



**HOW TO
PROFESSIONALLY
APPROACH THE
HUNTER ARTISAN
GALLERY.**

Jennifer Nichols
The Hunter Artisan Gallery
48 Melbourne St East Maitland NSW 2323
PH: 0407381911
Email: jenninichols1963@gmail.com
www.thehunterartisangalleryandcafe.com

Introduction

Thank you for taking the time to read through this document which outlines the best way to contact with **The Hunter Artisan Gallery** and introduce your work to the owner, **Jenni Nichols**.

Firstly I would suggest that you have a look through the gallery website www.thehunterartisangalleryandcafe.com as well as the gallery's Facebook Page to acquaint yourself with the gallery to make sure that it is the right venue for your art. Please read through this document so that you know what to expect. At the end is a checklist of how to make an appointment with the gallery owner.

Making contact with the gallery – how to do it right.

Art galleries and dealers are continually deluged with requests from artists to either show, sell, represent, or critique their art, or to otherwise help them advance in their careers. They make contact through direct messaging on social media, by email, phone, in person, by mail, by spontaneously appearing at galleries, through people who refer them, and so on.

Unfortunately, many of these attempts fall far short of what galleries expect from any artist who approaches them with their art.

Ways artists sabotage themselves include the following:

- * Sending generic messages or emails rather than individually personalized ones.
- * Providing little or no background information about either themselves or their art other than maybe sending a few images or links to their websites or social media pages.
- * Not giving specific reasons why they're reaching out in the first place, why they're making contact, why the gallery or dealer should look at the art, or even why they should reply.
- * They only talk about what they want, not about what's in it for the gallery or dealer they're contacting to represent or show their art.

It's your responsibility-- while keeping your enquiry concise and to the point, and abiding by a gallery's submission guidelines -- to show that you actually know who they are, care about them, tell why you're making contact, and talk about how they would benefit from getting to know you and considering your art. If you can't come up with really good reasons that have a gallery's or dealer's best interests in mind, don't bother contacting them.

Once you've established your purpose in making contact, the most important details to provide are specifics about your art-- not all of your art, but the recent work, what you're currently in the process of creating or working on, what you want them to focus on and why. They don't want to see everything you've ever done; they want to see what direction you're going in now and why you believe it's worth paying attention to. In combination with that, your website and/or social media pages should clearly back up everything you say.

Limit your presentation to art that you feel is relevant to any gallery you contact. For instance, you might mention how you think it fits in with the art and artists the gallery already shows, and briefly say why. If a gallery asks, be prepared to tell them approximately how many pieces you have completed and currently available for sale, how many more are in process or that you intend to complete, and about how long it will take to complete them. Additional details are also helpful, like sizes, mediums, dates, titles, edition sizes, and so on (a good way to handle these is to include them with images of your art on your website or social media pages).

Don't inundate a gallery with information or images of older art, art that has nothing to do with what you are contacting them about, or art that you've already shown at other galleries or on your website or social media pages. Galleries tend not to want work that's been out in public for a while or that has failed to sell elsewhere. They want to see your newest, freshest, best stuff.

Make sure you have your pricing act together. Are your prices net to you or are they retail prices that you and the gallery split? You don't necessarily have to go into specifics early on, but at least be clear on what ranges your art generally sells in if the question comes up. The reason for talking prices at certain points in a conversation is that any gallery you contact needs to know whether those dollar amounts fall within the ranges they typically sell art in. For example, if a gallery typically sells work in the \$150-\$1200 price range and your art typically sells in the \$10,000-\$20,000 range, then the gallery will likely not be interested in your art. Better yet, don't waste time contacting galleries that sell art way out of your price range in the first place.

No matter where you send someone to look at your art, make sure it's organized, presented, and introduced in ways they'll be able to understand and appreciate. If necessary, give instructions on where to start, what to pay attention to, and where to find basic information on what your art is about. Think of this part like handing them a roadmap of your work. As an artist you have to remember that whenever you contact anyone who has little or no previous knowledge of either you or your art, you have to be exceptionally clear about why you are contacting them, what the significance of your art is with respect to them and their gallery, and how they can locate and see your work. If you can't put that information together in an effective presentation-- what your art is about and why it's worth their attention-- wait until you can.

