

Cape Breton Centre for Craft and Design

General Information on the Product Assessment Process

Mandate of Cape Breton Centre for Craft and Design.

The Cape Breton Centre for Craft and Design is an organization whose mandate is to assist in the development and promotion of fine craft in Cape Breton. To achieve these goals, the Centre helps craftspeople attain success in their craft through education, information and assistance. We also exist to help create and maintain standards for craft on Cape Breton Island.

Achieving Goals Through the Product Assessment Process.

One of the ways we can assist in the development and promotion of fine craft is through offering a “product assessment” process to craftspeople. This process is designed to help craftspeople improve the quality of their craft and marketability should they wish to sell their work in different settings. This process replaces what was commonly called “jurying” at the Centre. It is a more supportive and educational approach to help support craftspeople in their careers.

Who Will do The Assessments?

The assessment is performed by a carefully selected committee of qualified craft makers, marketers and craft sector professionals. These people have been selected because of their craft design, making and marketing skills and experience - experience they will bring to the product assessment process.

What are the Benefits of Being Assessed Successfully?

Once your work is accepted by the committee, your name is entered in our registry of successfully assessed craftspeople. Inclusion in this registry indicates that your work has been recognized for its level of skill and craftsmanship and can give you access to certain specific craft marketing programmes and opportunities (some programme restrictions may apply). Successfully assessed craftspersons who maintain a membership with the Centre will receive notice of upcoming programmes through a variety of sources such as e-mail and print newsletters. Feel free to approach staff at the Centre regarding any programmes and opportunities that might be of interest to you.

How Does the Process Work?

You will receive an application package that you must read carefully. You are then asked to submit your application and a number of pieces of your work for the committee to assess. After the committee meets, you will receive a letter outlining the committee’s thoughts on your work. Your work may pass assessment on the first round. It may also be suggested that you make certain changes or improvements to your work and resubmit your product. You are free to follow these if you wish. If your work does not meet basic standards it will be declined.

Application and Membership Fees

You do not have to be a member in order to apply for product assessment. There is a \$25 fee for non-members who wish to have their work assessed. The fee for members in good standing is \$15. Note, sales tax is added to these fees. If your work is successfully assessed and you are not a member, you will be required to pay the annual membership fee. Please see the application form for the appropriate category and fee.

Residency

Artisans wishing to have their work represented through Cape Breton Centre for Craft and Design marketing programs/projects must reside in Cape Breton at least six months per year.

A successful submission for product assessment does not mean automatic inclusion in marketing opportunities presented by the Centre, including representation in the Centre’s Gallery Shop. Inclusion in the Gallery Shop is determined by careful consideration of many factors including (but not limited to) availability of space, display requirements, price point, presentation, consumer demand.

Cape Breton Centre for Craft and Design

Product Assessment Criteria

The Cape Breton Centre for Craft and Design is an organization whose aim is to help Cape Breton-based craftspeople achieve excellence in their chosen craft. In this role, we work with craftspeople to assist them in the production of handmade work of the highest quality and skill. The following are guidelines for craft that we will consider for product assessment. Please read them *carefully* before applying.

A Craft is:

A "craft" is an artistic occupation requiring *special* technical and manual skills in the making of objects. *Expertise* in technique and handling of materials must be evident.

Your Craft Must:

... ***be original.*** The craft object must be the original idea or design of the maker. Traditional, historic and "classic" designs are also acceptable, especially if the craftsperson has brought her/his personal interpretation to this design.

... ***exhibit good design.*** The use of colour, creativity and innovation are an integral part of good design.

... ***be well constructed.*** The craftsperson's skill should be evident in the finishing. Functional objects should function properly. Materials used must be appropriate to the function and be of the highest quality.

... ***be appropriately packaged and labelled*** - as if for sale. Packaging must be attractive, functional and complement the item. It must also include all necessary information regarding the product such as artist identification, pricing, safety and care instructions - especially as required by law (food, textiles, children's clothing and toys etc). The craftsperson is responsible for being aware of and meeting these requirements.

