

Planning And Conducting An Addiction Art Exhibition

What Is Addiction Art?

Addiction Art is artwork that conveys the human experience and reveals the complexities of addiction, treatment, and recovery. Addiction Art stimulates public dialog and plays a key educational role in the understanding, prevention, and treatment of addiction.

What Is An Addiction Art Exhibition?

It is a gathering of artists and other interested people, in a public place, for the purposes of viewing and discussing Addiction Art. The gathering may be large or small; local, regional, or even national; open to the public, or limited to specific invitees; free or charging an admission; lasting a single day, or open for an extended period. **But, regardless of any of these things, the exhibition's purpose is the same: to make a positive contribution towards addressing the enormous public health problem of addiction, using art as a means of communication.** A sampling of Addiction Art Exhibitions, including descriptions and photos, may be found at:
<http://www.addictionandart.org/shows.html>

What Can Such An Exhibition Achieve?

Substance abuse is currently our world's biggest disease – responsible for cancers, strokes, accidents, suicides, murders, and violence. There is an urgency to address this health epidemic with any and all available tools, including art exhibitions. Such exhibitions demonstrate that art can be used as a therapeutic tool for addicts in treatment and as an information tool for any audience. The benefits which can be realized from these exhibitions include, but are not limited to: education of the public about the personal and community tolls caused by substance abuse, increased attention to community needs for accessible addiction treatment, prevention, and education to reduce substance abuse. An exhibition can and should be an avenue to encourage active communication and dialog among addicts, family members, therapists, art appreciators, community leaders and others.

The purpose of this document is to provide you with a plan for conducting an Addiction Art Exhibition. The information herein is based on the experiences of many who have done so. Obviously, there will be many specific decisions that will have to be made, based on local needs, facilities, etc. But many successful exhibitions have been held following the guidelines presented here.

The remainder of this document is a discussion of the key steps in conducting an Addiction Art Exhibition:

- 1. Establish A Budget**
- 2. Establish An Exhibition Committee**
- 3. Establish Exhibition Location And Dates**
- 4. Select Your Jurors/Art Advisory Board**
- 5. Create A “Call To Artists”**
- 6. Advertise Your “Call To Artists”**
- 7. Select The Artwork To Be Displayed**
- 8. Notify Artists Of The Jurors' Selection**
- 9. Consider Handouts For Attendees**
- 10. Promote Your Exhibition**
- 11. Confirm Received Artwork (If Shipped)**
- 12. Edit And Prepare Artists' Statements**
- 13. Install The Exhibition**
- 14. The Opening And Beyond**
- 15. Dismantle The Exhibition**
- 16. Follow-Up**

Note: The Guidelines which follow are written based on many art show experiences and are a compilation of activities that have been used to put successful medium to large-sized Addiction Art Exhibitions together. If you are following these guidelines, keep in mind that not all of these actions may be needed for your particular situation. This will be especially true if you are organizing a small exhibition. In other words, you don't have to follow these guidelines to the letter. Use the parts that work for you and skip the rest. And, if you find that there are steps that are not a part of the guidelines but are needed, please send them to the editor@addictionandart.org so we can update the guidelines.

1. Establish A Budget

Examine available resources and determine what funds are available. Estimate the costs for the exhibition under consideration and determine how expenses will be covered. For local exhibitions organized by personnel in existing gallery settings, or for small low-key exhibitions organized by volunteers, expenses will be minimal. Expenses usually considered for these types of exhibitions include: office supplies, duplication costs, exhibition invitations and mailings, opening reception refreshments, etc. Budgets for larger, regional or national exhibitions

may include, in addition to the items above, exhibition site rental, shipping costs for artworks, reimbursement of expenses for jurors and staff, and perhaps even fees for jurors and staff.

2. Establish An Exhibition Committee

Recruit individuals interested in art and in addiction, treatment and recovery to help plan and implement your Addiction Art Exhibition and any related events. Depending on the scale of your exhibition, help may come from several sources: art and addiction professionals, in-treatment or post-treatment addicts (especially those who have produced addiction artwork), staff members of the exhibition hosting facility, local community groups such as art councils, addiction treatment centers, friends, family, and others. It is strongly recommended that at least one committee member (and more if possible) have experience in conducting exhibitions. Although it is helpful to have a number of folks on a committee, a "committee" could also simply be one or two people, especially if the exhibit is a small one.

