# The Canadian Society of Painters in Watercolour (CSPWC)
# La Société Canadienne de Peintres in Aquarelle (SCPA)

## CSPWC/SCPA Elected Membership Application Guide

Any artist who paints in watercolour, from anywhere in the world, may apply for Elected Membership in the CSPWC/SCPA. Only application by the artist shall be considered. Every artist who becomes an Elected Member must donate one unframed painting to the Society's Diploma Collection.

**Deadline for 2026 applications: November 30th**

An application is made by digitally submitting:

1. The completed Application form
2. Payment of the Application fee ($70 CAD)
3. Six digital portfolio images compliant with our standards (the "Application Portfolio")
4. The Bio and Artist Statement document

Please read this guide thoroughly; improperly prepared Applications will not be accepted into the Jurying Process. Whenever possible, we will inform you of necessary corrections in a timely manner so that you may correct the issue and re-submit. If these requested corrections are not completed or are ignored, the Application will not be considered.

When contacting the Society info@cspwc.ca, please enter "Applicant name-New Membership" into the subject line of your email: this makes it easier for our administrator as we go through the process. Do not hesitate to contact us if you have any questions or concerns before applying!

All necessary images and documents must be sent to us as attachments in an email. We will not use Dropbox, Google Drive links or anything similar. Do not physically mail us anything. If you require to send more than one email due to file sizes, that is acceptable.

Example subject line: John Smith – New Membership

## The Process

1. The Jury evaluates the Applications. This is generally completed in early January, and Applicants are notified of results shortly afterwards; Applicants must receive at least 5 out of 9 votes for Membership by the Jurors to proceed with the process. Applicants will be notified of results the 2nd week of January.
2. Any Applicant that receives at least 5 out of 9 votes for Membership by the Jury will also be notified of the Jury's selection for the Diploma Collection. The Applicant will receive instructions for sending this painting (matted but unframed) to the CSPWC/SCPA office for verification, and additional paperwork to fill out. The painting and documentation must be received in the Office by March 15 or Offer of Elected Membership may be revoked.
3. Once the paintings have all arrived in the Office, they will be verified by several Elected Members in good standing to confirm that they conform to the digital images submitted, and to our definitions of Watercolour.
4. Once the painting is verified, an Official Offer of Elected Membership is made to the Applicant.
5. Upon payment of yearly dues ($140 CAD if paid between January and February, and $150 if paid March 1 or onward) and completion of all paperwork, the Applicant is now an official Elected Member of the CSPWC/ SCPA. All dues and paperwork must be completed by April 15 or Offer of Elected Membership may be revoked.

The Annual General Meeting (AGM) is traditionally the first Saturday in May. New Elected Members are invited to attend, where their artwork will be presented. When an in-person AGM is held, the Diploma Collection Paintings of these new Elected Members will be on display for the attendees.

## Are you ready to apply?

The Diploma Collection has been created as each successful applicant for Elected Membership donated one painting to the CSPWC/SCPA at the time they were juried in. This is an incredible collection of excellent watercolour paintings.

The Diploma Collection is available to view online. We recommend you review it thoroughly before you submit your own application and honestly evaluate whether your work is of a similar standard. We also encourage potential applicants to review our Open Water shows, Membership shows, and the personal websites of our Elected Members to get an idea of the high level of work necessary. However, as Elected Members continue to develop their styles and skills in the years after achieving Elected Membership, for many of our veteran members, the Diploma Collection paintings, while now representing relatively early pieces in their body of work, are a more appropriate

bar to measure oneself in comparison against when considering applying for Elected Membership.

Do all six of your paintings live up to this standard?
Does your drawing and draftsmanship help or hinder you?
Is your use of colour effective? Composition? Etc.

