

## Show Preparation and Participation Outline

This Outline was developed out of a need to have a document for mentors to use with Student members who are new to bead shows such as the Bead Bazaar at the ISGB annual conference, the Gathering. It has evolved into a document that any member who participates in shows will find useful. Susan Matych-Hager's original outline, which was used in presentations to college art classes for students who wanted to participate in art shows, was used as a basis for this Outline. It has been refined and expanded by the following members of the ISGB Student Outreach Committee: Susan Matych-Hager, chair; Margie Shanahan; Allison Johnson; Kendra Bruno; and Hayley Tsang Sather.

### Preparation

1. Apply for sales/use tax license if needed. Pay attention to the ISGB's Forum for information about sales tax in host city of the Gathering.
2. **Product and Pricing**
  - a. Be sure that your product is ready to be displayed with all items priced and inventoried well before the show date.
  - b. Research pricing with local bead shows and shops, as well as on websites such as etsy.com.
  - c. Offer several price points. You are more likely to sell to a wider audience.
  - d. Make sure items are marked with prices.
    - i. Group items according to price point
    - ii. Use Avery labels (can be cut very small) and fine pen
    - iii. Color code your prices by using different colored ribbons on beads along with a sign showing the price for each corresponding color
    - iv. Use cord or plastic zip strips to string like beads and tag with price (be sure to note "each" on tag to avoid misunderstandings)
3. **Payment:** Decide what payment methods you will accept and the form of your receipt.
  - a. **Receipts:** Use a double receipt book. Keep one for your records and give one to your customer.
  - b. **Cash:** Be sure to have enough bills and change available to make change. Have a place for cash (moneybelt or cashbox). Don't leave it out or in the open where people can get to it.
  - c. **Checks:** Make sure you get a current phone number. May want to check ID (you can "blame" your bank for this – "My bank requires ID for checks and credit card.")
  - d. **Credit Cards:** You can accept credit cards with a merchant account (opened through your bank), smart phone apps such as Square (squareup.com) or Intuit (intuit.com), or through PayPal. Allow yourself enough time to get the account set up and the device to run the card in hand. Do a test by running \$1 using your own credit card.
  - e. Decide whether you will add on sales tax or include it in your pricing. Know the state's policy about reporting sales tax.
  - f. Some customers may have resale or tax exempt numbers. Be sure to get his/her name, company name, and resale number. You can staple your customer's business card to your copy of receipt and include the resale number.
4. **Display:** At the Gathering Bead Bazaar, student members get 2-3 foot of a shared table. "Practice" your display set up ahead of the show. Make your display interesting and appealing without distracting from your product. Remember, your product is the star, not your display.
  - a. **Drape:** The tables are bare, so you will want a drape/cloth as a table covering. Make sure the drape/cloth enhances your display. Solid colors are often better than prints. If you are sharing the space, you may want to coordinate with your table mate(s).
  - b. **Levels:** Consider having several levels so that the eye is not static but moves in a logical fashion from product to product. You can create simple levels with the boxes you used for carrying your product/display or cardboard boxes. If levels seem wobbly, you may want to use duct tape or masking tape to stabilize them. Keep your tape hidden.
  - c. **Lighting:** Be sure your products can be seen well. Lighting enhances glass. If you bring lights, bring extension cords and cord strips.
  - d. **Signage:** You may want a small frame (for display top) and/or poster (for front of display) with your name, studio name, picture, and/or artist statement.