3. Establish Exhibition Location And Dates

Choose the location for your exhibition. Organizations and activities that typically have facilities suitable for an Addiction Art Exhibition include: art galleries, libraries, community centers, cultural centers, addiction treatment and prevention centers, hospitals, coffee houses, churches, schools, community colleges, universities, museums, professional conferences, and many others. In addition to cost, convenience of location, availability, and suitability should be considered in making your decision.

Choose the date(s) and time for your exhibition. The length of time available will vary with the type of facility. For example, a conference exhibition typically runs 3-4 days, while an art gallery exhibition may run for a month or longer. Facilities associated with a church may be available for just a few hours on a single day.

4. Select Your Jurors

You will need individuals who have an appreciation of this art form and are supportive of effective education, control, and treatment of addictions of all kinds to select the artwork to be displayed. The type and number of these individuals will depend on your organization and its needs, the size of the exhibition facility, and the number of artworks you expect to be entered. As the concept behind an Addiction Art Exhibition is that art complements addiction treatment, it would be ideal to have at least one juror from the addiction community and at least one from the art community, or more if the exhibition is to be a large one. For a small exhibition and/or under tight budget constraints, one juror from either field would suffice.

Prospective jurors should be informed of your exhibition objectives and logistical information regarding the judging process.

5. Create A “Call To Artists”

Your “Call To Artists” is your invitation to artists to submit artwork they feel is suitable and appropriate for your exhibition. Therefore, it must describe your overall theme/purpose in conducting the exhibition, show location, submission guidelines, and pertinent dates.

A Typical “Call To Artists”, which you are free to reproduce and use “as-is” or modify to fit your needs, is attached as Appendix A, or it may be downloaded from the Addiction And Art Website at: <http://www.addictionandart.org/guidelines.html>. Typical Art Submission Guidelines, and a description of typical entry submission form content, is discussed below.

Typical Art Submission Guidelines

Theme The exhibition's theme is addiction, its treatment, and recovery. The theme may be addressed using any aesthetic (realism, abstract, expressive, etc).

Eligibility Art in all media, including video, will be accepted. Submissions may have been completed in any year. Restrictions to size of artwork or media inclusion may vary, based on facility accommodations.

Jurors Jurors and their affiliations should be listed.

Deadline The deadline for submissions should be at least 2-3 months after your “Call To Artists” is released.

Awards Awards may or may not be a part of your exhibition. If you include an honorarium, it is common in art exhibitions to award a cash amount to the top three artists: 1st, 2nd and 3rd) and honorable mention(s) as funds allow. In lieu of money, you might consider giving the winners an opportunity to discuss their artwork at the Opening Reception, or give them ribbons or other “wearable” awards.

Entry Requirements When issuing a call for your exhibition, provide the options acceptable to you for the artists to submit their works for the jury. Normally, at this stage, artists are asked to submit reproductions of their work, such as digital images, photocopies, etc., as opposed to originals. If appropriate, a limit may be placed on how many pieces each artist may enter. The form the entries take should be considered in the light of your judging situation and resources. For fairness and consistency, all entrants

should be expected to submit images in the same format(s).

One approach asks each artist to submit high-quality color copies on 8.5" X 11" paper of each image (labeled with artist's name and title of artwork). It is quite convenient for a group of judges to use paper images for comparison purposes and also later for positioning each piece in the exhibition hall. However, the clarity of such imaging is somewhat limited. Digital Images provide a higher reproduction quality, and may be submitted via e-mail, or on one or more CD or DVD disks. For consistency and convenience, limiting digital images to 300 dpi and no larger than 1.5 MB in size is advisable, and the name of each piece should be included in its file name. And each disk should be labeled with the artist's name and the title of the artwork.

Slides have fallen into disfavor in the light of modern digital imaging, but you may want to consider accepting entries using slides to accommodate artists who want to exhibit pieces they completed and photographed some time ago. If you decide to accept slide entries, they should be labeled with the artist's name and title of the artwork on the front of the slide, with an indication of which edge is top of the slide.

Ask artists to submit a statement (100-200 words) that describes the intent of their work to increase viewer understanding. It is helpful to ask for these statements in both hard and digital copies.

