

Based on the “Composing a Portfolio for Signature Status” workshop conducted by Teresa Bernard SFCA, Angie Au Hemphill SFCA and Andrew McDermott SFCA

WHAT TAKES PLACE WHEN THE BOARD OF GOVERNORS SITS TO JURY IN NEW SIGNATURE MEMBERS

The Board of Governors sits once a year to jury in new signature members, AFCAs and SFCAs.

All current SFCA members are sent an invitation from the office to attend, and those that can, accept. On the day of the jurying taking place, the SFCA members gather before the jury sits to have a short social time over coffee and muffins. The members are then called to sit as the jury, are welcomed by the Standards Chair, and given the criteria required for the process.

The criteria is as follows:

No talking or discussion among the members once the jurying starts.

Only questions regarding the images presented are allowed.

The voting is secret. There are no names on the ballot sheet, either of the juror or the applicant. The applicants are listed only as numbers with a box for NO and a box for YES. The juror must choose one.

At no time is a name of an applicant provided.....the jurors don't know who the artists are unless you sign your name on your paintings so that it can be read. Even then it doesn't sway the jurors either way. Your work is all that is important at this point.

The process:

All of the images sent to be juried are screened and compiled by the Gallery Director who may contact you for more information or clarification.

Once the jury sits, the AFCA applicants are done first. All of the images from all of the AFCA applicants, ten per applicant, are shown in random order and without pause to give an overview of the paintings submitted. They are viewed on a 50 inch TV. Once that is done, we start reviewing each artist's images (ten) at a time. After the ten images from an artist have been viewed, their three original paintings are carried around the perimeter of the room to be viewed by the jury. There are three staff members or volunteers available to carry one painting each. At this time, the jurors may ask questions regarding what the medium used might be, or about technique. Most often, no questions are asked.

Once all of the AFCA applicants are finished, the process starts over again with the SFCA applicants. The only difference is that the jurors are asked to be somewhat more critical.

At the end of the process, all ballots are collected and tallied. The jury doesn't know which artist applicants were successful until the information is posted online.

COMPOSING A PORTFOLIO FOR SIGNATURE STATUS

The opinions and advice expressed in this article are personal beliefs of the Standards Committee and are intended to provide helpful ideas on composing your portfolio. We cannot and are not intending to speak for the jury panel, the Board of Governors. We can only provide our insights into what could be your best strategy plan. The final decision is of course entirely up to the individual applicant.

WHAT ARE JURORS LOOKING FOR

Assembling a portfolio of 10 Paintings for Signature Status

There are many aspects to assembling your portfolio for presentation to the Board of Governors for consideration to achieve your signature status.

The reason that applicants are required to send in ten images to view is because jurors would like to see a body of work with a high level of consistency.

Consistency of quality

Composition, focal area, value (tone) and colour should all combine to create visual interest. The Jurors would also like to see your work stand out and make an impact. Therefore, design, originality, creativity and a level of sophistication are all valuable qualities to make your paintings memorable. Jurors are also looking for competency in the use of the medium you choose.

Consistency of style

You might paint in more than one style, such as representational or abstract, impressionistic or hyperrealism, but it's better to just send in one style for consideration, whichever is your strongest.

Consistency of medium

Your painting style should be consistent even if you paint in more than one medium. If you choose to submit more than one medium, i.e. watercolour, oil, acrylic, collage, etc., your paintings should all look like they were painted by the same artist. Quite often, because the media is so different, our painting style changes. This would be an important consideration.

Consistency of subject matter

This is a very personal choice, and might not be as important as the style, quality and medium of your paintings. However, if you have one style or subject matter that you shine in, you should consider submitting only that.

To sum it up, jurors don't need to know that you can paint everything in any medium and any style. They need to see that the artist is able to produce a body of work with a high level of competency and consistency.

Quality of photo image

The images of your paintings must show only the painting. No frame, easel, clips or tape should be appearing in your image. Lighting and colour should be as close to the original as possible. This is an important aspect of your submission as it shows a level of professionalism. (Please check our web site for references).

Also take into consideration, when images are viewed on a 16:9 television format, vertical or portrait images are at a disadvantage as the longest side of the image becomes the shortest when viewed and makes it smaller. This is especially true for 48x10 or 48x12 narrow canvases.

Is the size of your three original paintings important?

It could be. If you paint very small and in high key, your paintings might not show as well as if they were larger. It helps if your original paintings have impact, so please consider how your paintings might look from ten feet away. Obviously you are free to submit any size painting that you feel fits the work, but it's our feeling that anything under 11" x 14" might be too small. This is a point that others might disagree with, but it could be of value to you.