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**A HANDBOOK FOR DEVELOPING AN EXHIBITION GUIDE FOR A STUDENT
UNION ART GALLERY**

by

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A Thesis Submitted to the Faculty of the

SCHOOL OF ART

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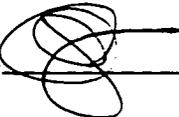
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ABSTRACT

This thesis is a narrative of the development and design of an exhibition guide entitled *Exhibition Guide for the Student Artist*. The guide was created for use with student artists who will exhibit at the Union Galleries. The contents of the Exhibition Guide were based on an analysis of data collected from questionnaires administered to university students and curators of community galleries. The data were compared for common themes and threads. A series of questions about exhibiting emerged which formed the basis for the guide. The purpose of the guide is to help art students, new to the exhibition process, and to encourage their professional development. *The Exhibition Guide for the Student Artist* will be publicized by the Arizona Student Unions in January 2003.

CHAPTER 1

Overview

Introduction

The purpose of this thesis was to develop an exhibition guide for student artists. The guide was developed from research on student artists and information from galleries in my community. This project also allowed me to draw on my background, research interests and experience as a curator of a University art gallery and create an exhibition guide for new artists. I followed two students through their first solo exhibition and between my observations, their responses to a post exhibition questionnaire and the input of area galleries, I developed a guide that will be used as a supplement to the exhibition application for the Union Galleries.

Background

After struggling to find a program where I could study fine art and pursue a graduate degree in education, I entered the University of Arizona's Division of Art Education. The art education program provided me with an opportunity to explore the fundamentals of art and immerse myself in undergraduate studio art courses, which had not been available in my undergraduate career as an elementary education major. It was enlightening to be a graduate student in art education and to be involved in constant dialogues about genuine art curriculum while at the same time being a student in the entry level studio courses. I sometimes witnessed the struggles of undergraduate students majoring in studio art as they often seemed overwhelmed by the enormity of their field of study.

Along with my studies at the University, I was given the opportunity to be Graduate Student Technical Support (GSTS) to the galleries curator of two different galleries, the Union Galleries in the student union and the Joseph Gross Gallery in the School of Art at the University of Arizona. The position allowed me to work in each gallery. Between my studio course work, my graduate career, working as a graduate assistant in the gallery, and my background in education, I was able to develop a holistic understanding of how art is studied and exhibited on campus. I began to think about how, in my role with the galleries, I could help student artists gain confidence in and develop an understanding of gallery practices and the exhibition process. Unfortunately, there was no guide to help students when they were interested in exhibiting their work. There were elective courses offered in the School of Art that engage students in career development and gallery management but the exhibition process is not the focus of these courses. Given my role as a GSTS I felt that I was in a position to help student artists. Outside of these elective courses and conversations with faculty, there were few ways in which students could access information about exhibiting their work. The missing pieces needed to be addressed and I felt I was in a position to explore them further.

I started working in the GSTS capacity in the fall of 1998. I was not familiar with gallery practices or management but the curator was incredibly experienced and knowledgeable, not to mention patient. She shared her knowledge with me and allowed me to work in every curatorial capacity of the job; thus I received much hands on experience. This experience included installing shows, arranging schedules of gallery monitors, training students and interns during installations, organizing receptions, and completing mailings and signage. After my two years in the position of GSTS, the

curator resigned from the University, and so I was assigned as her replacement and began to curate in the Student Union Galleries. At this time the Student Union building was close to being torn down (a new Union was planned) but I was still required to oversee the upcoming shows, which had been scheduled by the former curator.

Delays in the construction of the new union building allowed me to keep the Union Galleries open beyond the time allotted for the previously scheduled shows. Thus there were gaps in the schedule that I could fill with exhibitions. I consulted with the union staff to see if we could use this time to exhibit student work, and it was agreed that this was a good opportunity to feature work from students in the School of Art. I distributed a call to artists throughout the School in hopes of finding some student artists who had a body of work ready to show.

The Union Galleries consisted of three exhibition spaces. The Union Gallery was an enclosed and secure area on the first floor of the Student Union and closed due to construction prior to the development of this project. The Arizona and Rotunda Galleries were both in open areas of the union. There were four exhibition spaces to fill, two were in the Arizona Gallery and two were in the Rotunda Gallery. Each exhibition was for a four-week period. By the entry closing date, I had received about fifteen portfolios from both graduate and undergraduate students. Since this was my first experience curating and many of those who applied were acquaintances of mine from the School of Art, I formed a small users committee of fellow student union employees to review the artwork. As a group, we chose the top four artists. Of the four, two were painters of large-scale paintings so they were scheduled in the Arizona Gallery, which can accommodate larger works. The other two, a mixed media artist and a print artist, were scheduled in the

Rotunda Gallery. All four applicants were undergraduate School of Art students, ranging in age from their early twenties to late fifties. There were three female artists and one male. It was evident through a slide review and reading the artists' statements that the artists and their artworks were diverse in personality and style.

For three of the artists, this was their first opportunity to have a solo exhibition. As I worked with the artists, I realized that many experienced significant emotions, frustrations, excitement, and confusion during the planning and hanging of their exhibitions. Therefore, I began to design and implement this project.

Rationale

My experience with these student artists peaked my interest as a teacher, an art student, and a curator. Given that I was noticing a difference in working with senior fine art students I began to think about how the School of Art was preparing art students for the professional world of exhibitions. I was still completing my undergraduate studio work and had not experienced any direct instruction on professional development. I was, however, learning a great deal from my role as a campus curator. I wondered if these student artists exhibiting in the union hadn't had some guidance from me in the exhibition process, how they would have fared in putting their shows together. I walked through the exhibition process at length with these individuals and realized that this was not a traditional curator and artist relationship. However prepared these students were when they applied to the Union Galleries, I wanted them to walk away with full knowledge of how an exhibition is built. Whether this was my responsibility as a curator or not I wanted to make all of the essential elements that go into a successful show available to

student artists so that they could gain confidence during the transition from student artist to becoming an exhibiting artist.

With all of these thoughts in mind, I began to research student artists' transition from being a student to becoming an exhibiting artist. This research led to further examination of the relationship between curators and artists, traditional galleries and alternative spaces, the career development of new artists, and responsibility of artists in the exhibition process.

The Union Galleries Environment

Based on the literature available, I discovered that non - traditional galleries or alternative spaces often feature new artists. To better understand the Union Galleries' role in this project, I have included how the galleries are defined in the exhibition packet (see Appendix A for full text) given to interested artists as well as how the Union Galleries fit in the vision of the Memorial Student Union:

The galleries heighten awareness of both current and ongoing issues and creative processes, which encourages open dialogue and personal introspection.

Approximately 32,000 people visit the Union Galleries per year. The gallery spaces have the prime advantage of high exposure in one of the busiest buildings on campus. Both professional and student artists are encouraged to show their work in these spaces (Gallery Exhibition Packet, p. 1).

As a member of the Association of College Unions International and based on the 1956 Role of the College Union statement, the UA Student Union is committed to the development of a campus community and is intended to "complement the academic experience through an extensive variety of cultural, social, and recreations programs (see

appendices C and D For Arizona Student Unions Mission and ACUI (Arizona Student Unions, June 2001))." At the core of the Union's values lies the incorporation of student centered participatory decision making.

While the statement on the Union Galleries themselves is broad, it does address the high visibility of the spaces, which allowed, especially in the case of these unknown student artists, for a greater exposure of the artist in these spaces. The Arizona and Rotunda Gallery each held at least nine exhibitions per academic year. They were both in unsecured lounge areas within the building and focused on two dimensional work by student, regional, and national artists. Because the spaces were also for student lounge and study, they were not versatile in terms of media that could be displayed. Neither were commercial spaces, pieces were often listed for sale, but there was no emphasis on sales or commission.



FIGURE 1.1 Arizona Gallery and study lounge - second floor Memorial Student Union



**FIGURE 1.2 Rotunda Gallery and commuter lounge - third floor
Memorial Student Union**

Many students frequented the galleries be it to study, eat or relax. While some might not have come with the intention of viewing the exhibition, they were none -the - less exposed to it and conversations started based on their reactions. The genuine nature of their dialogue with the artwork was questionable but this openness of the area took the experience out of a fine arts venue and made it a more public interaction.

The Memorial Student Union Mission Statement stands out in the case of art students in that it addressed the connection of academic learning and practical experience. The resources made available for art students in the former union building that incorporated their academic and practical skills were the Arizona and Rotunda Galleries. While their function was not exclusively to exhibit student work, students were welcome in the application process and were frequently exhibited. The high volume of visitors to the Student Union included a diverse population from various educational backgrounds and opportunities. For this very reason it was an ideal alternative space for exposing artists and heightening the public awareness of art in their daily lives.

Role of the Union Galleries Curator

Curators, by definition, are the directors or caretakers of an exhibition. The curator is often responsible for the selection, press, installation, reception and all other details outside of the creation of the artwork that surround an exhibition. Curators, however, exercise only the amount of control allowed in their situation. Freelance curators might move from venue to venue and work in more specific areas of the arts than a stationary curator. Some galleries or museums might select shows via committee or through a board of directors, allowing the curator to then follow through with the details of the exhibition. Since the role of the curator varies from situation to situation, I will examine their role in alternative spaces in the chapters that follow to allow for a comparison to my role at the Union Galleries.

As the Union Galleries curator I am responsible for the press, preparation of the gallery spaces, installation of the work, public receptions, security and all contracting and details that are a part of the exhibition process and the day to day management of the galleries and the Student Union Permanent Collection. The artwork on exhibit in the Union Galleries is decided upon by committee. This committee includes Student Union customers, staff, university students, and community members.

Methodology and Data Collection

My question that shaped the project was; what can I do as a curator of a campus gallery to help students exhibit their work and assist in their professional development? I needed to determine how I could find out what students need. It was essential that I find a way that I could utilize information based on real life experience of students rather than on my own subjective experience. In order to determine what I could do in the future of

the Union Galleries I needed to evaluate the student experiences that led me in this direction. I developed a set of student questions that would determine what elements of the exhibition process the students were prepared for and those they were not prepared for. I also added questions that would give me insight into the fears and struggles the students experienced while preparing and installing their exhibition in the Union Galleries. Each student was given a written form of these questions allowing him or her to reflect and expand on his or her experience. The questionnaires were then examined for common themes and threads.

Because of the nature of the Union Galleries and my limited experience as a curator, I developed a comparable questionnaire for local gallery curators. The intention of questioning local gallery curators was to see if a set of common expectations for artists would emerge, in relation to the application and exhibition process.

Strengths and Limitations of Project

One of the strengths of the project is that it explores the experience of the student artists and their reactions based on what they initially brought to the exhibition process and the knowledge it provided them toward future exhibits. The project has limitations because there is little research on this topic. The limited number of student questionnaires does not represent a large enough sample to be considered significant. The reliance on the students' experiences may not represent the experiences of all School of Art students. Another limitation is the few questionnaires from area galleries that were returned. This allows the few that responded to establish a standard for gallery spaces in the community that may or may not exist.

Organization of Chapters

There are three chapters that follow. Chapter 2 will include a review of literature, which documents research related to art students career development, traditional and alternative galleries, and exhibition guidelines. Chapter 3 discusses the methodology and narrative of the project and student exhibition guide. Chapter 4 will discuss the development of the student artist guide and the role this guide will play in the Union Galleries and its implications for the overall arts community.

CHAPTER 2

Review of Related Literature

Introduction

This chapter will discuss the students and their experience, traditional and alternative galleries, the philosophy of the student union and the purpose of developing an exhibition guide for the student artist.

Student Artists

Little research has been done on the exhibition of student artwork. In this review I will address the assumption that all new artists have a Masters of Fine Art. I will also discuss the emphasis placed on new artists building relationships with art professionals as a key to their success in exhibiting their artwork.

A viable choice for a student artist to apply for exhibition on our campus are the Union Galleries because of the frequent group exhibition opportunities and juried student exhibitions. "(The Union Galleries') Exhibitions are chosen by the Galleries Curator and the Exhibitions Committee. Proposals for exhibitions are accepted on an ongoing basis throughout the academic year (Exhibitions packet, p.1)"

The materials required for the application process stated in the Union Galleries Terms and Conditions are as follows:

The Union Galleries request an entry fee of \$5.00 for unsolicited proposals, payable by check to The Union Galleries. Applicants and invited exhibitors are asked to submit up to 20 slides, an artist's statement, resume or biography and other supporting materials. Slides must be clearly labeled with artist's name, title,

medium, and dimensions (height x width x depth). Include a self-addressed, stamped envelope for the return of these materials.

The above stated materials are all items an art student would have available following their portfolio review. Unfortunately, the actual discussion of how to pursue the exhibition of work is left uncovered. Students are required to take in depth courses on methods, media, and critique but the business of art courses that exist within the curriculum are not only elective but also difficult to fit into an already full schedule. The existence of such courses is vital to the student's development as a professional. In a similar course offered at the School of the Museum of Fine Arts, Boston, Susan Jane Belton takes her students on a tour of the profession of art with dealers, consultants, and curators in the classroom discussing their roles.

Belton sees her goal as providing students with a thorough grounding in the nuts and bolts of maintaining an art career, via detailed sessions on every situation an artist might encounter. "There are a lot of barriers to being able to make a living, get art made, and manage an art career, and this program is designed to hurdle you over all those barriers," she says. Topics include resumes, artist's statements, and how to approach galleries. Belton also explores alternative exhibition venues such as nonprofit spaces and artist co-ops (Metazatos, p 64).

The how to of approaching galleries is an important highlight of this course. There are a wide range of galleries to chose from and faculty and curators can play an important role in guiding students in the right direction. Experienced professions have a strong sense of the personalities of local gallery spaces and some perception of their

expectations. The tie in with faculty is a vital part of this equation and some members of the faculty will be more willing than others. A unique example of how student artists thrived comes from Southern California. The presence of multiple art schools in one area and its undeveloped art market allow for a healthy relationship between faculty and students.

Ironically, the lack of local critical publishing combined with a limited art market were actually powerful formative factors for Los Angeles area art schools, according to David Bunn, who studied at UCLA and is now an associate professor at USC ", The schools began to flourish as a kind of market replacement, " notes Burns. "Artists were teachers and a certain energy in production and discussion took place more and more in art schools. During the '80s, no right minded artist in New York would admit to stopping to teach, whereas many of the most internationally visible artist who were living and working in Southern California were teaching"(Miles, p 13).

