



VESTERHEIM

The National Norwegian-American Folk Art Exhibition

2024 Official Rules
and Guidelines

Knifemaking - Metalworking - Rosemaling
Weaving - Woodworking

The National Norwegian-American
Museum and Folk Art School

vesterheim.org

Welcome to the 2024 National Norwegian-American Folk Art Exhibition!

The National Norwegian-American Folk Art Exhibition is a summer exhibition at Vesterheim Norwegian-American Museum in Decorah, Iowa. It showcases the self-expression of contemporary artists who create folk art rooted in Norwegian traditions. The mission of this exhibition is to celebrate the past, present, and future of folk art by encouraging and inspiring emerging and established folk artists to develop their craft. Artists submit work for evaluation by a team of judges, who offer feedback on their pieces and award ribbons to the very best work. The ribbons carry points that accumulate toward a Vesterheim Gold Medal.

All the information you need to enter is listed in this booklet and at vesterheim.org/national-norwegian-american-folk-art-exhibition-2024! Read through the rules and regulations, print out the entry forms (from the website), and mail or deliver them to Vesterheim with your piece(s) and check for entry fees from May 1-20, 2024.

We look forward to seeing your pieces and sharing your artwork at Vesterheim!

Questions:

Contact Lauryn Johnson:

563-382-9681 or ljohnson@vesterheim.org.

Support for this exhibit is provided by the Iowa Arts Council, which exists within the Iowa Economic Development Authority.

GENERAL RULES

The following rules apply to each folk-art category. (Special rules and standards for separate categories are listed after the general rules.)

PLEASE READ CAREFULLY.

Pay close attention to the colored text because it includes changes for this year.

ENTRY DATES: May 1- 20, 2024

EXHIBITION DATES: June 8 through July 27 in Vesterheim's Main Building. Ribbons will be placed next to winning entries on Thursday, July 25, when the exhibition opens to the public, except for the People's Choice Award, which will be revealed at 3:00 p.m. on Saturday, July 27.

WHO MAY ENTER: Any living artist who has resided in the U.S. or Canada for the past five years.

ENTRIES:

- Artists may enter four items per category for judging (rosemaling, weaving, woodworking, knifemaking, and metalworking).
- Entries must have been completed in the last three years and not entered in any previous Vesterheim exhibition or show.
- All aspects of a piece must highlight the artist's unique and personal technical skills and design decisions, so work partially or entirely created under supervision or in a class is not allowed in the exhibition.
- Instructors cannot enter pieces created for instruction.
- Vesterheim and the judges are solely responsible for deciding whether an entry upholds the rules of the exhibition.
- The museum reserves the right to remove any piece that does not follow the rules of the exhibition, and the piece will be returned at the artist's expense.
- No items may be sent as "not judged."

ENTRY FEES: All artists, including Gold Medalists, are required to pay the \$25 fee per entry.

HOW TO ENTER: Read through the rules and regulations and print out the entry forms ([available at vesterheim.org/national-norwegian-american-folk-art-exhibition-2024](https://vesterheim.org/national-norwegian-american-folk-art-exhibition-2024)). Fill out a registration form and identification label for EACH entry. Write a check for the \$25 entry fee for each entry. Mail or deliver the completed forms to Vesterheim with your piece(s) and your check for entry fees from May 1-20, 2024.

You will need to print the PDF Entry Form and Identification Labels for EACH entry. (If you would like forms mailed to you, contact Lauryn Johnson at ljohnson@vesterheim.org or 563-382-9681. Please provide the number of entry forms you will need.)

Pack carefully – UPS guidelines suggest two-inch, non-slip packing materials in all directions between object and box. The identification label must be attached to the object. In the case of weavings, the label must be lightly sewn to the back (no pins or staples please). **In the case of rosemaling, please note that using strong tape such as packing tape can peel paint from your item so choose your tape carefully. We recommend using masking or painter's tape.**

Send labeled entry to:
Vesterheim Norwegian-American Museum
Attn. Lauryn Johnson, Folk Art Exhibition
502 W. Water St.,
Decorah, IA 52101

Or deliver your entry in person between 9:00 a.m. and 5:00 p.m. daily to the Westby-Torgerson Education Center or Museum Store (502 W. Water St., Decorah, IA).

