

JURIED EXHIBITIONS

These guidelines for Juried Exhibitions present an ideal scenario for organizing a juried exhibition, drawn from the collective experience of the Professional Guidelines Committee members.

A well-organized exhibition benefits the sponsor, the artists and the craft field at large. These guidelines are primarily **intended for the sponsors** of a juried exhibition: galleries, museums, schools or other organizations. They are designed to enhance the organization's ability to conduct a successful juried exhibition, and to clearly describe the sponsor's and the juror's responsibilities.

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I. SPONSOR RESPONSIBILITIES (Prior to jurying)

A successful exhibition requires significant organizational efforts on the part of the sponsoring entity.

A. The Prospectus

Starting **at least one year in advance** (preferably longer), the sponsor should develop a good prospectus outlining a clear vision of the exhibition theme, scope, venue, and approximate number of pieces. Specific suggestions for developing a prospectus are included in a separate section below.

B. Selecting Jurors

Select jurors who will stimulate artist participation. Jurors should be paid a honorarium plus expenses (in the case of out-of-town jurors, this would include travel, hotel lodging, and meals). The honorarium should reflect the professional expertise and experience of the juror, as well as the number of entries and the amount of time the job is expected to take. It may also reflect the realities of the sponsoring organization's budget.

Honorariums range from \$100 to \$500 a day. The amount of the honorarium and of expense reimbursement should be stated when the juror's services are requested.

C. Marketing the Exhibition

If the exhibition sponsor hopes artists will be inspired by the theme or concept of the show to make new work, they should start advertising for the juried exhibition **twelve months in advance**. Continue soliciting for entries with announcements or ads to encourage as many entries for the show as possible. Follow up by garnering publicity for the show itself beginning at least six months in advance of the exhibition opening date and continuing through the exhibition.

D. Insurance

Insurance is an essential requirement for a quality exhibition. At a minimum, insurance should cover works from the moment they are delivered to the venue until they are returned to the artist. Artists and sponsors should be aware that some states have laws that dictate that the sponsor of an exhibition is responsible for damages to work regardless of whether the sponsor has insurance or not.

II. DEVELOPING A PROSPECTUS

Experience has shown that prospectuses are often inconsistent and incomplete. Use the following guidelines as appropriate to the situation.

A. Prospectus/entry forms should be designed so that they provide:

1. Space for title, dimensions, materials, year of creation and any other important information for each slide. This data can be consulted during the jurying process. The same data can be used to fill out loan agreements, so it should be fairly detailed.
2. A postcard receipt indicating that the slides or objects have arrived for jurying. Indicate if postage stamp is the responsibility of the artist.
3. A postcard for notification of selection/non-selection of work. Postcard should specify when non-selected slides will be returned or work should be sent. Indicate if postage stamp is the responsibility of the artist.

Do not print important information on the back of these cards that the artist will need later. Since artists are sending the entry forms back to the exhibition organizer, they must be able to retain all the basic information separately.

B. Prospectus should be concisely written and include the following:

1. Title of show
2. Clearly written description of the theme or concept behind the juried exhibition
3. List of jurors and brief biographical information
4. Criteria for work:
 - a. Thematic or other content requirement
 - b. Geographic restrictions (if any)
 - c. Size restrictions (if any)
 - d. Weight restrictions (if any)
 - e. Material restrictions (if any)
 - f. Restrictions on date of execution (if any)
5. Description of how work will be selected:
 - a. From actual work
 - b. From slides
6. Information about submitting slides, if slides are requested
 - a. Number of slides permitted, including number of detail slides.
 - b. Diagram for slide labeling
 - c. Format for the slide description
 - d. A statement such as, "Slides should accurately represent work. High quality or professional slides required. Poor quality slides are more likely to be eliminated during the jurying process. The sponsor or juror(s) reserves the right to return work that is not of acceptable quality or that differs significantly from the slide image."
7. Include procedures for returning slides. Artists generally provide their own SASE for returning slides.

