



THE  
NATIONAL  
EMBROIDERY  
AWARDS 2026



Fashion &  
Embroidery

# THE NATIONAL EMBROIDERY AWARDS 2026

**Are you ready to let your stitches shine?**  
**Whether you're threading your very first needle or you're an embroidery expert, The National Embroidery Awards 2026 is your stage to amaze, inspire, and be celebrated.**

## WHY ENTER?

- This isn't just a competition – it's a national showcase of passion, innovation, and artistry. Your work could be admired by thousands at Fashion & Embroidery, NEC Birmingham, and later featured in a stunning exhibition at The Sunbury Embroidery Gallery (17 August to 11 October 2026).
- Prizes include top-of-the-line materials, tools, and – most importantly – nationwide recognition. Finalists and winners will have their work exhibited at The Sunbury Embroidery Gallery and also featured in Embroidery magazine... so this is a chance to be seen by some of the UK's leading embroidery experts and textile artists alike.

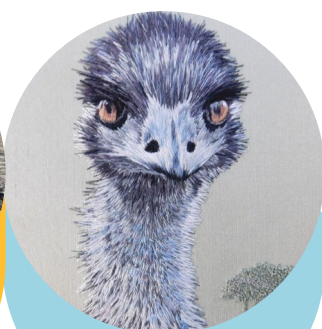
## THE BRIEF

Submit the piece you're most proud of – your best, most beautiful embroidery created within the past 12 months. We want to see texture, originality, depth, and that fearless spark that sets your work apart.

Your work should not have been entered into any other competition or displayed publicly elsewhere in an exhibition. However, this year you will not be excluded if you have shared your work via Social Media.

## NEW FOR 2026

Your embroidery can now be hand delivered direct to the NEC and collected after the show. No parking charges will be incurred for the drop off of your entry (parking charges apply during the event).





# TWO MAIN ENTRY CATEGORIES

We've designed the structure to level the playing field, so everyone gets a fair shot – from newcomers to professionals.

## In Education – Choose from 3 classes:

- **Schools** (from 6 to 16 years old – up to GCSE level)
- **Colleges, Sixth Forms and apprentices** (A levels, T levels, Btecs, foundations, apprentices, other)
- **Undergraduate, Postgraduate Degree Students and recent graduates** (any degree specialism – within 3 years of graduating)

## Not in Education – Choose from 3 classes:

- **Hand Embroidery**
- **Free Machine Embroidery**
- **Digital Embroidery**

See terms and conditions for percentage of technique to be used for entering each class.

## KEY DATES

- **Registration & Image Submission Deadline:** 16 January 2026
- **Postal Entry Deadline:** 20 February 2026
- **Hand Delivery Date:** 10 March 2026 (to the NEC Birmingham)
- **Winners Announced:** 12 March 2026
- **Hand Collection of work:** 15 March 2026 (from the NEC Birmingham)
- **Postal Return of work:** Within 30 days of competition taking place.



# JUDGING PROCESS

Due to the amazing amount of entries that we received for our inaugural competition, we will now be implementing a pre-selection process for 2026. This will allow for 60 entries to go forward to the final judging at the NEC Birmingham.

If selected you will be notified and asked to submit your work, via the delivery method that you chose on your entry form.

## THE JUDGES



**David Morrish**  
Founder of  
Kingfly Embroidery



**Twan Lentjes**  
Digital Embroiderer and  
Costume Maker



**Karen Nicol**  
Esteemed free machine  
and textile artist



**Anne Butcher**  
Head of Studio and Standards,  
Royal School of Needlework



**Angie Wyman**  
Former BA (Hons) Course  
Leader, Royal School of  
Needlework



**Anthea Godfrey**  
Artistic Director,  
Embroiderers' Guild

## JUDGING CRITERIA

Entries will be judged on:

- **Creativity and Originality:** How unique and innovative is your work?
- **Technical Skill:** The level of expertise demonstrated in your chosen embroidery method.
- **Artistic Expression:** The emotional impact and storytelling of your piece.
- **Intentions and Risk Taking:** What you are trying to do and the risks involved – even if it has not quite worked out how you intended. Celebrating that give it go spirit.
- **Adherence to Guidelines:** Compliance with the competition rules and the percentage requirement for the "Not in Education" classes.

