Art Division

**Submit Top Three Finalists in Each Category -** Facilities may submit the top three finalists in each category. A formal competition is not required at the local level but is strongly encouraged. All eligible Veterans should be given the opportunity to participate regardless of degree of talent.

**National Judging and Results -** The national judging will occur in October-December via the digital image judging process with results being announced in January. VA Local Staff Contacts at each facility will be notified of the competition results via E-mail and through Microsoft Teams channel: NVCA Competition-Local Staff Contacts. All first-place winners from the national level of the competition will be invited to attend the National Veterans Creative Arts Festival.

**\*IMPORTANT – When shipping national first place artwork to the Festival it is required that NO GLASS** **be used.** The artwork can be left without a protect layer or if a protective layer is needed, **Plexiglas, (not glass) must be** **used**. This requirement is in place due to the risk of potential damage to the artwork and for the safety of those who will be unpacking the artwork.

**First-Place National Winning Veterans** **Invited to the Festival** - Veterans invited to the Festival and who accept the invitation to attend must commit to participating fully in the Festival week to the best of their ability. The Festival week is structured with daily workshops, seminars, rehearsals, exhibitions, and the stage show performance. Veterans should not view their attendance at the Festival as a vacation experience. While there are downtimes, attendance and full participation is required at all scheduled events.

## Veteran Artists, Writers, Performers who are also VA Employees

VA employees who are eligible to compete and if invited to attend the Festival event, must use annual leave (AL), compensatory time off (CT), sick leave (SL) or disabled veteran leave (DVL) (SL and DVL are only appropriate when the individual’s participation is part of their required medical treatment/ordered by their provider), travel CT, or, leave without pay (LWOP). Normal leave approval procedures and rules, as outlined in VA Handbook 5017 and applicable labor agreements, apply.

Art Division Rules

1. All artwork entered (except for the Military Combat Experience) must have been **completed/photographed after October 1, 2023**. Artwork submitted in a prior year in any form of completion may not be entered again.
2. Veterans need to communicate (as early as January 2024) with their local VA facility to find out their local competition deadline date.
3. No one Veteran will be allowed to enter more than three art categories and one group category in the art division. **Veterans may only submit one entry per category.**
4. **Veterans may only submit one entry per category.** A Veteran may not have more than one entry in a category moving forward to the national level of the competition.
5. Veterans who have received a gold medal in the same category from any of the 5 divisions (art, creative writing, dance, drama, and music) for two consecutive years must enter a different category the third year. Failure to comply with this rule will result in the entry being disqualified.
6. References to diagnosis and explanations of emotional or personal content related to the Veteran will not be read or communicated to the national judges. The exception to this rule is an entry submitted into a category that requires a write-up.
7. Complete the art entry form with detail about the mediums and techniques used. This information is crucial to the judging process and is shared with the judges.
8. All art entries must be created solely by the Veteran and/or Veterans submitting the art entry.
9. Entries that contain a combination of art and writing should be entered into the Mixed Arts category in the Drama division – see page 46, Category #13.
10. Reproductions of another artist’s original two-dimensional artwork, photographs, or computer-generated art (including inkjet, Giclee and other types of reproduction methods) will not be accepted. The use of Giclee is only acceptable in the following categories: Printmaking, Black and White Photography, Color Photography and Digital Art.
11. All two-dimensional artwork must be exhibition ready (ready to hang for display).
12. If an entry contains a craft kit, it must go into a craft kit category. All materials needed to complete the project are supplied in the kit. Embellishments may be made to the assembled kit using non-kit items. Entries containing more than one kit will be disqualified (with the exception of the combined kit category).
13. GUNS, BLADES, KNIVES or other WEAPONS will **not** be accepted due to VA regulations banning these items from VA facilities.
14. Chess sets, dipped art, and puzzles (including puzzle kits) will not be accepted.
15. Entries that include personal collections such as spoons, medals, or coins (where the content of the entry is not created by the Veteran) will not be accepted.
16. Two electronic jpeg images may be submitted for each two-dimensional entry. Please include one image of the art entry in its entirety and one image of the art entry in more detail. **(Optimal image file size is 1 MB or greater but no larger than 10 MB.)**
17. Three electronic jpeg images for each three-dimensional entry will be accepted. Please include one image from the front of the art entry in its entirety, one image from the back or side of the art entry in its entirety, and one image of the art entry close up in more detail. **(Optimal image file size is 1 MB or greater but no larger than 10 MB.)**
18. Sets in the fine arts and applied arts may contain **no more than three** **pieces**. The pieces must relate to one another in an obvious way for the judges to classify as a set. **No sets** are allowed in the kit categories, unless a single kit contains a set such as a set of suncatcher Christmas ornaments in which case, no more than 3 pieces may be submitted for judging.

