

Craft Council of Newfoundland and Labrador
Standards of Quality

revised October, 2009

GENERAL STANDARDS

The following criteria for quality in handcrafted objects have been written and approved by the membership of the Craft Council of Newfoundland and Labrador. All work to be sold through Craft Council sponsored events must meet these Standards of Quality. Craftspeople submitting samples to the Standards Committee should be aware that both the General Standards and the specific standards for the media area(s) concerned will be consulted by the Committee during the assessment process.

Craft techniques not specifically mentioned in the Standards of Quality may be accepted only if they comply with the General Standards. Exceptions to the standards regulations may be made upon specific application to the Standards Committee.

General Standards

In order to meet the Standards of Quality, a craft product must excel in the areas of technique, design and materials used. Work should show a distinct and personal style of the maker - characteristics of any or all of these elements which illustrate the individuality of the maker, the product and the product line.

Design

Finished pieces must demonstrate that the maker has an understanding of design and its application, as well as a sensitivity to the special characteristics of the materials chosen. It should be evident in the final product that the maker has carefully considered decisions regarding concept, function, technique and materials and the relationship among them.

Originality The design of an object must be original to the craftsperson, or a skilful rendering of a traditional or classic design. In either case, work should show *the hand of the maker*, signs of the personal contribution of the craftsperson that separates his or her work from that of other craftspeople. Originality involves going beyond the ordinary and the commonplace to seek and use ideas that are special and unique to the maker.

Technique

All works must demonstrate a high level of technical skill, with attention paid to each detail of construction and finishing. Care should be taken that the inside and/or back of an article receives a professional finish. The finished piece must be sound and able to withstand normal expected usage.

Construction techniques must be true craft techniques - those which transform a raw material into a finished product. The assemblage of unaltered bought or found parts will not be accepted, unless these assume an intrinsic, aesthetic value.

Use of molds

The use of molds is acceptable if the master, the mold and the casting are the work of a craftsman. The use of commercial molds is permitted only if the mold is so neutral as to have no influence on the aesthetic of the finished piece. Surface decoration must:

1. show a high level of understanding and application of design principles
2. be original, and show the distinct, personal style of the maker
3. show that consideration has been given to the integration of the base form into the finished product
4. be consistent with other products which form part of the craftsman's line.

The use of a natural object as a model for a cast product

The hand of the maker is essential to each juried handcrafted product. An unaltered casting modeled from a natural object cannot be considered as having personal design contribution from the craftsman, and therefore does not meet the Craft Council's Standards of Quality. Castings which are altered, or incorporated into a more complex object can be considered interpretations, or decorative elements, and as such have individual design input from the maker. They would meet the Standards of Quality.

Commercially manufactured reproductions

Commercially manufactured reproductions of a craftsman's work (that is, original artwork that has been mass-reproduced by a commercial printing plant), fall outside the Craft Council's Standards of Quality for craft. However, it has been agreed by the Craft Council that such reproductions may be offered for sale at Craft Council marketing venues under the following conditions:

1. Samples must be submitted to and accepted by the Craft Council Standards Committee.
2. Products have been designed by a craftsman and are rooted in the craftsman's product line.
3. Products are professionally and competently manufactured, using high quality materials.
4. Such manufactured products will comprise less than 10% of the volume of work shown in any booth at a fair, or in a Craft Council shop.
5. Products are clearly labelled as "commercially manufactured reproductions".
6. At a Craft Council craft fair, only the craftsman/designer will be permitted to sell reproductions of his or her work.
7. If the above reproduction is hand-signed and numbered as an art print, the work will not be accepted.

Materials

All materials used must be of high quality and appropriate to the function of the finished object. Natural materials are preferred. Craftspeople working with fibre should note that at least 75% of work should be of natural fibres. Exceptions to the fibre content ruling may be made in exceptional circumstances at the discretion of the Standards Committee. Specific application must be made for such exceptions and each case will be judged individually. Generally, such circumstances occur in the suitability of the fibre/fabric to the function of the article, or in the innovative use of new and exciting materials. Craftspeople wishing to have the Standards Committee consider a request for an exception should state the reasons for their request in writing with their submission of samples.

Pre-manufactured components

The use of pre-manufactured components is permitted only if the components are subordinate to the overall design and craftsmanship of the article (i.e. pin backs, buttons, hinges).

If the pre-manufactured component is a **base form** which is then built upon by the craftsperson, the criteria for the use of objects made from commercial molds (noted above) will apply.

Recycled materials

Recycled materials may be used only if they are in good condition, clean and originally of good quality. The use of recycled materials is permissible only if the original form is substantively transformed by the craftsperson. Objects made from recycled materials **must** be clearly labelled as such.

Presentation

Packaging and labelling will inevitably play a major role in product identification. Packaging should be designed to convey a distinct product style, to complement and enhance the product and to provide necessary consumer information.

Labelling

All craft objects should be accompanied by information regarding materials used and instructions for proper use and care. Federal government regulations require that certain textile products carry fibre and dealer identification labels. It is the responsibility of the craftsperson to ensure that these regulations are met.

In addition, craftspeople should note that there are certain specified techniques and materials identified within the body of the Standards of Quality which require clear notice to the consumer.

Framing

Framing should enhance the piece; if a commercial frame is used, it must be subservient to the overall piece.

Unacceptable Objects, Materials and Techniques

The objects using the following materials and/or techniques are not acceptable under Craft Council Standards of Quality policy: liquid embroidery, decoupage, paper toling (unless designs are the original product of the craftsperson), string art, embroidery transfers, plastic canvas, popsicle sticks, commercial symbols or characters.

In addition, it must be noted that true craft techniques, involving the transformation of raw materials into a finished product, must be employed. Assemblages composed primarily of unaltered purchased or found parts will not be accepted, nor will objects that require no special skill to make.