

Art and Valentine Categories North Carolina Shell Show

A Hobbyist Exhibitor is one who has never sold or marketed any of their works via galleries, shows or similar outlets including the Internet and/or a home studio.

A Professional exhibitor may enter a Hobbyist Class provided the art is substantially and clearly different from the exhibitor's professional media.

Valentine Categories, Hobbyist and Professional

A Brief Discussion, North Carolina Shell Show Valentine Categories

Defined Parameters

Shell shows may use “traditional Barbadian style” or simply “Traditional” as the requirement for the class of Valentine that emulates the historic 19th century valentine. Contemporary valentine makers have a monumental challenge in sourcing the shells and/or wood with which the 19th century Valentines were made. I assigned Revitalized for a category of Valentines that adheres closely to the traditional artform but allows flexibility in execution. I have added a traditional valentine category following design and content that is widely agreed upon as the original artform. The parameters are very strict. In recognition of that challenge it features a trophy for the best in either single or double category. For contemporary valentines two extra-large categories are added.

All valentine (and art category) subjects will be offered in separate hobbyist and professional categories. I have not yet determined category numbers for the prospectus. As the descriptions are identical whether hobbyist or professional, for this document they are listed inclusively.

Hobbyist and Professional

New Category! Natural (materials) Extra-large Single Valentine

Size (outside) of octagonal box is 15”– 24.” The box can be any species/type of wood. No painted, stained or similar color modification to the natural color of the wood.

Must be shells or other marine life of natural colors. No artificially colored content.

No polished shells, polished portions, painted or other modifications including acid treatment.

Seeds are allowed.

Center can be a medallion not by the artist. If it is created by the artist please note that on the application. If not a medallion or small painting the artist is encouraged to create the center via assembly of shells and other sea life. .

Hobbyist and Professional

New Category! Contemporary Extra-large Single Valentine

A single valentine with a box between 15” - 24” across. The box can be any species/type of wood. Stained and or painted wood is allowed. Center can be a medallion not by the artist. If it is created by the artist please note that on the application. If not a medallion or small painting the artist is encouraged to create the center via assembly of shells and other sea life. .

Matt board is allowed, dividers allowed, Mollusk shells, can include dyed and/or painted. Other life including echinoderms (sand dollars, sea urchins, sea stars) seeds, barnacles and fish scales.

Notes on Extra-large Valentines: There are no Barbadian (traditional) or revitalized categories for the Extra-large valentines. Extra-large works depart significantly from the Barbadian artifacts widely accepted as the genesis or traditional works. Victorian Era valentines produced in Western Europe were already a significant departure from the Barbadian works.

Extra-large as with all valentines will have to be displayed on the standard shell show 30" deep tables, either on an exhibitor supplied easel or similar mount. If no mount is provided, the valentine will be laid flat on the table by the shell show committee.

Valentine Categories, Hobbyist and Professional

Hobbyist and Professional

New Category! Single (Mid-19th Century) Barbadian Valentine “The Traditional Valentine”

The box must be between 6” and 15” across (outside dimensions). Box is made of Spanish Cedar or “New World” Mahogany (Swetinia species). No other wood considered.

All shells must be species found in Barbados. Shells sourced from the Caribbean are preferred but if collected elsewhere, for example Florida, they must species that include Barbados in their natural range. Mollusk species introduced to the Caribbean later than 1890 cannot be included. Crab eye seeds (poisonberry) are allowed. Cotton batting and or colored paper dividers or inserts are allowed but not required.

A center of either hearts or messages of affection created by arrangement of shells by the artist is recommended though images or other art work may be included but must be executed in mid-19th century style and or technologies.

Hobbyist and Professional

New Category! Hobbyist, Double (Mid-19th Century) Barbadian Valentine “The Traditional Valentine”

Each box must be between 6” and 15” across (outside dimensions). Box is made of Spanish Cedar or “New World” Mahogany (Swetinia species). No other wood considered. The two boxes are hinged to close face to face like a book.

All shells must be species found in Barbados waters. Shells sourced from the Caribbean are preferred but if collected elsewhere, for example Florida, they must species that include Barbados in their natural range. Mollusk species introduced to the Caribbean later than 1890 cannot be included. Crab eye seeds (poisonberry) are allowed. Cotton batting and or colored paper dividers or inserts area allowed but not required.

