

Judging Visual Artwork

Judging Standards

Introduction to this document

After 25 years of participating in art shows and exhibits, we've noticed a concerning trend. The judging process seems to have lost its focus on objective standards and has become more subjective, relying heavily on the personal preferences of the judges.

This has left artists wondering who the judges are and what they like, leading them to make their work to appeal to the judges taste. As a result, we're seeing less quality art emerging in the judging process and more conformity to the judges' tastes.

Furthermore, shows and events often prioritize the "taste" of the judge over the quality of the work. They tend to hire judges who are less qualified and/or who take less time to judge, which is unfair to the talented artists who have dedicated their lives to honing their skills.

In our minds, judging should be about evaluating the merits of the artwork, not just the personal preferences of the judges. We believe that the ten elements outlined in our free downloadable document, are crucial for determining the best work for the awards. Even if this means taking more time and effort, it's worth it to ensure that the judging process is fair and objective.

These ten elements are taught in various academic formats and are supported by many well-respected professional art organizations. Artists who want to achieve these fundamentals in their work have sought out this information on their own. Unfortunately, many of them struggle to succeed at exhibits or other art events due to the subjective nature of the judging process.

We're excited to share this free document and scoring formats with you. We hope they'll inspire the jury process and help set new standards. We believe that artists, judges, and future jurors will all be eager to learn more about these tools. This will ultimately benefit both the judging process and artists.

The free download is a PDF version that includes credits, contents, an introduction, related subjects, the Ten Elements, and judging forms.

We'd love to hear your thoughts, addendums, and feedback on how you've used and valued this document, especially the judging form. Use the email on our website to send us your comments, [www.http://discoverfineartjudging.com](http://discoverfineartjudging.com)

Thank you for your time and consideration for your adoption for use!

Judging Visual Artwork

all mediums

For The Benefit of and Free Use By

Art organizations, current or to be judges, art festivals, artists, art galleries and other visual fine arts individuals or groups.

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Contributors

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Gary Winn – photographer

and many others

Here's a quick rundown of what this document is all about:

This document is a **guide** for developing and educating fine art judges, exhibitions, and art festival events. It aims to bring credibility, consistency, and resolve to both artists and visual fine art events.

It's **also meant to be an educational tool for artists and event managers** to learn about the criteria judges should use when judging artwork submissions.

We want **to make this document available for free** to organizations, exhibitors, calls for artists, festivals, and galleries. We value your feedback as you work with the content of this document. You can find it at [www. http://discoverfineartjudging.com](http://discoverfineartjudging.com)
Now, let's talk about the judging elements of visual fine art:

It all **starts with an artist's passion for their art and their desire to share it with the public**. The exhibition or art festival event then presents the best artwork submitted to the judges for their event. Both the artist and the event or gallery gain the recognition and credibility the artwork deserves because of the judging process.

As a judge, it's crucial that you remain unbiased and avoid your personal preferences. Above all, you should be objective during the judging process across all mediums and styles. This also includes adhering to a Code of Ethics and Professional Standards.

No matter how you find a judge, it's important that the **event management has a clear and documented plan for the awards or selections, rules if any, compensation, dates, and times for their event**.

The quality of a visual fine art example depends on how well it conveys aesthetic beauty and meaningfulness. These qualities can be determined using ten criteria that are outlined in this document.

We've also included a **judging form** in this document that's based on these ten criteria. This guide is designed to help you become a great art judge. *It covers everything you need to know about judging art exhibitions, from the importance of vision and purpose to the role of event organizers and artists.* It's a great resource for anyone who wants to learn how to judge art effectively.

The guide starts by explaining the passion and desire of artists to share their work with the public. It then describes the role of event organizers and galleries in presenting the best art to the judges. Finally, it emphasizes the importance of fair and consistent judging to ensure that the artwork receives the recognition it deserves.

This guide was created by a group of independent artists from different mediums and disciplines. We believe that art should be judged fairly and consistently to ensure that the best work is recognized and appreciated.

We're excited to share this documentation with organizations, exhibitors, artists, judges, festivals, and galleries. As an artist, it's important to create work that stands on its own merit and also be able to explain your artistic choices and overall sense of purpose. Remember, creating art is a continuous learning process. It's okay to make mistakes or overlook certain aspects of your work as you grow. Being careful and thorough in your approach can help you create and present artwork that meets the standards expected in art exhibitions.

