Artists and Directors Met...and Discussed

By Teresa Saborsky, NAIA Board Chair

On May 18 and 19, 2012, the NAIA brought together artists and show directors in Indianapolis, Indiana, for “Solutions: A Working Conference.” Why bring artists and show directors together? This industry has three primary components: shows (and those who put them together, the directors and/or producers), the artists, and the buying public. The purpose of a show is to provide an enjoyable atmosphere for the public who attend and to encourage them to buy original art. We feel that in order to most effectively reach those goals, it is important for shows and artists to work together to examine their concerns from each other’s perspective, continually working to improve the means of marketing original art. With this in mind, the NAIA invited both artists and directors to this year’s conference to look at some of the issues and discuss them. While the group was smaller than desired and representation was limited, it was a start toward opening a dialogue between artists and directors.

If one reads forums or takes part in conversations at art shows, one will hear a number of concerns and complaints about shows these days. We talked with some artists and directors to determine some of the most pressing and prevalent concerns with regard to shows and came up with three topics: The Cost of Doing Art Shows; Booth Image; Buy/Sell, Imports, Reproduction, and Production work. Yes, there are other issues, but, after discussions, we felt that many other topics are also addressed under the headings of these three.

Cost of Doing Shows

Those presenting on the topic of costs in this segment were Terry Adams, President, Cherry Creek Arts Festival, Denver Colorado; Sara Shambarger, Krasl Art Fair and Special Events Director, Krasl Art Center, St. Joseph, Michigan; Carroll Swayne, printmaking artist, Englewood, Florida; and Richard Fizer, glass artist, Englewood, Florida.

There are a lot of questions about booth fees and jury fees and, as questions arise and discussions take place, it becomes evident that many don't really know the actual costs involved in producing shows. Though the attendance of the conference was low and not all shows in the country were present, there were representatives from shows of varying sizes, so the range of input into the cost of doing shows was considerable.

Expenses vary according to the size of the show and the location, though rising costs for all include labor, insurance, venue fees, permits, and advertising. For example, in a larger city setting, police are required to be present throughout the show, which means paying a number of police to patrol, thus incurring overtime costs. Sometimes these costs rise to $30,000 for a three-day show. Larger shows tend to use sponsorships for revenue, enabling them to keep booth and jury fees at a set level. The challenge for such shows becomes achieving the fine line of balance between the visual arts, sponsorship, and retail sales. For smaller shows, the booth fees make up a larger percentage of revenue. Such shows often don't have the staff, urban location, or high attendance numbers to attract major sponsors, leaving them to rely on donations from local businesses. This support often comes in the form of in-kind donations.

On the artist side, cost of doing shows include advertising, travel, food, lodging, photography, labor, taxes, and the cost of materials. Material costs are going up as well as the price of gas and lodging while on the road. Artists cannot get sponsorships to offset costs and must rely strictly on sales and monetary show awards... and raising prices is not always an option in a shaky economy.

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A Letter from the NAIA Board Chair

I have heard more than once (it’s become a sort of sound bite) that the National Association of Independent Artists is an oxymoron . . . that independent artists aren’t joiners. If that is true, then I have a question. How is it, then, that independent artists join a show for a weekend to sell their art—a show in which artists play by the rules of the show and the show has all the control over the venue in which they are to make sales? NAIA is an organization whose membership consists of artists, show directors, and supporters of artists. Our goal is to work together “to strengthen, improve and promote the artistic, professional and economic success of artists who exhibit in art shows” and our members have joined knowing that problems are solved more effectively when voices are joined rather than spoken as individuals.

So now I have another question: why would you join a group on weekends—one over which you have no control or authority—to sell your work, yet not an organization which has a goal of helping level the playing field to make a safer, more equitable environment in which you can sell your art?

So now we come to efficacy.

What is NAIA doing for the artists?

Well, first, I’m an artist as are two others on our board of directors and some of our staff, as are past board members. It’s in our best interest to identify and address issues, come up with possible solutions to offer fellow artists and shows, then implement them. Is it easy? Of course not. Shows and artists are all different and there’s no “magic wand” to wave and take care of all issues. Also, change takes time. You can look at the articles in this issue of the Independent Artist and see what has been done in the past to make our jobs a little easier and more equitable as well as improve the quality of shows. You can also see by reading articles on our most recent conference how we’re working with an eye on the present and the future.

Do we represent all artists?

No. We have an obligation to our members, however all those who work within the art show industry have benefited from the work NAIA has done.

Do we have all the answers?

Of course not. One of the reasons we have conferences and have invited both artists and directors to talk together is to present as many perspectives as possible as well as sharing experiences and solutions to different problems. At this point, though the representation of the variety of both shows and artists has been impressive, we’ve only had a few participants when there are many out there.

Is everyone going to agree with what we do or actions we take?

Absolutely not, but the more voices we hear, the more likely we’ll be able to act in ways to reflect the need of the whole. NAIA is an organization of those in the art show industry—not all, but those who want to do something more than spend time on forums or blogs ranting about the inequities “out there.” We want to implement solutions. Forums and blogs are terrific ways to communicate and learn of the experiences and thoughts of others, but without action, relating experiences and ideas only become impotent complaints.

In invite you to join us to be a part of the solution.

Teresa Saborsky
NAIA Board of Directors, Chair

Buy/Sell: Taking Action

Artists:
• Be familiar with a show prospectus regarding what kind of work is allowed at a show.
• If you suspect buy/sell, check the business card of an artist and look at the business web site.
• Give information to the director of the show.
• If you are a NAIA member, you may discuss suspicions on our forum. Other artists may know more about the artist in question.
• Remember that suspicions are not fact!

Show Directors:
• Make certain that your prospectus is clear on what is allowed at your show.
• Enforce the rules that are in your prospectus (artists recognize and welcome such action and the word spreads).
• If you are a member of NAIA, share your concerns and experiences with others on our forum. It is a networking device for you to connect and share stories with your fellow directors.
FYI: An Informative Booklet for Show Directors and Artists
by Carroll Swayze, printmaker and NAIA Board Member

Art shows have changed drastically in the past ten years, as everyone can attest. No longer are we just competing with other artists in our fields, we are finding that our competition is coming from many other sources, world wide. Our very livelihoods are being threatened from within, and while the shows and their directors are trying to cope with the changes, no one has really stepped up with a viable tool to help them. For those of you who don’t know me, I am a working printmaker and painter. I am also a new board member of the NAIA. I am fifty-five years old and have been doing outdoor art festivals since I was 14. I feel lucky to have been a part of the art show movement in its infancy. It was fresh and exciting, but I am very worried about the health of our world today. With forty-one years of art shows under my belt, my experience is extensive. I feel compelled, this year, to try to give something back to an industry that has supported my family for my entire life. Thus the birth of FYI—an informative booklet for show directors and artists.

A compilation of years of experience, hours of research, and too-many-to-count intense conversations with hundreds of incredible artists so far, it is a work in progress at this point, the first edition of which I hope to make available by the end of 2011.

This booklet is intended as a guide for show directors and artists to help create a level playing field. It is an informative guide to aid in the discovery of rule breakers, buy/sell vendors, art festival imposters, production studios posing as individual artists, and imported art. It is not intended to be used as a means to change the “rules” for any show or to suggest that every show have the same rules.

Art shows began years ago with the mission of bringing original art to the public, one on one. The basic concept of an art festival or fair was an outdoor exhibition where the artist was able to meet and interact with the individuals who purchased the artist’s work. Then the concept of an art show evolved into a more structured concept, including a jury process, but unfortunately, the infractions are simply prohibited from returning in future years or, worse yet, the infractions are ignored and not addressed at all.

