

Preparing Your Artwork for an Exhibition

Inspired by Artistsnetwork.com

After you secure an exhibition opportunity, you must collect a body of work appropriate for the venue. Here's an overview on how to prepare your own art portfolio for an exhibition:

- **Choose your artwork**
- **Write the size and title, your name and if you wish your contact telephone number** on the back of your paintings and drawings for easy reference.
- **Take good quality photographs** of the art work.
- **Create an inventory list**, including a digital image of the painting, title, size, medium, price of unframed piece, cost of frame, if applicable, and gallery of exhibition. You may want to include more information, such as date of completion, customer contact information, and so on.
- **Update your C.V., artist's statement and biography.**
- **Fill in your submission form.**

If framing is required:

*Decide if your paintings require **framing**. Work on canvas stretched on thicker frames might not need framing.*

Framing can be very expensive. If you require framing I recommend developing a relationship with a local framer who will offer you significant discounts, or research wholesalers that sell directly to artists. Choose your molding style and then order frames using the dimensions you measured earlier. Order custom made frames (or purchase lengths of molding to build your own frames if you own the right equipment). Several weeks are required for filling the framing order so consider this in your schedule. When the frames arrive at your studio, assign the paintings to the appropriate frames and install with suitable hardware.

- **Prepare each painting for transportation** even if it's just going across town. Wrap your paintings with cardboard corners and plastic wrap to protect them from scratches and dents. If the destination is in a different city, you may have to crate and ship the paintings; be aware that this can be time consuming and expensive.

Once the paintings arrive at your gallery safe and sound, you can trust the owner and staff to install the show.

- **Promote the art exhibition independently** of your gallery. **Emails, social media, phone calls and snail mail** are all valuable to encourage clients, friends and family to visit the exhibition. It's really lovely to be surrounded by these supporters for your opening!
- **On the day of the opening wear** something that makes you feel comfortable and confident.
- **Socialize** with clients, friends and family; it can be easy as they're interested in you and your work! This is your time to listen, offer information about specific paintings and enjoy the event.

Pricing artwork:

Inspired by artquest.or.uk and mycake.org

For many visual artists, pricing artwork is often as difficult as making it in the first place.

It is important to remember that, in line with much of the knowledge within the visual arts, there are no right answers or standard formula for pricing your work. There are, however, lots of formulas and systems which may be of help; at the end of the day, you should be satisfied with the prices you set.

When considering what price range to put your work in, it's worthwhile to consider your own research and thinking about your own price range.

There is no guide to price your work as there are too many variables to consider in each artists' practice.

Below are two examples of artists reasoning for pricing:

"...I have always felt that to command a strong position in the Arts one must set one's stall out right from the start. Putting a confident and strong price on one's work is a statement of intent. It goes without saying that this price shouldn't seem arrogant or enormously inflated. This way the public are immediately aware of your ambitions and a positive perception is created from the start.

"...When I first started I increased my prices every year. I did this because I wanted to show that the work collectors had bought was increasing in value, also simply because I needed more return from each piece. This increase in price was in conjunction with more ambitious work and higher quality pieces. Eventually increasing the price in this way has to curve out, but it was important to do it methodically but never too aggressively."

How to make labels for an art exhibition

Inspired by Makingamark.blogspot

Labels for exhibits - about artists and/or paintings - in an exhibition are necessary. However some artists find them a bit of a challenge to produce and or treat them as a late addition.

Why have a label?

