

HOW TO JUDGE YOUR OWN ARTWORK

By Jaceena Shepard, WSA Exhibition Director

I am writing today to the WSA members who have asked me about how to achieve success in getting into a juried show. Perhaps others of you might enjoy reviewing these principles as well. Your plan for success can be as simple as you being the judge of your own methods for choosing and submitting the art you enter into shows! Use this list to evaluate your painting:

1. Does the piece of work express an idea or a feeling? Does it tell a story, or is it primarily a study or an exercise in solving a problem?
2. Is the work done appropriately or is it overdrawn? Do the shapes appear to have been drawn and filled in? Is it “painterly” or does it have an amateurish look?
3. Is anything out of proportion, out of key, or unintentionally exaggerated?
4. Is the perspective correct in every respect: linearly, atmospherically, and with regard to color and tone?
5. Is there a focal point, a place for the eye to rest?
6. Are there any composition errors such as a picture split in half, contours emerging, or a disconcerting “bulls eye” somewhere?
7. How is the color? Is it muddy, chalky, sooty, milky, wooly? Do the colors work with each other?
8. Has consideration been given to color harmonies, values, contrasts, and dominants?
9. Are shadows warm and luminous with reflected lights or are they dead?
10. Is the piece of art clean, matted and framed for presentation? Will viewers see it as art created by a professional artist; one who is proud of it and its presentation?

After you have finished evaluating the work itself, you must then look at the photo images you have taken of your entry. So many jurors reject images immediately because of poor image quality. Out of focus images, poor color, and interfering background matter – the easel, the mats, etc., are the usual culprits. So, when entering a show or any other competition that will be judged from images, make sure yours are excellent. Enlarge them on your computer screen and view them in high-resolution sRGB profile. This is how most jurors set up their computers to view your images.

Before submitting your images to a show, read and follow directions explicitly as outlined in the prospectus. While you might think it is okay to be a couple of days late, it is not! BE ON TIME!

Don't lose heart if the judge doesn't like your art. Being rejected can be disappointing or even devastating to an artist. But as frustrating as rejection is, please realize that the juror is often faced with the knowledge that they must choose a limited number of art pieces from hundreds of entries so rejection of your work is not a valid evaluation of your work. It represents one opinion...the juror's. The greatest artists of all time had work rejected on some occasions. So don't give up; keep painting, evaluating, improving, and submitting.

This article was adapted from Ms. Dorothy Roatz Myer's self judging brochure. Copies or her brochure may be obtained by sending a SASE and \$1.00 to Dorothy Roatz Myers, P.O. Box 204 FDR Station, New York, NY 10150.

Submit questions to:
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