



The Useful and Beautiful Art Prize

2026

Terms and Conditions

"Art made by the people, for the people, as a joy to the maker and the user."

~ William Morris

Key Dates

Open for entries	15 th July 2026
Submission deadline	30 th September 2026
Finalists announced	30 th October 2026
Finalists' presentations and Winner Announced	22nd November 2026, Birmingham and Midland Institute during MorrisFest

1. About the Prize

The Useful and Beautiful Art Prize is a new award established by the William Morris Society to celebrate and support emerging artists, designers, and craftspeople whose work reflects the ideas and ideals of William Morris. The Prize is guided by Morris's belief that art is both Useful and Beautiful, inseparable from everyday life, work, and nature.

It is guided by the following quotes and principles drawn from his writing and practice:

- "Art has remembered the people, because they created."
- "Have nothing in your houses that you do not know to be useful or believe to be beautiful."
- "Wherever nature works there will be beauty"
- "Art should not be separate from life, but embedded within it"
- "Art made by the people, for the people, as a joy to the maker and the user."
- "Artists cannot help themselves; they are driven to create by their nature, but for that nature to truly thrive, we need to preserve the precious habitat in which that beauty can flourish."

The Useful and Beautiful Prize aims to:

- Support and showcase emerging artists, designers, and makers
- Encourage work rooted in craft, process, usefulness, and meaning
- Reconnect Morris's ideas with contemporary practice and lived experience

- Provide a national platform for crafters and creatives
- Promote sustainability, care, and material awareness in making
- Promote the objects of the charity; to share knowledge of the life and works of William Morris to a global audience and to preserve the house and collection in perpetuity

It asks a simple but poignant question:

What does it mean today to make things that are both useful and beautiful?

The Prize is administered by the William Morris Society ("the Organiser"), a registered charity in England and Wales.

2. Eligibility

2.1 Who May Enter

The Prize is FREE to enter and is open to:

- Artists, designers, makers, and craftspeople of all backgrounds, ages, and stages of practice. You do not have to be a professional artist to enter. We welcome applications from everyone.
- Individuals and collaborative groups (where a group submits, one named individual must act as the lead contact and accept the Terms and Conditions on behalf of the group).
- Entrants must be based in the United Kingdom

2.2 Who May Not Enter

The following are not eligible to enter:

- Members of the WMS Prize judging panel, or anyone involved in administering the Prize.
- Employees or Trustees of the William Morris Society.
- Immediate family members of any of the above.

3. Themes

Entrants may submit work across any of the following broad themes:

1. Craft & Material – hands-on making rooted in material knowledge and process, including but not limited to: textiles, ceramics, sculpture, printmaking, woodworking, stained glass, furniture craft and natural dyes.
2. Pattern & Design – artwork, design, illustration, interior design or digital work informed by the principles of the Arts and Crafts Movement.
3. Nature, Sustainability & Environment – work engaging with natural materials, ecological awareness, sustainability, or environmental themes inspired by Morris's relationship with nature.
4. Literature & Creative Writing – poetry, fiction, essay, and other writing that reflects Morris's belief that art and politics are inseparable, including themes of work, craft, community, and social reform.

4. Submission Requirements

4.1 What to Submit

Each submission must include:

- Digital images of the work (3-4 images; maximum size each 5000kb, JPEG or PNG format).
- A written statement of no more than one side of A4 (approximately 500 words) explaining how William Morris has inspired your work and how it engages with the Prize themes.
- A completed submission form, including the entrant's name and contact details.

4.2 Format of Works

Submissions may be finished works or prototypes. All physical works must not exceed:

- 1 metre squared in overall dimensions (height x width), and
- 10 kg in weight.
- No live organic materials to be used, such as soil.
- AI usage prohibited. Entries using AI will be disqualified.

Finalists works that cannot be physically transported to the exhibition venue may be submitted as documentation, installation proposals, or digital works, subject to prior agreement with the Organiser.

4.3 How to Submit

Submissions must be made via the online entry form on the William Morris Society website. Incomplete submissions will not be considered. The Organiser reserves the right to request additional information or images.

4.4 Submission Deadline

All submissions must be received by 23:59 (BST) on 30th September 2026. Late submissions will not be accepted. The Organiser accepts no responsibility for submissions lost, delayed, or not received due to technical issues.

4.5 Number of Entries

Entrants may submit up to two works for consideration. Each work requires a separate submission form and statement.

5. Judging

5.1 Judging Panel

Entries will be assessed by an independent panel of judges appointed by the William Morris Society. The panel will be announced in advance of the Prize opening for entries. The decision of the judging panel is final and no correspondence will be entered into.