This adolescent market spurred not only artists to teach but also students to create their own fate:

"You had promising local students staying here for school and promising students from all over coming here, and then many of them staying after finishing school," enthuses Gray, adding that, "with so many schools, and so many former students keeping in contact, it became an amazing support system" (Miles, p13).

And while the faculty and local art professionals can encourage students in the right direction through courses or mentoring, another factor, seen in the Southern

California art schools, is the establishment of friendships and collaboration with other students.

"How do you do it? Is always the big question for people getting out of school, and the answer is that you and all your friends have to figure it out and do it."

Bunn concurs. "The scene has always been about artists and their friends and colleagues--lots of time to talk, hang out, to look at each others work, to create venues for that association to happen--a lot like art school," he notes (Miles, p 13).

As students, the collaborative effort is a place to begin, especially if no direct guidance is available. Much can be said for learning from one another and piecing together a show. "Lerner suggests that artists choose a few works to show and then focus on exhibiting"(Willard, p 13). The advise to a student artist is to seek an alternative gallery because the beginning of an artist's career is more likely to be a rough one and the traditional commercial gallery needs assurance that the work will sell. A wonderful statement on the true essence of student art is found in an article by Linda Weintraub who experimented with some exhibitions in the campus museum. "For example, in order for exhibitions to become integral to studio art education, it is necessary to divert emphasis from products to producing. These exhibitions present art as evidence of transitive activities, not static states" (Weintraub, p 36). While the student artist may not see and understand the process and timeframe involved in the transition from student to professional, galleries and museums can do their part in the education of both artist and public about this process. This can happen through exhibiting a variety of media and

providing some background on each or perhaps a veteran artist's work from student years through present.

The potential downside of this mixing of school and commerce, cautions Gray, is that young artists surrounded by stellar faculties (most of whom took a long time to reach their stature) and peers making fast inroads into the marketplace begin to view being an artist as a quick chance to make it big rather than a life choice centered around long-term output and involvement in community discourse (Miles, p 13).

Art professionals in the university setting have some responsibility to being an active part of student development. The potential for early burnout or misunderstanding of the road to success can deter promising artists. Exhibiting the process and supporting their transition through application materials and intentional solicitation of student artists can also encourage the student's confidence to keep plugging along because success comes in many forms and over a range of years.

Many student artists will go on to an MFA program. The concentration of faculty interaction at this level of study differs considerably for most BFA programs. In the world of art professionals, it is assumed that artists carry this terminal degree because this appears to be a significant time of growth for the student artist.

...four basic questions that get asked in subtle variations whenever one mentions an artist someone hasn't heard of before: What's the work like? Where does the artist live/work? Is the artist showing somewhere? Where did the artist attend graduate school? The last one always catches me a little off guard-though when I stop to think about it, realize it's a question I ask as much as anyone else-not so

much because it might embody the suggestion that the school name signifies something about an artist of whom one has only just heard, but more because it carries with it the presumption that practicing artists have MFA Degrees (Miles, p 13).

There is a considerable amount of research on the MFA, a great deal of which discusses the overwhelming number of individuals pursuing MFAs in a limited marketplace. Unfortunately, the general art student is overlooked. As a professional working in a university gallery, however, I see tremendous opportunities for both the artworld and student artists if some level of focus is applied to making our campus galleries open to the process and learning that exists in the exhibition of various media and transitions of student art.

Defining Traditional and Alternative Galleries

In order to discuss the implications of an undergraduate visual arts degree, we must look in depth at the stages of professional development. Traditionally, an artist seeks commercial representation to publicize and sell their artwork. Commercial galleries and dealers seek to represent art that they can sell and generally profit between 30 and 50 percent of the sale. This system can challenge artists financially; moreover for the young or unconventional artist, it may be difficult to find a niche in the art market (i.e., hard to find representation). This conundrum was the impetus of the alternative movement. Dating back to the 1960s and 70s, the alternative movement has had many faces and can most commonly be defined as noncommercial. The general need arose simply to give artists without commercial representation an opportunity to gain exposure. Many galleries were unwilling to exhibit radical contemporary artists or emerging artists.

An early example of this is Artist's Space in Soho. "Artist's Space, founded in 1972, grew out of conversations between Trudy Grace and Irving Sandler about the need for a resource to support, exhibit, and promote young artists whose work was not commercially viable" (Canning, p. 8). Alternative spaces vary from artists' warehouses to office buildings to private homes. According to Christopher Willard (1998), "public exhibition is also possible at numerous alternative venues, such as libraries, bank lobbies, office buildings, corporate lunchrooms, and store windows. In fact, the number of venues available to show artwork is as limitless as an artist's imagination" (p.12). An example of this is 57 Hope, an exhibition space housed in the artists' studio of Colin Keefe, Mary Magsanen, and Stephen Hillebrand. They invite exhibitions of unknown artists. "57 Hope's democratic approach seeks to show as much art as possible while balancing different ideas within an informal setting" (Canning, p.11). And in Los Angeles, many artists have taken to showing work in their own home in an attempt to expose the many young artists that exist in the area that, despite the overwhelming number of galleries to exhibit in, still struggle. "Given the number who have generously transformed their living quarters into exhibition space throughout the nineties, one could say that this has been the decade of the home gallery in LA" (Spaid, p. 15). Spaid goes on to discuss what might be considered an extreme alternative space at the Hollywood DMV in 1998, "Jamie Bush and Michele Schroeder have organized *While U Wait*, a series of six week exhibits that begins with 'Time Travel', an exhibit curated collaboratively by Michelle Guy, Soo Kim, Karen Reitzel, and Brent Zerger, and is followed by their independent curatorial endeavors" (p.17).

Alternative Spaces exist nationwide. Another example, Lump, in Raleigh, North Carolina has monthly shows as well as film screenings and live bands. "One of the more exciting exhibition spaces in the area, Lump makes a great effort to show young, decidedly "cutting edge" artists and often shows the work of artists from other states in conjunction with local artists "(Dougherty, p.21).

These alternatives cater to all genres of art and allow opportunities for emerging artists to exhibit while not compromising their art in order to increase its commercial value. There is a growing appreciation for new genres in the constantly evolving art world. While those who prefer mainstream art still exist and have a strong hand in the market, alternative spaces are opening doors for the untraditional and unknown.

The Union Galleries falls under the general definition of alternative space in that on more occasions than not, the artists shown are not represented in a commercial gallery. In the case of the student artists included in this project, these shows were an introduction of the artists to the Tucson community.

Traditional Galleries

"Museum curators and other scholars who work with them are intellectuals who have absorbed the values of their peers. They have a mandate to be provocative innovative, and the leaders in their respective fields"(Rice, p 53). Art professionals in traditional museums and galleries are faced with the pressures of pleasing the public and keeping up with their colleagues. Not to mention the pressures of the for profit galleries keeping work moving therefore paying the rent. For all of these reasons, traditional galleries are a challenging place for any artist, especially the student artist. The expectation is that artists have established a fair market value and their work will sell.

Not to mention that the artist has a strong body of work and a keen sense of professionalism. While galleries are a great venue for artists to show their work, often times they are not able to take a chance on the unknown. "Contemporary art is a clear reflection of institutional value systems, or expert decisions about what constitutes good art. As a result, it forces visitors to confront the difference between their personal definition of art and the institutional definition" (Rice, p53).

There are commercial galleries that are more willing to reach out to up and coming artists and do so in the hope of finding the next great thing. In this case the gallery works to support and announce the artist to stir some attention. Collectors and agents might frequent such spaces scouting out new talent.

One of the greatest challenges to a curator working with living artists is to remain open to new ideas. The curator is the advocate for the artist in presenting a work of art for acquisition or exhibition and must navigate the uncharted path between the present and the future (Moser, p 171).

While galleries rarely solicit student artists, students can seek the advice of these professionals. Visiting galleries is an important part of the education of any artist because it not only encourages young artists to explore varied media, it also allows them to get a sense of what particular galleries look for or exhibit frequently. If students are able to connect with art professionals it can be beneficial to determining where they might seek to show their work.

"Feedback from an engaged and thoughtful curator can serve as an important touchstone for an artist seeking to assess his or her own work. A curator can serve as a sounding board for an artist's ideas in the development stage, or the

curator's comments might help clarify an artist 's accomplishments and suggest new directions for exploration. Sometimes a curator can offer practical advise, such as the names of galleries that might be interested in showing an artist's work, or a curator might agree to write a letter of recommendation for a grant or tenure" (Moser, p 167).

Some elements of traditional galleries are more cut and dry then others. Students can research for months or years what galleries show in their space or how to pursue a show but some elementary facts when looking to show your work are more easily addressed.

The works should be framed and ready to hang, and although I rarely censor, I try to choose works that are in good taste. Artists should be aware when applying for a show that I do my calendar a year in advance (Willard, p 14).

Galleries are changing with time and the demands on the art market. Technology is one element that has altered the audience. The most easily accessible space to exhibit currently is the internet. Everyone from student to veteran can easily put his or her work up for a much larger audience. This audience while vast, has its limits. The engagement of the experience for the audience is one limit and another is population that cannot access this technology. Along with this technology are new media that challenge the institutional view of art held by many professionals.

The use of mass culture is more than a mere enthusiasm for the popular; it is an anti-elitist strategy which runs alongside showing art outside conventional gallery spaces, and the refusal to create valuable, durable art - objects. The effect is a decided shift of power away from artworld professionals to the artists themselves

and to mass media. Even art criticism, though important, is no longer much about critique but mostly about column inches - often purchased in exchange for the placement of adverts or even works of art. As a consequence, criticism is in decline, giving comforting puffs to the favoured and entirely ignoring the rest (Stallabrass, p 79).

This challenges the role of art professionals and one would think it might ultimately benefit the student artist but that is left to be seen. According to Sheets, the strain that these changes are making affects artists, curators, and the audience. When confronting difficult or new work it appears everyone but a select few are confused. "Consulting a cross section of art world professionals - including artists, collectors, dealers, and museum curators and directors-revealed that even the experts often don't understand new work, at least on first encounter" (Sheets, p 130). The select few who run with the change are in fact children.

"I watch children in museums, especially looking at some of the so-called difficult work," he (Leonard Riggio) says. "They move freely throughout these pieces, and there's a joy of discovery. I don't think that to them the challenge is to understand but rather to observe and participate. Children might say, 'Wow, that's really neat,' or just shrug their shoulders, but they don't put their hands on their hips and say, 'I don't get'" (Sheets, p 132).

There is a leveling of the playing ground in the transition of the traditional gallery but one thing that remains is the need for funding so it is safe to say that as long as work sells, galleries will display it.

Alternative Spaces

"You have to create your own thing," says Nannette Pyron, a "visual communicator" in mixed media. Pyron recalled a spur of the moment art show organized by herself and a few other artist friends one fair summer's day back in the eighties. The show took place at a house set in the middle of the wheatfields near the Snake River in Washington state and the word was spread the way word is always spread in the country: by word of mouth. "We hung it on trees and clotheslines and set it on stumps," said Pyron as she described a day long, picnic like atmosphere (Meyer, p 22).

Gallery representation is difficult to come by for new artists. A gallery's first concern will be who is this artist and will their work sell? The challenges of finding exhibition space has plagued many artists to the point that they began to seek new spaces and create their own. Many started with a very basic and familiar space: their homes. "It's no accident that many of LA's strong galleries have come out of people's houses, apartments, garages or have started as a way to get one's friends together and do a show." (Miles, p13).

The use of one's own personal property to display art brings art to the masses instead of expecting the masses to come to art. It circumvents gallery gatekeepers and transportation considerations, freeing artists to turn down the volume of the internal critic even much lower. While it's true that the hottest alternative at the moment is cyberspace, rural areas still remain disconnected either economically or electronically (Meyer, p 23).

More artists started to visit and host alternative shows. Interest grew among artists and networks formed.

Aside from financial considerations, the need to be a part of a creative environment serving as a constant source of inspiration was just as important a concern for artists. Thus the collaborative, artist run space came into being, often acquiring a nonprofit status due to its noncommercial nature (Golou, Berin editors note to Miles, Christopher, 2000, p 13).

These new artist run venues not only enabled artists to represent themselves, it also challenged the institutional standard of art. The lack of commercial pressure encouraged more variety and the nature of these exhibitions were collaborative and experimental. "The current paligenesis of the artist run space is the self-sustaining art venue, committed to complete freedom in what it chooses to showcase" (Cohn, p 20). This freedom is encouraging for student artists.

The non-commercial definition of an alternative gallery fits the Union Galleries based on the terms and conditions statement, which refers to sales:

Although sales are not stressed, works can be listed for sale. The Union Galleries gratefully accepts a 25% donation from sales through the Galleries. If works are not for sale, please mark "NFS" and the insurance value.

It is clearly stated that sales are not stressed and any commission is a donation. This would not be typical in a traditional commercial gallery. The Union Galleries are provided on campus as more of a service for students and faculty by the Arizona Student Unions. It also fits into the alternative category because two of the three spaces included are open lounge areas that are available for study, dining, and relaxation. They are informal and comfortable.

I have the experience of working in both the gallery of the School of Art and the Student Union Galleries. The gallery spaces varied in layout, uses, audience, and artists. The union stands out because the open lounge function of the second and third floor galleries incorporated furniture, computers, the entryway of a large ballroom, and information racks. The lighting was not adjustable, the third floor incorporated stanchions to delineate between the computer stations and the artwork, and the walls were old and covered in cloth and years of bad patchwork. Despite the less than ideal conditions of these spaces, there were constantly people in and out of each of them. On a campus of 50,000 students, staff, and faculty, the student union is well used. The lounges were always abuzz with intentional and unintentional audiences who were confronted with various media and content from 6 am to midnight 7 days a week.

Despite the view that the alternative situations are merely transitional exhibition opportunities for artists awaiting gallery representation, artists on all levels benefit by the openness and spontaneity of unusual settings. If one buys the view that each new project leads to another, one's future work can't help but benefit from the excitement and discovery brought on by some wacky project (Spaid, p 17).