Your Entry Requirements should specify a deadline for receipt of art submissions, the date when participants will be notified of artwork accepted for exhibition, the participant's deadline for delivery of actual artwork(s) to your organization, the exhibition's location, date and gallery hours, the date of the exhibition's opening reception, and the date when artwork(s) will be returned to artists. Your organization's website address, if you have one, e-mail and mail addresses, telephone number, and contact person should also be included.

Entry Submission Forms Request that participants provide their name, mailing address, e-mail address, and telephone number. Spaces should be provided for the title of each entry, the year the artwork was completed, the artwork's dimensions, medium, and, if sale of artwork is permitted, the price.

Release of Liability/ Photo Release. If your organization can not provide insurance for the artwork it is important to obtain a *release of liability* statement on your entry form. For example: **"I release (insert your organization's name) from any liability during the Addiction and Art**

Exhibition. I personally assume all risk of damage or loss of the artwork. Also, I give my permission for accepted artwork(s) to be photographed and used by (insert your organization's name) for press promotions as well as in newsletters or on websites." Have artists both sign and date this statement. Also, if an artist is under 18 years of age, it is important to have the releases signed and dated by a parent/guardian.

6. Advertise Your "Call To Artists"

The success of your exhibition depends largely on the artists you can recruit. Be sure to e-mail your call to: editor@addictionandart.org. We will post your call, and also information about your exhibition, to the "news" section of the website. Advertise your call in local newspapers and art association newsletters. Send your call to community art centers, galleries, college art departments, public and private school art departments, local art blogs, and to individual artists. Also, if you let local addiction treatment and art therapy organizations know you are recruiting artists, it both gives them a chance to encourage artists they may know and gives them a heads up about the pending exhibition. Also, for regional or national exhibitions consider placing your "Call" in art and art therapy magazines and on-line newsletters.

7. Select The Artwork To Be Displayed

If there are numerous jurors, and/or a large number of submissions, it will speed the selection process if you supply each juror paper copies of each image, with the artist's statement, for them to review at least two weeks prior to the final selection. It will also streamline the process if each juror provides you a list of their favorites a few days prior to the selection meeting.

If at all possible, the following process should be done in a meeting of all jurors in the same place. If this is not possible, arrangements should be made for remote jurors to be in communication by teleconference, telephone, e-mail, or some other means, so that their thoughts and opinions are part of the process.

To begin the judging process, carefully review with all jurors the Art Submission Guidelines that were provided to all entrants. Using one or more of the following visual representations of the submitted artworks: **paper artwork copies, computer monitors, projectors, and/or artists' statements**, the submitted artwork should be judged, based upon how effectively each entry fulfills the theme expressed in the Art Submission Guidelines. In evaluating the entries the following topics should be addressed.

Theme: Does the image address the theme of addiction and recovery?

Visual Power: Is the image engaging, compelling?

Originality: Is the image creative, unique?

Execution: Is the image technically well done?

Important: the criteria for selecting artwork will vary considerably by venue and their mission. For example, a museum show would be selective about the quality of works included, while a community show may opt to select at least one work from every entrant - no matter what the quality.

8. Notify Artists Of Jurors' Selection

Each submitting artist should be notified by letter of the jurors' decision, including artists whose work was not chosen. Artists whose work has been chosen need several pieces of information:

Provide the **deadline by which their art must be received**. Typically, at least three weeks from the date of notification is considered an adequate time.

Inform each artist of your expectation that their **artwork will be received in a "ready to be hung" condition**. For example, two dimensional works are typically required to have finished edges (canvas stretcher), or be framed, or framed under glass/plexi-glass, and to have a hanging wire attached. In a less formal exhibition, paper artwork could simply be tacked to a wall. For other artwork, such as three-dimensional sculpture or unusually shaped hanging pieces, specific guidelines should be given. Even though they were provided earlier, it's good practice to repeat **critical information**, including the physical and/or mailing address where art can be sent or hand delivered, and your organization's contact person's name and contact information. **Critical dates** should also be repeated, including the dates for:

- hand delivery of artworks (**with times & location**),
- due date for shipped artworks (**with address**),
- show opening (**with time & location**),
- show closing,
- picking up hand delivered artworks (**with times & location**), and
- date of returning shipped artworks

Artists whose work has not been chosen will appreciate a letter expressing your thanks for their efforts and participation in the process. You might also consider inviting them to attend the exhibition, or any other expression of gratitude you feel is possible and appropriate.

