

HOW SHOULD THE EWES BE DECORATED?

This will depend on the sponsor's and/or the artist's particular ideas. We are hoping for some really exceptional designs, and are sure that some amusing ideas will also come forward. Some sponsors might prefer to make their sculpture available for a school or community to decorate, working with an artist. Remember that at the end of the display period the ewes will be sold at an auction and the best designs attract the highest prices.

Each blank ewe is finished in a coat of white primer providing a tough, durable, water-resistant surface which can be painted over with virtually any paint, water or solvent based. Please do check your ewe over carefully before starting work and let us know of any problems. A gentle rub down with medium grade sand paper and then a water wash and wipe dry will optimise the adhesion of top coats. Unwanted surface irregularities can be filled with two part polyester filler available from DIY stores.

The use of acrylic paints such as Daler–Rowney System 3 is recommended although artificial resin paint or two-component paint can also be used to paint or spray a design. Paint pens can also be used but avoid readily water resolvable paints. Even when a top coat of solvent based varnish is applied over the design use of such resolvable paints can result in blistering if the ewe is exposed to weather.

Leave the acrylic to dry for a few days after finishing, in a dry and warmish atmosphere, before applying the varnish.

Please finish the decorated sculpture with a varnish to protect it from handling damage and wear and tear and from sunlight if it is to be displayed outside. You can use two thin coats of exterior-grade varnish such as solvent based Blackfriars Exterior UV66 Gloss Varnish or water based acrylic varnish like Lascaux transparent UV Varnish. See: <http://www.greatart.co.uk/Lascaux-Transparent-Acrylic-UV-Varnish.html> .

Both are also available in matt and satin.

Note: Solvent based oil varnishes tend to yellow any white shades in a design and this develops more over time so keep the coats even and thin.

If you know a friendly automotive repaint centre the spray application of automotive grade varnishes has also proven very successful and provides a very durable finish.

The best varnish treatment, which provides the most durable and anti-graffiti protection, is Easy-on which is applied by roller. See:

<http://www.urbanhygiene.com/paint-coating-anti-graffiti/10-easy-on-coating.html>

Most of the ewes will be on display in the open air, fully accessible to the public. Artists may attach accessories to the ewe but please bear in mind that unless attached very securely, they WILL be removed. The sculptures will certainly be touched by members of the public. Any attachments/accessories must therefore be very sturdy or you will need to agree with your sponsor special arrangements such as stabling at night.

The application of transfers or the gluing on of paper designs tend to fail on weathering. Even when over coated with multiple layers of varnish moisture penetrates and edges curl etc. So this approach should only be used when the ewe will be displayed in a covered location.

Artists wishing to alter the basic ewe shape should consult with the organisers. Only those experienced in working with fibreglass should attempt to do so, and of course it is important that the finished work remains structurally sound. You may wish to consult with us first if planning anything extreme.

One strict rule: **NO ADVERTISING**, i.e. no company lettering or logos on the actual ewes. There will be a small plaque on the base of each ewe stating the name of the sponsor, the name of the artist and the name they have given to their ewe.

We do need to retain a veto on designs to safeguard against offensive or poor quality designs or ones likely to present a safety hazard - but we will not be unreasonable! The aim is to have a good collection of attractive, interesting, artistic, colourful, amusing sculptures. If in doubt artists should consult with us before commencing work.

Finally, a note for mosaic artists. Mosaics can be bonded to the ewe but it is best to remove the primer and bond directly to the fibreglass gel coat. So if extensive areas are to have mosaic applied, then it will be best to ask for an unprimed sculpture. It is also best to sand down the gel coat with coarse grade paper to provide a key and wash with clean water to remove sanding dust.