

Call for Art – A Guideline

Introduction

A “Call for Art” is issued when a venue, such as a gallery, museum, public building with a large wall-space needing decorating, decides to ask artists to submit art to be shown in the building. Space may be open for three-dimensional art as well, and this could be for sculpture, pottery, ceramics, carvings, jewelry, fiber-art, or other artistic mediums.

We had hoped to provide a definitive guide for answering a call for art and a template. Upon researching various calls has come the realization that there is a great variation on what is asked for by venues, what their terms are, and what they want from artists. You need to find your spot on that continuum and decide what you are comfortable with. If the venue asks more than you are willing, or able, to provide, don’t apply. If there is not enough benefit for you versus the cost to you, to show your work, do not apply.

A venue may be a prestigious gallery showing only work of famous artists commanding a high price, or a local restaurant whose owner allows local artists to hang work on the walls as a way to help out and have some nice colour on the walls, and anything in between.

Determine the Value for You to Answer a Call for Art

Always do a cost benefit analysis before applying to show your work, and possibly sell your work at a venue.

We have provided a guideline, with some considerations and topics to think about. There are also links to helpful information.

CARFAC (Canadian Artists Representation / Le Front Des Artistes Canadiens), is a national voice of Canada’s Professional visual artists and CARFAC Maritimes is the regional affiliate. Their website has a lot of good information regarding dealing with venues. Their recommendations are desired ones; the reality is that you may not get paid for showing your work, you may have to pay an entry fee, and pay to insure your work yourself. You have to decide what you are willing to do to have your work shown.

IMPORTANT!

Always follow the instructions given by the venue. Read them carefully and have someone you know, who has an eye for detail, check over your submission against the requirements list.

Both Sides of the Story

The table view below may help you to see both sides of the interaction.

For Art Being Shown in a Gallery Type Setting: Callout for Art Submission:

The Ask	The Answer
Starting Out Carefully define what you want, if you don’t know, don’t expect the artist to know. i.e.	Starting Out Make sure you know what type of art is being asked for.

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<p>paintings, (what medium), line drawings, sculpture, fiber, or mixed, etc.</p> <p>Know your budget.</p> <p>Know what you are providing and what the artist is required to provide</p> <p>Requests Made to Artists</p>	
<p>Include enough material about your group so that the artist gets a feel for what you represent.</p> <p>Make clear what you want sent with the application. Is it electronic, or do you want a paper document?</p> <p>Are electronic images acceptable or do you want hard copy photos attached to the application?</p> <p>If electronic how are you accepting the files? Is there a size restriction?</p> <p>If you want to use a file transfer site stipulate it and include a link. Try to pick a method that is simple and free to use.</p> <p>Is there a file naming convention for electronic files? Give an example: <i>Autum-Colourama-John-Doe-5555551212</i></p> <p>This is an example, not a recommendation. You may want a way for distinguishing between artists with the same name, thus the phone number suggestion. You may also assign a sequence number to the application</p>	<p>Make Sure You Clearly Understand the Ask</p> <p>Don't skim the "Call for Art" document, read it carefully, then read it again. Make a concise list of all the criteria because if you miss one, your piece will likely be rejected and returned. This can cost you money if you have to pay for shipping. It is also a missed opportunity.</p> <p>If electronic files are asked for don't send a paper submission, and vice versa.</p> <p>If you are sending a paper form make sure it is legible to anyone reading it. Info from it will be used to print title cards for the show. If the venue staff cannot read your contact information you are not going to be a successful applicant.</p> <p>Make sure not to exceed file size limits.</p> <p>Use the acceptable medium to send the files, some files are too big for email. This transfer site may be Dropbox, a link to your Behance site, Wettransfer, etc.</p> <p>If file naming conventions, and file formats are given, follow them. e.g. all files in a PDF format, images embedded, to include a cover letter, bio, CV, description of submission and thought behind it. The order in which to include documents may be given. Why would</p>

