



Jerry Tollifson ART Criticism Open

“Because people are continuously confronted by visual images in their daily lives, they need instruction in the process of understanding what the images mean and how they can be understood. Providing the instruction has become the responsibility of the Art teacher.” -Jerry Tollifson

Jerry Tollifson was one of the Ohio Art Education Association’s most long-standing, beloved, and influential members. His long and colorful career as an artist and educator inspired countless students and teachers across the state. The Jerry Tollifson Art Criticism Open is one way his legacy continues to encourage and shape art students and teachers today.

Jerry conceived this writing competition as an annual opportunity to recognize students for their ability to articulate and compose critical responses to artworks. He promoted the idea that exercising critical thinking and careful observation while discovering an artwork’s deeper meanings empowered students to also build self-discipline and confidence. He saw the competition as another way to engage students in observing, perceiving, analyzing, and interpreting—abilities that show up repeatedly in the Ohio Fine Arts Learning Standards and National Visual Arts Standards, and also have practical relevance in other academic areas and as life skills.

Entry Guidelines

- The competition is open to students of Ohio Art Education Association members in grades one through twelve. Winners will be chosen across four division categories; Grades 1-2, Grades 3-5, Grades 6-8, and Grades 9-12. Each entry will be anonymously scored by at least three invited volunteers using the scoring rubric available on the OAEA website. *One entry is allowed per each student. Each teacher may submit up to a total of 10 entries per division.*
- Entries should be critical inquiries into the meaning of an artwork *made by an artist other than the student*. Works can range from a major work of art historical/critical significance to the work of a classmate. Writing should focus on a student’s ability to infer an artwork’s possible meanings by analyzing and citing evidence in the work rather than his/her ability to conduct historical inquiry.
- Submissions should be no more than 500 words. Entries for students in first and second grades may be hand written provided that they are easily legible. All other entries should be typed in 12 point Arial font and single spaced. Works not conforming to these guidelines may be disqualified from entry.
- First and second graders and any students with qualifying IEPs may dictate their criticism to an adult, but all dictated entries should represent the voice of the student. (The information may be reread to the student who may clarify or make changes. No other editorial changes should be made to the student’s entry.)
- All submissions must be completed digitally via the OAEA Webpage. Please attach the student writing as a PDF or Word Document.
- Winners will be notified by email by mid-February. Awards will be presented in March during the OAEA Youth Art Month Celebration at the STRS Building in Columbus. Check the OAEA website for exact dates and times. Subject to change.