

What to Expect: Your First Fair

1. Application

- a. Finding the right shows to apply to
- b. Taking application photos
- c. Jury fees
- d. Rejection/Waitlist
- e. Planning out art fair season

2. Preparation

- a. Purchasing equipment
- b. Organizing supplies
- c. Social Media/Advertising

3. Booth Equipment/Materials

- a. Tent, tent weights, & sidewalls
- b. Display/ Features
 - i. What kind of work do you have? How much space does it need? How can you use the tent you have?
 - ii. What is your style/aesthetic?
 - iii. Consider lighting, signage, outdoor rug
- c. Transport
 - i. Vehicle: Van or SUV? Rent a U-haul?
 - ii. Dolly/handcart
- d. Storage
 - i. Artwork
 - ii. Supplies
- e. Checkout
 - i. POS/Sale record
 - ii. Cash Drawer
 - iii. Packing/wrapping materials
- f. Power
 - i. External battery pack
 - ii. Portable power station
- g. Comfort
 - i. Cooler/ Drinks/ Snacks
 - ii. Seating
 - iii. Fan/heater
 - iv. First aid
 - v. Cleaning & Sanitary supplies

4. Setup

- a. Arrive early, give yourself more time than you think you need
- b. Dolly or cart your equipment and materials to your location
- c. Have a plan and a system
- d. Dealing with varied environments and weather
- e. Being flexible

5. The Fair

- a. Be in your booth
- b. Present yourself nicely
 - i. Dress well
- c. Professionalism
- d. Be a good neighbor to your fellow artists, follow the rules, get a good reputation

6. People

- a. Engage all
- b. Read their body language
- c. Tell (Sell) them the story of your work
- d. Give them a reason to come back (either to purchase or continue collecting)

7. Breakdown

- a. Don't break down early
- b. Have a system
- c. Pack and arrange equipment according to how you will have to put it in your vehicle

8. Post Fair

- a. Reflect on how you feel
- b. Examine your sales
- c. See what worked well and what can be improved
- d. Make a list of things you need to do while it's fresh in your mind
 - i. Supply replenishment purchases
 - ii. Inventory restock to create
- e. Get to work preparing for the next fair

Where and How to Apply to Art Fairs

1. Finding shows to apply to:

- a. www.zapplication.org
- b. The Arts Council of Indianapolis <https://indyarts.org/>
- c. Local community websites
- d. Asks artists/ vendors at fairs
- e. Facebook Groups such as 'Art Fair Reviews'

2. Application and Booth Fee

- a. Varies based on fair size, length of fair, and size of booth space
- b. Small fairs
 - i. App Fee: Free to \$20
 - ii. Booth Fee: \$50-\$200
- c. Large fairs
 - i. App Fee: \$20-\$35
 - ii. Booth Fee: \$200-\$550

3. Read details regarding all shows & consider the following

- a. Partial/ Full Refund deadlines if you have to back out
- b. What is the policy if event is cancelled
- c. Inclement weather plans if outdoors
- d. Covid procedures
- e. Set up the day before or day of
- f. Booth size
 - i. Indoors will vary
 - ii. Outdoors is usually 10'x10' or double
- g. Is electricity available? Free or extra fee?
- h. Requesting priority location (i.e. corner booth for extra fee)
- i. Are tents, tables, and/ or chairs provided, rented, or self-supplied

Art Fair Preparation Check-List

Tent & Display

- Inventory -----
- Tent & Tent Weights, Sidewalls, Awning-----
- Pool Noodles (If using Easy-Up & rain is in forecast)-----
- Banner/ Sign -----
- Display Signs: Intro/ Artist Statement; Accepted Payment Types
- Display Furniture/ Fixtures & Table Cloths (if using tables)-----
- Chair/ Stool-----
- Outdoor carpet, platforms, foam squares, plastic sheeting or tarp-----

Check-Out & Packing Materials

- POS system/ terminal/ iPad/ phone-----
- Card Reader/ Cash Box (with change)-----
- Receipt Pad/ Payment record book if not using digital-----
- Writing Utensils, Small Clipboard-----
- Business Cards/ Post Cards-----
- Packing Materials (i.e. paper, bags, bubble wrap)-----