FYI is going to address many important topics and issues that show directors and artists have to deal with in our new art marketplace, such as “Why Buy Original Art?” “What do Artists Expect From a Show?” “What is an ‘Original Print?’ What is a ‘Reproduction,’ and what’s the Difference Between Them?” The FYI will go into the specific problems and possible solutions in each of the categories at an art festival.

Hopefully, by providing information and research, the FYI will give everyone some direction in how to help rid the shows of imposters. If we can supply an aid to identifying those participants who are breaking the rules, then perhaps individual artists who follow the rules won’t have to compete with buy/sell imports and production studios for space to sell their work.

We all know the best time to police a show is during the jury process, but unfortunately there has never been a network of information available to help the jurors and show directors do this. The FYI is going to be a collective source, a statement by the show that it enforces its rules. The prospectus should also define the means by which those rules are monitored and enforced. If the show has rules, it needs to enforce those rules and ensure that issues that arise because of infractions are addressed and dealt with. All too often, artists responsible for infractions are simply prohibited from returning in future years or, worse yet, the infractions are ignored and not addressed at all.

Security and Regulation

Over the last few years, the credit card processing industry has seen a significant increase in risk, cost and overhead combined with a simultaneous dramatic decrease in profit margin. Several factors have caused this nearly half a billion dollar swing with the end result being increased fees to you the merchant. Although a giant leap forward, the internet, advanced technologies, increased communication speeds, and information networks have created a security nightmare for the credit card processing industry, which now spends hundreds of millions of dollars annually to protect critical information from hackers. Additionally, new government involvement regulating how much can be charged to cardholders and merchants has significantly affected the industry’s profit margin and, hence, the ability to pay for the additional expenditures. To top that off, the Fed now requires detailed annual 1099 reports on total transaction volume for every single merchant, as well as the withholding of deposits on merchants with invalid EIN numbers. (For reference as to the magnitude of this requirement alone, if you were to ask the average accountant to compile this data and to file this annual form for you it would cost in excess of two hundred dollars).

These new government policies have forced all companies to ramp their entire systems up to the standards that are now being set, and to collect data, and to dramatically increase the workforce to service and support the new requirements—all while being regulated on how much they can charge to process certain types of debit cards and credit cards. The amount of money the credit card processors are now spending to comply and adhere to all of these new government and security requirements, combined with a regulated profit stream, has forced them to come up with new creative fees they now pass on to the merchant. The bottom line is that the fixed cost of a merchant account has increased significantly, and whether high transaction volume or low, one way or another all merchants are going to have to pay for the ability to accept electronic card payments from customers.

New Fees

Maybe you, the merchant, haven’t heard about all of this but I guarantee that you have already been a victim or very soon you absolutely will be. New monthly fees and annual fees are being assessed to merchants industry-wide to cover all of the increased costs and decreased profits. These fees are sometimes called PCI Compliance, PCI Protection, PCI Non Action, or an IRS 1099 Documentation Fee. If you are not affected by one of those, you will see the addition of a $25 monthly minimum to your account, a dramatic increase to your monthly statement fee, a simple annual fee or, more than likely, all of the above—especially by the companies that claim they don’t have these fees while they are trying to suck you in.

And Buyer Beware, the contracts, not the merchant application, the actual Terms and Conditions and the Program Guide which a merchant rarely sees nor reads but still agrees to in full when they sign and personally guarantee a merchant application, are iron clad and the providers are completely empowered to add or change any fee they see fit. So make sure you know exactly to what you are agreeing because if you are not you could wind up with no valid references and BBB reviews of the company you are considering.

The bottom line is that every company in the industry has the same cost, overhead, risk, and requirements. There will be monthly or annual fees for you to have a merchant account on file. This is a fact. Nothing is FREE, no matter how much you would like it to be. Yes, if you are merchant, processing a high monthly and annual volume, then certain fees can be waived because the costs are being offset by the profit being made on the account.

The Rising Costs of Credit Card Processing

by Michael DiGiovanni
President, 1st National Processing

In the Fall 2010 issue of the Independent Artist, Wendy Hill wrote an article on her experiences with smart phones and credit card processing. Michael DiGiovanni requested that he be allowed to discuss this from the perspective of the credit card processing company. His response, which should not be construed as an endorsement from NAIA, appears below.
Almost seventy percent of artists and crafters strongly believe in a longstanding myth. As uncomfortable as the conversation is, and no matter how distasteful it may be, homeowner’s insurance is greatly misunderstood when it applies to artists and crafters.

Let’s attempt to simplify the discussion. In standard homeowner’s policies “Business Pursuits” are specifically EXCLUDED. Courts around the country generally define business pursuits as “continual activities carried out for financial gain.” In some states this can include almost any activity resulting in some form of revenue or exchange of money, even if the money comes from a tip jar. The pursuits don’t need to be full-time or even your primary source of income, either. “Business Pursuits” can simply be your hobby where you occasionally sell a product for money or trade.

Many artists and crafters also believe that the material goods used in their businesses are covered under their homeowner’s policy, too. Unfortunately, the same exclusions apply. A potter’s wheel or woodworker’s lathe could be excluded if they were damaged in a home fire or stolen if these items were ever used during a “business pursuit,” even if they are permanently located in your home’s shop or garage. This exclusion can also extend to inventory, shelving, containers, or even the bubble wrap used in your “business pursuit.” If you have visitors to your home to conduct business or sell your wares, and someone slips and falls on your premises, the possibility of your homeowner’s coverage excluding the incident is very high.

The Craft Emergency Relief Fund (CERF), vigorously advises that artists and crafters purchase insurance for their various activities. Too many artist and crafters discover the absence of proper protection at the worst time—after the disaster. Some insurance companies recognize the need to extend coverage to their clients who have small home-based businesses. This coverage can extend to liability or property, usually with costs that range anywhere from $250 to $1,500 depending on your activities and location. If you take your business away from the premises, additional extensions and premiums may apply.

Even with the additional premiums, the most widely used endorsement for business pursuits still has limitations. The business must be owned by the named insured on the homeowner’s policy, and resident family members, and must not exceed certain revenue benchmarks. Additionally, this extension will not cover anyone engaged in manufacturing, selling, or distribution of food or personal care products. Basically, the homeowner’s policy is written for homeowners, not necessarily small businesses.

Business Owner’s Policies (BOP’s) provide fantastic coverage, but cost, at a minimum of $500 per year, often exceeding $1,000 due to the broad coverages automatically included. However, they do not necessarily include “Products Liability,” for artists or crafters engaged in manufacturing. There are a handful of specialized products geared towards the artist and crafter that are both affordable and offer the basic coverages needed. For those who manufacture a product, they can extend protection benefits to this exposure as well. One or two specialized programs even offer their coverages for shorter periods of time if you are only doing a single show, or perhaps a summer season, saving you even more of your hard-earned dollars.

In summary, there is no reason to rely on your homeowner’s policy when it probably doesn’t provide the coverage you need when other programs are available at similar, or less expensive premiums. Do a little homework and cover your assets properly.

What You Should Know:
• The Craft Emergency Relief Fund (CERF), vigorously advises that artists and crafters purchase insurance for their various activities.
• Most Homeowners policies DO NOT cover ANY small or large business pursuits. If someone says a policy does cover them, ask to see it in writing.
• If you are a promoter or event organizer you should consider requiring participants to have basic liability insurance and be named as an additional insured. Having participants sign a liability waiver WILL NOT guarantee that you will not be named in a lawsuit.
• Many craft associations and guilds do not offer insurance options with membership. Stratus Insurance (www.stratusins.com) and others specialize in these kinds of association insurance plans, offering special plans and discounts on premiums. Let any associations with which you may be a member know about these special insurance programs.
• Often times an annual policy gives you more coverage and is worth the cost if you do more than a handful of shows.