As an artist, it's important to create work that stands on its own merit and also be able to answer any questions about your artistic choices and overall sense of purpose.

Experienced judges and viewers appreciate perfection and can easily identify any areas that may have been overlooked during the creation process.

Definitions and Clarifications on Terms Used

Visual fine art mediums generally recognized are the following: 2D and 3D art forms in painting (all forms), sculpture, ceramics, drawing, photography, and pastels.

There are many different forums for *exhibiting* art: solo, group, institutional, museum, retrospective, online, etc.

A curator/facilitator is in charge of all aspects of the exhibition from the concept through the jurying to the hanging and promotion.

A gallerist selects/buys/sells artwork and may work with a curator, dealer, or organization to select pieces for an exhibit.

Essentially, a juried exhibition shows artwork selected through a competitive process. In this document, we use the term "judge" to identify someone tasked with the job of determining what artwork will be included in an exhibition and which accepted pieces will receive awards/prizes.

An art critic is a person who is capable and specializes in analyzing, interpreting, or evaluating art. Their written critiques or reviews contribute to art criticism, and they analyze how artists use elements and principles in their work. They consider lines, values, colors, and cultural acceptance. They also look for balance, proportion, rhythm, and unity.

Judging art can be tricky because everyone has different experiences, knowledge, and opinions. But the authors of this guide believe that jurors should try to be neutral and objective.

When we submit our art to shows, exhibitions, or galleries, we're asking others to judge it against other artists. Each judge brings their own subjective elements to the judging process. The challenge is to set objective criteria to focus on.

Of course, these decisions won't be totally objective because everyone has their own interpretation. Not everyone will judge our art exactly the same.

There are two types of critique judgments: subjective and objective. Subjective judgments are based on personal feelings, taste, or opinions, while objective judgments represent facts and are impartial.

An art critique usually involves four categories: analyze, interpret, and evaluate. Evaluating and communicating the results to an individual or group is crucial. In educational settings, everyone can share their opinions and discuss them with peers.

When choosing a judge, certain qualifications are essential. The judge should be physically, mentally, and emotionally fit for the job. They should be neutral towards the subject matter, styles, and mediums. They should have the necessary background and skills to evaluate various art mediums. They should be able to provide constructive criticism and encouragement to the artist or event. They should be able to record their impressions clearly and concisely. They should maintain an ethical code of conduct before, during, and after the event. They should be able to honor all event commitments, assignments, and duties.

Exhibitions and Art Festival Events Management and Judge/s

Regardless of the resources available to find a judge, it's important that the event management has a clear and documented plan for accepting judges, awarding prizes, setting rules, if any, providing compensation, and setting dates and times for the event. This will clearly outline the expectations for the judge/s candidates. It's important to provide this information to the judge candidate when soliciting their services. If desired, include a copy of this document. If not offered, the candidate judge should ask event management for this information. If the candidate judge is not comfortable with the event expectations, they can opt out, avoiding any potential credibility issues for the judge and the event.

It's important to remember that any person asked to judge an event will bring a variety of experience, knowledge, and perspectives to each judging criterion. They should make their choices based on their familiarity with the art medium/s, formal/informal knowledge of fine art principles, and their experience.

The amount of time for the judging process for an exhibition/art festival event should be reasonable but will vary depending on the judges. Rushing this time factor can negatively impact the quality of the judging process.

Judging form 1 has five criteria, final judging form 2 has ten criteria. Review pages 8 and 9 to understand and note the differences.

If you're judging a large art festival or a lot of artwork, there's a quicker way to get through it. View all applicant artworks, mentally auditing them for the five categories on

form 1 pg. 8. Notate onto form 1 pg. 8, only those that have the strongest results and are worthy of further judging.

The resulting highest scores from form 1 pg. 8 will determine which applicants deserve use of the final judging form 2 pg. 9 to determine the awards.

If there's a tie, you'll have to review one or more criteria of form 2 again.

If you're new to judging art, this document can help you get started. It's a great way to improve your judging skills.

