Light Space & Time Online Art Gallery

Light Space & Time Art Marketing Manual
Art Competition & Art Exhibition Success

By Light Space Time, Inc.
There are many artists who enjoy competing and when successful, receiving recognition for their art.

To be taken seriously as an artist, you must enter juried art shows and competitions. Why is this? By entering and being accepted into an art competition or art show you are getting a “third party endorsement” of your work.

This manual will provide the artist with ideas which should help them to compete more successfully and to ultimately gain more exposure for their art by placing in more exhibitions.
But I Thought My Art Was Pretty Good...?

Each month we receive emails from artists who think their art should have placed higher or received more recognition than it did. They believe that their art is good and in most cases it is. Their results may have nothing to do with the quality of the art. The reason it did not place higher may be one of those explored below.

At least 30 to 35% of the entries we receive are not being submitted properly or are not showing the artist’s artwork in its best light. It is a shame since there some very good art does not get in or place higher in our exhibitions due to the manner in which the artist has submitted their art.

The following are some of the most common issues that we see each month. When entering any art contest, try to make sure you do not make these mistakes:

1. **Understand the Competition’s Theme & Allowed Media**

Understand what the theme entails and be honest with yourself prior to submitting your entries. If the prospectus or rules state that the competition is for 2 dimensional art, do not submit your jewelry, sculpture or crafts. If it says no photography, do not expect the organization to make you an exception. There are numerous venues and organizations conducting calls for your type of art.

If you have questions or concerns about the theme or what is acceptable media, contact and discuss this with the organization’s event staff prior to submitting your art. You can save yourself a lot of trouble, wasted time, effort and money.

2. **Apply Only to Competitions That Truly Fit Your Art**

In their haste to submit, artists will sometimes miss what the organization is really after in terms of the theme or the parameters of the competition. For instance, an artist who submits their “Black and White” photography into a competition with a theme of “Bold or Bright Colors” will get rejected. I know there are people reading this who are saying “but black and white are colors too!” Yes, they are, but black and white are not in keeping with the spirit of the theme or the scope of the show.
Many times the submitted artwork is fantastic, but again if it is not what is asked for, the artist has wasted their time and money by placing their art into a competition for which it is not suited.

3. Follow the Organization’s Sizing Requirements

If the competition asks for certain size submissions in terms of pixels or inches and resolution, follow it. There is no excuse not to have the art sized properly. There are many free art editing programs that can be downloaded or used online.

Follow the size, resolution and quality settings that the competition requires. The main reason for these requirements is to standardize the judging process. If all the entries are the same size (longest side of the image) and resolution, it helps the juror to make better judgments and decisions about your art.

Some art that we see entered has a very low resolution or pixel size and when this image is seen in an image viewer it is pixelated or fuzzy. When images that are small are resized to the minimum size that we require (1000 pixels width x 100 resolution), in many cases this makes the image unusable.

4. Provide Good Quality Images without Frames

There are many times we have had to choose someone else’s art over another where the quality of the image/entry was poorly presented. We see entries where paintings have been photographed or scanned for presentation purposes but are poorly cropped (showing part of the mat, background or frame) or the image may be too dark or too light or the overall colors and contrast are out of balance.

The artist’s presentation to the gallery and the jurors should be as professional as it would be if you were trying to sell your art to them in person. You only get one chance to impress the juror. This is not the time to get sloppy with your art submission.

5. Provide a Biography No Matter What Your Experience

Many times we do not receive a biography with the artist’s submissions. Either the artist is too busy, lazy or embarrassed to provide a biography. This brief amount of information can help the artist get accepted into a show or be placed higher in a competition. There have been times when an artist’s work has been accepted into a show, only to find out they have not provided
a biography. This usually leads to the artwork not being as highly placed as it should be. You will notice that the top LST artists have a biography. We suggest that you have several different sized bios ready-made and available to help in this regard.

It takes courage for an artist to enter their work into art competitions, as they are exposing their art to the possibility of rejection. Yet, it is through these competitions and being accepted into these shows that their art will be considered “serious”. Art shows and competitions are a necessary evil and it is something that all artists must go through if they want to get better and have their art taken seriously.
How Not to Submit Your Art to Art Competitions

Every month Light Space & Time Online Art Gallery receives entries that we simply cannot use due to the poor quality of the images submitted by the artist. Here are the top 5 art submission problems we see every month. We present these problems and issues visually with example images in a slide show at the bottom of this post.

Below are the top 5 common presentation problems that we see:

1. Framed Images

Framed images are submitted to our gallery that are crooked and not level. Images such as this will not be accepted, as they detract from our gallery presentations and shows.

On a wall, in many cases, framing will help to establish, highlight and enhance the appearance of any art. On a website, the exact opposite is true and framing of art will detract from the appearance of the art. We will not present art with this flaw and state that several times in our rules and submission guidelines.

Our main goal is to create a show which represents the best art submitted to us, but we also wish the show to be visually attractive to our gallery visitors. Images which are framed, crooked or have image lines that are not level are unacceptable in our online art shows.

2. Images Have Hot Spots

Any images that are submitted with highlights or over exposed “hot spots” will also not be used. This condition is caused by using a flash camera directly in front of the painting that you are trying to reproduce.

Obviously, the best solution (though it is the most expensive) is to have the art professionally scanned. The next best thing to do is to photograph the art in natural outdoor, diffused light. (See our article How to Photograph Your Art the Right Way.) Images of paintings or photographs should always be color corrected, balanced and resemble as closely as possible the original.

3. Under Exposed Images
Artists, who submit underexposed images of their art, prevent their work from being selected for our art shows. Overexposed images are difficult to see, evaluate and to judge and we will not present poor images of an artist’s work on our website.

4. **Images with Digital Markings**

Art which is submitted to us which contains any digital markings on the face of the image will not be used in our shows, no matter how good that we think that the art is. Any digital marks with dates and other meta data detracts, not only from the art but also from the show’s overall appearance. They will not be considered for inclusion.

