



# Standards of Quality

Craft Council of British Columbia

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## Background

The Craft Council of British Columbia (CCBC) provides leadership in the craft community by building and promoting the development, viability and appreciation of Canadian Contemporary Craft.

Both CCBC Shop & Gallery locations are programs of the Craft Council of British Columbia (CCBC), a non-profit charity. The CCBC Shop & Gallery shops provide an outlet for the display and sale of contemporary and leading edge fine craft where tradition may have provided inspiration.

As a non-profit, charitable arts service organization we work with contemporary craft professionals and local, provincial and national arts organizations to promote the development of excellence in crafts. Since 1972 we have been making craft more significant in the cultural life of British Columbians and Canadians. Through our public gallery and retail shops on Granville Island and online, we exhibit and interpret contemporary objects in mediums such as ceramic, glass, fiber, metal and wood that honor innovation in art, craft and design and celebrates materials and processes.

The Craft Council of BC has implemented an assessment process to ensure the highest technical quality of craftwork presented for sale under its banner retail opportunities. The following information will help those of you wondering if you are required or wish to submit your work to our Standards of Quality Jury.

CCBC requests that artists also provide a Cultural Context Statement for their work. This means providing a brief description that situates your work in relation to its cultural narrative. Some points to touch on: Who is telling whose story? Who is sharing cultural expressions and knowledge from marginalized communities? Consider the impact of the work in the context the communities reflected in the work.

### WHY?

- As a professional organization working to promote the development, viability and appreciation of fine craft, it is important that all work that is sold or exhibited through CCBC is of predictable quality based on consistent and high standards of production and presentation.
- As a professional/emerging craft maker, you will want to ensure that your work meets the standards of CCBC, which are common to other Canadian craft councils.

## WHO?

- Must be a CCBC member in good standing.
- All artists submitting work to be sold at CCBC Shop & Gallery Granville Island (CH GI) or any other retail outlet that may carry our brand in the future will be required to pass SOQ.
- Artists need to pass SOQ prior to submitting their work to the procurement jury for CH GI. These are completely separate juries with separate intentions and responsibilities.
- Any artist who would like to have their work assessed by a jury of professional makers, at least one of whom will be an expert in your medium.
- This is an opportunity for emerging artists to receive feedback and assistance in presenting themselves and their work in a professional manner.
- Artists will be required to be reassess every 5 years or upon submitting a new product line that significantly differs from previously assessed techniques or design.

## WHAT?

- Artists are requested to submit a minimum of 5 pieces in a particular line of their work for assessment. The jury would need to see a consistency in a body of work, rather than a small sampling of all the work that the artist does (please see examples in Appendix A).
- If the artist is planning to submit more than one of their lines to the procurement jury for sales, they should submit both/all lines to SOQ as separate entries with 5+ pieces of each line.
- CCBC only wants to sell the best work, so please keep this in mind when selecting submission pieces for the jury

## WHERE?

- SOQ juries will be held approximately 4 times/year. Locations and dates will be announced as early in the year as possible.
- Initially the juries will be held in the Lower Mainland in order to have time to assess the process and create a template for juries to take place in other regions.
- The regions will rotate having SOQ juries, depending on the resources available (financial and volunteer) to CCBC and the individual region who is holding the jury.

## WHEN?

- see [website](#) for dates
- Dates for SOQ juries and locations will be announced as early as possible to allow artist time to prepare, hopefully minimum 2 months prior.

- Artist's selling their work under the CCBC name will need to pass SOQ certification every 5 years.

## HOW?

- Artists will email their intention to submit **1 month prior to the jury**. This will allow CCBC staff to engage jurors who will best be able to assess their work.
- Approximately **2 weeks prior to the jury**, artists will complete on-line submission detailing the artwork info, artist's statement, technique and any other information that may be helpful to the jury. See **Appendix B**
- Artists will ship or bring their work to the SOQ location, ensuring that it arrives at least 2 days prior to the jury so it can be catalogued and set up for viewing by the jurors.
- After the jury date, it may take up to 2 weeks for the jurors' info to be compiled. An assessment sheet will be emailed to the artist with jurors' feedback.
- Individual feedback appointments with the juror who is expert in the artist's medium can be arranged at the request of the artist.
- If your work passes the SOQ in the Lower Mainland and you wish to have your work submitted to a procurement jury for CCBC Shop & Gallery, we can arrange to store your work at CCBC until that jury has been held.

