



Mission Statement

The Blue Ridge Fine Arts Guild (BRAG) promotes the works and activities of artists working in two-dimensional media in Yancey, Mitchell, and Avery counties and the surrounding areas of Western North Carolina. BRAG is an avenue for artist education and exposure through programs, workshops, exhibitions, and the internet, and seeks to promote and encourage the arts among its members, local schools, and the public.

Check out our On-Line Store to use PAYPAL



April - BRAG Newsletter

From the Editor...

I'm sure by now you all have heard that TRAC is closing the gift shop and offices in Burnsville. What a surprise that was to hear! They will be missed here.

Spring brings the beginning of our busy art season. Seems like every weekend is busy with art openings. And now that the weather is better - it's time to get outside and paint - and get ready for next month's Paint Out.

Don't forget... paint first!

Susan Garriques

News

BRAG members enjoyed a talk by artist Karen Weihs at the March monthly meeting. Karen, a contemporary oil painter and colorist", talked about the methods she uses to create her landscapes.

The BRAG April meeting is Monday, April 16th, 6:30 p.m. at the Town Center. A representative from Golden Acrylics, Phil Garrett, is scheduled to talk.

And please don't forget that the May meeting has been moved from the usual Monday to Friday, May 18th. Stuart Roper, who will be judging the Paint Out on the following day, will be our guest artist.

BRAG Member Pauline Dials has paintings in ANITA'S ART GALLERY, Bakersville. There will be an Open House on Saturday, April 14th, from 5 to 8 pm, to introduce gallery artists. Food & beverages will be served.

John Elsegood has finished the first in the series of posters to promote BRAG On Avery. Please be sure to send an image of your painting so that it can be included in the series.

Field Trip???? Waking Up with Van Gogh - Seventy-four artists from WNC respond to Van Gogh's "Bedroom in Arles" - Hickory Museum of Art - Opening reception April 14th from 6-8 pm. Exhibit on display through July 29th.

The Seasonal Challenge is "Spring". Seasonal challenge art is specifically for the banner on our website, so please keep a "panoramic" format in mind. We've decided to change the Creative Challenge from a "word" based subject matter to a "photo". Each month a photo will be included in the newsletter and members are encouraged to paint from that photo. It should be quite interesting to see how everyone handles the subject matter. Feel free to crop and edit as you wish. You may bring your paintings to the meetings, or if you would prefer, send photos of your paintings to Susan Garriques for the newsletter. And... you don't have to finish it for a specific month - there won't be any deadlines. So if you don't get to paint this month's photo till November or December, no worries. Just have fun.

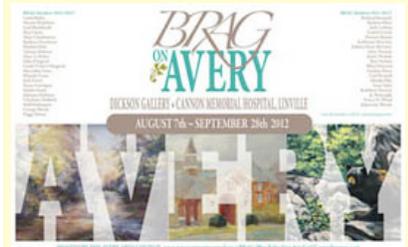
(if you would like a higher resolution image (larger image) for printing - or an image from a previous Creative Challenge, please email Susan Garriques)

Guest Article Top 5 Mistakes Artists Make When Trying to Sell Their Artwork This post is by guest author, Kim VanDerHoek.

After years of selling my artwork both online and off and talking to other artists, I've found that there are several common mistakes artists make when trying to sell their work. This list doesn't cover everything however, it does include the topics I am asked about the most. I've ranked them by order of importance.

1. Thinking that you don't need to have your artwork on the internet. Most of the time artists will ask me, "Do I really need to have a web site? Collectors don't really buy art online do they?" My gut reaction is to grab them, shake them and shout, "Yes!" More than ever before collectors are buying art online.

Baby Boomers are very comfortable shopping on the internet. According to marketing research, Baby Boomers respond to the use of email campaigns, Facebook and Twitter as sales tools. GenX-ers are on Facebook, Twitter and Pinterest looking for things that interest them and GenY-ers also uses social media as a shopping tool.



John Elsegood: First Avery Poster



Artist: Pauline Dials



Artist: Anne Sabri



Creative Challenge April



Artist: Sandra Gates

Imagine you have a painting or two in a group art exhibit and a collector sees your work. They love the style of your paintings in the show but they are looking for something larger. They write down your name to take home (or they take out their smartphone) and do a Google search on you and nothing comes up. You just missed a sales opportunity because you didn't have an online presence.