5. **Images with Watermarks**

Any art which is submitted with watermarks will not be used by our art gallery. Watermarks do not allow us to judge the art fully, as they take away from our goal of having the most professional and best online art show that there is on the internet. This issue also holds true for art which contains any large artist signatures or signs. If we like the art, and believe that it is “show worthy” we will try to crop it out, but if not, it is better to submit to us the purest form of your art that there is without any watermarks.

Many artists believe that by having watermarks or large signatures on their art will protect them from theft on the internet. We believe a 1000-pixel wide x 100 resolution image (which is what all the art on our website is resized to) will produce a 10” wide image of rather poor quality when printed and an image that is not worth reproducing.

If as an artist, you are afraid someone will steal your art and then you should remove your art from the internet right now, as I guarantee, eventually someone will do this to you. It just the way the internet is! However, since we need the internet, the best thing to do is to eat make the posted art of such quality that it isn’t worthwhile for the thief to steal it.

These are submission problems that we commonly see that will cause us to reject someone’s art. There are articles on this website that can help you improve your presentations and there are many free programs on the internet that you can download or use that allow you to enhance your art when submitting it to art exhibitions and shows.
A good reproduction of your art can mean the difference between getting into an important art gallery or art exhibition or making a sale of your art. It is well worth the time to learn how to improve your art presentations and art submissions.
How to Be Accepted into More Juried Art Shows

To be taken seriously as an artist, you must enter juried art shows and competitions. Why is this? By entering and being accepted into an art competition or art show you are getting a “third party endorsement” of your work. What do I mean by that? The goal is for you to sell your art to another party. That other party likes your work but may need justification to purchase it. By having someone of authority endorsing your work (the judge or jury of an art competition), you confirm the art buyer’s judgment and provide proof that what they are buying is exceptional and worth purchasing.

What can an artist do to increase the chance of being selected into a juried show?

1. Understand the Theme

It is amazing how many artists do not follow or try to match the art that they are entering to the show’s theme or by entering in the proper categories available for that show. I am not sure why this is but be honest with yourself and if you cannot be objective about this, get some help. Do not enter the competition if your work does not match the theme. Save your time, effort and money.

2. Read and Understand the Rules Thoroughly

The number one reason that artists are not accepted into shows is that they did not read and understand the rules thoroughly. Read the rules once. Then read the rules a second time and highlight or underline the key parameters. Then finally read the rules once more. Check your highlight notes against the contest rules to be sure you understand exactly what it is that they need and require of your entry.

3. Follow the Rules

This will sound stupid, but just follow the rules. Do not deviate from the rules. This can be anything from sizing, to resolution, to image, to quality, to framing, to artist statement, to deadlines, etc. When I first started entering into competitions I exceeded what the rules required, by sending in with my entry my bio, my resume, along with my business card and postcards from
last exhibition. Guess what? They did not want that and I was rejected because I had included those materials. Entering a show is not like school where you will get extra credit. Follow the rules exactly. If you do not understand some aspect of them, call the appropriate person in charge to have your question answered or clarified.

4. **Enter the Maximum Amount of Pieces Allowed**

Enter as many pieces of art work as possible, as this will increase the odds of getting your art work noticed by the judges. This also demonstrates to the jury that you have more outstanding pieces and an overall body of work.

5. **Provide Your Best Work Over and Over Again**

I discovered that I had some artwork that most everyone liked and I saw that when I entered those pieces in a competition, I usually was accepted into the show. I then tried to use those pieces exclusively until they were no longer acceptable, due to age constraints. Think of it as “market research” as the market is telling you which pieces of art work are good. Keep showing them whenever possible.

6. **Provide the Details but No More than That**

This goes along with follow the rules. Do not do or provide anything more than what the rules ask for. This will only get you rejected or noticed for the wrong reasons. The judges usually donate their time for these competitions, do nothing that has them look at your work or presentation negatively.

7. **Enter as Many Shows as Possible**

Enter as many shows as possible or as you can afford. You want to do this for a couple of reasons. First, you need to expose your art to as many people as you can. Second, you are trying to develop your resume and by entering as many shows as possible you will build your resume more quickly. Third, by entering a lot of shows, you can become more selective about matching the themes and the parameters of each show to your work, thus increasing your chances of being accepted.

8. **Don’t take it Personally If Your Art Doesn’t Get In**

Finally, do not get upset, feel rejected or think negatively about yourself and your art if it is not accepted into a show. The decision to accept your art is a very subjective judgment by the judge. Your art is probably as good as anyone else’s art. For whatever reason, yours was not chosen. It is as simple as that.
Do not worry about it as it is not a reflection upon you, your art or anything else. Just forget it and enter another show.

It takes courage for an artist to enter their work into art competitions as they expose themselves and their art to the possibility of rejection. Yet, it is through these competitions and being accepted into these shows that your art will be considered “serious”. Art shows and competitions are a necessary evil and it is something that all artists must go through.

In order to increase your chances of being accepted into an art competition, follow these suggestions.
How to Photograph Your 2D Art the Right Way

As an artist (other than a photographer), you are required to take pictures of your art in order to submit your art digitally for exhibitions, presentations and promotional purposes. We see many submissions by artists of photographs of their paintings which due to sloppiness do not portray what the artist intended. A good photograph of your art can mean the difference between getting into an exhibition or making an important sale. It is critical to take the time to do this the right way.

Here are some pointers to help you improve your art presentations the next time you photograph your 2 dimensional art.

1. Photograph your art outside when it is cloudy or overcast. Indirect light shows your art better than any other light. I prefer to have the art work facing north when you photograph it. It is very difficult to create a good image when shooting inside with a flash. Outside provides a “natural” light which allows the best representation of your art. Make sure it is indirect light.

2. Use a tripod or other device (boxes, table or ladder) to hold the camera steady.

3. Match the angle of camera with the tilt of art that is propped against the wall and be sure the camera is focused at the exact center of the art. Do not use a “wide angle” lens. If you have a zoom lens, use that.

4. If at all possible when shooting, do not have your art framed or covered with glass in the frame. It is very hard to avoid reflections in the glass. Also, if the art is frame-less this helps in post-production. If it is framed with glass or plastic, make sure it is absolutely clean.

