



AMERICAN SOCIETY OF BOTANICAL ARTISTS
EXHIBITION GUIDELINES

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INTRODUCTION

The following is a general guideline to assist in the preparation of ASBA exhibitions. It is just that: a guideline, and ideas on how to improve, streamline, maintain quality and professionalism are always welcome and can be incorporated into this document's next publication.

ASBA's goals are to promote public awareness of the botanical art tradition, and to further its development, so the use of exhibits to further our goals is of prime importance. ASBA exhibits should be of a quality to both promote a high standard of botanical art and to make exhibitions of the ASBA's members' work highly desirable. Another goal of our exhibitions should be to create excellent cooperative working relationships with sponsoring institutions. It is preferable to work with sites that have staff that is familiar with mounting exhibitions. Remember that institutions schedule exhibitions well in advance, usually at least two years, and this should be taken into consideration when cultivating a relationship with a possible exhibition site. Exhibitions of botanical art offer an event around which the institution can build activities and increase visitorship.

WHO CAN PARTICIPATE

All current members in good standing are eligible to enter or participate in an ASBA exhibition. An artist who is not a member but wishes to enter an ASBA exhibition may join at the time of entering. It is the responsibility of the exhibition curator or coordinator to check the status of the entrants, either by the published listing in the newsletter, or by checking with the Exhibitions Coordinator.

The definition of an ASBA exhibition is one that is initiated, curated, coordinated or implemented by one or more members of the ASBA in the name of the ASBA. It is open only to ASBA members.

ASSEMBLING A WORKING GROUP

One of the most important things to do is to assemble a group of members to assist in various tasks, as this prevents any one member from becoming overworked. An active local group of artists is a great asset in planning an exhibition. There may be such things as paperwork, cataloging of slide entries, phone calls, unpacking and packing of works, fundraising, publicity, and other tasks needing attention, so it is helpful to assign areas of specialization early. It is important to utilize the resources of the institution as much as possible.

SELECTING A VENUE

When selecting a venue, several things can be taken into consideration. One is the size of the institution, and another is the size and location of the exhibition area. It is important that the exhibition area be secure; can the room be locked at night, is it in view of or guarded by a member of the Institution's staff when open, and are there multiple entries/exits? Is the staff experienced with hanging exhibitions of artwork? Is the exhibit space separate from areas that are gardened, i.e., plants sprayed or high humidity areas? How is direct sunlight controlled or excluded, and is there extensive fluorescent lighting? Are the walls adequate for hanging pictures, and is the space dedicated to exhibitions or is it a multiple use area? Is the space conveniently located to encourage visitorship? Does the venue provide insurance coverage, and will they assist in publicity? Will they host a reception or other

event in conjunction with the exhibition? Will they handle sales of artwork if work is for sale? These are some of the questions to consider when looking at a potential venue.

EXHIBITION SCOPE

Determine the type and size of the exhibition. Detailed below are several templates for exhibition types, or you may custom-tailor your own exhibition.

Juried International Exhibitions: These exhibitions are major exhibitions at high profile venues open to all current members, regardless of geographical location. They are juried, and are organized to bring in fine botanical artwork. Advantages to this types of exhibit are a) exhibition is open to all ASBA members, b) exhibition showcases botanical art from all regions, c) exhibition can generate national attention via media outlets. International exhibitions draw many high quality entries, so the jurors have the opportunity to present the best of the genre.

Juried Regional Exhibitions: A regional exhibition is a showcase for the botanical artwork created within a given geographical area. The advantages of this approach include a) creating an opportunity for members to participate in an exhibition, since it is geographically nearby, b) focusing on the work of ASBA members within a given geographical area, c) reducing the number of entries. This type of exhibition is an excellent way to provide a venue for members to meet and network with one another, and to establish ties with regional institutions.

Members' Exhibitions: A members' exhibition can be a showcase for artwork produced locally, usually held at a small scale venue and organized and coordinated by local ASBA members. These are inclusive shows, calling for submissions from any members in that locale. Generally not juried; instead a committee serves to provide quality control by eliminating very weak or poorly presented work. The exhibition serves to raise the public's awareness of botanical artists within the area, and to provide professional development and exhibition experience for artists. These exhibitions can generate good press for the artists and the ASBA.

