



AMERICAN SOCIETY OF BOTANICAL ARTISTS
EXHIBITIONS GUIDELINES

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INTRODUCTION

The following is a general guide to assist in the preparation of ASBA exhibitions. It is just that: a guide, 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 pursue 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 ASBA's members' work highly desirable. Another goal of our exhibitions is to create excellent cooperative working relationships with collaborating 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 opportunities around which the venue institution can build activities and increase visitorship.

DEFINITION

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 ASBA. Only ASBA members may submit entries.

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. Membership status is verified automatically when on-line entry is completed. If entry is by mail, the exhibition curator or organizer will check the status of the entrants, via ASBA member services.

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 will be such things as communications, cataloging of entries, unpacking and packing of works, fundraising, publicity, educational planning, and other tasks, so it is helpful to assign areas of specialization early. It is important to utilize the resources of the venue 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 and the gallery can be locked at night. It should also be safe by day, observed by a member of the Institution's staff when open, and have no direct outside exits other than emergency exits. Other questions to be asked:

- Does the mission of this potential partner amplify ASBA's mission, allowing us to reach a new and expanded audience and providing opportunities for collaborations?
- Is the staff experienced with holding 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 multiple use?
- Is the space conveniently located to encourage visitorship?
- Does the venue provide insurance coverage, and will they assist in publicity and outreach?
- Will the venue host a reception and educational events in conjunction with the exhibition?
- Will the venue handle sales of artwork if work is for sale?

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 a high standard of 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 an exhibition of this type is 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.

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. (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 be organized 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, field trips, lectures, panel discussions, 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 Director in this case. Artists are responsible to insure their work while it is being shipped to or from the venue, except in the case of ASBA-organized traveling exhibitions, where it is insured by ASBA when traveling between venues.

BUDGETING

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

Costs incurred can include, but are not limited to:

- Administrative expenses to receive entries and execute artworks jurying.
- Mailings and communications with accepted artists
- 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 Director.)
- Artworks list 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 award or purchase award.

Exhibition expenditures should not outstrip the income generated by the exhibition. Expenses should be cleared with the Exhibitions Director then submitted to the Executive Director for approval, procedure, and reimbursement.

THE CONTRACT

A formal document should be drawn up at the onset of planning for an exhibition that articulates the assignment of duties and responsibilities of 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 Director about this subject.

JURY PROCEDURES

See separate section on this subject at end of document.

CALLS FOR ENTRIES

Calls for Entries should 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 two to three years in advance of entry deadline. Themed exhibitions need more advance time than non-themed exhibitions. Full information should be provided at least a year in advance of entry deadline. A preliminary call should consist of venue name, show dates, type of exhibition, exhibition's theme, to whom exhibition is open, submission deadline, whether works must be for sale or not, 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. Calls for Entries submission procedures are detailed on the website, and can be submitted online.

NAMING THE EXHIBITION

When an exhibition is initiated, curated, or developed by the ASBA or one of its Chapters or Artists' Circles, it is important the title of the show include the name of the American Society of Botanical Artists and feature it prominently on any exhibition signage.

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 two weeks of the jurying and at least three months in advance of artwork delivery date. Additional information is requested of accepted artists and a signed waiver is required. 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 an artwork is accepted, the artist is committed to including it in the exhibition for the duration of the exhibition as specified in the Call for Entries, and this must be restated in the Notification.

EXHIBITION 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 Director 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 three 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. Often announcements are sent via email to ASBA and venue's mailing lists, and this e-vite must be designed.

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 soft foam are best. Damage incurred during shipping is exclusively the responsibility of the artist. Prepayment for return shipping may be needed unless the venue is paying for return shipping. When exhibition will travel ASBA is responsible for shipping and insurance between venues.

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. If the show is traveling it will be accompanied by a condition report book for logging artwork arrival and dispatch condition. Photos should be taken and artists should be notified immediately if any damage is 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 required 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 digital entry image. Artwork must be wired 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 Director. Digital

files 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. Press releases are included on ASBA's website.