Whether your style is bold and modern or intricate and traditional, we want to see your creativity – told through thread. Take a leap of imagination. Share your vision. Inspire the nation.

The National Embroidery Awards 2026 – Where creativity meets recognition.

We can't wait to see what you'll create.

# AWARDS AND PRIZES

There will be awards and prizes for the winner and runner up of each Category Class and one overall Best in Show award.

## SPONSORED BY



THE TEXTILE ART MAGAZINE

**embroidery**



Embroiderers' Guild



a brand of  
**FREUDENBERG**

THE SUNBURY  
EMBROIDERY  
GALLERY

**Barnyarns**



Patron: HRH The Duchess of Cornwall  
President: HRH The Duchess of Gloucester



## BEST IN SHOW

- The Perpetual Madeira Rose Bowl trophy held for one year and engraved with the winner's name
- 194 spool Madeira Treasure Chest (usual price £485)
- PFAFF Creative Expect 350 sewing and embroidery machine (usual price £1199)
- Exclusive feature in the Embroidery Magazine
- 1-year print, plus digital subscription to Embroidery magazine
- Entry exhibited in a winners gallery at The Sunbury Embroidery Gallery



## IN EDUCATION

### SCHOOLS

#### Winner

- An engraved trophy and certificate
- A selection of Madeira sewing threads
- Showcased in Embroidery Magazine feature and a 1-year print subscription for the school.
- £100 voucher to spend at Barnyarns
- Entry exhibited in a winners gallery at The Sunbury Embroidery Gallery

#### Runner Up

- Runners up certificate
- Vlieseline goodie bag
- Entry exhibited in a winners gallery at The Sunbury Embroidery Gallery

### COLLEGES, SIXTH FORMS AND APPRENTICESHIPS

#### Winner

- An engraved trophy and certificate
- A selection of Madeira sewing threads
- Showcased in Embroidery Magazine feature and a 1-year print subscription for the student.
- £100 voucher to spend at Barnyarns
- Entry exhibited in a winners gallery at The Sunbury Embroidery Gallery

#### Runner Up

- Runners up certificate
- Vlieseline goodie bag
- Entry exhibited in a winners gallery at The Sunbury Embroidery Gallery

### UNIVERSITIES AND RECENT GRADUATES

#### Winner

- An engraved trophy and certificate
- A selection of Madeira sewing threads
- Showcased in Embroidery Magazine feature and a 1-year print subscription for the student
- £100 voucher to spend at Barnyarns
- Entry exhibited in a winners gallery at The Sunbury Embroidery Gallery

#### Runner Up

- Runners up certificate
- Vlieseline goodie bag
- Entry exhibited in a winners gallery at The Sunbury Embroidery Gallery



# NOT IN EDUCATION

## HAND EMBROIDERY AWARD

### Winner

- An engraved trophy and certificate
- A selection of Madeira sewing threads
- Showcased in Embroidery Magazine feature and a 1-year print subscription
- £60 voucher to spend at Barnyarns
- Signed copy of Royal School of Needlework book
- Entry exhibited in a winners gallery at The Sunbury Embroidery Gallery

### Runner Up

- Runners up certificate
- Vlieseline goodie bag
- Entry exhibited in a winners gallery at The Sunbury Embroidery Gallery

## FREE MACHINE EMBROIDERY AWARD

### Winner

- An engraved trophy and certificate
- A selection of Madeira sewing threads
- Showcased in Embroidery Magazine feature and a 1-year print subscription
- £60 voucher to spend at Barnyarns
- Signed copy of Karen Nicol's book
- Entry exhibited in a winners gallery at The Sunbury Embroidery Gallery

### Runner Up

- Runners up certificate
- Vlieseline goodie bag
- Entry exhibited in a winners gallery at The Sunbury Embroidery Gallery

## DIGITAL EMBROIDERY AWARD

### Winner

- An engraved trophy and certificate
- A selection of Madeira sewing threads
- Showcased in Embroidery Magazine feature and a 1-year print subscription
- £60 voucher to spend at Barnyarns
- Signed copy of David Morrish's book
- Entry exhibited in a winners gallery at The Sunbury Embroidery Gallery

### Runner Up

- Runners up certificate
- Vlieseline goodie bag
- Entry exhibited in a winners gallery at The Sunbury Embroidery Gallery



# PRE-SELECTION OF ENTRIES

Registration and image submission deadline is **Friday 16 January 2026**.

