



2026

# Gen Con Miniatures Painting Competition Official Rules

**The following rules are written to ensure:**

- Clear expectations for all entrants.
- Consistent judging standards.
- A fair and ethical competition environment.

If an entry relies on interpretation rather than on clear compliance with these rules, it may not qualify. For questions or concerns, please email [mhecoordinators@gmail.com](mailto:mhecoordinators@gmail.com).

**The Gen Con Miniatures Painting Competition is designed to:**

- Encourage skill development.
- Support learning and technique sharing.
- Recognize painters at all levels.

**This is an open-format competition:**

- Awards are based on individual merit, not the quantity of entries.
- Multiple entrants may receive the same award level.
- Painters are evaluated against a standard of skill, not against each other.

**The goal of the competition:**

- Reward current skill level.
- Provide a clear benchmark for year-over-year improvement.

## Judging Panel

- All dates are for the 2026 calendar year, unless otherwise noted.
- All times are in Eastern time zone, unless otherwise noted.

**The standby judge will:**

- Step in if a judge is unavailable.
- Break scoring ties when necessary, including major awards, like Best in Category.
- All judging decisions are final.

## Scoring & Entry Limits

- Limit one entry per category, per entrant.
- All entries are evaluated using digital scorecards.
- Entries are scored independently based on the criteria below.

# Judging Criteria

All entries are scored in four areas:

## **1. Complexity**

- a. The level of difficulty in the piece.
- b. Judges consider:
  - i. Difficulty of the painting techniques used.
  - ii. Complexity of sculpting, conversions, or modifications.
  - iii. Composition and design challenges.
  - iv. Higher complexity should demonstrate intentional skill, not unnecessary complication.

## **2. Workmanship**

- a. The quality of preparation and construction.
- b. Judges look for:
  - i. Clean mold line, 3D-print support, and/or filament line removal, and surface preparation.
  - ii. Seamless joints and assembly.
  - iii. Clean, intentional modifications.
  - iv. Well-built bases and structural elements.
  - v. Visible flaws or poor construction will reduce the score.

## **3. Painting Skill**

- a. The execution of painting techniques.
- b. Judges evaluate:
  - i. Smoothness of blends and transitions.
  - ii. Precision and control (fine details, clean lines).
  - iii. Effective shading and highlighting.
  - iv. Contrast, depth, and readability.
  - v. As this is a painting competition, this category carries significant weight.

## **4. Presentation**

- a. The overall visual impact and cohesion of the piece.
- b. Judges consider:
  - i. Unity between the figure(s), base, and environment.
  - ii. Effective use of color and composition.
  - iii. Consistency of mood, tone, and style.
  - iv. How well all elements work together as a whole.

**A high score in one category does not compensate for deficiencies in another. All criteria are considered together to determine the result.**

# Categories

## **1. Single Figure**

- a. Definition: A single figure as the primary subject.
  - i. Consistent judging standards.
  - ii. A fair and ethical competition environment.
- b. Requirements:
  - i. Exactly one figure.
  - ii. Scale: Up to 53mm.
- c. Judging Emphasis:
  - i. Painting skill (primary).
  - ii. Workmanship, presentation, and complexity are secondary.
- d. Not Allowed:
  - i. Multiple figures of equal importance.
  - ii. Additional figures that compete for attention.

## **2. Large Scale**

- a. Definition: A single figure that is 54mm scale or larger, or clearly equivalent in visual mass.
- b. Includes:
  - i. Large humanoid figures (54mm+).
  - ii. Monsters, dragons, and large creatures.
- c. Requirements:
  - i. One clearly dominant subject.
- d. Judging Emphasis:
  - i. Painting skill (primary).
  - ii. Other criteria are secondary.
- e. Not Allowed:
  - i. Standard 28–32mm figures on large scenic bases.
  - ii. Multiple figures used to simulate a “large” entry.

### **3. Bust**

- a. Definition: A head-and-shoulders (or similar) sculpt focused on the upper portion of a figure.
- b. Judging Emphasis:
  - i. Painting skill and workmanship.
- c. Clarifications:
  - i. Sculpting quality is not judged in this category.
  - ii. If the intent is to be judged on sculpting, the piece must be entered in open.