A center of either hearts or messages of affection created by arrangement of shells by the artist is recommended though images or other art work may be included executed in mid-19th century style and or technologies.

Hobbyist and Professional

(Returning Category) **Revitalized Single Barbadian Sailors Valentine:** The entry is encouraged to be a naturally dark colored wood similar in appearance to Spanish Cedar, glass covered, octagonal box; cotton batting, paper dividers only; Dimension of box is 8”-15”; seashells and seeds only; no dyed or painted shells; seeds such as crab’s eyes, *Abrus precabrius* may be included; a center design/motif of a heart, flowers or nautical themed items for example an anchor; and/or words for example: “Home Again,” Forget Me Not,” “Forever Yours.”)

Hobbyist and Professional

(Returning Category) **Revitalized Double Barbadian Sailor’s Valentine** The entry is encouraged to be in a naturally dark colored wood similar to Spanish Cedar, glass covered, double octagonal boxes, hinged to close; cotton batting, paper dividers only; Dimension of box when closed is 8”-15”; seeds such as crab’s eyes and/or seashells only; no dyed or painted shells; no echinoderm spines, sea stars, fish scales or barnacles; a center design/motif of a heart, flowers or nautical themed items for example an anchor; and/or words for example: “Home Again,” Forget Me Not,” “Forever Yours.”

Hobbyist and Professional

(Returning Category) **Contemporary Single Sailor’s Valentine:** The entry is 6”-15” inches in size (dimension measured from outside of box), are an octagonal wood box. Matt board is allowed, dividers allowed, mollusk shells, can include dyed and/or painted shells, echinoderms (sand dollars, sea urchins, sea stars) seeds, barnacles and fish scales.

Hobbyist and Professional

(Returning Category) **Contemporary Double Sailor’s Valentine:** The entry is 6”-15” inches in size (dimension measured from outside of box when closed), are octagonal wood boxes. Matt board is allowed, dividers allowed, mollusk shells, can include dyed and/or painted shells, echinoderms (sand dollars, sea urchins, sea stars) seeds, barnacles and fish scales.

Hobbyist and Professional

(Returning Category) **Contemporary Miniature Sailors Valentine** The entry must be an octagonal or hexagonal box that is less than 6 inches in its largest dimension (dimension measured from outside of box). Matt board is allowed, dividers allowed, mollusk shells, can include dyed and/or painted shells, echinoderms (sand dollars, sea urchins, sea stars) seeds, barnacles and fish scales.

Art Categories Hobbyist and Professional

Hobbyist and Professional

New Category! Holidays Art & Craft Using Actual Shells

Themes for holidays or annual celebrations such as Christmas, Easter, Halloween, July 4th, etc. The submission must include mollusk shells/echinoderms (sand dollars, sea urchins, starfish)

Hobbyist and Professional

New Category! Art & Craft Using Actual Shells, **Miniature** Flower Arrangement:

The entirety of the art including holders, vases, driftwood, etc. cannot exceed 6" (six inches) in any dimension. The submission must be made of mollusk shells/echinoderms - sand dollars, sea urchins and starfish. Vases or other standard "holders" are allowed to be not made by the entrant. An artist provided covering such as an acrylic or glass lid is recommended for the safety of the art.

Hobbyist and Professional

New Category! Art & Craft Using Actual Shells, **Standard** Flower Arrangement:

The entirety of the art including holders, vases, driftwood, etc. is 6" (six inches) or larger in any one or more dimensions. The submission must be made of mollusk shells/echinoderms - sand dollars, sea urchins and starfish. Vases or other standard "holders" are allowed to be not made by the entrant. A covering such as an acrylic or glass lid is suggested for the safety of the art.

Notes on Floral Categories: The miniature category of works 6" or less in size is new. The former broad category is now divided. In both categories the holder such as vase or other decorative part that supports the "flowers" counts as part of the dimension parameters.

Hobbyist and Professional

(Returning Category) **Art & Craft Using Actual Shells, Lamp** (including lampshade) using shells: The submission must include mollusk shells/echinoderms (sand dollars, sea urchins, starfish) The lamp shade can include depictions of and or actual shells. Including shells on the shade is not required but a shade is required to complete the presentation.

