



THE IRON THISTLE

Painting Competition Rules

Friendly - Fair - Community-focused

A compact guide to eligibility, categories, judging and conduct.

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Welcome and general rules

The Iron Thistle Painting Competition celebrates miniature painting across all genres and manufacturers, welcoming painters of every experience level. Whether you're entering your first competition or you're an established award-winning painter, our goal is to provide a friendly, inspiring and community-focused event.

- The organisers may amend these rules where necessary.
- Categories may be merged or split if entry numbers require.
- Rule interpretations will be made in the spirit of fairness and consistency.

Eligibility

- Entries from any manufacturer are welcome.
- All scales are accepted provided they fit the chosen category.
- Plastic, resin, metal, 3D printed, scratch-built and mixed-media models are all permitted.
- Commercially printed miniatures and home-printed miniatures are both accepted.
- Conversions, kitbashes and scratch-built work are encouraged.
- Entries must be fully painted by the entrant. Conversions, kitbashes, sculpting and scratch-built elements completed by another person are permitted, provided all painting and finishing work has been carried out by the entrant. Collaborative painted entries are not permitted.
- Each entrant may submit one entry per category.
- Previous competition-winning pieces may be entered, although entrants are encouraged to showcase new work where possible.



Competition categories

Single Miniature

A single miniature on a base up to 54mm scale and under 80mm in overall height, measured from the foot of the model.

Includes:

- Infantry
 - Characters
 - Cavalry mounted on a single base
 - Small creatures
- The focus should be on one individual miniature.
 - Miniatures supplied with integral companion models (for example familiars, Nurglings, cherubs, drones or similar sidekick figures) are still considered a single miniature, provided they form part of the original character or intended display piece and the entry clearly represents a single primary subject.

Large Scale & Bust

This category is for display pieces 54mm in scale and above, and busts.

Vehicle & Monster

Intended for vehicles, monsters, walkers, war machines and models below 54mm scale, but more than 80mm in height.

Squad

This category includes squads and units (three models or more). There is no upper limit on the number of miniatures included in an entry.

Diorama & Vignette

This category includes dioramas, vignettes, duel scenes, display pieces and open-format artistic projects.

The organisers reserve the right to reassign entries to the category they consider most appropriate prior to judging. Wherever possible, this will be discussed with the entrant before judging begins.

Beginner & Feedback

Designed for painters who would like constructive feedback in a relaxed environment. Entrants may submit any miniature regardless of manufacturer or scale. This category is not judged for awards.

- Every entrant is entitled to receive personalised feedback from the judging and coaching team through our online feedback platform after the event.
- We have intentionally set aside a significant amount of time for feedback throughout the day, and our judges and workshop hosts will remain after the advertised event finish where necessary to ensure everyone has the opportunity to receive the feedback they are looking for. Where time permits, feedback may also be provided in person during the event.

Judging approach

Entries are judged anonymously wherever possible. Judges assess each piece as a whole, considering both technical execution and overall presentation.

- No individual technique automatically receives greater recognition.
- Techniques such as non-metallic metal (NMM), object source lighting (OSL), weathering, freehand, textures, sculpting and complex conversions are valued where they enhance the finished piece rather than simply for their inclusion.
- Judges may carefully handle entries where necessary to inspect details. The judges' decision is final and there is no appeals process.
- If your entry is moved into a category where you already have another entry, we will give precedence to the piece that would receive the highest award.

Judging criteria

Judges look at the finished piece as a whole.

Overall visual impact

Composition and presentation

Brush control and paint application

Basing and integration

Colour selection and harmony

Creativity

Contrast and readability

Storytelling

Technical execution

Awards & photography

Awards

Each judged category will award one Gold, one Silver and one Bronze medal. From the Gold medal winners, the judges will select one outstanding entry to receive The Iron Thistle Award for Best in Show.

Photography

Every competition entry will receive a professionally photographed plain-background image, perfect for portfolios, social media or personal collections.

The organisers may also photograph entries for promotional material, event galleries and future marketing. Photographers attending the event are welcome to photograph entries unless requested otherwise by the entrant.

Copyright of the artwork remains with the painter.

Display & care

- Entries should be stable enough to be moved carefully for judging and photography. If an entry is particularly fragile, entrants should notify the organisers during registration.
- Models mounted on display plinths should be securely fixed to the plinth before submission.
- While every reasonable effort will be made to protect entries, all miniatures are entered at the owner's risk.
- The organisers reserve the right to refuse entries considered unsafe, excessively fragile or inappropriate for public display.

Code of conduct

The Iron Thistle exists to celebrate creativity and foster a welcoming hobby community.

- Entrants are expected to treat fellow competitors, judges, volunteers and visitors with respect throughout the event.
- Poor sportsmanship, abusive behaviour or attempts to influence judging may result in disqualification.
- The Iron Thistle aims to inspire painters of every level to challenge themselves, share their work and enjoy a fantastic day celebrating miniature painting with the community.

Before you submit

Check your category

Choose the most appropriate category before registration.

Make it stable

Entries should be safe to move carefully for judging and photography.

Paint your own entry

All painting and finishing work must be completed by the entrant.

One entry per category

Each entrant may submit one entry per category.

Feedback

After the event you will have an opportunity to receive feedback on your work. Consider any specific areas you may wish to ask about.





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Final reminder

Please review your categories, make sure your entries are stable for careful handling and enjoy the event.

If you have any other questions or would like more information or further clarification please reach out to us:

theironthistle.com

[@the_iron_thistle](https://twitter.com/the_iron_thistle)