You are asked to send in 3 good quality (high resolution) images of your work for pre-selection, along with your entry form and relevant fee.

Please email the following images as .jpeg files to **[competitions@ichf.co.uk](mailto:competitions@ichf.co.uk)**

1. An image of your whole embroidered piece
2. An image of you standing next to/holding the piece (so that we can assess the scale)
3. A close up detail of your stitching

You will be notified if your work has been selected for the competition by **Friday 30 January 2026**.

## ENTRY LIMITATIONS AND RESTRICTIONS

### FEES

- **In Education:** £20 per person (max 1 entry per person)
- **Not in Education:** £30 per person per entry (max 1 entry per class)

**PLEASE NOTE:** Fees are non-refundable if your work is not selected for the competition. However:

- Non-selected entrants will receive a complimentary ticket to the 'Fashion & Embroidery' show that will allow them to visit free-of-charge on all four days of the event.
- Selected entrants will each receive a Competitors Badge, which can be collected from the Organisers Office on arrival at the show.

### ENTRY DIMENSIONS

If working 2D – your piece of embroidered art needs to be no larger than 150cm x 150cm. If working 3D i.e. embroidering on a garment, piece of furniture, soft furnishings or creating an embroidered 3D sculpture etc then please try to keep the size under 1 x 1 x 1 meters for exhibition and display purposes.

### EMBROIDERY PERCENTAGE

For the **In Education** category – over 50% of the art piece has to be embroidered. So for example you could print or manipulate a piece of fabric and embroider over 50% of the area in a combination of free machine or digital embroidery with beads added by hand.

For the **Not in Education** category, please ensure that at least 50% of your piece is produced using the method of the class you are entering.

### DISPLAY

We aim to showcase all work that has been selected, so please consider how your piece will be displayed. Some form of hanging may be required for 2D work, so you could frame your piece, which has display wings or a hanging mechanism on the back or other. Please clearly state on the Entry Form, how your piece is intended to be shown. 3D work may require a mannequin or plinth so again please state preference on the Entry Form.

# DELIVERY OF WORK

If selected, please choose one of the following options to deliver your embroidery to us:

## Option 1: POST OR COURIER

Deadline for the delivery of all postal embroideries to the following address is **Friday 20 February 2026**.

Suzanne Lewis

The National Embroidery Awards 2026  
ICHF Events, Dominic House, Seaton Road,  
Highcliffe, Dorset, BH23 5HW

Email: [suzannel@ichf.co.uk](mailto:suzannel@ichf.co.uk)

The cost of the postage will depend on the courier or service that you choose.

## Option 2: DELIVER BY HAND

Hand deliver to this address on **Tuesday 10 March 2026, between the hours of 11am and 3.30pm** – You will not need to pay for parking at the NEC to drop off your embroidery.

Jane Bolsover

Sewing For Pleasure and Fashion & Embroidery  
Hall 20  
National Exhibition Centre (NEC),  
Pendigo Way, Marston Green, Birmingham B40 1NT

Tel: 07767 415187

# COLLECTION OF EXHIBITS FROM SHOW

All exhibits must be collected at the stated time and NOT before.

Collection can commence from 16.00 Sunday 15 March 2026. Please be aware of this rule when organising your travel plans. Competitors' badges must be worn as proof of ID to enable you to collect your embroidery from the show. The Organisers' reserve the right to remove any exhibit not taken by 7pm on Sunday 15 March 2026.

**PLEASE NOTE:** If you have opted for your embroidery to be returned by post, **then you may not change your mind and collect it in person, or nominate anyone else to do so at the end of the show.**

# HOW TO ENTER

1. Register your interest and pay the entry fee (see fees), choosing the category and class that best fits you.
2. Complete all sections on the online Entry Form:  
[www.creativecraftshow.co.uk/competitions/](http://www.creativecraftshow.co.uk/competitions/)
3. Read the Rules for entry.
4. Email 3 high-resolution images of your work in progress or completed piece to: [competitions@ichf.co.uk](mailto:competitions@ichf.co.uk) (j.peg files are preferable) by 16 January 2026. Please label the image files with your name, category and class.
5. All Selected Entries must be posted to ICHF Events by 20 February 2026 at the latest (see Rules of Entry for details).