With the constant movement, the use of the gallery spaces in the student union by student artists allows for a new dialogue with peers, faculty and staff. Each space had an accompanying visitors comment area that not only provided the audience with more in depth information on the artist with their statement, resume, and biography, but also allowed for commentary. Each of the comment sheets was then passed onto the artist so that they might contemplate the reaction of their audience. This was not a log of institutional definitions of art. It was often raw commentary on the gut reaction of the

unintentional audience that visited the area that day. While the "untrained eye" of these individuals needs to be evaluated for what is, the reality of the situation is that these individuals engaged in some dialogue about the work and the artist will have a clear idea of whether or not what they were attempting to communicate flowed.

Student Union Philosophy

The student union plays a variety of roles on campus: food service, student programs, retail services, entertainment, and most importantly- a link between the classroom and real world experience as seen in chapter one in the mission of the Arizona Student Unions. Hands on experience in a large university union are limitless, crossing a great deal of the degrees offered to undergraduate students. For this reason, it is an ideal space for student artists to experience the various elements of exhibition of artwork. This is especially true because most alternative spaces' non-profit status leaves them in jeopardy of failing.

Yet as the alternative spaces have become an acceptable route for establishing an art career, funding from NYSC, the NEA and other governmental grants that helped to initiate the movement and then sustained it throughout the 1980s has been cut considerably (Canning, p9).

While non-profits struggle, the momentum of alternative spaces remains strong.

"This concern for providing an alternative to the alternative as a way of addressing what seems to be and increasingly decentralized and diverse art scene in which content, medium, and activism are intermingled had also led artist to form their own exhibition spaces...Noting that traditional alternative spaces have

become less flexible and commercial galleries less willing to take risks with young or unknown artists" (Canning, p 10).

The value of the student experience in unions across the world encourages the collaboration and inclusion of students. In the development of a mission statement for an exhibition space in student unions, ACUI encourages that staff ask the question ", How can you advance an understanding of the "business of arts" with the artists" (Beeland, p 8)?

"Successful arts programming can build bridges with academics, increase audiences in the union, provide passive and active learning opportunities, involve students in service learning and challenge union users to contemplate perspectives and attitudes new to them (Beeland, p 8).

"We are prompted to examine not only what contributes to the aesthetics of the building but also how visual art management, decision making, display space and support programming can significantly enhance fulfillment of the mission" ((Keintz and Rowlas) Beeland, p 8).

Exhibition Guide

The purpose of establishing an exhibition guide for student artist in the union gallery is quite simply for clarity.

The nature of the arts and the potential for artistic development and creativity make arts programming ripe for "communication problems". It is critical to determine presenters' and artists' responsibilities and clearly define them in advance of the program or exhibition. If you are working with student artists, it may be the first time they have had to translate their works into an exhibition or

performance or to define/explain it. The artists may have little or no "business experience" and be unfamiliar with contracts or with following deadlines. It is critical to have consistent information available about your facility, your expectations and firm deadlines in writing (Beeland, p 10).

The above mentioned elements that are important to a successful exhibit need always be approached with artists. The next step is to make this digestible for student artists. "But studio art students are often alienated by the information- dispensing, hand-off restrictions of museum display" (Weintraub, p 37). The culmination of the unions commitment to student learning, the alternative nature of the space and the suggestions offered by ACUI on forming concise guidelines for exhibition of art are the impetus for the development of a guide for the student artist on our campus. The student input from my case studies highlighted the missing pieces in their preparation for their exhibitions and encouraged me to evaluate their needs and the expectations of galleries in our area so that the information might carry over into their career beyond the Union Galleries.

Conclusion

Despite the limited literature on new student artists, it is clear from the review that students require the attention of veteran artists and faculty in order to succeed beyond their college career. By creating the exhibition guide, the Arizona Student Unions will fulfill the exceptions of the Association of College Unions International through establishing clear guidelines for artists and it will state the commitment a student union should have to its students. It is the product of simply listening to young artists and helping to incorporate our space into their education.

CHAPTER 3

Methodology and Project Narrative

Introduction

This project was led by the question of what I could do as a campus curator to encourage student exhibition and professional development at the University of Arizona. With this question in mind I decided to survey student artists and area galleries to determine how prepared student artists are for exhibiting their work in comparison to the expectations galleries have of artists during the exhibition process. By analyzing the readiness of students and gallery expectations, a student exhibition guide was developed to bridge any knowledge gap that exists between the two.

Research Questions

In the Union Galleries I was able to exhibit student artists' work and work with them hands on during the exhibition process. It was important to me, however, to leave an impression on their future as exhibiting artists. I wanted to provide answers for them that were not readily available and thus decided to create an exhibition guide for student artists. I needed to determine what questions and concerns students had that would be worth addressing in the guide. I decided to survey student artists with hands on experience in the Union Galleries to determine what questions surfaced during their experience. Some questions that I developed to assist in understanding the needs of student artists were:

How prepared were you to apply for a solo exhibition? What advice would you give to someone who was applying for a solo exhibition who had never done so

before? What experience and knowledge did you bring to the installation of your show and what did you walk away with? Having had time since this exhibition to reflect, what elements do you feel go into a successful exhibition? What do you feel are the artist's responsibilities in the exhibition process?

The complete student questionnaire is available in Appendix D.

I also sent questionnaires to curators of area galleries to determine if common application requirements existed in the community. Among the questions asked of the curators were:

What is required to apply for a solo exhibition in your gallery? What is the timeframe from submission of materials to the exhibition? What is the process between a show being selected and the opening of the exhibit? What do you feel are the artist's responsibilities in the exhibition process? What advice would you give to someone who was applying for a solo exhibition that had never done so before?

A complete set of gallery questions is available in Appendix E.

Data Collection and Analysis

Included in the data analysis are short backgrounds on the questionnaire participants. I felt that this information allowed for a holistic analysis of the responses and put the participants concerns and questions in perspective.

In order to determine what needed to be included in the exhibition guide I looked at the questionnaire responses of the student artists, and the gallery curators. The common responses of each participant group were then compared. The responses were put into table form and the breakdown of each follows.

Participants: Student Artists

The student participants in this project were in the last year of their program. In order to evaluate the students level of preparation to exhibit they first applied to exhibit in the Union Galleries by entering 10-20 slides, a resume, artist's statement and supporting materials. They were then selected during an exhibition committee review of the materials. Based on my observations of the student artists and my experience as a curator, I created a questionnaire for the students to determine how prepared the students were and what emotions they felt were associated with their exhibition experience. This questionnaire was emailed to the students within two months of the completion of their exhibition allowing them ample time to reflect on the experience. The complete questionnaire is included in Appendix D. There were four student artists on exhibit in the Union Galleries during this research. It was the first solo show for three students, of the three, two invested time in answering the questionnaire. These questionnaires were transcribed and compared for common answers and concerns.

Student artist #1

The student with the first slot in the Rotunda Gallery was in his early twenties and a senior in his last semester of his program. He was a mixed media artist exhibiting both painterly works and a large full wall installation. His work focused on the issues of identity. He was also working as an intern for a student gallery space associated with the

School of Art. He had installation experience both as an artist in group shows and as a coordinator of student work in the student gallery. He had established relationships with professors in the variety of genres he worked in and willingly sought criticism and exhibition opportunities. He had a full sheet of 35-mm slides prior to the call to artists in December and a strong proposal for the installation. His work was dark and whimsical. This combination mystified the committee and drew them to selecting him for an exhibition. He was clear in his intent and had a solid resume with prior group exhibitions. He had shown a piece in the Arizona Gallery during a student juried exhibit one year prior to his solo exhibition and was well prepared for the experience.

Student artist #2

The second artist to exhibit in the Rotunda Gallery was also in her senior year of her program. She was also in her early twenties and her preferred media was printmaking. The show had a consistent theme of distance in intimate relationships and incorporated sharp colors and playful, reoccurring icons. The artist had shown in group shows prior to this exhibition but had a great deal of unframed work and had to put extensive time and money into the matting and framing of this work. This was her first experience designing, laying out and installing her work and she was uncertain and surprised by the level of detail and time involved.

Participants: Gallery Curators

A questionnaire that paralleled the student questionnaire (see Appendix E) was then sent via mail to fifteen galleries in Tucson that function within the definition of alternative spaces. Of those fifteen, four were returned with in depth answers. These four were evaluated and compared for common answers.

The galleries that responded had the option of maintaining anonymity. Of the four galleries, gallery one can only be described as a downtown Tucson gallery space, gallery two remains anonymous, gallery three is a community gallery, and gallery four is in the lobby of a historic downtown Tucson hotel.

Student Artist Responses

As the questionnaires came in each was transcribed individually and then compared to corresponding questionnaires. In the case of the two student questionnaires, a Table was developed to compare the answers for common responses. A sample of this table follows on the next page with the complete table in Appendix F.

As the Table indicates, common responses in the student questionnaires range from very basic elements to complicated circumstances that vary from gallery space to gallery space. The students each pursued the exhibitions based on their body of work. The students felt the work was of high quality and contained an appropriate number of pieces to have a solo exhibition. These students had participated in group exhibits prior to this call to artists and were prepared with slides of their work. These students were active participants in their courses and were both asked to participate in exhibits and also sought out exhibition opportunities. They also felt the quality of the work was essential to the success of a show accompanied by the dynamics of the space and an open relationship with the curator. Despite their previous exhibition experience, these students felt the most unnerving element of accepting the show was the reality of having an audience view and respond to the work. In this particular circumstance they would be the only artists on display. This created a focus and scrutiny of their work that might not have existed in the group atmosphere.

TABLE 3.1 Student answer comparison (sample)

| Student Question | Student 1 Answers | Student 2 Answers | Common Answers |
|--|---|--|---|
| 1. Why did you pursue this exhibition? | I was and am interested in exhibiting my work so as to "get it out there." The exhibition was a great opportunity to exhibit work in a pretty well known space that was on the campus, so that other students/my peers could check out the work. The exhibition was also held near the end of the semester/beginning of the new semester- I had a bunch of new work that I had just finished and was extremely interested in getting feedback. | I saw the flyer in the hall and saw also that a close friend of mine was applying and I felt that I genuinely had a good chance of getting the show, as well as a desire to compete or size myself up against that friend of mine. In addition to those things I had been working on a large body of work compulsively for the year prior to the applications and so I had many pieces that I felt were both of show quality and of a very interconnected style, theme and conceptual basis. | Good body of work, to show work and all work had common theme |
| 2. How prepared were you to submit for a solo exhibition? (Did they have slides, a solid body of work, resume, artist's statement?) If so how did you prepare them? | I would say I was quite prepared to submit for a solo exhibition. I had slides, a solid body of work, resume, artist's statement etc. as well as some knowledge of the interworkings of the UA gallery system. I had taken the gallery management class, done gallery sitting, and had been coordinating the Lionel Rombach gallery. I also had experience submitting work for exhibition. I had taken slides myself as well as had peers and faculty feedback/help with the resume and artist statement process. I was also fresh off the "I just applied to six grad schools over the Christmas break and know how this stuff works" train. I prepared these materials with the help of peers and faculty members that I felt knew my work and had the knowledge and background to give me solid information on writing, slide quality, slide order, etc. | I was already well versed in showing with groups and so I already had slides and a resume as well as an artist's statement and I felt at the time that I had a very solid body of work. I did take some new slides and rewrite my statement and update my resume, when preparing for the actual handing in of the application I viewed all slides on a projector and organized them in a way that I found to be most striking and interesting. | Slides, resume, statement, body of work (suggest getting hands on experience in gallery, and talk to peers and faculty) |
| 3. What were your expectations in terms of actually getting a show and how it would come together at the time you submitted? | I really had little to no expectations because I had no idea how many people were submitting work, what the actual selection process was, how many shows were available, who would be looking at the work etc. I felt, at the time, that my | I had few expectations, other than a great desire to have the show and to be selected. | Expectations were none to wanting the show |

The students were also set back by the level of detail leading up to opening the show. A solo exhibition requires a great deal more from the artist than a group show, especially when they are asked to participate in the installation. It is time intensive and

can exhaust ones creativity and patience. The minute details such as wall text and press were left to the curator. Much of the marketing of the show relied on the artists returning all paperwork in a timely manner. It was an expensive and painstaking effort for the students to get the shows ready. Elements included in this process were touching up of work, framing, contracts, pricing, et al.

The student artwork pricing was based on emotion. The students tried to keep prices low so that the work might sell and kept in mind any expenses incurred in the art supplies needed to create these pieces. These students had seen other work on exhibit and this may or may not have played a role in the pricing. Overall, the students relied on their relationship with the curator in assisting them throughout the pricing and exhibition process. They were comfortable and able to ask questions along the way.

Neither of these students were required to take any business of art or exhibition/gallery management courses but student artist #1 had taken gallery management as a supplement to his coursework.

Each student felt more prepared for future shows after his or her first solo exhibit and that it was a benefit to his or her resume. They each continue to pursue exhibits but are focusing on group shows. The students felt they have exhausted the work they exhibited and need time to build a new body of work. They felt that the gallery's responsibilities include insurance, the coordinator/curator being open for questions, and press.

Gallery Responses

The four gallery questionnaires were also transcribed individually and then compared in table form in order to find common responses to the questions that paralleled

TABLE 3.2 Gallery answer comparison (sample)

| Gallery Question | Gallery 1 | Gallery 2 | Gallery 3 | Gallery 4 | Common Answers |
|--|---|---|--|--|--|
| 1. Does your gallery encourage the exhibition of beginning/student artists? | Yes, in group juried shows. | Yes, the work is judged on its own merit. | Yes – This year we've had four shows of either primarily or all U of A students. | We don't actively encourage them however we don't turn them away. However the Hotel shows mostly accomplished artists. | Three of four galleries – Yes |
| 2. What is required to submit for a solo exhibition in your gallery? | 20 slides, Resume, price list with dates, media and sizes, artist's statement, SASE (self-addressed stamped envelope). Usually the artist must have extensive exhibit record, but not always. | A resume, artist's statement and enough images to enable us to clearly define the artist's style. Usually around ten images are sufficient. | We only have group shows here of 3 or more artists. | Color photocopies or slides representing a complete body of work of at least 7 pieces. | Resume, artist's statement, 10-20 slides |
| 3. What percent of those submitting for a solo show are accepted? | 5% | People normally don't request a solo show. If we love the work and there is a sufficient amount of it we ask the artist if they would like to have a solo show. | N/A | Perhaps 20%. | ~12%, most of the galleries focus on group exhibitions |
| 4. What is the timeframe from submission of materials to the exhibition? What is the process between a show being selected and the opening of the exhibit? | It varies depending on how booked up we are. Can be from 2 months to 1 year before a show. | Our current timeframe is about 6 months. I feel comfortable with this timeframe because it allows artists needed time to prepare for their show and allows the gallery time to consider marketing possibilities unique to the exhibition. I feel that at 6 months there is still immediacy but also security that if changes need to be made time is allowed for. | The materials have been due in mid March. The slides are viewed and voted upon by a panel of artists and arts professionals, as well as a TPAC board member. At that time, the selected artist groups are notified and scheduled for the entire upcoming year. | There is no specific time frame; it depends on season, the work and available dates. The process is selection, notification, printing of invitations, sending press releases, hanging the exhibition, typing a list of works and or statement and having the opening | Between 2 and 12 months |

those asked of the student artists. A sample of this table (3.2) follows with the complete table in Appendix G.

