

MARY VIRGINIA SWANSON GIVES ADVICE ON MAKING THE MOST OF YOUR SENIOR SHOW

q:

“This fall I am concentrating on building the body of work I plan to exhibit next spring in my senior show. What should I be thinking about now to ensure that my exhibition is the best possible launch for my career?”

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There are many elements that together constitute a successful exhibition, and getting an early start is a great idea. Think about your upcoming show in three stages: before, during and after the event.

BEFORE:

This is the time to plan both the physical exhibition and the marketing of the show—two very different aspects that must be well thought through.

First, determine the budget for the installation. Familiarize yourself with the space where your exhibition will be installed, and decide in advance how many and what size prints the gallery can properly accommodate. If you hope to exhibit large-scale prints or utilize

costly matting and framing techniques, you may need to begin fundraising; the sooner you can confirm those contributions, the better. Whatever costs you cannot secure will likely be your responsibility, which may change your plans for the installation.

Then, determine the marketing budget. You may want to create the following marketing pieces: an announcement with an image to be featured in the show in both print and electronic format, a take-away containing your contact information for distribution at the show, and poster-sized announcements on campus and elsewhere. Learn from the venue what assistance, if any, they will provide; the rest of the marketing components will be your responsibility.

No matter who is paying for the announcement, you should compile a mailing list of those you wish to know about the show. Beyond friends, family and fans, consider which industry professionals you want to reach out to (photo editors, commercial studios, agents/ reps, gallery directors, curators and more). I strongly encourage sending a print announcement rather than email for those individuals you do not personally know, and as this is likely to be the first time they see your name, don't expect a personal reply.

Finally, talk to the gallery about the possibility of a “gallery talk” to speak about your work during the exhibition run. Set the time for it early on, and include the date (or dates) in all of your press materials.

DURING:

Document the opening-night festivities for your social media accounts and your website. After the opening, continue to be present. Promote your “gallery talk,” your

opportunity to speak about your work during the exhibition run. You can also shoot installation views on your website homepage with “Currently on View: (Location)” providing dates, hours and driving/parking directions. Leave a book for comments and a sheet to capture contact details for those who wish to be added to your mailing list.

AFTER:

The images of the show will live on through your website, but if you have purchased your own frames, consider another venue that might be able to host the show following its launch, such as your local public library or community centers.

Remember to write and thank everyone who helped make your exhibition possible. Add the details to your résumé. Consider a follow-up to your targeted mailing list summarizing the event. Include exhibition views, testimonials and copies of press received—all great reasons to be further in touch with those individuals you hope will become your professional community. **EDU**

NIKON NEWS

Photographers and filmmakers looking to sharpen their technical skills and read up on new projects will find a great resource in Image Chaser <www.imagechaser.com>, a NikonUSA blog that hosts content written by photographers in the field. Contributors to Image Chaser include Nikon Ambassadors such as Bill Frakes, Lucas Gilman, Tamara Lackey, Sandro and Ami Vitale, in addition to other seasoned photographers. You can also keep up with new Nikon equipment on the site through product news and hands-on testing by photographers.

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Mary Virginia Swanson is an award-winning educator, author, mentor and entrepreneur in the field of photography. Visit her website at <www.mvswanson.com>



GOT A MARKETING OR BUSINESS QUESTION?

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