Further clarification of sets:

* Examples of two-dimensional sets are diptychs, triptychs, or series—no more than three separate pieces of artwork that are clearly intended to be displayed together as ONE PIECE with equal size and framing. Imagery/content must relate to each other in clear and obvious way.
* Three-dimensional sets must relate to each other in an obvious way and may contain no more than three pieces for judging purposes.
1. **Artwork Size Restrictions** - Each national art entry must be able to fit into **one box**. The box can be up to 150 lbs., up to 165 inches in length and girth combined. Length cannot exceed 108 inches. To measure packages, use the following formula: **length + 2x width + 2x height.**

**Step 1.** Determining Length - Measure the longest side of the package, rounding to the nearest inch. This is your length.

**Step 2.** Determining Girth (2x Width + 2x Height). Measure the width of the package, rounding to the nearest inch. Multiply this number by 2. Measure the height of the package, rounding to the nearest inch. Multiply this number by 2. Add these two numbers together. This is your girth.

**Step 3.** Add the length and the girth together. This is your package measurement.

**\*Entries that exceed the weight and measurements indicated above will be disqualified.**

1. Veterans who are invited to the Festival and accept the invitation to attend must commit to participating fully in the Festival week to the best of their ability. The Festival week is structured with daily workshops, seminars, rehearsals, exhibitions, and the stage show performance. Veterans should not view their attendance at the Festival as a vacation experience. While there are downtimes, attendance and full participation is required at all scheduled events.

NEW – Art Division Category List

There are changes to categories in the Art Division. Please read the definitions carefully. There are no longer three subdivisions (Fine Art, Applied Art, and Kits). Like/similar categories have been grouped together.

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| --- | --- | --- | --- | --- |
| **GROUP A** **Categories 1-17** |  | **GROUP B** **Categories 18-34** |  | **GROUP C** **Categories 35-50** |
| **Cat. #** | **Category Name** |  | **Cat. #** | **Category Name** |  | **Cat. #** | **Category Name** |
| 1 | Acrylic Painting |  | 18 | Carving |  | 35 | Leather Carving/Tooling/Stamping |
| 2 | Oil Painting |  | 19 | Woodworking |  | 36 | Leather Kit |
| 3 | Watercolor |  | 20 | Wood Building Kit |  | 37 | Metalwork |
| 4 | Monochromatic Drawing |  | 21 | Collage |  | 38 | Glasswork |
| 5 | Colored Drawing |  | 22 | Assemblage |  | 39 | Scroll Saw/Fretwork |
| 6 | Pastels |  | 23 | Mosaic |  | 40 | Mixed Media |
| 7 | Sculpture |  | 24 | Mosaic Kit |  | 41 | Model Building (Plastic, Metal, Wood) Kit |
| 8 | Pottery |  | 25 | Crocheting/Knitting/Knotting |  | 42 | Diorama |
| 9 | Slip-Cast Ceramics |  | 26 | Original Design in Needlework |  | 43 | Craft Coloring Kit |
| 10 | Stained or Painted Figurines |  | 27 | Needlework Pattern |  | 44 | Color by Number Kit |
| 11 | Figurine Painting Kit |  | 28 | Needlework Kit |  | 45 | Suncatcher or Sand Art Kit |
| 12 | Pyrography |  | 29 | Original Design in Fiber Arts |  | 46 | Combined Kit |
| 13 | Transfer/Engraving Art Kit |  | 30 | Fiber Arts Pattern |  | **Special Recognition Categories** |
| 14 | Printmaking |  | 31 | Fiber Arts Kit |  | 47 | Physical Health Recovery |
| 15 | Black & White Photography |  | 32 | Weaving Kit  |  | 48 | Mental Health Recovery |
| 16 | Color Photography |  | 33 | Beadwork |  | 49 | Combat Experience |
| 17 | Digital Art |  | 34 | Jewelry (not beads) |  | 50 | Group Art  |