In terms of organization, present your work in easily understandable groups, series or categories, each having a particular theme, subject matter, point, purpose, philosophy, or whatever your unique criteria are. You typically do this on your website or social media pages. Whenever a gallery is not familiar with you-- especially if you're early in your career-- you pretty much have to arrange your work almost like you're curating your own exhibition. The closer you can come to presenting your art in terms of groups or series that are basically ready to show, the better. And make sure your current work as well as work that's most relevant to the gallery is clearly labelled and easy to find.

If you are early in your career or are just starting out, presenting completed or nearly completed groups or series of work is best. That way, galleries can see that you're capable of finishing what you start. If you already have a respectable resume and track record, you don't necessarily have to present a completed or nearly completed body of work. For example, you can say something like, "These are the first few works of my XYZ series. When completed in six months, it will consist of 20 pieces all themed on this specific subject or concept or philosophy or idea or whatever." That way, the gallery or dealer can get a reasonable idea of your capabilities as well as the significance of what you're working on.

Regardless of what you're contacting a gallery or dealer about, make sure your work is accessible in a systematic and easy-to-understand format. It's your duty to do the heavy lifting up front so that they don't have to-- and essential if you expect to make any headway at all in terms of having them represent you. This level of attention shows that you are serious about getting your art out there and will do whatever you have to do to make sure they get what you're up to. No gallery wants to waste time trying to figure you out.

Now let's talk business. Galleries are not likely to respond to artists who give little or no specifics about what they're looking for other than someone to show, sell, represent or pay attention to their art. Open-ended or general "look at my art and get back to me" types of requests will get you nowhere. So be very specific about what you're looking for. And don't have any conditions or requirements around representing or showing your art. If you insist on conditions (and hopefully you won't), state them up front so a gallery can quickly determine whether or not you're compatible with their agenda.

Also be able to tell a gallery why you believe you're at an appropriate point in your career to contact them. Be prepared to direct them to your resume, your artist statement, or to any other information that supports your reasoning. If the conversation progresses beyond initial contact, be ready to go into greater detail about what makes your art unique, special or significant. Perhaps you're extremely knowledgeable about a particular theme or subject matter or aspect that's prominent in your art. Perhaps you've been working on a certain type of art or perfecting a proprietary technique for a long period of time. Maybe certain aspects of how you live or conduct your life are instrumental in the creation of your art. Focus on whatever separates your art out from all other similar looking art. A gallery needs the back story; they need to understand your work in depth, the way that you understand it, to essentially see it through your eyes.

One final reminder-- personalize every presentation to whoever you contact. Know exactly who you are dealing with and why. Way too many contact attempts look like form letters, like the artist is sending out the exact same materials to anyone who they think might be interested in their art. When galleries see that an artist has little or no idea who they're contacting or why, it's over before it even starts. And don't think you're going to get lucky if you spam enough galleries, because you're not. In fact the opposite is more often the case because word will get out, and you'll likely end up reducing your chances of success.

Whenever you contact any gallery about your art, make sure you're fully prepared to get them up to speed on what it's all about in case they like what they see and want to know more. You have to put this kind of time and care into your presentation in order for whomever you're contacting to put the equivalent amount of time into continuing the conversation. There is no shortcutting this process. If you make a compelling relevant personalized presentation, you can be certain that sooner or later a gallery or dealer will give you the opportunity you deserve.

Label your Art

As a gallery owner this is my 'pet peeve'!!! Artists who bring their work in without any details. It is annoying and quite frankly unprofessional. There is no standard format but should include the following information.

- Artist's Name
- Title of the work
- Date of completion
- Size of the work (I prefer in cm and width x height)
- Medium
- Price (make sure you indicate if this is the 'wall price' or 'what you want' – remember all galleries have different commission structures)
- Some artists also include a signed Certificate of Authenticity.

Get yourself a cheap duplicate docket book where you can write the details...give a copy to the gallery and you have a record.

Also, please ensure that your art is suitable to be hung (for wall art with either D rings or wire). If it is a sculptural work, ensure that the gallery has a suitable plinth, otherwise bring your own.

Pricing your Art

There are different approaches to putting a price on your art.

Getting a painting to the stage where you're satisfied with it is hard but putting a price on your work can be even harder.

There's no wrong way to decide on a price for a piece of art. But you should try to get as much out of the sale as you put into the piece, whether you measure its worth in sweat equity or materials used. How you decide to approach it depends somewhat on your

There are two ways that you can sell work through a gallery. The art can either be sold on a **commission basis** or the gallery can choose to **buy the artwork up front**. Most gallery-artist agreements work on commission.

