

AGS Judging: Technique Series – COILING



This Judging column is going to cover the judging considerations of one technique – a different one for each of the coming issues - to assist AGS Certified Judges when performing their judging duties AND gourd artists who use the given technique and those who enter gourd competitions. Our goal is to help you answer the following questions: What does good look like?

What are the expectation differences for Novice, Intermediate, and Advanced levels? What do experts in the given technique expect to see that demonstrate quality execution of the skill? Conversely, what are errors that we should be aware of?

Definitions of related fiber techniques

Weaving: *The process of interlacing fibers at right angles. Warp are the lengthwise fibers and weft are the crosswise fibers. Fabric and basketry are two examples of weaving.*

Teneriffe: *Also called Teneriffe Lace, it the process of weaving with needle and thread often done in a circle.*

Kumihimo: *Is a braiding technique that involves 4 or more “threads” to make long, round cords.*



Open pine needle coiling with closed floating coils by Bonnie Gibson, AZ

What is Coiling? Coiling is a basketry technique that involves the use of a core and a binder material for wrapping and/ or stitching the core material to the gourd or a previous row of coiling. Core material could be from a variety of materials such as pine needles, philodendron sheaths, long



Floating coils by Susan Ashley, CO

grass, bark strips, cotton clothesline, paper rush or Danish Cord. Binder materials most commonly used are artificial sinew, waxed linen, embroidery floss and raffia.

- Open Coiling is when the core is exposed and materials such as pine needles, seagrass, horsehair, Danish cord or long grass/plant fibers are visible with decorative stitches of varying degrees of complexity. Pine needles can be used with or without their tips, called fascicles.

- Closed Coiling is when the core material is NOT exposed. The most common core materials are twisted paper cord, raffia and Danish cord. The simple and complex designs stitches and the stitching materials are featured.

- Floating Coils are rows that rise above and are not attached to the previous row.

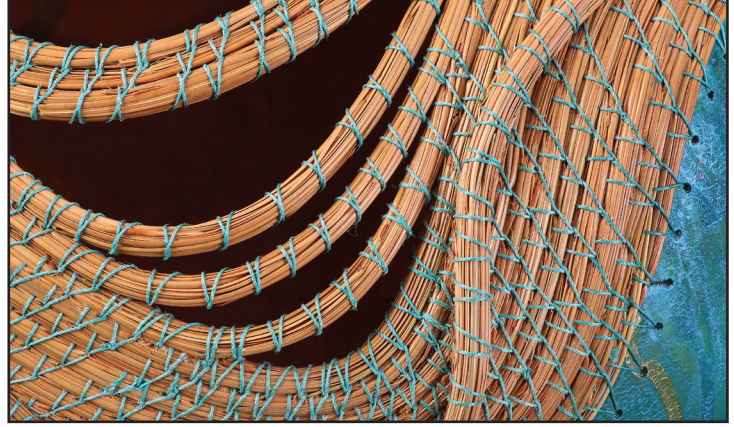
Judging Coiling at Gourd Competitions

Coiling is a technique that encompass' several different techniques-pine needle coiling, open coiling around material that remains visible, and closed coiling around material that is not to be visible. Within each of these techniques there are, of course, variations and degrees of complexity. Coiling may be an individual category

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Judging continued

or be included with weaving, teneriffe and/or kumihimo and braiding. Other techniques are normally allowed, but should accent but not overpower the coiling, but in all cases, the gourd must be visible. Entrants should carefully read the entry guidelines and rules to avoid disqualification and judges should read them too to be consistent and fair.



Coiling detail by Toni Best, CA

What is the Process for Moving or Disqualifying an Entry?

- *No moving or disqualification can be made without the knowledge and agreement of the Head Judge.*
- *Clerks at Registration Table may ask Head Judge about moving an entry they question.*
- *Judging Team may recommend moving an entry that does not meet category description. Head Judge makes final decision.*
- *The category that received the moved piece would be re-judged.*
- *The Head Judge may disqualify an entry that cannot be moved.*
- *The Head Judge will notify the entrant of the move or disqualification as soon as practical.*

Reminder. Dominance is the first criteria that your entry will be judged by when you present it for a competition. You select the category, but be advised that if you place it in a coiling or weaving category and it is not the dominant technique it will be moved to the appropriate category or disqualified. Here's an example. The gourd bowl is clearly dominated with a pyrographic design and the coiling on the rim is a nice finishing technique but not the focal point. It will be moved to the pyrography category. However, disqualification occurs when the entrant already has a gourd in the category where it should be moved to. The only possible exception is when the show permits entrants to submit multiple gourds in a category.

So, what are Judges looking for in the Coiling category?

