

## Make Sure You and Your Art Are Show Ready

Whether you are just getting started as an artist, your work has been accepted into a gallery or museum, or you are just preparing your studio for an open house, there are certain steps you should follow.

The first steps to actually becoming an emerging artist:

1. Take photos of all of your finished work and crop them so that only the art itself shows. Any work that you might consider entering into a show or contest should meet the size and quality requirements provided in the instructions for the contest. Sometimes this requires professional photography or scanning.
2. Prepare an artist's statement, using first person, and a biography, written in third person.
3. Compile a portfolio of your work. If you work in different styles, then segregate the styles into their own individual sections.
4. Build a network of artists and art lovers on social media.
5. Get a web page.
6. Attend art functions, and museum and gallery openings.
7. Seek critique of your work by more established artists, and actually listen to them.
8. Have images of your work saved on your phone or tablet in case you get an opportunity to share, but don't come off as pushy by trying to share at the wrong time.
9. Be mentally prepared for rejection, but never stop creating.

Preparing your own studio for a tour or open house:

1. Clean! Make sure clutter is cleared and dust is removed from your art. Tools of your trade are not considered clutter and are actually part of the display.
2. Provide a clear walk path through the studio so guests are paying more attention to your art than they are to the obstacles in their path.
3. Provide ample lighting. Raise blinds, open curtains, or install a few cheap clip-on lights. A single overhead light is usually not enough, and if too bright can cause distracting shadows.
4. Order some business cards. They are cheap and usually easy to design. Additionally, if you can afford it, then create a brochure with images of your work. Brochures are a nice touch, but are not nearly as important as business cards.
5. Prepare a one-page biography to display, so visitors can learn more about you, and hand out copies along with a business card or brochure. The biography should be in third-person format. Incorporating a few personal quotes is acceptable.
6. Make sure all of your work is neatly and legibly identified (see more below).

Preparing for a gallery or museum show:

NOTE: Most galleries or museums will provide you with a list of instructions, which you should follow to the letter. The following list of preparations should ensure that you will be able to more easily follow any instructions provided.

1. Identify your art type; i.e., drawing, painting, collage, photography, digital, sculpture, ceramics, pottery, glass, quilting, embroidery, knitting, crochet, tatting, weaving, jewelry, mosaic, stained glass etc.

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2. Identify your medium; i.e., graphite on paper, charcoal on newsprint, oil on canvas, acrylic on panel, pastel on paper, crayon on paper, encaustic on board, gouache on paper, mixed media, wood fired clay, polished amber mounted in silver, shaped and welded steel, colorized aluminum, etc.
3. Indicate the unframed dimensions of each work of art. Make sure the dimensions are in proper sequence; i.e., height first, then width for wall hanging two-dimensional works, and add depth as the third number for three-dimensional works.
4. All wall hanging art should be ready to hang with wire.... not a clip or saw-toothed hanger.
5. Any painting on wood, Masonite, or other solid thin surface should be framed. Paintings on canvas on  $\frac{3}{4}$  inch or thinner stretchers should be framed. Paintings on any canvas with staples visible on the sides should be framed. Photographs that are not printed on metal or canvas, display better if they are matted and framed. Use plexi-glass instead of breakable glass for temporary gallery displays or when shipping.
6. Never allow glass or plastic of any kind to touch the surface of any drawn or painted art, digital art, or photography, and never cover an encaustic painting with glass even if there is air space between the surfaces. Framed pastel art should never be stored face down. Avoid direct sunlight and fluorescent lighting on your art. Both will eventually leach all red tones out of a painting or print.
7. Attach a small label to the back or bottom of each piece of art containing the following information:
  - a. Artist's name
  - b. Title of artwork
  - c. Unframed dimensions of artwork
  - d. Medium and material (such as oil on canvas, mixed media on board, etc.)
  - e. Price (this should be the price that the work will sell for, understanding that the gallery will take a predetermined portion of that price).
  - f. Artist's contact information (address, phone, email)

**Never be afraid to ask for advice or guidance from other artists or gallerists.**