To study the entire Diploma Collection, go to the CSPWC/SCPA website, click on "Membership", then click on "Diploma Collection"

*A reminder: your work must be your own. If based on photographs, they must be your own.*

## The Application Portfolio

The Application Portfolio is the most important part of the Application. It consists of six paintings. The Jurors are looking for members who are using Watercolour to express their authentic and personal vision. Your work needs to demonstrate the ability to create a successful painting in terms of composition, draftsmanship, and technique. Your paintings do not all necessarily need to be the same subject, but the overall Portfolio must show a consistency in style and vision. As large paintings require a different skill set than smaller ones, it is to your advantage to demonstrate your expertise with various painting sizes, but not strictly necessary. The six paintings must all be of high quality; the Jurors are instructed to vote against Portfolios that have even one poor painting.

Definition of Watercolour

There are two definitions of Watercolour used by the Society; paintings that fall under *either* definition are acceptable for the Elected Membership Application Portfolio.

*However make note: **any** painting eligible for the Diploma Collection must be on unmounted paper: this is non-negotiable due to the logistic constraints of storing the Collection. Paintings eligible for the Diploma Collection must be unvarnished and unwaxed. Therefore, **at least three paintings** in the Application portfolio must be unmounted, unvarnished and unwaxed paintings on paper; please also see following section regarding the Diploma Collection*.

*Transparent Watercolour*: The use of artist's-quality resoluble watercolour paint, with minimal use of opaque paint.

*Watermedia*: Artwork must maintain the character and appearance of watercolour. Permitted media include artist's-quality watercolour paint, watercolour ink, watercolour crayon, watercolour pencil, and gouache (which may be applied transparently or

opaquely). The use of a graphite drawing and India Ink are accepted. No acrylic, oils or pastels of any kind are permitted.

*Substrate*: The paint surface is an organic fiber paper, which includes: watercolour paper, watercolour paper glued to wood/composite panel, watercolour paper glued to canvas, canvas prepared for watercolour, or watercolour board. Yupo is not accepted. Paintings may be finished with varnish or wax. *Remember: the three paintings eligible for the Diploma Collection must be on unmounted, unvarnished and unwaxed paper!*

All paintings in the Application Portfolio must be solely conceived and created by the submitting Artist. Work completed during a workshop and/or under the tutelage of an instructor is ineligible. This includes live instruction, as well as tutorials in either book or video format. Work may be based on photograph(s) only if the original photograph(s) was/were taken by the submitting Artist. The submitting Artist must be the sole holder of copyright interest in the submitted paintings.

All paintings in the Application Portfolio must have been completed in the last three years.

Image File Requirements

The six digital images for the Application Portfolio must be in JPEG format, minimum of 1MB and maximum of 4MB in size, maximum 2400 pixels and minimum 1500 on the longest side, at 72 DPI resolution. *Please note that there are additional image requirements for the Diploma Collection piece; refer to that section.* Please use the following naming conventions for your files:

LASTNAME, FIRSTNAME, 1, PAINTING TITLE, H in x W in, WC, YEAR.jpeg

Image numbers must correspond to the number provided on the Application Form. It is essential that you do this properly to avoid any confusion with your submitted images. Test your material before submission to ensure that it is formatted correctly. Artwork should be photographed to as high a standard as possible. Good lighting is critical. Crop digital images to remove any extraneous material, such as frames, mats or studio background. Paintings should be photographed squarely from the front, not angled within the frame of the photo. If you are unfamiliar with digital photography, have your paintings photographed by someone who is, even professionally. Images that do not meet these criteria will not be accepted.

Most image editing software will tell you estimated finished file size before you save a file. If you are having trouble determining what size your images are, remember that you can always use a search engine with the query “How to check file size in (*insert relevant windows/apple operating system/photo editing software*)” with no brackets of course.

While of course every system is a little different, here is an example of how to check in Windows:

-find the appropriate file
-right-click and select the "**properties**"; this will display the overall file size, amongst other information
-to find out the pixel dimensions and DPI, click the little "**details**" tab

Please understand that due to the innumerable different combinations of cameras, scanners, editing software and operating systems, as well as the volume of Applicants, we are generally unable to provide detailed step-by-step instructions for creating and editing appropriate files.