If you have any questions about entering or need guidance, please contact Jane Bolsover on: [jane@janebcreatives.co.uk](mailto:jane@janebcreatives.co.uk)





# RULES OF ENTRY

## ENTRIES

1. This competition is open to all embroiderers' in the British Isles. Embroideries entered into this competition should not have been previously entered into any other competition or displayed publicly elsewhere in an exhibition. However, this year you will not be excluded if you have shared your work via Social Media.
2. For the "In Education" category only one piece may be entered per student. For the "Not in Education" category competitors must complete an entry form for EACH CLASS and submit 3 images for each entry, if entering more than one piece. All entries must be the bonafide work of the individual who has entered.
3. The pre-selection deadline is Friday 16 January 2026. You will be notified if your work has been selected for the competition by Friday 30 January 2026. Those not selected, will also be notified and sent their complimentary show tickets.
4. Entries may be 2D or 3D but see Entry Limitations and Restrictions regarding finished entry sizes. For safety reasons GLASS must not be used when framing, but Perspex is allowed. Please provide accurate dimensions of your work on the entry form.
5. Please ensure your piece has some kind of hanging system if it is a picture, to enable hanging in the judging exhibition. Failure to provide this will mean that the piece cannot be displayed.
6. The decision for the category entered is the responsibility of the maker. Embroideries cannot be swapped to another category after the entry form has been processed.
7. We reserve the right to NOT hang work that contains any sharp or dangerous materials, or which, the Organiser's feel is unsuitable in anyway for display.
8. Your name, address and phone number must be clearly and securely attached to the back of your work to enable us to identify your piece. Please do not label the front – to ensure anonymity during the judging process.
9. We endeavour to hang all selected pieces, which comply with the Rules of Entry, where we receive an entry form by the due date, but this cannot be guaranteed and the Organisers reserve the right not to display any piece for whatever reason.

## PACKAGING AND POSTING YOUR EMBROIDERY

1. Packaging the embroidery is the maker's responsibility, but we advise wrapping it with bubble wrap and enclosing it in strong cardboard or plastic box, for protection and transportation purposes.
2. Attach a 'From' label to the outside of your parcel, to enable us to identify your entry, also stating the Category and Class that you are entering. Make sure your labels are clear as to whom the parcel is 'To' and 'From'. Please use BLOCK CAPITALS.

## HAND COLLECTING YOUR EMBROIDERY

**PLEASE NOTE:** If you have opted to collect your piece in person, your original packaging will not be available when you come to collect and it cannot be returned to you at a later date. So please ensure that you bring along something suitable to take your piece home in.

## RETURN OF POSTAL EMBROIDERIES

We will aim to dispatch your embroidery back to you within one calendar month from the show date.



## SECURITY

While reasonable care will be taken with the security of all exhibits ICHF Events and the judges accept no responsibility for any loss or damage occurring to works whilst in our possession.

## INSURANCE

Insurance is the responsibility of the maker. We cannot insure embroideries on your behalf.

