



## Southern Arizona Clay Artists. Jurying Guidelines

### Jury Intentions:

There are standards of good craftsmanship and artistry to which all SACA juried artists should aspire, and SACA must ensure that we present high quality work at juried shows and exhibitions. By presenting our finest work at shows and exhibitions, we help educate viewers and further SACA's mission "to provide a greater understanding and appreciation for clay to the community at large." Jury sessions may also provide helpful feedback to artists to assist their continued development.

### Jury Requirements:

1. Register and pay for the jury session on the SACA website by the deadline. Complete the Artist Form for all five pieces you will bring.
2. Read all the Jury Guidelines and tips for jurying.
3. Bring five pieces of your best work to the session. Your pieces should fit well in a space approximately 30"x30". Affix a small 1"x1" label to each piece in a prominent position with a number from 1-5. If your pieces are too large for that space, contact the Jury Coordinator to ask for accommodation.
4. Bring any stands, easels, and fabrics to display your pieces to best advantage.

### Do's and Don'ts of Jurying:

1. **Do bring your best work.** Please make sure all pieces are well made, clean, and free of cracks, dust, soot, dirt, smudges and fingerprints. The primary criterion for acceptable work is good workmanship.
2. **Don't bring seconds.** Construction must be of high quality. Don't bring work with cracks, S-cracks, chips, splitting seams, uneven walls, rough or sharp edges, or obvious repairs. Standing pieces should have a stable base or footing and stand on their own. All work should exhibit a finished appearance with *smooth bottoms*. Please make sure any feet, legs, handles, and the like are well built and solidly affixed. Use caution in attaching any additional media such as rocks, feathers, wire, gems, etc.; they should augment the work in an attractive way.
3. **Do make sure pieces function as intended.** Clay work intended for food or drink must have food-safe glazes and functional forms. Hanging pieces must have sound hanging devices. Vases must hold water. Also judge the weight of your piece versus its intended function. Lids should fit well, with smoothed mating surfaces on lid and vessel.
4. **Don't leave any doubt about functionality.** As you know, raku and many low-fired pieces are not safe for food or liquids. Please mark such items with paint or permanent marker, or enclose an information sheet about proper usage. Also, if a decorative vessel won't hold water, it should be so marked.



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5. **Do bring pieces appropriately glazed.** Work should be free of glazing flaws such as overruns, thin areas, sharp edges, crazing, bubbling, crawling, or pin holes except when *clearly intended* for special effects. Good glazing can punch up an otherwise standard form and help demonstrate the artist's personality.
6. **Do be original.** Whatever the construction technique, make sure your work demonstrates your own imagination and originality. Show your own creativity, individuality and knowledge of the medium. Deriving inspiration from another is all right as long as the composition, colors and/or details make the work uniquely your own.
7. **Do try a trial-run at home.** Set up your presentation and view it through another's eyes. Get opinions from others; teachers and professionals may offer helpful insights.

### A Discussion about Aesthetics and Originality:

Perhaps the element least understood in jurying is "aesthetics" and it is the hardest to define. Aesthetically sound work displays an understanding of the elements and principles of good design – shape, line, color, texture, balance and composition. Good aesthetics clearly demonstrate the artist's voice and personality, as well as intention and "body of work." Here is some juror feedback from prior sessions to help shed light on how to assess this element of artwork.

- Aesthetically sound work is original and unique with a clear voice from the artist. We all learn at first by copying, but eventually the true artist moves toward work which demonstrates his/her own personality, vision, and original ideas. Surface decoration techniques offer the most opportunities for creating unique work.
- An identifiable "body of work" makes a positive aesthetic statement. When an artist displays pieces with correlating elements, it usually strengthens the presentation and helps define the artist's "voice." This can be done through repeating ideas, similar glaze colors or techniques, repeating forms or other decorative elements. Some artists may believe they can best demonstrate their knowledge of a range of techniques with wildly different pieces, but the display could end up looking disorienting instead of coherent.
- On the other hand, pieces which are all too similar in form and color make a boring display. Similar forms need individual personalities. Create ways to meld repeating elements into an interesting display with a defined voice.
- The use of color often makes a favorable impact. If the work does not feature the use of color, use interesting elements of form or texture to make the best impression.
- The word "original" is also complicated. In a medium with thousands of years of history, new forms and methods are scarce. But even classic forms can be made unique with a twist (sometimes literally) in shape or decoration.



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- Incorporate commercially available tools and forms with discretion. The easy availability of stamps, texturizers, slip cast forms, decals, and more offer abundant opportunities for creativity. Strive to use them with moderation. For example, a commercial slip cast plate dipped in two glaze colors would hardly be classified original. But a slip casting form created by the artist clearly makes the work unique. A purchased slip cast form must be made personal by applying truly unique surface decorations.

It is true that beauty is in the eye of the beholder, and what inspires one person may put off another. Above all, display pieces that best inform the viewer of your own unique creativity and personality. Learning how to prepare for jurying also better prepares artists for other types of displays such as shows or exhibits.

### **Juror Information:**

Jurors are recruited from the SACA membership and from local clay educators and professionals. They typically have many years of experience and/or training, and a willingness to help raise the level of expertise among SACA members. They are sensitive to the anxieties inherent in the jury process and direct their comments to the purpose of the member's education and growth.

Each jury session strives to maintain the anonymity of each artist. Numbers are assigned in place of names. Forms are provided to allow jurors to write comments and/or numerically rate the artists and each of their pieces. Jurors first evaluate each artist independently, and then as a group discuss to arrive at a consensus.

The jurors' comments are collected by the Jury Coordinator and are available to pass along to the artists. The administrator emails each artist within two days to give the jury's decision. The jury results are "Accepted" or "Deferred." Deferrals are meant by the jurors to say the artist is not ready yet to participate in a juried show, but the artist is encouraged to seek help from teachers or professionals and try again later.