

Preparing for a Show

Submitting Your Application

- Consider submitting work that explores new media, ideas, and/or work that speaks to contemporary issues.
- Submit professional photographs of your artwork as that is all the jury has to judge your work.
- Update your resume/biography/artist statement regularly.
- Apply for or update any business/sales tax licenses required.

Artwork Considerations:

- Bring plenty of artwork. Don't skimp. Give your potential buyers many choices.
- Think about bringing a variety of artwork options – some framed, some with mats only.
Bin work generally sells well.
- Consider having a broad range of prices.
- Take the extra time to create a pleasing display of work. Consider your mat and framing selection carefully.

How Much Art Work to Bring:

- Bring a variety of sizes and price points, in-the-bin artwork that is less expensive and unframed, and the artwork you are most proud of for walls and display.
- Keep the rest of your artwork in your vehicle or in event HQ to access as needed.

Appearance Inside and Outside the Tent:

- Spare, clean, spacious; less is more.
- Your tent presentation is part of the artwork.
- Draw a schematic in advance so you know how to display your art upon arrival.
- Remember one small table and one small chair for yourself. A few items on the table: your postcards/business cards and your sales paraphernalia.
- Place a small bin near the entrance so visitors can look through it and hopefully be enticed to enter.
- Leave the rest of the tent space open and unencumbered for people to view your artwork.

- Consider if additional signage is desired inside and outside of the tent.
- Many artists use a rug inside the tent to create an attractive entry. Make sure it is lightweight and easy to manage, perhaps a woven lightweight plastic material.
- Whenever possible, check out other artists' displays for new ideas. Stability and aesthetics are important.
- Most important is your work itself - without that, you've got nothing to build a business around.

Set-up and Prep:

- Arrange your space to bring people in, so that customers can get in and out easily without doing any damage to them, to you, or your work. Keep the flow as open as possible.
- Make sure you have enough artwork to fill your booth space comfortably.
- You can rent lattice to hang your work. It is recommended that you keep the middle of the tent as open as possible.
- Pay attention to show rules about tents (kind, color, staking vs weights).
- Pay attention to show rules about leaving or taking artwork overnight.
- Don't assume that electricity will be available. Bring fully charged electronics and bring a battery-powered charger as a backup.
- Tent walls are great for privacy but they keep your space very warm.
- Buyers may arrive before the show opens. Plan on early arrival and set-up.

Labeling Your Art:

- Use professional-looking labels.
- Mark your work clearly including medium, artist name, title, and price.

Glass & Framing:

- Consider Plexiglas for larger pieces. It is lighter and not as fragile to move or for the guest to carry.
- Framing and matting are expensive. Consider suitable frames and mat boards at bulk prices, order plenty, and order ahead.
- Learn how to frame, mount and wire properly. Plan several weeks of preparation.
- Remember to include this in the capital cost of participating and price your artwork accordingly.

Tent and Displays:

- Consider renting the tent from the approved provider only as it is set up and ready when you arrive. Someone else breaks it down when you leave. Make sure that the rented tent has an opening in the back for access and storage.
- The display can be very challenging. Investing in Pro-Panels is pricey but may be worth it, especially if you plan on participating in numerous shows.
- Consider the website www.artfairinsiders.com, where artists can locate used art festival display equipment to help defray the cost.
- Practice and prepare hanging/displaying your artwork well in advance to avoid a last-minute crisis.

Don't Forget to Bring:

- Cord, string, and hardware to hang and stabilize your work.
- Business cards, postcards, etc. featuring you and/or your work. Give them to potential buyers so they can easily remember your work. People's memories can get muddled once they leave your booth.
- Plastic sheeting is good for covering work if there is a sudden downpour.
- If setting up your own tent, don't forget weights: hand weights, filled plastic gallon jugs, sandbags, etc.
- Think about how to repair, hold in place, cover up, protect, transport, and label your art.
- Where will you stash your artwork? How will you keep it safe from the sun, rain, and wind?
- Consider very large plastic tubs with wheels to move and store your art.
- Consider a wagon or cart on wheels for transporting your art to and from your vehicle.

Load-In:

- Check the show rules about loading in. Give yourself extra time so you aren't stressed.
- Check the show rules to find appropriate parking.

Safety and Protection of Artwork:

- Anticipate the unpredictable Colorado weather. Be prepared to protect yourself and your artwork from sun, rain, and wind. If wind and rain do develop, move your art away from the gutter near the curb as it's usually the low point on the street.

