

YOUR EXHIBITION: The Checklist

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As discussed at the beginning of my lecture, when you have completed a series of photographs, conducted research on print presentation styles and determined the final print presentation for your new work, it is time to start entering juried exhibitions and begin to set your sights on a larger, more comprehensive show.

UNDERSTANDING EXHIBITION VENUES: Public vs Private

Case Study:

Lori Waselchuck's public and private exhibitions for her long-term project "Grace Before Dying" www.gracebeforedying.org.

Public Venues

Libraries, airports, government buildings, public university art museums/galleries and city museums:

- Open to the general public but may have admission fee; calls for proposals typically readily available to all.
- Information on the show tailored to the public.
- Programming tailored to audiences of all ages.

Public Art

Temporary public art exhibition or permanent public art commissions offered through government agencies:

- Open to the public, no fee.
- No programming provided to the public.
- Securing participation requires submitting a proposal by pre-set RFP. ("Request For Proposals") guidelines/deadlines.

Public Events

- Weekend art fairs or industry trade show.
- Securing participation may require portfolio submission for acceptance.
- YOU are the Vendor at these temporary events: you set up and staff your booth, set prices, handle all sales, and more.

Private Venues

- Open to the general public; sometimes limited access and may have admission fee
- Limited information on the venue available to the public
- Limited programming, primarily tailored to adult audiences

Private Businesses (i.e. Art Galleries)

- Open to the general public, fewer hours than public venues; no entrance fees
- Limited information on the show to the public
- Limited to no programming for the public

UNDERSTANDING EXHIBITION AUDIENCES: Who are they? *The General Public, the Cultured, and the Collectors*

The General Public

- Public spaces such as airports, libraries community centers, city/county / state buildings
- College and University Galleries / museums

The Cultured

Public and Private Art Museums

And the Collectors

- Corporate Collections
- Private businesses

Homework

Make it your practice to **read** every venue:

- Who supports the institution?
- What is their exhibition history?
- What shows are planned for the future?
- Who do they reach out to through public programs?
- Are their submission guidelines posted?

Do Your Homework: NEW VENUES

Do Your Homework: ART FAIRS

How Well Do You Know Your Venue and Its Audience?

Clarify Your Relationship to the Venue

Ask questions, clarify and confirm the terms of your exhibition.

- Financial Matters:
Who pays for what, terms of relationship.
- Task list for you/for the venue:
PR Production elements.
- Calendar and Deadlines:
Delivery of press materials, artwork and more.

Seek Financial Support (foundation center, zip code search)

Example: Who is interested in your SUBJECT?

- Do they gather for meetings/ conferences?
- Do they belong to a trade association?
- Can you inform them of your exhibitions?
- Can you identify individuals or organizations in your community who can participate?

PRESENTATION:

Consider non-traditional framing and installation style if appropriate to your work and the venue.

When Writing Copy for the Wall (or, “object”) labels, “speak” to the age group and the languages spoke in your community.

Be a Partner to Your Venue

Make yourself available for gallery talks, host special audience screenings, give workshops, docent training, et cetera.

During the installation and throughout the term of the exhibition: DOCUMENT

- The making of the project and the installation
- The public events held in conjunction with your exhibition
- Final installation views (with and without yourself, and the audience)
- Add images to your website (on Home page during show dates).
This documentation will bring a strong sense of value to your brand. This tells the viewer you are an experienced artist, one that has determined the final presentation style of your work and that it has been deemed worthy of display.
- *You will use ALL of the images documenting your exhibition in press materials, in proposals for future work, grant applications, at Portfolio Reviews and more.*

Parting Thoughts

- Know your work, its content and your presentation materials.
- When ready to show the work: whenever possible, start local (you can talk to people in person)
- Know the Venue's audience inside-out
- Know the business relationship inside-out
- DO Find sponsorship
- DON'T Spend a fortune on presentation or promotion
- DON'T Count on print sales
- SOCIAL MEDIA (or not): BE PRESENT
In the space where your target audience lives
- Add names to your mailing list every single day

Keep the show moving to the next venue, and the next, and...

Target new venues that you feel would be receptive to your work – check to see if they post their submission guidelines!

Be mindful of online exhibition opportunities, like [Lenscratch](#), [Flak Photo](#), [Art Photo Index](#), and [LensCulture](#).

In closing: Maintain relationships throughout your career. Continue to update those who have expressed interest in your work.

Selected Resources for Juried Show Opportunities

Mary Virginia Swanson's Marketing Blog – mvswanson.com/category/mvs-marketing-blog

Café Call for Entry – www.callforentry.org

The Art list – www.theartlist.com

Weekend Art/Craft Fairs –

www.getcreativeshow.com/craft_sew_business/business_seminars/juried-nonjuried.htm

Festival Net – festivalnet.com/art_fairs.html

LensCulture “How to Get the Most Out of Photography Competitions” –

www.lensculture.com

PhotoShelter's “The 2015 Photographer's Guide to Photo Contests” –

www.photoshelter.com/resources/photographers-guide-photo-contests-2015

Industry Artist Fairs (juried)

Architectural Digest Home Show – www.archdigesthomeshow.com

Dwell on Design – www.dwellondesign.com

SOLO – artexponewyork.com/solo

The Artist Project – www.theartistproject.com

VERGE – www.vergeartfair.com/vergenyc/vergenycmain.html



This content is included in the chapter “Your Work, The Venue, and Its Audience” in the forthcoming title *FINDING YOUR AUDIENCE: An Introduction to Marketing Your Photographs* by Mary Virginia Swanson (Spring 2015).

To receive notice of publication, sign up to receive MVS' monthly newsletter [here](#).

About MVS

Mary Virginia Swanson is an innovator, educator, author, advisor and entrepreneur in the field of photography. During her career she has coordinated educational, exhibition and publication programs for a wide range of institutions and organizations. Her seminars, workshops and lectures on trends and opportunities in photography have aided countless photographers in moving their careers to the next level.

Swanson is widely respected for her innovative teachings on making and marketing art. She received the Lifetime Achievement FOCUS Award from the Griffin Museum in 2013, the Susan Carr Award for Education from ASMP in 2014 and has been named the 2015 Honored Educator by the Society for Photographic Education.

Swanson coauthored with Darius Himes, *Publish Your Photography Book*, now in its second edition (Princeton Architectural Press, 2014). Her forthcoming title *Finding Your Audience: An Introduction to Marketing Your Photographs* will be released in Spring 2015.

Today Swanson is a sought-after speaker, advisor, juror and portfolio reviewer. Swanson gives back to our community and serves on the advisory boards of numerous arts organizations. She maintains a popular blog on opportunities for photographers, *Marketing Photos* which can be found on her website mvswanson.com. She is based in Tucson, AZ and New York City.

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Disclaimer: Resources suggested within this document are not to be misinterpreted as recommendations or endorsements by the author.

If you find any of the links to be no longer working, please email Kelsey Vance, Editor:
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Thank you.

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