The gallery questionnaires revealed that most of the alternative galleries were open to exhibiting student work. They require slides and biographical materials to

determine the show schedules and approximately 12% of those who apply for a solo exhibit are granted a solo exhibition. The timeframe from application for an exhibit, accepting a show and opening an exhibit ranges from 2 to 12 months. The galleries also see the curator and artist relationship as one that involves collaborators working together on the details and process. Artists' responsibilities, according to the galleries surveyed, include having work ready and meeting deadlines while the galleries' responsibilities include preparing the space and installation. The installation, however, requires the artist being able to understand how their work should be displayed and being able to articulate any special hanging instructions.

Frequent struggles between artists and curators from the gallery perspective include egos, nervousness, lack of attention to timelines, lack of professionalism, and knowledge of how to display the show. Pricing is left up to the artist for the most part with the gallery simply making suggestions. Galleries felt that a successful show is gauged by the quality of the work, PR and display. The galleries stressed the need for artists to attend to timelines and they in turn need to assure that the artist is pleased. Of the advice given by galleries to student artists the following were consistent: visit the space before applying, have slides ready, start with group shows, be cooperative, professional and prepared for rejection.

Overall Responses

The common student responses from Table 3.1 were then compared to similar responses from the gallery questionnaire (Table 3.2) in Table 3.3 (Appendix H) with a sample that follows:

TABLE 3.3 Comparison of common answers of galleries (G) to common answers of students (S) (sample)

| | |
|--|--|
| G2 What is required to submit for a solo exhibition in your gallery? | Resume, artist's statement, 10-20 slides |
| S2 How prepared were you to submit for a solo exhibition? (Did they have slides, a solid body of work, resume, artist's statement?) If so how did you prepare them? | Slides, resume, statement, body of work (suggest getting hands on experience in gallery, and talk to peers and faculty) |
| | |
| G3 What percent of those submitting for a solo show are accepted? | ~12%, most of the galleries focus on group exhibitions |
| S3 What were your expectations in terms of actually getting a show and how it would come together at the time you submitted? | Expectations were none to wanting the show |
| | |
| G5 What is the relationship between the artist and curator during the exhibition process? | Collaborative, must work together on press, installations, and the schedule |
| S5 What about your relationship with the curator made the processes involved in your exhibition easier/more difficult? | Efficient, easygoing, friendly, comfortable, and were able to ask questions of the curator |
| | |
| G6 What do you feel are the artist's responsibilities in the exhibition process? | Meet deadlines, work on/mail out invitations, have work ready to hang |
| S16 What do you feel are the artist's responsibilities in the exhibition process? | Good work, slides, installation experience, statement, resume, good invitations |

The gallery questionnaires and student questionnaires often reiterated similar answers. Common unknowns for students were similar to difficulties gallery saw in with working with artists. The preparation requirements for exhibition were a common element for galleries and students: slides, resume, and statement. Students seemed to have undefined expectations when applying for an exhibition but mentioned being prepared for rejection. Galleries mentioned that only 12% of artists applying for solo exhibits get solo exhibits which explains why artists need to be prepared for the rejection.

Both galleries and student artists spoke of the relationship between curator and artist as collaborative. The student artists said the ability to comfortably ask questions of the curator was important despite any of their previous experience. Galleries were most

concerned with attention to timelines and egos getting in the way of being productive during the exhibition process. Both students and galleries felt the artist had the responsibility of making announcements for the show or at least a role in making them. Both also agreed that the gallery is responsible for the space being ready, the PR and the installation of the show.

There was an expectation by galleries that artists know how to display the work and the students felt they brought this experience to the installation. The stresses felt by students were common and similar to those galleries had witnessed, focusing on nervousness, timelines, details, and the final product. A successful show, in the eyes of both the galleries and student artists, overlapped in that the artist has an overall good feeling when done, the space looks good, and the work is of high quality. Advice for those applying for the first time from both perspectives was be ready with slides, talk to professionals, be professional and be prepared for rejection.

Further Analysis and Common Threads

In analyzing the questionnaire responses, I took into consideration that the final product of this project would be an exhibition guide for student artists applying at the Union Galleries and throughout campus. The concentration of this analysis was on the reoccurring statement that students wanted to be able to ask questions during the exhibition process. I focused on the questions and concerns that arose during the questionnaire in an effort to answer questions for the students that curators might not take the time to answer for them. I also paid close attention to elements that were mentioned by galleries that contradicted or were overlooked by students in their responses to the questionnaire.

Common threads in the student and gallery questionnaires were artist nervousness, attention to detail, installation, the importance of paperwork and PR, timelines, relationship of the curator and artist, persistence, rejection, common requirements for application, and a lack of emphasis on pricing. These areas therefore became areas of emphasis for the student exhibition guide.

A base with which to start this analysis is the conclusion by both artists and gallery curators alike that a strong body of work is the impetus of an exhibition's acceptance and success. What determines a strong body of work is highly objective but can be personally concluded through exposure to a multitude of genres and media as well as peer and professional critiques.

The nervousness of the student artists concentrated on the response and scrutiny of the audience viewing their solo exhibition. Based on the review of literature these nerves might easily be addressed by the student by seeking the input of faculty and gallery staff. Students can seek the advice of professionals and peers to overcome or cope with the initial fear as well as visit galleries to gain some perspective on their work and how it will be accepted by the community.

The extensive details and paperwork involved in the exhibition process are easily addressed if they are clearly stated from the initial acceptance of an exhibition. If the contract or what supporting materials are necessary is not clear to the artist in the initial conversation with the curator, the artist needs to be aware of what is traditionally expected so that they can ask clarifying questions of the curator. This information is easily obtained by looking at the curators questionnaire responses from this project and essential elements addressed by the curators include insurance, timelines,

announcements, reception responsibilities, pricing, installation, and control of appropriateness of artwork on display if a sensitive subject matter is addressed.

Among the more technical aspects of exhibition that was not expanded upon in the questionnaires was pricing of artwork. Since this is a vital part of the insurance value and sale price of artwork it is a question that student artists will need to address. Unfortunately little to no advise was made available on this subject by the galleries surveyed. It will, however, be addressed in the exhibition guide.

The responses that addressed the relationship of curator and artist reiterated the same themes: communication, open mindedness during the exhibition process, and professionalism. These elements can be discussed but ultimately come with experience.

Because the requirements to apply for an exhibition and installation were consistent in the overall questionnaire responses, they will be addressed in detail in the exhibition guide but do not require analysis here because they can be discussed via simple definition and diagram of gallery standards already in place.

CHAPTER 4

Exhibition Guide

I understand as a gallery curator that I am in a unique position of examining the day to day workings of professional artists. I also understand that the demands on the Union Galleries are fewer than those placed on a traditional gallery and this flexible aesthetic and financial opportunity allows me to experiment with student work. I feel that through this work I can witness a variety of levels of student development and help build upon studio education by exposing students to the logistics of exhibiting their work in a gallery. The Exhibition Guide for the Student Artist was developed for this reason. This chapter presents an overview of the exhibition guide, its format, design and its intended use in the Union Galleries.

Design of Exhibition Guide

Format

This guide is specific for use in the Union Galleries in the Student Union at the University of Arizona. The Exhibition Guide for the Student Artist is based on the common questions and concerns of students and gallery curators that emerged during the project. The format highlights these common questions on the first page of the guide so the artist is immediately aware of the issues that will be addressed. An example of some of the questions follows:

- How do I know if I am ready to exhibit my work?
- Where should I apply for a show?
- How do I deal with contracts?
- Who installs the show? How?

These questions are repeated in the body of the guide's text in bold and are then answered based on the gallery curators' questionnaire answers, common advice from the literature review and my own experience as a curator. An example from the Exhibition Guide for the Student Artist follows:

What do I need to apply for an exhibition?

To include in your application:

- 10-20 35mm professional quality slides (see diagram of how to label slides)
- A short biography
- An Artist's Statement
- Resume or Curriculum Vitae (CV)
- SASE – self addressed stamped envelope (for the return of materials)

(See in – process design layout for complete body of the Exhibition Guide for the Student Artist in Appendix I)

Designing and Publishing the Guide

After establishing reoccurring questions and answers to be addressed in the Exhibition Guide, the actual design was turned over to the Student Union's professional marketing team. The marketing team determined who might use this guide, as it was determined it would be visual artists, they carefully considered the layout. A graphic designer, who is both a university student and an employee of the marketing department, was assigned to develop the design of the guide. The designer took into consideration that the guide needed to be easy to read, visually appealing, and conformed to the standard postage size. The designer and I discussed incorporating the layout of the new Union Gallery into the guide but we were unable to find a descriptive blueprint.

Therefore, the designer decided to create a reoccurring icon of the general shape of the new gallery that could be used in the guide. The Arizona Student Unions and University of Arizona trademark logos were added to the final design.

The design was then evaluated and approved by myself and the Student Union's marketing staff. Before publication, however, some changes may be made by the Student Union marketing staff to complete the overall appeal they are aiming for in the design. These changes can include visual elements, text layout, and text editing. The final text and format of the guide will be edited and approved by myself and the senior marketing coordinator. The Exhibition Guide, at the time of the writing this paper, is scheduled to be published in January 2003.

Use of the Exhibition Guide

The publication of this guide will coincide with the opening of the new Union Galleries. The first student exhibition will be the annual juried student exhibition. The exhibition will feature 20 to 25 student artists. Those students who apply will have an opportunity to receive and use the guide.

It is intended that the Exhibition Guide will accompany the various student exhibitions held in the Union Galleries, and student artists who make inquiries to the Union Galleries will be eligible to receive the guide as well. The Union Galleries website (<http://www.union.arizona.edu>) will host a professional and student artist application link that will display the Exhibition Guide on line. During the first year of the Union Galleries Exhibition Calendar, exhibiting student artists will be asked to fill out a survey and indicate whether they found the guide helpful.

In March 2003, I will be presenting on the Exhibition Guide at the National Conference of the Association of College Unions International (ACUI), Chicago, Illinois. My session is called Enabling Student Artists, and it will be attended by Union professionals from across the United States, Australia, Canada, and Europe. The individuals who will attend this session work in Unions that may or may not have art galleries. These individuals may also be from institutions that are not as committed to displaying art as the UA Student Union. However, many of these individuals want to learn more about the role of art in Student Unions. I am hopeful that the guide will promote an exciting conversation about issues related to Student Union exhibition. The larger goal is also to highlight the necessity for art galleries and exhibition as a part of the overall mission of ACUI.

Discussion of the Exhibition Guide

The development of the guide is based directly on the unique opportunities available in the Union Galleries. I realize that there are a great deal of factors that were not addressed in this project that would further the development of student artists. The largest conflict in the development of this guide is the lack of discussion of the business of art or the art of professionalism. I chose to generalize and start simply with a guide that will allow students artists to face the immediate demands on them in exhibiting their work.

I am focusing on the steps an art student needs to take to exhibit in the Union Galleries. This focus allows me to help students in the Union Galleries as well as those in comparable Student Unions on other college campuses throughout the thirteen regions of the Association of College Unions International (ACUI).

Another important element to be considered in student exhibition is the question: What is worth exhibiting? This is beyond the scope of this project because the committee-based program at the Union Galleries does not have set aesthetic criteria. The committee relies solely on the guidelines established in the exhibition packet, which requires 10-20 slides, an artist's statement, resume and other supporting materials. This in combination with the weight and dimension limitations of the space is the guiding force in the selection of art for exhibition. The reason for this loose criterion is to allow for an aesthetic that reflects the individuals on the committee, which consists of individuals from a variety of backgrounds that represent the campus community. The aesthetic of the union spaces reflects the tastes of union visitors more so than that of the fine art professional. The reliance on the curator and art professionals is concentrated on the actual space arrangement and management.

The Union Galleries exhibition application process will also reflect the issues addressed in this project. In order to encourage student art, the Union Galleries will no longer require an application fee for enrolled student artists (solicited or unsolicited). Student artist contracts will not ask for a 25% donation from sales to the gallery that is asked of professional artists. It is also our intention, if budgets allow, to acquire appropriate student artwork for the existing permanent collection of the Student Union Memorial Center.

Conclusion

The purpose of this project is ultimately to bridge the knowledge gap of what students know about exhibiting and what galleries expect of artists. This guide will allow student artists to present their work in a manner that galleries will take seriously. With

coaching and an understanding of student exhibition preparation, university galleries and alternative spaces can provide students an opportunity to learn through hands on experience what it takes to put a show together and present their work in their community. I answered some of the more obvious questions about the exhibition process that may plague the student artist in order to allow the student a jumping off point so that they can not only exhibit in the Union Galleries, but also approach other galleries with a better understanding of what is expected of them.

This project has been a journey into a variety of issues involved in the exhibition of student art. In the process of researching these issues I have had opportunities to embrace fine art trends that lend themselves to non traditional exhibition spaces and parallel the Union Galleries.

Professionally, the development of this guide is in line with the mission of the Associate of College Unions International and has enriched my role as the curator of the Union galleries. This guide will be an important resource that will allow student artists to understand the intricacies and requirements of exhibiting their artwork.