The labels on the wall of an art exhibition can tell people about:

- **The purpose or nature of the exhibition.**
- **The artist - who produced the painting.**
- **The artwork - typically medium and size.**

Making labels:

There are different ways of making labels, here is one that might work for you:

- **Find out what surface and space is available for labels.**
- **Decide on content, size and number.** Determine:
 - The purpose of the label
 - The content of the label
 - The size of the label for the exhibition
 - How many labels are required

For example:

One A5 sized label for each artist:

- the name of artist,
 - a few lines about the artist and what they did
 - the title/media of all the artwork being exhibited
 - price of the artwork and if it includes the frame or not
 - if you wish a website address, blog address and contact arrangements
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- **Create a template for the label.** Make the size of the label efficient in terms of the number of cuts required to produce a label for an artist. You can use Word to set up a sheet of A4 in landscape format with two columns sized A5 with margins which were equalised for each column.
 - **Select and appropriate font.** Keep it simple and professional.
 - **Decide on the minimum font size** for ease of reading a label on a wall - this needs a few trial runs to see what works best. Remember people will be reading this from a distance - it needs to be bigger than the font size used for a book. The text for the body used in the above example was Arial 12.
 - **Print the label** on matte photo paper if you wish. It eliminates the scope for wrinkles in the next stage.
 - **Cut backing for the labels.** The backing is adding weight - which makes them look more professional - and makes them easier to attach to the wall. You can use off cuts of mount board or foam core. It's helpful to use a template to get the size right.
 - **Glue the label to the backing.** Use spray glue or a glue stick. If you use lightweight paper you need to be very careful, as you'll find it may wrinkle. If necessary trim to neaten up edges.
 - **Attach the labels to the wall** - after you have hung the exhibition. You can use picture pins or removable adhesive strips (but make sure you get the ones that leave no damage)

The same process works as well for much smaller labels, which are for just the artist's name or details about an individual artwork.

Writing an artist's statement:

Inspired by artquest.org.uk

An artist's statement is a short piece of writing about your work, practice and any wider intellectual concerns.

You will need an artist statement for most applications for opportunities, to add to press releases, websites and when approaching galleries and curators.

Artist statements act as an introduction to your practice, highlighting common concerns, motivations and processes. A longer statement may go into more detail about specific works.

A statement should give the reader a better understanding of:

- Where your practice and interests come from.
- What influences your art work.

The length depends on what it's being used for.

It is a good idea to have a basic artists statement that you can adapt, grow or shrink, as you need it for different things, to provide a quick starting point for applications. This could be straightforward paragraph of about 100 - 200 words in length, which can then be adapted and added to depending on what its being submitted for. As well providing the appropriate information in an artist's statement, how this is delivered is important.

What makes for a good artist statement?

- **Be clear:** use as plain English as far as possible. Don't use complex or specialist language unnecessarily.
- **Accuracy:** be true to your practice, don't make it up.
- **Say what you see:** refer to any physical qualities of your work. Explain how the work took shape and why you made them.
- **Stick to your subject,** which is your practice. The purpose of the artist statement is to talk in a focused way about your practice, not wider philosophical questions or concepts.
- **Objectivity:** use objective language when describing your own work.

What kind of information to include in an artists statement?

- What media do you work with?
- Why do you work in this media? Is there a relationship between the media and the ideas that you work with?
- What themes, ideas and concerns does your work uniquely consider?
- Are there any outside influences and ideas, perhaps from outside the arts, which have bearing on your work?
- Are there any particular theories, artists or schools of thought relevant to your work?
- Is there an 'intention' behind the work; what do you want the work to achieve?

Things you should not include in an artist statement include:

- Information about your career as an artist
- Exhibition history
- Work history
- Writing them in the third person (Jane's work is...) is less direct than in the first person (My work is...)

Useful links:

Artistsnetwork.com

<http://www.artistsnetwork.com/articles/inspiration-creativity/art-business-tip-how-to-prepare-for-an-exhibition>

Makingamark.blogspot

<http://makingamark.blogspot.co.uk/2012/07/how-to-make-labels-for-art-exhibition.html>

Artquest.org.uk

<http://www.artquest.org.uk/articles/view/how-to-write-an-artist-s-statement>

<http://www.artquest.org.uk/articles/view/how-to-price-your-artwork2>

Mycake.org

<https://mycake.org/cockpit-arts-pricing-value-and-goals-an-interview-with-jacob-van-der-beugel/>

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