5. Make sure the flash is off on the camera. If not, it will produce “hot spots” on your art and there is practically nothing that you will be able to do about this.

6. When your art is leaning against the wall and you have focused your camera lens in the manner previously described, look out for any distortions of the art and be sure your edges are straight and parallel. In the view finder
match the edges of the art with the inside edges of the frame. If you cannot get it perfect, this can be taken care of in post-production.

7. If your camera has different settings like SLR, try different shutter speeds and ISO settings. Try to bracket the camera’s settings from high to low and you should be able to produce an image somewhere in the middle of the settings that matches the depth and color of your art. Slower shutter speeds will help with your colors. Experiment with the exposures and shutter speeds if you are doing this for the first time. Better yet, if you have a photographer friend see if they can help you with this.

8. You will need photo editing software to crop the image in order to eliminate any distortions and lines that could not be made exactly parallel. If you do not have an editing program, two good free programs can be found at www.gimp.org or at www.sumopaint.com/app. I also suggest that you eliminate the frame when you crop the image. Also, use the editing software to balance your colors and contrast. It will never be perfect, but you will be able to get pretty close representation of your art. Make sure that you are producing a jpeg image for the submission process. This is the accepted standard.

An image of your art will never be perfect but with trial, error and experimentation you should be able to present your art in the best possible form.

Remember, you are competing with other artists who are sweating over this aspect of presenting their art, as they know how important it is. It is time for you to take your art presentation to a higher level.
Photographing 3 Dimensional Art the Right Way

Below are some ideas on photographing 3 Dimensional (3D) art for promotional purposes and for providing digital entries for art competitions. This includes ideas and tips on how to professionally photograph art installations and public art.

If an artist follows these ideas when recording and presenting their 3D art, they will increase the chances for their work being accepted.

At the end of this post is a link to a more detailed PDF article on this subject, along with additional ideas on how to photograph any 2D art.

This information was provided by the Visual Resources Center, of the University of Colorado, Boulder, Department of Art & Art History

1. Positioning Your Art

For smaller sculptural work, place your art on a flat surface with a neutral colored background.

Don’t place your art too close to the background, give it some space.

If your art is small enough and you want even diffused light, use a tabletop soft-box.

If using soft-box lighting, place the lights at 45 degree angles from the art, half way between the art and the camera, this will give even, diffused light.

Then move around one of the lights to start creating shadows, once you have reached a desired shadow leave the light and begin shooting.

Some pieces of art need three lights to create dimensionality. If needed, add a third light.

2. Camera Settings

Set the ISO to 100 (this will reduce “noise” in the digital image).

Set the camera to “aperture priority” (this will keep the aperture locked).

Set the aperture to f/8 or higher (this will put more of the image in focus).
Set the white balance if shooting in jpeg or tiff (Tungsten, Fluorescent, Daylight, Custom, etc.).

Set the camera to timer mode (this is to minimize camera shake).

3. Setting up the Camera

Set up the camera on a tripod, make sure the tripod and camera are level.

Place the tripod at a distance where the art fills almost the entire view, yet you are not too close to get distortions.

**Shooting the work:**

- Get the entire image in the frame with a bit of background (you will crop it out later)
- Focus your image (manually or with auto focus)
- Press the button and let go of the camera, the timer function will open the shutter and take the shot
- Bracket your shot by going up and down one stop with the shutter speed
- Leave the tripod in place in case you need to come back and shoot more images
- Make sure to capture your piece from multiple angles if needed
- Image editing in Photoshop, Photoshop Elements, Gimp, etc.

4. Post-Processing

Open an image in Photoshop and set a white balance.

Save as a tiff.

Crop the image.

Correct any distortions if necessary.

Adjust color and contrast if necessary.

Zoom to 100% to check for imperfections.

If you have the storage space, save both your tiff and RAW images.

You can now make derivative jpegs from your tiff to match the requirements that are needed.
5. **Tips for Photographing Installations**

Shooting installations requires capturing full views of the work as well as details.

Try shooting your full views with a wide-angle lens. Remember that distortions can occur at the edges of a wide-angle lens, so zoom in a bit with the lens when shooting. Always look at the image on the view-finder to see if you have noticeable distortions.

To capture the installation in focus you must keep your aperture closed down quite a bit. Try using only f/16 or higher and see what your results look like. Because you are using such a small aperture and lighting in installations are very often dim, a tripod is an absolute necessity.

Make sure to get shots from a variety of angles and positions. When people walk through or into an installation they often can experience the art from many different views, make sure your photos can document that aspect of an installation.

Be very aware of the backgrounds that may exist within the space of the installation. Make sure to avoid elements that may distract from the piece, or be sure to include them if they are part of the piece.

While most installations can be shot with the current lighting, sometimes adding additional light can be helpful to highlight a certain area. If you are supplementing the current light with a lighting-kit, be sure to position the kit so it cannot be seen in the photo.

Make sure to get lots of detail shots of the installation, and be sure to still use a tripod.

6. **Tips for Photographing Outdoor Buildings or Public Art**

It is best to shoot at dusk or dawn when photographing buildings or outdoor sculpture/public art. There is better lighting and fewer people to get in your shot. Only photograph during the day if there is a very specific lighting reason to do so, for example shadows are an important element.

Since you will be shooting in a low light situation (dusk or dawn), a tripod is absolutely necessary.
Be sure to get multiple shots from many angles. And be very aware of the background of your shot. Moving to the side one or two feet may give you a significantly better shot.

For larger building or public art pieces you may need a wide angle lens. Be sure to watch out for distortion at the edges of the frame. Zoom in a bit or stand closer to your subject and it may help with the corner distortions.

Your depth of field can vary quite a bit with outdoor photography. For large buildings where it is important to get the entire structure in focus, use a small aperture (f/22). For isolated sculptures where you want just the sculpture in focus and the background blurry use a larger aperture (f/5.6).

While almost all public buildings are legal to photograph, a few are not (especially in foreign countries). Do some research to find out if you are allowed to photograph your site of interest?

Be sure to bracket your shots. You may not get another chance to come back and shoot the subject again so be sure to have a variety of exposures from each shot to choose from later.