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 allows the viewer to easily examine 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. Individual labels for each artwork may include such things as: artist's name, medium, common name and scientific name of the plant. Often the price is not listed on the label, but is listed on a separate pricelist (if allowed). This serves as a helpful tool for visitors to use as a self-guide through the exhibit. 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 in italics.

(ASBA will provide our Appropriate Care document for information on acceptable artwork handling.)

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 Director. 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 at the close of exhibition, or the artwork can be shipped at the buyer's expense.

1) *Sales can be handled by the venue:* A portion of the sale is reserved as a contribution to the venue and to the ASBA. This is usually 20% for each organization, and the artist should price her/his work to reflect this. An artworks list 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 funds 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 artwork in the exhibition is for sale, it is unethical to try to arrange sales with interested parties directly, thus bypassing the percentages given to the venue and the ASBA.

2) *Venue doesn't handle sales:* the exhibition organizer can be the contact person for sales, and can collect checks made payable to the ASBA. Payments will be held until the end of exhibition, at which time disbursements are made for all sales.

3) *Artwork is sold by artist directly when on view in ASBA exhibiton:* Artists are encouraged to make a donation 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 cannot publish or display pricing, visitors will be directed to ASBA Director of Exhibitions with inquiries. If the venue collects and disburses the income from sales, these disbursements will 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 using artist's credit card. Occasionally a venue will absorb the cost of returning works. 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.

CHOOSING JURY TEAM

- The team of jurors will be chosen by the exhibition organizer in consultation with personnel involved at the venue. If additional suggestions are needed, the organizer will consult with the Director of Exhibitions.
- The team of jurors should be chosen on the basis of their stature in their respective fields, so that their decisions engender respect. The ASBA recommends a team of 3 jurors, including one botanical artist, one person who is a plant scientist or horticulturalist, and one person involved in the arts, either as a curator, gallery owner, or arts academic. When choosing the team one should consider how they will work together, as well as the exhibition criteria laid out in the call for entries.
- A botanical artist will be fluent in the language of botanical art, including its techniques, the art of it and the science of it.
- A horticulturalist/botanist will be able to judge the botanical accuracy of a variety of plants.
- A person involved in the adjunct fields of art will bring a dispassionate voice to the judgment of the artistic merit of each piece.

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 and botanically 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 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.

EXHIBITION CRITERIA

The organizer may make a preliminary cut of artworks not conforming to show criteria in one way or another. Examples of this are: too large or too small, subject matter or media not included. The organizer will only remove artworks clearly outside the show criteria.

JUROR HONORARIUM

It is 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.

COMPILING ENTRY MATERIALS

A member of the organizing team is selected to receive, log in, and hold the entry materials sent by mail until the jury meets. These are combined with on-line entries, which are compiled into a downloadable spreadsheet. Once the deadline arrives, a master list of all entries is assembled, and each entry is assigned a number.

SETTING UP A JURY MEETING TIME AND PLACE

The exhibition organizer or the Exhibitions Director 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 digital entries, assembles and records them, places the artworks' information into a database, and provides the jury team with a digital slide presentation and scoresheet. 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 jurying; it is an all day task.

PREPARING TALLY FORM

The exhibition organizer or Exhibitions Director will provide the jury team with 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. At the close of jurying, the exhibition organizer or Exhibitions Coordinator will tally the scores.

FINAL SCORES

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. Artwork should be reviewed to verify that the quality of the original is up to the standard seen in the submission, and that presentation requirements are met. ASBA policy currently states that if artworks are received with out-of-spec presentation, the artist can choose to remove the work from the exhibition, or allow the ASBA to bring the artwork into spec, at the artist's expense. A \$100 fee is levied to replace an out-of spec frame, in addition to the cost of framing.

AWARDS

It is required that the awards jury team meet on-site to determine recipients of awards, as awards must be juried from original artworks. Sometimes a separate jury is empaneled to select awards. Awards jurors are provided with a list of the awards to be given, and any special criteria for the awards.