JUDGING: Two or three judges, including specialists in each area of folk art, evaluate the entries for each category. The role of the judges is to provide positive and helpful feedback on entries and to award ribbons for exceptional work. The judges' decisions about ribbons are final. The judging process will be filmed, and artists will receive links to view videos about their piece. These videos will not be made public in 2022 without permission of the artist. Artists without digital access may receive written comments upon request. Videos or written comments will be available three weeks after the close of the exhibition.

AWARDS: In each category, judges may award blue, red, and white ribbons accompanied by a cash award and a corresponding number of points.

Blue Ribbon: \$100 and 3 points

Red Ribbon: \$75 and 2 points

White Ribbon: \$50 and 1 point

Prize money will be sent to artists approximately three weeks after the close of the exhibition.

In addition to these ribbons, judges may also award Honorable Mention ribbons, which are given to encourage artists to keep working and developing their craft.

Judges may award more than one ribbon of each color, but they are not required to award any ribbons if they believe the entries do not meet exhibition standards outlined in the exhibition rules. To see examples of ribbon winning work, please visit goldmedalist.vesterheim.org.

Once an artist accumulates eight points in a category over successive exhibitions, they are awarded a Vesterheim Gold Medal. Although Gold Medal winners cannot compete for ribbons in future exhibitions, they are eligible for the Best of Show and People's Choice Awards and are encouraged to participate.

Honorable Mention, Best of Show, and People's Choice Awards carry no points toward a Gold Medal.

SALES: We will offer direct gallery sales throughout the National Exhibition. Artists who wish to sell their work during the exhibition must provide a sale price on the registration form. This will not be an auction format.

Prices will be listed on the object labels and exhibition sales will take place during normal museum hours starting at 9:00 a.m. on Saturday, June 8, and ending on Saturday, July 27, at 5:00 p.m. Buyers must be present to purchase artwork and objects may be picked up after 5:00 p.m. on Saturday, July 27. Shipping may be available on some items.

Vesterheim Museum retains 20% of the sale price and the remaining 80% will be mailed to artists about three weeks after the exhibition. For insurance purposes, the sale price amount will serve as the declared value. Artists not selling their work will need to declare the insurance value for their piece on the registration form.

RETURNING OBJECTS: Objects may be picked up between 5:00–7:00 p.m., Saturday, July 27; or 9:00–11:00 a.m., Sunday, July 28, in the exhibition area in the museum’s Main Building. They may also be picked up during the following week between 9:00 a.m. and 5:00 p.m. in the museum’s Main Building. Objects that cannot be picked up will be returned by UPS or other service and the artist will be billed for shipping and insurance costs. For pieces that are sold, the purchaser will be responsible for picking up the object or arranging it for shipment.

PHOTOGRAPHY: Vesterheim Norwegian–American Museum reserves the right to photograph any object submitted to the competition for any use. There will not be a CD with images of exhibition entries produced or sold through the Museum Store. Photography of exhibition entries by the public is permitted for personal, noncommercial use only. Artists have the right to take legal action against any unauthorized commercial use.

Knifemaking – 28th year

SPECIAL RULES AND JUDGING STANDARDS

Knives and their sheaths should be executed in techniques and/or with stylistic characteristics common to Norwegian knifemaking. Artists are encouraged to explore the use of non-traditional materials as long as the form of their sheath knife is within the tradition of Norwegian knifemaking. All pieces, except blades, must be made solely by the entering artist and not done under supervision. The materials used for the handle and sheath must be stated on the registration form. Judges will rate entries on functional and aesthetic values: technique and design of the knife, sheath, and overall impression.

Rosemaling – 55th year

SPECIAL RULES AND JUDGING STANDARDS

The rosemaling must be on wood. The design must be the artist's own, and the painting cannot be done in a class or under supervision. Your piece may, however, be inspired by another work.

Exceptional work should reveal the stylistic characteristics of rural Norwegian painting from about 1700 to 1875. Pieces painted in the style of newer traditions such as Os and American Rogaland should also reveal the characteristics unique to those styles.