Invitational Exhibitions: An invitational exhibition involves a team selecting individual ASBA members and allowing each of them to submit a given number of works. The number of works can then be winnowed down, according to the space available. This type of exhibit can be chosen for many reasons, among them: a) when showcasing a specific style of botanical art (i.e. scientific illustration), b) when showcasing artists from a given area, c) when focusing on a specialized group of plants, d) when control over the number of artists is desired, e) when multiple works by each artist are desired. This type of exhibition can simplify the administrative work to be done. There are no entry fees to offset expenses, however, so this will work best in an institution that needs little financial assistance or that will provide funding for all necessary expenses. If the institution cannot cover expenses, and it is still deemed a desirable location, it is possible to assess a small hanging fee for each artist, stated when the artist is invited, to cover incurred expenses. This hanging fee could be refunded upon sale of artwork. (Hanging fees are discouraged, however.)

Traveling Exhibitions: Traveling exhibitions provide excellent opportunities to have high quality artwork seen in different locations, without the work of organizing multiple shows.

Traveling exhibitions work best when they go to and from sites having staff people who are familiar with art handling and exhibition mounting. This minimizes the workload on the ASBA coordinator once the initial plans are made. Artists need to be informed in advance of how long the work will be on tour and how sales of work will be handled. Any of the above exhibitions can travel, provided all logistics are worked out prior to any artist contact.

Any of the above exhibitions can be organized so as to focus on a particular type of botanical art, or a theme, and all can be used as educational opportunities to be augmented with slide shows, gallery talks, school liaisons, and workshops.

INSURANCE

The exhibition venue is nearly always responsible for insurance of artwork while on site, and in general the artist is responsible for insurance of artwork while in transit. Be sure to clarify this at the outset, as well as whose responsibility it is while in storage, if applicable. There can be exceptions in some circumstances; please consult the Exhibitions Coordinator in this case.

BUDGETING

During the early planning stages of an exhibition, a budget must be established and a plan developed to cover the costs of the exhibition.

Costs incurred can include, but are not limited to:

- Printing and mailing a Call for Entries or Prospectus (usually avoided by placing these in *The Botanical Artist*).
- Postage and mailings to accepted artists
- Telephone calls
- Printing an Exhibition Postcard
- Office supplies
- Opening reception (this cost is often borne by the venue, however sometimes shared. Clarify with the venue early on if “approved caterers” are required. Confer with Exhibitions Coordinator.)
- Exhibition index or checklist printing, or catalog printing
- Juror honoraria
- Awards

Income sources include, but are not limited to:

- Entry fees
- Commissions to ASBA and the venue from sales of works
- Donors: individual, group, corporate, or foundation
- Institutional support, which can be the donation of in-kind services such as printing, phone, and mail services, or direct costs such as hosting a reception, providing an award in the form of a cash prize or purchase prize.

One’s expenditures should not outstrip the income generated by the exhibition. Expenses should be cleared with the Exhibitions Coordinator, then submitted to the Executive Director for approval and reimbursement by the Treasurer. Expenses should be detailed as to type of expenditure, (i.e., postage), amount, and the exhibition for which the expense was incurred.

THE CONTRACT

A formal document should be drawn up at the onset of planning for an exhibition that articulates the assignment of duties between the venue and the ASBA. Sometimes this can take the form of a letter signed by both parties, in the case of a smaller, non-selling exhibition, or a formal contract signed by both parties, in the case of a selling, national or international exhibition. Please consult with the Exhibitions Coordinator about this subject.

JURY PROCEDURES

See separate section on this subject at end of document.

CALLS FOR ENTRIES

Ideally calls for entries have the maximum lead time possible. This increases the number of entries and allows for artists to plan their work schedules. It is desirable to publish a preliminary call a year to two years in advance of entry deadline. Full information should be provided at least six months in advance of entry deadline. A preliminary call should consist of venue name, show dates, type of exhibition, to whom exhibition is open, slide submission deadline, whether works will need to be for sale, and when the formal Call for Entries will be published.

When an artist submits an entry, (s)he is entering into an agreement with the ASBA. Therefore, any pertinent information regarding the exhibition, requirements, and eligibility must be stated in the Call for Entries and upheld.