## Scoring Criteria

Using the published CCBC Standards of Quality all submissions will be juried on the following criteria:

- **DESIGN – 20 points**
  - Does the design of the piece match/enhance the expected function?
  - Are the techniques appropriate for the materials chosen?
  - Are the materials and techniques used appropriate for intended function?
  - Does the quality of the materials used match the intended quality of the object?
    - e.g. fine silver-smithing with inexpensive and inferior purchased findings
- **TECHNIQUES – 20 points**
  - Are the techniques used well executed?
  - Are the materials appropriate for the techniques?
  - Is the finishing well done?
    - e.g. skilful wood-turning, but with inadequate sanding etc.
  - If the techniques deviate from the expected norm, is this intentional?

- e.g. seams intentionally on the outside of clothing as a design feature
- **PRESENTATION – 10 points**
  - This would refer to the materials submitted with the craft objects (see Appendix B)
    - Artist's statement
    - Description of materials and techniques
    - Artist's biography
    - List of submitted objects

TOTAL – 50 points

- Artists must receive 45 points to pass SOQ

## General Standards

Please refer to CCBC's Standards of Quality for your related craft in addition to these overall standards.

1. The design of an article must be the original idea of the crafter or a skillful rendering of traditional or classic design.
2. No computerized or commercial patterns, kits or pre-printed background material can be used.
3. Molds are only acceptable only if the artisan made the mold or the molded parts are subordinate to the overall design. Molds or castings need to show consideration for integration of the base form and be consistent with the overall line of work.
4. All electrical components must be CSA approved.
5. All wall-mounted articles must be ready for hanging.
6. All food-bound surfaces must meet Health Canada standards.
7. Care of product: if an item requires instruction on proper care so that it may be maintained and durable over time, that information must be available.
8. A copyrighted design, such as those available electronically or on commercial fabrics, is not legal.
9. Labeling on clothing and textile items are subject to Federal Government labeling legislation. Some items require permanent labels (able to withstand 10 washings) and others require non-permanent labels. Both require dealer contact information and fibre content in percentages.
10. Safety Regulations required for children's products.
11. Place of Origin must be identified.
12. Attention must be paid to the finishing appropriate to the nature of the piece and its purpose.
13. Federal Legislation for safe studio practices in clay and glass.

14. Materials used must be of high quality and appropriate to the function of the finished Object.
15. Pre-manufactured components are permitted only if the components are subordinate to the overall design and craftsmanship of the article (i.e.: pin backs, buttons, hinges etc).
16. Recycled material or found objects are permissible only if the original form is substantively transformed by the craftsperson. Objects made from recycled materials must be clearly labeled.

# Media Specific Criteria

## CLAY

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1. The basic shape must be well proportioned and the piece structurally sound and balanced.
2. Clay must be vitrified for its respective kiln temperature for earthenware, porcelain, and stoneware. Functional ceramics should be free of cracks and warpage. Functional pieces should perform properly; teapot spouts should pass the pour without dripping test, handles must be pleasant to hold, lips, lids and handles must function well.
3. Bases must be smooth. Surplus clay and kiln wash must be removed. Each piece must be properly trimmed and finished. Wax lines must be even.
4. Molds are acceptable only if the molded object and the original model is the design and product of the artisan or the molded parts are subordinate of the overall design of the piece. The mold should not be commercially made unless the mold is of neutral influence on the final aesthetic. Purchased greenware is not permitted.
5. Glazes must meet Health Canada requirements. Glaze ingredients may be requested. No lead glazes on food-bound pieces. No oxides (e.g. copper and cobalt which are toxic in raw form) must be completely combined with the glaze and never left in a raw form on surfaces that may come in contact with food. Glaze must be without bare, pitted or pinhole spots and is free of crazing. Glaze must be selected for the use of the object.
6. Surface decoration must be related in scale and position to the whole piece. Surface decoration must show a high level of understanding and application of design principles. Surface decoration should show that consideration has been given to the integration of the base form into the finished product.
7. Decals must be properly attached and not removable.