5.2 Judging Criteria

Works will be assessed against the following equally weighted criteria:

- **Usefulness & Beauty** – Usefulness & Beauty – the integration of function, meaning, and aesthetic value in the work.
- **Making & Process** – Making & Process – the clarity, integrity, and intelligence of craft or production method.
- **Meaning & Originality** – Meaning & Originality – the relevance of the work to contemporary life and the originality of the entrant's response to Morris's ideas.
- **Engagement with Nature & Sustainability** – Engagement with Nature & Sustainability – sensitivity to materials, environment, and ecological awareness in the making and concept of the work.

5.3 Selection of Finalists

The judging panel will select a shortlist of finalists, who will be notified by 30th October 2026 and invited to present their work at MorrisFest 2026 in Birmingham. Shortlisted finalists will be expected to deliver or arrange delivery of their physical work to the exhibition venue. Costs shall be covered by the artists. Further logistics will be confirmed upon selection.

6. Awards

The following awards will be made at MorrisFest 2026 on 23rd November 2026:

- **First Prize:** the winning work will be displayed at the William Morris Society Museum, Hammersmith, London, for the duration of 'Morris Month' in March 2027. (1st-31st March) The winner will also be featured in WMS publications and digital platforms. The winner will also receive a year's free *Strawberry Thief* Patron level membership (Jan-Dec 2027) and a £100 WMS Gift Voucher.
- **Second, and Third Prizes:** The second and third prize winners will receive a year's free membership to the Society (Jan-Dec 2027) and a £50 WMS Gift Voucher each.

The Organiser reserves the right to withhold any award if, in the opinion of the judging panel, no submission of sufficient quality has been received.

7. Exhibition

Shortlisted works will be exhibited at the Birmingham and Midland Institute (BMI) from 22nd November 2026 as part of MorrisFest 2026. By submitting to the Prize, finalists agree to:

- Make their work available for the duration of the exhibition.
- Arrange transport of their work to and from the venue (the Organiser will provide guidance on logistics and may be able to assist in specific circumstances – please contact us if you require support).

- Allow the William Morris Society to use images of the work for promotional purposes (see Section 9).
- The winner will need to arrange their own transport and costs associated with the delivery of the artwork to the William Morris Society for Morris Month in March 2027.
- During the time the artwork is on display, the artwork will be displayed in line with professional museum collections care standards.

The Organiser will take reasonable care of all works during the exhibition period but accepts no liability for loss or damage to works during transit or display. Entrants are advised to ensure their work is adequately insured and protected.

8. Copyright and Intellectual Property

Entrants retain full copyright in all submitted works. By entering the Prize, entrants grant the William Morris Society a non-exclusive, royalty-free licence to:

- Reproduce images of the submitted work in WMS publications, website, social media, and promotional materials in connection with the Prize.
- Display and reproduce images of the winning and shortlisted works in perpetuity for non-commercial educational and promotional purposes.

The Organiser will credit the entrant's name whenever their work is reproduced. The Organiser will not licence images of an entrant's work to third parties without the entrant's prior written consent.

Entrants warrant that their submission is their own original work, does not infringe the intellectual property rights of any third party, and that they have the right to grant the licence described above.

9. Data Protection

Personal data submitted as part of an entry will be processed by the William Morris Society in accordance with UK data protection law (UK GDPR and the Data Protection Act 2018) and the WMS Privacy Policy, available at the WMS website. Personal data will be used solely for the purposes of administering the Prize and, where consent is given, for WMS communications. Data will not be shared with third parties except as necessary to administer the Prize.

10. General Conditions

- The Organiser reserves the right to amend, suspend, or cancel the Prize at any time and for any reason, including circumstances beyond its reasonable control. In such circumstances, the Organiser will endeavour to notify entrants as soon as practicable.
- The Organiser reserves the right to disqualify any entry that does not comply with these Terms and Conditions, or that is considered by the Organiser to be inappropriate, offensive, or in breach of any applicable law.
- By entering the Prize, entrants agree to be bound by these Terms and Conditions. These Terms and Conditions are governed by the laws of England and Wales.

- The Prize is not open to entries which have been submitted to, or won, a significant national or international prize in the 12 months prior to the submission deadline.
- Works previously exhibited may be submitted, provided the entrant retains the right to have the work acquired and displayed as described in these Terms.
- The Organiser will not be responsible for any costs incurred by entrants in preparing or submitting their entry.

11. Contact

For all enquiries relating to the Prize, please contact:

The Useful and Beautiful Art Prize

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