



Juried & Judged Quilt Competition January 21 - 24, 2026

Quilt Competition Rules & Entry Form Entry Deadline: October 2, 2025

Dear Entrant,

Thank you for your interest in our 2026 Quilt Competition. We are so excited to continue building on our tradition of providing artists a great place to enter their work. A few updates from our 2025 show.

We have a new category - Improv. Quilts in the Improv category should have a visual design that emphasizes spontaneity, creative freedom and working without a fixed pattern or template. Makers can use any construction technique. Improv quilts should embrace the maker's ability to explore and experiment with different shapes, negative space and embrace unexpected and unique outcomes. Improv quilts can be planned by the maker, but a commercially available pattern is not accepted in this category.

As a reminder, mail in entries will still be permitted, however you must provide photos on a USB Flash drive. We will no longer accept CDs/DVDs (we have no way to open those disks anymore). You will not receive your flash drive back, but you may put multiple entries on a single flash drive so long as you make the file name the quilt title. For example title_fullview.jpeg and title_closeup.jpeg.

Our 2026 awards list will reward those makers who celebrate original design. Our goal and mission in producing the two Road shows is to celebrate, embrace and grow innovation in quilting. Original Design is, in of itself innovation. We still have categories that technique based quilts can enter, and will remain a show for all quilters.

We have confirmed our special shipping exception with the American Quilters' Society. AQS will allow entrants who have quilts accepted in Road and Daytona Beach to arrive after the deadline for Daytona as long as Road ships them directly to AQS. We have done in the past and it has worked well, and are happy we are able to continue this option for you prior to entry.

Online entries will open on August 8, 2025.

If you have any questions, please reach out to the office.

Good luck and enjoy the show.

Matt Reese

President/CEO

Contest Rules

1. Each entry must have been completed after **January 1, 2024** and may not have been *displayed* at any previous Road to California Contest. Quilts that have been altered, amended or modified at any date after the original completion date retain the original completion date.
2. Contestant is limited to 3 entries, 2 per category. Exception: Group Quilt & Quilter for Hire. If you sign the entry form, it counts as one of your limited entries. If you are listed as a maker, but another member enters the quilt, it does not count.
3. Entry must consist of three (3) distinct layers - top, middle layer, and backing. Quilts must be quilted by hand and/or machine. Crazy Quilts may be tied instead of quilted.
4. No pre-quilted fabrics may be used. No pre-marked wholecloth quilt tops may be used. Quilts made from kits will not be accepted. This includes, but is not limited to: block of the month quilts made from fabrics pre-selected for the quilt maker.
5. No rigid frames, rods or mounting devices, or special lighting may accompany quilt. No rods may be sewn into the sleeve.
6. Quilts that require special handling will not be accepted. Your quilt must be able to be stacked with other quilts and boxed and/or rolled with other quilts without potential damage to your quilt or any other quilt in the show. Road to California, at its sole discretion, has final determination. Quilts that fall under this rule may be disqualified. The entrant will be notified and no fees refunded.
7. Quilts must be a single unit. No rods or other apparatus (including frames) may be sewn into the sleeves of the quilt.
8. Multiple panel quilts and odd shaped quilts with multiple panels must be mounted on black fabric containing a 4 inch sleeve. The top half these quilts must be securely sewn to the black fabric. The black fabric must not extend past the edges of the quilt.
9. All quilts must have a 4 inch double sleeve attached to the top of the back of the quilt for display. No special hanging hardware will be accepted and quilts requiring special hanging instructions will be disqualified.
10. Quilts measuring **longer** than 86 inches must have a second 4 inch sleeve sewn at the bottom of the quilt across the entire width of the quilt. Quilts **wider** than 80 inches must have a gap in the sleeve at the half way point. Quilts without the proper sleeve are subject to disqualification.
11. Quilts must be labeled with maker's name and contact information. **The label must be basted over or covered with blue painters tape to preserve anonymity during the judging process.**
12. All quilts should arrive clean and free of strong odors. Road to California reserves the right to not display an entry if the quality or condition does not meet Road to California's standards upon a hands on inspection. In such a case no fees will be refunded.
13. Quilt-for-hire quilting is acceptable. Any prize money for Best Quilting awards will be made out to the entrant who completed the entry form.
14. Road to California will insure each accepted entry against a major catastrophe from the time we receive the entry until it departs the Ontario Convention Center for \$300. It is highly recommended that entries over the above stated values be appraised and the entrant possesses appropriate insurance to cover any damage to the entry while in transit and at the 2026 Road to California Show. Every attempt is made to ensure the security of your entry at the 2026 Road to California show. It is the responsibility of the entrant to insure their quilt further. ~~Insurance is strictly for catastrophic loss - and requires forfeiture of ownership of the quilt to Road to California and/or our insurance provider in order for a claim to be paid to the owner.~~
15. All prize checks including two-person entries and group entries will be issued to the individual who signed the entry form. Only one prize ribbon is awarded.
16. **Be sure to select the proper category for your entry.** The jury reserves the right to change an entry category. The judges determine final category placement.
17. Each entry must include a digital image featuring the full view of the quilt and a digital image featuring a close up view of the workmanship of the entry. Digital image must be 2,000 pixels on the smallest size and color correct.
18. The written description must be no longer than 450 characters. Road to California may edit the description at its sole discretion.
19. The Road to California entry fee is \$40. Entries submitted fully online receive a \$10 discount.
20. Entry deadline is October 2, 2025. A complete physical entry packet must be received by 3 PM PST, online entry closes at 11:59 PM
21. All decisions of the jurors and judges are final. Road to California may disqualify any entry including those that fail to follow the quilt contest rules.
22. Accepted entries must be available for judging and exhibition from **December 23, 2025 to January 25, 2026**. Entries hanging in the show may not be taken down early for any reason.
23. All entries must comply with Road to California, Inc.'s statement on copyright releases. It is the responsibility of the entrant to receive written permission if your quilt falls under our Copyright Release Requirements. Road to California, Inc. at its sole discretion may request the written release from the entrant at any time. If Entrant fails to provide written permission, entry will be immediately disqualified and if any prize money is due, prize money will be withheld.
24. Categories 1-6 must be Makers Original Interpretations or Original Designs. Please note: ALL categories must comply with the Road to California, Inc. Statement of copyright, see rule 23.

