

# 10 Tips For Gallery Submission and Etiquette

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## Introduction

This article will highlight five tips for submitting your art to a gallery. Each gallery will have its own set of rules and steps, so rather than go through all of the different types of submissions, we will pick high level tips and focus on those.

## 1 – Understand the Rules

Every gallery has it's own rules. It is very important that you review all of the stipulations in whatever documentation or instructions are provided. This might sound obvious, but as a gallery owner, I try to send out the prospectus every time I do an artist call, and I still get the same questions asked over and over. Read the fine print, know the key dates, and follow the instructions.

## 2 – Provide quality images (either digital or print)

You never know how an image is going to be used. You want to use good high definition images that focus on the print or object.

Try to avoid the following:

- Images with glare
- Bad angles
- Framing
- Bad lighting
- Poor quality prints if you are printing the image. With the technology as inexpensive as it is, you can usually get a decent quality print at your office supply store for \$2 or less.

Try to do the following:

- Use a good camera or have it professionally digitized. These usually run around \$75 or less and while they are not required, they will get you that much closer to creating prints (which will be discussed in a later article) If you don't have the

means to take a professional quality photo, you can use a smart phone, but you need to make sure your angle is good and the lighting is good.

### 3 – Include Your Name and Title of the Piece as your filename

#### **Examples:**

MichaelHilden\_TheVentriloquist.gif (my preferred method)

Michael-Hilden-The-Ventriloquist.jpg

Michael\_hilden\_the\_ventriloquist.png

#### **Size and Format**

1. Size. Most cameras now days take images that have really high resolution and appear really large (in pixels) when transferred to your computer. I resize mine usually to try and be as close to 800 pixels x 600 pixels as possible. It's a good size and will usually fit within most memory size standards.  
▶ **NOTE:** Remember to keep the original image size in tact.
2. Format. The image should also be sent as either a .gif / .jpg / .png. For your purposes, .jpg or .jpeg is probably the preferred file.

Quick facts:

.png and .gif files are likely better for web as they allow for transparency (which you do not care about for your images).

.jpg is usually the smallest size (which is important, because most galleries have a file size constraint for

#### **Purpose**

Including your name and the name of your piece actually serves more than just the immediate purpose of offering a submitted image.

- It is a constant reminder to the gallery that there is a name associated with the image.
- It makes it easy for the gallery to identify your work when selecting.
- In the event the gallery uses the images for marketing purposes, they are able to quickly provide your name and the title of the piece when selecting. It will usually get you chosen above someone who doesn't have the information provided.

#### **Personal Storage Tips**

I actually go one step further and try to store my images with all of the information I need. I don't necessarily recommend sending it to galleries in this format, but it will help you have a quick snapshot in your mind about the piece. Here are some examples:

MichaelHilden\_TheVentriloquist\_MMC\_2013\_20x20\_250.jpg  
MichaelHilden\_SunnyDay\_OC\_2014\_20x20\_150.jpg

This file is set up by:

Name\_PieceTitle\_Medium\_Year\_Size\_Price

The MMC and OC are short codes for the media types. You can make your own short codes. Here's how a few of mine break down:

MMC – Mixed Media on Canvas

OC – Oil on Canvas

AC – Acrylic on Canvas

WP – Watercolor on Paper

PP – Photo on Paper

PA – Photo on Aluminum

PC – Photo on Canvas

## 4 – If possible, include other important pieces of information about your work.

If you are selected, the gallery will more than likely reach out to you for more information. Make it easy by providing the information up front (if you are given the opportunity. Each gallery is different and some have a submission process that does not allow for this until after you pass a preliminary selection round.)

If you are able to submit a document as an e-mail attachment or you are able to provide extra information on your form submittal, include at least the following:

- Title
- Size (unframed)
- Year created
- Medium
- Suggested cost.
- Image as a thumbnail.

## 5 – Be Prompt

I have a few different deadlines on art submittal and expect the artist to be prompt. On more than one occasion I've had to reach out to the artist after the deadline to obtain key pieces of information. The following are just a few suggested deadlines a gallery may impose:

- Final date for submission (to be accepted).
- Final date to have all additional submissions (post acceptance).

- Final date for art tag information.
- Date to present the material.
- Date of the reception.
- Date of the tear down.

If you are prompt, you stand a better chance of not only rising to the top of the food chain for marketing decisions and overall gallery acceptance, you also make the gallery's job easier which gives you a better chance of becoming a gallery regular.

## 6 – Have Your Art Framed (or Gallery Wrapped) and Presentable

I will have articles that contain more detail on framing artwork at a later date. For now, it is important to know how to present your art to the gallery.

NEVER NEVER NEVER turn in a piece of art that is not ready to hang. Since I consider my TAAU Gallery somewhat of a learning gallery, I will sometimes accept the work and frame it myself or show it “as is,” but if I were running a higher end gallery, I would not only NOT accept the art, I would likely not invite the artist back.

- GALLERY WRAPPED (2” Canvas) - If you use gallery wrapped canvases, either have a finished painted edge, a clean white edge, or continue the painting around the edge. Any other choice (besides shadow box framing or other framing options) is not acceptable.
- STANDARD (3/4” Canvas) I always recommend framing canvases of this size. They look cleaner.
- FRAMED
  - SHADOW BOX / WOOD: This is probably the cheapest way to frame your work, and is consistent with the standard currently used today. There are lots of videos on Youtube on how to shadow box frame your work, here's one of my favorites:
  - STANDARD WOOD: Similar to shadow box, just no gap between the canvas and frame.
  - STORE BOUGHT: These get tricky. I've tried using these in different gallery shows, and the cheaper ones, well, look cheap. If you're going to frame your art, better to stick to plain black if you're not going to use a wood or shadow box approach. If you do buy a custom build store-bought or have it custom made, the price of the piece should include the frame.

## 7 – Do NOT Be a Nuisance

There's a certain amount of trust that has to happen quickly for artists showing in new galleries. The gallery must accept the artist and the artist must have faith that the gallery is taking care of their best interests.

Here are some Do's and Don'ts

- DO follow all of the above rules and by all means, be on time.
- DO have your art ready
- DO offer to sign any agreements but be mindful to review any payment plans, non-compete clauses etc. (more on contractual agreements and obligations will be provided in future articles)
- DO NOT try to tell the gallery how to do their job.
- DO NOT ask the gallery to care for storage containers / bags
- DO NOT lie about the work or it's creation.

## 8 – Have an Artist Statement

I'm not going into a lot of detail on this one. I will have another article on Artist Statements available on the website. For now, just know you need one.

## 9 – Have Business Cards / Price Sheets

This one depends on the gallery and what they allow / expect. You should ALWAYS have a business card, but price sheets may not be necessary. Just be prepared and have them ready in case you need them.

## 10 – Have Fun and Make Connections

This is it, your time to shine. Getting selected to show in a gallery can be a great experience. Remember to relax, soak it in, and by all means, learn something and make connections.

## BONUS

### 11 – Other Considerations:

- Collect Names
- Be flexible on your costs
- Share the news