration, it will be passed on to a different illustrator.

5. Can the poem be about anything?

- We give writers a list of “spirits,” ask them to select up to three, and to submit a poem for each of their selected spirits. Poems about these spirits should reflect something about Syracuse or the surrounding area, such as its people, cultural diversity, landmarks, natural spaces, or history.
- Think of the spirits as muses, personae, or archetypes—the essence of places and experiences that make our region special.

6. What types of poetry can I submit?

- Haiku and other short-form poetry in the spirit of haiku. Three to four lines. Aim for lines less than eight words.
- Traditionally, the Project only accepted haiku. Haiku began as a Japanese poetry form in the 13th century. At a basic level, haiku follows a 5/7/5 syllable count.
- For example, see the classic haiku by the poet Matsuo Basho:
An old silent pond ... Five syllables
A frog jumps into the pond, Seven syllables
splash! Silence again. Five syllables
- Haiku presents the reader with an incomplete scene focused on a moment in time. This scene is stated simply, unfurling across the three lines. Haiku often invoke a seasonal reference and juxtapose two images (such as the silent pond and the frog jumping into it) that produce a sort of Aha! feeling in the final line.

7. When is the call for poetry? How do I submit my poem(s)?

- Although we welcome submissions year-round, we actively solicit poems over the summer. The call for poetry goes out in August with a deadline in September. Poems submitted in the fall stand a chance of being selected for the next year's poster series.
- We publicize the call with press releases, social media, and direct mail to invitees and former contributors. To join our poets' mailing list, send your contact info, including postal address, to: jim@posterproject.org Or fill out our website's "Contact Us" form: <https://www.posterproject.org/aboutus/contactus.php>
- Poems can be submitted:
 - By downloading an entry form from our website at: <https://www.posterproject.org/participate/index.php>
- The Poster Project occasionally offers poetry workshops. If you are interested in learning more about the art of writing haiku and other short-form poetry, sign up for the Poets' Mailing List and we'll send you news about workshops.

8. Any tips on how to illustrate a poem?

- If you're illustrating a poem that refers to a location or landmark, consider visiting the spot and gathering reference material, such as sketching or taking photos of the area. You could also talk to locals about the spot or research its history. This will make your illustration more authentic. If you're illustrating a poem that doesn't refer to a specific location or landmark, your work will still benefit from incorporating something local and recognizable to Syracusans. Posters with touches of local specificity will win over posters lacking specificity.

9. Can anyone enter?

- Any writer may enter our call for poetry, but we encourage only emerging or professional artists to enter the call for art.

10. Is there a submission fee?

- There is no charge to enter our competitions.

11. Are there prizes?

- All selected poets and artists receive complimentary poster prints and nifty swag. In addition, we award cash prizes to artists for first, second, and third-place posters. Corresponding first, second, and third-place poets receive books of the year's poster series.
- We also award a People's Choice Award, given to a poet-artist pair for best poster as determined by public vote. The award is honorary with no monetary prize.

12. Can I enter more than one poem?

- You can enter up to three poems per year. We call your most recent entries your "active entries" We screen them and select no more than one to pass along for artists' consideration. Your "active entries" remain in our system, and are re-considered for use in other project.

13. Can I use a copyrighted character or famous person in my artwork?

- You cannot illustrate copyrighted characters or the likenesses of celebrities.

14. Do you prefer a vertical or horizontal format for artwork?

- All artwork must be in a vertical (portrait) format. This is because the kiosks in which the posters are displayed are oriented vertically.

15. What size does the artwork have to be?

- The preferred size of original artwork is 11 x 17 inches. However, you can create original work at any size, as long as it has 11 x 17 proportions. If you want to work at a size larger or smaller than 11x17 inches, do the following: select a height that works for your paper or canvas; multiply the height by 0.647 to arrive at the proportional width.
- Final electronic files should be sized to 11x17 inches at a resolution of 300 DPI.

16. Do I add the text of the poem to my artwork myself or do I leave that to the Poster Project?

- The Poster Project allows each artist to creatively lay out the text for their poster. Please pay close attention to how each poem is written, spelled, and punctuated.
- If you need guidance on applying text to your poster, let us know and we'll try to help.

17. Can I submit black and white art?

- Yes, black and white art is acceptable if it adds to the concept of the piece.

18. What are the file requirements for submitting artwork?

- Please submit files sized to 11x17 inches at a resolution of 300 DPI, flattened TIFF image format, and CMYK color mode. These specifications can be configured in the Photoshop or Illustrator computer programs.
- Please do not submit original artwork or prints. Only digital files are accepted.
- Properly formatted files are typically 48 MB in size.
- We will provide a link to a file-sharing service, where you can upload the files.
- Or you can try emailing artwork to: jim@posterproject.org

19. What does 300 DPI mean?

- The term DPI refers to dots per inch, a measurement of image resolution (how clear an image looks). A DPI of 300 is the standard resolution for quality image reproduction. It allows us to enlarge the submitted artwork to the size of a kiosk poster without noticeable loss of quality.

20. What does “flattened TIFF image” mean?

- TIFF is a type of file format, like JPEG, PDF, or DOC. It is a graphic format good for the preservation and reproduction of high-resolution images.

“Flattened” means that all layers in the file, such as typography and artwork, are combined and cannot be moved or adjusted.

21. What does CMYK mean?

- The term refers to a color formula consisting of Cyan, Magenta, Yellow, and Black. An alternate formula, RGB, refers to Red, Green, and Blue.
- CMYK is the mode used for print production.
- RGB is the mode used for imaging on electronic screens.
- Since we are printing the artwork for display purposes, we prefer files in CMYK format.
- You are responsible for adjusting the color of your files the way you want them.

22. What else should I know?

- A panel consisting of Downtown Committee of Syracuse staff and guest judges selects winning posters in November. Our board members then select one or two additional winners. We announce selections by the end of December.
- If the Project produces note cards of an artist's work, it pays a one-time \$100 bonus to the artist.
- Selected poets and artists will be asked to write a blurb about their work, and asked to have their picture taken, for the information sheet that accompanies poster prints (and other forms of promotion).

- We hold an unveiling celebration in April for the poet-artist pairs, friends, family, and the art-loving public. Each winning artist and poet receives two complimentary 11x17-inch prints of his or her poster.
- In April, the new posters are installed in the poster kiosks along Salina and Warren streets, where they remain for a year.
- The Syracuse Poster Project is a non-profit civic arts organization that relies on grants, corporate sponsorship, charitable donations, and sales to fund its activities. Board members and volunteers donate time and talent to contribute to the art, poetry, and culture of our city. If you would like to be a part of our team or donate in any way, please email jim@posterproject.org

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