

Hanover Area Arts Guild

Standards for the Display and Sale of Work

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The information presented below is intended to provide guidelines and requirements for members who exhibit their work at Art Downtown, the Hanover Area Arts Guild's Gallery. This information has been published in the Arts Guild's monthly newsletter through a series of articles titled "Standards Corner" and may be expanded over time as the need arises.

Originality

What's an "Original?"

One of the fundamental requirements for showing artwork or crafts for sale in the Gallery is that the work must be the artist's own original creation. By definition, original art is not a copy of another artist's work. Additionally, if work incorporates trademarked images or logos (such as those of sports teams or corporations), care is needed to be certain that the representation does not violate copyrights.

The Arts Guild may decline to show any work that is determined to be not original.

This is an age of unprecedented availability of digital images. "Originality" can be compromised with the use of someone else's image (photo, composition, etc.) as the basis for a primary element of an artist's work. Downloading an uncopyrighted photo from the Internet, then making a drawing, painting, or other work substantially using that image, does not result in an original piece of art. Making art from one's own photo *is* original! All work displayed at the Gallery is to be original. It's one of the rules of membership, and it's certainly one of the expectations of the buying public.

3-D & Craft Originality

The same principles of originality apply to crafts and 3-D art as they do to 2-D work, of course. This includes avoiding copyrighted or licensed images, such as corporate or sports team logos that are not one's original images and could violate laws. For example, creating a pillow from purchased fabric sporting Steelers logos is fine for home, but does not qualify as an "original" craft. Likewise, simply assembling an object from a kit is no more original than doing a paint-by-number painting. These may be somewhat extreme examples, but are intended to emphasize the need for our members to think about what they are bringing to the Gallery to show and

sell. Work displayed at the Gallery must have a high degree of originality, even when or if it includes some purchased elements. The Arts Guild does reserve the right to decline to exhibit any work determined not to be original.

Size

Size Matters!

In general, artwork submitted for display at the Gallery has size limitations. For framed hanging work, that limit is 45 inches height or width, measured at the outside edge of the frame. For sculpture or 3D work, the limit is 45 inches in any direction. Special shows or exhibits may impose different limitations for a number of reasons. Always check the show information or entry form to see if exceptions apply to avoid the disappointment of having work excluded from a show.

Preparation for Hanging Work

Glass or Acrylic?

Framed artwork displayed at the Gallery needs to be prepared in a way that protects the work. This includes using a mat and glass or rigid acrylic when appropriate.

What works should be framed under glass or acrylic? Any artwork done on paper should have that protection. This includes drawings, watercolor paintings, photographs printed on paper, etc. Fragile or easily smudged finishes, such as pencil, pastel, chalk or charcoal, regardless of the underlying substrate, need to be covered. These works should also be matted, and the image should not touch the glass or acrylic. A general rule of thumb is that if a work is matted, it should also be under glass or acrylic. Photographs printed on canvas, and art that has been coated with a gel or other permanent,

protective finish can be framed without mat or glass. Fixative spray is not a permanent finish.

Whether glass or acrylic is the best choice depends on several factors. Glass is heavier, and breakable, but may be less expensive than the acrylics. Non-glare and museum grade glass is available. Acrylics include Plexiglas, available at hardware retailers, or acrylic glazing that can be purchased through art supply houses. These are lightweight and less prone to breakage, but can be scratched. Shows or exhibits to which artwork is shipped typically will require acrylic. The Arts Guild Gallery will accept either glass or acrylic in framed artwork, though for very large pieces acrylic is preferred because of weight considerations.

Framed Work

Picture hanging wire secured with screw eyes or D-rings is the acceptable mechanism for hanging. String or twine is not an allowable alternative to wire. Sawtooth hangers may not be used, because they will not work on the Gallery's hanging system.

How artwork is secured in a frame also matters. Customers considering purchasing a piece of art will look at the care the artist took in mounting the work in the frame, and will learn much by what they see. That will reflect either positively or negatively on both the artist and the Arts Guild.

Art created on paper (drawings, watercolor, photographs, etc.) should be matted and under glass or Plexiglas, backed by an appropriate material (foam core board, acid free backing board), all secured into the frame by materials intended for that use. These include metal spring clips for metal frames, and framer's points or brads for wooden frames. Duct tape, masking tape, cellophane tape, and packing tape are not acceptable; they will not hold up over time and may cause the artwork to discolor or degrade. The art should be secured to the mat or backing board with framer's tape.

Most artists finish the job by covering the backs of wooden frames with craft or other heavy paper. When using that paper, be sure to replace it if it becomes torn or ragged.