### **4. Open**

- a. Definition: For heavily modified, converted, or scratch-built pieces.
- b. Requirements (MANDATORY):
  - i. Entry must be at least 30% modified or scratch-built.
  - ii. Modifications must be clearly visible and intentional.
- c. Not Allowed:
  - i. Unmodified or minimally modified models.
  - ii. Simple kitbashes that do not meet the 30% threshold.
- d. Judging Emphasis:
  - i. All criteria are considered, including conversion and sculpting work.

### **5. Diorama**

- a. Definition: A composition that tells a clear story or interaction.
- b. Requirements:
  - i. Must include multiple elements and/or figures.
  - ii. Must communicate a narrative.
- c. Judging Emphasis:
  - i. Presentation and storytelling (primary).
  - ii. Painting skill remains important but is not the sole focus.
- d. Not Allowed:
  - i. Groups of figures without interaction or narrative.

## 6. Ordnance

- a. Definition: Vehicles and machines of war.
- b. Includes:
  - i. Tanks, artillery, war machines, and similar mechanical subjects.  
There are NO organic elements that make up this piece. (E.G- no flesh, skin, sinew, etc.)
- c. Judging Emphasis:
  - i. Painting skill and workmanship (primary)
- d. Judges look for:
  - i. Clean construction and crisp edges.
  - ii. Surface finish and texture control.
  - iii. Consistent lighting and material definition.

## 7. Unit

- a. Definition: A group of 3 or more figures presented as a cohesive set.
- b. Requirements:
  - i. Figures must clearly belong to the same group.
  - ii. Unified base is mandatory.
  - iii. Figures must be securely attached.  
(glue, tack, or magnets).
- c. Judging Emphasis:
  - i. Consistency of painting and workmanship.  
across all figures.
- d. Unified Base Requirement (for Unit Category)
  - i. A Unit is valid ONLY if all figures share a unified base.
  - ii. Same or coordinated terrain/material.
  - iii. Consistent color palette.
  - iv. Shared environment or setting.
- e. Not Allowed (Unit Disqualification)
  - i. Mixed or unrelated basing styles.
  - ii. Figures that look like separate individual entries.
  - iii. Grouping models together without visual cohesion.

**Example of what is not allowed:** In the photo below, these models are not one unified base.



**Examples of a unified base for the unit category:**



Painted by Light Miniatures

## **8. Gundam / Gunpla**

- a. Definition: Gundam and similar mecha model kits.
  - i. Judging Emphasis:
  - ii. Painting skill, workmanship, and presentation.
- b. Judges look for:
  - i. Clean panel lines and edges.
  - ii. Surface finish quality.
  - iii. Consistency of design and customization.
  - iv. Effective posing and presentation.
- c. Requirement:
  - i. Models on stands must be stable and secure.

## **9. Scale Model / Historical Figure**

- a. Definition: Historical miniatures and traditional scale models.
- b. Judging Emphasis:
  - i. Workmanship and painting skill (primary).
  - ii. Presentation and creativity are secondary.

## **10. Youth**

- a. Eligibility: Entrants 14 years of age and under.
- b. Rules:
  - i. Youth entries are judged within the standard categories.
  - ii. Awards are based on merit, with age taken into consideration.

# Awards for 2026:

## **Merit Awards (Open Format)**

All entries are evaluated based on score and awarded a ribbon according to quality.

### **Ribbon Levels:**

- Merit
- Bronze
- Silver
- Gold

Multiple entrants may receive the same ribbon level. Awards are based on **individual merit**, not placement.

## **Major Awards**

In addition to merit ribbons, the following awards will be given:

### **Best in Show**

Awarded to the highest-scoring entry across all categories.

Receives:

- The Langer Battleaxe.
- \$1000 cash prize.
- Sponsored by Metalhead Minis and Kilted Viking Studios.

