

Notes from Jackie Wukela's Presentation to TAG

Preparing Art for Competitions or Galleries-Two Different Things

Framing and packaging are sometimes tricky and expensive endeavors; therefore you don't want to get it wrong.

Competitions

Judges

In order to do well in a competition you have to get in. You need to catch and hold the judge's attention 3-4 different times—all the while others are trying to do the same thing.

First pass-Keep you in at all and make the first cut

Second pass-Make the large cut and the show

Third pass-Consideration for an award

Fourth pass-Choices between awards

BEING JUST GOOD IS NOT ENOUGH-

You must make a good choice in subject matter and bring something new to the game. Judges judge all the time, they see hundreds of close-ups of flowers, grandchildren, pets, famous places, and porches with flowers. Some of these may be nice to sell, but know if you are entering this type of subject that you already have a strike against you.

Think of something new or something you see everyday, but with a different approach. Being good isn't enough, especially at the higher level competitions. Use your mind, think how you could best present your idea or subject.

REMEMBER- A competition piece may not be a selling piece.

Framing

Use a simple frame. You want to show off the artwork, not the frame. Often a simple metal or wooden frame is best.

Read the prospectus, the small print, hidden information on requirements. SCWS now requires a certain wooden frame on all pieces hanging in their show. They want the show to have a uniform look.

With those simple frames, use neutral mattes, white, cream, light gray. No colors. Black may or may not be considered a neutral. "Don't shoot yourself in the foot with a non-neutral matte." If you are rejected, you won't know if it was because of your work or the matte selection.

Entries

If you are going to enter competitions, you need to be able to make jpg. files and email your entries. Learn how to take your own photos. (No frames, mattes, or feet in the photos, please.) I suggest that you take your photos before you frame. You may choose to wait to see if you got in—then frame your piece. Use Plexiglass on pieces you enter in competitions, especially large ones. Do not use non-glare glass, ever. Check show requirements. Some let you use glass on pastels. The Plexi requirement is for safety.

Suggestions for shipping to shows: Use a “Strong Box”. These are made by AirFloat and can be ordered. They are lined top and bottom with plastic and your picture is encased with foam. They can be used over and over—for several years.

Selling with Galleries

Visit the gallery that you’re considering. Is it the right fit for your work? Different work fits different galleries! Check out the price range, frames used etc.

Make an appointment (don’t just show up) and meet the owner. Discuss how they work with their artists. Bring actual work and a CD that you can leave with the gallery.

Make sure the gallery is insured.

Have all the information concerning your agreement in writing including the percentage you will pay in commission. Make sure he or she fills out the consignment sheet with to your agreed terms. Be sure to keep a copy. Be sure that you have an agreement about price negotiation. Your records are your proof.

Find out how and when you will be paid.

Check on what type of advertising and publicity they do and what part you might play in that.

After your work is there, check with the galleries often. How are they displaying your work? Is it up when you arrive. Do the sales personnel know your name. Keep an eye on the gallery while your art is there. Keep track of your work. Not all gallery owners are honest.

A Note on Models

Jackie invited everyone to paint faces if they haven’t tried them. Hire a model. Pay them well. She pays \$50 a hr. and may take a gig’s work of pictures in that hour. These are very valuable resources to have. Have the model sign a release form and keep it in your files.

If you want to photograph someone in public, approach them as if they were a model. With money in hand explain what you want and why—so that there is no misunderstanding. Pay.

She has invested in a really good camera that has paid off many times.