



Guide to Selling Your Paintings at Local Galleries

INTRODUCTION

Congratulations on creating a several beautiful paintings with your own voice! Now it's time to take the exciting step of sharing your work with the world. This guide will walk you through the process of approaching local galleries, submitting your work professionally, and increasing your chances of success. If any of this feels intimidating to you, you are welcome to reach out to me in one of our mentoring calls to talk it through.

BEFORE YOU APPROACH GALLERIES

Important note: If you've never exhibited your work before, I recommend you start in a less formal venue, like a coffee shop or library. Getting some experience and making more paintings will only make you more appealing when you approach a gallery.

1. Prepare Your Portfolio

- Select 5-8 of your strongest pieces that show consistency in style but variety in subject
- Ensure all works are professionally finished with clean edges if gallery-wrapped
- Photograph your work professionally (good lighting, straight-on angle, accurate colors)

2. Establish Your Pricing Structure

- Research comparable artists in your local market
- Create a consistent pricing formula (I like to use a "square inch" strategy)
- Prepare for the standard 50% gallery commission

3. Create Professional Supporting Materials

- Type up your Artist biography (one page, third-person)
- Have on hand a Resume of any previous exhibitions or art education, experience (this may not be asked for until after signing on with the gallery)
- Print post cards with your contact information and a gorgeous shot of your favorite painting
- Be sure you have a professional-looking way galleries can see your art online, a great place to start is an Instagram portfolio. Work up to a simple website when you can.

IN-PERSON INTRODUCTION SCRIPT

When visiting a gallery without an appointment, timing is everything. Mid-week mornings or slow afternoons are best. Avoid weekends, opening nights, or when staff appear busy with customers.

What to say:

"Hello, my name is [Your Name]. I've visited your gallery several times and really love your collection and how you focus on [whatever is relevant about their collection]. I'm an artist working in [medium]. I wondered if you ever look at new artists' work? I think my work would be a great fit for your gallery because [Explain your simple reason why your work fits here]."

If they want to look at your work:

- If a gallery is willing to look at your work, they will let you know the best way to submit. They may set up an appointment with you, OR they may ask you to send your work in via email, so have professional photos ready to send them.

If they want to see your work right then:

- Have a few pieces in the car just in case, but don't walk in with them unless asked.
- Be prepared to speak confidently but briefly about your work.
- Ask thoughtful questions about their submission process.
- Thank them sincerely for their time.

If they can't look at your work:

- They may say, "We are full" or "We're not accepting new artists right now". If so, ask if you could follow up in 6 months. Leave some postcards with photos of your favorite work, and your contact info on the back. Thank them for their time and compliment their gallery.
- In the meantime, stop by again and say "Hi", (without talking about your work), so that they know and like you. People are more willing to work with folks they know and like.
- Send them some notecards with your art on them and a note that says, "It was nice meeting you". Then send an email in 6 months asking if you could show them some new work. Be friendly and professional but not pushy. Remember you are trying to make their life better by creating a successful business relationship for BOTH of you.

If they give you a hard "no":

- Don't take it personally. The gallery is not a good fit for you. Keep looking around for galleries that feel like a good fit for your work. Be patient, and remember your art may not be for everyone, but it is right for someone.
- Most of all, don't give up. The only people who succeed are the ones who keep going. It's a numbers game. Approach enough galleries and you'll find one that is right for you.

GALLERY SUBMISSION TIPS

Do Your Research

- Visit the gallery multiple times before approaching them
- Understand their aesthetic, price points, and clientele
- Review their website for submission guidelines
- Connect with their social media accounts

Professional Presentation Matters

- Dress professionally when visiting galleries
- Bring work that is 100% ready to hang and sell
- Have all materials organized and easily accessible
- Be confident but not aggressive in your approach

Follow Up Appropriately

- Wait at least one week before following up on submissions
- Keep follow-up emails brief and courteous
- Accept rejection gracefully and ask if they would be willing to review your work again in 6-12 months

After Acceptance

- They should have you sign a contract. Make sure it works for you too.
- Make sure you understand your commission percentages, payment schedules, and exclusivity requirements. Don't be afraid to ask questions.
- Understand drop-off/pick-up procedures
- Discuss marketing expectations clearly
- Build a relationship with gallery staff

COMMON GALLERY REQUIREMENTS

- Exclusive representation in your geographic area
- Consistent production of new work
- Availability for openings and events

- Biography and supporting materials for their marketing
- Ability to speak about your process to interested buyers

FINAL THOUGHTS

Remember that gallery relationships are professional partnerships. The best arrangements benefit both you and the gallery. Be patient with the process—finding the right gallery fit can take time, but when it happens, it can be very rewarding both artistically and financially.

Keep painting, keep improving, and keep putting your work out there. Your art deserve to be seen and appreciated!

I hope this guide helps you navigate the exciting journey of sharing your paintings with the world through gallery representation!

Happy painting and good luck!

Kellie

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