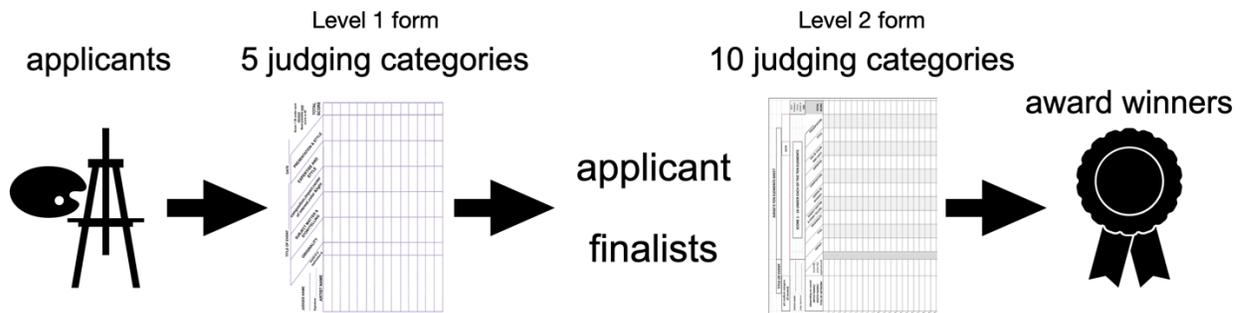
Here are some things to keep in mind when judging a piece of art:

1. Read the title. A good title can tell you a lot about the artwork and the artist's intent.
2. Look at the whole piece. Don't just look at the parts the artist wants you to see. Pay attention to everything, even the little details.
3. Check the composition. Make sure the artwork is balanced and has a good flow.
4. Check the quality of the construction. Make sure the artwork is sturdy and well-made.
5. Check if the artwork will last. Make sure it's made of good materials and won't break easily.

Judging Forms

There's a judging form in this document that's based on the ten elements on the following pages. You can print it out or use it in Excel to get your totals.

Diagram of judging form use:



Here are ten key factors to consider when judging fine art:

Ten Criteria for Judging Visual Artwork

Fine art should be judged based on ten criteria that encompass the visual arts.

1. **Impact:**

A piece of artwork should have a profound impact on the viewer. This is achieved through a captivating composition that focuses on a primary subject and demands the viewer's attention.

2. **Title:**

A relatable title directs the observer's attention to the artwork's central message. Typically, a title should be four words or less. A well-crafted title effectively connects the artist's creative intent with the expressed artwork.

3. **Originality:**

Originality is defined as a freshness, the ability to perceive a subject in a novel manner. It encompasses subject matter that is novel or presented in a unique way. Originality stems from the artist's imagination, inspiration, and mastery of the medium.

4. **Subject Matter and Storytelling:**

The subject of the artwork should convey a specific viewpoint or narrate a story. The subject and the narrative should align. The image must effectively convey the viewpoint or story to have an impact on the viewer.

5. **Center of Interest:**

The observer's attention should be guided to a center of interest. This is the point where the viewer's eye is drawn. The center of interest should align with the subject matter and title.

Secondary or supporting focal points within the piece should complement rather than compete with the main one.

6. **Composition:**

The composition of an image directs the observer's attention to the key elements. Nothing within the image should be unnecessary to the artist's message. Artists employ principles such as scale, proportion, *tone*, *value*, unity, balance, space, and perspective to achieve effective composition. When used judiciously, these techniques enhance the artwork's impact.

7. **Skill set:**

Artists are defined by the mediums they choose to work with and the techniques they employ within those mediums. Skill and creativity are essential for producing

high-quality artwork. The artist must demonstrate proficiency in the chosen medium's techniques.

8. The Power of Color and Light:

The interplay of color and light is a powerful tool for artists to bring their creations to life and evoke a sense of realism and depth. Understanding these elements is a critical skill that should be reflected in the artist's work. The effective use of color or the absence of color (as in a black-and-white image) incorporates form, line, shape, space, and texture to create visually engaging artwork.

9. Uniquely Expressing Style:

Style encompasses an artist's distinctive techniques that set their artwork apart from others. It evolves over time and reflects their artistic process. While style is easily identifiable in a body of work, it can also be discerned in individual works by examining the subject matter, color value, lighting technique, and even the size of the art piece. Style may manifest in various forms, such as realism, non-objective, representational, and abstraction.

10. A Comprehensive Presentation:

Every aspect of the presentation, including framing, matting, materials used, and even the signature, should contribute to the artwork's overall impact. The front-to-back presentation should reflect the artist's pride and care in their work.

Although the back side may not always be visible to the viewer, it is still important for the artist to present a neat and well-finished backside. It is crucial to assess whether the artist has paid attention to even *these* seemingly minor details, as they significantly influence the overall appearance of the product. An artist who values their art will present it in the best possible light.