Hobbyist and Professional

(Returning Category) **Art & Craft Using Actual Shells, Jewelry** (must be in a covered case): single or multiple strand necklace, earring pair, ring, pin made of mollusk shells

Hobbyist and Professional

(Returning Category) **Art & Craft Using Actual Shells, Avante-Garde Shellwork (Unlimited)**

The entry includes mosaics, framed shellwork Matt board is allowed, dividers allowed, mollusk shells, can include dyed and/or painted shells, echinoderms (sand dollars, sea urchins, sea stars) seeds, barnacles and fish scales. No need to adhere to parameters such as defined for Valentines.

Hobbyist and Professional

(Returning Category) **Art & Craft Using Actual Shells, Animals, Mermaids, Human Busts or Statues:**

The entry must incorporate mollusk shells in design The basis of the submission, for example a ceramic bust, does not have to be created by the entrant. If it is, make sure to note clearly on the submission that it is.

Hobbyist and Professional

(Returning Category) **Art & Craft Using Actual Shells, Shell Table:** The submission can be octagonal or another shape. It must include mollusk shells. It may include shells that are dyed or painted, Echinoderms including sand dollars, sea urchins and sea stars, can be included but as a minor element to the shells. Note: Contact the Show Chair before submitting your entry to determine that the show can accommodate it. It will be displayed directly on the gallery floor and or an exhibitor supplied riser/ pedestal, next to the standard exhibit tables.

Hobbyist and Professional

(Returning Category) **Art & Craft Using Actual Shells, **Not Categorized*****: Art using actual shells that does not fit in any of the specified art using shells categories. Review the categories carefully. A misplaced entry may not receive proper or desired recognition by the judges! (*Formerly a Miscellaneous Category)

Art Categories Hobbyist and Professional

Note: Categories Depicting Mollusks and/or Their Shells

Shells and or mollusks must be the main focus of the art in the depiction categories. Other life and features can be included but must be subordinate to shells and or mollusks.

Hobbyist and Professional

(Returning Category) **Art & Craft Depicting Shells, Three-D Art Depicting Mollusks and/or Their Shells**

Media can include but not limited to ceramics, wood, stone, metal, etc. Subjects in addition to actual shells may include cephalopods, nudibranchs, banana slugs, or other non-shelled mollusks.

Hobbyist and Professional

(Returning Category) **Art/Craft Depicting Shells, Two-D Art Depicting Mollusks and/or Their Shells**

The category includes, paintings, drawings, pastels and or similar media. The submission must depict mollusks and or their shells

Hobbyist and Professional

(Returning Category) **Art & Craft Depicting Shells, Wall Hangings** The submission includes shell mirrors, collages and other decorative arts designed to be installed on a wall. It must be primarily mollusk shells, but can include echinoderms (sand dollars, sea urchins and starfish) barnacles, bones, driftwood, shark teeth, etc. If a table top easel is not provided by the exhibitor it will be laid flat on the exhibit table. If the exhibitor wishes to submit an entry that will be displayed on an exhibitor supplied, floor standing easel, the Show Chair must be first contacted for determination if the show can accommodate it before the application is accepted. Tapestries or other art made with fiber are classified as fiber art.

Hobbyist and Professional

(Returning Category) **Art & Craft Depicting Shells, Fiber Art Tapestry, Rugs, Quilts etc.**

The entry must be mollusk inspired/related. The category may be cross-stitch, needlepoint, embroidery, quilts, tapestries, rugs, artform utilizing fibers and/or textiles.

Hobbyist and Professional

(Returning Category) **Art & Craft Depicting Shells, Fiber Apparel (Wearable) Art**

The entry must be mollusk inspired/related. The category may be clothing featuring decoration/enhancement such as needlepoint or embroidery. Printed fabrics such as may be employed to make a shirt must be created (made) by the entrant,

Hobbyist and Professional

(Returning Category) **Art & Craft Depicting Shells, Not Categorized***

Art depicting shells that does not fit in any of the specified art depicting categories.

Review the categories carefully. A misplaced entry may not receive proper or desired recognition by the judges!