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<p>for this purpose and ask the artist to include it with any references to their submission.</p>	<p>your submission be a good fit? Include measurements, photos embedded at end of document. Name it with Call out Name, Your Name, Phone number (this is just an example), all lower case with hyphens between words and none between phone numbers.</p> <p>If asked for photos separately and no specific file naming conventions are given use: your last name and title of the artwork is a reasonable suggestion.</p> <p>If a jpg format is asked for don't send a tiff.</p>
<p>If there is a theme, and there usually is, make it very clear that the art needs to incorporate the theme.</p>	<p>Include the theme of the show in the piece in a way that makes it recognizable to the organizers.</p>
<p>Make sure to be clear how your brand is to be incorporated if you have one.</p>	<p>If there is a brand to consider reflect it in the piece.</p> <p>Check the venue's website, better still visit the venue if possible. Look at the space where your work will be displayed.</p>
<p>How is the Art Selected?</p>	<p>How is the Art Selected?</p>
<p>How are you deciding what is accepted?</p> <p>Is there a "Jury" deciding which submissions are selected, is it your art director? Are all decisions final? Are you passing on this information to the artists who submit work?</p>	<p>How is the decision made whether or not to accept your work? This may have bearing on whether or not you decide to apply.</p>
<p>Be Clear on Your Financial Obligations</p>	<p>Be Clear on Your Financial Obligations</p>
<p>How is money changing hands for this show;</p> <p>Does the artist pay to submit a piece?</p>	<p>Make sure you understand what your financial obligations are.</p>

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Does the venue pay to have the piece on view?	Are you going to get your work back and who pays to ship it?
Is there a prize for category winners, how much?	Do you pay to submit your work, if so, how much?
Will the product be sold and who establishes the price?	Does the venue pay you for having your art on display, and if so, how much and when?
Who pays to return the art to the original artist?	Do people have to pay to attend the showing of your work?
Are you charging the public to view the art?	
If the art is sold what is the commission on it?	For art for sale, what is your commission?
Do fees come out of the artist's commission?	Does the artist look after accepting payment and shipping the artwork or is it the venue? If the venue does this, are they paying for it or billing you?
Does the venue look after accepting payment and shipping the artwork?	
How is government sales tax handled?	How is government sales tax handled?
Who pays for promotions of the show? It should be the venue.	Who pays for promotions of the show? It should not be the artist.
	Price your work so you feel you are getting proper value for it if it is sold.
How Good is the Security at the Venue? Who is responsible for Insuring the Art?	How Good is the Security at the Venue? Who is responsible for Insuring the Art?
Does the venue insure the art on display? Show organizers Venue Individual Artists	Does the venue insure your property or do you have to provide that if you want it insured?
If the Individual Artist, is insurance required?	During shipping how is it insured? There are specific terms for this, be clear as to your responsibilities.
Who is responsible if damage occurs?	

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	Do you accept the venue’s policy If damage is done to your work?
What is the Benefit to the Gallery and the Artist to Have This Work on Display?	What is the Benefit to the Gallery and the Artist to Have This Work on Display?
<p>If you are not paying for the art and it is unlikely to be sold what is the benefit for the artist?</p> <p>Make sure you stipulate the media you are accepting and its size, e.g. sculpture only.</p> <p>Max 10’L by 6’H x 4’W</p> <p>Min 6’ L by 3’ H x 4’ W</p> <p>Stipulate if the frame is to be included in the finished size of the work (this avoids confusion).</p> <p>If you have specific requirements for canvas wraps, include them. Do you accept glass on pictures or require acrylic? Does it matter?</p> <p>What type of product shots do you need, if any? Possibly a shot to tell if you are</p>	<p>Make sure you understand what is in this showing of art, for you, and what costs you will incur.</p> <p>If the spec is a painting, oil on canvas, 16” X 18” matted with a 3-inch white mat and framed with a 4-inch wide black wooden frame, with wire mounting hooks on the side and a wire spacing them, the top height at tension, 5 inches below the top of the frame. This gallery would be looking for very consistently sized work and likely needs this to fit their slots for displaying work.</p> <p>With this stipulation don’t send them an unframed watercolor of any size or anything other than what was requested.</p> <p>Unless otherwise stipulated include the frame in the dimensions.</p> <p>Paintings without frames are usually done as canvas wraps. Make sure the canvas is tucked under and stapled neatly inside so no staples are exposed. It should be painted, glazed, however the venue requests, (usually painted and they may ask for plain black and perhaps with a varnish).</p> <p>If you are framing, are you including glass, or plexiglass. Some galleries do not want glass because of breakage considerations.</p> <p>Do a good job of producing the images you send in. They represent your work if you</p>