Commission sales mean that your artwork is displayed in the gallery for a certain period. Neither you nor the gallery makes any money until the artwork sells. At this point, the two parties split the sale according to the commission split agreed upon in the gallery contract.

Gallery Commission

Currently this gallery works on a 20% commission, however this is subject to change at the discretion of the gallery owner.

Artists can have a hard time grasping the fact that galleries do need to make money as well. It can be painful to see a percent of a sale for *your* work go to someone else, but you must remember that we have expenses too. Galleries need to pay the utilities, rent, and other expenses along with taxes and marketing to get your work seen. They are marketing for *you* and if they do a good job at it, both of you benefit.

Who Determines the Price?

Again, every gallery is different, but in general, gallery owners work with artists to reach a retail price that both of you are comfortable with. You can often tell them what you would like to receive after commission and they will have opinions of what the work is worth on the art market.

This can be one of the most uncomfortable conversations to have. Pricing is rarely an artist's strong suit and it can be a touchy subject. Yet, you also must realize that most gallery owners know the reality of the local art market.

As an artist, you should remain aware that some people will want to take advantage of you. Remain vigilant, don't agree to anything if you're uncomfortable without seeking outside advice first, and watch out for shifty gallery owners. There are great gallery owners and not-so-great gallery owners. Your job is to weed out the bad ones.

Price your work for profit.

Pricing can be one of the hardest things for artists to figure out. But that's the goal of being a professional artist, right? Making a living from your art?

There's a stubborn myth that artists must be "starving." That's simply not true. Your success all falls back on your art business strategy and a great deal can be attributed to how you price your work.

Here's what you need to know:

First, know your costs and make sure they are covered in the price of your artwork. Costs you should remember to include (or you will have to pay for it yourself later) are your time, materials, shipping, and even framing when necessary.

Think of it like this: you have a unique skill set that people value and are willing to give you compensation in exchange for your services. Remember, you are providing a service along with a final product. Decide on a reasonable hourly wage that you would feel comfortable with and work backward.

In Australia the **average hourly wage** for a fine artist ranges from approximately \$20 to \$60 depending on the stage of your career. **The average hourly pay for a Fine Artist, Including Painter, Sculptor, or Illustrator in Australia is AU\$34.16.** Use this number to help you estimate.

Finally, consider offering artwork at multiple price points. Not all fans of your work will be able to afford a \$3000 piece. Smaller, less expensive pieces are more attainable for buyers who can't afford more costly works, and in the end, you'll be able to cast a wider net on your sea of buyers. Every sale counts!

How to price your art.

There are different approaches to putting a price on your art

Getting a painting to the stage where you're satisfied with it is hard but putting a price on your work can be even harder.

There's no wrong way to decide on a price for a piece of art. But you should try to get as much out of the sale as you put into the piece, whether you measure its worth in sweat equity or materials used. How you decide to approach it depends somewhat on your personality and experience. Here a few different options to consider.

- ***The Simple Approach: Price Determined by Standard Sizes***

Using this tactic, paintings of the same size will all have the same price tag, regardless of the subject, how long it took to finish or how much you happen to like it. Create a price list based on size and stick to it, with possible premium prices set for commissioned paintings or other specialty work.

- ***The Accountant's Approach: Recover Your Costs***

Decide what percentage of profit you want to make over your costs for creating the painting. Then add up the cost of everything that went into making the painting, add the percentage, and you've got your selling price. The costs calculation can be basic (materials and labour) or comprehensive (materials, labour, studio space, lighting and sweat equity or a combination).

Under this system, every painting has a different price, based on what went into creating it. Think of this approach as getting a return on your investment.

- ***The Capitalist Approach: Make the Price Market-Related***

Do your homework by visiting galleries and studios in your area and target market(s) to see the sale prices for similar types of art. Price yours to compete. If you're selling directly (not through a gallery), you could offer special deals to make potential customers feel like they're getting a bargain.

If you're also selling through a gallery, never undercut their prices; you may risk undermining your business arrangement with them.

- ***A Mathematical Approach: Price Calculated by Area***

With this method, you decide on a price per square centimetre, then multiply the area of a painting by this figure. You'll probably want to round up to a number that makes sense.

If you paint smaller works, this approach may put you at a disadvantage, but you could use another measurement, such as the amount of paint used. Ideally, those who choose this style of pricing will be creating big, bold works of art.

