

Just what are the judges looking for?

Photography:

Judges will consider (in no specific order):

- Focus
- Sharpness
- Detail
- And the “I just love it ... It really catches my eye ” appeal.
- Depth of field
- Color
- Brightness
- Contrast
- Use of light
- Creativity

Fine Arts:

Judges will consider (in no specific order):

- **Skill**...Apparent control of the medium – how pencil marks are made, or how paint is applied.
- **Beauty**
- **Inherent meaning**...Consider – “Would I buy / want this piece myself? A piece which a student has obviously spent a great deal of time on – with a lot of “detail” compared to another “simpler” piece that is overall a “better” piece – makes judging difficult.
- **Fulfilled intent**
- **Uniqueness**...Comparison to the other pieces in that same grade level, has a student done something in a different way (execution or content) than the others on that same level?
- **Neatness**... Clean, no smudges! An entry may be the most artistic piece, but if it is “messy” it may lose consideration.
- And the “I just love it ... It really catches my eye ” appeal.

Random thoughts from the judges:

Good art should appeal to you. It will be skillfully made, and has meaning beyond just an image. It will strike an emotion. It will bring you to tears, make you laugh, or remind you of something you’d almost forgotten. It stands out in a crowd and dares to be different. Most important (in the beholder’s opinion), good art is understandable; although, it may make you think in ways you never expected to.

Final thoughts for both Photography and Fine Arts categories:

We all recognize this subjective statement: Judging art is subjective! ☺

Judges are human and opinionated (as we all are!). Please remind your children that although the judges use the above considerations, making ribbon decisions is HARD. However, viewing all the entries is a BLESSING. What decisions they make one day may very well be different the next. Please encourage your children to do their best, work hard, and be satisfied/pleased with their accomplishments regardless of the ribbons they may or may not get.