



ROCKY MOUNT  
IMPERIAL CENTRE  
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# How to Write an Art Exhibition Proposal

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Imperial Centre for the Arts & Sciences

# What We'll Cover

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- Artwork
- Venues
- Develop Your Artist Proposal
- Helpful Tips
- Pitfalls to Avoid
- Q&A



*Clay Pots, Clay Sculpture: Mark Gordon, Fall 2017*

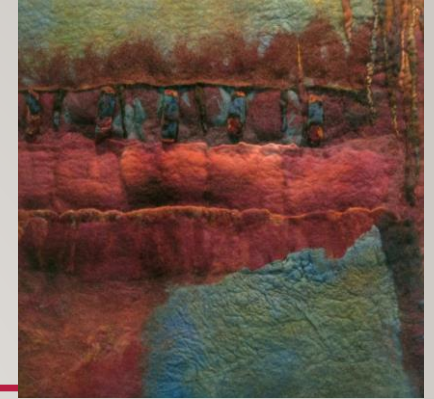
# The Artwork

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Left: Artwork by  
Karen Healy

Right: Artwork by  
Sharon Parker



- Point of View, Theme, Message
  - What makes your work unique/one-of-a-kind?
  - What are you trying to say through your work?
  - Who is your audience?
- Content
  - Is it cohesive?
  - Does it have visually interesting qualities?
  - Does it reflect your point of view (or whatever quality you have stated makes your show unique)?
- Practical
  - Can you reasonably package and transport your work?
  - Do you have enough to fill a space?
    - If you have too much, how will you choose what is added and what to remove? (Are you willing to work with the venue on this?)
    - If you have too little, will you have time to create more in time for a show? Or consider a group exhibition.



# Find Venues For Your Work

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- Know what you're looking for
  - Who's your audience?
  - Exposure?
  - Sales?
- Do your research
  - Know what the venue is looking for. Are you a good fit?
  - Tailor your proposal/materials for the venue.
- Some options
  - Museums
  - Galleries
  - Art Councils
  - Other venues looking for artists
    - Consider libraries and other public spaces in your home town.



# Develop Your Artist Proposal: Resume

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- Last thing I look at
  - Not universal, this is sometimes the first thing venues will consider.
- What do I look for?
  - Where does the artist live?
  - Contact information they might have left off elsewhere.
  - Does the artist have experience working with a gallery?
  - Would the artist be able to do a program/workshop?



Four Ways With Wood: Mike Smith, Spring 2017



# Develop Your Artist Proposal: Artist Statement

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*Women of the Red Earth: Tonya Locklear and Margie Labadie, Summer 2017*

- Second thing I look at
- If it's done well, the statement often goes on the Gallery Guide.
- What do I look for?
  - Is it well written?
  - Who is the artist?
  - Why is their work special?
    - Message, theme, etc.
  - Do they connect with an audience?
- The statement should be one full page max, half page is ideal.



# Develop Your Artist Proposal: Samples of Your Work

- First thing I look at
  - This is the most important part of a proposal, in my opinion.
- What do I look for?
  - Does it fit with our visitation/community?
    - Who will want to see this? Is it appropriate for families/children?
  - Does it fit with our space/venue?
  - Is it exceptional in some way?
    - Innovative, different, unique, etc.
  - Is it marketable?
- Include previous exhibit photos (if you have them)



*To Contemplate What Lies Behind Us: Susan Fecho, Fall 2019*



# Develop An Artist Proposal: Cover Letter

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- Not required at the Imperial Centre
- Consider this an introduction
  - Cover letters are a good way to say “hello” to whoever’s reading it
- Cover letters are a great place to add additional, pertinent information
  - Size requirements
  - Availability (flexibility is important)
  - Special requirements
    - TV, projectors, etc.
  - List educational elements
    - Willingness to do a talk or give a workshop.





# Helpful Tips



## The Artist Proposal

- Have someone else read your proposal
  - Readability, clarity
  - Check for typos, hard to read, too long
  - Ask them: Would you host this exhibit?
- Include a “cover letter”
  - The more information you provide, the better.
  - Offering to give a talk is a plus!
- Clearly labeled attachments, easy to navigate and print
- Follow instructions
- Send strong images that represent your work

## General Tips

- Be Professional!
  - Treat your art like a business
- Read the contract carefully and ask questions
  - Stipends, commission, etc.
- Be reliable/on time
- Network!
  - Go to the receptions, meet other artists, introduce yourself to venue staff.
- Submit to juried shows

# Some Things To Avoid!

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- Demands
  - EX: Timeframe
  - Overall, **don't be rude or unreasonable**
- Send information that wasn't requested or send less than what's asked for
- Repeatedly send your proposal
  - Follow ups are okay
- Drop in unexpectedly with your portfolio
  - Or take it out during an event, etc.
- Leave your business card and hope for the best.
- Expect the venue will do the work if you just give them your website information.





# QUESTIONS?

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Thank you for joining my session today!

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