



Advisory Committee Review: Helpful Hints

The ACC Advisory Committee meets at the beginning of every month until the end of October to review the work of members wanting a full product and marketing critique and/or to retail their work in the Gallery Shop. To help you make the most of your review, please consider the following suggestions when submitting your work:

-  **If you are able, visit the ACC Gallery Shop.** Visiting the Gallery Shop may help you visualize what you would like to submit. Consider the work currently on display and how your work may compare. Is it different and unique? Is the quality and craftsmanship as good? Is the pricing of similar disciplines comparable? Can you supply the Gallery Shop with the amount of work needed to create a good display?
-  **Submit physical samples.** The Committee will review the work, in part, by reacting to sensory cues including weight, texture, finishing, action of moving components, smell, proportion, scale, craftsmanship, etc. Photographs may show the scope of an artist's practice and can certainly be included in your submission package, but they will not offer the tactile interaction between the piece and the user that is so important in fine craft.
-  **Submit an appropriate quantity for review.** The Committee needs to see a number of pieces to determine the consistency of an artist's work. If your pieces are large (like furniture) and/or you only have a couple of designs to retail, consider bringing in only 3-6 pieces for review. If your work is smaller and is part of a larger design line (such as jewellery or pottery) include enough pieces to show the scope of the line. A jeweler may consider submitting earrings, necklaces, bracelets, pins and cuff links, while a potter may submit mugs, bowls, plates, platters, tumblers etc. We suggest submitting no more than 10 pieces. If you do want to show more than 10 pieces, photographs can complete your submission.
-  **Submit only new work.** You may have many pieces stored in your basement created over the last 10 years, but for the purpose of retailing through the ACC, the Committee is only interested in the work you are doing now and into the future.
-  **Submit only original designs.** Work made by kits and patterns are not considered original, even if they are hand-crafted. Work created primarily from mass manufactured elements (such as beads not made by the artist) is not considered hand-crafted.
-  **Submit your best work.** Your work should be in pristine condition for the committee's review. Be mindful of flaws, no matter how small or technically insignificant. This may include sharp edges, rough bottoms, chips, cracks, wobbly or tippy vessels, sloppy varnishing, unintentional tarnish, excessive glue/adhesives, dirt/fingerprints, pencil marks, loose threads etc. Remember, everything matters!

Submit work that you would like to retail, not what you think will sell. Ultimately, the work you love most to create is the work most likely to sell the best. You are also more likely to want to make this work on an ongoing basis, should it prove to sell well and have a long retail life

Limit the selection of work you are submitting. You may have a number of lines that you would like to explore, but consider that the Committee will be regarding your work in terms of collection. A body of work should be cohesive and look like it was created by one person. The Retail Gallery has a finite amount of space, but a large roster of artists. Therefore, displays are small. If there are too many ideas being explored by one artist, the display will not look cohesive and may detract from possible sales.

Ensure that the piece is complete. As an artist, you should make the final decision as to how your work is used or displayed. If you are making pendants, include the chain. If you are making quilts to hang, include the rod pocket and rod. If you are making wall art, include the hanging wire. Audiences will not shop for the accessories needed to display or use your work. They will only wish it was available “prêt-à-porter” (ready to wear) and then choose something else.

Consider your personal influences. The strongest work can often be born from the close connections of an artist's environment, culture, ideals, and traditions. If your work is inspired by the traditions of a specific culture, prepare to elaborate on how these influences came to your work. Be cautious of incorporating elements appropriated from only a cursory or superficial interest in a culture. Adopting cultural influences from second and third hand sources can, at times, be considered derivative.

Have a retail price list ready. If you do not feel confident about your pricing structure, we can help you, but we do want you to try to make an educated guess. If you do not know where to begin, research work similar to your own, or drop into the Gallery Shop to get a feel for the pricing of work similar to yours. An artist knows how much time and materials are invested in their work which can also give clues to its value. The Committee will be able to comment on your values using your best guesses as a starting point.

Ensure that every piece is signed. Consider using your last name as it will be the best way for audiences to find you in the future.

Tag your work well. Not everything needs a label, but if you do opt to make tags, consider the information it provides. Artist name, website, location (Alberta for example) and discipline (such as “jewellery” or “home décor”) may be all that is required. Remember, simple is better. The piece should be getting the attention of the customer not the tag, so stay away from busy graphics and excessive text. Consider also the amount of space the tags may take up in your display. The bigger the tag, the more space is taken away from your actual pieces.

Don't be discouraged if your work isn't initially accepted. Consider that many of our current Shop Artists were not accepted as retailers with their first submission. The Committee's comments about your work are suggestions to help you understand how your work may be viewed by an audience thinking in terms of retail. You do not have to make any changes to your work if you do not agree with their comments and suggestions. But if you do see the value in their comments and heed their advice, you may consider submitting your work again for another Advisory Committee review at a future date.