

QUILT SHOW JUDGING TIPS

Ladies of the Lake Quilt Guild

Judging is such a harsh word. It can intimidate even the hardiest among us. A quilt judging is really an evaluation. Every quilt has good qualities. There is always room for improvements. If a quilter receives a constructive comment from a judge, it should be viewed as a learning opportunity, not a criticism. Remember, a quilt judge is trained to know the correct way a quilt should be constructed; but it doesn't mean they possess the skills to create a prize winning quilt. The most important thing is to have fun with the quilting.

The judging process is called the "Pathway", similar to the path a quilt maker takes to construct a quilt. Jody Ohrt, Quilt Judge and Co-Founder of West Coast Quilt Judging Academy, has provided us with the Pathway and components a judge uses to evaluate a quilt.

PATHWAY

VISUAL IMPACT: How the quilt looks. Design elements are evaluated.

DESIGN: The first element the judge considers.

BALANCE: Is the design well balanced creating comfortable visual weight? A lack of balance can distract from the visual impact. Asymmetrical balance should be well planned.

VALUE: The arrangement of dark, medium and light in the design and the use of contrast. Is value used effectively? Dramatic use of contrast enhances the design. Strong use of contrast causes chaos.

COLOR: The use of color and its contribution to the visual impact. Is the use of color well handled?

SCALE: The relative size of one object to another. The combination of varied scale prints can lend more interest to the visual impact. Variety of scale adds interest; too much variety of scale can cause chaos.

UNITY: Creates interest. Does the quilt look like all the parts belong together? Repetition, proximity and continuation will help you achieve unity. All parts of the quilt relate.

GENERAL APPEARANCE

The quilt should be free of stains, pet hair and odors such as smoke, mustiness or mildew. The quilt should lie flat upon completion.

TECHNICAL ASPECTS

CONSTRUCTION OF BLOCKS: Blocks should be square and lie flat. Triangle points should be sharp. Straight pieces

should be straight. Thread color should not be distracting. Seam allowances should not have gaps or open seams. Dark seams should not shadow through light fabric. Stitches between seams should not be visible.

APPLIQUE: Points should be sharp. Curves should be smooth. Inside edges should not fray. Basting stitches should be removed. Thread should match applique piece.

BORDERS: Should be straight. Width of borders should compliment centerfield of quilt.

QUILTING TECHNIQUES

Density – amount of quilting should be evenly distributed over quilt surface. There should be no distortion of the quilt. The back should be free of tucks or pleats. Marking lines should not be visible.

HAND QUILTING: Stitches should be equal length front and back. Tension should be consistent. Size of hand stitches is generally not considered as long as they are of consistent size on the front and back.

MACHINE QUILTING: Tension and stitch length should be even. Starts and stops should not be distracting.

BINDING: Width should be of even width front and back. Should be securely attached with small even stitches. Miters should be stitched front and back. Batting should fill binding. Binding should be smooth and not twisted. Rounded corners should be smooth.

From Connie Cracraft, Judging Committee Chairman...

Your quilt must have a 3" sleeve attached to the top of the back for it to be hung. A pinned on sleeve will not be accepted. Please do not expect your quilt to be accepted if you bring it without the sleeve attached. It will not be accepted at check in. That would be disappointing for you as well as "show goers"!