A differentiation between functional and sculptural ceramics should be given consideration with the intent of the artist and clearly stated. Not all of the above considerations will apply to sculptural works.

**Note:** the Hazardous Products Act regulates ceramics in Canada. For contact information see Federal Legislation under General Standards Guidelines.

## FIBRE

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The assumption is that the work of fine craft embodies the highest standards of technical execution suited to the function of the object and that deliberate deviations from the standards are justified in the artistic intent. The following are not exhaustive or exclusive lists.

### Categories of Fibre Materials:

Raw and Processed, Hand-made and Commercial, Natural (wool, cotton, silk, soy, hemp, linen, ramie, sisal, leather, cedar, seagrass) and Synthetic (polyester, rayon, microfibre), New and Recycled, plastics, reclaimed garments

### Categories of Techniques: Traditional and Contemporary

Spinning, weaving, felting, hand embroidery, machine embroidery, quilting, knitting, crocheting, surface design, construction.

1. Fibre materials and processes must be lightfast and colour-fast. Pigments must become part of the fibre.
2. Fabrics must be pretreated for shrinkage and texture changes consistent with the end use of the product/object.
3. Washing or care instructions should be provided either on a label or with the artist biography, according to labeling guidelines. This applies to garments and objects. Fabrics that change texture or shape when washed or dry-cleaned must be washed or dry-cleaned before offering for sale.
4. Work must be of original design, but may incorporate ethnic or traditional designs. There must be evidence of the makers' own hands as described in the originality jury criteria.
5. Commercial or computerized patterns or kits may not be used.
6. Attention must be paid to textile finishing details appropriate to the nature and intent of the piece; e.g. felt should be solid when used as a vessel, thread beginnings and endings should be secure on garments, thread tension even if a flat surface is desired, quilts should not unravel with use, wall weavings should not warp over time with its method of hanging.

## GLASS

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This section includes Stained Glass, Blown, Kiln fired, Lamp worked beads, jewelry.

1. The basic shape must be well proportioned and the piece structurally sound and balanced.
2. Glass must be tempered when necessary.
3. Bases must be smooth.

4. Molds are acceptable only if the molded parts are subordinate of the overall design of the piece. The mold should not be commercially made unless the mold is of neutral influence on the final aesthetic.
5. Decals must be properly attached and not removable.

### **Stained Glass**

1. Overall construction must be sturdy with adequate reinforcements such as rebars and brass binding.
2. Glass pieces must fit together properly with all seams, inside and out, and outer edges well beaded. Foil tape even on both sides of glass.
3. Flux and solder remnants removed, clean to the touch.
4. Hanging loops placed in a seam for greatest strength.
5. Mirror pieces should be free of scratches or rot.
6. Painting on glass must be done with kiln fired vitreous paints.

Note: the Hazardous Products Act regulates glass blowing in Canada. For contact information see Federal Legislation.

### **METAL**

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1. Ornamentation must be subordinate to wearability.
2. Functional parts must operate smoothly.
3. Pieces must be cleaned and excess solder minimized.
4. Attachment of metal to metal must be by bolting, riveting, welding, brazing or soldering or by mechanical attachment inherent to the design. Where soldering is not practical, cement is permitted. Epoxy may be used for attaching findings where soldering is impossible. Excess resin must be removed.
5. Commercially manufactured settings and devices for mounting stones are not acceptable. Commercially made stampings or ornamentation is acceptable if subordinate to the overall design.
6. Commercial findings must be of good quality and subordinate to the design. All materials used in the creation of metal craftwork must be of high quality. The quality of subsidiary items (bolts, findings, clasps, chains, etc) must be suitable for the material, finish and workmanship of the article.
7. Jewelry must not contain lead or cadmium bearing alloys if it is in contact with food or skin.
8. Work must be free of tool marks except where intended as design.
9. Seams must be even, completely filled and without excess filler.
10. Sharp edges, burrs, claws must be as smooth as possible. Castings must be free of flashings. No fire-scale.
11. Hardness of stones must be considered in relation to usage. Stones must be securely set. Identification of stone type is required.