Gallery Wrap: An Alternative to Frames

One acceptable alternative to a frame for paintings on stretched canvas is a gallery wrap. For a gallery wrap, the canvas is stapled on the back of the stretcher strips rather than on the edges. All four edges of the canvas are then painted. Often the artist will extend the image from the painting onto the sides, top, and bottom; others will use an

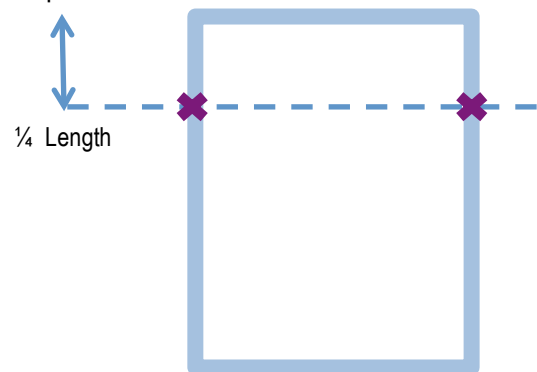
appropriate color or colors to finish the painting. Either way is acceptable.

Using a gallery wrap has the benefit of avoiding the cost of a frame while giving a different look to a finished painting.

Remember, it's still necessary to use screw eyes or D-rings and wire to prepare the painting for hanging.

Get Wired

Two-dimensional work, whether painting, print, drawing, photograph, pastel, etc. that is intended to hang in the Gallery must be prepared appropriately for hanging. A properly prepared piece uses picture hanging wire attached to screw eyes or D-rings. These are affixed to the back of both sides of the frame or stretcher strips. They should be placed at a point measuring one fourth of the total length, down from the top, as shown below. Sawtooth hangers, single point hanging hardware and stick-on tabs are not acceptable.



Unframed Flat Work

Unframed artwork can be an attractive alternative to a framed piece for both artist and buyer. Flat artwork offered for sale at the Gallery must be properly protected and clearly labeled to identify what the piece is. As with framed work, flat work should be periodically rotated to keep the display fresh.

All items should be attached to a backing board and neatly covered with acetate or inserted in a plastic sleeve. A mat is optional.

Quality prints or reproductions must be of *the artist's original work*, and identified as such. Limited editions of prints typically include the sequence number/total number, and are signed by the artist.

Artists should provide a freestanding sling for display of unframed work. Slings should sit on the floor, not a tabletop, and be marked with the artist's name. Slings are available at many art supply stores or through catalogs.

Gallery Tags

With the change to the new Arts Guild logo, we've also created new, standardized tags for artwork that hangs in the Gallery. Standardizing the tags presents a more professional appearance for the Gallery, and avoids questions about how to use the tag.

Tags are made to hang below the frame, near the bottom right-hand corner of the frame. Artists should *clearly* and *neatly* print the information on the tag. Tags are to be attached with blue tape, available at the desk, to the back of the piece.

Only the tags with the new logo should be used. Old style tags should be discarded.

Selling Artwork at the Gallery

Art for Sale

Arts Guild income comes primarily from paid memberships, show fees a few times a year, rental units on the property, and Gallery sales. Because Gallery sales are important to us, member work put on display must be for sale. This is a requirement for the months there's an exhibit theme, and for the Spring Show and the Fall Show. There are only a few instances in which some member work may be shown and marked not for sale. These include the Artist of the Month window, invitational shows, or shows open to both members and non-members, such as an Open Exhibit.

Members who are reluctant to sell a work they want to display should consider pricing the piece to discourage all but the most serious shopper. And if the artist simply doesn't want to part with the piece, please just enjoy it at home. We promote the Gallery as a place where people can browse and buy the art on display. When people come in but can't buy the piece they want, we do both the Arts Guild and the public a disservice.

Valuation of Work

Deciding on a price can be frustrating for artists once their creations are completed. The price an artist places on a piece of work will be influenced by many factors: cost of material, time, cost of framing or presentation, emotional investment in the piece, reputation of the artist, and history of past sales. The Arts Guild provides a venue for the display and sale of work, and takes a percentage of the sale price lower than most galleries. It is in the interests of both the artist and the Gallery, of course, that work is priced appropriately to maximize sales. The Gallery takes 30% on sales over \$100, and just 20% if below \$100. Serving on the board or as a volunteer can drop the percentage even more. Most of the time, work in the Gallery must be for sale. Exceptions are noted above.

When determining an "appropriate" price, consider what a reasonable person would think is a fair value, given all factors. "Fair" doesn't mean cheap, or a bargain, but a fair representation of what the market in Hanover would bear for work of that quality and content by that artist. Members who are reluctant to sell a work they want to display may want to price the piece to discourage all but the most serious shopper. And if the artist simply doesn't want to part with the piece, just enjoy it at home rather than assigning an obviously absurd or outrageous price.