



Comprehensive
Checklist & Timeline for Your Art Exhibition

ART BIZ success
with Alyson Stanfield

Thanks for downloading this checklist to keep you organized as you prepare for your exhibition. Instead of worrying about what to do next, you can focus on making the work and follow the timeline to stay on task.

The tasks on your checklist, and the deadlines you give them, will depend on the following:

- The type of exhibition (juried, self-curated, open studio)
- If the venue is in charge of sales and refreshments or if that's up to you
- Whether you're showing with other artists
- How much time you have to plan

With this in mind, you can use the list on the following pages to customize a plan that works for you.

My superpower as a coach is helping artists create foundational systems that can help them grow and stay sane throughout the process.

If you're working toward your next show and find yourself wanting help thinking through the bigger picture — pricing, positioning, what's next for your business — I work with a small number of private clients on exactly that. Drop me a note and tell me about your plans: alyson@artbizsuccess.com .

With gratitude,

A handwritten signature in black ink, appearing to read 'Alyson', with a long horizontal flourish extending to the right.

Do it now.

Task	Considerations	Deadline	Done!
Set goals	What would you like to have happen at this exhibition or as a result of it?		
Plan budget	How much can you afford to spend on materials and framing? How much can you allocate to promotions, printing, and a reception?		
Identify a thesis	Your exhibition should make sense. What will hold the works together? Curate the work accordingly.		
Title it	Give it a title because titles distinguish one show from another on your résumé. Titles with your name in them scream "solo show!"		
Update postcard and email lists	Include new acquaintances and those who have requested to receive email from you.		
Meet with venue's contact person	Discuss arrangements. You'll want to cover sales, dates and deadlines, insurance, security, opening reception, advertising, any artist presentation, and other items on this list. You don't need any surprises or miscommunication.		
Sign contract	If you're having your exhibit anywhere but your own home or studio, you should have a written, signed contract (or letter of agreement) with the other venue. No exceptions! Again, we're trying to avoid any unwanted surprises.		
Create a Pinterest board for your show	As an example, see: https://www.pinterest.com/gilhooly/pattern-language-2014/		

Do it soon.

Task	Considerations	Deadline	Done!
Consider using real mail	Design and print invitations or postcards, if you have time. Real mail will help you stand out.		
Pull together publicity material	Have promotional brochures or flyers ready to hand to people that describe you and your work and reminds them of upcoming events. Write a press release, if appropriate, and order additional business cards. Also think about placing a guest book in the space.		

Task	Considerations	Deadline	Done!
Make a notebook	Put together a notebook with plastic sleeve inserts that details your accomplishments (magazine articles, resume, statement, etc.). You can display all of these in the exhibition space.		
Send or deliver invitations	Address, stamp, and distribute any invitations.		
Print object labels	Object labels are placed beside your art in an exhibition space. They include your name, title of artwork, and medium. See examples at https://artbizsuccess.com/wall-labels/		
Review pricing	Get super clear on your pricing structure so that you have confidence that what you're asking is correct.		
Create objects list	Finalize the works you will include in the show and generate a list. This is easy to do when you use an inventory system like Artwork Archive.		
Organize sales materials	Gather your credit card materials, receipts, and cash box, if needed.		
Ask for help	Call on good friends to help with the installation. Ask a friend or family member to help greet visitors and make them feel comfortable. Designate someone to process sales for you.		
Finalize plans for talk or presentation	Coordinate with the venue's contact and make sure you're on the same page regarding the date, equipment needed, and publicity.		
Consider refreshments	If this is something you are organizing yourself, don't forget something to eat and drink so that guests stay awhile. Keep it simple (but special). You don't want to add stress to the event.		
Double check insurance	If you are hosting in your home or studio, review your policy. Are you covered for your work and exhibition space? Do you have liability insurance for your guests? Note that homeowner policies aren't usually sufficient for covering business events or inventory.		
Make a page on your website	Post the details of the exhibition on your website or blog. A special page, which might be a blog post, makes it easy to send people directly to the information they need to show up for you.		
Send a teaser on social media	Ask your friends and followers to save the date for your opening or other program.		
Proofread and send press release	If press releases are appropriate (if your show really is news-worthy), get 'em done. Lead times vary, but monthly and quarterly publications have much longer lead times than dailies and weeklies.		

