

COMPOSING A PORTFOLIO FOR SIGNATURE STATUS

By Teresa Bernard, SFCA

Based on the “Composing a Portfolio for Signature Status” workshop conducted by Teresa Bernard SFCA, Angie Au Hemphill SFCA and Andrew McDermott SFCA on November 18, 2013.

The opinions and advice expressed in this article are personal beliefs of the Standards Committee (*editor’s note: Standards Committee as of 2014*) 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 10 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 at '**Member Resources**' 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.