Resources
Craft Emergency Relief Fund (CERF+):
Insurance Survey article and full report
tinyurl.com/CERFInsurancesurvey
Studio protector
www.studioprotector.org/
A few insurance companies:
• Artists, Crafters and Tradesmen Insurance Program
  • www.ACTinspro.com
  • www.kandkinsurance.com
  • RLI insurance
  • www.insuremyhomebiz.com
  • www.shahinianinsurance.com

Specialty Insurance for handcrafted
Beauty and Cosmetic Products AND
Candles and Jewelry is available
through associations including:
• Handcrafted Soap Makers Guild (HSMG)
  • www.soapguild.org
• Indie Beauty Network (IBN)
  • www.indiebeauty.com

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• Often times an annual policy gives you more coverage and is worth the cost if you do more than a handful of shows.
• Before the show
This is the best time to contact a show director to let them know about possible infractions. Artists should take responsibility to review the artist list posted by the show and tell director if they see a potential problem and provide documentation. The artist must understand that claims must be substantiated so must provide information web links or contact information of another show director who may have dealt with the issue at another show. With the artist providing the director with solid proof of infractions rather than speculation, the director can better check into possible infractions.

• During the show
Artists must be aware that a director may not be able to deal directly with the issue during the show. The director has responsibilities on site and may not have the time or capability to research a suspected infraction. Understand that the director often may not be able to act on his/her own. They may need to answer to a board or show committee or to consult with attorneys before taking action. Also, registering a complaint to a director should be a personal conversation between the artist and director, and do not expect the director to be able to act immediately during the show on all complaints.

Artist should not circulate petitions among other artists to remove a suspect offender nor go back to their room after a day at the show and report suspected offenders to artists at large on a forum.

• After the show
Work with directors after the show to present further facts after the show. When you lodge your complaint, offer to get what information you can and forward it to them after the show when you can gather facts more completely. "...I think a great dialogue was started between show directors and artists, and I think that this will continue as both realize the symbiotic relationships that we all have. We all need each other and harm…I think a great dialogue was started between show directors and artists, and I think that this will continue as both realize the symbiotic relationships that we all have. We all need each other and harm…I think a great dialogue was started between show directors and artists, and I think that this will continue as both realize the symbiotic relationships that we all have. We all need each other and harm…"

Another question being put to shows is: "How would you respond to the suggestion of having artists send photographs of their booths from the most recent show prior to application?" One director has said that he would prefer an authentic, recent photograph taken with a cell phone to a stylized booth shot so that he and his jurors can see what is actually in the booth and how it is presented. Again, we'll keep you posted on responses and other questions that arise from this conversation.

**Booth Images**
The facilitators for this topic were Carla Fox, metislaw and director of Art in the High Desert, Bend, Oregon; and Stephen King, Executive Director Downtown Events Group, Des Moines Arts Festival, Des Moines, Iowa. Carla Fox has written her own summary article on Booth Images for this issue of the IA. (Please see page 14 for her summary of the discussion that took place and some possible solutions available. Photographer Lea Sleznick also presented on the topic at a previous conference, and you can read his follow up remarks on the issue on page 12.)

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**Buy/Sell, Imports, Reproductions**
This was a full day of discussion facilitated by Richard Lobenthal, member of NAIA Board of Directors. While some of the discussions can be eliminated and some let the conversation sometimes fell to "flogging an expired equine," all had an opportunity to express experiences and concern as the morning segment was devoted to identifying the problems and the extent of them.

The afternoon segment of the session was devoted to solutions and three primary points for effectively addressing the problem were put forth:

1. **Prospectus**
The shows prospectus must spell out the rules for buy/sell, imports, reproductions, and production work. Simple statements such as "Buy/Sell or Imports will not be tolerated" should be written. It is difficult for directors to address these concerns that do not fit within the jurisdiction of the show's policy on production work and reproductions.

The importance of such statements in a prospectus are reflected by artist Marji Rawson, jeweler. "If there isn’t a written statement or policy against buy/sell in the prospectus, "said Marji, "I probably won’t apply to the show."

2. **Both artists and directors must approach the buy/sell issue in a professional manner.** This point has four different levels of involvement.
   1. **Jury level**
   A show's policies should be explained to jurors. Many of the issues in question can be eliminated at the jury level. Using qualified, experienced jurors is a good start. A jury panel may consist of individuals who are knowledgeable in different media and should be allowed to share their expertise with other jurors. The "no discussion" rule should be re-examined by shows to allow for a combined experience of jurors to be utilized in selecting artist exhibitors.

3. **Director level**
   "One of the issues only briefly touched upon and in need of further exploration is refund policies. Some follow-up discussions with directors showed that many have had refund policies in place, but they varied widely. As a whole, returns are available, but the amount of the refund differs depending on the time frame. In advance of the show. Most directors cited the expenses involved in substituting artists. Not only are there administrative charges related to staff time, but accepted artists appear on web sites as well as some printed materials. Costs are incurred both in time and printing to make those changes. These are only some of the considerations for refund policies. More will be discussed on this issue and reported as they take place.

Where do we go from here?
We’re talking with those who attended the conference and putting together a summary of the conference to distribute to others. The summary will include some of the suggested actions and proposals that came from the conference. We’re presently looking at different means to most effectively distribute to both artists and shows nationwide.

There haven’t been many face-to-face discussions between the two primary on a large scale. There are many different kinds of shows just as there are different artists. All have their different parameters within which they have to work. When there have been years of real or imagined barriers between the shows and artists, there is a lot to discuss as well as myths to dispel. We made a start at this conference, but we still have a way to go.

I hope all of you will see the importance of the direction we are going and support NAIA with your membership and contributions to such things as FYI and future conferences. ☺

FYI, continued from p. 4

hopefully linking show directors and artists together to help create an extensive list of imposters, websites, and buy/sell merchandise which can then provide the shows with the source to prove the infractions and suggest possible solutions to the problems in the future.

After the jury process, the next best place to stop the rule breakers is before the show occurs, using research methods to check the accepted artists who will be coming to the show. You’d be surprised to see what kind of information is available to all of us if we have the time and the tools to spend. The FYI will include sources for artists and show directors and their staff to use. The benefit of this is, of course, the willingness of opening of spaces to legitimate artists on the shows’ wait list.

The final place to police a show is on location as the show opens. This is probably the most difficult time for the show directors to police the artists because everyone is so busy. The FYI will suggest many solutions to this problem such as making sure the show has enough manpower to work with informed volunteers, educated paid staff or artists educated in their particular media whose job is to walk around the show and point out to provide the proof to extricate the rule breakers.

One of the things I would hope to create with the FYI is an open line of communication between artists and show directors. This has been too long in coming. Artists hold a wealth of information that they would like to share with the show directors if they felt comfortable doing so and if they thought the show directors would do something with it. So often in the past the worry that they would be blackballed for speaking out is forefront in their minds and as a result a lot of information is kept secret. I think we can change this situation and I hope the FYI will be a catalyst to that change that will help us all.

I would love to have help with this project. Any information that you would like to share will be greatly appreciated and will be kept confidential. You can send me this information at my email at Carroll Swayne, 2373 Donovan Rd. Englewood, Florida, 34223.
We produce the art fair and a book festival. We also have a touring public art collection and do author visits in schools.

Q: What makes the Saint Louis Art Fair special or unique?
A: Hmmmm... I am still trying to figure that out... It was a mystery to me before I was the director and I still don't know the secret, but do know that I do not want to mess with it!

Q: Why should an artist want to apply for your show?
A: We have great community support and belief in the art fair.

