

# CPI – Preparing Your Artwork for Exhibition/Sale

This document may seem to focus mainly on flat artworks printed for on-wall display. However the guidelines should be adapted for other printed works, including artist's books, fabric works, other 3D objects, related video presentations, installations, etc., especially with regard to *Signing, Labelling and Numbering* your artwork and the *Certificate of Authenticity*.

## Framing

The size and type of framing may be determined by exhibition constraints and the artist's intent. Framing can make artwork look larger, especially with the use of large mats, but poor matting and framing can adversely affect the artwork's effect. An exhibition may also refuse to hang a work if the framing fails to meet its guidelines.

Often prints are exhibited in dark timber frames with mat board surrounds, reflective or non-reflective glass, D-rings and hanging wire. Recent prints, however, have been exhibited unmatted on a simple black foamcore board with a DIY hanger or mounted, on plywood blocks fitted with self-adhesive velcro strips for hanging or in simple glassless frames with D-rings and hanging wire.

An exhibition's *Expression of Interest* will normally indicate the maximum size and number of works considered as a single entry and may also indicate the minimal level of framing required. Even small frames should have medium to large D-rings for ease of hanging and hanging wire should always have the ends secured and protected to ensure safe handling by exhibition workers.

CPI has a number of frame sizes available for rental, check for size and availability. Although bevel cutting tools are available for DIY matting, they will normally be cut by a local professional framer/art store. Ensure that the outside dimensions match the glass dimensions, rather than the nominal size of the frame.

## Frameless Works

Check with exhibition organisers to ensure that frameless works can be accommodated within the exhibition. Even small works should have medium to large D-rings for ease of hanging and hanging wire should always have the ends secured and protected to ensure safe handling by exhibition workers.

## Foamcore & Shrink wrap

Some exhibitions allow unframed works (often other prints from the same edition) to be sold as part of the exhibition or in a pop-up shop. The simplest method of safely handling these prints is a foamcore backing shrink wrapped with an art-safe clear plastic wrap. While smaller works can be done as a DIY project using a hair dryer, most local professional framers/art shops will do this for a reasonable cost.

## Signing, Labelling and Numbering Your Artwork

Always sign your prints in **pencil**. Never sign on top of your image.

Sign your name, initial or monogram/chop on each print just below the bottom edge of the plate on the right hand side of the print, the date usually comes after your signature, the year is sufficient.

The *Edition Number* is placed on the left hand side just below the bottom edge of the plate (in line with your signature and date). A *Title*, if desired, is placed in the middle between the signature and the edition number. The title may be written in inverted commas, eg: 'Title'.

For *Bleed* prints (these are where the printed area is larger than the sheet of paper it's printed on) use the same placement as above writing along the bottom of the image on the front if enough unprinted paper is available, or write along the bottom edge of the reverse side of the paper, in the same order as above.

In *Open Editions* (where the print will continue to be printed without a predetermined number) and

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*Mono Prints*, leave the bottom left hand side blank.

While a signature integral to the print or an embossed signature/seal might be acceptable, an ink signature (eg biro) or rubber stamp is not acceptable on a print and can adversely affect the value of the print.

Incidentally, professional photographers used to sign their work with an embossed studio seal. Now it is more common to use a rubber stamp on the back to identify the studio/photographer, but photographic paper may be less likely to bleed through to affect the print.

### **Certificate of Authenticity**

Artworks submitted for a Capricornia Printmakers Inc (CPI) exhibition **require** a *Certificate of Authenticity* that provides details about the artwork.

The Certificate of Authenticity is a signed document containing:

Name of artwork

Medium (including type of ink and paper)

Type of plate(s) used (as well as multiple plates used)

Further techniques used (hand colouring, stitching, digital print, embossing, chine colle, collage, found object(s), etc.)

Dimensions of artwork (framed dimensions, unframed dimensions and plate dimension(s) can all be added)

Limited Edition # of # (if this applies to your work)

The DATE/MONTH/YEAR the artwork was produced

Your (the artist's) hand-written signature

### **Artist Photograph and Bio**

The Artist Photograph will likely be used in promoting your work and/or the exhibition. While it could be a head and shoulders shot, a more useful Artist Photograph might show you in the studio working on the current artwork. Your photograph should be at least 300 x 300 pixels saved as a high quality jpeg file with your name as part of the filename.