Personally, the development of this guide has allowed me to understand the exhibition process from a new perspective and I see my role at the Union Galleries as an exciting opportunity for myself and the student artists I work with. I am looking forward to the reestablishment of the Union Galleries' spaces after the 2-year construction of the new Union. With the reopening of the Union Galleries, I will not only welcome student art, but I will also seek it out and encourage students to exhibit their work within the new spaces. I am in an ideal position to truly effect the future of student exhibition on campus. I will take advantage of my role to encourage student art, internships in gallery

management, and student curatorial assistantships. I will further my research on the guide directly in the first year of the new Union Galleries through surveying student artists as well as further my research on overall student artist development. I intend to make myself available to students and professors for outreach through guest lectures and gallery visits. I will also provide the Exhibition Guide for the Student Artist and other supporting materials from the Union Galleries to Union professional in order to encourage a strong commitment to art on campuses throughout ACUI.

This project is only a beginning; however, there seems great potential for further exploration on the role of gallery curators and art professionals in the practices that encourage the growth of student artists as professionals as well as the provision of practical experience for student artists in the exhibition process.

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will exercise all reasonable precautions within the physical limitations of the spaces, so as to minimize risk of loss and damage to art works.

SHIPPING/TRANSPORTATION OF ARTWORK

All artists exhibiting in the Union Galleries have sole responsibility for transporting their artwork to and from the exhibition, unless other arrangements have been made with the Galleries Curator. The Galleries Curator shall set up a schedule for the delivery, installation, and return of artwork. Due to finite storage space, it is imperative that all artwork be picked up on the appointed day. Any artwork not picked up by the 30th day after the close of the exhibition shall become the property of the Memorial Student Union.

EXHIBITION OF ARTWORK

Artists are encouraged to participate in the installation of their work when possible. Please contact the Galleries Curator regarding your specific installation needs.

All artwork must be ready for display. Works on paper must be framed and wired, unless otherwise approved by the Galleries Curator. All works must be labeled on the back with the artist's name, title, medium, and dimensions (h x w x d). Please refer to the enclosed floor plans of the galleries for space considerations. Works must be able to fit through an entryway 83 inches high by 34 ½ inches wide. Works cannot weigh more than 100 pounds.

The Union Galleries reserve the right to refuse any artwork which is too fragile, improperly prepared for exhibit, or overvalued.

It is agreed upon by both the lender and the Union Galleries that the exhibition will remain on display for the entire scheduled time.

ANNOUNCEMENTS

Exhibition announcements shall be created by the Union Gallery's staff, unless otherwise agreed upon. Any announcements created by the exhibitor will be used only with prior approval of the Galleries Curator. Each artist shall receive 25 copies of the announcement for personal distribution. The artist will be responsible for mailing announcements from his/her own mailing list.

RECEPTIONS

Exhibition receptions will be scheduled when appropriate and when funding permits. If the exhibitor would like to have a reception, the date and time must be approved by the Galleries Curator. The reception food must be catered by the Student Union Catering Service. Alcohol is not permitted at any reception.

I hereby agree to the terms and conditions as enumerated above.

Please sign and return to Chrissy Lieberman, Galleries Curator•Union Gallery•Memorial Student Union•The University of Arizona•Tucson, Arizona 85721• (520) 621-6142.

Artist's Signature

Date

EXHIBITION APPLICATION

Name _____

Address _____ Zip _____

Home Phone _____ Work Phone _____

Status: ___ Student ___ Faculty/Staff ___ Other (Please Specify) _____

Have you exhibited at one of the Union Galleries before? _____
If yes, which one and when? _____

Proposed exhibition time:

Fall/Year _____ Spring/Year _____ Summer/Year _____

Proposed exhibition title: _____

Approximate number of pieces to be exhibited: _____

Description of proposed exhibition: _____

Special conditions, if any: _____

EXHIBITION AGREEMENT

Please complete, sign, and return this form to the Union Galleries. Please make a copy for your records.

Name _____

Artist's name as it should appear on gallery labels, publicity, and signage.

Address _____

_____ Zip _____

Home Phone _____ Work
Phone _____

Exhibition

Title _____

Gallery _____

Location _____

-

Dates of Exhibition _____ Dates of

Loan _____

Please complete the enclosed loan form including title, media, year, dimensions (h x w x d) and sale price or insurance value. The Union Galleries take a 25% commission for all sales.

If pedestals are needed, please request a pedestal list and mark selections. Please note: the Union Galleries are not able to construct new pedestals if the size you request is not available.

Please submit a resume, artist's statement, and any other supporting literature. The Galleries request 2 black and white photographs for publicity purposes. The return of photographs cannot be guaranteed. Permission to reproduce images is assumed unless otherwise stated by the lender.

I understand and agree to abide by all the rules and regulations of the Union Galleries. I further authorize the Union Galleries to accept payment for the sale of the artwork to be exhibited at the price I have established unless I have indicated the works are not for sale.

Signature of Lender _____ Date _____

Signature of Galleries Curator _____ Date _____

For return of artwork at the close of exhibition:

Received by _____ Date _____
Signature Print Name

Appendix B

Arizona Student Unions' Mission Statement

The Arizona Student Unions through its associated facilities, programs and services balances the diverse educational, recreational, cultural and social needs of the University of Arizona community and its visitors. The Unions embody the University's mission in six areas:

1. We nourish the mind, body and spirit of the University community by creating environments where people are supported through quality programs, dining, retail and support services.
2. We empower students to participate in self-directed activities and governance by providing employment and differences.
3. We embrace the University community by creating programs and services that celebrate and respect individual differences.
4. We promote interaction among members of the University community by providing common facilities and collaborative programs throughout campus.
5. We provide state-of-the-art information & communication resources which enhance effectiveness of services and programs to internal and external customers.
6. We explore possibilities for making academics and leisure activities cooperative factors in a student-centered university. We provide resources that successfully facilitate the practical application of academic concepts and we make available to everyone cultural, recreational and social opportunities.

The Role of the College Union

Adopted by the Association of College Unions International's general membership in 1996, this statement is based on the "1956 Role of the College Union statement."
 "The union is the community center of the college, serving students, faculty, staff, alumni, and guests. By whatever form or name, a college union is an organization offering a variety of programs, activities, services, and facilities that, when taken together, represent a well-considered plan for the community life of the college."
 The union is an integral part of the educational mission of the college.

1. As the center of the college community life, the union complements the academic experience through an extensive variety of cultural, social, and recreational programs. These programs provide the opportunity to balance course work and free time as cooperative factors in education.
2. The union is a student-centered organization that values participatory decision making.

3. Through volunteerism, its boards, committees, and student employment, the union offers first hand experience in citizenship and educates students in leadership, social responsibility, and values.

4. In all its processes, the union encourages self-directed activity, giving maximum opportunity for self-realization and for growth in individual, social competency and group effectiveness. The union's goal is the development of persons as well as intellects. Traditionally considered the "hearthstone" or "living room" of the campus, today's unions are gathering places of the college. The unions provide services and conveniences that members of the college community need in their daily lives and creates an environment for getting to know and understand others through formal and informal associations. The unions serve as unifying forces that honors each individual and values diversity. The unions foster a sense of community that cultivates enduring loyalty to the college.

Appendix C ACUI Mission and Core Values

Core purpose: To be the leader in advancing campus community builders.

Core values

ACUI's essential and enduring tenets are core values—a small set of timeless, guiding principles that do not require external justification. They only have intrinsic value and importance to Association members, staff and key stakeholders. Core values are so fundamental, they seldom change—if at all.

Unconditional human worth

Joy

Learning

Caring community

Innovation

Communication

Integrity

Mission statement: The Association of College Unions International Inc. supports its members in the development of community through education, advocacy and the delivery of services.

Appendix D
Student Artist Questionnaire

1. Why did you pursue this exhibition?
2. How prepared were you to submit for a solo exhibition? (Did they have slides, a solid body of work, resume, artist's statement?) If so how did you prepare them?
3. What were your expectations in terms of actually getting a show and how it would come together at the time you submitted?
4. What elements were you anxious about?
5. What about your relationship with the curator made the processes involved in your exhibition easier/more difficult?
6. What advice would you give to someone who was submitting for a solo exhibition who had never done so before?
7. What experience and knowledge did you bring to the installation of your show and what did you walk away with?
8. What classes had you taken that prepared you for exhibiting your artwork? How did they prepare you? Were they required courses for your major?
9. What stresses, comforts, fears, etc. did you have during...
-the initial submission? accepting the show? filing out the contracts? preparing your art work? just before the show went up? once the show was up and when it was complete and ready (lights, wall text, pricing etc.)? what about the days following?
10. How difficult was pricing your work?

11. How did you go about establishing your prices?
12. Having had time since this exhibition to reflect, what elements do you feel go into a successful exhibition?
13. Have you pursued more exhibitions since this experience?
14. If yes, were they solo or group shows?
15. How did (or will, depending) your first solo exhibition affect your future exhibitions practically, emotionally, professionally?
16. What do you feel are the artist's responsibilities in the exhibition process?
17. What are the gallery's responsibilities?

Appendix E
Gallery Curator Questionnaire

1. Does your gallery encourage the exhibition of beginning/student artists?
2. What is required to submit for a solo exhibition in your gallery?
3. What percent of those submitting for a solo show are accepted?
4. What is the timeframe from submission of materials to the exhibition? What is the process between a show being selected and the opening of the exhibit?
5. What is the relationship between the artist and curator during the exhibition process?
6. What do you feel are the artist's responsibilities in the exhibition process?
7. What are the gallery's responsibilities?
8. What experience and knowledge is expected of the artist during the installation?
9. What stresses, comforts, fears, etc. have you experienced in dealing with beginning artists as the gallery coordinator? And those expressed by the artists?
10. Does the gallery play a role in pricing the artwork?
11. What elements do you feel go into a successful exhibition?
12. What advice would you give to someone who was submitting for a solo exhibition that had never done so before?

Appendix F
TABLE 3.1 Student answer comparison

| Student Question | Student 1 Answers | Student 2 Answers | Common Answers |
|---|--|---|--|
| <p>1. Why did you pursue this exhibition?</p> | <p>I was and am interested in exhibiting my work so as to "get it out there." The exhibition was a great opportunity to exhibit work in a pretty well known space that was on the campus, so that other students/my peers could check out the work. The exhibition was also held near the end of the semester/beginning of the new semester- I had a bunch of new work that I had just finished and was extremely interested in getting feedback.</p> | <p>I saw the flyer in the hall and saw also that a close friend of mine was applying and I felt that I genuinely had a good chance of getting the show, as well as a desire to compete or size myself up against that friend of mine. In addition to those things I had been working on a large body of work compulsively for the year prior to the applications and so I had many pieces that I felt were both of show quality and of a very interconnected style, theme and conceptual basis.</p> | <p>Good body of work, to show work and all work had common theme</p> |
| <p>2. How prepared were you to submit for a solo exhibition? (Did they have slides, a solid body of work, resume, artist's statement?) If so how did you prepare them?</p> | <p>I would say I was quite prepared to submit for a solo exhibition. I had slides, a solid body of work, resume, artist's statement etc. as well as some knowledge of the interworkings of the UA gallery system. I had taken the gallery management class, done gallery sitting, and had been coordinating the Lionel Rombach gallery. I also had experience submitting work for exhibition. I had taken slides myself as well as had peers and faculty feedback/help with the resume and artist statement process. I was also fresh off the "I just applied to six grad schools over the Christmas break and know how this stuff works" train. I prepared these materials with the help of peers and faculty members that I felt knew my work and had the knowledge and background to give me solid information on writing, slide quality, slide order, etc.</p> | <p>I was already well versed in showing with groups and so I already had slides and a resume as well as an artist's statement and I felt at the time that I had a very solid body of work. I did take some new slides and rewrite my statement and update my resume, when preparing for the actual handing in of the application I viewed all slides on a projector and organized them in a way that I found to be most striking and interesting.</p> | <p>Slides, resume, statement, body of work (suggest getting hands on experience in gallery, and talk to peers and faculty)</p> |
| <p>3. What were your expectations in terms of actually getting a show and how it would come together at the time you submitted?</p> | <p>I really had little to no expectations because I had no idea how many people were submitting work, what the actual selection process was, how many shows were available, who would be looking at the work etc. I felt, at the time, that my work was of high quality and that maybe other students wouldn't turn in materials, but it's a toss up. Who could say? I</p> | <p>I had few expectations, other than a great desire to have the show and to be selected.</p> | <p>Expectations were none to wanting the show</p> |

| | | | |
|---|--|---|---|
| | was and am extremely confident in my work, the slides I had, and overall exhibition concept but again who could say. | | |
| Student Question | Student 1 Answers | Student 2 Answers | Common Answers |
| 4. What elements were you anxious about? | Most if not all of them. I think putting an exhibition together can be anxiety provoking in and of itself. In my situation all of the work except for one piece was finished. I have experience installing work and dealing with opening receptions, so those weren't bad. It was just a matter of getting the invitations printed (late, unfortunately, because of modern postcard- but no harm done), the work transported, installed, and the reception planned and executed. Again- I think with all of the other things that were going on at the time, school, grad applications, it being my last semester in undergrad and my first real solo exhibition, a social life, making work and so on and so forth- the experience was overall a little Anxiety provoking. Nothing too bad though. No heart attacks or psychotic episodes. It was all good. | When handing in the application I was anxious about the graduate students and other undergrads that I felt I was competing with. I was concerned that maybe my slides weren't exactly up to par and I was also self conscious of the fact that I forgot to buy an envelop for the returning of the slides. As the show approached I became wary over audience or viewer response to the work. As I think that anyone preparing for their first solo show should be. | Anxious about submission and the response of the audience, invites, installation, transport of work, and that it was their first solo show |
| 5. What about your relationship with the curator made the processes involved in your exhibition easier/more difficult? | The curator is a goddess! Working with her was so great. The whole thing was laid back yet efficient. With my knowledge of the gallery workings it was easy to get the paperwork filled out, the invites ordered, the work installed, and the reception going. I would definitely like to work with the curator again in the future because of her professional yet understanding nature. Working with the curator was also a little bit easier because we had met each other before the work was scheduled to go up. This made the whole process a lot easier as well. | I was acquaintances with the curator and we were very friendly, which then turned into a good friendship when dealing with all of the things that it takes to pull off a show. It was very nice to be able to call Chrissy if I had any questions and to be able to tell her about the things that I was worried about without worrying that she may have been judging me or being critical of my professionalism when I wasn't around. | Efficient, easygoing, friendly, comfortable, and were able to ask questions of the curator |
| 6. What advice would you give to someone who was submitting for a solo exhibition who had never done so before? | I would definitely recommend the gallery management class as an introduction to the gallery setting and submission process, etc. The class was great because it gave me the opportunity to work in the gallery and do hands-on work with professional and student artists. It also allowed me the opportunity to get feedback from an experienced and respected | I would tell them to make sure that their slides were of good color and representation of the works. The work is the most important part, and if one cannot make their work look good or at least true to form when submitting then they will be in deep trouble when it comes to showing the work. I would also tell them to prepare themselves emotionally for the | Good slides, be emotionally prepared for rejection, find experience to learn from, talk to professionals, be sure you have a strong body of work, resume, statement |

