

Decorative Arts Competition Handbook ADULT

QUESTIONS?
CONTACT US!



BY PHONE AT
(813)621-7821

BY EMAIL AT
CREATIVELIVING@FLORIDASTATEFAIR.COM

IMPORTANT DATES

Entry Deadline: Friday, December 5, 2025

Late Entry Deadline: Friday, December 12, 2025

Item Delivery: Wednesday, January 7, 2026 - 11:00am-3:00pm
Thursday, January 8, 2026 - 11:00am-3:00pm
Friday, January 9, 2026 - 11:00am-6:00pm
Saturday, January 10, 2026 - 10:00am-4:00pm

Item Pickup: Wednesday, February 18, 2026 - 11:00am-3:00pm
Thursday, February 19, 2026 - 11:00am-3:00pm
Friday, February 20, 2026 - 11:00am-3:00pm
Saturday, February 21, 2026 - 10:00am-2:00pm

ENTRY DELIVERY & PICK-UP

Enter off of Orient Road through the Service Entrance on the west side of the fairgrounds.

A map with directions to the Florida Center is available on the Creative Living Website



ENTRY FEES

Adult Divisions (Ages 18+): \$5 Per Entry

Late Entry: \$10 Per Entry

ENTRY FEES ARE NON-REFUNDABLE

GUIDELINES

- **Up to four (4) items per person will be accepted for judging.** All 4 can be entered in the same class or may be entered in different classes.
- All artworks must be labeled with the exhibitor's name on the back or bottom of the piece.
- Two-dimensional artwork, including the frame, cannot exceed 36" in any direction.
- All two-dimensional artworks must be received installation ready. Most artwork must be framed unless painted on a gallery-wrapped canvas. Painting must continue on all sides or be painted black on a gallery wrapped canvas. Artwork should be suitably wired using strong screw eyes and wire.
- Three-dimensional artwork cannot exceed 24" in any direction and must be received installation ready.
- A decorative artist can use a design created by another artist; however, the piece must be entirely your own work.
- Each adult exhibitor will receive one (1) admission ticket to the Fair.
- Entries previously exhibited in the Florida State Fair may not be submitted for competition.
- Exhibited work must be completed within the last two (2) years.
- Entries must have been prepared/made/ processed by the exhibitor in whose name they are entered.
- All entries will be displayed at the Fair, regardless of whether they receive an award. In keeping with the Florida State Fair's family-friendly environment, entries containing offensive, controversial, or otherwise inappropriate subject matter will not be accepted.

JUDGING & AWARDS

- The Fair selects judges who are experienced and knowledgeable in the categories they are assigned. Judges are expected to be fair and unbiased. They may reassign an entry to a different division or class if they feel it's a better fit.
- All entries will be judged using a scorecard to help ensure fairness and consistency. Judges' decisions are final.
- If the judge feels that an entry does not meet the standards for an award, no ribbon or prize will be given, even if it is the only entry in the class.
- Winners and final displays will be announced during the Fair.

JUDGING CRITERIA

Overall Impression	Pattern Execution	Technical Skills	Presentation
Impact on the viewer, unique approach to subject matter	Placement on the surface, appropriateness for the surface	Including color, values, application of paint, and clean execution of the design	Including type of finish, all the surfaces are finished, framing if applicable

DECORATIVE ARTS DEFINITIONS

Decorative Painting is a diverse art form using a variety of techniques and mediums to decorate functional and nonfunctional surfaces. The designs can be original or copied patterns painted on a variety of surfaces from paper, wood items, canvas, clay pots, furniture, boxes, and many more. Mediums are anything from oil, acrylic, watercolor, colored pencils, alcohol inks, pastels, etc.

Oil & Acrylic Media Paintings are defined as 2D paintings painted on stretched or non-stretched canvas, wood, clay board, or another hard surface.

Water Media is limited to water-soluble water media (no water-soluble oil products or pastels). Paintings may be created on all surfaces specifically for water media (i.e. paper, clay board, or synthetic surfaces like Yupo and Tyvek®, illustration board, paper mounted on board, or flat upstretched watercolor canvas). The Paintings can be framed, matted, under glass or Plexiglas, or varnished.

Acrylic Pouring can be used as a background for any of the categories but if it is only a pouring it should be entered in Fine Art Painting Class 7.

Drawing includes colored pencils, pastels, graphite, charcoal, pen & ink, scratch art, and water-based markers, etc.

Alcohol-based – Inks & Markers can include any surface where alcohol-based media can be applied.

