



2025 NOVA Open Capital Palette Miniature Art Show

INTRODUCTION

The NOVA Open Convention invites hobbyists and artists to proudly display their work in Capital Palette, a juried, open-forum award, miniature art show. Capital Palette uses a panel of experienced judges that award gold, silver, and bronze awards for six (6) Categories across three (3) Divisions.

In this open forum art show, there can be multiple gold, silver, or bronze winners (or no winners) in a Category. Each submitting artists' work is individually evaluated and receives the level of award the judges feel their work merits, without regard to the awards given to other pieces in the same Division and Category.

1.0 DIVISIONS & CATEGORIES

The Capital Palette uses multiple Divisions to separate artists by their skill level prior to evaluating entries. Each entry is judged on its individual merits in the open-forum fashion. However, standards for judging Gold, Silver, and Bronze are scaled based on Division, allowing artists in different Divisions to compare themselves to their peers.

Entries are not limited to miniatures which would be used in tabletop wargames or other Sci-Fi/Fantasy themed models. The modeling world is full of historical models and figures, alternative vehicles, landscapes and imaginary scenes. The painting itself is more important than the model figure.

GENERAL GUIDELINES

There are a LOT of different miniatures, in many scales and many sizes. So many that we'll never be able to cover them all with simple descriptions for our categories. We ask for your flexibility and patience and common sense.

“**Scale**” is how we describe the size of the model as a ratio compared to the full-size subject. ***This is not the size of the base used.*** Where "all scales" are permitted, be aware that if a piece is too large, it may impact Capital Palette's ability to display.

The Capital Palette has three Divisions based on relative skill and experience. Each of these Division contains six Categories.

Entries may be upgraded to the next Division or moved to another Category at the discretion of NOVA Open staff and/or Capital Palette judges if they have a justifiable reason for the move. Entries will not be moved to deprive the Artist an award.

1.1 Divisions:

a) Apprentice

The Apprentice Division is for beginners and is designed for young painters and new miniature painters who are just starting their journey.

b) Journeyman

The Journeyman Division is focused on artists that are developing their painting skills and artistic expression. The Journeyman Division is for hobbyists that are active in their local communities, participating in painting competitions, as well as established artists getting back into painting after an absence.

c) Masterclass

The Masterclass Division is for artists who are actively refining their painting skills and leading their local hobby and painting communities. These painters may have won major awards (e.g., Golden Demon, Crystal Brush, and of course Capital Palette), and/or paint and teach this art form professionally. This is a challenging Division, and not for the faint of heart.

1.2 Categories:

c) Single Model – Small (up to 54mm Scale)

Any single figure, up to and including 54mm scale figures. Single figures on a display base may include ancillary models (e.g., familiars, small animals, mounts, etc.) necessary to add to the scene.

Examples include: all Warhammer 40k and Age of Sigmar playable figures, Star Wars: Legion or Shatterpoint figures, or Marvel: Crisis Protocol Characters.

c) Single Model – Large (greater than 54mm Scale)

Any complete figure(s), over 54mm scale or monstrous sized creatures. Multiple figures are allowed but must be displayed on a single base. The focus of the category should be on the characters.

Examples include: 75mm knight, 32mm Dragon, or a Warhammer Greater Demon.

c) Diorama, All Scales

Any diorama, in all scales, in any theme. Diorama entries convey a story or communicate a story to the viewer. Dioramas can involve multiple models, as with a duel, or no models, as with a burning shed in a field. Note that some commercially available miniatures may be presented in a particular setting. These entries may be moved to the Single Model or Unit/Squad categories if the judges feel that the artist has not injected their own story-telling elements into the piece. Please also keep in mind the size requirements for all entries.

d) Vehicle, All Scales

Any vehicle, in all scales, in any theme. The focus should be on the vehicle, with ancillary figures in support of the story

Examples include: war machines (e.g., Dreadnoughts, Warjacks, mechanical constructs), cars, planes, tanks, ships, trains, etc.

f) Unit / Squad

Squads /units consist of three (3) figures to five (5) models displayed as a cohesive unit. Entries in this category must be submitted on a single coherent base to better indicate that they are part of a single submission and reduce model handling.

f) Bust, All Scales

Any bust, in all scales, in any theme. This includes scale busts, and “partial figure” busts that include a torso. Please keep in mind the size requirements for all entries.

2.0 ADDITIONAL AWARDS

The following awards are not affected by Division or Category, except as expressly stated in the description:

2.1 Best in Show:

Capital Palette Judges Panel will select one model from each Category from their Division to be of the Best in Category winners. Of the Best in Category winners, one will be chosen as the overall Best in Show winner.

