

BIENNIAL VENUE APPLICATION GUIDELINES

FotoFocus is excited to announce Venue Applications are now available for the 2026 FotoFocus Biennial. Proposed exhibitions must have a confirmed Venue during October 2026.

Venues are considered for inclusion in the FotoFocus Biennial based on an Application that demonstrates artistic merit and excellence, is in alignment with the FotoFocus mission, responds to the 2026 FotoFocus Biennial theme, and adheres to these Venue Guidelines.

Proposals must include photography, film, or lens-based art for consideration. Venues must be located within the Greater Cincinnati, Dayton, Columbus, and Northern Kentucky region to be eligible.

The Long View

2026 FOTOFOCUS BIENNIAL

ELIGIBILITY

This Biennial Venue Application is for museums, galleries, universities, and non-traditional spaces that reside within the Greater Cincinnati, Dayton, Columbus, and Northern Kentucky region that want to propose an exhibition for the 2026 FotoFocus Biennial.

By completing the 2026 Biennial Venue Application, applicant agrees to:

- Respond to the 2026 FotoFocus Biennial theme: *The Long View*
- Promote the 2026 FotoFocus Biennial on site at Venue, on social media and/or website, and in all promotional and educational materials related to the FotoFocus Biennial Exhibition. *Promotional Guidelines will be provided by FotoFocus along with acceptance letter*
- Include at least one event with an educational and/or community engagement focus as part of the proposed programming
- Present Exhibition to the public for a substantial portion of the month of October 2026 (FotoFocus strongly recommends 14 days minimum, unless it is a film program, performance, pop-up, site-specific installation, or non-traditional project). Public hours should include a selection of weekdays and weekend-days throughout October
- Waive general admission or special exhibition fees for FotoFocus Biennial Pass Holders for the duration of the Exhibition in October 2026
- Follow guidelines set forth for FotoFocus and Biennial brand and logo usage. *Promotional Guidelines will be provided by FotoFocus along with acceptance letter*
- **NOT** host events, including receptions, related to the FotoFocus Biennial (other than regular exhibition hours) on the day reserved for FotoFocus programming during the Opening Events, **Saturday, October 3, 2026**
- Complete a final report following the closing of the Exhibition, which will include attendance figures, as well as Venue and visitor feedback

TIMELINE & DEADLINES

PHASE ONE: APPLICATION

Official Submission Deadline: September 5, 2025

Applications must be submitted by midnight Friday, September 5, 2025, to ensure consideration for inclusion and funding as a 2026 FotoFocus Biennial Venue.

Letters & Acceptance Notification: November 2025

Applicants will receive notifications and contracts, if accepted, starting in November. A copy of the contract must be signed and returned to FotoFocus by **Monday, December 15, 2025**.

PHASE TWO: VENUE MARKETING FORM

Deadline: March 13, 2026

All confirmed 2026 FotoFocus Biennial Venues will need to submit promotional materials for inclusion on the Biennial website and in printed materials by Friday, March 13, 2026. This Marketing Form will request: final Exhibition start and end dates, Exhibition descriptions (short and long), gallery hours, promotional images with appropriate captions/credits, etc. All specifications for the Marketing Form, as well as FotoFocus brand and logo guidelines, will be communicated to accepted Venues by FotoFocus.

PHASE THREE: EVENTS FORM

Deadline: July 24, 2026

The Events Form will request final event details, including opening and closing receptions, related to Venue's accepted 2026 FotoFocus Biennial Exhibition. Each accepted Exhibition **MUST** have an event with an educational and/or community engagement focus, such as a lecture, artist talk, curator talk, gallery tour, film screening, workshop, or performance, which can coincide with receptions. Events, including receptions, **CANNOT take place Saturday, October 3, 2026**.

PHASE FOUR: CLOSING SURVEY

Deadline: November 6, 2026

The Closing Survey helps FotoFocus better understand our partnerships and the overall impact of the Biennial. It primarily focuses on attendance numbers, the efficacy of FotoFocus promotional strategies, and areas for future improvement. Final disbursement of grants is contingent upon completion of this survey.

FUNDING STRUCTURE

Select funding is available for Venues that fulfill the criteria, but not all Venues will receive funding and not all requests will be met at 100%. All Venues awarded funding will receive 50% of the grant with the acceptance notification and contract in November 2025. **The first installment must be deposited no later than December 15, 2025**. The remaining 50% will be disbursed in November 2026 following the Biennial month and submission of attendance numbers for October 2026.

FOTOFOCUS BIENNIAL GRANT REGULATIONS

FotoFocus Biennial granted funds **CAN** support the following:

- Artist and guest curator honorariums and fees
- Artist lecture and curatorial travel expenses
- Exhibition shipping and installation
- Loan and/or participation fees

- Catalogue/publication
- Reception hospitality
- Events

FotoFocus funds are **NOT** to be used for any indirect expenses, such as the following:

- Personnel expenses: salaries, taxes, and benefits for staff curators, security guards, educators
- Facility expenses: utilities, maintenance, lease, or rental fees
- Insurance
- Office supplies
- Marketing and promotional expenses, such as paid advertisements

APPLICATION & IMAGE/VIDEO SUBMISSION PROCESS

The 2026 FotoFocus Biennial Venue Applications are hosted on the [Submittable platform](#). Applications are also accessible on the [FotoFocus website](#). Each applicant will need to create a free account on Submittable, if they have not already done so. This platform allows the applicant to save, edit, and review the Application at any time before submitting the final Application. Applicants will be instructed via Submittable to upload up to five (5) images or videos of artist(s) work to be included in the proposed Exhibition, or examples of artist(s) work if new work is being proposed.

APPLYING WITH MORE THAN ONE EXHIBITION?