Also remember to take a shot of any kind of plaque or ID that may be posted near the building or art to help you identify it later.

Many thanks to the Visual Resources Center, University of Colorado Boulder, Department of Art and Art History for proving this wonderful information. Here is a link of a PDF file which provides more detailed information along with diagrams How to Photograph Art - University of Colorado Boulder.
I Was Accepted into an Art Exhibition! Now What?

You entered an art competition and were accepted into a group exhibition, now what should you do to leverage that achievement? At every chance an artist should try to promote and market this success.

Hopefully, this article will provide an exhibiting artist with a plan of action to take advantage of this news. Below are some ideas on what an artist can do to leverage this accomplishment through social media, traditional marketing, online marketing and press release promotions.

**Social Media Marketing**

Social media marketing is becoming the fastest way for an artist to expose, market and brand their artwork. This is a relatively new marketing tool with which an artist can make an impact and be able to measure results immediately.

An artist should have the ability through their art website to be able to post articles, news and press releases. This ability to post is very important as these posts will create individual url’s that can be posted all over the web to promote the artist’s event, create traffic to their website and help generate backlinks to the artist’s website (more on that later).

Today, an artist should have free accounts for Facebook, Twitter, Linkedin and Google+ (at the minimum) to take advantage of social media networks.

**Caution**: Create separate accounts for your art promotion. You do not want to co-mingle your personal life with your business life! There are many other free networking accounts that you can also join, but for now this will provide the coverage that you need.

If you belong to any of these accounts/groups, upload your posts to your social media pages in order to spread the word of your success. This is the easiest way to promote your art and increase interest in and traffic to your art website. This same post or page can also be emailed or posted to others in the art industry. Ask to have your (good) friends and followers forward posts on to their followers/networks. Offer to do the same for them.
Recently, Google provided the +1 feature, which is the equivalent of the Facebook “Like” icon. Whenever you press the +1 button on any post, page, website or Google search page, you are alerting your friends, networks and others that you are “endorsing or interested” in that page or post. People will be curious to see what you recommend and they usually will look too, as they do not want to be left out of something that may be important. Since I mentioned the Facebook “Like” feature, always encourage your followers, friends and networks to “Like” your post, page etc. as this will also increase interest in that post. The more “Likes” and “+1’s” that you acquire, the more interest, traffic and exposure there will be for your website and your art.

**Offline & Traditional Marketing**

Offline traditional marketing may take more time compared to electronic promotions, but this method can be worth the effort for an artist. Offline and traditional marketing still works very well for local and regional target audiences. If you have the time, ability and wherewithal to promote your work further, here is a link to posts we wrote about offline (traditional) forms of marketing and branding for successful artists: Offline Marketing and Promotion for Successful Artists, 10 Ways an Artist Can Market Their Brand and 10 More Ways an Artist Can Market Their Brand. Artists should use a combination of online and offline marketing in order to create the greatest impact on their target audience.

**Social Bookmarking**

Social bookmarks are an important tool for artists to take advantage of in their overall marketing program. A social bookmark is a way in which an artist can alert their followers, friends and networks about a post, web page or a website. Think of a social bookmark as “someone’s own individual +1 or Like button”, as you are alerting everyone that this post or page is important and they should take a look.

When employed properly, social bookmarks can create better page ranks and more traffic for the artist’s website. How is this done? There are literally hundreds of social bookmarking websites. When you join these sites and upload content to them (in the form of your art, posts, press releases, pages etc.) you are creating a “backlink” to your website. Why is a backlink important? When search engines index and grade your website, they base a large part of their page ranking on the volume and the quality of links back to your website. The larger the volume and the better the quality of the links,
the better they will rank your website and the higher they will place it on their search engine. This results in more traffic to your site.

There are many services and programs that can perform this task for you, but I do not suggest that you use them as you want good quality and industry specific (the art industry) backlinks and only you can determine the worthy websites to link to. Here is a page that explains (in simple terms) what social bookmarks can do for you, along with suggested social bookmarking websites to join and post on. [http://caroline-middlebrook.com/blog/do-follow-social-bookmarking-sites](http://caroline-middlebrook.com/blog/do-follow-social-bookmarking-sites).

**Press Release Marketing**

Press releases provide the same type of importance and effectiveness as a social bookmark. Why is this? A press release provides the artist with a cheap and quick way to promote themselves and their art to a large and targeted audience. In addition to their effectiveness, a press release creates an automatic backlink to the artist’s website and for whatever reason, the major search engines rank backlinks from press release sites very highly, thus again boosting your website’s page rank. The Light Space & Time website contains several related articles about this tool; Press Release Marketing for Today’s Artists and How to Write a Press Release for Art Events.

Artists should belong to as many art websites as possible (Fine Art America, Artspan, Artid) as they usually have a community section where you can post in a blog, post in a newsletter and submit a press release or post an exhibition event in their Forums. Most of these sites also allow you include an image with the post. Take advantage of that feature, as people tend to look at a post if it contains a picture.

We also recommend using PRLog and Press Release Point for distribution of free press releases and Star One PR for distribution of paid press releases ($10.00 to $15.00, depending on the distribution size). All of these sources provide the artist with the ability to be indexed quickly by the major search engines. By using these press release services, the artist can take advantage of their ability to spread the word of their art work, success and/or events and to quickly drive additional traffic to their website.

Also, remember that any advertising, marketing and promotion has a cumulative effect. Consistency and repetition of the message is necessary to see results. Don’t be like most artists and do a little marketing, see no real
results and then give up! It does not work that way nor is it that easy. It takes time and you will see results if you “stay the course”.

We hope these suggestions are helpful to your art marketing efforts. In today’s hugely competitive marketplace, just entering and placing in an art competition is not enough to attract a lot interest to the artist’s website and art. Successful artists market, promote and leverage their accomplishments whenever they can and you should too.

Congratulations on your success, now tell the whole world and good luck!
Quick Tips to Get Your Art into More Art Galleries

Contrary to what most new artists think, art galleries do want to look at new artists’ artworks. Most art galleries want to be able to do this on their terms, on their time schedule and in their own manner. If an artist wants to successfully present their art to an art gallery, they need to comply with the gallery’s presentation procedures.