2.2 Fan Favorite:

Fan Favorite is decided by all NOVA Open attendees. All attendees with a Convention Badge are encouraged to cast a ballot for their favorite model. Each attendee gets one voting ballot with their entry. Votes can be cast at any time until voting closes at 6:00 pm EST on Saturday evening. The NOVA Open staff recommends that convention attendees make multiple passes by the Capital Palette display cases throughout the convention prior to casting their vote, which will allow them to see the widest selection of submissions.

2.3 Sponsored Awards:

Sponsored Awards awarded by Businesses, Vendors, or Artists that follow requirements of the miniature hobby that is most interest to them. These awards will be advertised and may include any number of requirements as noted by the sponsor.

2.3.1 Youth Award: Top three painted entries by our hobbyists under and including 15 years of age.

2.3.2 Creativity Award: Top three most creative entries from all Capital Palette submissions.

2.3.3 Historical Award: Best Historical figure or display will be awarded within Apprentice, Journeyman, and Masterclass Divisions.

2.3.4 Sculpting Award: Awarded for best original sculpted entries in a single Category. Can be hand sculpted or 3D printed.

3.0 ENTRY, ELIGIBILITY REQUIREMENTS & AGREEMENT

The following rules, requirements and limitations apply to all Capital Palette artists and entries:

3.1 Attendees submitting figures in the Capital Palette must purchase a Convention Badge. Additional Capital Palette registration fees apply for each entry.

3.2 Capital Palette entries must be purchased through Tabletop Events- Merch Sales. Select the total number of entries you expect to enter.

3.2.1 Refunds will be granted through Table-Top Events for withdrawing from the Capital Palette before registration.

3.2.2 There is a limit of three (3) entries per category/per artist; there is no limit to the number of categories you may enter.

3.4 After purchasing your entries in Tabletop Events, artists must create an [Emperor App](#) account and register each entry. The Link for Emperor App registration will be open in the Summer.

3.5 At the time of registration in the Emperor App, each artist must designate which Division they are best suited.

3.5.1 The Capital Palette staff and judges presume all entries are made in good faith; however, judges reserve the right to shift a model to a different division.

3.5.1 Artist submissions may be disqualified if it is discovered an artist chose a lesser division in bad faith, deliberately trying to “game the system.”

3.6 All composition and painting must be the artist’s own work. No team entries are allowed, although uncredited conversion work, sculpting, etc. from another party will be accepted. This includes the submission of scratch-built models built by another party and 3D printed figures legally obtained but painted by the submitting artist.

3.7 Models from any manufacturer are allowed for entry. This includes scratch-built models and 3D printed figures which are allowed and encouraged.

3.8 Artists agree to have their entries photographed, videoed, or otherwise recorded by NOVA Open. Prize-winning artists, likewise, agree to have their person photographed, videoed, or otherwise recorded. All such recordings shall be the property of NOVA Open and shall be for purposes of identification and promotion. All likenesses will be unedited and credited to the artist.

3.9 Artists agree to provide all entries, at their own risk to NOVA Open/ Capital Palette for the duration of the competition for the purpose of display, photography, and judging.

3.9.1 Submitting artists must agree to the Hold Harmless agreement with NOVA Open at the time of Emperor App registration.

3.9.2 Capital Palette staff will make every effort to safely handle and secure entries, but NOVA Open accepts no responsibility for damage to or loss of entries during the convention.

3.10 Capital Palette displays artwork for viewing by all those who attend the NOVA Open Convention, which includes people from all ages and walks of life. Therefore, at its sole discretion, NOVA Open reserves the right to NOT DISPLAY any submission considered inappropriate or offensive. All submissions are eligible to win prizes in the competition.

3.11 All NOVA Open Staff may submit entries for the open-forum competition and can receive medals if their work warrants it. NOVA Open Staff are ineligible to win the Best in Show Award. NOVA Open Staff are eligible to win Fan Favorite award.

4.0 ENTRY SUBMISSION, HANDLING & PICK UP

The following information applies to all Capital Palette artists and entries:

4.1 Entry submission and pickups follow the posted Capital Palette Schedule. Entries will only be accessible during posted hours.

4.2 Artists must drop-off their entries in person; this must be the same person who painted the model(s).

4.3 Artists must provide any special handling instructions for their entry at the time of submission.

4.4 NOVA Open is not responsible for transportation of entries to/from the event site. This is the sole responsibility of the artist.

4.5 No storage space for transportation materials (e.g., figure cases) will be provided. There will be no off-hours storage for models or figures.

4.6 If the number of submissions exceeds the capacity of the display cases, Capital Palette staff will rotate submissions between the display cases and a secured storage area.