8. Fees for juried show. (There is often discussion about whether an entry fee should be charged for juried exhibitions.) The Professional Guidelines Committee suggests that every effort be made to keep the fees to a modest amount.)
9. Calendar including deadlines for:
 - a. Dates for submitting slides
 - b. Dates for slide jurying
 - c. Dates artists will receive notification of selection/non-selection of work
 - d. Shipping/delivery dates
 - e. Dates for exhibition
 - f. Dates for picking up work in person after exhibition closes and /or:
 - g. Dates after exhibition closes for return shipping of work
10. Information about prizes, awards and award categories
11. Commission (if any) taken by sponsoring entity on retail sales
12. Information about insurance coverage
13. Photography release. It should be clear in the prospectus that in submitting work for the show the artist has given the sponsor **permission to photograph the work**, or use the artist's photo in a catalog or in marketing the exhibition.
14. Information about shipping and who pays for it
15. Telephone number, name and/or e-mail address of **contact person** in case artists have questions

III. SUGGESTED TIMELINE FOR A JURIED SHOW

- 18 to 24 months before** - Start planning for exhibition as described above including theme selection, inviting jurors, securing jurying and exhibit spaces.
- 15 months before** - Write a draft prospectus.
- 14 months before** - Send draft prospectus to jurors for input, if appropriate.
- 13 months before** - Finalize and print prospectus.
- 12 months or more** - Post notices in magazines and art newsletters. Continue advertising for entries until slide deadline to promote entries.
- 6 months before** - Arrange and send advance publicity to magazines.
- 5 months before** - Due date for receiving artists slides for jurying process.
- 4 months before** - Host jurors for slide viewing and selection of work.
- 4 months before** - Mail acceptance and non-selection notices.
- 1-2 months before** - Arrange local press releases.
- 1 month to 2 weeks before** - Receive shipments of artists work

If a catalog is to be produced: the publication deadlines for juror/curator statements, full checklist of works included, and publishable photos will dictate additional deadlines depending on how ambitious the catalog will be. Most catalogs take a year or more to organize.

IV. JUROR RESPONSIBILITIES

Jurors should:

- A. Read the prospectus thoroughly and be sure the exhibition theme is understood.
- B. Remember the ethical responsibility to make decisions impartially. Jurors may want to abstain from the decision-making process when facing a conflict of interest. (for example, if a juror is a teacher and their student is an entrant).
- C. Advise sponsor of juror's physical or special needs.
- D. Pace the jurying process to ensure adequate time for reviewing all work.

- E. Return (if possible) to view actual work to determine awards (if any).
- F. Select work that is based on the juror's unique experience and broad perspective without reflecting merely their personal likes and dislikes.
- G. Consider the overall exhibition theme in the selection.
- H. Prepare a juror's statement and submit it to the sponsoring organization by the agreed-upon deadline.

V. THE JURYPING PROCESS

A. The Setting

In general, jurors prefer that entrants not be present at the jurying. No person other than the chosen juror(s) should participate in the jurying. This includes staff members, volunteers, and trustees of the sponsoring entity. Those present should refrain from commenting on the process and from extraneous conversation.

Exhibition Sponsor should provide:

1. Good projection set-up (with extra light bulbs and a back-up slide projector)
2. Well organized slides in carousels for easy review and identification
3. Written list of slides in the order that they appear in the carousels
4. Adequate number of well trained assistants to run the projectors, file or record decisions, and provide information to the juror about the slides
5. Drinking water and other refreshments
6. Pen, paper and/or prepared form
7. Periodic breaks to stretch and refresh

B. Viewing Works Submitted as Slides

1. Before Viewing:

- a. The sponsor should describe how the jurying process will work and reiterate what criteria the jurors should consider (based on the prospectus).
- b. The number of entries, the number of slides, and the time allotted for each step should be discussed briefly. The sponsor might inform the jurors about the approximate number of artists or objects to be accepted (e.g. approximately 1 out of 5 or 20%) or the number of objects suitable for the exhibit space.

2. During the First Viewing:

- a. In the spirit of fairness, the jury should view the slides without mentioning names of entrants - even if they recognize or know the artist.
- b. All slides should be viewed quickly before the decision-making process begins. This quick overview allows the jury to see the range of work and the quality of the slides.
- c. When there are multiple jurors, there should be no discussion about particular slides among the jurors or with assistants during the first viewing.

