

# Judging continued

competition. Both artists and judges know that no more than 30% of the gourd surface should be covered with clay and 55% of the armature must be gourd(s) and gourd pieces. “The artist is to provide a photo of the original,



*Advanced. The attachment of the fins, tail and eyes are seamless. The surface is smooth and glossy.*

unaltered gourd used as the armature.” The AGS Judging Committee urges both entrants and judges to read and follow the published rules or guidelines for the specific chapter’s competition. As an aside, we also recommend that competition teams for each chapter review their rules and guidelines to be sure they address the use of clay.

## Conclusion

Many of these guidelines will apply to other techniques, such as pyrography, carving and painting. It may seem redundant but repetition will lead to a better understanding and a consistent application of these judging guidelines. Focus on the originality, quality of craftsmanship and overall impact of design of your entries.

One last word. Take the time to enter your gourd art in the proper category and at the appropriate level. Don’t be afraid to enter at the higher level if you are on the cusp of two levels. Challenge yourself. Recognize that you are likely to be more accomplished than you give yourself credit for. 🐾

# AGS Judging Program Overview and 2022 Updates



The original AGS Judging Handbook was published in 2008, and in the intervening 14 years subtle but important changes have been made – many by chapters based on “the real world.” The

Handbook established guidelines for judges to follow, but left Chapters “in charge” of running the competition events according to what their officers and members felt was necessary for a successful event. The AGS Handbook mainly guided the judging procedures for the observing crafted, artistic and raw gourds with the intention of selecting award-winning specimens. Detailed and Simplified Scoring forms were prepared for judges and tally sheets for the clerks. Each of these forms were explained as was the Judging procedure and authority.

In 2013 we published a supplemental training document for judges that we call the Judging by Category Guidelines. Experts in various techniques collaborated to document

the guidelines for carving, painting, wood burning and many more “categories” that are commonly represented in gourd art competitions. These “by category” guidelines

### MEDIUM SCORING FORM for JUDGING


**Scoring:** One to Five (1 to 5) scale, with 5 being Best, relative to other entries in that category and skill level. If there are no other competing entries in that category, comparison will be with expectations for work at that skill level.

Entry ID:	
Division:	
Class:	

Score each 1 to 5	CRITERIA	COMMENTS
	<b>Overall appearance</b> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Overall appeal</li> <li>Artistic design</li> <li>Stands out from the competition (has that “wow” factor)</li> <li>Originality and artistic creativity</li> </ul>	
	<b>Craftsmanship</b> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Attention to detail</li> <li>Uniform quality of work</li> <li>Overall impact not marred by obvious flaws</li> <li>Gourd sits flat or hangs evenly</li> <li>Finished look</li> </ul>	
	<b>Difficulty/level of effort</b> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Difficulty of techniques as applied</li> <li>Design complex or intricate</li> <li>Skill in multiple areas</li> <li>Amount of effort required</li> </ul>	
	<b>Featured technique or Theme</b> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Featured technique dominates</li> <li>Apply quality of craftsmanship for the specified technique</li> <li>Theme or class description must be fulfilled</li> <li>Overall impression created by the featured technique or theme</li> </ul>	
	<b>&lt; TOTAL &gt;</b>	

assist AGS Certified Judges when performing their judging duties. They help answer the following questions: What does good look like? What are the expectation differences for Novice, Intermediate, and Advanced levels? What do experts in a given technique expect to see that demonstrate quality execution of the skill? Conversely, what are errors that judges should be aware of?

This year, 2022, the AGS Judging Committee has released a new Judging form that is modeled after the form created and used by the Arizona Gourd Society for the past 2 years. The new form resolves the differences between the Detailed and Simplified scoring forms. If a judge traveled to different shows and at one event used the detailed scoring form and at another the simplified form was used they would see different criteria on each form...and perhaps most confusing, totally different rating scores. When using the detailed form, the judging criteria were each given a score between 1 and 5, with 5 being best, so the entry with the highest total score was awarded first place. When using the simplified form, the judges rank-order the entries (1st, 2nd, 3rd etc) and the lowest total score is deemed the first-place entry.

