



ARE YOU READY TO EXPORT - Video Summary

Andrea Graham

Tip Three:

Invest Time In Building Your Relationship Network

Does the international market know who you are? What have you done to expose your work to an international market?

Look for calls for entry for international shows on-line or in magazines, research the galleries, jurors and previous exhibitions and find the best fit. Look for galleries that accept proposals and send them. Be sure to follow up and ask for feedback, if they are willing to provide it. Exposure in international shows, publications and a web presence make it easier for the international market to find you and for you to make contacts. You must beat your own drum and create your own good fortune.

In my own exhibition journey, once I had participated in local juried shows and gained some confidence, I expanded my market to provincial and national juried exhibitions and I began writing proposals to commercial and public galleries seeking invitations rather than entering juried shows. Invitational public gallery shows and museum shows will make you more desirable to an international market and will look great on your resume and your bio which can be made available on your website. I attended many openings and events connecting with other artists, curators and arts councils many of whom have international connections. While the immediate benefit may not be evident, these relationships are in investment and these contacts and relationships build over time. Eventually, invitations to exhibit from Canadian curators came.

In 2010 I entered and was accepted into Fiber Art International with 1600 entries and 84 works accepted. The jurors were important people to connect with and many artists were expected to attend. I made the tough decision to buy a plane ticket and arranged to stay with a friend. I made the very most of the event introducing myself, collecting and handing out business cards and followed up once home referencing a conversation and sending a link to my website.

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It was well worth the trip and I still exhibit with one of the galleries I visited and maintain contact with many of the artists. You never know where the next opportunity lies.

I am now *invited* to participate in international exhibitions, but am always looking for the next level.

Don't forget publications. Create a wish list of publications you would like to be in. Read the articles, research the artists and determine if your work might be a fit. Most magazines have easy to find submission policies. Even a rejection might put you on their radar for another issue or project. Send in the best professional images of your best work. If you do not have someone willing to write a review of your work or an article on you, write one yourself about something you know, write a how-to or an article about a current body of work depending on the submission requirement and don't forget to follow up.

Websites should be clean, easy to navigate and only have excellent images. This is an international stage. Make it good.

Blogs, social networking/twitter can be a huge time trap, so set a timer and limit yourself. Blogs can be a great way for your audience to get to know your work in a less formal way. It can be friendly, but keep it professional and speak to the audience you wish to draw. For me this is potential and past students so I speak to them primarily, acknowledging my galleries may also follow.

Posts must be done consistently to create and maintain a following and can take many years to develop your audience. It took me 6 years to reach 150 followers and I now have over 700 that follow me in their RSS feed. Does this generate income? Indirectly, yes and it is worth the 10 minutes a day and not more.