The Artist Bio provides information about you as a person and your development as an artist. The Bio may be used in promoting your work and/or the exhibition, but it will likely be of more interest to purchasers of your work who want to know more about you as an artist.

The Artist Bio might include:

Where you were born and raised

Where you currently live

Your artistic influences and where you draw inspiration

Your medium(s)/technique(s) of choice and why

Whether you're self-taught or received formal education/tutelage

Artists you've worked under/with

Prizes and awards you've won

Exhibitions that you've taken part in

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Collections (both private and public) which include your work

Online address (web site, blog, Facebook or LinkedIn, etc.)

Personal e-mail, telephone or other personal contact details are not required.

## Artist Statement

The Artist Statement will usually be included in the didactic information displayed near your work when exhibited. Normally no longer than about 200 words it should describe the work and your reason for creating the work.

## Didactic Information

While it is possible to create the didactic information from the information provided above, most exhibitions will require it as a separate document. A CPI didactic, to be displayed near your artwork should include:

Artist(s) name

Name of artwork

Medium (including type of ink, paper and special techniques used)

Dimensions of artwork

Purchase price (noting whether framed or unframed)

Artist Statement

## Types of Prints

An 'edition' of a print is a limited set of identical prints made from the same plate. Editioned prints must be identical. If there is a discrepancy in quality, ink colour or even the paper is changed these prints should not be considered part of the edition. Editions are labeled with the particular print number then a slash (/) then the number of total prints in the edition. For example:

1/10 - print number 1 from a total of 10 identical prints.

35/75 - print number 35 from a total of 75 identical prints.

As well as printing a numbered edition there are several other conventions that allow artists to label their prints to convey different meanings. These labels simply go in place of where the edition number would be (under the bottom left edge of the plate.) Some of these are listed below:

A/P (Artist's Proof) - Originally the artist was able to pull a number of prints out with their edition for personal use (e.g. if the edition was being retained by an agent). These are normally printed at the same time as the edition, are of the same high standard, and number up to 10% of the edition size.

B.A.T (Bon a Tirer) - The first perfect print to be pulled from the matrix is signed as the B.A.T. (good to pull). The edition and artist's proofs are then matched up to this as it is printed. The B.A.T. usually remains the property of the editioning atelier.

T/P (Trial proof) - These prints are pulled to assess the development of an image. They are marked as trial proofs as they indicate the unfinished progress of a work. They can be worth large sums if they land on the market as they show an insight into the artists working methods.

S/P ( State Proof) - This is the general term covering all working proofs. It can refer more specifically to trial proofs being reworked after an image has been editioned.

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H/C (Hors Commerce) - These prints are not for sale but are marked for commercial/business use such as display or promotion. They do not have to be signed by the artist

C/P (Cancellation print) - When the edition has been printed, the plate is defaced in such a way that it cannot be reprinted in the original manner. Often a print is pulled with a large score across the plate and is signed as the cancellation print.

Monoprint or monotype - This refers to the technique of printing a single painted image from a silkscreen or non porous surface such as a sheet of glass, metal or styrene. In either case, the print is unique and cannot be editioned.

U/P (Unique Print), U/S (Unique State), V/E (Variable Edition) - These labels all refer to the print being unique or containing unique elements that cannot be exactly reproduced in another pulling. These three labels are probably best replaced with using the simple convention 1/1 (edition of 1)

Imp. - From the Latin "impressit" which means "has printed". An artist who has printed his or her own work may write this after their signature.

These are just some of the different labels that can be used when signing original prints. It is also worth being aware that conventions may vary in different countries.

### **Acknowledgments**

Some details have been taken from Saatchi Art's guidelines for their artists: [support.saatchiart.com](http://support.saatchiart.com). Other details and *Types of Prints* are from Angus Fisher – Fine artist and Printmaker (Sydney): [angusfisherarts.com/labelling-an-original-print](http://angusfisherarts.com/labelling-an-original-print).