Do it 2 weeks before the opening.

Task	Considerations	Deadline	Done!
Send email invitation	Write, proofread, and test your official invitation then send it to your list.		
Send personal invitations	There are probably many people you'd like to show up for your exhibition who aren't on your list. Reach out with the personal touch and ask them to bring a friend along.		
Post another teaser to social media	All of your emails and posts should be different. If you use the same angle or words each time, they'll look boring. Here are a few ideas for varying your message: https://artbizsuccess.com/vary-your-marketing-message/		
Ask someone to take photos for you	You want to spend your opening talking with guests and answering questions. Photos are the last thing you'll be thinking of. Without a plan, you'll go home without a single pic. Trust me. This job is best left to someone else. If you want to hire a professional, great! That's probably something you'd need to line up earlier.		

Do it just before the opening.

Task	Considerations	Deadline	Done!
Deliver and install artwork	Double check the lighting. (Learn how to light your work properly!)		
Present your inventory list	Ask the venue to sign off on the inventory you're leaving in their hands.		
Make a plan to count visitors	Wouldn't it be nice to know how many people attend your opening or presentation? Count them! This is where you can rely on that extra help.		
Clean the space	Even if the space isn't your own, its state is still a reflection of you. Visit the bathroom and other hidden corners to make sure it's spotless.		
Email your list	Send an email reminder to local people on your list the day before the opening. If your list isn't segmented, you aren't making the most of your most important asset.		

Do it at the last minute.

Task	Considerations	Deadline	Done!
Email your list	Send an email to local people on your list reminding them that "It's tonight!"		
Grab plenty of business cards	You'll want to have these around the room so that interested people can be reminded of how to find and contact you.		
Prep refreshments	If you're DIYing this shindig, get the food and beverages together or ask the assigned friend to help.		
Put out the guestbook	It's nice to know who came to your show, even though publicly displaying this information isn't the best way to collect contact information.		
Go over photos with assigned photographer	Make sure your photographer knows what types of photos you want. They should be proactive and suggest others throughout the evening.		
Assign an interrupter	It's important that you're free for all of your guests, which means keeping others (even close friends!) from monopolizing your time. If you find yourself stuck, a good friend could tap you on the shoulder and say that so-and-so would like to meet you.		

Do it while the exhibition is running.

Task	Considerations	Deadline	Done!
Follow up	Follow up with people who expressed interest and make sure they have seen the show.		
Send thank-you notes	Write thank-you notes to everyone who helped the show come together.		
Email before show closes	Send an email to local people to remind them that your show is closing.		
Photograph and video the installation	Get excellent shots of your work installed.		
Post to social media	Keep your show alive while it's up. Remind people with plenty of photos and videos from the space.		

Do it after the exhibition closes.

Task	Considerations	Deadline	Done!
Follow up	Follow up with anyone else who has expressed interest.		
Send thank-you notes	Write thank-you notes to anyone who still needs them, including those who purchased your art.		
Update your inventory	Update your inventory to reflect works that sold during the show.		
Update your contacts	Add new contacts to your list and database.		
Analyze	Review what went right, what went wrong, what you wish you had known, and what you'd do differently next time.		



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ARTBIZSUCCESS.COM/WHITEWALLS

About Alyson

I'm a former museum curator and educator who now works with serious visual artists at a turning point in their business.

Through private consulting, strategic planning, and tools like this one, I help you clarify your priorities, build systems you can rely on, and move forward with confidence.

I'm the host of *The Art Biz* podcast and author of *I'd Rather Be in the Studio: The Artist's No-Excuse Guide to Self-Promotion*.

Say Hi on Instagram: [@alysonstanfield](https://www.instagram.com/alysonstanfield)

If this checklist has you thinking about your next show, you might enjoy **Beyond White Walls**, my on-demand workshop for being proactive about exhibition venues. It's for looking outside of the box when it comes to showing and selling your work.

See → artbizsuccess.com/whitewalls

My gallerist complimented me on my marketing, social media presence, and website. She said, "I can't keep up with you," more than once and that I was the most together artist they work with.

This is a testament to a lot of hard work and listening to you for a decade.

—REBECCA FINCH

