



# Evaluating 4-H Visual Art Exhibits

## A. Objectives of the 4-H Visual Art Program

4-H'ers should:

1. Have fun creating.
2. Make art decisions and think, feel, and act creatively.
3. Be aware of artists in their community and their country.
4. Be inventive, resourceful and original in problem-solving activities.
5. Explore a variety of art forms and media.
6. Evaluate their art decisions.
7. Learn about art-related careers.

## B. Philosophy of Evaluating Exhibits in the 4-H Visual Art Program

1. The age, ability and previous involvement in the program by the exhibitor should be considered during evaluation.
2. Emphasis during the evaluation should be placed on what the member has done and learned based on the member's goal. If a member has spent thirty hours painting a picture and two hours framing it, the major amount of time and comments should be in relationship to the painting of the piece, not the framing. This does not mean that finishing is not important, nor that it should not be discussed. However, more weight would be given to the actual painting than the framing.
3. Junior members are more apt to relate to statements analyzing both design elements and principles.
4. Projects are evaluated, not members.
5. Projects are evaluated independently, not compared. (The exception to this is when items are compared and a few chosen to be sent to state, outstanding exhibits, or when class champions are designated. It is our preference, at the state level, not to encourage the awarding of grand champions in visual art at the county level.)
6. The purpose of evaluation is for positive learning. Judges are expected to be objective; in the arts this can be particularly difficult. If you have a questionable decision, error in favor of the youth, and try for a good night's sleep!!
7. Judges should be conversant with design terminology and have an interest in youth and art. We suggest all visual art judges read pages 3-9 of the 4-H Visual Art Leaders Manual and also be familiar with the two members manuals.
8. We cannot evaluate creativity or originality, however, we can encourage it during the evaluation process. Pay particular attention to design decisions the member has made. The more decisions the member has made, the more creative opportunities the member has had. Encourage members to choose projects that allow decision making, not just technique learning experiences.
9. There are many low-cost alternatives in the visual art program. When discussing alternate methods with members, remember individual economic situations and rural locations may limit some choices.

## C. Emphasis in the Visual Art Program

1. This project emphasizes creativity and originality. As youth are weaned away from kits and strict adherence to patterns, projects will appear less sophisticated, less adultlike, more youthful. Copyright materials are never appropriate in original art classes. When doing projects for design and media exploration, you may use copyright source of design

for an article used in a personal setting; however, when exhibiting, a copyright design is not allowable because in the fair setting it is on public display.

2. A continued emphasis is that of awareness, understanding, and application of design elements and principles.
3. A continued emphasis is on the understanding of the properties of different media learned by experimentation with media and techniques.
4. Members are expected to set their visual art goals using the art manuals. Not everything they want to learn in art will be found in the manuals, however, the majority of their goals need to be tied to content in the manual.
5. If a 4-H'er has set a goal(s) that can be accomplished by both a classroom assignment and an outgrowth of a 4-H project goal, that's okay. The intent is that a pre-determined goal has been set. The 4-H'er must realize that the evaluation criteria and exhibit guidelines for each opportunity will be different and should prepare accordingly.
6. More emphasis in evaluations of learning experiences and projects throughout the year, not just at fair time.
7. Less emphasis on the end products and greater emphasis on the learning process in the arts throughout the year.

#### **D. Design Trends affecting Projects in Visual Art**

1. Computer aided designs.
2. Vivid colors advanced by sixties influences.
3. Decorated sweatshirts and t-shirts in fashion wear.
4. Continued interest in the country and Victorian look as featured in popular magazines and craft supply stores, evidenced by materials, techniques, and motifs; calicos, nature wreaths, painted wooden ware, stenciling, paper cutting, hearts, geese, lace, mop dolls.
5. The current collecting trend advanced by the decorative accessory merchandisers; coyotes, rabbits, southwestern influence, patriotic motifs.

#### **Resources**

The following are available from each county Extension office or can be ordered online at <https://www.extension.iastate.edu/store/>. Those with PDF may be downloaded and printed.

Celebrate Art, 4-H Visual Art Unit 1, 4H 635A

Art in Your Future, 4-H Visual Art Unit 2, 4H 635B

Sketchbook Crossroads Drawing, Fiber and Sculpture, 4H 638A

Portfolio Pathways Painting, Printing and Graphic Design, 4H 638B

All 4-H'ers are encouraged to start with Unit 1. They may proceed to Unit 2 as their skill and understanding of the arts grow. Older members who continue in the project may find the Sketchbook and Portfolio resources challenging.

#### **Additional Support Material**

4/89/#75596, Celebrate Art: 4-H Visual Art Project, Video, 18 minutes long. Available through county Extension offices and area offices (ages 10-14).

1988, #75563, Introducing Design, video, 20 minutes. Available through county Extension offices and area offices (older youth and adults).

4H-633, Color, basic understanding of color wheel and terms

4H-634, Design: Exploring the Elements and Principles, PDF,

<http://www.extension.iastate.edu/Publications/4H634.pdf>

NCR110, Design Posters, available in county Extension offices, leaders/judges