9. Consider Handouts For Attendees

Attending an Addiction Art Exhibition leaves many attendees feeling a desire for additional information on addiction and treatment. You may want to consider handouts listing addiction treatment centers and organizations in your area, a listing of phone numbers for Alcoholics Anonymous, Narcotics Anonymous, and other similar organizations, etc. Also, The National Institute On Alcohol And Alcoholism (www.niaaa.nih.gov) and the National Institute On Drug Abuse (www.nida.nih.gov) have materials on substance abuse prevention and treatment that you can order to distribute at your exhibition.

10. Promote Your Exhibition

To maximize the attendance at your exhibition, it is necessary to “get the word out” to the public in every way possible. Exhibition announcements, press releases, and perhaps a “Show Postcard” should be prepared and distributed as appropriate about three weeks before your exhibition opens. For local exhibitions, personal letters of invitation may be sent to private and public schools, addiction treatment and prevention organizations and facilities, churches, art associations, etc. Also, all participating artists should be provided invitations for their personal mailing lists. Sample press information and exhibition information may be downloaded from the Addiction and Art website:
<http://www.addictionandart.org/guidelines.html>.

11. Confirm Received Artwork (If Shipped)

Be sure to e-mail, call, or write each contributing artist who has shipped their art to you to let them know their artwork has been received safely.

12. Edit And Prepare Artists' Statements

Each piece of displayed artwork should be accompanied by the title of the work, the artist's name and location (City & State), and the Artist's Statement, edited as necessary for accuracy and consistency. Typically, this information is typed or printed on cards or heavy paper, and displayed on or near each piece of art as appropriate.

13. Install The Exhibition

This critically important step may take from a few hours to several days, depending on the number of art pieces to be displayed and the characteristics (lighting, dimensions, shape, size, etc.) of the space. Based on these factors, and the characteristics of the artwork to be displayed, the individual pieces may be hung on walls, placed on easels or shelves, placed on floors, or a combination of methods. Particular attention must be paid to lighting, especially if windows cause the lighting to change with time of day. An individual with experience in this work, if available, should be placed in charge. If necessary, check with local art galleries or museums to see if someone with experience hanging art shows is available. And, since a significant amount of physical work is involved, any

interested volunteers should be encouraged.

14. The Opening And Beyond

Staffing If at all possible, make arrangements to have a staff member or volunteer on hand whenever the gallery is open for visitors, to answer questions and provide a welcome to visitors. This person will also provide for the security of the artwork during exhibition hours.

Opening Reception Traditionally, an opening reception of no more than 2-3 hours duration is held to officially “launch” an art exhibition. Light refreshments may be served, as budgets allow. Especially in the case of Addiction Art Exhibitions, it is valuable to ask the participating artists to attend, so they may discuss their art. Name tags for the artists and staff members, as well as a guest book with provisions for comments, will have additional value. Note: Several exhibitions have successfully used small reproductions of artists' artwork on their name tags to facilitate conversation.

Exhibition Photographer Documenting the opening events is valuable. Photos of the artwork and its installation are likewise a good idea. Photos can be used for publicity and press, your organization's newsletter/website, and advertising the next time you do an exhibition, as well as other purposes. You are encouraged to forward photographs of your exhibition to the Addiction and Art website at: editor@addictionandart.org for posting.

Gallery Talks Lectures by artists, substance abuse professionals, art therapists, and others may be held during the exhibition's duration.

Security The exhibition facility must be kept locked after hours for the safety of the artwork.

15. Dismantle The Exhibition

A crew, similar in scope to the one used in step 13, will be needed to dismantle the exhibition. Local artists will typically pick up their work after the exhibition has closed. The rest of the artwork will need to be appropriately packed and shipped back to the artists. For this reason, packaging used in shipping the work to you should be saved, as possible. Additional materials will be needed, though, to insure the safety of all returned artwork.

16. Follow-up

It is very important to contact the participating artists by letter, e-mail, or phone call and thank them for allowing your organization the privilege of displaying their artwork. And, likewise, those who volunteered their time in any and all capacities deserve thanks in some appropriate form. These are the people you will need

and rely on for the next exhibition. Because... YES, conducting Addiction Art Exhibitions is habit forming!