- ***The Collector's Approach: Increase Your Prices Every Year***

Some people who buy art do it for investment reasons, and they want to believe the value of the painting they bought from you will increase.

Read enough financial news to know what the current rate of inflation is and be sure to increase your prices annually by at least this much.

- ***The Creative Director Approach: Sell a Story, Not Just a Painting***

Have a good tale to tell with every painting, hinting at it in the title, to create a sense that the buyer is getting a little bit of the artist's creativity, not just a product.

Write or print out the tale of the painting on a little card to go with the buyer to its new home (Be sure to put your contact details on it). Hide your prices in the small print to keep the sense of intrigue.

Note that this approach takes some planning (and possibly some comfort with stretching the truth to create a compelling backstory).

- ***An Instinctive Approach: Pull a Price Out of Thin Air***

This particular method is not a good long-term approach, but if you have a piece for sale that is very different from your usual style or medium, you may just have to wing it. If you get a buyer willing to pay for a one-off, you can't hesitate or haggle over prices for something new and different.

Consider all the other approaches before going this route, as you may end up losing money, or getting a reputation as a bit of a flake.

Provide an Artist Statement & Bio

As nice as it would be to let your art speak for itself, it doesn't quite work like that.

Sooner or later, people are going to have questions about your work, and they'll look to your artist statement for answers. Your artist statement will either entice them to dig deeper into your art business or it will scare the sale right out of them.

You'll need it to submit your work to art competitions, and to provide to any media writing about your art. It's also a cornerstone of creating your brand identity as an artist.

An artist statement is an invaluable tool artists use to better understand how and why they do what they do. It is an ever-changing document that is revisited, often after a new body of work or project is completed, concisely outlining the artist's practice, ideas, intent, materials, and methods. Almost every institution, gallery, critic, curator, funding resource, and collector will ask for or require an artist statement at some point, so it is good to have an updated artist statement ready at all times.

Writing an artist statement can be a good way to clarify your own ideas about your work. A gallery dealer, curator, or the public can have access to your description of your work, in your own words. It can help you or someone else write an effective press release, help in writing a bio for a program brochure and avoid anyone misinterpreting your work, assist reviewers and critics write more informed pieces about your work.

It is a good way to introduce your work to a buying public. Often the more a buyer knows about your work the more she/he becomes interested in what you do, which can lead her/him to purchase your work.

A collection of artist statements over the course of an artist's career can be one of the only written keys to understanding how an artist's ideas about her/his practice has changed over time.

You will have to write all kinds of artist statements during the course of your career. Your statement should change as your practice matures and you gain perspective on older work.

Usually you rework your statement after finishing a new body of work. If you make many kinds of works you might find it helpful to have a separate statement to correspond with each kind of work. That said, here are a few different kinds of statements you will certainly need handy.

Ask yourself pointed questions: "What am I trying to say in the work?"; "What influences my work?"; "How do my methods of working (techniques, style, formal decisions) support the content of my work?"; "What are specific examples of this in my work?"; "Does this statement conjure up any images?" Answer these questions using specific examples in the work itself.

CHECKLIST

1. Contact the Gallery Owner, Jenni Nichols by either:
 - a. Email jenninichols1963@gmail.com
 - b. Phone 0407381911
 - c. Facebook

Please be aware that the gallery is operated as a 'one-woman band', so I may not be able to get back to you immediately. Your patience is appreciated.

2. All appointments need to be scheduled between 2 and 3pm, Thursday to Sunday
3. Please do not just rock up to the gallery and expect that there will be time to talk...it all depends on how busy the gallery is...that's why making an appointment is best for everyone.
4. Once an appointment is made, please ensure that you bring along a portfolio of original works, or a couple of original examples. I am not a fan of looking at photographs of works
5. Please be prepared to talk about yourself, I am just as interested in your story as I am about your art
6. Be aware that I am not always in a position to take your art immediately, it depends on the exhibition schedule and availability of space as to when and how many works I can take
7. There is no cost involved in hanging your works, the gallery currently charges 20% commission (subject to change)
8. If your work is accepted, the gallery will require a copy of your artist statement, bio, bank details and all contact details
9. If your work is accepted into the gallery it is expected that you will promote the gallery via your social media and other networks. It is also expected that you will visit the gallery on a regular basis to show your support

Thank you

Jenni Nichols – *Gallery Owner, Curator, Artist, Chief Cook & Bottlewasher*