Calligraphy and Zentangle can include any media and must be 100% drawn by the artist.

Small Furniture includes chairs, trunks, side tables, stools, hassocks, etc. Pieces can be antique, vintage, or new but must contain decorative painting, stenciling, faux finish or leafing done by the artist that is entering.

Repurposed Items are transformed or modified to use for a purpose other than its originally intended use, for example, a coffeepot made into a birdhouse. **The item must show some form of decorative painting done by the artist entering.**

3D Surface is any dimensional item that is not considered small furniture or a repurposed item. For Example, plates, small boxes, ect.

Art Created from Artificial Intelligence Generator is any digital art created or enhanced with AI tools.

Diamond Painting is a form of art that is a cross between Cross-stitch and paint-by-numbers. The distinct feature of diamond painting is that it uses "diamonds" also known as drills. (Can be from a kit or design on blank canvas)

Kit or photo conversion* is when the subject is preprinted on a canvas following a color legend filling it in with drills (dots). If a photo has been converted, it would be printed on the canvas, making it a kit.

Design on a blank canvas is when the subject is not preprinted from another source such as a cross-stitch pattern, paint by number, or the exhibitor's original design, and put on a blank canvas.

DIVISIONS & CLASSES

Decorative Arts - Beginner Division 25.601

Any Media 2D or 3D

- Class 1 People (Portraits & Figures)
- Class 2 Places (Land, Sea, Sky & City)
- Class 3 Still Life, Florals or Things
- Class 4 Animals Realistic or Whimsical Creatures
- Class 5 Stroke Work/Folk Art
- Class 6 Other Not Listed

Decorative Arts - Adult Division 25.101

Acrylic & Oil Painting – 2D or 3D surfaces

- Class 1 Acrylic & Oil – People/Portraits
- Class 2 Acrylic & Oil – Places (Land, Sea, Sky & City)
- Class 3 Acrylic & Oil – Still Life Florals & Things
- Class 4 Acrylic & Oil – Animals (realistic)
- Class 5 Acrylic & Oil – Whimsical Creatures
- Class 6 Acrylic & Oil – Stroke Work/Folk Art

Water Media Painting – 2D

- Class 7 Water Media – People/Portraits
- Class 8 Water Media – Places (Scapes - Land, Sea, Sky & City)
- Class 9 Water Media – Still Life Florals & Things
- Class 10 Water Media – Animals (realistic)
- Class 11 Water Media – Whimsical Creatures

Class Other Mediums – 2D or 3D surface

- Class 12 Reproduction of Old Masters (any media)
- Class 13 Drawing – People/Portraits
- Class 14 Drawing – Places (Land, Sea, Sky & City)
- Class 15 Drawing – Still Life Florals & Things
- Class 16 Drawing – Animals (realistic)
- Class 17 Drawing – Whimsical Creatures
- Class 18 Alcohol-Based – Inks & Markers (any surface)

Class 19 Calligraphy & Zentangle (any media)

Class 20 Fabric, Silk, or Theorem painting (any media)

Class 21 Mixed Media (2D or 3D)

Class 22 Small Furniture – see definition

Class 23 Repurposed Item – see definition

Class 24 Original Design by artist (any media)

Class 25 Art Created from Artificial Intelligence Generator

Class 26 Other Not Listed

Class 27 Diamond Painting (kit or photo conversion)*

Class 28 Diamond Painting (Design on blank canvas)

Decorative Arts - Professional Division 25.201

Class 1 People/Portraits

Class 2 Places (Land, Sea, Sky & City)

Class 3 Still Life, Florals or Things

Class 4 Animals Realistic or Whimsical Creatures

Class 5 Stroke Work/Folk Art

Class 6 Other Not Listed



Preparing Entry for Exhibition

Decorative Arts (2D) (Items that can be hung on wall)

Artwork should be framed excluding gallery-wrapped canvases.

- Framed items must be ready to hang using secure screw eyes and wire.
- Gallery-wrapped canvases should be ready to hang using secure screw eyes and wire.

Gallery wrap is a method of stretching an artist's canvas so that the canvas wraps around the sides of the stretcher bar or strainer bars and is secured to the back of the wooden frame, where the hardware (staples, tacks, etc.) is hidden.

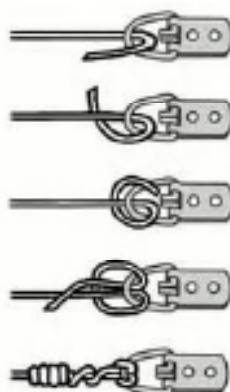
- All artwork must be labeled with the exhibitor's name on the back of the piece.