The Gourd

- ✓ Are the holes dyed to match the gourd's color? They should not be white.
- ✓ Is the spacing between the holes uniform? It should be, unless it is a specific part of a pattern.

Stitching

- ✓ Are the stitches placed uniformly/evenly spaced?
- ✓ Is the stitching/wrapping of the coil neat? Are the threads overlapped?
- ✓ Are the stitches tight? They should not be able to be moved.
- ✓ What is the complexity of stitches? Complexity should be recognized.
- ✓ Is the stitching on the inside as neat as that on the outside?
- ✓ If stitches were added or decreased, was it spaced evenly?
- ✓ Are knots visible? They should be hidden.

Stitching Material

Note: As long as the stitching is neat, it should not matter what binder material is used.

- ✓ Do you see scuff marks on the gourd surface from waxed linen due to excess wax? (It should have been removed with the use of a hair dryer)
- ✓ Was the raffia split it so that the size of the weaver is consistent?
- ✓ Has the artificial sinew weaver split or are there feathers or thin threads on the sides?

Fascicle (pine needles with tips)

- ✓ Is the design using the fascicles (tips) neat?
- ✓ Is the length of fascicles (tips) consistent?
- ✓ Are the fascicles on the side of the coil so that they can be seen? (Fascicles should not be hidden on the top of the coils) ** Note: These points do not apply to pine needle coiling without tips

Coils

- ✓ Are the coils uniform in diameter?
- ✓ Are the pine needles in the coil twisted? They should not be twisted.



Open pine needle coiling using fascicles by Judy Richie

- ✓ Are the ends of pine needles (without tips) sticking out of the coil? They should not, unless it is part of the design.
- ✓ Pine needle handle should be able to be held and handled without ends sticking into handler.
- ✓ Is the beginning of the coil hidden or covered with the following coil? It should be.
- ✓ Is the ending of coil abrupt? It should not be. The coil, including pine needles, should be feathered/tapered so it does not suddenly stop.

Closed Coil

- ✓ Is the core of coil visible in a closed coil? (It should not be)
- ✓ If a pattern is used for the closed coil design, is it consistent?
- ✓ Is the wrapping of the coil neat and consistent? (The wrapping material should not overlap itself)

Scoring Criteria.

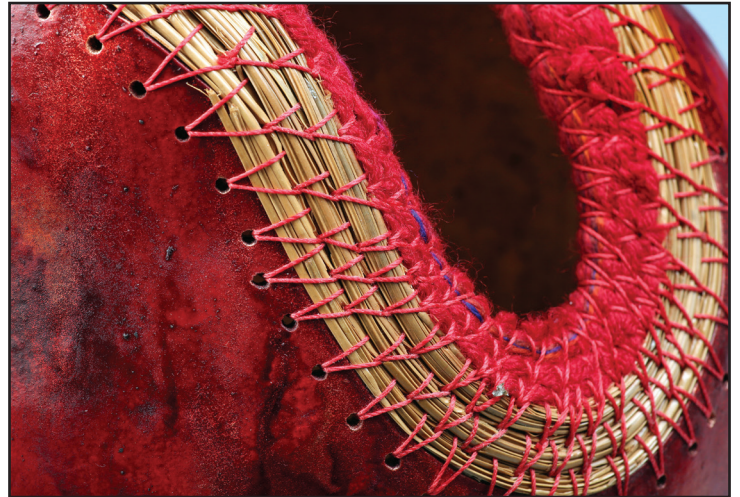
With all of the factors presented above that are to be taken into consideration you may wonder how does it translate into the AGS Scoring Criteria. Originality of design differentiates



Closed coiling by Bonnie Gibson, AZ

between those based on patterns and/or created in a class or from a tutorial from those that were designed by the entrant. Craftsmanship is the details covered above. Things like attention to detail for the stitching, uniformity quality for the entire coiled piece, no obvious flaws, it is even, neat and has a finished appearance. Creativity & artistry is the Wow factor and overall appeal. Color, finish, accessories & decorations is how well the coiling is enhanced by other aspects of the entry. It could be the gourd shape, color, embellishments that add a little something but do not become the feature or take away from the coiling, in this case. Finally, Appropriate for category is referring to what was mentioned at the beginning. A nice rim treatment to almost any gourd is desirable to give it that finished look, BUT in this category the coiling should predominate.

What is the main difference when judging coiling entries in the Novice, Intermediate and Advanced divisions? It is in the Craftsmanship. As the entrants advance from one division to the next, so too is the expectation that the art will demonstrate more attention to detail and greater amounts of complexity. Entries are purposely separated into these divisions so entries are judged among those of similar degrees of prior experience.



Coiling detail by Toni Best, CA

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. 🍷