Q: What do you feel are the advantages of art shows run by non-profit organizations staffed by volunteers vs. those produced by for-profit companies?
A: I do not believe there are advantages of one over the other. The passion the management team brings to the job is more of an important than the tax status. A non-profit organization is a business just like a for-profit business. The tax status should not have any affect on the outcome or how well the organization performs.

Q: What is the level of support for the festival in the community where you are located?
A: The Saint Louis Art Fair was started by a former mayor with the idea that this is the community's event and could help bring Clayton to the forefront in tourism. The founders did their research and created the event they wanted. Looking at our sponsors, over 90 percent come from the community and have been with us for 17 years. The city of Clayton is extremely invested in the event and it has become a selling point for economic development. In September it is the event to be at in Saint Louis. As a newbie to the area, I am amazed how many people tell me their art fair stories—regarding a purchase or an interaction with an artist—and how they look forward to September. This past October, I was at a chamber event and an individual stopped me. He wanted to apologize because he had been at the art fair in September, but due to a change in the family finances, he was not able to make a purchase this year. He felt badly and wanted me to know he was hoping to purchase art at the next festival. I have never had that happen to me before!

Q: What marketing strategies do you use to draw the crowd to your show?
A: We use a wide variety of non-traditional vs. traditional media. We try to use social media, PR stories, and traditional ad placement in print, radio, television, and web.

Q: Are there any special ways in which you strive to inform or educate art fair customers?
A: We try to tell stories and educate through our PR efforts. We focus on unique stories that make art interesting to the masses.
Imagine a Better Art Show World
by Cynthia Davis, Photographer, NAIA Staff, www.CynthiaDavis.com

Imagine that you are sitting down to apply to shows and you find....

Some shows want slides, some want digital files, but they ALL want something different. So you remount all of your slides and relabel them (each one differently) for shows A, B and C. You copy and resize all of your digital files in 3 different formats to apply to shows D, E and F. By the time you’re done you are so exhausted and confused you have to take a nap even though you should be in the studio working. How has the NAIA been able to effect change?

• Booth fees due upon acceptance. Many shows used to require that booth fees be paid upon application. Some shows even cashed booth fee checks and used the money for expenses or made interest on your money between the deadline date and the notification date. If you were rejected, they sent you a refund check in their own sweet time.

• Standard for labeling of slides / digital slides. It seemed that every show wanted the slides labeled differently. Slides needed to be continually remounted and relabeled to conform to show requirements. When digital jurying came on board we heavily advocated that a standard be developed and worked to help develop that standard so that artists wouldn’t have to continually resize their digital files to conform to a show’s requirements. We continue to promote this standard and shows are coming around. The NAIA wasn’t that popular during those years because some artists thought that the NAIA was pushing digital jurying down their throats. Instead the NAIA saw that it was inevitable and we wanted artists to have a say in what was happening.

• No Social Security Numbers on application materials. Yes, some shows were actually requiring this information! If you have been or known anyone who has been the victim of identity theft, then you know how important it is that your SSN does not fall into the wrong hands. One show accidently published their artists SSN’s on their website!

• Reasonable cancellation and refund policies. Establish a reasonable period of time during which accepted artists may cancel and receive a booth fee refund. Engaging in the application process should be considered only a commitment to jury; not a commitment to show.

• Discourage proxies at shows. The art show venue is unique in that the public not only gets the opportunity to buy original art and crafts, but gets to meet the artists who make it. Artists engage with the public about their work and processes thus furthering the perception of value in what we do and create.

• Copyright is sacrosanct. Artists hold copyrights of their images on their shows. Shows should be aware that the use of artists’ images beyond any permission specifically granted by the artist is subject to the copyright laws of the United States. Seems like a given right? NOT! Shows often would use images from an artist in their publicity even if the artist did the show several years before and had been rejected for that particular show that the image was advertising!

• In the beginning there was more of an “us vs them” attitude meaning “artists vs show directors.” But due to the positive constructive work of NAIA leaders and through the Director’s Conferences, it has developed into everyone working toward the betterment of the profession. We all realize that artists need shows and shows need artists and we all need to work together to nurture and protect our venue. These are just a few of the practices that the NAIA can be proud to say they have been effective in changing. If you are fairly new to the art show venue or do not know that much about the NAIA, you may not be aware of all the challenges and changes that happened before. In fact, you may not see the need for an organization like the NAIA but you are now benefiting from them. Many people worked very hard to make it what it is today and the NAIA continues to work for positive change.

The work is not yet done, the NAIA is not obsolete. The art show industry faces new and different challenges today including a depressed economy, imports, buy/sell. But the NAIA continues to work toward the betterment of the profession. We all realize that artists need shows and shows need artists and we all need to work together to nurture and protect our venue. Imagine a better art show world!
Become a Member!

What is the NAIA about?
"The mission of the NAIA is to strengthen, improve, and promote the artistic, professional, and economic success of artists who exhibit in art shows. We are committed to integrity, creativity, and the pursuit of excellence. We advocate for the highest ideals and practices within all aspects of the art show environment."

Who is the NAIA?
The NAIA is YOU! The NAIA is primarily a volunteer-based organization of artists just like yourself. The board directs the efforts through input from the membership while many other volunteers assist in providing the manpower to accomplish those goals.

What does the NAIA Do?
The NAIA provides a forum for artists to communicate with one another and with other people in the arts community with the goal of improving our industry. We help existing shows in their efforts to provide a viable market for selling art and crafts. In addition, we work with communities to establish high quality new shows. The NAIA works toward reducing threats such as imports and a sagging economy that are threatening the art show industry and artists’ ability to make a living at what they love. We have listed many benefits and discounts above, but the most important reason to become a member of the NAIA is to add your personal voice to the collective efforts of the NAIA. Your financial support is integral to the success of these efforts. If you can volunteer in these efforts, even better! We welcome you to the NAIA!

Why should I become a member of the NAIA?
Because the NAIA needs you NOW! There are important issues such as buy/sell, imports, and a sagging economy that are threatening the art show industry and artists’ ability to make a living at what they love. We have listed many benefits and discounts above, but the most important reason to become a member of the NAIA is to add your personal voice to the collective efforts of the NAIA. Your financial support is integral to the success of these efforts. If you can volunteer in these efforts, even better! We welcome you to the NAIA!

How can I become a member of the NAIA?
It’s easy! Simply log onto the NAIA web site at http://naia-artists.org/join/index.htm. You can join online or print out a membership form to mail in. The NAIA Membership Committee looks forward to welcoming you as a member! ☺

You can join NAIA online at www.naia-artists.org

Please Note: If you are a member of the NAIA you should be receiving monthly updates and other important communications from us via email. If you are not receiving these, please contact Membership@NAIA-artists.org to make sure that we have your email address correct. Also, please make sure that your email program is set to receive email from the NAIA.

NAIA Emerging Artist Membership Program

In 2007 the NAIA conducted a survey, “Trends Among Artists,” that showed that the art festival artist is aging. Eighty percent of the respondents were 46-62 years old with another 14% over 62! Last fall, The Art Festival Newsletter conducted a survey titled “Art Festival Artists: Who We Are,” which painted a demographic portrait of the art festival artist. This, too, showed that a majority of art show artists are 50 years old or older. Younger artists do not seem to be choosing art shows as a venue for selling their art. Instead they seem to be opting for venues such as Etsy, their own web sites, and social media marketing.

Many veteran festival artists are getting older and starting to retire and they are not being replaced at the rate that they are leaving. If we want to keep our art festival venue alive and vibrant, we need to address this.

