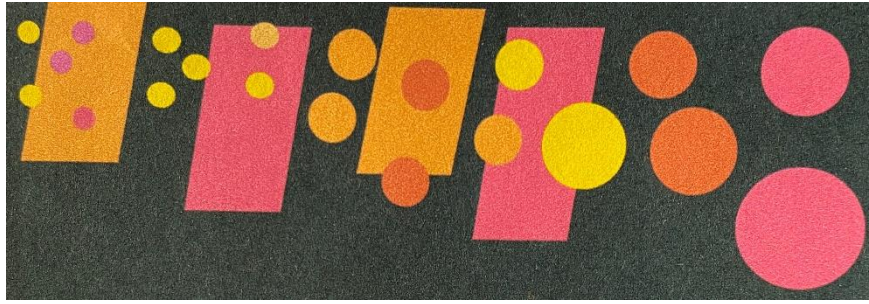




What is involved in “having a table” at the ArtFair? Cate’s Guide

It’s not long now until the annual Hornsea Arts Society ArtFair (formally Meet the Artist) when members come together in August for the opportunity to showcase their work.

Last year, Cate had no idea what she needed to do to successfully showcase her work as she has only started painting quite recently. She asked some experienced sellers for their advice; the tips and suggestions made were excellent. This year she thought that other members who are taking part might be in the same boat wondering what this entails. Cate hopes the following suggestions will be helpful for you.

1. General

- Have a cover for the table placed to hang over the front edge to hide any clutter underneath
- Disposable covers work well, but avoid paper ones as they easily tear
- If you are selling make sure every single piece is priced; have a list of the prices with you
- You might also want to have a receipt book to record sales for reference
- If you are going to be cash only (it works!), you’ll need some change. Card machines such as Sum-Up can be a cost-effective investment
- Price in round figures to make life easier i.e. £5 not £4.99
- You also need a safe place to store your cash (bum-bag, lockable cash box etc.)
- You might also want to have some ‘blurb’ about you, your inspiration and your work. This might be in the form of a leaflet and some kind of card.
- To get you started, this year we are providing a few ‘business-type’ cards so you can add your details and give these away

2. Displaying artwork

- For paintings and drawings, your work may simply be shown with no mount or frame
- You can mount and leave work unframed but ideally you would add some sort of backing board for stability; trimmed cardboard is fine although you could add backing board or mountboard. A stable backing makes it much easier to pack and travel
- If you can, display your work into a ‘cello’ bag; not only professional but keeps your work clean from sticky fingers
- Framing doesn’t have to be expensive, especially if you use standard paper sizes for the work. Inexpensive mounts and frames can be sourced from outlets such as IKEA, The Range etc. as well as professional framers (at a cost!). The advice to me was to use simple white frames, which I did at first; my personal preference is now for black. You learn what works for you as you go along
- I will remove work from the frame if it’s not to the buyer’s taste for a reduction in price
- You can seal the back of the frame with self-sticking tape to make your work neat and tidy and free from dust
- Always sign, date and fully label your work with the medium(s) used and any other pertinent information (for example the inspiration for the piece)

- Your signature can be on the front or back of your work; I always label (as described above) both the work itself and the back of the frame in case the buyer removes the work from the frame
- There are simple, inexpensive ways to display your work but do beware of overcrowding your table - less is more!
- You could use small easels, plastic stands and so on, Amazon and other retailers have a reasonably priced choice
- Bear in mind that many customers like to buy a piece and hang it when they get home, so ensure they can do so by including a suitable hanging system
- When you pack your work, I'd advise wrapping each piece. I learnt from (expensive) experience that D-rings scratch the frame in front!

3. Displaying crafts

- Consider how you will display your pieces on your table to the best advantage. Items at different heights make an engaging display and simple draped fabric can look very elegant
- Sign and date all your work as described above
- Check textiles for sharp objects, such as pins, if used

4. How do you price your work?

- This is a difficult question. Look at how similar work is priced; also ask yourself what you would be prepared to pay. With experience this will come more naturally
- It's also a great idea to have a range of prices to tempt customers. You may want to make some smaller pieces for easy sales, so-called 'pocket money' items, such as cards. I found these to be popular
- Consider pricing per item with a discount for a multi-sale whether that is small or large items; e.g. £4 per item or 3 for £10, it worked very well for me

5. Plan ahead; be as organised as possible

- Mount/frame/label and organise display methods well before you get to the venue so all you have to do is hang and/or organise the table
- If you are able, pack up the car the evening before
- Make lists, lists and more lists!

6. Working at your table

- Consider bringing a project, or projects, with you to engage directly with potential buyers but do bear in mind you will have limited space and may not have very good light

7. Thinking of the future

- Consider an Instagram account and/or a Facebook page; you may also want to organise a website for yourself. It's relatively easy to do by using a building platform (e.g. Wix/Wordpress) where you can use a template without the cost of a bespoke site. Do take a look at what others do (for inspiration) and consider what suits your style and objectives. Any such details should be included in your 'blurb'

And ... and most important of all

Enjoy! Even if you don't have many sales this time round, learn from the experience and consider what worked and what didn't so next time you can plan differently. Should you have questions, please email me and I will do my best to help.

Best of luck!

Cate

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