Group A – Categories 1-17

1. **Acrylic Painting** - The creation of original work by applying acrylic paint to a surface. The surface is not limited to canvas; it can be on wood, plaster, leather, metal, glass, etc.
2. **Oil Painting** - The creation of original work by applying oil paint, oil sticks, or oil pastels to a surface. The surface is not limited to canvas; it can be on wood, plaster, leather, metal, etc. Encaustic painting should be entered into this category.
3. **Watercolor** - The creation of work using watercolor paint. The surface is not limited to canvas; it can be on wood, plaster, leather, metal, etc.
4. **Monochromatic Drawing** - A monochromatic drawing consists of lines that use a single color and shades of that color that may be done using pencil, ink, charcoal, etc. Any use of additional color should be entered into colored drawing.
5. **Colored Drawing** - A colored drawing consists of lines of two or more colors and may be done using colored pencils, markers, etc.
6. **Pastels** - An art medium in the form of a stick, consisting of pure powder pigment and a binder. A pastel is usually a painting rather than drawing because the color is applied in masses rather than lines. Note: Oil pastels should be entered into the Oil Painting category.
7. **Sculpture** - Art created by shaping, combining, modeling, or casting materials such as plastic, clay, textiles, wax, or polymers into a work of art. They may be free standing or relief. Note: Slip-cast clay should be entered into the slip-cast category. Carved sculptures should be entered into the Carving category, metal sculptures should be entered into the Metalwork category, and glass sculptures should be entered in the Glasswork category.
8. **Pottery** - A functional piece of fired ceramic ware (bowl, vase, pot, etc.) The form must be wheel-thrown or hand-built, not slip cast in a mold. Poured ceramics belong in Slip-Cast ceramics categories. Sculptural clay pieces should be entered into the Sculpture category. Porcelain is included in this category.
9. **Slip-Cast Ceramics -** Clay pieces formed by pouring slip in a mold, fired, glazed, painted and/or stained. Note: Entries that contain premade bisque pieces that are painted and/or stained, as well as glazed, are to be entered into the painted ceramic category.
10. **Stained or Painted Figurines** (formerly known as Stained or Painted Ceramics) - Pre-made 3 dimensional figurines (ceramic, plaster, plastic, metal, or wood) stained or painted by the Veteran that did not come with diagrams or instructions. Judging is based solely on application of stain or paint.
11. **Figurine Painting Kit** - Pre-made 3 dimensional figurines (ceramic, plaster, plastic, metal, or wood) stained or painted by the Veteran by following a diagram and/or instructions included in the kit.
12. **Pyrography** - An original design burned into a surface by using wood burning tools. This process is typically done on wood but can also be done on leather and other surfaces. Reference images must be original to the Veteran. Any pre-made designs (including photo reference not original to the Veteran) must be entered in Transfer/Engraving Kit. Laser engravings are not accepted.
13. **Transfer/Engraving Art Kit** - Copper tooling kits, foil scratch art kits and wood burning kits are included in this category which involves incising images, designs, or patterns onto a surface by rubbing, scratching, burnishing, cutting, or burning. Laser engravings are not accepted.
14. **Printmaking** - Printmaking is the process in which an impression is made by any method involving transfer from one surface to another. It consists of an original print or proof from a master plate created by the Veteran through such processes as aquatint, drypoint, lithography, etching, woodcut, engraving, etching, Intaglio, monoprint, screen print, woodcut. Computer graphics must be entered into Digital Art category.
15. **Black & White Photography** - A monochromatic photograph using black and white and varying shades of grey or sepia tones. Photographs can be printed on any surface but must be mounted and/or framed and ready to hang for display. This category includes both film and digital forms of photography. Sepia and other tonal prints such as cyanotypes (blueprints) should be submitted into this category. Photographs can be edited using apps.
16. **Color Photography** - A color photograph. Photographs can be printed on any surface but must be mounted and/or framed and ready to hang for display. This category includes both film and digital forms of photography. Photographs can be edited using apps.
17. **Digital Art** - 2D Art that was completely created using digital technology. The work is created entirely through software or applications. All original entries must be printed, mounted, and framed to qualify for this competition.

It is required that in addition to listing the software programs or applications used, techniques must also be detailed in the “mediums/techniques used” section of the entry form.

Note: 3D printed artwork will not be accepted. Photographs, animation, and videos will be disqualified. Digitally enhanced/edited photography should be entered into either the Black and White Photography or the Color Photography categories.