More and more shows are seeing the desirability of drawing into the art show venue new and emerging artists. They are creating programs specifically for that. The NAIA has created a new pilot membership program designed especially for this unique class of artists. We want to help shows in their efforts to bring these new artists into our venue and keep them there by mentoring them during the process in order to help make their experience a success. The NAIA Membership Committee contacted our member shows who have emerging artist programs asking them to partner with us. Currently seven shows are participating. The NAIA and the shows have agreed to jointly underwrite a one-year membership in the NAIA for each emerging artist participating in their programs. Each emerging artist will have access to all of the benefits of being a member of the NAIA.

Access to our Member Forum where they can ask questions of veteran artists and get the nitty gritty on selling their work at art festivals
- Membership discounts with hotels, credit card processing, photographers, displays and supplies.
- Mailed copy of The Independent Artist twice a year
- Regular email updates from our board chair
- Periodic email updates on timely and important topics

We are also asking our veteran member artists to volunteer to mentor these new artists. Midway through their membership and at the end of their year, we will be surveying these new artists as to their experience.

The NAIA is committed to work toward maintaining the health and vibrancy of the art show venue. If you are a festival director who has an emerging artist program and would like to partner with us, please contact Cynthia Davis, Membership@NAIA-Artists.org.

If you are a festival director who does not yet have an emerging artist program but are interested in developing one, please let us know. We can put you in touch with shows that can advise you on how to develop your own program. ☺

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Supporting New Talent: The SLAF Emerging Artist Program

Most artist mentoring programs at art fairs are little more than transient introductions to the life of an art fair artist. Little is planned in advance; rarely are there scheduled learning events for the student. The Emerging Artist as Entrepreneur (EAE) Program, begun in 2010 at the venerable Saint Louis Art Fair, however, is the clear exception. Visualized as a year-long learning program, it began at the fair in 2010 as a four day, total immersion experience with each student under the direct tutelage of a well-versed art fair artist. It will end this September with the student returning to the show to exhibit and sell his or her own work. In between were scheduled lectures covering such subjects as financial planning and legal issues offered by professionals in their respective fields.

With 20 artists participating in 2010, representing a remarkable combined total of 448 years in the art fair business, the program began with a day of classroom lecture involving 15 speakers. Subject matter on the first and ensuing days included pricing, profit structure, writing press releases, inventory control, booth stability and security, display methods, protection of artwork, preparation for inclement weather, cash and sales security, art fair etiquette, labor costs, and others.

Utilizing a "classroom setup" at the show's host hotel, the program's first weekend included an accumulative total of approximately ten hours of classroom lecture and instruction. A highlight for each student was working one-on-one with one of the show's judges on Saturday as the judge visited the booths and assessed the artists' works. Students were required to enter to the booth with the judge and to observe the interactions and conversations between artist and judge. Those conversations were later discussed after the awards ceremony on Sunday in a session titled, "Were there any surprises?"

Another unique aspect of the program was the Friday morning "Parade of Vans." Each participating artist opened his or her van for inspection by the students prior to unloading and setting up for the show. The importance of astute and safe packing and transport was the focal point, as common practices were noted and defined. Students were additionally required to assist in both set-up of the booth on opening and subsequent days, as well as securing the booth for the night and teardown on Sunday. All in all, it was estimated that each student spent well over 42 hours, either on the street or in the classroom, with the program in the four days of its opening weekend, actively engaged in one activity or another.

The program's host for the opening weekend was Les Slesnick, an art fair veteran of more than 30 years. Developed under the auspices of Executive Director Cindy Lerick and Board Director David Smith, the EAE Program was designed to hopefully reverse the "aging of our industry," as it has been often described.

Participating EAE Program ceramicist Robert Briscoe from Minnesota held the record for the longest service to the industry at 39 years, while newcomer Amy Flynn from North Carolina tipped the other end of the scale at just one year. They and the other 18 artists and guest speakers provided each student with a structured and detailed introduction to the business of art fairs and the life of an art fair artist that some consider to be unparalleled in the industry.

Referring to it as "the proudest achievement of my art fair career," Slesnick considers it the initial program a resounding success. "I know for a fact that these students' lives were clearly influenced, a few of them profoundly," Slesnick said. "One young student, Slesnick added, "hesitating to go home after the wrap-up session on Sunday night, frankly admitted he didn't want to leave -- just one clear sign of the program's success.

Those art fair directors wishing to develop similar programs may contact Mr. Slesnick at Lslesnick@msn.com. There is no charge or fee for this service.
Artisphere 2011 Open Jury Review by Anonymous

Attending was worthwhile, I really enjoyed it and it was eye opening. But there were only about 20 artists attending including one who didn’t want to see their own medium projected. Talk about being in denial.

The process
We were told at the beginning how many applications were received in each medium and how many spaces were allocated for each medium the previous year.

I was surprised how fast the process went by though everything I’d previously read about projection jury issues said that. They did a run through by medium before scoring that particular medium. The preliminary round went by as if to be about two seconds. Then the jurors saw the images for about ten seconds, all five projected simultaneously on separate screens without the artist statement being read. We were told that they juried in the order that the applications were received. Whenever there was a break, they came over and spoke to us (observing artists) answering any of our questions.

Artisphere is one of the few shows on ZAPP that has filled out the ‘jury details’ information page in their application so they are open in their process.

The importance of booth images
One booth image was taken in a gallery and it wasn’t just that artist’s work. There were even a bunch of people standing around drinking wine in the picture. And there were people who set up easels in their home and took a picture of it for their booth image.

Some of the jewelry booths looked like Claire’s Boutique with all the stuff in the booth. Claire’s Boutique is a cheap jewelry store chain in malls where every inch is covered with little things. In other jewelry booths I saw too much skipping. The camera angle was too low. I did see one jewelry booth where a ladder was used to get a perspective showing more of the actual jewelry.

The one juror I could see clearly would score the artist and then enlarge the booth image on their monitor and adjust the score accordingly. For my own images, I saw the juror lower my score by a point after examining my booth and for some other artists I saw the juror raise their score by a point. This answers a commonly asked question about the importance of the booth image. In fact, the only image I noticed any of the jurors enlarging on their monitors were the booth images.

A cohesive body of work
Seeing the images projected simultaneously made it easy for me to see if the presentations flowed properly and composition matched from image to image. To see that cohesive body of work made a big difference for me, and it also did for the one juror I was able to see scoring. It’s frustrating for me as an artist because I want to show what else I can do, but it doesn’t translate to the jurors in that short a period of time. I’ve read about that over and over but it didn’t make sense until I could actually see it. Through my images were somewhat cohesive but when I saw them projected they didn’t go together as well as I would have liked them. I could see the cohesive body of work got higher scores from the juror I could see.

Response to the Review from the Director of Artisphere
Hi Larry, I just read through the jury review on your website. I thought it was very fair. We were a bit worried when we realized that the attending artists were able to see the jurors scores on their computer screens. We will probably change the set up next year so that attendees cannot see the computer screens but, at least for the artist who wrote the review, it seems to help that they saw exactly what the jurors were doing. The attendees were not present when we went over our expectations of the jurors as well as the jurors – we ask the jurors specifically to judge the work based on the projected images and to use the thumbnail images on their computers as a point of reference only – that is why the artist did not see the jurors blowing up any other images of work.

—Liz Rundorff Smith

Thoughts on My First Jurying Experience: Broad Ripple Art Fair, Indianapolis
By Elizabeth Busey

I spent the afternoon in the dark auditorium at the Indianapolis Art Center observing the jurying for the Broad Ripple Art Fair in May. This is my first year applying to shows using the ZAPP system. I had several thoughts as I watched. I should caution readers that I do not know if my musings are in agreement with the jurors, as the results were not announced that day.

Application Process
Artists were requested to submit three images of their work, plus a shot of their booth and a 200 word explanation of their process. The jurors were asked to judge over 800 entries, where only a bit over 200 would be accepted. A schedule of the media categories was e-mailed to applicants, and the categories were considered in alphabetical order. I arrived in time to see the jewelry, leather, painting, photography and printmaking categories.