Wiring of gallery wrapped canvases



LARK'S HEAD KNOT

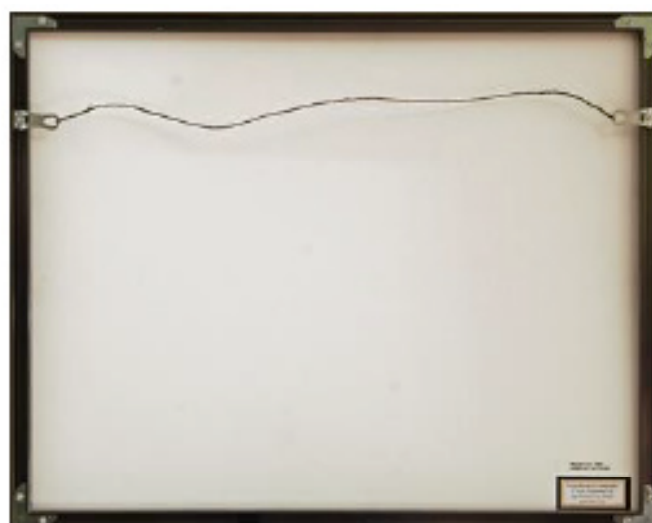
Also called...
Lark's foot, Cow
hitch, Girth hitch,
Ring hitch,
Lanyard hitch,
Bale Sling hitch,
Baggage Tag
Loop, Tag Knot,
Deadeye hitch,
Running eye



Decorative Arts (3D) (Items that sit on a pedestal or shelf)

- All three-dimensional artworks must be received installation-ready. If necessary, provide a base for structural support. The Fair will provide pedestals and glass cases to protect the work.
- All artworks must be labeled with the exhibitor's name on the bottom of the piece.

Examples of wire hangers on frames



GENERAL RULES

DISCLAIMER

All entries are submitted at the exhibitor's own risk. The Florida State Fair is not responsible for any loss, damage, or theft of exhibits even if caused by staff, volunteers, contractors, or visitors. If you want insurance for your entry, you must arrange it through your personal insurance provider before the Fair. Reasonable care will be taken to protect exhibits. No unauthorized people are allowed in the building after closing hours.

DIVISION OR CLASS CANCELLATION

The Florida State Fair may cancel any division or class if there are not enough entries to ensure fair competition. Any affected entries will be returned.

ENTRY ERRORS

Exhibitors are responsible for making sure their entries are correct. This includes online forms and summary sheets. The Fair is not responsible for correcting mistakes, and no awards will be given for entries disqualified due to exhibitor error. If an award is later found to be ineligible, it will be withheld or recovered. You may appeal a disqualification in writing within 90 days of being notified. Include your name, address, full entry details, and your reason for requesting a review.

PREMIUM PAYMENTS

Prizes will be awarded based on the Judging Criteria Record Sheets. **Prize checks are void 6 months after the date on the check. No replacement checks will be issued after that, so please cash them promptly.**

SUBSTITUTIONS

If needed, substitutions must be made within the same department as the original entry. They must be completed by the last day of the entry delivery period. You may not transfer your entry to another person.

PREVIOUSLY ENTERED ITEMS

Entries that have been shown at past Florida State Fairs are not allowed, except for entries in Horticulture and Aquarium Beautiful.

VERIFICATION OF ENTRY

To confirm that your mailed entry form and fees were received, include a self-addressed stamped envelope with your submission. Online entries will receive a confirmation code after submitting.

RESPONSIBILITY FOR EXHIBITS

The Fair is not responsible for exhibits left behind after the scheduled pick-up time. **Anything left after that time will be treated as abandoned and discarded by April 1st of the same year.**

ENTRY REMOVAL

Once accepted, entries cannot be removed until the official release date listed in the Competition Handbook. Early removal is only allowed in cases like serious illness, emergencies, or at the Fair's discretion.

RETURNED OR BOUNCED CHECKS

A \$25 fee applies to any returned checks. This must be paid with cash, a certified check, or a money order.