The format for Calls for Entries is specified in The Botanical Artist.

ARTIST NOTIFICATION

Artists should be notified of acceptance or rejection within a reasonable time and this date should be set. A good guideline is to notify within 2 weeks of the jurying and at least two months in advance of artwork delivery date. If the exhibition will include International artists, a 3 month notification is minimum. If additional information is requested of accepted artists, it is most desirable to send a tear-off form that the artist can fill in and return. This can save a great deal of time and money spent tracking down information that is omitted. Frequently, the sponsoring institution assembles a dossier including C.V.s, Artists Statements, and other pertinent information about the artists which the public can access. Once the painting is received at the venue, the artist is committed to including it in the exhibition for the duration as specified in the Call for Entries, and this must be restated on the Notification form.

SHOW ANNOUNCEMENT

Show announcements can be the most costly element of an exhibition. If a postcard is printed it should be either sponsored, or demonstrated that revenues will cover its cost. Please contact the Exhibitions Coordinator, as we use a single postcard printer in most cases. Size requirements for a postcard rate postage stamp is 4" X 6". Cards larger than this must include first class postage. It is desirable to have the cards sent out 3 weeks before the opening if mailing first class. If the institution is handling the mailing, and they plan to use the "bulk mail" rate, please make sure that they have a "deliver by" date on the postcard and allow six weeks. If there are nearby institutions that would have visitors with an interest in the exhibit, investigate the possibility of placing some announcements in their card racks or getting permission for a one-time usage of their mailing list.

ARTWORK SHIPPING

In general, the individual artist is responsible for shipping to and from the exhibition venue. Artwork must be packed securely, in reusable packaging. Peanuts are not acceptable, and this must be stated in the call for entries. Sheets of bubble wrap or foam are best. Damage incurred during shipping is exclusively the responsibility of the artist. If the work is shipped, prepayment for return shipping may be needed and should be included unless the venue is paying for return shipping.

ARTWORK UNPACKING

When planning an exhibition, be sure to articulate who is responsible for unpacking and packing artwork. Sometimes a team of volunteers can be assembled and sometimes the venue has experience and staff to do this. All packing materials should be retained, and labeled for easy repacking at time of return. An inventory should be taken as pieces arrive, and condition of each piece should be noted. A good option is a videotaped documentation. Artist should be notified immediately of any damage found.

ARTWORK PRESENTATION

It is our goal to hang exhibitions which are professional in appearance as a whole, and do not give the appearance of a jumble of different styles of framing. The artwork is on exhibition and it should be displayed with minimally distracting mats and frames. Mats should be of professional quality and either white or off-white. Frames should be simple, L-profile gallery frames, light to medium brown wood or gold wood. If a different standard is decided upon in consultation with the venue, it should be clearly stated in the call for entries. Plexiglas is highly recommended to prevent damage in shipping and hanging, and UV Plexiglas ensures the artwork is protected from any light intrusion. On the Acceptance Notification, glass and framing specifics must be given, as well as a statement that the ASBA reserves the right to exclude works which are poorly presented, or that doesn't meet the standard shown in the slide. Artwork must be equipped with wire for hanging.

PROMOTION

A press release should be written, and provided to our press list as well as the press list of the venue. Frequently the venue can write this article, often it will fall to the exhibition organizer or Exhibitions Coordinator. Slides or jpegs of included work should be provided as well. Personal contact with media personnel is highly desirable. Remember to notify groups that might have an interest in the exhibition, i.e.: Natural History, Art Museums, decorator's groups, garden clubs, etc.

NAMING THE EXHIBITION

When an exhibition is initiated, curated, or developed by the ASBA, and the artists are ASBA artists, it is important to ensure that the title of the show include the name of the American Society of Botanical Artists and that it is featured prominently on any exhibition signage.