Such a Short Time
The jurors would see a quick run through of each category, and then each entrant was given about 30 seconds for the consideration of the jurors. During this time the jurist’s statement was read. I was struck by how short a time this is. I learned from a former juror that artists are...
Background and Introduction

Since making the original paper on misrepresentation and its accompanying booth slide recommendations available at the NAIA Directors Conference in Peoria in 2009, and in subsequent publication in The Independent Artist that winter, I can’t think of a subject more in the forefront insofar as issues and debates are concerned than that of the booth slide. As the author of that paper and of the informal study of the relative strength of show prospectuses conducted for the Peoria conference, I clearly have a vested interest in the outcome of these issues.

Whether any of the new show rules came about as a direct result of the paper, or whether they came about as a result of an indirect “trickle-down” effect, it can’t be denied that the paper’s publication played a role. NAIA should be congratulated for having foreseen, eighteen months ago, to print the paper, knowing its implications. The result, I told, was a record thousand plus hits on the NAIA forum in the first ten days or so, indicating the paper’s importance in the eyes of its members, the impact it had, and the high level of priority the members placed on the subject.

My Goal and the Benefits I Hoped to Achieve

That was my goal, to bring the issues as I saw them into the mainstream so that reasonable people would get together and formulate reasonable solutions. I concluded the paper with the one sentence that I felt was a good start in resolving what many consider to be separate issues: a strong booth slide component as part of the application process that would (1) ferret out those who would otherwise misrepresent themselves in the application process by helping to eliminate bait and switch (turning in with one thing and showing up with another); (2) minimize buy/ sell as much as possible; and (3) minimize the use of inappropriate booth slides (most notably submitting a booth slide suitable only for indoor use as a booth slide for an outdoor show). For the director, the benefit of a strong booth slide requirement is knowing ahead of time how the show will look in real time. For the artist, the benefit is a level playing field for all at jury.

The Peoria Conference

At the Peoria conference, I presented the results of my informal study of show prospectuses in straightforward fashion, inducting no one, but recognizing those shows in attendance having a more comprehensive prospectus and set of rules. Unless a show director later contacted me, and several did, no further attempt was made on my part to contact anyone. The shows that made changes initiated those changes on their own, presumably because the director and his or her board felt there were issues needed to be addressed and there were changes that had to be made, or that they simply applied the recommendations made sense.

Although a few art fairs have adopted some of the paper’s recommendations, none has adopted everything. Each show that has since implemented changes and/or new rules tailored those changes to meet its own unique, individual needs and priorities. No one’s arm was twisted, nor was there any undue influence or pressure placed on any art fair director to adopt any of the recommendations.

The original paper contained several true-story examples of observations, meant only to point out principles and to serve as rationale in support of conclusions. To enhance or debase any one person or show was never a consideration, either with the paper or with the study, and until then, the booth slide was never considered a possible remedy for any of our industry’s ills. But because most artists, myself included, had become so accustomed to misrepresentations, I insisted that the body of work in question be removed simply, and that any influence, or any influence at all, Houston’s rules regarding “product mix” and booth appearance were no impediment to Bayou City’s increasingly stellar sales performance and popularity with patron and artist. Rules and requirements concerning the booth slide may be changing or may be in the process of being modified, but there is nothing that keeps any artist, legitimate or otherwise, from complying with new guidelines. Nothing stays the same forever, nor should it. To do so is to remain stagnant and become stale. As the art fair grows and evolves, even the old booth rules are to mature, so must its players.

An Art Fair Dilemma: An 18-Month Update and Clarification

Compliance Committees Must Exercise Good Judgement

As more art fairs implement policies requiring that the booth appearance at the show resemble the booth slide from jury, stories of overzealous compliance committees have begun to emerge. Overall, this was one of the primary thrusts of the 2009 paper: that we remain truthful in the application process. But in a world where we tend to overreact when presented with a pressing issue, it must be kept in mind that we must also be reasonable.

At an early 2011 show in Central Florida, one glass maker who was thought by his peers to be engaging in bait and switch, and whose hands were smooth and unblemished, was allowed to remain in the show while another, whose hands revealed years of experience, who was pressed to make his product, was forced to remove a small body of work because it did not appear in the booth slide. In this case, the body of work that was removed was in the artist’s lower price range of work, but the work itself was consistent in quality and design with similarly priced work from the same artist that was in the booth slide. The committee was incoherent that the body of work in question be removed simply because it did not appear in the booth slide. The committee was clearly misinformed, or a compliance committee, in this case, exerted improper judgment.

It must be recognized that rarely will the booths appearance at the show be an exact replica of the booth slide at jury. As stated in the original paper, “...from show to show and from season to season, booth setup is going to change somewhat and we should expect that. There are many reasons for this, not the least of which is that time has passed since the booth slide was made, in many instances a year or more, and that the work in the slide may have simply been sold. Other reasons include, but are not limited to, a change in the artist or the booth; or a "remodel" of the booth to enhance appearance. Indeed, requiring or demanding that the booth be exactly the same as the booth slide is tantamount to demanding that the artist never move beyond his or her current level of inquiry, process, and expertise, and that he never develop new skills. The professional artist’s psyche insists that he continually asks questions about things he does not yet know, and that he develop skills he does not yet have. It is that drive of searching for something new that propels the artist into territory he has never been before; rather than remaining in a niche of complacency that may be comfortable and profitable, but is nonetheless nothing more than relying on past success. In this process of growth, we must permit that the final appearance of the booth, from the subtle to the not so subtle. First and foremost, the successful artist must also continually seek ways to generate sales.
It was never the intent of the original paper to suggest otherwise. It was the intent to prevent misrepresentation to the extent it had become prevalent, and to clearly prevent out of order vitriol as much as possible.

**Compliance committee** persons must be given guidance and assistance regarding this paper. They must be given the proper tools to successfully complete their mission and, above all, they must understand that, in all cases, common sense must prevail.

### Ugliness and Vitriol

A recent online forum commotion concerns a major mid-west show’s new rule requiring that the applicant’s full range of prices be represented in the slides of the application process. With absolutely no input from me, and with apparently no attempt of investigation or inquiry, my name was nonetheless mentioned as being somehow involved in the rule’s formulation and adoption.

Before I state my response to the new rule, let me say this to the online forum community: It’s unfortunate that pure vitriol and ugliness have been permitted to appear on occasion. A case in point is an essentially profane diatribe last year that unfairly slammed everything about Belleville that should never have been published. Very negative comments were even made against authors who it was later learned were, in fact, friends.

**Why?**

What possible purpose could be served by such negative postings? These online attacks resolve nothing and do not speak well of the forum sponsors and individuals. They are nothing less than cyber-bullying and, in the case of the Belleville post, clearly cyber-bug.

This has been my response to the new rule regarding the inclusion of the artist’s full range of prices in the application process. It appears to be nothing new, but rather a carry-over from the director’s tenure at a previous show for which she served as executive director. The policies at her previous show were set in place well before the publication of my original paper on misrepresentation and its subsequent recommendations.

Art fairs that are modifying their rules, or that are making them more stringent, seem to be reacting to what legitimate artists feel are necessary to protect the integrity and reputation of their shows. Similarly, every artist has the right to decide for himself or whether or not to apply to any given show.

That said, there is nothing that prohibits a concerned artist from writing a polite, well-intentioned letter or email to any art fair director should a situation warrant, presenting a new rule or policy, and even proposing alternate solutions for consideration. Discussion is one thing, but simply beating such matters to death on a forum may very well be a fruitless exercise.