12. Sterling and carat marks must be in accordance with Federal Government Legislation.
13. Artists may supply varying length of chain, e.g. 16, 18 or 20-inch chains with clear instructions of how to charge for variations in consumer choice. Chains may be priced separately.
14. General guidelines for molds/castings apply.
15. Iron must be brightened before finishing and rust-proofing applied and sculpture ready for display with appropriate scaffold.

## **MIXED MEDIUM**

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Mixed media can include, but is not limited to: wood, metal, found object (e.g. shells), and sculptural clay with significant additional components, leather, paper (mache, cards), enamels, bookbinding, toys, lamps, leather, and carving.

1. All general standards apply.
2. This category is to accommodate work that does not fall within one vein of medium.
3. Work may be of one or more of the above-mentioned medium.
4. Work should be of a caliber that rises above the materials used. The materials used should be subservient of the overall finished piece.

## **WOOD**

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Wood, wood products, finishes and hardware should be selected to achieve a finished piece that functions well, is durable and aesthetically appealing.

1. Wood should be furniture quality or grade, and free from blemishes unless intended for specific design effect.
2. Wood must be dried to the moisture content appropriate to the design and function of the article.
3. Knots are acceptable if they do not affect structural integrity.
4. Commercially made molds, carvings & trim are not acceptable.
5. Hardware should operate smoothly with the finished product.
6. Finishes need to complement the materials and functionality.
7. Stains should be used to enhance, not disguise materials.
8. Wax and polish if used together must be compatible.
9. All food-bound or toy items must be non-toxic in finish.
10. Toys must meet Health Canada production, material, packaging and labeling regulations (e.g. >3 choking hazard).
11. Joins should be square and secure. Grain direction, orientation and movement must be respected in the construction of the piece. 'Breaking the

- edge' for optimum safety and durability is important. No wood burning. No plywood or MDF.
12. Allowance for alterations in the relative humidity can be expected to alter the dimensions of solid wood.
  13. Surfaces should be smoothly sanded or planed. Ridges left by machines, or chipped ends are not acceptable.
  14. Wood filler should not be used to compensate for inaccurate joints or cover flaws. Screws and nails are to be concealed unless the design requires otherwise. Purchased wooden 'buttons' are not considered an appropriate method of concealing screws and nails. No glue should be visible.
  15. Pencil marks from construction should be removed.
  16. Even finishes, surfaces sanded between coats, smooth to the touch. Finished pieces should be free of sags, brush marks and foreign matter. Sanding scratches should not be visible.
  17. Bottoms, backs and undersides should all be finished.
  18. Lathe work should be executed so that the piece is evenly turned, well balanced and of consistent proportions throughout.

## **SEASONAL**

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This category refers to retail seasons: Valentine's Day, Easter, Canada Day, BC Day, Halloween, Hanukah, Christmas, etc.

1. The general guidelines apply for all seasonal work.
2. The work must be thoughtful, original and well made.
3. Fittings, filler and commercial findings should be subservient to the overall concept of the piece.
4. We do not want kitschy or silly work; rather we would like to see fine craft that enhances the celebrated day or season.

## APPENDIX A

In order for the SOQ jury to adequately assess your work, we request that you submit a body of work of similar intent that shows consistency and excellence in technique. Each piece may be one-of-a-kind, but the techniques and/or designs used should be similar.

