



Follow up

Follow-up is key to success, and it's critical to proceed with a no-pressure approach. Include a mention of an intended phone call in a cover letter and then follow through. When calling it's important to present a positive attitude and not appear frustrated by obstacles encountered. Keep in mind that this is a business issue, not a personal one. Make a list of things to mention in advance – preferably something that will enhance your credibility in the mind of the person with whom you are speaking. Mention recent updates or future plans for your work. Research the background of this person and comment about something that impressed you.

Even if there isn't immediate potential for a connection, people are more prone to remember and respect those who make informed comments and have solid reasons for making contact. This kind of connection may pay off in the future. Remember, it's less about an immediate hit than about building a relationship that will evolve and pay back over time. If your follow-up meets with resistance, back away gently and try to convey a positive but firm message.

A widely exhibited artist relates the following story to illustrate the value of effective follow-up. "Several months after being invited to send an image for consideration in a public-art poster pro-

gram, I called to follow up on the submission. With great apology I was told the image submitted would not work due to a minor design element. In further discussing this matter the art administrator mentioned a policy not to contact artists about changes to submitted designs since this procedure had met with resistance in past encounters. Since I often alter work for commercial clients, I had no problem with making changes to the image and promptly offered to do so. The revised work was accepted for the poster program, a resolution that would not have happened without proper follow-up and thorough inquiry about the submission."

Current Trends

Many spaces are currently seeking artist-curated exhibits as well as exhibitions that mix media. Exhibits that pair known talent with emerging artists are also a popular subject. Organizations that serve the humanities (like cultural centers, libraries, science or natural history museums) often seek creative content and are

less taxed with competing submissions. Such venues serve a more diverse public and may provide greater opportunities for funding an exhibit fitting the right demographic.

A past exhibit of my photographs was met with great interest when exhibited at a regional cultural center in Western

Pennsylvania because of their position as a focal point for fireworks production in the United States. This single detail led to funding for the exhibit, which in turn created a new source of local advertising and publicity for the company who funded the show.

Rejection

It's important to understand that rejection is most often an illusion that lurks in the depths of one's own ego. Many times a rejection letter is simply an indication the work didn't quite fit the parameters or direction of the venue. Rejection letters can lead to opportunities down the line. Such connections often present themselves indirectly, so it's important to keep a positive attitude and an inquiring mind when contacted by an unrecognized source.

Some organizations provide feedback after rejection through details about the

ranking of one's submission available by phone. The New York Foundation for the Arts annual Arts Fellowship program provides this type of information, and they also provide a seminar to discuss submission and selection procedures in advance of the Fellowship deadlines.

It's critical to seek out opportunities for an inside look at the real issues related to selection and rejection. The ever popular portfolio review component at many conferences and events can be immeasurably helpful for gathering

advice related to appropriate venues, getting feedback on the work and confronting issues of acceptance or rejection.

The selection process is ultimately highly subjective – as is the process of making the work. In crafting, focusing and advancing the work and its public life, you must seek out and absorb as much feedback as possible, all the while maintaining the knowledge that you, as the creator, hold the reins and have the last word about what you want to say and how it's received.

Costs

Costs vary tremendously, from the payment of entry fees required by most call-for-work exhibits to expenses for matting, framing and shipping for a solo show at an established gallery. There are no hard and fast rules. Each situation depends on a host of circumstances – the operating budget of the space and what they provide to exhibitors; whether there is funding for an exhibit; or the possibility of programming a fee-based event to offset the photographer's costs.

It's important for a photographer to ask questions and find out as many details as possible before agreeing to an exhibit. Once accepted for an exhibition, inquire about issues like shipping and insurance for exhibited work. Some spaces may help with these expenses or provide framing for work matted at standard sizes.

It's also a good idea (yet not always implemented) to sign a written contract that spells out the details in writing. If the space doesn't provide a written agreement, the photographer needs to do this. When delivering or shipping prints; submit a detailed list of the works consigned. It's also very important to define limits for the use of the work. An exhibition agreement or consignment memo should contain language stating that reproduction of the work for commercial purposes is not permitted without consent of the photographer and negotiation of a licensing fee.