### In Closing

It remains my firm belief that a strong booth slide rule is in everyone’s best, long-term interest. It serves the artist in that it helps protect the artist’s ability to earn a living and most importantly puts everyone on a level playing field at jury.

It serves the art fair director in that it assists the director in maintaining control of the show by protecting its overall appearance and perceived level of quality. A bonus for the director is hopefully less time spent the weekend of the fair addressing complaints and more time being productive.

No art show director is being forced to do anything he or she doesn’t want to do. Art show directors who are making changes are doing so because they feel the changes are necessary. No artist is being forced to apply to a show to which he or she philosophically disagrees, but if the art show world is indeed changing and adapting, the professional artist would do well to consider changing and adapting along with it.

Respectfully submitted,
Les Slesnick
February 22, 2011

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**An Interview with Jerry Gilman**

**by Larry Berman**

**Refreshing your art**

My big bugaboo now that I’ve juried about ten shows and after seeing a lot of artists over the years, is the idea of refreshing. The artist needs to refresh their work. The jurors are always refresh (change each year) and then the director has to be concerned about what they’re doing to make the audience feel refreshed when they attend the festival. The audience doesn’t want to see the same artwork or they will blow it off like they’ve seen it before and stop attending.

I love to see new energy based on the artist, especially those that may deal in multiples that may be very appealing to people and have sold well over the years. But I think that as an artist, you always have to replenish or refresh your part of the bargain, so to speak.

**Giving people a Reason to Attend**

Giving artists the same prime spaces year after year is like the permanent collections in a museum which is usually the same work. You walk through the door and immediately think to yourself that you’ve been there before. I think that is a hindrance to the art festival and to the artists. The festival is entertainment and people can stay home just as easily and watch things electronically. They don’t have to go anywhere anymore, and sometimes prefer not to because of the economy. You don’t want to give them reasons not to attend.

As a collector, if I’ve bought a piece from an artist and then I came back a year or two later and saw the same piece, I would be offended, even though I know it’s a multiple. It would be weird to see the same thing over and over again, that you really didn’t buy something unique, only a slice of the huge pie of one particular image. It’s a difficult question and something that should be taught about on a national level. How do you refresh yourself, refresh the judges, and refresh the festival.

**How do you make the audience come and see something they’ve never seen before? They’re going to see familiar artists but I think that they don’t see the same thing, there should be a turnover every couple of years that you should have pretty much all new work. For most galleries and museums, or if you apply to a grant from a foundation, the work can’t be more than two years old. So for festivals, the work probably shouldn’t be older than five years. You might have some older work in your booth but you should never be able to get into a show with slides (images) that are more than five years old. If you’re not making new work by then, you’re hurting your own reputation as an artist. There should be some regulatory progression as you keep experimenting and that also keeps you alive as an artist.

**Giving People a Reason to Buy—TheStory**

I think that there’s some real quality in these festivals and I also believe that artists do like the festivals more than dealing with galleries and museums because you’re talking one on one with the person who likes your work. Even if you don’t make a sale that day, you still implanted something in that person’s mind about who you are as an artist. And when you see them again maybe next year, they remember you and might bring back a friend. Sometimes it takes two years to make a sale because the first year they just want to know who you are. I’ve always believed that the best thing you can do for a patron who buys one of your works is that they have a story to tell about you when that piece is on their wall. It’s a wonderful transfer of the stories from the artist to the collector and then to their friends. Then their friends may come to meet you and tell you that so and so has one of your pieces and now they want to buy something. It can be a slow process building a quality sale.

**What I’m Looking for In the Jury Room**

I’m looking for something that’s unique to me, something that I’ve never seen before. I don’t give a lot of applause to someone who I know is copying someone out of art history. There isn’t a lot of time when you only have ten seconds, but I look for quality, uniqueness, and for me every time I’ve juried, I try to put a sense of humor into the final show. It could be childlike, naive, or something that you’re going to put up a smile on someone’s face, a funny piece to look at. There’s lots of serious artwork out there but I also believe festivals should have something for everybody so when families attend, little kids can get excited when they turn the corner and there’s those little robots or things like that.

**On Site Jurying**

I look for uniqueness. I’ve seen a lot of the same artists over and over, but when we jury in person (at the festival) I want to see something in their booth that I haven’t seen before. If it’s the same stuff than I won’t consider them for an award. They could be the best artist in the whole festival, but for me I want to see them replenishing their ideas and work. I want them to show me some of the new stuff that they’ve done. If I’ve seen their work before, I would love to see growth and new work to get me excited. What artists may not understand is that, at the better shows, there are lots of judges that travel all over the country. When you see enough of the top art festivals, you may see a high percentage of the artists repeatedly, so I want to see something different. I grew up in art so I’m looking for things that really floor me. Most of the awards I’ve given out over the years when I’ve been a judge are not to the most common people that you think of in the festival. They are people who are really pushing the envelope.

Multiples printed on canvas There was a discussion about photographs printed on canvas. The jury is not going to buy a $5,000 piece but you may buy a $100 piece and go home and show it to your friends. If you only have ten seconds, but I look for quality, uniqueness, and for me every time I’ve juried, I try to put a sense of humor into the final show. It could be childlike, naive, or something that you’re going to put up a smile on someone’s face, a funny piece to look at. There’s lots of serious artwork out there but I also believe festivals should have something for everybody so when families attend, little kids can get excited when they turn the corner and there’s those little robots or things like that.

**Prices in the Jury Room**

I don’t care what things cost. That’s up to the artist. If you price your work too high, you’re going to find that out when you get to the festival and people may say “great work, but we can’t afford it.” I don’t care if an artist gets a little bit of money that less than $5,000. Maybe you could, but you only have to sell one or two
Booth Images: Report from the NAIA Conference

By Carlo Fox

At the recent NAIA Directors and Artists Conference, in Indianapolis, Indiana, May 26, 2011 (see page 1), artists and show directors had extensive discussions of booth images in an effort to clarify what a booth image is and how will it be used. There has been a fair deal of confusion in the recent years associated with the booth image, centered around several questions:

- What is a “good” booth image?
- What do shows want?
- How are booths used?
- How are booth images to be juried?
- Should an artist “style” their booth image?
- Is a great deal of Photoshopping required or discouraged—or what?
- Artists received previously acceptable booth images being rejected by some shows as unacceptable now—why?
- Shows are concerned about the lack of quality in some booth images and the increase of heavily Photoshopped images.

The goal of the session was not to come up with a standardized format for booth images for all shows or all artists. Each show has differing needs and each artist has a different type of set up. Rather, the goal was to let each side of the booth hear, understand, and discuss the benefits and problems of obtaining and shooting an acceptable booth image. And to have each show make clear to the artists who apply to their show what is required for the application.

The facilitators for this session were Stephen King, Art Director, and Michelle Thomas, Conference Coordinator. Despite the range of shows, both geographically and in terms of size—with huge festivals, for-profit shows, and small non-profit shows represented at the conference—there was a surprising amount of consensus among the directors about what they wanted in booth images. Here’s how the directors answered each of the questions:

1. What is the purpose of the booth image?
   - To show the body of work
   - To show the scale of the work
   - To show how the artist will present their work to the public (at the show)
   - To show the consistency of the work
   - To show the professionalism of the presentation
   - Also, directors stated that the booth image is often helpful to a tie-breaker if two or more artists are vying for one spot
   - Art directors suggested that the image be consistent with the show rules—or if an image isn’t available, then the artist explain. For example, “While ABC Art Festival does not allow bins, my booth image shows them. For your ABC Art Show I will not be bringing my browse bins.”

2. How is the booth image going to be juried?
   - Judging booth images is a visual “contract” with the show as to what was juried in.
   - What is the extent of what will be scored, during jurying?