HANGING AND SIGNAGE

Often the venue has a great deal of experience in hanging exhibitions and has its own procedures to follow. Artwork should be handled in a professional manner, including carrying framed works by the sides, not by the top or by the wire. Artwork should be

stacked back to back and front to front, with padding between front to front stacked work. Artwork must not hang in direct sunlight or in high humidity. Strong florescent lights should be avoided as well. Artwork should be hung in a manner that does not prevent the viewer from easily examining the work. The ideal hanging height is that the center of each piece should be at eye level of a 5'6" person. If this is not possible, and works must be hung over each other, works should not be hung too high or too low. It should be determined early on if the venue needs assistance in hanging, so that the show organizers can provide it. A title panel for the exhibition must be created and ideally the venue will produce it based on text supplied to them by the ASBA organizer. Sponsors must be noted on the panel, and a panel describing the ASBA is highly desirable as well. Individual labels for each artwork may include such things as: artist's name, date of the artwork, medium, common name and scientific name of the plant, and price, if for sale. Often the price is not listed on the label, but is listed on the checklist or catalog of the show. The scientific name must be accurate: first letter of the genus name should be capitalized and the species name should be all lowercase. The scientific name should be underlined or in italics. Again, most venues have frequent exhibitions, and have their own labeling systems. An index, checklist or catalog containing this information about all included pieces is a helpful tool for visitors to use as a self-guide through the exhibit.

RECEPTION

In general the venue provides the Opening Reception. Sometimes the cost is split between the ASBA and the venue; in this case please approve this with the Exhibitions Coordinator. If an "approved caterer" is required, the cost can be substantial.

ARTWORK SALES

Venues have varied requirements for sale of items on exhibit. Some don't allow sale of artwork. If artwork is offered for sale, it can be accomplished in a number of ways. Any artwork that is sold must remain in the show until its official close. Arrangements may be made for the buyer to pick up the artwork directly from the venue.

- 1) Sales can be handled by the venue. A portion of the sales is reserved as a contribution to the venue and to the ASBA. This is usually 15 – 20% for each organization, and the artist should price her/his work to reflect this. An index of works can be printed indicating the price of each artwork, and the venue can collect the monies. At the close of the show, accounting is done, with donations disbursed to the venue, the ASBA, and the artist. It is helpful if the venue records and releases the name of the buyer to the artist for future contact. If the venue is handling sales, it is unethical to try to arrange sales with interested parties directly, thus bypassing the percentages given to the venue and the ASBA.
- 2) If the venue cannot handle sales, the exhibition organizer can be the contact person for sales, and can collect checks made payable to the ASBA. The checks would be forwarded to the Treasurer, who will then deduct our commission and send the remainder to the artist.
- 3) If the venue cannot handle sales, and the ASBA does not have pricing information, contact information regarding purchase inquiries can be provided directly to the artist. It is hoped that if an artwork is sold through an ASBA show, the artist will

make a donation (even a token) to the ASBA in recognition of the success that this opportunity yielded the artist.

When artwork is for sale, this fact should be clearly stated, and prices be readily available for all visitors to the exhibition. If the venue collects and disburses the income from sales, these disbursements should take place within 30 days of the close of the exhibition.

RETURN OF ARTWORK

Artwork may be hand collected or shipped. If return shipped, artwork should be carefully repacked in the original shipping materials. The artwork should not be in direct contact with the box, and its wrapping material should fit snugly in the box, so that there is no movement of the artwork within the box once sealed. The artwork should be returned via the same shipper used to transport the work to the venue. Packages should be either prepaid by the artist, or can be return shipped C.O.D. (Domestically shipped packages only.) Occasionally a venue will absorb the cost of returning works. Packages should be shipped either by FedEx or UPS as these can be tracked. This also reduces the amount of effort required by the venue to return the packages, as they will be dealing with only 2 shippers. If the venue would like assistance, members should be prepared to help with packing the works for return shipping.

THANK YOU

At the close of the show, don't forget to thank the many people who gave assistance in making the exhibition a reality. Exhibitions are the product of many helping hands, for which we are most appreciative. A special thank you to the venue and any sponsors, is of course a must.

JURY PROCEDURES

The team of jurors will be chosen by the exhibitions organizer in consultation with personnel involved at the venue. If additional suggestions are needed, the organizer will consult with the Exhibitions Coordinator or with others on the Exhibitions Committee. Jurors should be of such stature as to command respect for their opinions of botanical artwork, and they should be professionals working in the fields of art and/or botany. A typical team should consist of 3 jurors, preferably one a botanical artist, one with botanical background, and one with curatorial background. The juror pool includes but is not limited to the list of trained jurors maintained by the ASBA. If a juror is also a botanical artist who otherwise would have entered the exhibition, one of the juror's artworks can be included at the entrance to the exhibition, clearly labeled as the work of the juror, with her/his biographical information. Biographical information about the other jurors should be included here as well.

