

Your Art Exhibition

Points to consider when preparing and running your Exhibition:

by **SCOTT JACKSON**

for

Macleay Valley Community Art Gallery
5 Kinchela St, Gladstone NSW

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www.scottjacksonartworks.com

122 Wortley Drive, Crescent Head, NSW, 2440, Tel 02 6566 0182, M;
0439696612

Email : sjacko1@bigpond.com ABN 58 081 564 402

Your Art Exhibition:

Points to consider when preparing for your exhibition:

- **Time to Plan.**

- Give yourself enough time to plan and prepare your exhibition, say least three months, especially if you haven't completed all the works to be displayed
- Sit down and think about your goals for the exhibition.
- Write it down and start a folder because from now on you will start to accumulate lots of paper.
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- **Type of Exhibition**

- Decide is the Exhibition an Artist run or Commercial Gallery show ?
- Consider the amount of involvement you want and the commissions you are willing to pay. Basically for an artist run show you do all the work (see below) have greater control on the operation and pay less commissions and costs.

- **Marketing:**

- Who is your Market ? Locals, Tourists, everybody you know? This will effect your decisions on the best dates for your exhibitions, the venue and the opening.
- Your target audience : If this is your first Exhibition, Go for “the everybody you know option” , their friends and family and everyone they know. Your work is your best advertisement and every one of your works on someones wall is advertising for you in the future. You can pick up the strangers later.
- Keep in mind that many people like looking at Art and going to exhibitions but do not always have the money to buy originalart. Layby helps here. Also consider lower priced items like prints and Artist made cards....as many people will buy these items now and may come back to you later for an original piece.
- Make your art accessible to people and their friends and family and even if they don't buy anything now they may in the future. Word of mouth is a valuable tool.

- Have links to your online sites eg, website, Instagram, Facebook, twitter
- Make your exhibition an EVENT. It is one anyway.....your having it!
People like to be part of the event.
- Have an opening...celebrate you and your artit is a big deal !!...you are putting it out there. Some artists also have live music ..
- Give your exhibition a title. Eg. “Mary Smiths Fantastic Summer Art Exhibition”
- Use a Visitors Book: You know people like your work ..so give them an opportunity to see it and comment on it. Seek feedback (and addresses for future exhibitions and events)
- Are you looking at school holidays or seasonal exhibitions i.e. spring summer autumn or weekends only ?
- Does the venue already have a market ? or a client list.
- What promotional material will you be using ? Some examples:
 - About the artist
 - Bio and CV information
 - Website details
 - Business cards
 - Give aways ie bookmarks, fridge magnets etc
 - Exhibition catalogues
 - Enclosures with mail out
 - Invitations
 - Thank yous

- **Advertising:**

- **What advertising methods will you use ?**
 - Newspaper advertisements, local, regional and state
 - Newspaper Editorials: give them the Press Release
 - Magazines
 - Press and Media Releases. write one yourself.
 - Radio and TV
 - Websites
 - Social Media: Instagram, Facebook and twitter.
 - Email and E- Newsletters eg Arts Mid North Coast
(www.artsmidnorthcoast.org), Regional Arts NSW
(www.regionalartsnsw.com.au) , NAVA (National Association of Visual Artist www.visualarts.net.au)
 - What advertising can you afford ?
 - How effective is it ? Does it reach your target audience?
 - Signage: for the street? For the venue?
 - Banner
 - Sandwich boards

- Road side
 - Internal
- **The Mailing list ?**
 - Make a list of everyone you are sending invitations. (Remember the everyone you know option!
 - Make a list of corporate and business organizations you will send invitations
 - What will you include in the invitation ?
 - Invite ?
 - Bookmark?
 - Business card?
 - Sample Catalogue?
 - Menus (depends on venue)?
 - Laminated display signs?
- **Catalogue and Price Tags:**
 - What type of catalogue and price tags will you have?
 - Will it have images or just be a list?
 - What information will you include?
 - Title, Image, Size, Price, Framing, Medium, Inspiration
 - Don't forget red dots, receipts and blu tac on the Day.

If you have considered the above , now you can get really serious !.....

- **Where / When/ Venue**
 - Arrange a meeting with the venue owner /manager. Take along a checklist covering at least the following:
 - Dates and times of opening hours for the exhibition and opening night (if applicable)
 - Dates and times for you the artist to attend.
 - Set up dates, times and access.
 - Pack up dates and times.
 - Is there supplied music or do you supply music.
 - Discuss sales operations: i.e. who does the sales, is it cash, cheque, cards, eftpos or lay-by.
 - Is there other staff during the exhibition?
 - What food and drink is supplied by you by venue.
 - Agree on Commissions: What percentage of sales?
 - Agree on maximum venue hire costs.
 - Settlement dates. When do you get the payment?