... ***be well presented for assessment.*** Craft should be presented "as if for sale" with packaging, pricing and accompanying print materials such as brochures. All application and information forms must be read and filled out completely. Submissions should be safely packed for return.

Acceptable Non-Traditional Crafts

The Cape Breton Centre for Craft and Design recognizes these craft categories with the following provisions and restrictions:

Food Products- Only food items of the highest quality, production standards and craftsmanship will be considered for inclusion in a fine craft setting. Products and ingredients must be grown, created or derived from local ingredients as much as possible. Traditional recipes, ingredients and processes will be given priority.

Fine Art (two and three dimensional) - Accepted providing work is appropriately framed. If exhibiting at Centre-sponsored events there must be at least 50% original work by the artist.

Commercially Produced Art Prints - are acceptable as long as they comprise no more than 50% of the exhibit. Numbering commercial prints (editioning) is not allowed.

Kits by the Craftsperson - kits created by craftspersons for commercial sale are acceptable for assessment by the committee. If exhibited at Centre-sponsored events there must be at least 50% original work by the artist.

The following types of work are NOT eligible for product assessment:

1) Crafts that require ***no specific training, skill or mastery of a technique*** to create. Examples of these might be: simple strung bead necklaces, greeting cards with computer clip-art, children's crafts.

2) Crafts made from ***commercial craft kits and patterns or copyrighted designs*** are generally not considered acceptable, unless the maker has brought particular design or skill techniques to enhance the product. Examples of crafts from kits and patterns may include: knitting/hooking kits, decoupage, paper tole kits, tole painting from contemporary patterns, "cheater" quilts, liquid embroidery, etc.

3) Items made with ***too many commercially manufactured parts***. Items such as these are only permitted when these parts are subordinate to the overall design (ie: screws, hinges, bases, handles, etc.) or when these parts are used in an innovative and creative manner to produce an entirely new item. Examples of items with too many commercially manufactured parts may include: earrings made from 3 purchased beads with purchased findings. An example of an innovative use of purchased components might be attractive jewellery made from recycled computer parts.

4) Product made with ***commercial molds***, such as ceramics, jewellery and candles. This work will only be considered if the mold is subordinate to the overall design of the work. Examples of this might be: mold-formed pillar candles with a highly decorative textured surface, a ceramic bowl made from a purchased mold with a very ornate hand-painted glaze or pattern.

All crafts will be individually assessed on their own merit. If you feel that your work does not meet the criteria above but deserves consideration, please submit your work for assessment.

The Application Process:

The Assessment Committee meets only at specific times. Please enquire at the Centre for the upcoming dates. Complete applications are required **2 days prior** to those dates. Please ensure that your application is complete. ***If your application is incomplete it may not be assessed during the session you have applied for.***

Results of the assessment will be available 3 weeks after the session. If for some reason the results are delayed (due to weather, the need to call in media-specific specialists, etc.) staff at the Centre will inform you of this delay. The results will detail the comments of the committee, the pass/resubmit designation and suggestions for improvement if applicable.

It is your responsibility to make sure your work is delivered and retrieved. Please pack it securely for travel and itemize all pieces carefully. If you wish to have your work shipped back to you, please make arrangements at the Centre and provide the necessary shipping fees with your application.

Persons, who for health or other valid reasons, are unable to make their submission in writing may be permitted to do so in person. Please contact the Centre with your reason for this request.

You may submit **ONLY** your own work. If work is submitted by more than one person doing a different craft (i.e. a husband who does woodworking and wife who quilts) you will be required to each apply separately.

Only two craft media per person may be assessed at a given session.

Please remember - staff at the Centre for Craft and Design are not members of the assessment committee and are therefore not responsible for the decisions of the committee. *Please do not request information from them regarding your results.* Direct such questions, in writing, to the committee. If you wish to appeal your assessment results, please send your comments in writing to the Chair of the Board of Directors and it will be brought to the attention of the Centre's Board of Directors at the next regular meeting. A response to your appeal will be mailed to you following this meeting.