Sales/Payment Method:

- Test out the sales hardware and software weeks before you plan the first event (Stripe, Square, etc).
- Be aware of transaction fees!
- Make sales and refunds to yourself, ideally standing in the location where you'll have your tent to verify that everything works as expected.
- Some software will allow you to pre-load your inventory and sales tax.
- Plan for a backup plan in case there is a technology breakdown.
- Keep a logbook for sales and receipts. Be methodical about it and don't get flustered and in a hurry.
- Have a safe place to keep cash on your person. Though most guests will be using card transactions, some do use cash, so perhaps a \$100 in change on hand would be useful. It is recommended to stay away from coins.
- If power is provided, evaluate the need for extension cords and chargers for computers, phones, or square hardware.
- Have everything fully charged for each day of the event.

Pricing:

- This is a difficult question and is cause for consternation. Consider materials and labor to produce the work, where you are in your art career (emerging or established), the price point of other artists and similar works, and where your skill level, size, and degree of complexity rank compared to that.
- Consider where you think your work is valued. If visitors buy several pieces or at the end of the event, do you want to offer a discount?
- Clearly label each artwork so that visitors don't have to ask you for the price.
- Have a conservative dollar amount in mind for sales. And then have a wildest-dreams goal because it really could happen!

Weather:

- Check on the weather in advance.
- Prepare for wind, rain, or even a cold snap.
- Everything that can get damaged by water should be lifted off the ground for the night.
- Everything that can be buffeted by the wind should be tied down and protected for the night.
- Dress in layers and/or bring extra clothes.
- Having pockets is helpful in keeping your cash close by.
- If standing on concrete, bring a change of shoes and socks.
- Bring good rain gear.

Relax and Enjoy Your Day!

- Acknowledge the people who come into your booth. A simple "Hello" is fine. Don't be pushy, but make sure a customer knows you are there if needed.
- Sometimes visitors want to talk, sometimes they don't. Sometimes they are in their own orbit. Don't take it personally. Let them take the lead.
- Be inviting, welcoming, and open to what they are presenting to you and respond accordingly.
- If they appear to like your work, offer your postcard and information about your process.
- Remember this is a wonderful, fun event where you will get to meet lots of people and show off your work.
- Take notes about everything, especially the nice things people say to you. These are good to review, especially if the show doesn't meet your expectations.
- Takes notes about what you forgot and make changes to your next show.

Advertising Yourself:

- If you have an upcoming show, website, Instagram, Facebook, YouTube, etc. present this information on a postcard, business card, or artist statement giveaway.

Your Neighbors:

- Be respectful, helpful, considerate, and tidy around your tent. Your tent neighbors are part of your 'family' for this event (because this is a shared experience) and the relationships may extend into the future.

- Observe the physical boundaries and don't spread out into other people's space, even if they aren't using it.
- If they are selling well and you aren't, or you are selling well and they aren't, be aware of the feelings that situation may create in yourself.

Resting and Breaks:

- Locate a place to sit in the shade and restore yourself. Bring a cooler for sustaining foods and fluids.
- Make friends with a tent neighbor so that you can take a break, walk around and escape to use the facilities.

Breaking Down Your Tent:

- Keep everything inside your tent until it is packaged and ready to load. There is a lot of confusion and car traffic because everybody wants to leave at the same time.
- Once you are packed up, this may be a good time to take a break. Waiting 15-20 minutes for traffic to clear may save you time and stress.

Common Mistakes:

- Do not display all the artwork you have. You do not want your tent looking like a garage sale.
- Having no tent opening in the back.
- Keeping a cash box unsecured.
- Frames and glass breaking in transit. Package and transport your artwork carefully, and consider where to store the packaging during the show.
- Do not leave your artwork outside your tent during tear down.
- Do not forget weights to secure equipment & tent, especially overnight. Wind is not your friend.
- Don't be afraid to talk to other artists that have more experience. Most are happy to offer advice.

Checklist:

- Aspirin
- Bungee cords
- Business cards, postcards, artist statements

- Calculator
- Cash/change
- Chair(s)
- Duct tape
- Equipment to display artwork: easels, bins, racks)
- Fan (battery operated)
- Guest book
- Hanging wire
- Markers, pens, pencils
- Packing for sales: plastic bags, bubble wrap, paper, tape
- Sales supplies: receipt book, logbook
- Sales tax licenses
- Scissors
- Step-stool
- String, rope, cord, zip ties
- Sunscreen, hat
- Tent
- Tools: hammer, wire cutters, pliers, screwdriver
- Trash bags, plastic to cover work
- Water, food, snacks
- Weights to secure equipment and tent

Thank You to the following artists for contributing to this document:

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