3. What’s in/what’s out regarding styled booths and Photoshopped booth images?
   - It is hoped that, while there will be shows that will have very strict booth image requirements and artists who continue to stylize or heavily Photoshop their booth images, the conversations and understandings reached at the conference will help clarify the booth image “issue” with the vast majority of shows and artists.

4. What’s in/what’s out regarding styled booths and Photoshopped booth images?
   - In booth images, the conversations and understandings many ways and forms:
     - Keep it real.
     - Keep it authentic. They did not see a need to keep it real, keep it authentic. Show directors said that jurors were not impressed or swayed by heavily stylized booths if they did not look “real.” They said the heavily Photoshopted or poorly Photoshopped booths fared poorly with jurors.

5. What do shows want?
   - Back to keep it real, keep it authentic. Show directors said that jurors were not impressed or swayed by heavily stylized booths if they did not look “real.” They said the heavily Photoshopted or poorly Photoshopped booths fared poorly with jurors.
   - Photo images are easier to judge than the show itself did not like them.
   - One director said it best and many heads nodded… “Do not send a booth image that will make the jurors question it.”
   - While there was a relatively small sampling of artists and show directors at this conference, it was a pleasant surprise to see how much common sense and consensus this diverse group brought to the subject of what makes a good booth image.

6. What do shows want?
   - It is hoped that, while there will be shows that will have very strict booth image requirements and artists who continue to stylize or heavily Photoshop their booth images, the conversations and understandings reached at the conference will help clarify the booth image “issue” with the vast majority of shows and artists.

From the Jury Room, continued from p. 11

ranked between 1 and 7, with four not being used. There was no discussion between jurors throughout. I wasn’t able to glean any particular criteria they were using, other than their personal assessment of the quality of the artwork, and the appearance of the booth.

Image Quality

I am a printmaker, and was surprised to see that when my images were projected on the screen, the top two images looked washed out, while the bottom image and booth shot looked fine. I chatted with Larry Bierman about why this might be. He suggested that part of the problem might have been the angle from which I was viewing the images. The jurors were much closer to the screen, and lower in the auditorium, so my seat in the middle of the auditorium might have been compromised by the angle of the projectors and the light reflected off the screens.

Another possibility was that the two top images had too much contrast. He noted that sometimes you have to adjust the contrast of your digital representations to make your artwork appear more accurate to the judges. I realized that I would have to think carefully about my images, and choose ones that are both strong artistically, but also are the best when reproduced digitally. Thus my “Fibonacci” was the most popular of my fine art prints, may not be part of future entries.

Booth Shots

The range of booth shots was striking. Many jewelry entries looked very professional because of the display cabinets and cases used. I was struck by how distracting a busy print could be on the skirts of the jurors as they were walking through the show. The best jewelers had large photos at the back of their booth to further display their work.

For 2-D artists, the best booth shots in my opinion were those where simple fabric or carpet panels let the work be the center of attention. Racks of prints made things look cluttered. The best ones were photographed in a way that did not show the outside setting, but focused only on the work. Open wire mesh and wood lattices really detracted from the beauty of the work.

What I was most surprised about, however, was the number of booths that had either their identifying banner, or the artist themselves, or both in the booth shot. The jury facilitator told us that artists who had identifying signs in their booth shot were contacted, and given the opportunity to submit a corrected booth shot. I was shocked at the number of people who ignored this request. These artists will lose two points from their overall score.

Short Statements

For this show, artists were asked to submit 200 words explaining their process. This was read during the 30 seconds their work was considered. For some, their process was unusual, and the statement served to illuminate their work. Others chose to the obvious—“I paint with oils”, or make somewhat political statements like; “I will never make copies of my work” or say something puzzling like; “I have a recognizable unique style.” I am already writing memorable future explanations so I can accurately describe how I make my prints, but also give the jurors a peak into why I make my art.

Who Will Get Accepted?

The facilitator told the audience that they attempt to represent all media categories, but that if none of the entries in a category are of high quality, that category will be represented by the best case. The eleven other entries in the printmaking category were impressive, arresting, and tremendously varied. I would highly recommend that artists attend any jurying that is open to the public. It was definitely a learning experience.
But if you are a merchant who does minimal processing and you come across a company offering you a higher rate, and no monthly fees whatsoever, boy are you in for a ride. You are about to fall victim to the typical “Bait and Switch.”

In today’s market, the average cost for a credit card processor to maintain your account on line is over $200 per year. This is their fixed overhead for Account On File Fees, IRS reporting, PCI Compliance, etc., that are paid to all of the third parties—meaning the back-end networks, security scanners, settlement banks, card issuers, and the gateway and wireless providers among others. On top of that are upfront fees that companies incur for boarding the accounts and activating them.

So, for a low volume merchant, even a per transaction rate of 10 percent would be highly unlikely to cover these fees, because this percentage fee is also split among the front-end and back-end processors, the settlement banks, and the card issuers; thus, the merchant service provider is only earning a small piece of that pie.

You can rest assured that at some point this merchant will see an annual fee—followed up by a monthly fee—assessed across the board to make up for all of the continued loss on the account.

You need to be aware of this if you are currently accepting credit cards or plan to do so in the near future.

The Smart Phone Trap

The new smart phone technologies provide a perfect example of the type of trap of which you need to be aware. Several providers are offering “Free Everything and No Contract.” They claim there are no monthly fees, no setup fees, no equipment costs and no termination fees, just a higher rate and transaction fee. Keep in mind these same companies have invested tens of millions of dollars in the development of the devices, software, and gateways. On top of that they are spending even more on marketing, with ads almost everywhere you look—even going as far as putting huge advertisements in the middle of Times Square in New York City and TV commercials on the most popular channels. They are going to have to pay for all of this somehow, and continuing to board accounts that barely process any transactions, while having a huge annual fixed cost on each account, is simply not going to cover it. At some point they are going to end up changing their price structure and charging the same types of fees as that of the other 95 percent of companies in the industry. And remember, no matter what you may think or what they tell you, the processors are contractually able to do this to you at any time. And they will, in fact, do just that as a quick annual fee to the millions of customers that fell for their trap, followed up by a recurring monthly fee to those clients as well. What a racket!

While the overall costs increases and the smart phone technologies are new, all of the shady tactics being used by all too many providers are not. Companies in the credit card processing industry have been pulling the wool over the eyes of merchants for years. At 1st National Processing, we have tried our hardest to spread awareness of all the unfair business practices that are blackening the eye of our industry. In fact, on our website, we have an entire “Buyer Beware Guide” detailing all of the things of which you need to be aware. If you are currently processing credit cards or are in the market to do so, take ten or twenty minutes and read it. It will be well worth your time.

Since its inception nearly 15 years ago, 1st National’s mission is to establish a long term, mutually beneficial relationship with each and every customer. We strive to build a personal rapport with our merchants, regardless of size, while providing superior service, support, products, and services and to never compromise our policy of Honesty, Integrity and Full Disclosure. This is truly our goal and we are confident that maintaining these standards has enabled us to achieve the success we have reached thus far.

1st National has recently renegotiated our agreements with all of our vendors to deal with the rising costs of credit card processing. We are confident now, more than ever before, that we offer the hands down most competitively priced deal for merchant services in the industry. Combine that with our complete line of Technologically Advanced Products, our Superior Service and Support, and our A+ Rating on the Better Business Bureau, you will not find a better merchant service provider in the industry. We guarantee it!!!

You may learn more about 1st National Processing at www.1nbcard.com. They may be contacted at sales@1nbcard.com or Toll Free: 877-964-1622. You may also contact Mike directly at mike@1nbcard.com.
Accept credit card payments using just your cell phone.

Scan our QR code at the left and instantly view TeaMac’s website on your smartphone.
Or call 800-873-1192