MAILING PAPER ENTRY FORMS

Entry Forms must be postmarked by Friday, December 5, 2025. Failure to complete any portion of the entry form may result in disqualification. Late entries must be postmarked before December 12, 2025. If you're submitting a late entry form, you must include the extra \$5 per entry fee. **Make checks payable to: Florida State Fair Authority**

Mail Entry Form to:

Creative Living Competitions Decorative Arts
Florida State Fair
P.O. Box 11766
Tampa, FL 33680

SHIPPING ENTRIES

Shipped entries must arrive no later than January 6, 2026. **Packages MUST include Shipping form and prepaid shipping label.** Entries will be shipped back to the exhibitors after the fair in the same container. Return shipping costs are the responsibility of the entrant.

Ship Entry Form to:

Florida State Fair Authority
Creative Living Competitions - Decorative Arts
4800 US HWY 301 North
Tampa, FL 33680

RETRIEVING ENTRIES

All entries not claimed by April 1st of the same year will be recycled, disposed or donated through our program department. Entries not picked up on designated dates can be arranged for a special pick-up appointment by emailing CreativeLiving@floridastatefair.com.

EXHIBIT DESIGN & SET UP

The Florida State Fair controls how exhibits are displayed. If your entry is meant to be hung but isn't ready to hang, the Fair will display it as they see fit. No changes can be made once items are on display. Exhibitors cannot handle their entries after drop-off. Fair staff will handle final placement and assembly, using any instructions you provide. If your item needs assembly or disassembly, include clear instructions and diagrams. The Fair may use pins or other tools to secure your exhibit for display. Online entries will receive a confirmation code after submitting.

AWARD PREMIUMS

BEGINNER DIVISION

First Place - State Fair Ribbon **\$15**

Second Place - State Fair Ribbon **\$10**

Third Place - State Fair Ribbon **\$5**

Best of Show - State Fair Ribbon **\$25**

Best of Show award will be chosen from
the first place winners of each class

NON-PROFESSIONAL DIVISION

First Place - State Fair Ribbon **\$20**

Second Place - State Fair Ribbon **\$15**

Third Place - State Fair Ribbon **\$10**

Best of Show - State Fair Ribbon **\$30**

Best of Show award will be chosen from
the first place winners of each class

PROFESSIONAL DIVISION

First Place - State Fair Ribbon **\$30**

Second Place - State Fair Ribbon **\$25**

Third Place - State Fair Ribbon **\$20**

Best of Show - State Fair Ribbon **\$40**

Best of Show award will be chosen from
the first place winners of each class

Director's Choice Award - State Fair Ribbon **\$35**

Honorable Mention Ribbons may be awarded at the discretion of the judge(s).

2026 Florida State Fair

Decorative Arts Competition Entry Form

OFFICE USE ONLY

Exhibitor # _____

Late Entry ☐ YES ☐ NO

Total Fee _____

Paid ☐ YES ☐ NO

Type ☐ Cash ☐ MO ☐ Check

Check No. _____

Entry Forms must be postmarked by Friday, December 5, 2025.

Late Entry Period: December 6 – 12, 2025 (Double Entry Fees)

Failure to complete any portion of the entry form may result in disqualification.

Please print legibly

Exhibitors Name (First, Last)			
Mailing Address		County	
City	State	Zip Code	<input type="checkbox"/> Check if you are a new exhibitor
Phone ()		Email	
What division are you competing in: <input type="checkbox"/> Beginner (ages 18 +) <input type="checkbox"/> Non-Professional (ages 18 +) <input type="checkbox"/> Professional (ages 18 +)			

Entry Fee: Adult Division \$5 per entry | Late entry \$10 per entry

Exhibitors may enter up to four (4) entries for judging.

Late Entry

☐ YES ☐ NO

#	DIVISION #	CLASS #	Enter the Title of the Artwork	FEE
1				
2				
3				
4				
5				
6				
Total Amount Due				\$

I hereby certify that I have read the Florida State Fair General Rules for the Competitive Exhibits Program and the above item(s) is/are entered for exhibition strictly in accordance with these rules, by which I agree to be governed. I also agree that the Florida State Fair may use my name, likeness, or photograph (including, but not limited to photographs of my entry), in any manner relating to my participation in the Competitive Exhibits Program, free of charge and without further notice or consultation.

I understand that the 2026 Creative Living Competitions & Exhibits are held in conjunction with the 2026 Florida State Fair and agree that the Florida State Fair is not liable or responsible for any delay, change of dates or cancellation of the 2026 Florida State Fair due to the following unforeseeable circumstances: (a) acts of God; (b) flood, fire, earthquake; or (c) other potential disaster(s) or catastrophe(s), such as epidemics, pandemics, or explosions.

Signature of exhibitor

Date

Mail Entry Form to:

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Florida State Fair
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Tampa, FL 33680

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