## The Diploma Collection

The Diploma Collection is an important National Collection, representing Canadian Watercolour Artists since the conception of the CSPWC/SCPA in 1925. It includes one painting donated by each Elected Member at the time that they are Elected, currently over 400 paintings! It's an incredible resource for all Watercolour Artists. We strongly encourage you to explore the Collection online in detail once it is available.

Ask yourself if each one of your Portfolio paintings could hang comfortably beside those works? Makes notes of what you like, why, and how it enhances the work.

*"Yeah, I've been elected!" What should I know about my Diploma Collection Painting?*

Your three paintings offered as potential Diploma pieces should be your very best work. Though you are donating one of your paintings, that painting will represent you in a National collection - forever! As we adapt to online access, this makes the Collection even more visible. Members **may not** switch paintings in the future; they represent you at the time of being Elected. Even as your skills and style change in the future, you want an example of your current best work in the Collection. Please consider this when you make your Application.

Once the Jury has voted to Elect an Applicant, they will also select which painting will be accepted into the Diploma Collection. The Applicant is responsible for having the painting matted (requirements to follow), and then delivered to the CSPWC/SCPA office. The Applicant is also responsible for providing us high-resolution digital file (requirements to follow) of the Diploma Collection painting. If the Applicant sends their Diploma Collecting painting inappropriately matted, or is unable to provide us with a high-resolution image, a processing fee may apply as the CSPWC/SCPA must then supply new matting, or hire a photographer.

The Diploma Collection requirements

Successful Applicants must donate 1 matted, unframed painting of the Jury's choosing from their Application Portfolio to the Society. At least 3 of the 6 paintings from the Application Portfolio must be eligible for the Jury to choose for the Collection. The Artist must retain ownership of the eligible paintings until the close of the Jurying process. The painting the Jury chooses becoming unavailable is grounds for revoking the offer of Elected Membership. Upon becoming an Elected Member, the Artist gives the Society permission to exhibit the painting and to reproduce it for educational and promotional purposes.

Eligible Diploma Collection paintings must:

1. Be no larger than a full sheet of watercolour paper (30 by 22")
2. Be unmounted paper, unvarnished, and unwaxed
3. Be appropriately matted: the single mat must be 4-ply, archival (acid-free), white or off-white in colour, hinged on the long side to a 4-ply backmat (archival tape only please!)
4. Have a high-resolution file available (requirements to follow)

When shipping the painting, please ensure there are no non-archival materials (masking tape, cardboard, etc) physically attached to the painting.

Paintings that are received with inappropriate matting materials may be subject to a processing fee as the CSPWC/SCPA cannot send them to the archive until they are matted to this standard.

The digital image for the Diploma Collection painting must be in JPEG format, minimum of 1MB and maximum of 4MB in size, maximum 2400 pixels on the longest side and 300 DPI. If the Applicant is unable to provide this file, there may be a processing fee so that the CSPWC/SCPA can hire a photographer to create one for us.

## Supporting Documents

Application Form

This is an electronic PDF document available for download from our website. It can be filled out and signed electronically; a guide to this available on our website. If you must print out the document to fill it out, you may scan the completed and signed document and submit it; however it must be formatted as a PDF (not a JPEG).

Bio and Artist Statement

We understand that artists of many different backgrounds and strengths will be applying for Elected Membership. Therefore we offer some flexibility for this document. It must be **one file**, but it can be between 1-2 pages in length, with the Bio and Artist Statement each taking up any proportion desired by the Applicant. Any pages submitted after the 2nd page will not be given to the Jury for consideration. If it is sent as two separate files, only one will be given to the Jury. There can be no illustrations or photographs in this document, and no links to the Artist's website. Note that we are not looking for point-by-point CV's, but you may refer to any shows, awards, education experience, etc in as much detail as you think relevant and space allows.

The submitted file must be either .doc, docx or .pdf. Please use the following naming convention for your file:

LASTNAME-FIRSTNAME-DOCUMENT.doc (or .docx/pdf)

If you have any further questions, please feel free to contact the office info@cspwc.ca before or during any step of the application process.

## Good luck!