I am often asked “How do I get my artwork into art galleries?” I cannot say that there is a set formula on how to approach an art gallery, but I can give you some tips to guide you in this mission. The major mistake that I see artists make is being so desperate to get their work shown that they waste a lot of time approaching the wrong art galleries. By this I mean that the artist solicits any and all art galleries without first determining whether their art is compatible with that gallery’s inventory.

The artist should do a certain amount of research on the targeted gallery prior to approaching them to present their work. They objectively evaluate the gallery to determine whether they are a good fit with their art, style, media, pricing etc. For instance, if you are a photographer or a sculptor and the gallery you want to show your work in does not represent photographers or 3D art, why waste your time (and the gallery’s time) trying to get an appointment? Or if the pricing of the art the gallery represents is in the 5 figure range and you sell your art on average for $500.00, I would not bother approaching this gallery. Your time is valuable, so only solicit art galleries and gallery owners who represent artists whose work is similar to yours in terms of media, pricing and style.

Today, there is enough information online (usually at the art gallery’s website) to allow the artist to make a reasonable judgment on whether a gallery is a good prospect for their art. The gallery website will show the artists they represent, provide samples of their art, a short bio of the artist and prices of their work. Is your artwork comparable to the art this gallery presently represents? Only if this gallery is a good fit for you would I do further research into it.

Many times the gallery website will provide their submission policy and submission parameters and requirements. In some cases, they will say they are not reviewing any portfolios at this time. This means the gallery is
satisfied with their current artists and that they are too busy to review art portfolios. Please respect this and do not submit work to the gallery. However, if a gallery has not provided their submission policy publicly, then a short note or a concise email asking about their present submission policy will suffice. There is no good reason to go into any further detail on your art, education, qualifications etc.

Many art galleries schedule a certain time of the year or month to review portfolios, as this is easier and more efficient for them. Again, an artist should follow their procedure and schedule exactly as it is stated. To do anything else, will risk the artist being remembered by the gallery for the wrong reasons!

You finally find a gallery that seems to be suitable to your art, you contact them or present your artwork in their prescribed manner and they would now like to see more of your artworks and discuss showing in their gallery with you! Now what do you do? Here are some tips to help an artist when they finally get an appointment with the art gallery;

1. Make sure that your biography, CV and artist statement are up to date. Have extra copies.

2. Prepare images of your artwork in several forms for the gallery to review. Make sure that you have extra copies of these in order to be able to leave them at the gallery for further review. There is nothing worse than for an artist to say to the gallery this is their only set and they cannot leave them. Don’t do it.

3. Make sure that the images of your artwork are professionally presentable. This means that there are no crooked images, no frames in the image, the images are cropped (with no backgrounds beyond the image borders), no watermarks and no hot spots. Also make sure that all images are color corrected. If you cannot do this well, get someone to do it for you with the proper equipment, programs and experience in duplicating art.

4. Act professionally. Approach this gallery appointment as if you are applying for a job and the employer is interviewing you. The gallery will have questions about your background, experience and your art. You should also be prepared to discuss how the gallery conducts their business and if you are to be selected, how could their arrangements help to sell your art?
5. Be prepared to wait for a decision on their behalf about taking you on as a gallery artist. In many cases, art galleries work a year or two out with the scheduling of their shows and exhibitions. So be prepared to wait and be patient.

6. Conversely, be prepared to act quickly! How can this be after what I said in #5? I say because sometimes artists are accepted into a gallery but are not prepared and they have to drop out. At that point, the gallery will need a replacement artist very quickly and you can be that replacement if you are ready! When I first started out, even though I was not the gallery’s first choice, I was asked several times to replace artists who were not prepared or were “no shows”. This doesn’t occur all the time, but there is always a chance...be prepared and available.

7. Whatever you do, do not keep calling the gallery to bug them about your art, your meeting, their decision about your art, etc. Art galleries are busy places and they have their own schedule to follow, not yours. Again be patient.

8. If you have the time, I suggest sending an “old fashion” handwritten thank you note to the person who you had the appointment with at the art gallery. Why is this? Because, *No One Else Does It*! It is a nice touch, totally unexpected to the recipient and it is an incredibly good way to have them remember you in a positive light.

9. One of the best ways to meet gallery directors/owners to discuss your art is to be introduced by other artists who have shown their work at the gallery. This approach is much better than a “cold call” and it is also a form of “third party endorsement” of your work. It’s another reason why it is important to network and be a part of local art organizations.

10. Think locally and branch out from there. Try to get into local galleries through art competitions and art shows, and then build upon that success into regional, state and national galleries.

11. Are you just starting out? Besides #9 above, seek to place your art in alternative venues, rather than just art galleries. Get your art into local restaurants, retail shops, community clubhouses, consignment stores and libraries. All of these alternative venues can help you to become known and established within your community. Who knows, you might make some sales too!
I also suggest that you learn how art galleries operate, as this will give you a better understanding of the business and help you when you approach them to show your artwork. There is a “code of conduct” in the art business and as an artist starting out, you need to follow it. To do otherwise will lessen your chances of getting your art into galleries. Good luck!
Think Like a Judge When Entering Art Contests

It is difficult for most artists entering an art competition to evaluate their entries objectively. Questions which come to mind are; will my art measure-up to everyone else’s? Is my style of art what they are looking for? Is my work good enough to be accepted? What are my reasons for entering this competition? Am I entering this art competition for validation, exposure or for the prize money? These questions can stress an artist to the point of paralysis!

In order to proceed further, the artist needs to make a determination as to their exact objective for entering this art competition. Does it meet the artist’s needs?

Is this a judged event or is this a juried event? Is this a local, regional or international event? Is there a theme or subject? What type of art organization is conducting this event? These questions should be answered prior to entering any art competition.

*Let’s review these points in more detail in order to help the artist determine whether this is the right competition to enter or not:

A **judged** art event means the art which is selected will be evaluated and ranked against the other art which was submitted. Many local, small or regional art events are handled in this manner.

