

A Suggested Check List for Evaluating Your Own Quilt

or

So, what are judges judging, anyway, and do I want to choose my quilt to be judged?

Design:

- All elements (borders, sashings, bindings, piecing, appliqué and quilting) appear unified and proportionate in size and scale to the overall quilt.
- No single element should create a distraction.
- Color and fabrics used should create contrast and interest.

General Appearance:

- Free of pet hair, odors, tears, loose threads.
- Free of marking lines on front and back.
- Quilt lies flat against wall or on a table.
- Quilt should be free of obvious technical problems.

Borders:

- No puckers, tucks, waves or other distortions.
- Corners should be 90 degrees square (unless otherwise intended).
- Mitered corners should extend directly into the inner corner.
- Long, straight edges should be straight (unless otherwise intended).
- Seams in borders should be inconspicuous.
- Borders should create a frame for a quilt and not appear as an afterthought.
- Width of borders should be proportionate to the quilt.

Piecing:

- Corners and points should align perfectly and be free of bulk.
- Curves should be smoothly curved and straight lines should be straight.
- Points should extend to the seam line and not be cut off.
- Thread used for piecing should match or blend with fabric.
- Seam allowance should be an even and consistent width, trimmed to

minimize bulk and consistently pressed open or to one side.

- There should be no evidence of "shadowing" which is defined as dark fabrics showing through to light fabrics.
- Piecing should be secure with no gaps or loose stitches along seam line.

Appliqué:

- Marking lines should not be visible on front or back. Curves should be smoothly curved with no distortion. Straight lines should be straight.
- Points should be sharp and free of bulk.
- Raw edge appliqué should be firmly attached.
- Stitches should be small, secure and invisible, unless used as a decorative element.
- Thread used should match or blend, unless used as a decorative element.
- Identical pieces should be consistent in size and shape.

Quilting:

- The quilting design should enhance and not detract from the quilt.
- Quilting should be appropriate to the piece (e.g., no formal feathers on a folk-art quilt).
- Quilting density should adequately fill the space (e.g., the judge may note that the quilt could benefit from additional quilting in a specific area or that quilting is so dense it distorts the quilt).
- Backtracking should perfectly follow the seam line.
- Curves should be smooth and straight lines should be straight.
- Starts and stops should not be visible.
- Knots should be buried.
- Thread used for quilting should match or blend and not create a distraction.

Stitches:

- Stitches should be even and consistent on the top and the bottom.
- Stitches should not lie flat on the top or bottom.
- Stitches should be free of tension issues.
- Hand stitches should evenly and consistently penetrate all three layers of the quilt.

Binding:

- Binding should be full of batting completely to the edge.
- Binding should be a consistent width throughout.
- Mitered corners should be 90 degrees square, folded in the same direction and stitched close on both the front and the back. All four corners should match.
- Thread used to secure binding should match or blend with binding.
- Stitches should be small, tight and secure. Binding joints should be inconspicuous and free of bulk.

Embellishments:

- Embellishments should be securely and invisibly attached.
- Thread used should match or blend, unless used as a decorative element.
- Embellishments should enhance the quilt and not create a distraction.
- Embellishments should be appropriate to the quilt (e.g., no beads on a baby quilt).

Note: The suggested evaluation criteria included above is not intended to be all inclusive of what judges consider when evaluating quilts for award recognition, but rather to provide a strong foundation in assessing your own quilt prior to entering a quilt show.

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