Category Definitions

1. Abstract – Quilts entered in this category should reflect principles of abstract design. Forms and compositions should emphasize color, line and design. Quilts should be abstract, cutting edge and non-literal. No Minimum Perimeter; Maximum perimeter is 480 inches.

2. Animal – Quilts entered in this category should feature an animal or creature as the centerpiece of the quilt. Can include other sub-design elements, but the animal or creature must be the primary focus of the quilt. No Minimum Perimeter; Maximum perimeter is 480 inches.

3. Human Image – Quilts entered in this category should feature some recognizable aspect of the human form. No Minimum Perimeter; Maximum perimeter is 480 inches.

4. Improv – Quilts entered in this category have a visual design that emphasizes spontaneity, creative freedom and working without a fixed pattern or template. Quilts should embrace the maker's ability to explore and experiment with different shapes, negative space and embrace unexpected and unique outcomes.

5. Natuescape – Quilts entered in this category should illustrate an aspect of a natural scenery. Creatures and animals may be a component, but should not be the focus of the quilt. No Minimum Perimeter; Maximum perimeter is 480 inches.

6. Pictorial – Quilts entered in this category should illustrate a recognizable image (Cityscape, Wildlife). Use this category if your quilt combines aspects of the other categories listed above. No Minimum Perimeter; Maximum perimeter is 480 inches.

Quilts Entered in 1-6 must be original design or original interpretation in design.

7. Appliqué – Quilts entered in this category should reflect traditional principles but may deviate from tradition. The quilt should be composed at least 50% of appliqué, in any technique (fused, machine, hand, etc.) No Minimum Perimeter; Maximum perimeter is 480 inches.

8. Pieced – Quilts entered in this category should reflect traditional principles but may deviate from tradition. The Quilt Should be constructed by piecing, either hand or machine. Wall - Maximum perimeter is 284 inches. Large - Maximum perimeter is 480 inches.