ARTWORK CRITERIA FOR ASBA EXHIBITIONS

All artwork in ASBA exhibitions shall be executed by hand in traditional two-dimensional media. We do not include photography or computer-generated artwork.

All artwork submitted for ASBA exhibitions shall be judged on three major criteria. These are:

-Scientific Accuracy. Are all the plant's parts that are visually apparent shown clearly and accurately? Are all aspects shown in correct proportion to one another and in correct perspective? Is the artwork structurally correct?

-Aesthetic quality. Is the artwork's composition aesthetically pleasing? Is the three-dimensionality of the plant believably conveyed? If in color, are the colors accurate and lifelike? Do all the elements of the artwork conform to the same high standard?

-Artistic proficiency. Has the artist demonstrated a superior control of and comfort with their medium? Has the whole been executed with professionalism, and with a high standard of practical application of techniques? If in paint, has the artist shown expertise in handling the paint or is the paint blotchy? If in ink, are there blotches or is there shakiness in the line, and are the techniques well mastered? If in pencil, is there adequate contrast between light and darkness, and is refinement shown? If lettering is included, is it proficiently done?

When judging artwork, the quality of the artwork should always be the overriding consideration for selection. Artwork chosen should be "most perfect from all points of view". We will strive to have the best work on exhibit, so we should discern between good, better and best.

JUROR HONORARIUM

It will be the ASBA's policy to provide an honorarium for each juror on the team. Frequently jurors will donate their honorarium to the ASBA, or earmark it for a juror's award to a participating artist. There are sometimes circumstances for which we will reimburse a juror's expenses in meeting with the team.

COLLECTING ENTRY MATERIALS

A member of the organizing team is selected to receive, log in, and hold the entry materials until the jury meets. Once the deadline arrives, a master list of all entries is assembled, and

each slide is assigned a number. (Please see attached form.) The slides should be placed in carousels prior to jurying. Checks for entry fees are sent at the close of submissions to the Treasurer, via express with delivery confirmation.

SETTING UP A MEETING TIME AND PLACE

The exhibition organizer or the Exhibitions Coordinator is responsible for contacting each juror and setting up a meeting time and place. Ideally the meeting place is at the venue, which allows the jurors to see the space prior to jurying the exhibition. The ASBA strongly encourages that the jury team meet together so an open dialogue can take place during the jurying. Usually the exhibition organizer receives the slide entries, assembles and records them, and provides them to the jury team ready to view. The organizer's list will include artists' names, artwork titles, sizes, and media. Title, size, and media information is required, in order to tailor the exhibition to its respective criteria. The list provided to the jury team will not include artists' names; rather artworks will be numbered. Adequate time must be given for the process; frequently it is an all day task.

PREPARING TALLY FORM

The exhibition organizer or Exhibitions Coordinator will provide to the jury team a tally form for the team to use in scoring artwork. The organizer will screen out files that don't conform to exhibition requirements that are clearcut: i.e., size, medium. This tally form will include artwork number, title, size, medium, point tally, and a space for comments. The ASBA uses a point score of 1 – 5, one being the low score and 5 being the highest. Comments which can then be relayed to the artist by the organizer can help provide constructive criticism to further professional development. At the close of jurying, the exhibition organizer or Exhibitions Coordinator will tally the scores.
(Tally form attached)

FINAL TALLY

When the artwork has all been scored, and scores added up, the top pieces are selected. If the gallery has space for 40 works, then the top 40 pieces will be included. If there are works tied for inclusion, the venue may be consulted to determine whether the additional works can be included. If not, the team may look at the top scorers again, and cut additional works until the correct number is achieved. At this stage, jurors may also consider subject matter or overall appearance of the show.

ON-SITE JURYING

Once all the artwork has been received on-site, an additional jurying should take place. The work should be reviewed to verify that the quality of the original is up to the standard seen in the slide, and that presentation requirements are met.

AWARDS

Awards should be juried by the entire jury team on-site after the show is hung. If it is not possible for all jurors to return to the venue, then an awards jury should be assembled to provide this service.

