DIGITAL ART CONTEST

July 4, 2026 will mark 250 years since the signing of the Declaration of Independence. In Monmouth County, we will celebrate the birth of the greatest nation on Earth and Monmouth's rich history with pride and enthusiasm.

@MonmouthNJ250

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Prompt

Monmouth County Celebrates America's 250th Birthday!

The MonmouthNJ250 Committee has identified three themes to guide our celebration of America's 250th birthday

Create digital artwork that portrays one or all of the following themes. Artists are encouraged to delve into the expressions and emotions that the celebration of our nation's 250th anniversary evokes.

PATRIOTISM FOR OUR COUNTRY - America is the greatest nation in the world and has been a beacon of hope and freedom for almost 250 years. Our founders bravely fought for independence on the principle that all individuals are bestowed by God with inalienable rights to "life, liberty and the pursuit of happiness." With recognition that our shared national and local history includes joyful and painful memories, and that the struggle for freedom has continued over the past 250 years, we celebrate our nation's history, heritage and countless gifts to the world.

PRIDE IN OUR COMMUNITIES - Monmouth County's role in the fight for independence makes us a unique community with an important history that has impacted the national landscape over the past 250 years. Monmouth County has grown and flourished to be the fifth most populous in the state with 53 unique towns and cities, each having an important role in the growth of America. From our beautiful shoreline to our western communities of farmland and open space, we are proud that Monmouth is a beautiful place to live, work and visit.

PARTICIPATION IN THE CELEBRATION - We are encouraging all Monmouth County residents to be part of the celebration. We have undertaken a robust, inclusive and comprehensive approach to ensure all residents and visitors feel welcome to participate.

Prizes

PROFESSIONAL CATEGORY:
First Place: $1,776.00
Second Place: $1,200.00
Third Place: $500.00

NON-PROFESSIONAL CATEGORY:
First Place: $1,776.00
Second Place: $1,200.00
Third Place: $500.00

Timeline

Registration opens: 9 a.m. (EST) on Wednesday, December 17, 2025 at MonmouthNJ250.org.
Deadline for submission: 3 p.m. (EST) on Friday, April 3, 2026.
Exhibition dates: May 1, 2026 to TBD 2026.
Announcement of winners: Thursday, July 2, 2026.

Eligibility

Artists who currently reside in Monmouth County, New Jersey, that are at least 14 years old. Valid identification is required upon submission.

There are two (2) categories: Professional and Non-professional. Artists must indicate which category they are submitting for.

Professional: Person who meets 2 or more of the following criteria:

- Sells or has sold artwork through commercial channels (galleries, online, craft shows, etc.).
- Exhibited in a professional gallery and/or in professional shows for 2+ years*.
- Had artwork selected in 2 or more juried art shows*.
- Has received 2 or more awards for artwork*.
- Holds (or has held) professional membership in art guilds or associations.

**Exception: These criteria do not apply to artists who only enter a community art show and never exhibit artwork in any other show - unless they have won first place in their category three or more times. In that case, the artist should identify themselves as a professional.*

Non-professional: Person who does NOT meet the above professional criteria.

Registration | Submission

Registration is required. 25 registrations will be accepted in each category.

Artists may only submit one entry. Artwork created by two or more artists or on someone else's behalf will not be accepted.

Criteria

Submissions can be created using the aid of computers, tablets or other digital devices. This includes digitally edited photography and use of design software or creative programs.

Artwork must be:

- The artist's original creation and cannot rely on tracing or direct replication of existing images.
- Created using digital tools. Acceptable software includes: Adobe Photoshop, Procreate, Clip Studio Paint, and other similar programs.
- Completed after March 10, 2025.
- Submitted in a high-resolution format (JPEG, PNG or TIFF) with a minimum of 300 dpi. Maximum size 10 MB.

Artwork must not:

- Violate intellectual property rights or copyright laws.
- Use 3D-modeling or rendering software.
- Include nudes, obscene or inappropriate content; discriminatory, offensive or vulgar language.
- Combine digital and traditional methods (scanning traditional artworks or mixed media).

An artist may use AI as a tool to enhance their work, however it must not be used as a program to create the work itself.

If applicable, include details about use of AI, and include the subtitle in bold: USE OF ARTIFICIAL INTELLIGENCE on the registration form. If any judge suspects the use of AI, artist must provide proof of their creative process, such as layer files or progress shots. Failure to provide enough proof may result in disqualification and the revocation of any prize.

Completed artwork is to be submitted via the link at MonmouthNJ250.org. Monmouth County is not responsible for any information that may be lost or corrupted during the submission process.

Judging

Judging will be based upon an equal balance of the following:

- Interpretation and clarity of the required prompt.
- Creativity, uniqueness, and originality of the prompt.
- Quality of artistic composition and overall design.
- Technical ability.
- Overall composition.
- Artwork's capacity to stand on its own as a complete and outstanding work of art.

Winner Selection and Notification

Winners will be notified via phone and email on July 1, 2026. Non-winners will be notified via email on July 2, 2026.

Monmouth County assumes no responsibility for any winner who is unable to receive, reply, or respond to a phone call or email for any reason, including service issues or incorrect, illegible or erroneous contact information was provided. If a winner is unable to be contacted within five (5) business days, Monmouth County reserves the right to name an alternate winner. If an alternate winner is named, the original winner is disqualified and not eligible to receive a prize.

Agreement to Official Rules

Participation in this contest constitutes entrants' full and unconditional agreement to and acceptance of these official rules. Any submission that is named a winner but subsequentially found to be in violation of the official rules will be disqualified, and another winner will be named. The decision of the contest judges is final and binding. The contest judges will be announced by Friday, February 6, 2026.

Release and Limitation of Liability

Entrants agree to release and hold harmless the contest sponsor and their officers from and against any claim or cause of action arising out of participation in the contest. Monmouth County will exercise all reasonable care with submitted artwork digital files; its staff, officers and volunteers will not be held responsible for loss or damage of any submission.

No compensation will be provided by Monmouth County for submissions.

By submitting artwork to this contest, the artist hereby grants permission for Monmouth County, its representatives and employees the right to produce and use, without fee, images of the artwork in broadcast, telecast and print media for promotional and publicity purposes. Furthermore, the artist authorizes Monmouth County, its representatives and employees, to copyright, use and publish same, without fee, with or without the artist's name, and for any lawful purpose, including publicity, illustration, advertising or website content.

Artists must have a full copyright of their submitted work. By entering the competition, the artist represents, acknowledges, and warrants that the submitted artwork is an original work created solely by the artist and that the creation does not infringe on the copyrights, trademarks, moral rights, rights of privacy/publicity or intellectual property rights of any person or entity, and that no other party has any right, title, claim or interest in the image.

Monmouth County reserves the right to determine whether any submission will be rejected without consideration in its sole discretion.

Upon submission to the contest, all submissions become the property of Monmouth County.

Winners are responsible for taxes. A W-9 must be completed, if applicable, before any prize is awarded.

Monmouth County is not responsible for any winner's ability to pay tax or to receive their prize.

Contact

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@MonmouthNJ250

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