Aside from potential sales opportunities having an internet presence looks professional. Having a portfolio of work on your own web site is even better. It sends the message to potential collectors, gallery owners and other artists that you are more than just weekend artist playing around, you are seriously pursuing art as a career.

**2.** Believing that any one thing will generate sales. I can't tell you how many times I've heard artists complain that they've had their work on a particular web site for X amount of time and they haven't had any sales. They then go on to use that as proof that collectors do not buy art online. Let's be perfectly clear, there isn't any one web site that will guarantee your success. You have to be responsible for your career, no one else. Y O U.

This is a good thing. There isn't anyone else in the world who is as invested in your success as you are. Not your spouse, your kids, friends and especially not a group of people who run an online sales site. That said, some sites truly do want you to succeed because the more sales you generate, the more income they make as a result. The online sales venues that understand that will offer free marketing information to it's members, they will have responsive tech people who are happy to answer your questions and they will immediately blacklist a scammer who tries to take advantage of members.

Depending on a particular web site or group to market your artwork for you is a mistake. Art buyers are a very specific group. Once you figure out who your particular customer is, you need to find ways of putting your work in front of them. If you depend on someone else to market your work, they will most likely put it in front of an audience much wider than necessary. Internet sales sites like Ebay, Etsy, Zatista, etc. have a diverse group of sellers therefore, the audience they market to is broad. Pinpointing your customer within that group requires effort on your part. That may include things that aren't internet related such as attending art festivals, entering in juried art shows, joining local arts groups, mailing postcards to your collector mailing list and sending thank you notes to existing collectors.

**3.** Making either of the following excuses. Have you neglected to get your work online because you aren't computer savvy? Sorry, I'm not going to sugar coat this because if I do then you won't take me seriously. No one cares. There, I said it, I'm sure I'll get a few angry comments over it but I would be doing you a disservice if I politely suggested that you might possibly want to consider, maybe figuring it out one day down the road.

While you are busy not figuring out how to get your work online there are 10 other artists who are. With YouTube, art marketing blogs, online community forums, Artists Helping Artists Blog Talk Radio and many other resources, there really isn't any good reason for not figuring it out. FineArtStudioOnline offers affordable and easy to assemble web sites for artists and what sets them apart is their stellar tech support that is always there to help you if you run into a problem.

Don't have time to do your own art marketing? With two kids, one of which is still in diapers, I'm in that same boat. The way I handle it is to do at least one thing to market my artwork every day. Whether that's writing a blog post, reading an art-related article, uploading new work to my web site, posting to my Facebook page or simply making a task list for the day/month/year. This keeps me from getting overwhelmed and gives me a feeling of accomplishment, however small it may be. So even if you do one small thing a day, just imagine what you will get done within a year.

**4.** Making collectors jump through hoops to buy your art. I buy art. I buy art both in person and online. I don't buy art from artists who don't list prices on their works online and off, who don't list shipping fees and who don't have any contact information available so that I can find out the above. I also don't buy art from artists who won't return phone my calls or emails.

I remember the first time I wanted to buy a painting. I saw the artist's work at a local outdoor show but didn't buy that day. I met the artist, I took his business card with his contact information. The next day, I visited his web site to look at more of his work. He didn't have any option to buy directly off his web site so I sent him an email detailing where and when I met him and saw his work. I waited, no reply. I tried again and when I still heard nothing back I called, got his voicemail and left a message. He never called me back, never answered my email. Do I own one of his paintings? No and I never will.

If you don't make it easy to buy your art then you will miss a lot of sales opportunities.

**5.** Thinking that exposure equals sales. We've all heard it and I'm guilty of saying it myself, "That show/opportunity is great exposure." My next question is always, "Exposure to whom, exactly?" There are lots of art shows, festivals and other opportunities to display your work out there. Some require a fee and some don't. Before you throw your hat into the ring, you should ask yourself who is attending the show or festival. If the answer is other artists, then the sales opportunities will be much more limited than if the show is attended by true art buyers. Yes, artists do buy art but typically not on the same scale as art collectors.

Now I'm not saying that exposure is a bad thing. Exposure can and will help you advance your career in other ways - just don't make the mistake of thinking that exposure will result in increased art sales, that isn't always the case.

I hope this list is helpful. If you've been reading my blog for a while you might have noticed that I'm posting more information about the painting process and now this marketing article. I plan on writing about art related topics like this in addition to posting new work. I'd love to read your thoughts on this new direction.

