

2025 Downtown Doors - Request for Submissions

2025 marks the 22nd year of the Downtown Doors program by the San Jose Downtown Foundation (SJDF). The SJDF Board invites your students to create unique, inspiring artwork that can end up publicly displayed on downtown San Jose utility doors and boxes, helping to transform Downtown into a more vibrant, creative, welcoming and beautiful environment for the entire community.

NEW Changes This Year!

We've listened to your feedback and are excited to introduce separate categories for this year's art competition! By organizing submissions into distinct categories, we aim to better evaluate the effort and craftsmanship of each piece and provide a more tailored judging experience.

Students can now submit their artwork in the following categories:

Traditional Art: This category includes artwork created using classic techniques and materials such as painting, drawing, and printmaking on physical surfaces like canvas or paper.

Digital Art: Submissions in this category encompass artwork created through digital tools and software. This includes illustrations, digital paintings, and any other art produced using a computer or tablet.

Mixed Media: This category is for artwork that combines multiple materials and techniques, such as incorporating both painting and collage, or combining drawing with found objects.

Photography: Submissions here should be original photographic work, whether in color or black and white, capturing unique perspectives or artistic compositions through the lens.

Urban/Street Art: This category celebrates the vibrant world of urban art, including graffiti and street art.

By separating the competition into these categories, we hope to create a more equitable platform for assessing the diverse forms of artistic expression. This approach allows our judges to evaluate each piece based on its specific techniques and materials.

About San Jose Downtown Foundation and Downtown Doors

SJDF is a non-profit organization founded in 1996 focused on promoting the work of local artists while enhancing the cultural, aesthetic and educational environment downtown. The Foundation is a part of the San Jose Downtown Association, whose mission is to make downtown a more vibrant place for everyone.

The Foundation's primary program is Downtown Doors, which has two primary purposes:

1. Provide local high school artists the opportunity to express themselves in the public domain through their creations

2. Add vibrancy to the downtown cityscape by covering otherwise plain service doors and utility boxes with art.

Each year since 2003, the look and feel of Downtown San Jose is refreshed through the Downtown Doors program and with the help of student artists who enter this competition. Typically, Downtown Doors receives art entries from students at about 20 schools. The number of selections each year depends on the amount of funds raised for the program.

Selected student art pieces are digitized, transferred onto vinyl decals and then installed on doors and boxes along busy pedestrian routes, where the artwork can be seen and admired. A walking map of the latest Downtown Doors selections is available to everyone at sjdowntown.com/doors.

The Foundation's Board of Trustees welcomes teachers to encourage students to create and submit artwork to Downtown Doors. Students whose pieces are selected to be displayed downtown will receive an award package and honorarium. Their school art program will also receive an honorarium.

Submissions Due

All submissions are due by 11:59 p.m. Friday, March 14, 2025. Please note that we will NOT offer a deadline extension this year so that we may have the selected artworks added to our urban landscape in time for our Artist Reception Ceremony.

Judging Criteria

- Artwork compliments and enhances Downtown San Jose's urban environment and has aesthetic quality—is dynamic and makes people stop and look.
- Content is appropriate for all ages and respectful to all communities.
- Content is not political, commercial or religious.

Timeline

- **Friday, March 14, 2025 by 11:59 p.m. – Submissions due!**
- **Late March / Early April** – Art Selection Committee reviews and selects 20 winning artworks
- **Mid-April** – Winning students and teachers notified and invited to the reception
- **Late April / Early May** – Installation of selected artworks onto downtown doors and utility boxes
- **May (Date & Time TBD)** – Artist Reception Ceremony at the San Jose Museum of Art

Artistic Guidelines

- Original artwork must be larger than 8.5" x 11" and smaller than 36" x 36" for consideration.
- Artwork can be handmade, digital or mixed media.
- Photographs must be taken at the highest resolution possible – a minimum of 300 DPI.
- Students must have written permission to include any copyrighted material in their work.
- Artwork will remain the property of the artist; however, each program participant must sign an Artist Waiver that allows San Jose Downtown Foundation to show their work in the public realm and to help promote the Foundation and Downtown Doors program.

- Selected artists will be expected to create a one-minute video describing their work, which will be included in the reception program.

Tips for Students & Teachers

- Think big! Design concepts that translate well onto a larger scale.
- Artwork might be cropped to fit a specific selected site.
- Encourage the highest standards of workmanship, showing significant time investment and thought in design, color, contrast, and content.
- Submit a variety of portrait-oriented and landscape-oriented entries -- door sites vary from square to rectangular.
- The larger the original artwork, the better the definition when it is enlarged to fit the door.
- When designing utility box artwork, the best type of image would be something that can stand on its own on each side but wrap around all four sides to make a complete image.
- Consider the diverse audience of downtown passersby – they (and judges) are looking for artwork that “pops” and attracts their attention.

Submitting Artwork

Each participating school is limited to 10 pieces for consideration overall, no matter which art category you're submitting into. Please be sure to specify in your email or in the document folders which art category the submissions are for. Multiple entries from one student may be submitted as part of the 10 pieces for each category, but only one entry may be chosen per student.

Submissions will be online only. Email a folder (e.g., Google Drive, Dropbox, etc.) of all student artwork and supporting documentation to sjdf@sjdowntown.com by midnight on Friday, March 14, 2025. Please also complete the forms listed below.

Each school submission should include:

1. One .jpg or .png file of each piece of art to be considered.
2. One higher resolution file in any one of the following formats – AI, PSD, TIFF or EPS.
3. Completed [Student Information Form and Waiver](#) per student. *(If you are a student submitting multiple artworks, please fill out a separate form for each art piece).*
4. Completed [Teacher Survey](#).
5. Completed W-9 from your school. *(If your school applied in the past and you know we have your W-9 on file already, please let us know.)*

Additional Information

To view our latest Downtown Doors winning exhibits, visit sjdowntown.com/doors, or take a walk through downtown San Jose using this [map](#).

Contact

For questions or more information, please contact the San Jose Downtown Foundation at sidf@sjdowntown.com.