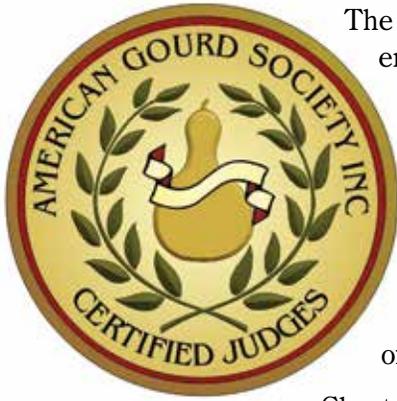


# AGS Judging Criteria: Overall Appearance



The purpose of Competitions is to encourage and reward gourd growers and artists. They should be designed to be appealing to beginner/hobbyist gourders as well as accomplished artists. Categories and awards are to be inclusive of all members. While winning should be a source of pride, the competition should foster a sense of accomplishment for all who enter.

Chapters establish the Divisions and Classes/Categories that are most suitable for their members, as well as what awards they will offer. Chapters also staff the competition with teams of judges and clerks. AGS trains and certifies Judges and encourages Chapters to engage one or more AGS Certified Judge to judge the entries. Different teams will be assigned to different categories to judge based on their desire or qualifications, by the head judge.

judges, regardless of division and category. They also use the same numerical, 1 to 5 with 5 being the best, scoring methodology whether using the detailed, medium or short scoring form.

There are four sections on the judge's form and this article will cover the first section: Overall Appearance. Overall Appearance asks judges to evaluate each entry based on the following criteria: overall appeal, artistic design, stands out from the competition, originality and artistic creativity. We should also note if the entry meets the overall requirement to be predominantly gourd. Each judge will give a numerical score between 1 and 5.

**Overall appeal.** Judges will approach a category with a number of entries and look carefully at each entry, both from a distance and close-up. There will be something special about each entry that the judges will notice.

**Artistic design.** Judges will notice if the artist has used a fresh approach or if it is something they've seen before.

**Stands out from the competition.** Some entries have a "wow" factor.

**Originality.** An entry that is a class piece or from a tutorial with minimal changes will score lower than one that is new and different. While these are

the easiest examples to recognize, they are not the only times when an entry might receive a lower score for originality. Below is a little more about this topic.

**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.

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

Score 1 to 5	CRITERIA:	THINGS TO LOOK FOR
	<p><u>Overall appearance:</u></p> <p>Evaluate based on:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Overall appeal</li> <li>• Artistic design</li> <li>• Stand 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>

**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
	<p><b>Overall appearance</b></p> <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>	

**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.

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

Circle Score for each					CRITERIA	COMMENTS
Low	Medium	High				
1	2	3	4	5	Overall appearance	

The New Judging Forms consider the same factors as the older forms but are organized in a manner that encourages consistency among

Continued on page 38

# Judging continued

## 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, comparison will be with expectations for work at that skill level.

CRITERIA:	Score Each: 1 to 5 (best)	THINGS TO LOOK FOR
<p><b><u>Overall appearance:</u></b></p> <p>Evaluate based on:</p> <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>	<input style="width: 50px; height: 30px; border: 1px solid black;" type="text"/>	<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>

### Key Take-Aways.

Judges may wonder, should an entry that is believed to be from a class or tutorial be disqualified? No, but it will lose some points for lack of originality.

Chapters may create exceptions and allow gourds made in a class or from a tutorial. Often, in the Novice Division, class or tutorial-based entries are permitted. A chapter may also create a special “open” category for entries made in a class or from a tutorial. If exceptions indicated it is permitted then no points would be taken-off for lack of originality.

Remember that the gourd must predominate. When you first look at the entry, you should be able to tell that it is a gourd. Occasionally we are challenged in making that determination when the entry is fully encased in clay. Is it a gourd or a sponge cut to look like a gourd? Some shows require photos of the entry during its creation when the gourd is not visible. If that’s not been provided, most will have to decide whether or not to accept the entry and rely on the ethics of the exhibitor.

Lastly, entrants should carefully read the descriptions, rules and guideline documents posted by the Chapter. It will aid in choosing the correct division as well as understanding the category descriptions and possible exceptions.

### A Deeper Dive into Originality

What is Originality? This is often a discussion point among artists and instructors in various art forms, including the gourd world. There is no uniform description or definition.

- Some believe that nothing is truly original any longer and that everything can be traced back to another person. This may be true. We could have seen something, a photo on Pinterest or Instagram, an entry in a prior gourd competition or on display at a show or gallery. Something about it appealed to you and later you are still inspired by it, so you recreate it with your own twist. Even if you could, you don’t know who to give credit to, or even where you saw it. Plus, it was a long time ago anyway. If you are of the belief that nothing is truly original, you probably feel your creation is as original as the other one was, because that was probably based on another piece too.

- Another belief is that if there has been a certain percentage of change when compared to a previous piece, that the new piece is also original. In fact, such an item would be considered a derivative work and only the aspects that were created differently could be considered “original.” Well-known examples are the numerous “versions” of the Mona Lisa and of the Last Supper. Make your versions of what inspired you enough different that most people will not see it as a copy with just a different color and rim or stand.

Are you confused yet? Perhaps these guidelines will help artists, teachers, judges and even chapter show coordinators navigate the world of originality.

**What was your inspiration?** Whether the source of your inspiration was a technique or project from a gourd class, a photo of someone else’s gourd art or artwork from another art form, acknowledging the source of that inspiration is both appropriate and appreciated. Giving credit can be a

specific mention (name or location) in a brief statement when you share your photos on Facebook or Instagram.

**Tip.** *Train yourself to save the name of the artist, the source or location of photos you download or take. You can include it in the file name.*

**Tip:** *Artists can/should add a watermark with their name onto the photos of their art before they post them because when they appear on Pinterest the credits are often lost without a watermark.*

**Re-teaching techniques:** Not everyone can or will travel to gourd shows several states away from home. Those who do are often asked to come home and re-teach the class to their gourd buddies back home. While it seems like no big deal, it's not proper. When someone does this, they are taking the original work of the teacher and appropriating it without permission. Asking for permission is necessary. Some teachers will say, sure thing, and others will ask you to purchase copies of the tutorial – or kits – for each of your friends. Why? Because teaching classes can be a significant part of their income.

Teachers should be prepared for students who may ask for permission. Perhaps you will say, "Sure, go ahead, but please create your own tutorial and not make copies of mine." Perhaps you will sell copies of your tutorial

(printed or PDF) or make kits available. Some teachers will say "No, please do not re-teach my class. I will be traveling and teaching this class for at least another year." Regardless of how you decide to respond to this question, you should always remind your students to give credit to you when they share photos of their class creations on their social media pages.

**How this relates to Judges:** You are encouraged to be aware of the classes being offered at various shows around the country. Check out the Calendar of Events in each issue of The Gourd Magazine and you will see what chapter shows, besides your own, are being held. The website information is listed on the Calendar so you can easily check out the latest classes. Seeing the class photos will help keep you informed so you can recognize class gourds and possible sources of inspiration.

**Chapter show organizers:** Please consider adding a place on your teacher application forms that asks the applicant if the class is their original design or to identify and provide permission from the originator.

AGS would like to hear your thoughts on these Originality topics. Write us at [americangourdsociety@gmail.com](mailto:americangourdsociety@gmail.com) so we can improve our suggestions and practices and share them with our audience. 🍷



Tutorial blog/ Videos  
Bettie Lake's  
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Product Reviews/Gourd Tips  
*Help getting your gourd  
from the field to the art show*  
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