5. Supplies and Wrapping
  - a. Use a desk organizer for your supplies: Business cards, small note pad, pens, scissors, tape, stapler and staples, small signs, newsletter sign-up, paper clips, rubber bands, baggies, tissue, rubbing alcohol wipes, etc.
  - b. Wrapping supplies: you can use small plastic Ziploc-type bags with white tissue paper for beads and a larger bag for jewelry purchases.
  - c. Place a business card in every Ziploc-type bag before the day of the event. You can also get mini-size cards ([www.moo.com](http://www.moo.com)).
6. Food and Water
  - a. At the Gathering Bead Bazaar, the ISGB has volunteers to booth sit if you need a break or need to get lunch.
  - b. At some Gathering Bead Bazaars, there are concessions on site. Check ahead of time so you can be prepared with extra funds for food or with your own lunch.
  - c. Always have snacks, chocolate (or something for that late afternoon pick-me-up), water, napkins, and sanitizing hand wipes on hand.
  - d. It's best not to eat in the booth in front of customers
7. Make a List
  - a. Make a list of things that you will need for the show.
  - b. Check things off as you pack.
8. Publicity/Marketing
  - a. Put your show schedule on your website and publicize each show on facebook.
  - b. If you publish an eblast newsletter, be sure to announce your shows so people will know where you are.
  - c. Have a guest book so that you can build your email list for future shows.
  - d. Have some business cards and/or postcards with your show schedule made up ahead of time.
9. Apparel
  - a. Decide what you are going to wear before the day of the show.
  - b. Wear your own work. You are your own best advertisement!

## On the Day of the Show

You're packed and ready to go. Arrive at your site and get everything set up in time for the start of the show. Allow extra time – two hours for a full table, one and a half hours for a half table.

1. Welcome customers. Say "hello" to everyone who stops by your booth. Smile, be pleasant, engage the customer, and be professional in your demeanor.
2. Be confident about your work. Think about (and rehearse) your story. What inspired you to make that piece? What makes that piece special?
3. Be engaged at all times (don't read a book, check your email, have prolonged conversations with friends, etc.).
4. Allow your guests to shop.
  - a. Once you have spoken to a customer, let them look at your work.
  - b. They will let you know when (or if) they want to continue the conversation with you.
  - c. While you are waiting for them to ask you a question, tidy things up, work on items, look busy but not too busy to interact with them.
  - d. If the customer asks you a question, he/she have given you permission to talk further about your work and the opportunity to move towards making a sale.

## At the End of the Show

1. Pack things up for the next show.
  - a. Take the time to put things away in their correct boxes so you won't have to repack for the next time.
  - b. Have a box/bag for those items you will need to get to as soon as you get home (such as cash box/bag, orders, etc.).
2. Clean up your space – leave things neater than you found them.
3. Process your payments.
  - a. Tally your sales.
  - b. Prepare to pay state sales tax.
4. Make notes for your next show. What will you do differently in order to be more successful?
5. Clean and sanitize your beads. Using rubbing alcohol in a shallow bowl, roll beads, and let them air dry.

## Additional Information

1. Where Are the Shows?
  - a. Subscribe to Sunshine Artist Magazine or check out a copy from your library.
  - b. Subscribe to Zapplication (online service for submitting to juried shows)
  - c. [www.Artfaircalendar.com](http://www.Artfaircalendar.com)
  - d. Google “art fairs”
  - e. If you are a craft artist, consider trying out some of the local craft fairs in order to practice your skills. The entrance fees are usually reasonable.
  - f. If possible, attend the show(s) you are interested in and see what type of exhibitors and attendees it attracts, how much traffic it has, as well as how well it is run.
  - g. Submitting to juried shows:
    - i. Deadlines for juried shows are usually about six months or more in advance of the show. Be prepared to pay the booth fee along with a jury fee with your application.
    - ii. Have fantastic photos of your work. Unless you are a professional photographer, it is usually recommended that you have entries of your work professionally photographed.
    - iii. Have a single theme or style for the photos you submit.
    - iv. Make sure your photos are eye-catching.
2. Outdoor Shows
  - a. You will need tent, tables or pedestals, chair, possibly panels, and lights. Many shows allow only white tents.
  - b. Be prepared for different weather conditions. Carry sunscreen, bug spray or wipes, umbrella and/or rain gear, extra sweater or cover up.
  - c. If the tent is new to you, practice setting it up several times before the show.
  - d. Be sure you have adequate weights and tie-downs for windy/stormy conditions.
  - e. In addition to poster-size sign with your/studio name, consider placing large pictures of your work on the tent walls.