| | | | |
|--|--|---|---|
| | <p>curator in the field. A working professional. My instructor was really great to work with. It gave me the opportunity to get feedback on my writing (artist's statements, resumes, biographies etc). I would also recommend having people talk to faculty about their (the student's) work. Having the faculty member look at slides and give criticism and feedback if possible. I would definitely recommend having slides taken professionally or otherwise if the student doesn't have them already. I would recommend creating a strong, cohesive body of work that would exhibit well on its own. If that makes sense. The combination of a solid body of work, good slides, good background written material (resume statement etc), and good presentation is all it takes...I think</p> | <p>lack of feedback that they might receive over the show as well as the fact that viewers probably won't spend much time with the works</p> | |
| Student Question | Student 1 Answers | Student 2 Answers | Common Answers |
| <p>7. What experience and knowledge did you bring to the installation of your show and what did you walk away with?</p> | <p>I had a lot of previous experience hanging and installing work as a result of the gallery management class, past exhibitions, and gallery coordinating history. (What I walked away with...) a dolly is a very important thing to have when moving work especially at 11.00pm in the rain when your car is 7 blocks away. Just kidding, sort of. Curatorial assistance is always an asset in installation even in the smallest way. Whatever the curator can do to help the artist in installation of work is wonderful. Two heads and four hands are better than one, always.</p> | <p>I had no experience installing 2-d works but Chrissy and I worked together and I learned a lot about balancing and about height to hang the pieces as well as organization for the viewer in an appealing way.</p> | <p>Need more hands and heads during installation, balance of work in installation, what height to hang at, how to organize the show</p> |
| <p>8. What classes had you taken that prepared you for exhibiting your artwork? How did they prepare you? Were they required courses for your major?</p> | <p>See question #6. The gallery management class rocks. The 497b or c class, I can't remember which- Barbara Rodgers's class that was similar to the gallery management class I heard was also pretty good if it's still offered. These classes are and were not required for my major. I think that my in school and office hour's meeting/crits with Barbara Penn were also very helpful to the slides and resume stuff that I was producing. Having a faculty 'mentor', if you will is a great thing. In my personal experience Joyan Saunders, Alfred Quiroz, Julie Sasse other faculty, and a vast majority of the graduate students helped me out a lot in the preparation of work/slides</p> | <p>hadn't really taken anything that was formally in preparation for exhibition. The experience that I had was my studio experience and my work. I believed that because I had seen many shows and been in some I had ample experience and I have always jumped into things headfirst in a way that will be congruent with much learning.</p> | <p>NO classes, one gallery management class, none were required</p> |

| | | | |
|--|--|---|---|
| | <p>be honest with you for me I just put whatever I want and think. If I don't think I want to sell a work because it has extremely strong personal meaning and connection to me than I would put "not for sale" and if someone really, really wants it then they can talk to me. Otherwise I pretty much kind of look around to see what a piece like it might go for, I would talk to the curator maybe and then work it out for myself- it's a tough thing- I think it takes time getting used to putting a pricetag on you hard work, blood, sweat, tears, pain, triumph, ideas etc. and it comes down to what you feel.</p> <p>They are your ideas, concept, and creations out there and if you want to put \$3,375,171 price on them than go for it. Also take into consideration whether or not the gallery or dealer is taking a cut of it. If you are selling work and they are taking a bit out maybe mark stuff up a little- it's an odd and exhilarating experience selling work.</p> | <p>couple of hours one evening. See the next response....</p> | <p>feelings about the work, stayed low if there were multiples of certain prints, and considered price of framing</p> |
| Student Question | Student 1 Answers | Student 2 Answers | Common Answers |
| <p>11. How did you go about establishing your prices?</p> | <p>See above- I just put what I wanted really- I like 3's and 7's</p> | <p>Pricing the work was almost a random act, I would think about the printerly quality of the work, as well as the number of each of work that was printed, the size and the cost of framing. Finally I was consider the work's sentimental value and then apply a price that was predetermined to never be under a hundred dollars or over five hundred. I pre-determined that under a one hundred dollar price would be cheapening myself, and my image and over five hundred would make me look very stuck up, seeing as how I had multiples of everything in the show, minus four images.</p> | <p>Random, based on emotional attachment, and stayed low to sell</p> |

| | | | |
|--|---|--|--|
| <p>12. Having had time since this exhibition to reflect, what elements do you feel go into a successful exhibition?</p> | <p>I think first and foremost good work. A strong, well thought out, concise body of work, good display, good lighting/space etc. are important. For me in my work and in the work I enjoy, I look for strong, powerful, and moving concepts or ideas expressed visually in such a way as to perpetuate and provoke thought, conversation, change, emotion, response (good or bad) and so on. A successful exhibition moves me or makes me think.</p> | <p>I feel that lots of ambition must be present on the part of the artist, and lots of believing the artist must be present in the curator. It is a team effort, to have an exhibition of any size. One must always be thinking ahead and of the many variables that go into the space and the work being shown there. The actual process of having a successful exhibition starts long before the application is even conceived of, it begins with the artist and the body of work as it is born.</p> | <p>Good work, display of work, lighting and space, it moves you, ambition, good relationship with curator, strong body of work</p> |
| <p>Student Question</p> | <p>Student 1 Answers</p> | <p>Student 2 Answers</p> | <p>Common Answers</p> |
| <p>13. Have you pursued more exhibitions since this experience?</p> | <p>Yes.</p> | <p>I have.</p> | <p>Yes.</p> |
| <p>14. If yes, were they solo or group shows?</p> | <p>All of the exhibitions that I have been in since have been group shows.</p> | <p>There have been several group shows since the solo exhibition. I have not really seen much opportunity for solo shows since the exhibition and was not interested for the first several months after the show because I felt that I had shown the majority of my body of work and needed to make more work before showing alone again.</p> | <p>Group (no solo opportunities) need new body of work, everyone has seen it already</p> |
| <p>15. How did (or will, depending) your first solo exhibition affect your future exhibitions practically, emotionally, professionally?</p> | <p>My first solo exhibition will be with me forever. It was the first. It was an awesome experience and I am so thankful to have been given the chance to put together such an exhibition. I look forward to having other solo shows in the future. It was great.</p> | <p>The first show has added many points to my esteem as an artist. It also looks very good on my resume because I am such a young artist and so I believe that it leads other galleries and curators to give me chances that I may not have had without the solo show under my belt. I also feel that I am much more prepared to show alone again because I do have some experience about what it takes now, and know more about the process and planning for the process.</p> | <p>It was great experience, esteem up, resume builder, are taken more serious now, more prepared and understand process</p> |

| Student Question | Student 1 Answers | Student 2 Answers | Common Answers |
|---|--|---|--|
| <p>16. What do you feel are the artist's responsibilities in the exhibition process?</p> | <p>Creating quality/innovative work. If the artist would like to show work in a profession gallery I believe they should have good, clear, well labeled slides for submission if need be. Knowledge of installation techniques and practices, basic lighting, signage procedures etc. basic knowledge of other artist or other artist work if being shown in a group setting. Access to a well written, concise artist's statement, resume, biography etc. and knowledge of invitations and how they work if need be.</p> | <p>I feel that the artist is responsible for everything except the space. Whether or not the artist is willing to take all of these responsibilities depends on the person. Being a very leader oriented person I took on the responsibilities as they came and took all that I thought were present.</p> | <p>Good work, slides, installation experience, statement, resume, good invitations</p> |
| <p>17. What are the gallery's responsibilities?</p> | <p>Insurance, installation in many cases, lighting in many cases, getting invites out in many cases, providing a safe, stable, well-lit space for work to be displayed in. signage in many cases. Limited publicity in many cases. Insight to specifics pertaining to the gallery space, gallery mission, history, past exhibitions. To provide assistance wherever possible within means. Provide limited assistance with installation again if need be. Deal with paperwork and "the business side" of things and to be friendly. I think that it is important for both parties to know what the other party is going through and have knowledge of the responsibilities of the other party. Honesty and open communication are also very important for both parties. Being able to ask questions and get clear answers.</p> | <p>The gallery is responsible for itself as well as checking up on the artist, artists can be very lazy as all people can, as well as very unorganized. The gallery is responsible for pulling it all off once the artist has got the work on the walls and is pacing in the foyer.</p> | <p>Organized and on top of the artist, finishing touches, insurance, installation, lights, invitations, PR, signage, business of exhibit (sales, etc), answer questions the artist might have, communicate with artist, accessible to artist</p> |

Appendix G
TABLE 3.2 Gallery answer comparison

| Gallery Question | Gallery 1 | Gallery 2 | Gallery 3 | Gallery 4 | Common Answers |
|---|---|---|--|--|---|
| 1. Does your gallery encourage the exhibition of beginning/student artists? | Yes, in group juried shows. | Yes, the work is judged on its own merit. | Yes – This year we've had four shows of either primarily or all U of A students. | We don't actively encourage them however we don't turn them away. However the Hotel shows mostly accomplished artists. | Three of four galleries – Yes |
| 2. What is required to submit for a solo exhibition in your gallery? | 20 slides, Resume, price list with dates, media and sizes, artist's statement, SASE (self-addressed stamped envelope). Usually the artist must have extensive exhibit record, but not always. | A resume, artist's statement and enough images to enable us to clearly define the artist's style. Usually around ten images are sufficient. | We only have group shows here of 3 or more artists. | Color photocopies or slides representing a complete body of work of at least 7 pieces. | Resume, artist's statement, 10-20 slides |
| 3. What percent of those submitting for a solo show are accepted? | 5% | People normally don't request a solo show. If we love the work and there is a sufficient amount of it we ask the artist if they would like to have a solo show. | N/A | Perhaps 20%. | ~12%, most of the galleries focus on group exhibitions |
| 4. What is the timeframe from submission of materials to the exhibition? What is the process between a show being selected and the opening of the exhibit? | It varies depending on how booked up we are. Can be from 2 months to 1 year before a show. | Our current timeframe is about 6 months. I feel comfortable with this timeframe because it allows artists needed time to prepare for their show and allows the gallery time to consider marketing possibilities unique to the exhibition. I feel that at 6 months there is still immediacy but also security that if changes need to be made time is allowed for. | The materials have been due in mid March. The slides are viewed and voted upon by a panel of artists and arts professionals, as well as a TPAC board member. At that time, the selected artist groups are notified and scheduled for the entire upcoming year. | There is no specific time frame; it depends on season, the work and available dates. The process is selection, notification, printing of invitations, sending press releases, hanging the exhibition, typing a list of works and or statement and having the opening | Between 2 and 12 months |
| 5. What is the relationship between the artist and curator during the exhibition process? | Collaborative and Congenial. | In an ideal situation the relationship is symbiotic, the artist suggesting possibilities having to do with marketing, hanging etc. An example: recently an outgoing artist suggested that I try to set an interview between himself | At this point my position is that of gallery manager, and not curator. I serve as the contact between the artists and public. I schedule the shows, openings, installation days, etc., as well as provide contracts for artists. | They work together on the press release info and hanging the show. The Hotel doesn't curate the show, usually, once the artist is chosen. In most cases once an artist is chosen they may do whatever they want <u>except</u> show nudity or private | Collaborative, most work together on press, installations, and the schedule |

| | | | | | |
|--|--|---|---|--|--|
| | | and a local interviewer for a TV show <i>Arizona Illustrated</i> on PBS. The show's producer liked the idea and the show aired shortly after creating free publicity for the exhibition. | Basically, I'm a facilitator. | parts as the gallery is in a very public space. | |
| Gallery Question | Gallery 1 | Gallery 2 | Gallery 3 | Gallery 4 | Common Answers |
| 6. What do you feel are the artist's responsibilities in the exhibition process? | To be professional and meet deadlines and PR requests. | Responsibilities include producing slides of one's work, having work framed, mailing out invitations to one's collectors, attending the reception and generally being available to the gallery. All of these responsibilities must be taken care of in a timely fashion. | To install and dismantle their shows, provide food for opening, as well as printed invitations for the exhibit. | The artist is responsible for completing the work on time for exhibition and providing a list of works as well as creating their invitations | Meet deadlines, work on/mail out invitations, have work ready to hang |
| 7. What are the gallery's responsibilities? | To showcase the artists' work, to put on high quality shows, to work within the limitations of the space or facilities, to be cooperative and helpful in installing work and to return gallery to original condition after the show and to be at the opening and down town art nights. | The gallery's responsibility is to promote the artist's work. This is done by sending out quality invitations to the gallery's clients, sending out press releases to the papers, hanging work professionally and with safety in mind, hosting an artist's reception and attempting to sell the work. | We provide insurance, an exhibition space that's open 8:30 – 5:00, Mon-Fri, press releases to local newspapers and calendars, artist contracts, and referral of potential buyers to the artists. We do not take commission. | Gallery is responsible for creating and mailing press releases, mailing a certain amount of invitations, providing hanging space and an assistant to help the artist hang the works and provides a time for an artist's reception. | Space needs to be ready, must work on PR for show, installation, host receptions |
| 8. What experience and knowledge is expected of the artist during the installation? | We hang the artists' shows for the most part. Special artists' installations require the artists' participation | The artist is not expected to help with the install unless it needs to be arranged a particular way. | They need to know how to hang/display their work, as they are the ones to do it here. They are solely responsible. | As the walls at the Hotel Congress are old, we provide a maintenance person to help hang the show. The artist is expected to place the work with help of the curator if needed. | Some installation experience, know how to display their work, and convey any special hanging needs |