Lights/Power

- Battery Power Pack for charging devices, USB cords-----
- LED Lights, Extension Cord-----
- Portable Power Station (if using more power for lights and such)-----
- Lantern/flashlight, headlamp

Comfort

- Cooler, Water, Snacks, Drinks-----
- Sunblock, bug spray, sunglasses, sun hat/ bandana-----
- Battery powered fan with extra batteries-----
- Rain boots, gear and umbrella (great for shade too)-----

- Layered/ extra clothing, extra socks_____
- Hand Sanitizer, Disinfectant wipes and/or spray_____
- Frozen towels for keeping cool in extreme heat_____
- First Aid Kit_____

Miscellaneous

- Tools such as scissors, hammer, screw driver, mallet, pliers _____
- Work Gloves_____
- Wood Shims to prop display if on unlevel ground_____
- Zip ties, Bungee Cords, Safety pins_____
- Duct Tape, Packaging Tape, Superglue, Epoxy _____
- Paper towels _____
- Plastic bags - ziplock of various sizes, grocery store bags, etc for trash & misc.
- Broom & Dust Pan _____

Pricing and Sales

To become profitable and make this a way to make a living you need to treat this work seriously:

- Keep track of time and expenses
- Set goals for sales and have a plan for recouping your investment
- Show up and work like this is a job (because it is)

A good basic equation for figuring out the cost of each item is as follows:

Cost of materials + (Time spent making work X Your Hourly Wage)

of items made with the cost of materials and in the time above

Check out procedures and equipment

- Minimal: Use excel spreadsheet or notepad to document sales, cash box with adequate change
- Next level: Square, Venmo, or other P.O.S. that processes cards and tracks sales
- Professional: Dedicated iPad, terminal with chip reader and/ or ability to accept digital payment

Consider fees for accepting cards, what forms of payments you want to accept, and how to include tax (added on to each sale or incorporated in price)

Consider packaging materials depending on your product: plastic or paper bags, bubble wrap, boxes, envelopes etc.

SALES TAX

Websites to assist with starting your business:

<https://inbiz.in.gov/start-business#>

<https://www.in.gov/dor/business-tax/new-and-small-business-education-center/>

When determining your pricing consider if you are going to add sales tax in addition to the price of each item or include the sales tax within each item price and calculate out the sales tax from the final sales. Most electronic POS systems, such as Square, will track and calculate the sales tax.

How to Engage Possible Customers

1. Talk To Everyone

- a. You never know who the people visiting your booth are at first glance or what they are shopping for.
- b. Every person who you interact with is practice for the one who turns into a sale and helps you build confidence.

2. Greet With Enthusiasm And Sincerity

- a. When someone enters your booth be sure to acknowledge and address them.
- b. You don't need to overdo it, but be genuine.
- c. You don't have to talk about your work right away, you can make small talk about the weather, something they're carrying or compliment what they're wearing, talk about the fair itself ("making your loop around").

3. Read The Customer

- a. What does their body language tell you?
- b. Engage
 - i. Are they shopping for themselves or someone else? Looking for something specific? Colors or styles they are interested in?
- c. Give them space to look and interact with your work, **DON'T HOVER.**

4. Tell A Story About/With Your Work

- a. You are selling a piece of yourself, so tell them about how the piece speaks of where you have been and what you do.
- b. Know what sets you apart.
- c. Find phrases unique to you and your work.
 - i. Artsy elegance for your everyday
 - ii. A mug for every hand
 - iii. Girlie pots
 - iv. Other artists
 1. Historically inaccurate drawings

5. Ask For The Sale

- a. Something as simple as, "Would you like me to hold while you continue to look," or "Can I wrap that up for you?"
- b. Add ons: if you have something of lower value that is easier to purchase, keep some near check-out area

6. If They Want To Keep Looking...

- a. Do not hold items for an unlimited amount of time.
- b. Leave them with more than a business card that is easily lost among their things
 - i. Little mini hearts
 - ii. Stickers or buttons
 - iii. Post card
 - iv. A sign to take a picture of near a memorable piece
- c. Remind them of the uniqueness of your work and that the item they are interested in may be gone when they return

7. How To Keep Them Coming Back/Making A Collector

- a. Personal touches
- b. Social Media
- c. Email List
- d. Creating a consistent presence