### **Best in Category Awards**

One award will be given in each category:

- Best Single Figure
- Best Large Scale
- Best Bust
- Best Open
- Best Diorama
- Best Ordnance
- Best Unit
- Best Gundam
- Best Scale Model / Historical
- Best Youth Entry

Each receives:

- Award ribbon
- Prize package provided by competition sponsors

## **Judges' Award**

Judges may award a Judges' Award to an entry that demonstrates exceptional creativity, innovation, or inspiration.

Eligibility:

- Must not have already won a Best in Category or Best in Show award.

### **Award Rules**

- Major awards (Best in Category, Best in Show) are determined from top-scoring entries.
- All award decisions are final.

# Manufacturer and Sponsorship Awards:

The following manufacturers and sponsors will be offering a variety of awards and prizes. More details to follow.

## **Armoured Wolf Productions**

Handmade Leather Brush Roll for each Best in Category and prize for Best in Show.

[armoured-wolf-productions.square.site](http://armoured-wolf-productions.square.site)

## **Black Heart Models**

Best Bust - \$150 Gift certificate to the Blackheart Models web store.

[blackheartmodels.com](http://blackheartmodels.com)

## **Bombshell Miniatures**

Award for Best Painted Critter.

[bombshellminis.com](http://bombshellminis.com)

## **Creature Caster**

Best Painted Creature Caster wins \$200 online gift voucher to their webstore.

[creaturecaster.com](http://creaturecaster.com)

## **Dexchk Supply Co.**

1 Axis Handle for each Best in Category winner.

[dexchk.com](http://dexchk.com)

## **Eldritch Foundry**

1 FREE Unlimited Subscription to Eldritch Foundry for Best In Show winner .

[eldritch-foundry.com](http://eldritch-foundry.com)

## **ImpendingDuff**

Best Warhammer 40K Entry - win a special prize package from Impending Duff.

[linktr.ee/impendingduff40k](http://linktr.ee/impendingduff40k)

## **James Wappel Patreon**

Best Unit - Win a full subscription of his Army Painter tutorial videos with many hours of painting instruction. Over 200 hours of painting instruction.

[patreon.com/JamesWappel](http://patreon.com/JamesWappel)

## **Metalhead Minis and Kilted Viking Studio**

Best in Show - The Langer Battleaxe.

[metalheadminis.com](http://metalheadminis.com)

## **Midnight Heroes**

Award For Best Painted Chibi.

[midknightheroes.com](http://midknightheroes.com)

## **Miniature Monthly**

The Golden Gnome Trophy for Most Imaginative.

[miniaturemonthly.com](http://miniaturemonthly.com)

## **Monument Hobbies**

\$300 Gift Certificate for Best in Show.

\$100 Gift Certificate for each Best in Category winner.

[monumenthobbies.com](http://monumenthobbies.com)

## **Nessie Knows**

Best Gundam - Master Grade Gundam Kit.

Best Mini Stompy Robot- 6/8 mm scale. No bases bigger than 60 mm. These sizes apply to Adeptus Titanicus, Imperialis, Battletech, and Steel Rift. - Prize TBA.

[Facebook.com/NessieKnows](https://Facebook.com/NessieKnows)

## **Terrainiacs**

Prize for Best Basing/Terrain.

[terrainiacs.com](http://terrainiacs.com)

## **The Army Painter**

Multiple paint set prizes across multiple categories.

[us.thearmypainter.com](http://us.thearmypainter.com)

## **Transatlantis Games**

Best Youth - Set of Duncan Rhodes' Two Thin Coats paints.

[transatlantisgames.com](http://transatlantisgames.com)

## **TurboDork**

Best use of Metallics - Wins Turbo Dork Starter Set.

Best use of metallics on Gundam - Wins Turbo Dork Starter Set.

Best Youth - Wins Turbo Dork Starter Set.

Best Open - Wins Turbo Dork Starter Set.

[turbodork.com](http://turbodork.com)

## **Warlord Games**

Best Scale Model/Historical.

Gift voucher to shop on the Warlord Games web store.

[store.warlordgames.com](http://store.warlordgames.com)