| Gallery Question | Gallery 1 | Gallery 2 | Gallery 3 | Gallery 4 | Common Answers |
|---|--|--|--|---|---|
| <p>9.What stresses, comforts, fears, etc. have you experienced in dealing with beginning artists as the gallery coordinator? And those expressed by the artists?</p> | <p>Do not know how to present work, egos can be out of control. Artists- have no understanding of time lines and deadlines nor of professional presentation of their work.</p> | <p>Beginning artists have made me very stressed by not having their work ready on time and by not having their work framed in a professional way. One artist who was invited to present a solo show expressed to us that she did not want all of the pressure of a one person exhibition. Although I was surprised, I understood and ended up having a two person.</p> | <p>Aside from general nervousness about showing new work, and beating the deadline, they usually don't communicate stresses. They express comfort at being able to communicate openly and frequently with me during the installation process and exhibition As the coordinator, my stresses come from artists who are still finishing their work during installation, or who do not have the work in place in time for the opening. This reflects negatively on both the artist and the gallery. (Also, artist who do not return calls, or complain about our regulations and process)</p> | <p>Young un-established artists may sometimes be primadonnas, but are just as often simply happy to have their work shown. Most of them are afraid to choose which work to show (but we lend guidance while encouraging independence). The main concern by artists is lighting.</p> | <p>Timeline stress, egos, nervousness, lack of professionalism, bad display of show</p> |
| <p>10.Does the gallery play a role in pricing the artwork?</p> | <p>Yes, or we accept works that are already priced in a range that we can sell in.</p> | <p>The artist is asked to price their own work and if it is over or under priced a change is suggested.</p> | <p>No</p> | <p>No, though sometimes the curator is asked to suggest a price.</p> | <p>Galleries only make suggestions</p> |
| <p>11.What elements do you feel go into a successful exhibition?</p> | <p>Outstanding art, meeting all deadlines for installation, PR and take down, accessible artist</p> | <p>I feel that the same elements that go into a wonderful work of art and an entire exhibition are the same.</p> | <p>Active artist participation; having the show installed on time; well made work that will to fall apart during the show, and a good invitation list for the opening.</p> | <p>The exhibition must be hung well, the work must fit with the surrounding (this is very important at the Hotel Congress) and the artist needs to be pleased with the outcome as well as the Hotel.</p> | <p>Artist is pleased, the work is hung well, the work is of high quality, the PR was out and worked, everything was done in a timely manner</p> |

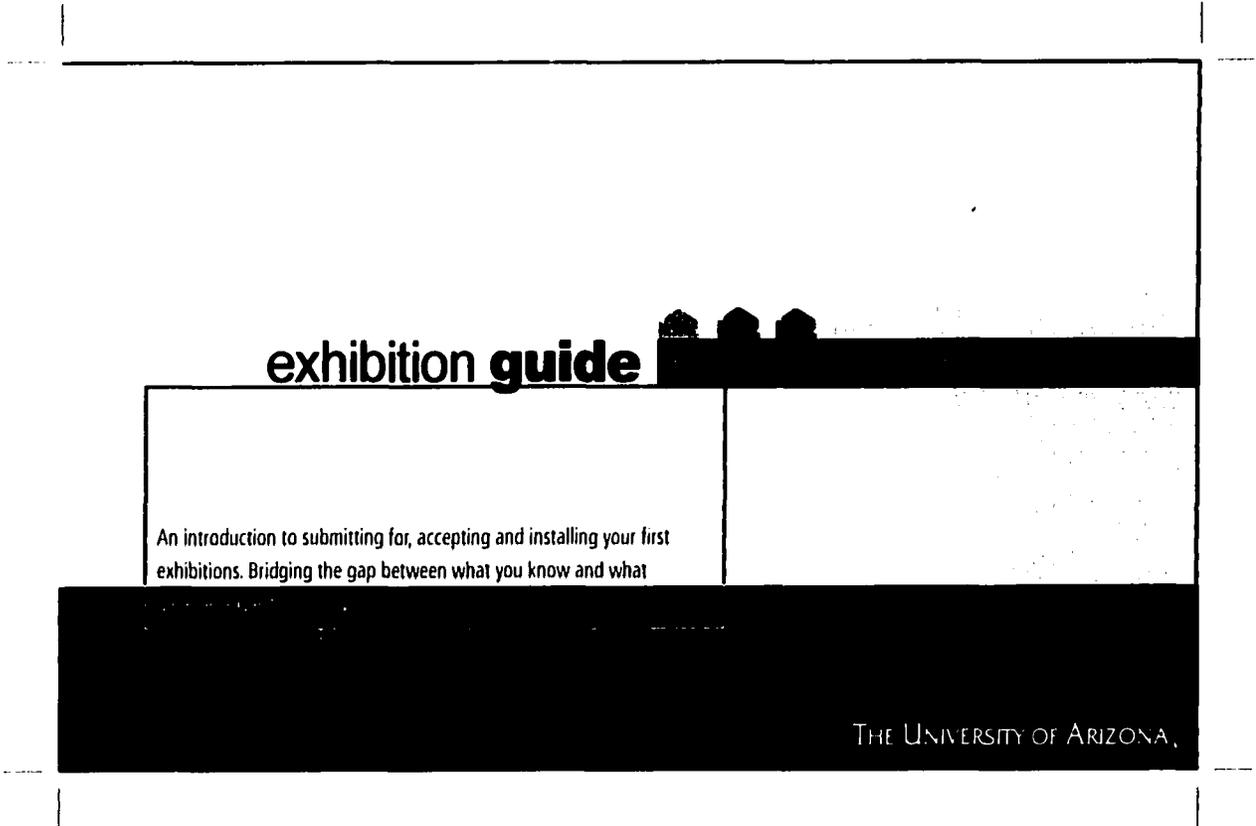
| Gallery Question | Gallery 1 | Gallery 2 | Gallery 3 | Gallery 4 | Common Answers |
|---|--|---|------------|---|--|
| <p>12. What advice would you give to someone who was submitting for a solo exhibition that had never done so before?</p> | <p>Submit slides, etc as listed on question #2. Be flexible and able to work with a gallery curator.</p> | <p>Be positive and cover all the bases, sufficient amount of work well thought out ideas, time and ability. Be prepared for rejection, most artists start out with group shows.</p> | <p>N/A</p> | <p>Be sure you visit a gallery for several exhibitions before submitting work, as you want to be sure your work fits the aesthetic of the space and curator. Both at my gallery and at MOCA (where I am director) I very often have people call who have never been in and I find it offensive. Also, have at least seven examples of your work to show. I also prefer color photocopies as examples of work that I can hold onto for future reference.</p> | <p>Visit the gallery before you submit, have several examples of your work (slides), keep timelines, start with a group exhibition, prepare for rejection, cooperate with the gallery, and be professional</p> |

Appendix H
TABLE 3.3 Comparison of common responses of galleries (G) to common responses of students (S)

| Questions | Common Responses |
|---|---|
| G2 What is required to submit for a solo exhibition in your gallery? | Resume, artist's statement, 10-20 slides |
| S2 How prepared were you to submit for a solo exhibition? (Did they have slides, a solid body of work, resume, artist's statement?) If so how did you prepare them? | Slides, resume, statement, body of work (suggest getting hands on experience in gallery, and talk to peers and faculty) |
| G3 What percent of those submitting for a solo show are accepted? | ~12%, most of the galleries focus on group exhibitions |
| S3 What were your expectations in terms of actually getting a show and how it would come together at the time you submitted? | Expectations were none to wanting the show |
| G5 What is the relationship between the artist and curator during the exhibition process? | Collaborative, must work together on press, installations, and the schedule |
| S5 What about your relationship with the curator made the processes involved in your exhibition easier/more difficult? | Efficient, easygoing, friendly, comfortable, and were able to ask questions of the curator |
| G6 What do you feel are the artist's responsibilities in the exhibition process? | Meet deadlines, work on/mail out invitations, have work ready to hang |
| S16 What do you feel are the artist's responsibilities in the exhibition process? | Good work, slides, installation experience, statement, resume, good invitations |
| G7 What are the gallery's responsibilities? | Space needs to be ready, must work on PR for show, installation, host receptions |
| S17 What are the gallery's responsibilities? | Organized and on top of the artist, finishing touches, insurance, installation, lights, invitations, PR, signage, business of exhibit (sales, etc), answer questions the artist might have, communicate with artist, accessible to artist |
| G8 What experience and knowledge is expected of the artist during the installation? | Some installation experience, know how to display their work, and convey any special hanging needs |
| S7 What experience and knowledge did you bring to the installation of your show and what did you walk away with? | Need more hands and heads during installation, balance of work in installation, what height to hang at, how to organize the show |
| G9 What stresses, comforts, fears, etc. have you experienced in dealing with beginning artists as the gallery coordinator? And those expressed by the artists? | Timeline stress, egos, nervousness, lack of professionalism, bad display of show |
| S9 What stresses, comforts, fears, etc. did you have during... -the initial submission? -accepting the show? -filing out the contracts? -preparing your art work? -just before the show went up? -once the show was up and when it was complete and ready (lights, wall text, pricing etc.)? | Not being accepted, mild anxiety Excited, nervous, happy Unaffected Finishing work was stressful; difficult to get everything together, expensive to get everything framed, painstaking Nervous, lots of last minute details Worried about/interested in audience response, relieved Comfortable, excited, relieved |

| -what about the days following? Questions | Common Responses |
|--|---|
| G10 Does the gallery play a role in pricing the artwork? | Galleries only make suggestions |
| S10 How difficult was pricing your work? | Compared to other prices they had seen, based price on feelings about the work, stayed low if there were multiples of certain prints, and considered price of framing |
| S11 How did you go about establishing your prices? | Random , based on emotional attachment, and stayed low to sell |
| | |
| G11 What elements do you feel go into a successful exhibition? | Artist is pleased, the work is hung well, the work is of high quality, the PR was out and worked, everything was done in a timely manner |
| S12 Having had time since this exhibition to reflect, what elements do you feel go into a successful exhibition? | Good work, display of work, lighting and space, it moves you, ambition, good relationship with curator, strong body of work |
| | |
| G12 What advice would you give to someone who was submitting for a solo exhibition that had never done so before? | Visit the gallery before you submit, have several examples of your work (slides) , keep timelines, start with a group exhibition, prepare for rejection , cooperate with the gallery, and be professional |
| S6 What advice would you give to someone who was submitting for a solo exhibition who had never done so before? | Good slides, be emotionally prepared for rejection, find experience to learn from, talk to professionals, be sure you have a strong body of work, resume, statement |

Appendix I
In - Process Design Layout of the Exhibition
Guide for the Student Artist





The Union Galleries function as an integral part of the Arizona Student Union. Since 1973 the galleries have served the community by exposing students and employees of the University of Arizona and off campus visitors to original art by regional and national artists. The galleries heighten awareness of both current ongoing issues and creative processes, which encourages open dialogue and personal introspection. Approximately 32,000 people visit the Union Galleries per year.

Works in a variety of media are shown including painting, sculpture, graphics, ceramics, fiberwork, and new genre. Each year at least 20 exhibitions are scheduled. The gallery spaces have the prime advantage of high exposure in one of the busiest buildings on campus. Each gallery hosts a variety of educational and enriching exhibitions. Both professional and student artists are encouraged to show their work in these spaces. Past exhibits include alumni art invitationals, juried student art competitions,

student and faculty shows, and traveling and curated exhibitions. The galleries within the Student Union Memorial Center provide traditional and alternative spaces to exhibit art. Exhibitions are chosen by the Galleries Curator and the Exhibitions Committee. Work is selected based on aesthetics, creative process, media, and strength in addressing current issues. Proposals for exhibitions are accepted on an ongoing basis throughout the academic year.

overview

Now that I have a consistent body of work what do I do?

It's important to have a consistent body of work that you can show to galleries and art collectors. This is a good time to start thinking about how to present your work in a professional and appealing way.

How do I know if I am ready to exhibit?

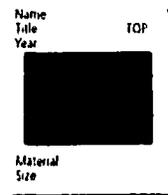
There are several factors to consider when deciding if you are ready to exhibit. First, you should have a consistent body of work that you can show to galleries and art collectors. Second, you should have a professional and appealing way to present your work. Third, you should have a clear understanding of the art market and the galleries you are interested in. Finally, you should have a strong network of contacts in the art world.

What do I need to submit to galleries?

When submitting your work to galleries, you need to have a professional and appealing presentation. This includes a clear and concise statement of your work, a high-quality photograph of your work, and a professional business card. You also need to have a strong network of contacts in the art world.

- A clear and concise statement of your work
- A high-quality photograph of your work
- A professional business card
- A strong network of contacts in the art world
- A consistent body of work that you can show to galleries and art collectors
- A professional and appealing way to present your work
- A clear understanding of the art market and the galleries you are interested in

When labeling your slides, include an indication of which corner is the top right. This will assure the gallery is able to view the work as you intended. Include numbers on the slides and a slide list.



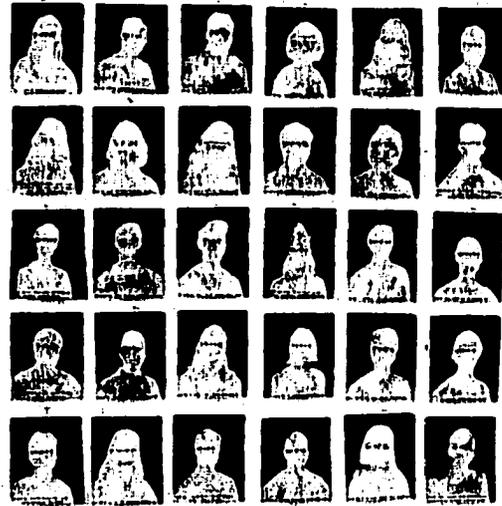
Biography—Keep your biography short and to the point. If the gallery is interested in a more in depth biography, they will likely inquire. Biographies written in the third person are ideal and easily edited.

Artist Statement—This statement is an important defining piece, so consider it in depth! This is where you need to know your work and determine how you want it presented to the public. Your intentions can be stated, but this is a personal decision you need to make. Some things you may want to include are: how is this work together? what led you in this direction? why is it significant in general and to you as the artist?