(*Formerly a Miscellaneous Category)

Hobbyist and Professional

(Returning Category) **Art & Craft Depicting Shells, Artistic Mollusk Photography**

The entry must be a photograph of mollusk and or its shells

Hobbyist and Professional

(Returning Category) **Art & Craft Depicting Shells, Youth I, Ages 4 -11 (K- 6)**

Applicants entering in this or any of the Art categories must use the Youth entry form. Failure to use the Youth application for ages less than 18 risks disqualification and/or denial from installing the art in the shell show. There are two Youth category age groups

Hobbyist and Professional

(Returning Category) **Art & Craft Depicting Shells, Youth II, Ages 12 -17 (7- 12)**

Applicants entering in this or any of the Art categories must use the Youth entry form. Failure to use the Youth application for ages less than 18 risks disqualification and/or denial from installing the art in the shell show. There are two Youth category age groups

General Art Categories, Neither Hobbyist or Professional

Collectibles not by the Entrant: The submission can include art and artifacts which must be or made of or depict mollusks and/or their shells. The entry still qualifies for **People's Choice Award, Art**.

Art Non-competitive: Any non-competitive art exhibit/installation.
The entry still qualifies for **People's Choice Award, Art**.

Eligibility

Awarding at North Carolina Shell Show

To promote highest quality of the shell show, all Awards except the "Peoples Choice" will only be made if the judges determine an entry has been made deserving a given award. For example an exhibit entered as the sole contender within a given category must fulfill the parameters of a high quality exhibit in order to earn a First Place in that category.

Repeat Exhibits

An exhibit that has won a Blue Ribbon or Trophy in a previous North Carolina Shell Show cannot qualify for the same award again in a North Carolina Shell Show. This rule does not apply to the "People's Choice Award (Art)" which can be received by any exhibit in a North Carolina Shell Show.

The "People's Choice Award, Art" may be received by any exhibit entered in the Art Division in a North Carolina Shell Show.

Judging

The art awarded top prize can be in the eye of the beholder. The judges exercise objectivity to not allow personal bias to enter into their decisions.

Pieces must be the sole creation of the entrant. Submissions created from kits are not allowed. Exception to entrant creation requirement are frames or other presentation hardware where defined or noted.

Art using, depicting and or inspired by shells are strong contenders for awards.

Take care to present work fresh and clean. Dirty glass, visible glue, dust or worn out looking frames are examples of pitfalls in presentation that can damage judging consideration.

Hobbyist and Professional Awards

Trophies are offered in the Hobbyist and Professional classes of the Arts division.

2027 Art Division Hobbyist/Professional Awards

Art Best In Show, Hobbyist/Professional

“Everything (in art) has been done,” is a paraphrase of a common statement. How can the artist be original with a challenge like this? How do you create something fresh and unique if it has already been done? There are innumerable styles and techniques that provide an answer. Fresh or original art is valued for departing from expected and or tested styles by surprising and inviting the viewer to marvel in it.

The trophy recognizes the one superior example of art judged to best exemplify a fresh, innovative approach. Simply departing from expected or established norms is not enough to earn the trophy.

The trophy is assigned to a work of art created by the entrant, entered in any one of the art categories. The trophy can be earned as a standalone award or received with other awards in the same show.

Best Arts and Crafts Using Actual Shells, Hobbyist/Professional

The Award is presented to the entry that stands out as the Best Using Shells in the Show. The work qualifying for the Award must be entered in an Art Category. Works may receive this Award only once in any North Carolina Shell Show.

Best Art and Crafts Depicting Shells, Hobbyist/Professional

The Award is presented to the entry that stands out as the Best in the Show. The work qualifying for the Award must be entered in an Art Category. Works may receive the Award only once in any North Carolina Shell Show.

Best Artistic Photography, Hobbyist/Professional

The shell photograph judged to display superior esthetic qualities including composition, color and or subject selection creating an image that is beautiful to behold. The image is entered in the photography art Category. It is appraised by the Art/Craft Judges as best in show. An image can win this Award in a North Carolina Shell Show once only.

New Trophy Best Traditional Valentines in the Mid-19th Century Barbadian Style; Single or Double Hobbyist/Professional

Single or double (closed) size 6” x 14” Sailor’s Valentines. The work must be the sole creation of the entrant excluding support such as frames and boxes. Material content may be self-collected, purchased and or traded for but must be Barbadian native shells or Western Atlantic species found in Barbados. It will emulate the Barbadian style utilizing flat geometric mosaic design incorporating cotton batting, paper dividers and limited to natural shells and seeds. The Award will be made to that work which is determined to be the finest example representing its category in the show.