9. Mixed – Quilts entered in this category should reflect traditional principles, but may deviate from tradition. Enter your quilt in this category if the predominate construction method is a mix of both piecing and appliqué or if it includes one or more of the following construction techniques: whole cloth, crazy quilts, embroidery and fabric manipulation. No Minimum Perimeter; Maximum perimeter is 480 inches.

Timeline

October 2, 2025: Complete Entry Packet Received by Road to California (Online or Mail In)

November 28, 2025: Entrant notification including, if accepted, shipping and return instructions. All information will be sent via email from info@roadtocalifornia.com

November 28, 2025 - December 23, 2025: Accepted Entries must be received in our office.

January 20, 2026: Judges comments & award winners notified via email (late evening). If you wish to come help hang the quilts, hanging occurs January 19 & 20.

January 24, 2026: You can pick up your entry after 5:30 PM

January 26, 2026: Domestic Entries return shipped.

January 29, 2026: International Entries return shipped via USPS International Priority.

Entry Checklist

Online Entries

Completed Online Entry Form
2 Photos (Full View & Close-up)
\$30 Online Credit Card Payment

Save \$10 by Entering Online!

Mail-In Entries

Completed Paper Entry Form
USB Flash Drive with Photos
\$40 Cash/Check Payment

Mail to: Road to California Quilt Entry
1160 Dewey Way Suite A, Upland, CA 91786



Contest Entry Form



Information About Yourself

Name of Entrant _____

Address _____

City _____ State _____ Zip Code _____

Phone (evening) _____ Email _____

This is a new ☐ Address ☐ Phone ☐ Email

Information About Your Quilt

Category (Check One)

- | | | |
|--------------------------------------|--------------------------------------|--|
| <input type="checkbox"/> Abstract | <input type="checkbox"/> Improv | <input type="checkbox"/> Appliqué |
| <input type="checkbox"/> Animal | <input type="checkbox"/> Pictorial | <input type="checkbox"/> Mixed & Other |
| <input type="checkbox"/> Human Image | <input type="checkbox"/> Naturescape | <input type="checkbox"/> Pieced |

Size: Height _____ Width _____

Title of Quilt: _____

Name of Maker(s): _____

Quilted by: _____

Design Basis (Choose One)

- ☐ Maker's Original Design
- ☐ (Other) _____

Please include book title, pattern title, or all other forms of inspiration on design basis. If your quilt was inspired by a commercial pattern or book, it is not your original design.

Year Started _____

Year Completed _____

Quilting (Check all that apply)

- ☐ Hand Quilted ☐ Machine Quilting Stationary ☐ Machine Quilting Frame ☐ Computer Assisted

Artist Statement Describe your inspiration, entry, techniques and what inspired you in 450 Characters or less. Please provide any copyright acknowledgment here. This statement may be edited for length, grammar, clarity and style. *Please do not quote lengthy poetry.*

I have read, and agree to, the contest rules which accompanied this entry form. I also certify that the entry described above was made by the person(s) listed above. I wish to display my entry at Road to California and agree to abide by the decisions of the jury and judges. I understand that Road to California will take every precaution to protect my entry in this show. Entrant will not hold Road to California, OCC, SMG, City of Ontario, event management or any of the above-mentioned employees or volunteers liable for damages or loss of entry beyond the insurance limitations specified in the contest rules. I realize they cannot be responsible for the acts of nature beyond their control. If my entry is exhibited, I understand that my signature gives Road to California the unlimited right to use a photo of my entry for promotions, advertising, multimedia productions, website (including any webcast coverage) CDs, DVDs, any photography needs relating to this event and other proper uses without further compensation to me.

Signature _____ Date: _____

Online Entry System

Specific Instructions

Please note the following about the online entry form.

The Design Basis line should be filled in. This line should include any inspiration, including pattern, book, etc. This line is printed on the Quilt Sign at the show so it should give any credit that you need to give.

Photos must be a minimum of 2,000 pixels per side. Please note: depending on the size of your photos, the upload may be slow. We recommend your photos to be less than 4 MB in size.

The online form will ask you for a photo of the back of your quilt. This is not required. Only the Front view and close up are required. The jury will disregard any photos of the back of your quilt.