An individual Application must be completed for each proposed Exhibition. For example, if the Contemporary Arts Center proposes two Biennial exhibitions in the same space, two separate Applications need to be submitted for consideration.

Please Note: FotoFocus does not have access to your Submittable account information. If you have an account and lose your login information, you must follow the “Forgot?” process when signing in or email the Submittable Support Team at support@submittable.com.

VENUE MEETINGS

Meetings are held by FotoFocus for Venues as informative sessions related to the Application and Biennial process. These meetings provide an opportunity for FotoFocus to share updates on the upcoming Biennial and for Venues to share lens-based programming in the community.

Meeting Schedule (subject to change)

All meetings will be at 12pm at the Lightborne Studio or the FotoFocus Center. Additionally, one-on-one meetings with Venue Coordinator, Lilly Hinckley, will be required in August 2026.

1. May 2, 2025, Friday
2. August 1, 2025, Friday
3. February 13, 2026, Friday

NEW VENUES

Potential new Venues are required to meet (via phone call, Zoom, or in-person) with Venue Coordinator, Lilly Hinckley, prior to the Application deadline. Attendance at Venue Meetings is required for new Venues. It is not required for returning Venues, but it is strongly recommended.

2026 BIENNIAL THEME DESCRIPTION

“The long view” is a phrase used to invoke a broader perspective. It suggests both distance and duration, i.e., looking far into the distance and looking for a long period of time. As an attitude toward history, the long view suggests a wise and measured perspective, one that takes into consideration both the distant past while also considering the distant future. The long view also describes in literal terms two primary functions of photography; photographic lenses both enable long-distance vision and long-duration viewing. The 2026 Biennial theme, *The Long View*, considers photography as a metaphor for our attempt to grasp our place within the durational sweep of history.

Investors take the long view to speculate about the future, to predict outcomes from actions made in the present day. In certain Indigenous cultures, the long view is expressed by the principle of Seven Generations, which instructs one to consider not only the present but also the future, to consider how decisions today will affect those seven generations from now. Another version places humans at the center of the seven generations, recognizing the three generations that came before and the three that will come after.

The Long View acknowledges the semiquincentennial of the United States, encouraging a posture of reflection in regards to the grand sweep of our country’s history, its past, present, and future. Photography can show us many moments from that history but it can also serve as a metaphor for how we understand our history and decide to shape it over time.

To elaborate, the theme considers aspects of time and perspective in photography and film, and how these mediums shape our understanding of the world. Time and perspective are fundamental aspects of photography. Time operates most essentially in terms of the duration of the photographic exposure. Early photographic technologies in particular were notoriously slow, requiring animated subjects to remain still for long periods of time, while faster films of the early-twentieth century allowed for instantaneous exposures, or snapshots. No matter the duration of the exposure, photographs, of course, once made, may be regarded for any length of time, for a split second, as for an Instagram post, or protractedly, for a photograph of an absent loved one.

Perspective is also an essential aspect of photography. The camera’s position in relation to subject matter remains essential in terms of the composition and, ultimately, the final impact of a photograph. Close up for greater detail, far away for greater context—these are also critical decisions in relation to photographic meaning. Furthermore, distance can be paradoxical: a telephoto view of the night sky, something far away but seen up close, will render stars and other bodies in greater isolation and detail, while an image of microorganisms can open entire biological landscapes not seen before.

FotoFocus invites proposals to participate in the 2026 FotoFocus Biennial that address the theme, *The Long View*. Potential topics:

- Bodies of work that address notions of history and collective memory
- Bodies of work that imagine life in the near or distant future
- Bodies of work, especially within the mediums of film and video, that address notions of time and duration
- Bodies of work that explore the technical challenges of distance and perspective as factors contributing to the meaning of lens-based imagery
- Bodies of work that consider the present moment within a longer historical framework

2026 FotoFocus Biennial: *The Long View*

October 2026

Biennial Opening Events: October 1–3, 2026

FOTOFOCUS

ABOUT FOTOFOCUS

Founded in 2010 in Cincinnati, Ohio, FotoFocus is a nonprofit organization created to celebrate and champion photography as the medium of our time through programming that ignites a dialogue between contemporary lens-based art and the history of photography. FotoFocus presents lens-based signature programming including the [FotoFocus Biennial](#), [FotoFocus Symposium](#), [FotoFocus Talks Series](#), and [Film and Video](#) programming. Additionally, FotoFocus has awarded over 500 grants to support partners presenting projects and educational programs that are accessible and engaging to the public. These initiatives are a vital part of what makes FotoFocus such an impactful contributor to the community and the larger art world.

FOTOFOCUS BIENNIALS

Launched in October 2012, the FotoFocus Biennial is a month-long celebration of photography, film, and lens-based art held throughout the Greater Cincinnati, Dayton, Columbus, and Northern Kentucky region every two years. The Biennial is the largest of its kind in America and has featured more than 3000 artists and participants, and 800 exhibitions and programs throughout its history. The Biennial is centered around a unifying theme and the cooperation of museums, galleries, academic institutions, and alternative spaces, in celebration of the FotoFocus Month of Photography.

The FotoFocus Biennial Opening Events constitute the core of the Biennial, establishing the theme and dialogues that unite the broader programming. Featuring keynote lectures, conversations, performances, screenings, and receptions with international participants, the Opening Events are designed to inspire conversations about the world through photography, film, and lens-based art.

Visit [FotoFocus.org/Biennial](https://www.fotofocus.org/Biennial) for more information.

If you have any additional questions, please email Venue Coordinator, Lilly Hinckley, at lillyh@fotofocus.org.

TERMS OF USE

By submitting the Application, you have read and agreed to the outlined 2026 Biennial Venue Application Guidelines. If the Application is approved, FotoFocus has the right to edit and/or change submitted content language to align with FotoFocus style guides.