The new forms (Detailed, Medium and Short) all use the same four criteria and the same 1 to 5 rating range, with 5 being best. The new Detailed form has an explanation of each criterion (“evaluate based on”) and additional considerations (“things to look for”) to help guide the evaluation for each. Judges will write their feedback to the entrant on the form, offering both compliments and constructive criticism. The criteria and scoring are identical on the Medium and Simple forms. The amount of explanation and additional considerations on each form are reduced, allowing more room for comments. We strongly recommend that the Detailed form be laminated or taped to the judge’s clipboards and used as a reference document when the Medium and Short scoring forms are used. The new forms are on the AGS website and includes a scoring form for Raw Gourds and another one for judging Manipulated Gourd entries, and of course there is a form for the clerks to tally the results. <https://www.americangourdsociety.org/judgingcompetitions-new.html> 

**Entry ID:** \_\_\_\_\_  
**Division:** \_\_\_\_\_  
**Class:** \_\_\_\_\_

**DETAILED SCORING FORM for JUDGING**

**Scoring:** One to Five (1 to 5) scale, with 5 being Best, relative to other entries in that category and skill level. If there are no other competing entries in that category, scoring should be based on your judgement and expectations for work at that entry and skill level.

Score 1 to 5	CRITERIA:	THINGS TO LOOK FOR
	<b>Overall appearance:</b> Evaluate based on: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Overall appeal</li> <li>Artistic design</li> <li>Stands out from the competition (has that “wow” factor)</li> <li>Originality and artistic creativity</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Has the artist used a fresh approach?</li> <li>Is it a class piece or something you have seen before?</li> </ul>
	<b>Craftmanship:</b> Evaluate based on: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Attention to detail</li> <li>Uniform quality of work</li> <li>Overall impact not marred by obvious flaws</li> <li>Gourd sits flat or hangs evenly</li> <li>Finished look</li> </ul> When class is multimedia, all techniques applied are to be evaluated for quality of craftsmanship	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Inside of opened gourds is clean &amp; neat</li> <li>Holes are smooth and, if visible, painted/dyed to match the interior or exterior</li> <li>Stitching or weaving is even and uniform</li> <li>Color and finish are smooth and uniform, without runs, fingerprints, or glue showing</li> <li>Burn lines are sharp and uniform and paint is not in the burn lines</li> </ul>
	<b>Difficulty/level of effort:</b> Evaluate based on: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Difficulty of techniques as applied</li> <li>Design complex or intricate</li> <li>Skill in multiple areas</li> <li>Amount of effort required</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Are all techniques applied with same level of effort, intricacy and complexity?</li> </ul>
	<b>Featured Technique/Theme:</b> Featured technique dominates, but other techniques may be allowed, if stated in show book. <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Apply quality of craftsmanship for the specified technique</li> <li>Theme or class description must be fulfilled</li> <li>Overall impression created by the featured technique or theme</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>If technique is carving, it should be what you notice most, for example</li> <li>When the technique that is called for in the class description is <u>not</u> the dominant technique, the entry should be moved to the appropriate class.</li> </ul>
	<b>TOTAL SCORE</b>	

**Entry ID:** \_\_\_\_\_  
**Division:** \_\_\_\_\_  
**Class:** \_\_\_\_\_

**SHORT SCORING FORM for JUDGING**

**Scoring:** One to Five (1 to 5) scale, with 5 being Best, relative to other entries in that category and skill level. If there are no other competing entries in that category, comparison will be with expectations at that skill level.

Circle Score for each					CRITERIA	COMMENTS
Low	Medium	High				
1	2	3	4	5	Overall appearance	
1	2	3	4	5	Craftmanship	
1	2	3	4	5	Difficulty/level of effort	
1	2	3	4	5	Featured technique/Theme	
					< TOTAL >	