In a **juried** art event, a panel or group of judges determines which art is to be included in the event. This type of selection process is used for larger art competitions. The show created by a juried event is subject to a variety of influences: the artistic tastes of the jurors, the politics of the local and larger art world, relationships with the sponsoring parties. The results may or may not produce a high level show.

A **non-juried** show includes all entries submitted. These are usually conducted by art membership organizations, artist registries and invitational art events. This is a great way for new artists to begin but they do not carry as much weight on a resume as a judged or a juried event.
Some art shows combine the judged and juried art processes. The art is juried as to whether it is to be included in the event and thereafter the selected art will be judged.

Different types of judges evaluate art differently. For instance, judges who look at and evaluate art all day often respond to new and unusual art. They look for and respond to the “Wow Factor”.

Art collectors, art consultants and art buyers as judges will usually be more conservative and “safe” in their evaluations and selections since this is how they buy and collect art.

A judge, who is also an artist, will be more critical of art that is within their specialty or in the media they also employ. They will not select art in their genre/style that is not as good as their own art.

Many times we see artists who research the judges in order to match their style of art with the judge’s. This can backfire as that judge will be more critical and subjective than another judge with a different artistic genre/style.

To me, the following are the most important determining factors for getting into an art show or art exhibition:

- Follow the competition rules and prospectus exactly.
- Submit art only within the subject or theme of the event.
- Provide the best quality images possible.
- Enter the maximum amount entries allowed.

No matter what we like to think, the judging process comes down to a subjective decision by the judge. If your art is not selected, it really does not mean much. The next time you enter that same art into another art competition with another judge, the results may be totally different for you.

After the selections have been made, whether your art is in or out, review the entries that were selected and objectively evaluate that art against your own. This will help you with the direction of your art in the future.

Never give up on entering more art competitions. Be smart about it, do the research and remember to think like a judge in order be more successful when entering future art competitions.
Reasons Why You Are Not in More Art Exhibitions

With more and more art galleries and art organizations using the Internet and email to receive and administer their art show entries, an artist needs to follow the rules more closely than ever. At least 35% of our submitting artists every month ignore the rules and prospectus requirements for the art competition. The artists send in their entries in the wrong manner, incompletely or in the wrong form. Failure to follow the rules of an art call is the number one reason why artists fail to get into art exhibitions and art shows.

The rules and prospectus for a particular art show are there to afford the administrators and the judges a way in which to sort through, categorize and evaluate the entries that are submitted. Artists who submit their entries to a show without properly labeling their files or without following the file description requirements may not get their art viewed by the judges. In many cases, the work is not even considered since no one has the time to hunt for the entries and match them with the artist’s paperwork, form etc. If an artist sends in their entry in a file size larger than that required, the administrators may have a difficult time administering, viewing and or storing the entries. Also, if the file is smaller than what is required, the judges may have trouble viewing the entries and may be unable to evaluate their quality as well.

If the files that an artist enters are not sized and cropped according to the competition’s requirements, the judges may also have a problem viewing and evaluating those entries due to the requirements of the viewing equipment the judges are using. In addition, the organizers may also have file size requirements for promotional materials. Judges and promoters expect the artists to submit their art according to the show’s specifications. They do not have the time to resize what is provided to them by the artist.

Specific resolution requirements should also be followed by the artist. The resolution may be required for judging, printing and promotional reasons. It unreasonable for an artist to expect a show’s judges to make adjustments to their evaluation process, when an artist does not follow the prospectus requirements for that art call.
File type is extremely important for the artist to follow. If rules say to send an email, do not send a CD. If the prospectus says to send a jpg file, do not send a pang file, a PowerPoint file or pdf file. There is a lot of great artistic talent out there and the competition to get into art exhibitions is very strong. Do not expect judges to conform to your presentation. The business of art does not work that way. The judges have a limited amount of time to evaluate the entries and if your entries do not meet or conform to the competition’s rules, they will not be viewed and judged. That is a total waste of your time, effort and money.

The next time you are about to enter an art competition, read the prospectus and highlight the rules and make sure that your entries are filed, named and sized properly and that the show’s paperwork is filled out fully. If you have not been getting into your share of shows and exhibitions, it may be because you are not following the rules and prospectus requirements.
Rejected! Or He’s just not that into Your Art...

Submitting for a juried art show and being rejected can be quite a negative experience to the artist. Sometimes this will lead the artist to doubt their artistic talent, their technique and their overall sense of wellbeing.

Artists should understand that the decision about who is accepted into a show is a very subjective and personal one made by the juror(s). This decision simply means that your art did not appeal to that judge. It is as simple as that. What is rejected by one juror for an exhibition may be selected by another juror for a different show.

Some of my “best” images have been rejected for a show I was sure I was going to get into but didn’t. Meanwhile those same images were out to another juried competition and I won! Why and how does this happen? These are personal and subjective decisions made by the judge for a particular show. It really is that simple. A different piece or style of art may have made the juror select your art for that show. Who knows? I don’t believe that you can ever find out why your art was rejected. The bottom line is they did not like it, for whatever personal reasons they had at the time.

The good news is that every artist experiences some rejection and that is all part of the game. When an artist is rejected for a show or by an art gallery, it is a good time for them to remember why they create art. Your art is a personal reflection and expression of you. Through your art you communicate what is inside of you. If people are “listening” great and if not, who cares! If your sole reason for creating your art is to “get into shows”, you need to reevaluate your reasons for creating your art.

Most artists love what we do and the inner joy we get when we do what we love to do. If a juror or judge just doesn't “get” our work, remember, he's just not that into your art and it’s nothing personal!

Don’t ever give up creating, trust yourself and create your art for you, not for the judges.
Resizing Images for Competitions for New Artists

Many times we see artists who need help with resizing their images in order to meet the requirements for uploading. If the artist runs their computer in Windows, there is an image editing feature that they can utilize to resize their images. In Windows this editing feature is called Paint.

Why does an artist need to learn how to resize images? Any image that you download directly from a camera or from a scan will be very large in terms of pixels. The size of the image file is contingent upon the settings of the camera such as image quality, sensor size and resolution. Most organizations will require exact image sizes when entering their art competitions (and there is no standard size) and it is very important to follow their instructions for the files you are uploading to them. This article is for those who have never resized an image before.