Group B – Categories 18-34

1. **Carving** - Decorative art achieved by carving away unwanted materials from an original piece of material. It may be relief or in the round. Material used includes stone, wood, ivory, and other hard substances. Carved pieces that are embellished with paint or other materials will be judged on the quality of the carving only. Enter pieces in which embellishment is 50% or more of the design into the Mixed Media Category.
2. **Woodworking** - This refers to pieces of constructed of wood that have a functional/useful purpose, such as a jewelry box, a clock, etc. Wood lathe work or wood turning is included in this category. Pieces that begin as pre-made "blanks" (i.e. pens, birds) should be entered into the kit category.
3. **Wood Building Kit***-* A wood building kit such as pens, birdhouses, carousels, cup racks, spice shelves, etc.
4. **Collage** - A 2D work of art that may include newspaper clippings, ribbons, bits of colored or hand-made papers, portions of other artwork, photographs, etc., glued to a surface. Scrapbooks are not allowed.
5. **Assemblage** - A 3D work of art made from combinations of found or purchased objects. Personal collections alone (for example: coin collections, medal collections, etc.) will not be accepted. 3D scenes should be entered into Diorama Category
6. **Mosaic** - A work of art produced by arranging together small pieces of hard materials such as stone, tile, glass, etc. This category also includes quilling.
7. **Mosaic Kit** - A work of art produced by arranging together small pieces of hard materials such as stone, tile, glass, etc., by following a diagram and/or instructions included in the kit. Woodscapes, diamond painting, and pixel art would be included in this category.
8. **Crocheting/Knitting/Knotting** - The interlocking of fibers using a variety of techniques including, tatting, fly tying, macrame, etc., to create 2D or 3D pieces.
9. **Original Design in Needlework** - **Original artwork** created solely by the Veteran, **NOT using a sourced pattern or kit materials provided by a manufacturer,** created entirely by the Veteran using needle and thread. This includes stitchery, needlepoint, quilting, sewing a garment, hand-sewn soft sculpture, embroidery, cross stitch, beaded embroidery, crewelwork, etc.
10. **Needlework Pattern** - Artwork made by **following a sourced pattern or instructions while incorporating original design choices**, created entirely by the Veteran using needle and thread. This includes stitchery, needlepoint, quilting, sewing a garment, hand-sewn soft sculpture, embroidery, cross stitch, beaded embroidery, crewelwork, etc.
11. **Needlework Kit** - Artwork made by **following a sourced pattern with materials included in a kit or outlined in the instructions,** created entirely by the Veteran using needle and thread. This includes stitchery, needlepoint, quilting, sewing a garment, hand-sewn soft sculpture, embroidery, cross stitch, beaded embroidery, crewelwork, etc.
12. **Original Design in Fiber Arts** - **Original artwork** created solely by the Veteran, **NOT using a sourced pattern or materials** provided by a manufacturer, utilizing a substance that can be separated into threadlike parts to create a design. This includes felting, latch hook, rug punching, string art, basketry, or weaving.
13. **Fiber Arts Pattern** - Artwork made by **following a sourced pattern or instructions while incorporating original design choices**, utilizing a substance that can be separated into threadlike parts to create a design. This includes felting, latch hook, rug punching, string art, basketry, or weaving.
14. **Fiber Arts Kit** - Artwork made by **following a sourced pattern with materials included in a kit or outlined in the instructions**, utilizing a substance that can be separated into threadlike parts to create a design. This includes felting, latch hook, rug punching, string art, basketry, or weaving.
15. **Weaving Kit** - A kit that uses string, wood, fiber, etc. to create a design. This category includes string art kits, basket weaving kits, dream catcher kits and bead weaving kits.
16. **Beadwork** - Beads of any kind are used to create a design. Examples would include **jewelry that incorporates beads** and other items made on a beading loom, hand-woven, etc. Beaded embroidery should be entered into one of the Needlework Categories
17. **Jewelry (not beads)** - Jewelry pieces made through casting, channeling, lost-wax, wire wrapping, etc. **Jewelry incorporating beads should be entered in the Beadwork category**.