3. During the Second Viewing:

- a. All slides are viewed again at a slower pace as each entry is evaluated. A clear process to select or reject the entries must be set in advance of the viewing. There are many effective ways to select work. One way is to have a prepared list of submissions by number. As each slide is viewed, the jury indicates: YES (for further consideration), or NO (will not be in the exhibition), or UNDECIDED (for possible further consideration).
- b. Questions can be asked by a juror concerning materials, size, function, etc. However, it is important to spend approximately the same amount of time on each slide in this viewing. If there are several jurors, any discussion (beyond direct questions) should be withheld until after this round.

c. Note: A numerical ranking system can quantify each juror's reaction to the slides. This seems to work satisfactorily especially, when there are jurors with diverse expertise or a large number of slides. The Professional Guidelines recommend using a numerical ranking from 1 to 7, with 1 the lowest (worst) score and 7 the highest (best) score. Each juror assigns a score for every slide/piece. The total score for each piece can then be compared to the total scores for all other pieces to determine the rankings. Jurors should be encouraged to use the full range (1 to 7) to rank the slides.

READ the **Comparison of Jury Ranking Systems** including the merits and myths of several commonly used ranking systems for more information.

4. During the Third Viewing

a. The jurors first review only the YES slides to agree which, if not all, are in the exhibition. Jurors should be reminded of the overall theme of the show and the number of pieces that would be workable. If space permits, then jurors should review the UNDECIDED group to select the additional works to be included in the exhibition.

b. Try to represent as broad a spectrum from the whole field as possible, as long as there is good work in each sub-category. If there is more than one juror, discussion should support or defend the strengths and weaknesses of individual pieces. Jurors should ask for more detailed information if they are unfamiliar with the medium, scale, materials, etc. Slides can be shown and re-shown at this point until a satisfactory grouping is reached.

c. Names of artists should not be revealed until after the jurying is completed. However, there is always a concern that "copycat" work (emulating work of a known artist) might get into a show instead of the originator. With this concern in mind, discussions among the jurors might be worthwhile after most of the decisions are completed.

d. The NO slides might be shown again (very quickly) to be sure no mistakes were made.

C. Viewing Actual Works as Entries

Use the same structure to organize jurying from actual work as you would jurying from slides. In the first viewing, view all the work. In the second viewing, physically divide work into YES, NO, and UNDECIDED areas or use a numerical ranking system as recommended above. In the third viewing, the final decisions about works are made.

D. Awarding Prizes

1. Deciding Awards

a. The sponsor should describe awards available and allow jurors to determine award recipients. Whenever possible, jurors should return to view actual work to determine awards. If the original jurors cannot return to see the work (at the sponsor's expense), an alternate person qualified to award prizes could be recruited.

b. While awards may be given such as Best of Show, First Prize, Second, etc., an alternative may be several awards of equal value. Another possibility, if there are several jurors, is allowing each juror to select an award winning work.

c. Deciding awards is the hardest task for most jurors. The jurors should apply their professional standards to the pieces submitted and take into account any specific criteria described in the prospectus. Personal preferences should play a

minimal role; awards should go to truly excellent pieces. If a number of awards are to be given, pieces that represent diverse kinds of work should be considered. Awards are to recognize significant achievements and advancements, be they technical virtuosity, conceptual insights, or aesthetic bravery. When there are two or more jurors, some give and take may be required to make decisions.

2. Purchase Awards

Organizations often offer purchase awards to artists as a way to add to their permanent collection. The value of a purchase award should cover the price set by the artist for his or her work.

E. Notifying Entrants of Results

In notification correspondence, congratulate the artist and reiterate that the work was selected by the jury from among many entries. Write **clear instructions** about:

1. How to pack the work for shipping, includes a packing list, and attach complete identification to each piece.
2. Which shipper is preferred by the sponsor, if any?
3. How to label the work for arrival at the exhibition space.
4. Where to send the work including name, place, and complete address.
5. When work is due to arrive at the exhibition space.
6. When to send additional slides or black & white photos for publicity.

F. Non-selection Notification

State simply that the jury did not select the work and thank the artist for submitting their work. A date by which slides will be returned should be included.

VI. INSTALLATION, SECURITY AND ACCESS

The sponsor is responsible for installing the chosen pieces in a manner that shows work to its best advantage, and for providing protection from theft and damage. Information about openings, viewing hours, and other associated events should be publicized.

VII. RETURN OF ENTRIES

Work should be returned in the original packing boxes by the deadlines listed on the prospectus. Insurance and return shipping is usually the responsibility of the sponsor.

If a catalog is published to document the exhibition, at least one copy (and preferably two copies) should be sent to each exhibiting artist at no charge when the work is returned.

SNAG Committee for Professional Guidelines
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