As previously discussed, Paint is a feature of your Windows operating system. Paint is used primarily as a drawing tool, but we can use their features for resizing. Locate this program in your Start Menu. It will be in the Accessories file. Open the program (if you feel you will be using this program more in the future, you can right click and create a shortcut to your desktop).

Locate and click on the "Paint" button located on the toolbar at the top of the application, choose and click "Open". Locate your image file on your computer and then click "Open."

Locate the “Home” tab. Below that tab is the “Image” tab. Click on the toolbar, then locate and click on “Resize”. A new small window will open called “Resize and Skew”.

In the “Resize and Skew” window, check the box labeled "Maintain Aspect Ratio".

Check the “Pixel” feature and enter the “Horizontal” and “Vertical” specific pixel sizes required for the art competition that you are entering. Then click the "OK" button.
If the resultant image is correct, then click the "Paint" button on the toolbar. Choose and click the "Save As," button. A new box will open and ask for the type of file that you want to save. Generally, this will be “JPEG”.

Name the file differently (or name it according to the organization’s file naming requirement) than the original image and click "Save”. This will complete the resizing process.

Other features that Paint provides for you are cropping, skewing and rotating images.

One feature that is lacking is the ability to edit and alter the image resolution. If for instance you are required to upload an image of 100 DPI, you would not be able to change your current image resolution with Paint. If you feel that you are limited with this resizer tool, perform an internet search for “free image resizer software” and see what you can find. A couple of free programs that I have used are Gimp, PicResize and Sumo Paint, which provide an artist with a "Photoshop Elements" type editing program. They have many editing features and each program has the ability to enhance and change the resolution of any image.

I hope that this information helps the novice when resizing an image for art competitions or prior to getting prints made.
Tips for Being Accepted into More Art Competitions

The “juried process” is a necessary career step for an artist to be considered as a serious artist. In order to build and develop their artistic resume, artists need to enter juried art competitions on a regular basis. By entering and being accepted into juried art competitions, the artist receives a “third party” endorsement of their skill and artistic talent.

It is through juried art competitions and juried art shows that an artist’s career and professional development progress. By successfully participation, the artist will be taken more seriously by art galleries, art buyers and art reps. It is a progression and a process that takes time for an artist to learn and adapt to in order to succeed.

This article will make the artist who is new to art competitions, aware of some major reasons why their art may be rejected when entering a juried show. Often it is not the quality of the art that is rejected but something else that the artist did or did not pay enough attention to in the competition’s prospectus, rules and underlying theme. Here are some points to consider when entering art juried art competitions:

1. **Apply only to competitions that truly fit to your art.**

Artists will sometimes miss what the organization is really after in terms of the theme or the parameters of the competition. For instance, an artist who submits their Black and White photography into a competition with a theme about “Bold or Bright Colors” will get rejected. I know there are people reading this who are saying “but black and white are colors too!” Yes, they are, but black and white aren’t in keeping with the spirit of the theme and scope of the show. When we only want 2 dimensional art for our show, we still receive pictures of sculpture, jewelry and crafts and even videos! Many times the work is fantastic but it is not what we want and the artist has wasted their time and money by placing their art into a competition that is not suited to what they create.

2. **Submit the best representation of the actual art.**

What does this mean? Every month we receive entries where the artist has taken a picture of their art with a “point and shoot” camera. The art was not
level, the camera is not perpendicular to the art, the image is under/over exposed, the background is showing, the picture frame is in the image, there are hot spots on the art or pictures are taken with reflections in the frame. It may be obvious that the art has the potential to be good, even exceptional, but we really cannot tell based on what is submitted.

The artist should either learn to take the images the right way (and there is a ton of information on the Internet about how to do this), hire a professional to do this or take their art to a professional to scan it. I would learn how to do this the right way as the last two suggestions are expensive.

3. **Follow the rules, event and prospectus completely.**

This means that in order to have your application and submissions handled and administered properly, read the application thoroughly and follow the instructions. It also means that the application should be filled out entirely, with the correct number of images and the image files labeled properly, according to the organization’s specifications.

In many instances, files are not labeled at all. This sets the artist up for not getting their art viewed at all, as the files could get lost. For instance, for our competitions we want the files labeled in the following manner: *Artist Last Name, Entry Number, Competition Name, and Title of the art*. It would look like this: *Smith_1_Abstract_Title.jpg*. This allows us at any time to locate and identify this entry. This is very important to an organization. This procedure requires a simple right click on the image file and a “rename” like any other document. Take the time to do this correctly.

Also, learn how to re-size your image files according to the instructions provided for that competition. Besides an expensive program like Photoshop or Photoshop Elements, there are two free programs [http://pixlr.com/express/](http://pixlr.com/express/) and [http://www.gimp.org/](http://www.gimp.org/) that are more than adequate for this purpose. Take a few copies of images that are not important to you and begin to experiment on how these programs work. The easier of the two programs is the Pixlr program. (See #5 below as it Relates to This Subject)

4. **Try to submit and present art that relates.**

By this we mean that the art that you are entering should show a complete grasp and mastery with that particular media. As an artist, you may work in several different styles and media. Stay with one media for your entries as
this demonstrates to the judge that you have a cohesive body of work. Your show’s entries should also relate in terms of media, color and style within the scope or theme of that particular competition.