## INTERLLECTUAL PROPERTY RIGHTS

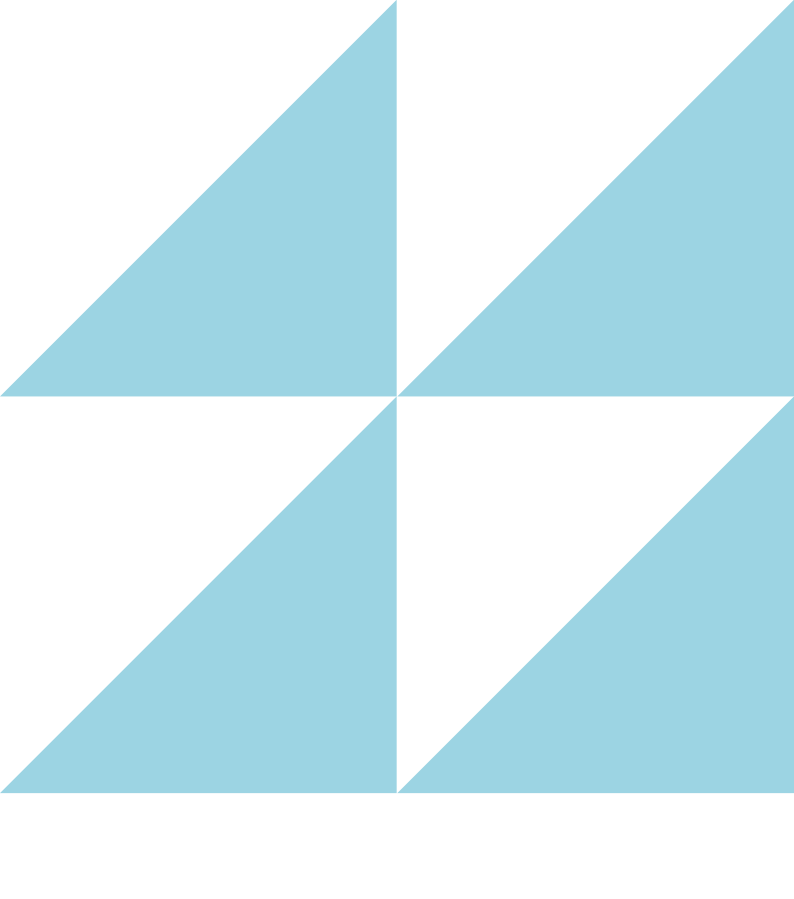
By entering competitions and allowing work to be shown at the Fashion & Embroidery show (12-15 March 2026), PLEASE BE AWARE that photographs or copies maybe taken by any person or visitor, and realise that your designs/work may be reproduced, but you will not hold ICHF Ltd or its employees' liable in any way should this occur.

## PHOTOGRAPHY

Please note the Organisers' will be taking photographs of the competition entries at this event. These photographs may be used within magazines, newspapers, online and Social Media and to promote future events.

## DATA PROTECTION

By entering the National Embroidery Awards, you agree for your details to be used by ICHF Events, who may wish to contact you with information of other services and publications, which may be of interest to you. Your details will be processed by ICHF Events Ltd in full accordance with data protection legislation and in full accordance with ICHF Events Ltd Privacy Policy.



## IMAGE CREDITS

### COVER (top to bottom)

- ICHF Events: Embroidery exhibit from Fashion & Embroidery 2025
- Silk Shading Diploma: Eagle, by Royal School of Needlework student Sally Walchester (Bristol)
- Not in Education – Digital Embroidery: Runner up 2025, The Move to the Country by Dr Anne Elliott
- Jacobean Crewelwork: Tree of Life, by Royal School of Needlework student Laura Parsons (Bristol)

### PAGE 2 (left to right)

- Goldwork: Octopus, Certificate in Technical Embroidery, by Royal School of Needlework student Deborah Parson (Hampton Court Palace)
- Not in Education – Hand Embroidery: Runner up 2025, The Reinvention of Myself by Sara Hadlow
- Not in Education – Hand Embroidery: Best in Show 2025, Man and His Best Friend III by Aran Illingworth
- Silk Shading: Ostrich, Advanced Certificate in Technical Embroidery, by Royal School of Needlework student, Christina Phillips (Hampton Court Palace)

### PAGE 3 (left to right)

- Appliqué: Continental style landscape with houses along a canal, by Royal School of Needlework Appliqué Diploma student Renee Tyers (Bristol)
- Goldwork: Royal School of Needlework student at work

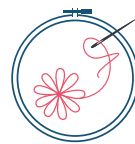
### PAGE 6 (top left to right)

- Royal School of Needlework BA (Hons) Hand Embroidery – Major project by Alex Standing
- Not in Education – Free Machine Embroidery: Entrant 2025, Eorthe by Nicola Vesey Williams
- In Education – College/Apprenticeship: Winner 2025, Reds, Blues and Oranges by Priyaguna Sundararajan Visalakshi (Royal School of Needlework)
- In Education – Recent Graduate: Runner Up 2025, Offence by Lucy May (Royal School of Needlework)

### PAGE 11 (left to right)

- Royal School of Needlework BA (Hons) Hand Embroidery – Major project Amelia Merrick
- Royal School of Needlework BA (Hons) Hand Embroidery – Major project Alice Brady
- Not in Education – Free Machine Embroidery: Runner up 2025, September Garden by Kate Findlay

# ICHF Events



## Fashion & Embroidery