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<p>interested in the piece at all. If you accept the piece, a shot that suits the website and another for a catalog, if you are producing catalogs. You may be able to use one shot for all if it is of good enough quality and resolution.</p> <p>Include a section explaining size, resolution or photos required and if you want them on a white background, straightened, etc.</p>	<p>can't drop by with a sample. Adhere to the size and resolution requested. Snagging a 320 X 280 pixel shot from your website when the venue wants 1920 X 1080 could get you disqualified.</p> <p>The lighting needs to be good so the object shows well. It needs to be level and the background should be plain and a color that does not conflict with the object of interest.</p>
<p>Number of Submissions Per Artist & Subject</p>	<p>Number of Submissions Per Artist & Subject</p>
<p>How many submissions will you accept from one artist?</p> <p>Do you have restrictions on topic, such as no nudity, discriminatory, inflammatory topics, violence?</p>	<p>If you are submitting multiple pieces, it is a good idea to keep the theme and style consistent.</p> <p>Public venues where children may be present will likely prohibit nudity. It helps to know if there are prohibitions on the subjects of the pieces. Fragile work is not best for these venues either.</p> <p>Title your piece appropriately and descriptively. Don't call it #425. The name should reflect the theme and subject of the piece and show your creativity.</p> <p>Sign your work and put your name and piece title on the back, or bottom of a sculpture.</p>
<p>Fine Details That Are Important</p>	<p>Fine Details That Are Important</p>
<p>Give a date and time for the submission.</p> <p>Give a date and time for pick up if this is necessary.</p>	<p>Make sure you get your submission in on time and know how and when to retrieve it.</p>

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<p>Include a physical address, an email address and phone number in case there are questions from those submitting and make sure someone is monitoring both.</p>	<p>Call/message if you need to, but read the instructions again first, so you don't sound foolish by asking for something that is obviously well documented in the call out.</p>
<p>Will you send confirmation the submission has been received?</p>	<p>Watch for a confirmation if you are supposed to receive one.</p>
<p>How are items returned?</p>	<p>Do you have to pick up your art after the show or pay for the return shipping if it is not sold?</p>
<p>What is the deadline if the item has to be picked up?</p>	<p>Make sure you know how this is to be handled.</p>
<p>What is done to the piece if it is not picked up?</p>	
<p>Can the artist designate someone else to make the pickup?</p>	
<p>Determine the dates for the show. Are there any special terms regarding sale of work during the show? e.g. if someone wants to buy a piece can they take delivery immediately or have to wait until the show is over.</p>	<p>Be sure you are willing to commit your art to the show for the duration if that is a requirement.</p>
<p>Promotion & Who is Doing It/Paying the Bill</p>	<p>Promotion & Who is Doing It/Paying the Bill</p>
<p>Do you have a website where the artist can look at examples of the work you desire?</p>	<p>If the venue has a website showing examples of the type of art they promote, look at it and get an idea of how to adapt your style to what they show, if you want to be accepted?</p>
<p>What caliber of artists are you looking for?</p> <p>This may determine where you advertise and the criteria you set as the responsibilities of the artist.</p>	<p>Do you know other artists who are showing work at this venue? Do you want your work to be seen displayed with their work?</p>