Styles accepted by Vesterheim: American Rogaland, Aust-Agder/Setesdal, Gudbrandsdal, Hordaland, Numedal, Old Rogaland/Ryfylke, Oppdal, Os, Østerdal, Hallingdal, Sogn, Nordfjord, Rococo, Romsdal, Telemark/Raudsaumsmaling, Trøndelag, Valdres, Viksdal, Vest-Agder.

The rosemaling must cover an area of at least 8 inches in diameter and must contain enough decoration to reveal the artist's technical skill and design abilities. Judges will rate entries on color, design, technique, and overall impact. Vesterheim reserves the right to attach a hanging device to any plate or flat object if one is not provided.

Weaving – 40th year

DIVISIONS

Of the two divisions described below, weavers should choose the one that best fits their piece. However, judges may re-designate the division of a piece for judging. If there are not sufficient numbers for a separation by division, the entries will be judged together.

1. **Traditional:** Must follow the historical tradition in technique, colors, and materials. Entries may be adaptations of old pieces.
2. **Contemporary:** Should be a contemporary departure from the historical in technique or colors or materials. Some elements should still identify the piece as being within the tradition.

SPECIAL RULES AND JUDGING STANDARDS

Weavings must be the artist's original designs and not done under supervision. Judges will rate weavings on overall impact, design, and weaving technique. They will look at the whole piece and consider the appropriateness of design, materials, and finishing. **Important: The intended function of the piece must be stated on the registration form.** Judges will examine the back as well as the front, so backings must be open in one section. Award-winning entries will demonstrate excellence in technical skills, show an understanding of both aesthetic and functional considerations, and express personal creativity within the long and rich tradition of Norwegian weaving.

Woodworking – 40th year

DIVISIONS

Of the four divisions described below, artists should choose the one that best fits their piece. However, judges may re-designate the division of a piece for judging. If there are not sufficient numbers for a separation by division, the entries will be judged together.

1. Deep-relief carving (acanthus, dragon-style, flatskurd, baroque, and rococo).
2. Shallow-relief/surface embellishment (chip carving, kolrosing, kroting, svidekor (burnt design)).
3. Figure carving (including three-dimensional and relief figures)
4. Open division (including ale hens and carved bowls, natural-form functional objects, and turned, bentwood, and stave containers).

SPECIAL RULES AND JUDGING STANDARDS

Entries should be executed in techniques and/or with stylistic characteristics common to Norwegian folk art. Contemporary exploration of these traditional forms and techniques is encouraged. Artists are welcome to experiment with non-traditional forms, colors, or techniques as long as some part of the piece is rooted in tradition. Items submitted for judging must be large enough to reveal the technical and aesthetic ability of the artist and should not be done under supervision. All carving and decorating must be done entirely by the artist entering. Entries in Divisions 1 and 2 may feature carving/decoration by the artist on a wooden form by another source. Entries in Divisions 3 and 4 must be made and decorated solely by the artist entering. The source of the design must be stated on the registration form. Judges will rate entries on technique, design, and overall impact.

Metalworking - 4th year

SPECIAL RULES AND JUDGING STANDARDS

The metalworking category showcases work done in steel and iron. Entries could be used for lighting (like candle holders), hearth or cooking tools, chest or door hardware (like locks and hinges), or other tools. These forged items were historically significant in Norway and were both functional and decorative.

Fantasy “Viking” or “Norse” weapons will not be accepted, but swords and axes inspired by or based on historic examples will be. Contemporary expressions of traditional forms and techniques are encouraged as long as some part of the entry is anchored in the tradition of Norwegian metalwork. Please include an illustration of the inspiration for your work and describe how your entry relates to the Norwegian tradition on the entry form.

Smiths are welcome to display their pieces on wooden doors or chests to demonstrate how hinges or locks would work when they are installed, but are not required to have made the wooden items themselves.

Judges will evaluate the quality of the forging, how well the item fits the purpose it was designed for (how well a lock works, do hinges open and close smoothly, etc.), the technical skill of the smith, how well decorative elements are designed and created, whether the finish of the piece is appropriate to its function and is visually satisfying.