Best Revitalized Sailor’s Valentine Hobbyist & Professional

Single or Double (closed) size 6” x 15” Sailor’s Valentine. The work must be the sole creation of the entrant excluding support such as frames and boxes. Material content may be self-collected, purchased and or traded for. It will emulate the Barbadian style utilizing flat geometric mosaic design incorporating cotton batting, paper dividers and limited to natural shells and seeds. All shells or other material in the mosaic must be natural colors. No dyed acid treated or artificially modified content allowed. .

2027 Art Division Hobbyist/Professional Awards

Best Contemporary Sailor's Valentine, Hobbyist/Professional

Single or Double or other formats and or combinations of Sailor's Valentines. The work must be the sole creation of the entrant excluding support such as frames and boxes. Material content may be self-collected, purchased and or traded for. All materials and design styles may be utilized.

Best Youth Art Award, Hobbyist/Professional

Exclusive to a work entered in Youth Categories 49-50. The award recognizes art created by youth members of shell clubs who may not have the experience and resources their adult counterparts have to create and mount art.

Note: If a Youth competes in one of the broader Art Division Categories they are in competition for awards those categories may earn but are disqualified from receiving this award.

The Janet Durand Award, Hobbyist/Professional

The Award honors the memory of long time North Carolina Shell Club member and Treasurer Janet Durand. Janet was well known for shell craft, and a regular fixture at club meetings.

New Award Best Novice Art, Hobbyist and Professional

In recognition of an artist's first time entering a shell show. The award may be earned only once. For example if it is earned by a hobbyist artist who subsequently begins to sell their work they remain an experienced entrant in shell shows. Qualification for the award spans all shell shows. If an artist has entered other shell shows prior to North Carolina Shell Show, they do not qualify for the award.

New Award Best Youth I Novice Art, Hobbyist and Professional

In recognition of an artist's first time entering a shell show. The award may be earned only once. For example if it is earned by a hobbyist artist who subsequently begins to sell their work they remain an experienced entrant in shell shows. Qualification for the award spans all shell shows. If an artist has entered other shell shows prior to North Carolina Shell Show, they do not qualify for the award.

New Award Best Youth II Novice Art, Hobbyist and Professional

In recognition of an artist's first time entering a shell show. The award may be earned only once. For example if it is earned by a hobbyist artist who subsequently begins to sell their work they remain an experienced entrant in shell shows. Qualification for the award spans all shell shows. If an artist has entered other shell shows prior to North Carolina Shell Show, they do not qualify for the award.

Judge's Special Award Hobbyist/Professional – Rosette

Two Awards in the show. each judge can assign it once.

Awarded to an entry judged to possess exemplary characteristics to its category. Up to two awards may be made in the Art Division in each North Carolina Shell Show.

2027 Art Division Hobbyist/Professional Awards

First Place Hobbyist/Professional - Blue Rosette

Awarded to the entry judged to possess superior characteristics meeting the goals of each category. Note: If no entry within a given category is judged to possess those qualities the Award will not be made.

Second Place Hobbyist/Professional – Red Rosette

Awarded to the entry judged to possess characteristics second only to one other entry within each category. Note: If no entry within a given category is judged to possess the quality the Award will not be made.

People's Choice Award, Art

Any entry in the Arts Division, Hobbyist and Professional

What Category to Enter?

If in doubt on the category to enter we recommended you contact the Show Chair ahead of submitting an application for suggestions/guidance. Once the show is being set up it is too late to make a category change as it's a hectic time.

Parameters for some of the categories have been modified since 2026. There are several categories new for 2027. Be sure to reference the prospectus for 2027 when it is published in early 2027, not documents of past years.

No category numbers are included in this document due to uncertainty of what they will be for 2027.

This information is being offered well in advance due to the possibility of art requiring a greater amount of time to execute than is provided from the time of prospectus publishing which is typically early January and the show, first weekend in May. Recent changes and additions to the arts categories makes this information relevant.

John Timmerman, Co-Chair North Carolina Shell Show

Karlynn Morgan, Co-Chair North Carolina Shell Show