- Insurance. Is there any?
- Check lighting and air conditioning.
- Hanging systems; what is supplied?
- What signage is supplied and what signage will you supply.
- Props: can use easels and other props?
- What promotional material will the venue supply or want distributed with mail outs?

- **What about the Artworks? How will they Look ?**

- Are they complete?
- Ensure that all artworks look professional and are of a high quality, front and back.
- Use D rings not eye screws.
- If you want to hang your exhibition at a consistent level at the frame top fix D rings at 75mm from the top. (less for smaller works)
- How many do you need?
- Do you have them all at hand? do you have to gather them ?
- What sizes, colour etc do you want?
- Aim average eye height for the centre of the painting.
- Don't forget to check and adjust your lighting.

- **Exhibition Timetable:**

- As part of your first real planning for the exhibition start a time table so you can keep track of what you need to do. It is easy for time and deadlines to slip away and who wants to be standing at the opening and ooopps I forget to send the invites or do the newspaper adds !!
- Would also suggest you copy the timetable objectives and deadlines to you business diary or planner if you have one. If you haven't got one , think about getting a diary at least.

The Timetable:

- **About 3 months before the Exhibition**

- Check out and decide on venue.
- Find out cut off dates for Advertising
- Do draft Press release and Advertisements.
- Design promotional material
 - Invites
 - Handouts etc
 - Promotional material
 - Signs and displays

- **Six weeks to Go!**

- Check mailing list and update
- Stamps, stationary, envelopes
- Finalise framing and display needs
- Website updates

- **Four weeks to Go!**

- Advertising to Newspapers/websites /Magazines depending on cut off dates.
- Complete Bio and CV documents
- Complete Display books for exhibition
 - Include at least press release, catalogue, Bio, CV, Images
- Decide on Props eg easels, sketch books, palettes,video etc (remember this is an event and the people coming like lots to look at)
- Check mailing list and update

- **Two weeks to Go !**

- Mail out invitations
 - Personal (all the people on your mail list)
 - Business/ Corporate / Art world
 - Shopfronts / Motels / Tourist info
- Confirm food and drink requirements if required

- **One weeks to Go ! (are you panicking yet ?)**

- Finalise catalogues and print

- Price tags and print
 - Do you want descriptions or inspiration statements?
 - Re check timetable ...have you forgotten anything?
 - How is the artwork going ?
 - Finalise and print all promotional material for display at exhibition
 - Don't forget the visitors book
 - Red dots, receipts, layby,
- **2 to 3 days to go !**
 - Deliver artworks, props, signs, handouts
 - Hang / set up artworks (get some helpers here if you can)
 - Set up signs , displays, music, lights
- **THE BIG DAY (or night)**
 - Arrive early
 - Hows it look ...fantastic?
 - Take some photos
 - Relax and breath deep, I'll be OK!
 - Enjoy your self
 - Spread yourself around
 - Introduce yourself and remember lots of people like talking to The Artist !
 - Stay sober, wait till afterwards to celebrate.
- **During the exhibition**
 - Review exhibition layout and design.
 - Rotate artworks as required. Some will look better in different light.
 - Review procedures ie introduction, sales, handouts, props, catalogue
 - Keep a record of numbers visited and comments made, work liked
 - Keep sold works on display if possible (it always looks good if there are red dots on the wall !)
 - Hand out catalogues and other promotional material. Remember some people may not buy your work today , they may discuss with their partners or contact you at a later date.
 - Discuss delivery and/or pick up of sold works.
- **When its over.**
 - Think about the next exhibition
 - Review all aspects of the exhibition, what went well, what needs a bit of improvement
 - Follow up contacts made and new customers.
 - Check your visitors book
 - Deliver sold works
 - Follow up payments and lay-bys

Useful Contacts and Links:

- **National Association of Visual Artist; (NAVA)**
www.visualarts.net.au
Their publications listings.
- **Arts Mid North Coast Website and Newsletter;**
www.artsmidnorthcoast.org
- **Regional Arts NSW . Monthly News letter**
- **“ Taking The Leap: Building a Career as a Visual Artist”:** An insiders Guide to Exhibiting and Selling Your Art. By Cay Lang.
Available through www.amazon.com
- **“Art Marketing 101” A handbook for the Fine Artist** by
Constance Smith, available through www.amazon.com
- **“Getting Art There: an artists Marketing Manual”**
Publication by NAVA
- **Wetcanvas** : an American art forum. By artists for artists.
www.wetcanvas.com
- **Whats My Plan** : a guide to building a career as a visual artist.
Produced by the Australia Coincil :
http://www.australiacouncil.gov.au/workspace/uploads/files/research/entire_document-5445e93ed8638.pdf
..might need an update as it was produced before Social Media...but still relevant.