This process is meant to help the artist develop professionalism in their work and presentation, and not meant to burden the artist, so please contact CCBC if there are questions or concerns. \*

FOR EXAMPLE:

### 1. CERAMICS:

- Ceramic mugs showing similarity in size, design and function. They need not all be exactly the same, but similar enough that jurors can judge consistency in technique.
- A set of dinnerware in a particular design. In this case, plates, bowls, cups etc. in similar design which show a likeness which would make them collectible as a set.
- A tea set (pot, cups, cream/sugar) would be considered a single line of work as above.
- Vases which are similar in technique, size, shape or design. They may each be one of a kind, but jurors will be able to assess the artist's ability to show consistently good technique in addition to good design.

### 2. FIBRE:

- Scarves: one-of-a-kind designs but all using a similar technique, such as woven, silk painting, shibori, knitting, etc.
- Garments: if showing jackets and skirts for example, the techniques used should be similar, as above.
- Wall pieces: technique should be similar as above. Individual techniques used in embroidery, weaving etc., may differ, but don't mix woven pieces and stitched pieces in the same grouping unless the 2 techniques are used together.

### 3. GLASS:

- Glasses: similar in size, design and function.
- Vases: as above
- Fused glass: pieces may have different functions but will show a similarity of design, technique or styling.
- Stained glass: as above
- Lampwork: as above

### 4. JEWELLERY:

- A set of jewellery that shows consistency of design and technique. These may be pieces of differing function, such as necklaces, bracelets and earrings, but will show similarity in particular technique or design or styling.

- Do not include pieces with many different techniques unless they are used in all the pieces. For example, do not include some pieces which are silverwork, some pieces which are beadwork and some pieces which are assemblage of found materials in the same body of work. These would constitute 3 separate groupings of submissions.

**5. WOOD:**

- Furniture: pieces which have slightly different functions, such as coffee tables, end tables, bureaus etc. may be grouped together, but have similarity in styling and technique.
- Furniture sets (dining table & chairs) can be submitted as one line of work.
- Smaller decorative/functional pieces such as bowls, vessels etc.: as above.

\* NOTE: If the artist has any questions or issues that arise from these criteria (e.g. pieces too large to ship in quantity, uncertainty about "a line of work", etc.) please contact staff at [soq@craftcouncilbc.ca](mailto:soq@craftcouncilbc.ca)

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## APPENDIX B

# Checklist for Submission

1. One month prior to jury:
  - Email [soq@craftcouncilbc.ca](mailto:soq@craftcouncilbc.ca) to indicate notification of interest in submitting to next SOQ jury.
  
2. Two weeks prior to jury (on-line submission):
 

<https://ccbc.slideroom.com/#/permalink/program/87795>

  - **Artist's biography** (one paragraph, approximately ½ page)
  - **Artist's Statement:** this is to support the work, inform the jury about the artist's intent.
    - 1 page maximum
    - Description of the work
    - Sources of inspiration
    - Influences (such as historical, other artist's work etc.)
    - Artistic Intent
    - What makes this work different, original, unlike the work of others?
  
  - **Statement of technique:** this is useful for the jury as some jury members will be less familiar with techniques in your medium.
    - Listing and description of techniques used in this work
    - Materials used
      - e.g. metal content of jewellery, fibre content of garments
    - Any testing you have done on this work and the results
      - e.g. testing of glazes for durability, staining etc.
    - Any other information that would be important to the buyer
      - e.g. CSA safely rated lights
  
  - **Cultural Context Statement:** Artists are asked to provide a brief description that situates their work in relation to its cultural narrative. Some points to touch on: Who is telling whose story? Who is sharing cultural expressions and knowledge from marginalized communities? Consider the impact of the work in the context the communities reflected in the work.
  
3. Two days prior to jury:
  - 5-6 individual pieces in a single line of work
  - Complete list of objects submitted
  - Any other support material you think might be useful to the jury
    - e.g. Installation photos, catalogues etc.

Questions? Contact staff at [soq@craftcouncilbc.ca](mailto:soq@craftcouncilbc.ca)