

2025 John Downton Awards

2nd December 2025

Submission Deadline: 5pm 11th September 2025

Application submissions to be sent to johndowntonawards@kent.gov.uk with the following subject heading:

JDA 2025 Submission – STUDENT NAME (For a Single Submission)

JDA 2025 Submissions – SCHOOL NAME (For Multiple Submissions)

We would like to invite you to take part in the John Downton Awards for Young Artists. This year's exhibition will take place in the County Gallery, County Hall, Maidstone, from 20th October 2025 to January 2026, with an awards ceremony on 2nd December 2025.

Background information

The John Downton Awards were first organised in 2000 at the request of Miss Hilda Downton – sister of the celebrated Kentish artist, poet and philosopher, to recognise the achievements of the young artists of Kent in the fields of painting and drawing.

Accepted media

Most 2D work is acceptable, including drawing, painting, printmaking, photography and collage. **We cannot accept** 3D work including sculpture, installation, performance or film work or **any work that is larger in size than 1.20 metres in either direction.**

Please note that all work must be securely packaged for transportation and clearly labelled with both the name and age of the student and the name of the school.

Prizes and awards

There will be prizes for the top three individuals in each of the age groups, 11–16 and 17–18 plus Highly Commended in each age group. The John Downton trophy will be awarded for the best overall submission by a school. There are media specific prizes in painting, drawing, photography and mixed media in each age group.

Submissions

Submissions are made online **by the school only** (see below for details). **The deadline for submission is 5pm on 11th September 2025.** Late applications will not be considered.

Schools may submit **ONE piece each per student, with no limit on the number of submissions per school. Any school submitting more than one piece of work per student will be automatically excluded from the selection process.**



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Successful entrants will be notified by 23rd September 2025. Work selected for the exhibition will be collected by courier / delivered to Maidstone between 13th and 14th October 2025.

Full terms and conditions can be found below. We look forward to receiving your submissions.

“The General Data Protection Regulation (GDPR) came into force on 25 May 2018. Under the GDPR there is a greater emphasis on compliance with data protection law. Our Privacy Notice gives you further information around what personal information we collect, store, share, and the reasons we have for doing so. We ask that you read this. Please read full details of the new regulations at the [Information Commissioner’s Office](#). To enable us to keep in touch with you after 25th May 2018 we require your permission to do so. You can withdraw your permission for us to keep in touch at any time.

Terms and Conditions

Exhibition

- The exhibition is open from 20th October 2025 to January 2026.
- Awards will be presented at two events during the evening of 2nd December 2025

Eligibility

- Open to young people living in Kent aged 11 – 18 on 31 August 2025
- Work should have been produced between 1 September 2024 and 31 August 2025
- Painting, print-making, drawing, photography and collage can be accepted. **We cannot accept** sculpture, installation, performance or film work, or any large work over 1.20 metres in any one direction.

Submissions

- Submissions must be **made by the SCHOOL only** by completing the online application form. Due to the new GDPR regulations we are unable to accept submissions directly from students.
- For students aged 11 – 12 schools are required to obtain parental/guardian consent to submit work and for students aged 13 – 18 schools are required to obtain the student’s consent. Please note that we reserve the right to request a copy of that consent.
- All fields on the application form must be completed.
- Application forms should be accompanied by a **clearly named** jpeg image of the work that **does not exceed 300 dpi and has a file size below 3Mb**
- Jpeg images should be titled following the convention: firstnamelastname.jpg. **Images must be clear, the correct orientation, and cropped where appropriate to show the image only and not surrounding backgrounds or reflections.**
- A maximum of **one** entry per student is allowed.
- **All applications must be received by 5pm 11th September 2025.** Late submissions will not be accepted.
- Once work is submitted, we reserve the right to publish any images in Kent County Council/ Culture & Creative Economy Service publicity/information material and online media, along



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with the name of the artist. If you do not wish for your name to be included, please email:

johnowntonawards@kent.gov.uk

- If you experience any issues with the online application form, please email johnowntonawards@kent.gov.uk

Fixing requirements for selected work

- Work must be supplied framed or presented in such a way so that it can be securely wall mounted with mirror plates fitted as appropriate.

Work supplied without appropriate mirror plates and screw fittings will not be hung. Where mirror plates cannot be fitted due to the nature of the frame, other fixings must be supplied. Where these are not supplied, and if the work can be hung using pins, nails, or staples, this will be at the exhibitor's own risk and cost. Work unable to be hung must be collected at exhibitor's expense.

- Submission of work by an exhibitor in this way is taken as acceptance of that risk.

Judging panel

- The work will be judged by a professional panel
- Initial long list for the exhibition will be carried out under the auspices of the Culture & Creative Economy Service
- **Prizes to be awarded:**

	Award 11 – 16	Award 17 – 18
Highly Commended	Certificate	Certificate
Bronze	£50	£50
Silver	£75	£75
Gold	£100	£100
Drawing	£50	£50
Painting	£50	£50
Mixed Media	£50	£50
Photography	£50	£50
Best School	Trophy	

Sales

- Whilst this is not a selling exhibition, we will forward sales enquiries to students. Any sales negotiations will be between the purchaser and student/school concerned.

Collection and return of work

Work must be appropriately packaged and clearly labelled with name/age of the student and school name. The carrier reserves the right to refuse any inappropriately packaged



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- Successful entries will be collected from the school / delivered to Maidstone between 13th and 14th October 2025.

Insurance

- All work will be insured against damage in transit and during the exhibition
- All work is insured for public liability
- To comply with insurance requirements, work should be supplied with mirror plates attached for securely fixing the work to the wall

The gallery can accommodate approximately 100 pieces, so regrettably we will be unable to show all work that is submitted.

Enquiries should be directed to [johndowntonawards@kent.gov.uk](mailto: johndowntonawards@kent.gov.uk)

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