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**Classifieds**

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**TRAC's Scholarship for the Arts** deadline is **Friday, April 27**. High school or adult students in Yancey or Mitchell Counties are eligible to apply. Visit the TRAC website for complete details and the application.  
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**The Avery Arts Council** will open for the season on **Friday, April 13th at 10am**. We open this season with our first Group Show of High Country photographers: **Skip Sickler, John Weber, Steve Buettner, David C. Smith, Cheryl Zibisky**, and a sneak-peek of the retrospective show of photographer Byron Knight. The show will run through mid-May. We also have the beautiful and creative wares of our shop artists on display. As part of our opening celebration, we are co-hosting a huge **ART YARD SALE** with the Old Hampton Store and 87 Ruffin Street Gallery. The whole compound in Linville is spring cleaning, and there are unique treasures to be found! **The ART YARD SALE will be from 9am – 3pm on Friday, April 13th; 9am – 3pm on Saturday, April 14th, and from 12pm – 3pm on Sunday, April 15th.** Please come help celebrate the beginning of our second year in Linville!  
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**DEADLINE: Sun, May 06, 2012 Call for Entries: 6x6x2012 - International Small Art Phenomenon**

Location: NY Rochester Contemporary Art Center's (RoCo) international small art phenomenon returns with thousands of original artworks, made and donated by celebrities, international & local artists, designers, college students, youths, and YOU. Each artwork must be 6x6 square inches (or mounted to a 6x6 board) and signed only on the back, to be exhibited anonymously. All entries will be accepted, exhibited and will be for sale to the public for \$20 each (in the gallery and online for global purchasing) to benefit RoCo. Artist names will be revealed to the buyer upon purchase and all artworks remain on display through July 15th. Sold Out artists' names will be revealed next to their work on July 6. Anyone may enter up to 10 artworks of any medium and there is no fee to enter the exhibition.

Contact: Bleu Cease | 585-461-2222 | [www.roco6x6.org](http://www.roco6x6.org) | [bleu@rochestercontemporary.org](mailto:bleu@rochestercontemporary.org)  
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**The Bakersville Creek Walk Arts Festival Organizing Committee and the City of Bakersville, NC** are happy to announce the eighth annual Bakersville Creek Walk Arts Festival in historic Bakersville, NC on Saturday, September 22nd, 2012. The festival will feature juried exhibitors from North Carolina and throughout the southeastern United States and will further establish Bakersville as a destination for individuals seeking fine art and craft.

We would like to invite local & regional fine artists and craftspeople to apply for space at this year's show. The entry fee is \$100 and the non-refundable application fee is \$15. (The \$15 application fee is waived if you have been previously juried into this show.) The jurying committee will require 3 images of your work and one of your booth set-up. (See application guidelines for specifics on submitting images.)

*Awards include:*

- Best of Show \$1000 ::
- Second Place \$500 ::
- Third Place \$300 ::
- Honorable Mentions (3) \$100 each
- Middleton Emerging Artist Award \$200
- Early bird entry deadline (\$15 discount on entry fee) is May 1, 2012.
- Final entry deadline is July 1, 2012.

An application has been attached to this email. You may obtain additional applications, if needed, via:

Email: send a request to [bakersvillefestival@gmail.com](mailto:bakersvillefestival@gmail.com)

Website: download an application at [www.creekwalkfestival.com](http://www.creekwalkfestival.com)

Or by contacting our Festival Coordinator: Brette Barron at 828-284-1913

Brette Barclay Barron  
Festival Coordinator

Bakersville Creek Walk Arts Festival  
September 22, 2012  
10am - 5pm

[www.creekwalkfestival.com](http://www.creekwalkfestival.com)  
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**One last note** - it's about the Money Jar. You may have noticed a vase or a jar placed near the refreshments at each meeting and you may have assumed that was to help pay for the coffee and cookies. BUT..... BRAG pays the Town Center \$30 for each night that we meet. The "Money Jar" is meant to help pay the rent. If each member attending the meeting will contribute \$1 it will just about cover the cost of the rental. Please don't forget to add your dollar when you come to the meetings. Every dollar helps!  
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**Archive of Newsletters:**

[December Newsletter pdf](#)

[January/February Newsletter pdf](#)

[March Newsletter.pdf](#)

BRAG is a not for profit organization under TRAC (Toe River Arts Council) in North Carolina.  
Any information not covered in this website can be obtained by emailing one of the officers on the BRAG website contact page.

Designed by John Elsegood© 2012