5. **Choose the order of the images submitted carefully.**

Initially, competition judges and juries will view your images (projected together) from left to right and top to bottom. However, after this initial view they will come back to that group of images from bottom to top and from right to left (the opposite direction). This is where you want to have your strongest and best work, at bottom or the end of the group of images submitted (as this is where you want to draw the judges’ attention). This is also why you want to master the labeling your image files because then you control the order of the files. (See #3 above as it Relates to This Subject)

If you wish to be a “serious” artist, follow these tips and suggestions. After the art show opens, always try to view the art that was accepted into that show and then be as objective as possible with yourself (or have a knowledgeable art friend assist you) as to the possible reasons why your work was not accepted. It may not have been the quality of your art. It may have been one of these other reasons. Work on these tips and incorporate them into future submissions and your chances will rise dramatically for being accepted into your next juried art competition.
Top 8 Mistakes When Entering Juried Art Contests

Every month Light Space & Time Online Art Gallery receives, processes, administers and judges hundreds of entries for our monthly themed art competitions. We would estimate that at least 35% of the entries received, are not being submitted properly or are showing the artist’s work in its best light. The following are some of the most common mistakes that we see each month. When entering any art contest, try to make sure that you are not making some of these common mistakes when entering juried art calls and juried art competitions:

1. **Read the Rules Thoroughly Prior to Submitting Your Work**

   The organization that is conducting the art call has developed their competition rules in order to administer, process and judge the art in a thorough and systematic manner. They have very good reasons why they want the submitted artwork to be labeled, sized and named in a certain way. Try to understand exactly what they want and conform to their process.

2. **Be Aware of the Competition’s Deadline**

   The group who is managing the competition has created a deadline for a purpose. Their advertising, collateral materials and judge/juror schedules revolve around this timetable/deadline. It is unfair for an artist to expect the organization to change their schedule in order to help the artist with their scheduling issues. In addition, it is not fair to all of the other artists who got their submissions to the organization properly and on time.

3. **Thoroughly Understand the Competition’s Theme & Media**

   Understand what the group wants from the artist. If it says 2 dimensional art, do not submit jewelry, sculpture or crafts. If it says no photography, do not expect the organization to make you the exception. There are lots of other venues and organizations conducting calls for your type of art.

   If you have any questions or concerns about the theme or what is acceptable media, contact and discuss this with the organization’s event staff. You can save yourself and the staff a lot of trouble, wasted time and effort by asking or having the theme and media questions clarified.
4. **Label the Entries Using Their Format, Not Yours**

The group who is conducting the call for art wants the entries in a certain form for identification, administration and judging purposes. By not labeling your entries properly, your art may miss being judged and may be lost or mishandled.

5. **Enter the Maximum Amount of Entries Allowed**

If a competition is asking for 3 images, give them 3 images. Many times we receive only 1 or 2 images when we ask for 5 images. A judge wants to see that the artist has consistent style and technique. Additional images will help the juror evaluate your art more closely.

6. **Provide a Biography If They Ask for It**

Many times we do not receive a biography with the artist’s submissions. Either the artist is too busy, too lazy or too embarrassed to provide a biography. This brief amount of information could possibly help the artist get accepted into the show. There have been times when we’ve accepted a certain artist’s work, only to find that they have not provided a biography. This usually leads to the artwork being withdrawn from the exhibition. Keep several sized bios readymade and available.

7. **Follow the Organization’s Sizing Requirements**

If a group asks for certain size submissions in terms of pixels or inches, comply with it. There is no excuse to not have art sized properly since there are many free art editing programs available online. Follow the size, resolution and quality settings specified. The main reason for this is to standardize the judging process. When all of entries are the same size (longest side of the image) and same resolution, it helps the juror make better judgments and decisions about your art.

8. **Provide Good Quality Images without Frames**

There are many times I have chosen one person’s art over another based on the quality of the image. I see entries where paintings have been photographed or scanned for presentation purposes but are poorly cropped showing the mat or frame or too dark or light or the colors and contrast are out of balance. The artist’s presentation to the gallery and the jurors should be as perfect as if they were trying to sell your art to them in person. You only get one chance to impress the juror. This is not the time to get sloppy.
The reason why they call it a “competition” is that you are competing with other artists for a limited number of places in an exhibition. Make sure your art is being prepared and submitted in the way the organization wants it. Do not give them a reason to reject your art by not following the rules or by not providing them with art that is not gallery worthy.
Give Them What They Want... (Art Judges That Is!)

Artists who compete in art competitions wish to be recognized and have their art validated. How they use that recognition is up to each particular artist (a whole other post topic).

Artists can gain more recognition if they give art judges what they are looking for when they judge and evaluate the entries for a particular competition. Here are some tips to help artists compete successfully in art competitions and contests:

**Apply to Competitions that Truly Fit to Your Art.**

Artists sometimes miss what an organization is really after in terms of the theme or the parameters of a competition. For instance, an artist who submits their Black and White photography into a competition with a theme about “Bold or Bright Colors” will get rejected. Simply put, black and white are not in keeping with the spirit of the theme and scope of that particular show.

Many times the artwork received for judging is fantastic, but is not what the art organization wants to judge. The artist has wasted time and money by placing their art in an unsuitable competition.

**Submit Art Only Within the Subject or Theme of the Event.**

Many artists do not match the art they are entering to the show’s theme or enter their work in the proper categories available for that show. I am not sure why this is, but it is important to be honest with yourself and if you cannot be objective about this, get some help. Do not enter the competition if your work does not match the theme. Save your time, effort and money.

**Submit Art that is Creative and Original.**

The art that the artist is entering should show a complete grasp and mastery of the particular media. As an artist, you may work within several different styles and media. The artist should stay with one media for their entries, however, as this demonstrates to the judge that they have a cohesive body of
work. The artist’s entries should relate in terms of media, color and style, all within the scope or the theme of that particular competition.

**Provide the Best Quality Images Possible.**

There are many times that art organizations will choose one piece of art over another because the quality of the image/entry was poor compared to the other.

Entries for paintings, which are photographed or scanned for presentation purposes and which are poorly cropped (exposing part of the mat, background or frame), the image may be too dark or too light, or the colors and contrast are out of balance.

The artist’s presentation to the gallery and the jurors should be of the same high quality they would use to sell their art to someone in person. You only get one chance to impress the judge/juror and sloppy art submissions destroy your chance.

**Enter the Maximum Amount Entries Allowed.**

Try to enter as many pieces of art work as possible, as this will increase the odds of getting your artwork noticed by the judges. This also helps demonstrate the level of your talent and your overall body of work.

If you are not getting into as many art exhibitions as you would like, it may not be about the quality of your art, but for one of the other reasons stated above. Work on these tips and suggestions, incorporate them into future submissions and your chances will improve dramatically for being accepted into your next juried art competition.

**Remember:** Give the judges what they want to see...