4.7 Capital Palette Staff reserve the right to limit the display of oversized dioramas and/or display models that are not contained within a 12”L x 12”W x 18”H space. This restriction is not meant to curtail creativity, so much as to ensure the contest functions cleanly within the facilities and infrastructure NOVA Open has available.

4.8 Submission drop-off closes on Saturday afternoon at 12:00pm for judging. Check event schedule to confirm this time.

Please speak to Capital Palette Staff if after hours arrangements need to be made due to Tournament schedules.

4.9 Fan Favorite voting must be cast by Saturday Evening at 6:00pm EST. QR codes for Fan Favorite voting will be located on cases in the Capital Palette area on Friday at 12pm.

4.10 Artists can pick up their models any time on Sunday morning once Capital Palette opens. All entries must be retrieved in person.

4.11 Artists may authorize a designee to pick up submitted entries if said artist is unavailable. To officially appoint a designee, an artist must submit a designation form and/or speak with Capital Palette staff.

4.12 Artist or a designee, must be present to claim prize awards during or after the Awards Ceremony on Sunday. Designees must be brought to the attention of NOVA Open Capital Palette staff beforehand. See 4.11

4.12.1 For models and/or Awards not retrieved in person will become property of NOVA Open. Shipping can be arranged with cost incurred by the artist. Expect delays in retrieving since they will be secured in storage.

5.0 JUDGING

The following information applies to all Capital Palette artists and entries:

5.1 The Capital Palette uses a panel judging approach to this competition with one or more panels for each Division. These Judging Panels, chosen by the Capital Palette Head Judge, will consist of renowned miniature artists from across the United States and around the world. These Judges will be the sole arbiters of the results in each Division and Category of the Capital Palette. Their decisions are final.

5.2 The judging panels will select one model in each category from their Division as the Best in Category winner. The Masterclass Panel Judges will choose the overall Best in Show winner from the Category winners.

5.3 Decisions on Additional Awards (sections 2.2, 2.3) are judged by either the primary sponsors of “Sponsored Awards” (unless, in their absence, the Capital Palette Judges) or attendees (Fan Favorite). In all instances, these decisions are final.

5.4 Judges Participation. The Head Judge draws from various groups to build quality teams of accomplished miniature artists. The Head Judge and Masterclass Judges will not be permitted to enter the Capital Palette competition.

5.4.1 Judges may enter based on the following: The Head Judge will assign Judges to Panels in a Division one or two steps "lower" than the Division they enter. For example,

if a Judge would enter Journeyman Division, then they are only eligible to judge the Apprentice Division; likewise, if a Judge would enter Masterclass, then they could judge in either the Journeyman or Apprentice Divisions.

6.0 CAPITAL PALETTE HOURS OF OPERATION

The following information applies to all Capital Palette artists and entries:

6.1 The Capital Palette schedule includes drop off/ voting/ pickup times, as well as judging and awards presentation times. Artists may begin dropping off submission Thursday Morning and throughout the rest of NOVA Open during open hours. Entry drop-off deadline for all submissions is 12:00 pm Saturday afternoon. Late submissions will not be made available to Judges for awards evaluation or for Fan Favorite voting.

6.2 Artists may pick up their Entries any time on Sunday morning during posted Capital Palette Open hours. ALL submissions must be picked up before 4:00 pm Sunday afternoon. All models and awards not picked up by the deadline will be secured in NOVA Open storage. Please see 4.12 for more details.

6.3 Hours of Operation:

Wednesday:	Afternoon after set-up, as time permits
Thursday:	8am – 4pm
Friday:	8am – 4pm
Saturday:	8am – 12pm
Sunday:	8am – 4pm (may be limited during Awards Ceremony)

7.0 AWARDS CEREMONY

Capital Palette Awards Ceremony will be conducted at 12:30 pm Sunday afternoon until complete; expect completion by 2:30pm.

The location of the Awards Ceremony will be updated as we get closer to NOVA Open.

8.0 CRITQUES

8.1 Capital Palette Judges provide limited critiques of Capital Palette entries.

8.2 Teams will consist of two critique judges to answer questions about submitted entries.

8.3 Critiques for different Divisions will take place in different locations, which will be communicated before or during the Award Ceremony.

Please be mindful that a number of artists will seek to engage with the Judges regarding their submissions, so there may be a waiting period for personal critiques. Additionally, most Judges will be available to offer detailed feedback on social media following the NOVA Open Convention.

If you have any specific questions regarding the above information or inquiries about anything Capital Palette related, please send an email to Capital Palette (capitalpalette@noveopen.com).