Group C – Categories 35-50

1. **Leather Carving/Tooling/Stamping** -Involves the use of shaped implements (stamps) or other leather carving tools, examples include Swivel knife, veiner, beveler, pear shader, etc. Pre-cut leather pieces may be used. Kits are not accepted in this category.
2. **Leather Kit** - A kit that comes pre-cut, pre-punched, pre-embossed and ready to finish, stain and/or lace. Kits in which the Veteran adds **Carving/Tooling/Stamping will be judged in the Leather Carving/Tooling/Stamping category.**

1. **Metalwork** - The primary material used is metal. Tooling or punching a design or transfer, or metal assembled into a three-dimensional piece for decorative purposes are included in this category. Lathe work using metal is included in this category. Copper tooling should be entered into Transfer/Engraving Art Kit category.
2. **Glasswork** - Glass is used as the primary medium. Examples would include stained glass, hand-blown glass, fused glass and glass etching and enameling. Commercially shaped glass items that have been painted would be in one of the Fine Arts Painting categories.
3. **Scroll Saw/Fretwork** - Decorative open patterns cut out of wood or metal using a scroll saw and/or files. Wood intarsia and marquetry are now included in this category. Laser cutting is not accepted here.
4. **Mixed Media** - The use of two or more **distinct categories** in the creation of a single piece of art, however kits are not allowed in this category. Entries in this category must include a description detailing categories and mediums/techniques used. Pieces must be made up of equal parts of all categories used. Categories in the same technique family cannot be combined.

Acceptable Entry Examples: Acrylic Painting and Monochromatic Drawing

Glasswork and Woodworking

Not Acceptable Entry Examples: Acrylic Painting and Oil Painting

Pyrography and Carving

1. **Model Building (Plastic, Metal, Wood) Kit** - Snap together, glue together, or assembled plastic, metal, and/or wood model kits. Models depicting three-dimensional representation of a display or scene should be entered into the Diorama Category.
2. **Diorama** - A model representing a three-dimensional scene. National winning entry will not be shipped to the Festival. Winning entry will be displayed via a poster board.

1. **Craft Coloring Kit** - A pre-printed design on fabric, paper, wood, canvas, rugs, etc. that the Veteran fills in with colors of their choice using colored pencils, markers, paint, etc.
2. **Color by Number Kit** - Involves applying paints, colored pencils, markers, etc., to the outlined numbered areas.
3. **Suncatcher or Sand Art Kit** - Suncatchers involve the application of transparent glass stains on a pre-formed and outlined plastic shape. Sand art involves colored sand applied to pre-shaped adhesive areas.
4. **Combined Kit** - The integration of two or more **distinctly different** kits to create a **single** work of art.  Multiple model car kits combined or together to create a new model car is not an acceptable entry into this category.

*Categories continued on next page*

### Art Division Special Recognition Categories

The intent of these categories is to reinforce the concept of the arts as therapy, where an individual uses artistic expression to facilitate successful treatment outcomes. Entries and their accompanying written statement/narrative should focus on how the arts are used by the individual(s) to rise above limitations.  **Judging for the categories below equally take into consideration the written narrative as well as the skill involved in the artwork.**

Entries in all four of the categories below **MUST** also include:

* **A Word document containing a typed statement/narrative** (50 to 250 words) composed by the Veteran and/or their VA staff contact person explaining how art relates to the Veteran(s)’ experience. **Entries submitted without a write-up will not be judged.**
* Consent forms 10-3203 **and** 10-5345 (links referenced on Page 10) must be signed and dated by the Veteran. The staff contact person submitting the entry for the Veteran should retain and safeguard the signed consent forms at their VA facility.
1. **Physical Health Recovery -** Entries that recognize individuals who exhibit creative expression through the visual arts while possessing significant physical challenges. Entries must meet one of this competition’s Art Division category definitions.
2. **Mental Health Recovery -** Entries that recognize individuals who exhibit creative expression through the visual arts while possessing significant emotional or mental health challenges. Entries must meet one of this competition’s Art Division category definitions.
3. **Combat Experience** - The Veteran must have experienced combat duty during World War II, Korean War, Vietnam, Gulf War, Grenada, Panama, Kosovo, Somalia and other recognized combats or current combat operations. The artwork and narrative must relate to the Veteran’s personal experience in that war or conflict but does not need to be a graphic representation of that combat experience.

Unlike the other art categories, there are NO restrictions as to when the Combat Experience artwork was created however entries submitted previously into this category are not eligible to compete again. Entries must meet one of this competition’s Art Division category definitions however, kits are not accepted.

1. **Group Art** - A single art entry created by a group of Veterans. Entries must meet one of this competitions Art Division category definitions.

Narrative should explain the creative process, goals of the group, and other helpful information. Entries submitted without a write-up will not be judged. Judging for this category equally takes into consideration the typed narrative as well as the skill involved in the artwork.

Group size is not restricted however, only up to 5 eligible Veterans from the winning entry will be funded by the Festival. Veterans from multiple VA medical facilities can work together but the entry must be submitted by only one VA local staff contact person. All size and weight restrictions must be followed.