A few basic issues to keep in mind related to costs are as follows: Is there a fee to exhibit in the space? Does the space print an exhibition announcement? Do they pay postage for the photographer's mailing list, and, if so, up to how many copies? Is there a press mailing and does the photographer need to provide press

prints? Are shipping expenses covered by the space, one way or both? Is framing available, what type and in what sizes? Is there an opening reception and are costs for this covered? Are there opportunities for a lecture or gallery talk and is the artist given a stipend? What is the percentage of commission taken on sales?

The potential for cost ultimately has a very high ceiling and should be limited by the realities of the individual's financial situation. Such decisions should correspond to planning a strategic investment over time, just as a business invests in advertising and promotion.

The book Business and Legal Forms for Photographers by Tad Crawford is an invaluable source of documents and information to use in exhibiting and marketing work. This book is available in most bookstores or on-line at www.allworth.com

Exhibition Options

Regional Centers for Photography:

The following 11 venues are representative of a large network of organizations spread across the country, providing numerous opportunities for exposure in addition to the possibility of solo or group exhibits. Members' Galleries, Juried Call for Work Exhibits, participation in Benefit Auctions and Collectors' Print Programs are among the valuable programs that present works to an interested audience.

Photographic Resource Center:
Boston MA. www.bu.edu/PRC

The Center for Photography at Woodstock:
Woodstock NY. www.cpw.org

The Light Factory Photographic Arts Center:
Charlotte NC. www.lightfactory.org

Palm Beach Photographic Centre:
Delray Beach, FL. www.workshop.org

Houston Center for Photography:
Houston TX. www.hcponline.org

Silver Eye Center for Photography:
Pittsburgh PA. www.silvereye.org

Society for Contemporary Photography:
Kansas City MO. www.sconline.org

pARTs Photographic Arts: Minneapolis MN.
www.partsphoto.org

Center for Photographic Art: Carmel CA.
www.photography.org

San Francisco Camerawork:
San Francisco CA. www.sfcamerawork.org

Blue Sky Gallery:
Portland OR. www.blueskygallery.org

University/Educational Venues:

The following 8 venues are a tiny sampling of galleries that present photography in the context of educational programming. Projects treating tough issues or complex theory can be especially well-received in this type of venue.

Siskind Gallery: Visual Studies Workshop,
Rochester, NY. Contact: Scott Laird.
www.vsw.org/exhibitions/gallery.html

Sol Mednick Gallery: The University of the Arts, Philadelphia PA. Contact: Harris Fogel.
www.uarts.edu/newhub.html

Clement Gallery: Center for Visual Arts,
University of Toledo, Toledo OH.
Contact: Deborah Orloff. www.utoledo.edu/

Juanita Kreps Gallery: Center for Documental Studies at Duke University.
Durham, NC. Contact: Exhibitions Program Coordinator. www.cds.aas.duke.edu/exhibits

Alice & William Jenkins Gallery:
Crealde School of Art, Winter Park FL.
Contact: Rima Jabbur, Senior Gallery Curator
Peter Schreyer, Executive Director
www.crealde.org/gallery.html

Southern Light Gallery: Amarillo College,
Amarillo TX. Contact: Jim Jorden
www.actx.edu/

Gallery 1101: Southern Illinois University
at Carbondale. Carbondale IL.
Contact: Department of Cinema and
Photography. www.intranet.siu.edu/~photogen/gallery1101.html

OCC Photo Gallery: Orange Coast College.
Costa Mesa CA. Contact: Chuck Nicholson.
www.occ.cccd.edu/

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Jill Waterman is a photographer, photo editor, arts writer and consultant. She presents the short seminar and extended workshop "Exhibition Options for

the Photographic Artist" which is available for future programming. She also offers consultations, editing and writing services to artists seeking to market

their work. She can be reached through her web site: www.newyearphotos.com or by e-mail to water_@earthlink.net.

The Texas Photographic Society is a nonprofit organization of amateur and professional photographers whose purpose "is to support contemporary photography as a means for creative expression and cultural insight." With over 800 active members from 32 states, TPS focuses on the education

and artistic development of its members and the community by providing exhibitions, publications, education and outreach programs. Tech Sheets, a benefit of membership, are edited by Jean Caslin and D. Clarke Evans. © Jill Waterman and the Texas Photographic Society.

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