

The Atlantic Giant Decision (2009)

On the Eligibility of Cultivated and Selectively Bred Subjects

DECIDED: 6 MARCH, 2009 · EDITOR-IN-CHIEF · PRECEDENT 2009-03

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EDITORIAL DECISION

Matter: Eligibility of the Atlantic Giant pumpkin for catalogue entry

Decided by: The Editor-in-Chief, in consultation with the Senior Cataloguer

Date: 6 March, 2009

Disposition: Admitted, with precedent established

Background

The Atlantic Giant is a cultivar of pumpkin developed over decades through the selective breeding of progressively larger fruits by a community of growers organised principally around competitive horticulture exhibitions. A specimen of the cultivar was submitted for catalogue entry on 11 January, 2009, by a grower in the Pacific Northwest who had achieved a specimen weighing approximately one thousand five hundred and seventy pounds.

The submission raised a question of editorial principle. The publication had, to that point, catalogued engineered subjects (vehicles, structures, machinery) under the Engineered Girth provision of the Style Guide (§ II.4 as then drafted). It had not formally considered subjects whose girth was the result of selective cultivation rather than design.

Question

Whether a subject achieves girth by industrial engineering (the Liebherr T 282B), by long-term agricultural selection (the Atlantic Giant), or by mineral accretion (the largest opal yet recovered) is, the Senior Cataloguer argued, a question of process rather than of outcome. The catalogue is, at its root, an outcome-based register.

Decision

The Editor-in-Chief, having reviewed the materials, finds:

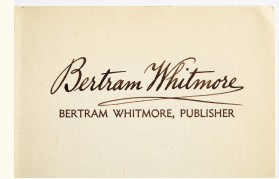
That selective breeding over multiple decades, by individuals who understood the assignment, constitutes a process indistinguishable, for editorial purposes, from industrial design. That the Atlantic Giant pumpkin is eligible. That § II.4 of the Style Guide be amended to read: *Engineered Girth is Eligible. A subject designed for girth, by intent or by accident, qualifies. The intent may be human industrial design, agricultural selection over generations, or any process by which the people responsible understood the assignment.*

Note

The Senior Cataloguer wishes to note that the matter was considered at the 1986 staff retreat, but no formal decision was entered into the record at that time. The present decision is, accordingly, both new and overdue.

ESTABLISHED PRECEDENT 2009-03 · CITED IN STYLE GUIDE § II.4 · AMENDED THE STYLE GUIDE'S ELIGIBILITY TEST

FILED AND WITNESSED



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