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<p>Juried Shows</p> <p>Is this show Juried. Explain the criteria. Who are your judges? Are they certified? You should tell the participants their credentials.</p>	<p>Juried Shows</p> <p>Do you want your work critiqued? Will this be in a juried show?</p>
<p>Copyright Protection & Other Security</p> <p>How are you protecting the artist's copyright?</p> <p>Do you have security features in place to protect the art from damage and theft.?</p> <p>Tell the applicants they must read and agree to the terms (Provide the document) by submitting they are agreeing to the terms. If they do not meet the terms/specs they do not get back their submission fee/ have to pay to get their art shipped back/it is not returned. Whatever your policy is, make it clear.</p> <p>Make sure you have a filing system that is efficient and that you can locate the artists applications and other relevant information quickly.</p>	<p>Copyright Protection & Other Security</p> <p>When you send images, maquettes, etc. describing your material you have the right to know how they will be used. They should not be sold without your permission. You can expect they will be reproduced in advertising material for the show. This should be made clear and you may be agreeing to this when you submit the application.</p> <p>Does the venue have security features in place to protect the art from damage and theft?</p> <p>Read the fine print. It is work but it is important. Follow the guidelines carefully.</p> <p>Prior to submitting your work have someone you trust, who has good attention to detail, review the submission with you to make sure you haven't missed anything. If you know someone else, who regularly submits pieces with success, this would be a good person to ask for assistance.</p> <p>Keep a copy of your application and make sure you know where you filed it. This is your legal contract.</p>
<p>Creativity</p> <p>Be open to a bit of creativity. A piece that you did not think would fit your specifications may do so if the artist presents it in a manner that meets the technical</p>	<p>Creativity</p> <p>Be creative in your thinking. You may be able to group pieces together to make several small pieces large enough to be considered</p>

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requirements. e.g. using shadow boxes to group small pieces to meet a larger piece requirement. Ask the artist why they think their work would be a good fit for your venue.	one large piece, perhaps in a shadow box. Make sure this is clear in your submission. Tell the venue why you think your art would be a good fit for them.

Note on Photographing Your Work

If you don't have professional images and cannot afford them, make sure you have enough light so the art is well lit and fully visible.

Natural light is good. Avoid high noon on a sunny day. Early morning and early evening should give good light without causing heavy shadows and light rays reflecting unpleasantly across the image. Place the piece and camera so you do not see the photographer's image/shadow on the photo.

Using a tripod and a hand held shutter trigger with the camera set at a low shutter speed, will allow more light into the photograph if you cannot get light in any other way.

Crop out distractions surrounding your work. If a photo of a framed image is requested, crop to the outside edge of the frame. It is very important to ensure the photo is in focus (not blurry).

Make sure it is straight. You may have to crouch down to do this if you don't know how to straighten it on the computer. Exposure can be adjusted in the computer if you know how to do this or have a friend willing to help. If you have a photo in focus (not blurry) a photo editor can crop it, straighten it, and adjust the light quickly, provided the aforementioned, are not in need of drastic adjustments.

You can find local photographers by checking Creative Pictou County website, Facebook pages and asking other artists. You will likely find someone who will fit your budget.

Links to More Information

CARFAC - It is suggested that you have a read through the information on their website

<http://www.carfacmaritimes.org>

Below are some links to articles on it.

Best Practices

<http://www.carfacmaritimes.org/en/best-practices-maritimes/>

Note on Juried Call for Art

<http://www.carfacmaritimes.org/en/organization-juried-group-exhibitions/>

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Commercial Galleries and Artists

<http://www.carfacmaritimes.org/en/commercial-galleries-and-artists/>

Public Galleries and Artists

<http://www.carfacmaritimes.org/en/public-galleries-and-artists/>

Regarding Donations

<http://www.carfacmaritimes.org/en/charitable-donations-of-artworks/>

Link to The Copyright Act of Canada

<https://laws-lois.justice.gc.ca/eng/acts/C-42/Index.html>

Canada has incorporated an exhibition right into the Copyright Act. The exhibition right entitles visual artists to receive payment when their work is exhibited in a public exhibition and is not for sale.

Link to information including how to write a CV

<https://www.agora-gallery.com/advice/blog/2018/07/16/the-artist-cv/>

Writing a short biography

<https://www.agora-gallery.com/advice/blog/2018/07/16/the-artist-cv/>

Link to good info for the venue making the call

<https://www.callforentries.com/pages/tips-for-running-an-art-call.html>

This website has a call for paintings and sculpture and has a very thorough document.

<https://artists.ca/submissions/index>

If you are interested in reading it scroll down to the small PDF, slightly to the right of mid center.

Information from Suzanne Redmond

<https://suzanneredmond.com/14-what-is-a-call-to-artists-and-how-do-you-respond-to-it/>