And, finally, **we are here to help!** For ideas for your Addiction Art Exhibition, visit us at **addictionandart.org**. The “shows” page contains descriptions of several exhibitions, and the activities that accompanied them. If you have questions about an event you're planning, e-mail them to editor@addictionandart.org. We can't promise, but time permitting, we'll try to get an answer for you. And don't forget to send information about your show, including photographs, for inclusion in our “shows” section to: editor@addictionandart.org.

*Planning and Conducting an Addiction Art Exhibition is inspired in part by “Guidelines for Organizing Art Exhibitions on Addiction and Recovery” by Patricia B. Santora, PhD, Margaret L. Dowell, PhD and Jack E. Henningfield, PhD. – a publication from the former Innovators Combating Substance Abuse, a National Program Office of the Robert Wood Johnson Foundation at the John Hopkins University School of Medicine. Also, significant insight for this document was received from Maggie Ball (MFA), gallery curator, Carroll Community College and juror of an Addiction and Art exhibition.

Appendix A “Call to Artists” and “Submission Form” follows.

Addiction and Art

Call to Artists

Organization's Name

Location of Show

Dates of Exhibition

Deadline for Submissions

_____ (Name of Sponsor) is pleased to issue a Call to Artists to appear in an exhibition highlighting substance abuse, addiction and recovery.

Substance abuse is currently our world's biggest disease – responsible for cancers, strokes, accidents, suicides, murders and violence. The purpose of this exhibit is to contribute to the concept that creativity and artistic expression can play a significant role both in recovery and in raising awareness of the personal and community tolls caused by substance abuse and addiction. Artworks can give insights into the human experience of addiction, can spark dialogs, can teach, and can change perceptions.

Artists are invited to submit original artworks on the theme of drug addiction and recovery (drugs include alcohol, tobacco, illegal or prescription drugs). The juror(s) for the exhibition will be _____ (Name of juror(s), title, and affiliations).

Guidelines for Submissions

Eligibility:

Artists must live or work within _____ (Distance) of _____ (Show Location).

Works in all media will be accepted. They may be any size and completed in any year.

Entry:

Artists may submit up to 3 artworks by e-mail, CD or slide format.

For Both E-Mailing and CD: Images should be jpeg format, resolution 300 dpi, file size should not exceed 1.5 MB in size. Label each image with your name and the title of the work. E-mail images to _____ (Organization's E-Mail). Mail CD to _____ (Organization's Mailing Address).

For Slides: Label each slide with your name, title of work on the front of the slide and indicate the “top” of the slide. Place slides in a slide sheet holder and write your name on the holder.

***Artists must submit a 100-200 word artist’s statement which describes the meaning of the artwork to enhance the audience’s understanding of it. Electronic copies of this statement should also accompany mailed images.**

Artists must complete and submit the enclosed *Submission Form*.

Send submissions to: _____ **(Contact person and Address)**

Exhibition Calendar:

Date and/or Time

- _____ Entry Deadline (Postmark Date)
- _____ Notification of Acceptance
- _____ Hand Delivery of Artworks **(Location)**
- _____ Due Date for Shipped Artworks
- _____ Opening Reception **(Location)**
- _____ Show Opens
- _____ Show Closes
- _____ Pick Up Hand Delivered Artworks **(Location)**
- _____ Shipped Artworks Returned

Submission Form

After reviewing submission guidelines, complete the information below. Be sure to include a 100-200 word description of artwork's meaning (electronic copy). Deadline for receipt of all materials is _____. (Post Deadline).

Name: _____

Address: _____

E-Mail Address: _____

Phone Number: _____

#1 Title
Media
Dimensions
Price

#2 Title
Media
Dimensions
Price

#3 Title
Media
Dimensions
Price

Conditions of Participation:

I release _____ (Organization's Name) from any liability during the Addiction and Art Exhibition. I personally assume all risk of damage or loss of the artwork. Also, I give my permission for accepted artwork to be photographed and used by _____ (Organization's Name) for press promotions as well as in newsletters or on websites.

Print Name: _____

Signature: _____ Date: _____

Artists Under 18:

If artist is under the age of 18 a parent or guardian signature is required. I hereby give my permission for artwork and accompanying artist's statement created by _____ (Minor's Name) to appear in the Addiction Art Exhibition at _____ (Organization's Name, Location and Dates of Show), and to be photographed by _____ (Organization's Name) or the press for media-related purposes.

Parent / Guardian – Print Name: _____

Parent / Guardian Signature: _____ Date: _____