

EXHIBITION PLANNING - notes by Kate Downie,

with additional information from Kirsty O'Connor,
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1. WORK

Useful to have more work framed and ready to hang than you actually need. It makes hanging easier as you have a greater combination of arrangements to fit a variety of spaces in the gallery. Don't decide where they are going to go in the gallery until you come to hang the show.

2. TEXT

Have something written about yourself and the work currently showing, for display alongside the work. 200-300 words approx. Write this in plenty of time, when not feeling stressed.

3. PRICING

Don't under-price work as others will be less likely to take your endeavour seriously. Account for materials, framing, time, overheads and commission. It's worth looking at what other artists of a similar standing charge for their work. If you feel a particular piece is especially good, charge accordingly.

4. PAYMENT

Stay flexible with buyers as to the method of payment. If a buyer is unable to pay full amount up front, offer the option of a down payment, followed by monthly instalments. Do not offer to set up a bankers order; instead request payment in the form of 4 pre-written cheques, each dated at the beginning of the following 4 months. Important: Kindly request that the client marks into their diary the dates when the cheques will be drawn, and mark in your own diary the same (in order to avoid bouncing cheques.)

Don't be scared to be business-like with buyers.

DO NOT put red dots on work which are reserved with a promise of buying, this quite often results in no sale at all on that work.

5. HANGING

Arrange transport well in advance. Get work in well packaged to avoid damage at your earliest possible time. It's easier to apply mirror plates (preferable option) or hanging wire (not secure, avoid using if possible) in the gallery, but remember this is a fiddly job and takes time.

Arrange help with hanging.

Design the hang:

Corridor does not have to be utilised.

Select key works and lean them in approximate places to start with. Group other works in relation to them, taking into account the site lines in the gallery and thinking about how you want to draw peoples' gaze around the exhibition.

Have a strong piece on the wall opposite the entrance, to immediately catch peoples' attention as they come in. This stage can take a lot of time -moving works about - but it will save time later if you don't hang until it has 'come together' and works as a whole.

Tools and materials needed:

mirror plates -2 sizes

the right screws to fit (small for back of frames, larger for walls)

spirit level

screwdrivers with appropriate heads - cordless electric is good

bradle for making holes

drill and bits

hammer and nails

tape measure

2 metre stick (or 2) to mark heights and widths for hanging

plastic sheeting or white sheets (to lay work out on etc)

refreshments and sandwiches to keep helpers happy! Kettle provided.

bin bags

red dots/ receipt book for sales

Tools provided by the gallery:

stepladder, white emulsion, brushes, roller and tray/ filler/ cleaning stuff for mopping floor and wiping surfaces all are available at the gallery.

Example of hang method:

A 'central hang' means that the mid-point of works are at average eye-level height.

Mirror plates are attached at the centre point either side. Have a long stick marked with eye-level height from the floor.

Mark the wall for one side of the piece, using the stick to measure from the floor and a spirit level to get the vertical correct, screw on and then using a spirit level to get the horizontal, screw on the other side. Most walls only need a bradde as they are plasterboard. Brass screws are not strong enough.

6. LABELLING

Labels; either printed onto self-adhesive labels or onto plain paper, pasted onto mounting board and cut to size with a scalpel and straight edge, for a really professional look. Once the show is hung, make out the labels in order of works from the door onwards.

Or printed on self adhesive computer labels and stuck to wall appropriately.

1. Untitled
mixed media on paper
£200

Or number work and have a printed and photocopied list of titles and prices.

7. PHOTOGRAPHY

Photograph work both on slide film and colour print film or digital camera in advance of framing. Copy onto a CD for ease of emailing. Work is then available for reproduction in publicity material. Email image and text for press release and for inclusion in Patriothall Gallery website 'current show' page in good time before show.

Get photographer experienced in photographing artwork for slides, it requires different skills and equipment from other types of photography.

8. PUBLICITY -Also see TEXT.

Press release - name, title of show, venue, dates, opening hours and private view time/ date. Strong image. Approx. 100-150 words of text. Contact name & address/ phone no./ email.

Email to The List magazine and Patriothall Gallery at least 3 weeks in advance for inclusion in listings.

Send to other press & galleries about 8-10 days before the show opens, but can be emailed/posted during exhibition.

Always do as much publicity as possible and keep following up.

NB. In our experience at Patriothall Gallery, press (and gallery owners) are unlikely to turn up unless: you are already a 'name'; or are doing something very unusual - that they can write a feature on; or you have made good personal contact with them beforehand.

Use all contacts -family and friends, previous buyers.

Post invites about 2 weeks before the private view approx. Email your image and text to Patriothall so the gallery co-ordinator can email the gallery's email mailing list, which includes galleries, some press and a growing number of people joining the list to be emailed.

Your image and text will be posted onto the gallery website just before your show opens.

9. POSTERS/FLYERS

20-30, A3 or A4, for public galleries, print workshops etc. Edinburgh College of Art reprographics section reasonably priced for colour copying or outputting from disk. (Also for invites for your private view.)

The gallery has two A-boards, and two posters can be stuck up at the top of the vennel, and one round the corner on the building itself. There are railings at the end of the street that a poster can attached to. People do come in off the street when they see a poster.

10. INVITES & MAILING LIST

Invites to private view - colour, ECA reprographics (as above) good for small quantities on thinnish card.

For 1000 worth colour printing. For excellent price and quality go to Graham and Sons in Omagh, Tel 02882 249 222. It will be cheaper if it's output straight from disk. Allow for about 2 weeks turnaround with them.

Otherwise cut and paste and b/w photocopying on 130gr card.

11. PRIVATE VIEW

Get help for bar and tidy up before and after, so you are free to talk to people about your work and deal with sales.

Sponsorship for booze needs to be sought a few months in advance.

Have non-alcoholic stuff too -sparkling mineral water and cheap boxes fresh orange. Off licences usually loan glasses if you buy wine in bulk, some do sale or return on wine.

12. BUDGETING AND FINANCE NOTES

Lots of money goes out before any return.

Framing is a major cost. If possible arrange to pay half on receipt of framed works and half one month later - 30 days deferment is a great help.

Wine: maximum of £100 should do it

Photography - worth paying well for this if you are not able to do it yourself.

Sales - always get the name and address of potential buyers. Write out sales in the gallery receipt book, and get cheques made out to 'EDINBURGH WASPS'.

NEVER PUT A RED DOT BEFORE RECEIVING PAYMENT FOR THE PIECE OF WORK.

Put 'NFS' on a piece of work if you do not want to sell it.

Arrange collection of work sold in the last 2 hours of the exhibition or you can send small stuff by post. Avoid the impression of the exhibition as a shop.

Give cheques and a list of sales to the gallery co-ordinator for banking, you will receive payment less your commission and gallery rental fee.

If cheques have been made out to you, work out your commission and make sure you can pay it with your gallery rental within 30 days of the close of the show -preferably sooner.

Return all borrowed stuff! Get rid of rubbish! Bottles to bottle bank. Gallery walls restored and all mess cleared away.