If you get stuck, you can email us at info@roadtocalifornia.com. We will be able to assist you through the entry process.

Road to California, Inc. Statement on Copyright Releases

If you use the designs, photography, art, pattern or quilt created by another person as the source of your quilt's design, you must obtain that individual's written permission before displaying your quilt publicly and entering it for competition. This applies whether you have copied, altered, or used only a portion of the design.

This is considered derivative work, which by definition is "something that is based on another source" and "imitative of the work of another person." Designs are considered intellectual property and are covered under the copyright laws of the United States.

Please note that when you see the word "permission" referenced in this document, it refers to written permission. Written permission is any written document (email included) that must be specific about what permission the copyright holder has granted you. It is important to keep the release for your records, and to be able to produce it when asked. This not only protects you, but releases any liability you may have with any show or venue where you display your work.

Please do not automatically send us your permission. We will request the copyright release should we feel it necessary given the circumstances.

I Used Someone's Design as Inspiration for My Quilt.

Most quilters fall under this situation. If someone else's work is identifiable in yours, you should still ask for their permission. If it is not identifiable, it is still common courtesy to credit the artist and the work that provided the inspiration on your entry form.

I Purchased my Pattern, Book or Magazine. They sold the Patterns to be used. Doesn't that Give me All the Permission I Require?

Purchasing the pattern, book or magazine simply gives you permission to make the quilt for your own use. To show it publicly, enter it into competition, or use it for commercial purposes, you must have the pattern designers written permission.

How do I obtain the Permission I Need?

Check the inside cover pages of the book or magazine and the back of the pattern. You may find the contact information or the artist's website information there. If the information is not printed there, contact the publisher and/or search for the artist's website on the Internet.

Begin with a short letter or email. Tell the artist that you have made a quilt from their pattern or artwork and attach a photo. Ask their permission to enter it for competition and to publish photographs with proper credit given. Depending on the situation, you may need the publisher's permission as well.

What if the Designer Denies Permission?

Unfortunately, there is not much you can do. You can ask why. Always remember, you get farther with Honey than with Vinegar. If you still cannot get written permission from the copyright holder, you cannot enter your quilt to competition without putting yourself at risk of legal action from both the copyright holder, and potentially the shows and venues you enter your quilt into.

What Else do I Need to do?

Once you have received written permission, you must give proper credit to the artist or designer everywhere the quilt is displayed. Please use the Design Inspiration to give proper credit to the copyright holder under this entry form. Provide the Artist or designer's name, the title and publisher of the book, magazine or pattern, the website where you found the artwork or any other important information. If you run out of space on the design inspiration, please use part of your quilt description to complete the copyright information.

What if the Artwork is in the Public Domain?

Credit the artist and state that the work is in the public domain.

What if I Cannot Locate the Artist or the Artist is Deceased?

If you cannot locate the artist, or if the artist is deceased, contact the publisher, or in the case of a photograph or other artwork, contact the place or website where you found it. This could include art galleries, colleges, or museums. They may own the copyright or be able to put you in touch with the copyright owner.

Please note: Even if the original artist is passed away, there is a good chance the copyright is still in effect. Copyrights in the United States last at least 70 years after the death of the original artist.

******This copyright information is made available by Road to California, Inc. strictly for educational purposes. The information is to provide you general information and a general understanding of the requirements to fulfill the copyright requirements to enter your quilt into the Road to California Quilt Competition. By using this information, you understand that this should not be used as a substitute for competent legal counsel from a licensed professional attorney in your state.******



2026 Contest Awards

Best of Show Award

\$10,000

Sponsored by:



**Handi
Quilter**

Marie White Masterpiece Award – \$5,000

The Stevii Graves Director's Choice
Award – \$5,000

Each Outstanding Award Earns \$1,500

Outstanding Abstract Design

Outstanding Artistry

Outstanding Hand Work

Outstanding Machine Quilting Frame

Outstanding Machine Quilting Stationary

Outstanding Original Design

Outstanding Visual Narrative

Category Prizes

1st Place – \$1,000

2nd Place – \$750

3rd Place – \$500

**Judges Choice – \$500
Each (2 Judges)**