

Getting Accepted into a Juried Art Show

DO'S & DON'TS

Your application should show jurors quality, original work and a professional presentation.

Your Product & Application – First Impressions are Extremely Important!!!

DO

Submit your best, most representative work. Choose pieces that show strong craftsmanship, creativity, and originality while representing the majority of what you create and sell—not just a one-off piece. All items MUST be handmade by you!!!

Present a cohesive collection. Your pieces should look like they belong together and clearly represent your artistic style and primary product line.

Show originality. Give jurors a reason to remember your work and distinguish it from products commonly seen at craft fairs or in retail stores.

Clearly explain your process. Briefly tell the jury what you personally design and make, the materials you use, and any special techniques involved.

Apply in the correct category. Choose the category that best represents your primary body of work.

DON'T

Submit average or inconsistent work. A few weaker pieces can lower the overall impression of your application.

Show too many unrelated products. A mix of unrelated jewelry, clothing, décor, artwork, ornaments, and other items can make your work look unfocused.

Include work that is mass-produced or commercially purchased. Avoid products that appear to come from kits or rely heavily on manufactured components without a clear handmade element. (If you are accepted and include commercial items to sell in your booth, you will be asked to leave.)

Make jurors guess what you actually make. Your description and photos should make your role in creating the product clear.

Choose a category simply because you think it has fewer applicants. Your work, description, and category should all match.

Taking Good Product Photos

DO

Make your photos look professional. Take the extra time to properly stage and photograph your work. The presentation of your work is part of the jury's first impression.

Use good lighting. Natural, indirect daylight works well. Photograph near a window or outdoors in open shade.

Use a clean, simple background. A neutral background keeps the attention on your work.

Fill the frame with your product. Make the piece large enough in the photo for jurors to clearly see what you made.

Make sure every photo is sharp and in focus. Clean your camera or phone lens and steady the camera before taking the picture.

Photograph the piece straight and level. Use angles that accurately show the shape and proportions of the work.

DON'T

Hold the item in your hand over your worktable and snap a quick picture. Hands, tools, supplies, clutter, and a messy workspace can make even well-made work look amateurish and may give jurors the impression that you are not serious about presenting your work professionally.

Use harsh sunlight or poor indoor lighting. Heavy shadows, glare, or yellow lighting can hide details and change the appearance of colors.

Use a busy or cluttered background. Household items, patterned fabrics, plants, tools, and decorations can compete with the product.

Photograph a small item from several feet away. Jurors should not have to enlarge the image just to understand the product.

Submit blurry or poorly focused photos. Poor photography can make excellent craftsmanship look mediocre.

Use awkward angles or distorted perspectives. Crooked artwork or tilted products can look careless.

Include a close-up when details matter. Show stitching, carving, brushwork, texture, construction, or another important handmade feature.

Show accurate colors. Your photograph should look as close as possible to the actual piece.

Keep styling and props to a minimum. A simple prop can provide scale or context, but your product should remain the obvious focus.

Watch for reflections and glare. Adjust your lighting or camera position when photographing glass, jewelry, ceramics, or shiny surfaces.

Take several photos and choose the strongest one. Small changes in lighting, distance, and angle can make a big difference.

Use your smartphone if that is what you have. Modern phones can take excellent jury photos with good lighting, a clean background, careful composition, and sharp focus.

Make jurors guess about the quality. If craftsmanship is an important part of the piece, make sure they can see it.

Over-edit or heavily filter your photos. The jury should see an accurate representation of what shoppers will see.

Let props become the star of the photo. Too much styling can distract from the work being juried.

Submit photos showing distracting reflections. The juror should see your work, not the photographer, room, or light source reflected in it.

Assume the first photo is good enough. Review your choices as critically as a juror would.

Assume you need expensive camera equipment. Professional-looking results are more important than expensive equipment.

Your Booth Photo

DO

Present a professional, organized, inviting booth. Your booth photo should meet the show's requirements and reflect the quality and professionalism of your work. **No matter how spectacular your work is, an unprofessional booth or poor booth photo can jeopardize your acceptance.**

Make it immediately obvious what you sell. A juror should understand your product and artistic identity at a glance.

Give your work room to shine. Use displays that highlight the products and keep storage and supplies out of sight.

Make your booth photo match your application. The work in the booth should clearly represent the same product line shown in your jury images.

DON'T

Let the booth look like a flea market or miscellaneous retail display. Clutter and unrelated merchandise can take attention away from your handmade work.

Make jurors search the booth photo to figure out what your main product is. Your primary work should be visually dominant.

Overcrowd tables or leave boxes, supplies, and random props visible. Visual clutter can make the booth look less professional.

Apply with one type of work and show a booth filled with unrelated merchandise. The jury should feel confident that what they approve is what shoppers will see.

Before You Hit Submit

DO

Read and follow every show requirement. Check photo specifications, handmade policies, booth requirements, deadlines, and prohibited-product rules.

Proofread your application. Use clear, concise descriptions and make sure every question is completely answered.

Review the entire application as one presentation. Your photos, product description, category, and booth should all tell the same story about who you are as an artist or craftsperson.

Remember that you are competing for a limited number of spaces. Your application should show why your work deserves a place in the show.

DON'T

Assume every juried show has the same rules.

Requirements can vary considerably from one event to another.

Rush through the application. Missing information, careless wording, or incorrect photos can hurt an otherwise strong submission.

Treat each part of the application separately.

Inconsistencies can make jurors question what you actually intend to sell.

Assume meeting the minimum requirements guarantees acceptance. Jurors are often choosing among many qualified applicants in the same category.