Resume—Your resume serves as a supplement to the short biography. Focus on significant work experience, your educational background/experience, exhibitions (group or otherwise), and any highlights of your artistic development.

labeling

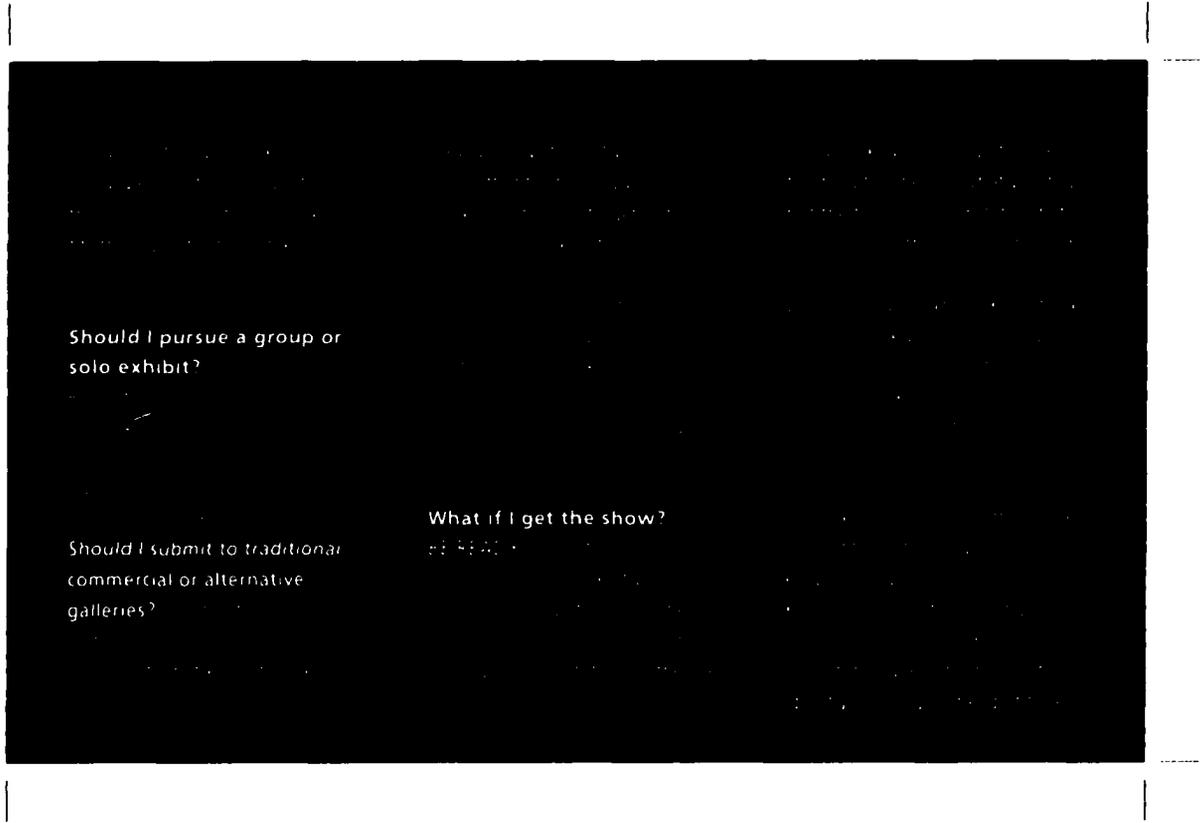
John Riskey
Youth Label Culture 1999
Mixed media installation



Where do I submit?

Explore your options! Visit a variety of spaces. Look through local periodicals for calls to artists. What do the galleries you are interested on require to submit? If you don't have the required items, call or stop by the galleries to see if there are exceptions. Do not assume they will take incomplete submissions!

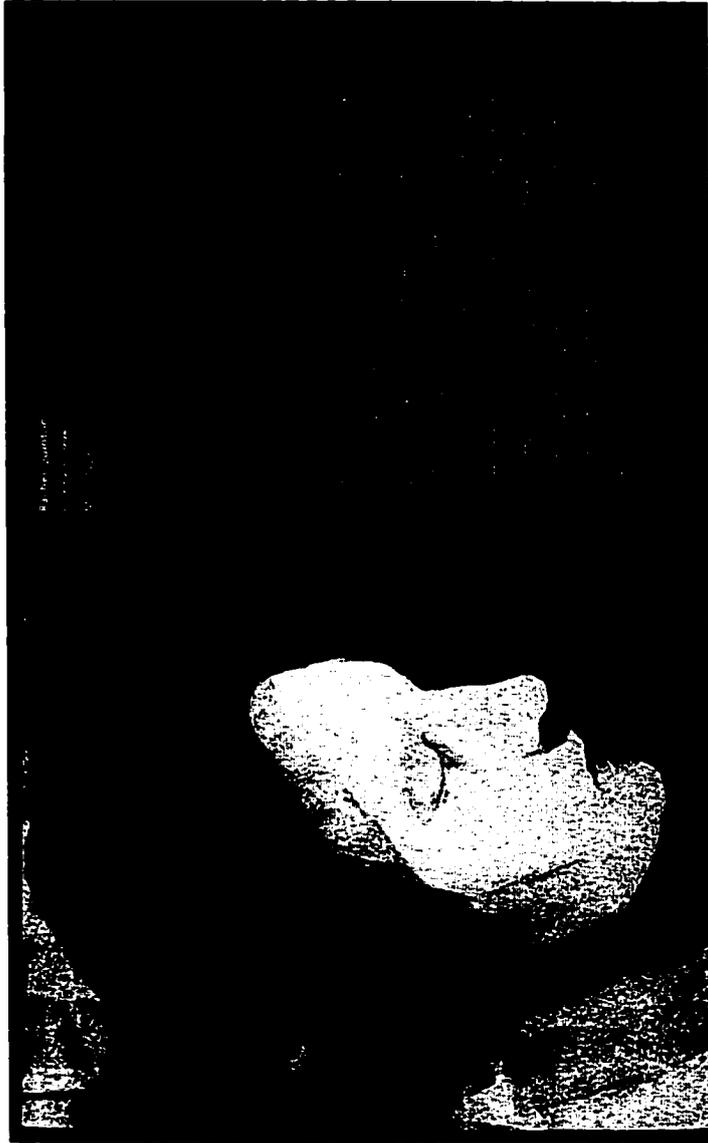
where



Should I pursue a group or solo exhibit?

Should I submit to traditional commercial or alternative galleries?

What if I get the show?



By the author
© 1998

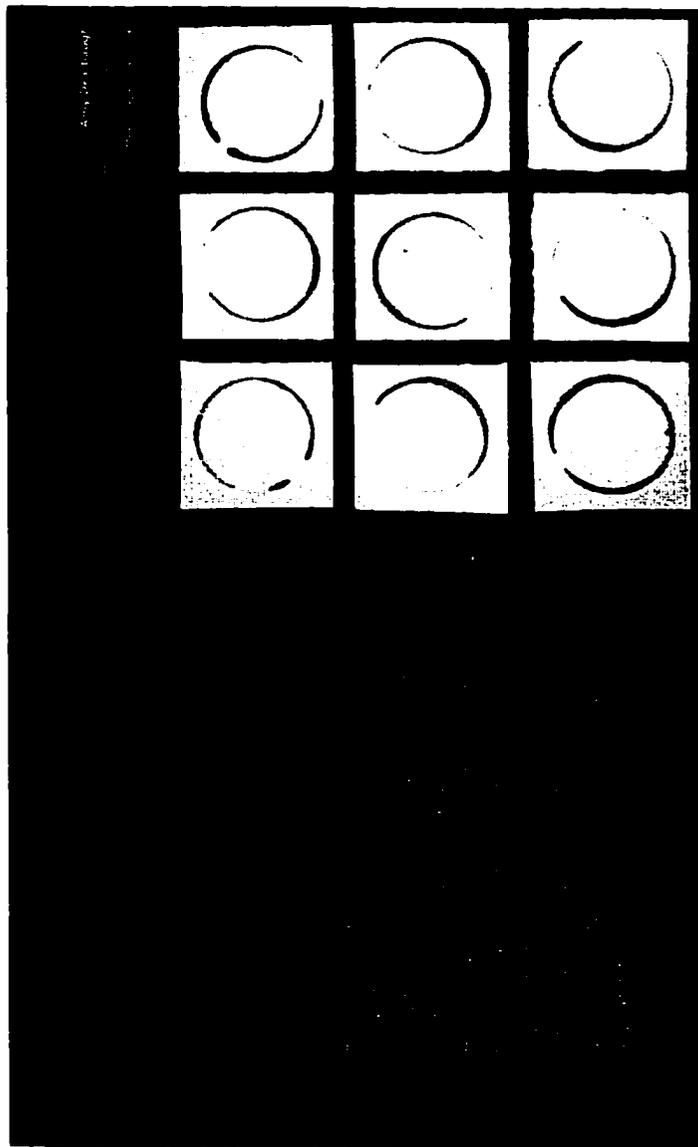
How do I deal with contracts?

Read them carefully and pay attention to the details. Be sure the dates on the contract will work with your schedule and ask questions if something on the contract differs from the original agreement. Be sure any changes are initiated by both parties and all necessary signatures are obtained before the work is delivered. You can also provide the gallery with a written description and photo of each piece to be included with the contract. Be sure you receive a copy

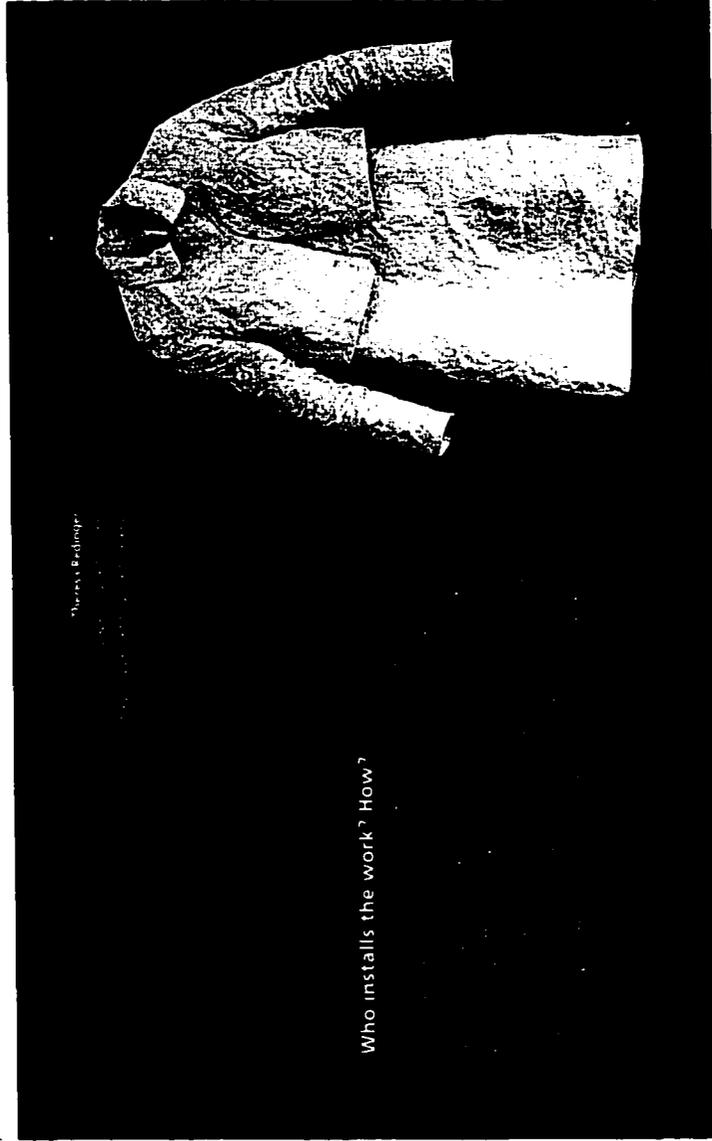
of the signed contract before leaving your work at any gallery. You need to establish both insurance values and sale prices. The insurance value needs to reflect Fair Market Value. Fair Market Value needs to include the cost of the materials and the time involved in the creation of the piece. Have you sold many pieces? If so, this helps establish the value of the piece. When you price your work to sell, you need to take into account the fair market value and keep in

mind that selling the piece means parting with it. Keep in mind, to establish your self in the market you need to sell some work so consider your level of experience and be reasonable. If you have spent time visiting galleries you will have a better idea of a price at which it is likely to sell. Compare the price per square in at your pieces to that of other comparable emerging artists. No matter the sale price, insurance will only cover the FMV. In some cases proof of FMV is required.

deal with contract?



Art by [unreadable]



Therese Bedinger

Who installs the work? How?

double sided velcro (so your pieces stay level). Often times the lighting of a space will dictate where you hang or place work. There may be wall obstacles to contend with, but in a standard gallery, if you are hanging the show, place the work against the wall to consider what layout will work. You want a flow that will guide your audience. Again, know your work and decide the order that is most appropriate. Does the work look best if it is placed with symmetric distances between each piece? Should some pieces be clustered together? Are there locations in the space that are more obvious, less obvious, darker, lighter, etc? If you would like each piece to hang at eye level, calculate the height of the ceiling. If it is high, consider an eye level of 60 inches or more. Lower ceilings a 58 inch standard will work.

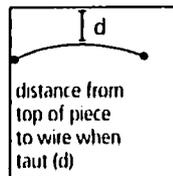
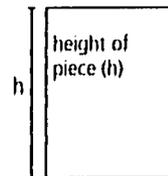
install?

12

How to calculate eye level...

1. Determine **eye level** (ex: 60")
2. $\frac{(h - d)}{2} + 60 =$ distance of nail should be from floor

EX: $\frac{(20 - 3)}{2} + 60 = 67''$



3. If you use a hook rather than a basic nail, you need the base of the hook to be at the 67" mark and the nail will actually be just above it.

No matter your level of preparation and professionalism, you must remember there are only so many shows per year and it may take some time to get into a space but you must persist, prepare for rejection, and be ready! Your relationship with the curator will vary from space to space so do your part, be professional.

two dimensional work?



John Kelly
The Art of the Object

Exhibition Application, Term & Conditions, and Agreement can be seen at www.union.arizona.edu/icsilgalleries

