

Bulletin: An Urgent Message to Art Shows NOT using ZAPP or Juried Art Services



Dear Show Director:

A potential crisis is looming for artists if you require, or may be planning to require, that artists submit digital images of their artwork for jury purposes, and you are not subscribing to either ZAPApplication or Juried Art Services. The NAIA urges you to read this bulletin before you proceed further.

The digital world is upon us, and art shows everywhere are moving from requiring artists to submit slides of their artwork with their application, to requiring or accepting digital images of artwork. At first glance, this may seem like a simple matter. **But if you are independently creating your own digital image “standards” for your show’s application requirements, please STOP.**

While you may believe that simply switching to digital offers an easy and favorable option for artists, paradoxically, it can greatly complicate the application process for artists. If not done properly and with *complete understanding* of how digital imaging works, we fear that applications to your show will suffer from it.

While it is true that many art shows are moving to digital jury images, **a show that develops their own “standards” creates a tremendous hardship on artists if they must reformat jury images simply to conform to your show’s requirements.** Even worse is when a show does not provide the technical information that an artist needs to submit images that will best represent their artwork under the display method that the show elects to use.

10 years ago, NAIA worked to standardize the marking of jury slides, which became widely known as the “Red Dot” standard. As long ago as 1999, NAIA foresaw that slides would eventually be replaced by digital images in the jury process. In an effort to insure that artists and shows alike could make the easiest transition possible, the NAIA began working with the Western States Arts Federation (WESTAF) and 10 art shows that joined in the process to create a standard that we felt would provide the best and most complete format to create clear and detailed images. Much time, effort and money was put into creating standards from which *all* could benefit, and after 5 years, these standards were introduced as part of the ZAPP system (www.zapapplication.org).

While we fully understand that ZAPP is not a feasible option for all shows, **the 1920 x 1920 format is one that any show can use whether or not they use ZAPP.** The equipment used by ZAPP to project the 1920x1920 images is not even required

as long as whatever program you may use will fit the image to the screen. However, the 1920 x 1920 file size is *large* enough that it allows the all-important detail to be seen.

What are some of the dangers of coming up with your own particular and isolated standards? Here are **some of the most common problems** we have encountered with such applications:

- 1) **Technical information that artists need to create the best possible presentation is often missing from the prospectus**, such as: How will the images be viewed? Will they be projected, or viewed on computer monitors? If viewed on monitors, what color space is optimum?
- 2) **Shows do not understand the difference between “dpi” and “pixels”**. If you are projecting an image or are viewing an image on a monitor, dpi (dots per inch) is a meaningless matter. Dpi is a consideration only for images that are to be printed. For projected or monitor-viewed images, the **ONLY** measurement that has any meaning is pixel size.
- 3) When shows do tell artists to submit images of a particular pixel size, they often request sizes that are less than 700 pixels on a side. **Images smaller than 700 pixels allow for too little detail to be shown**. Not only does this not allow the artist to show the technical quality of their work, it also does not provide enough information for the juror to accurately judge the work.
- 4) **Requiring artists to reformat their digital images to conform to isolated and particular requirements is a burden and an extra expense for artists**. Although some artists may be able to reformat their own images to various requirements, the majority of artists cannot. Many have already paid a significant amount to have their images prepared to standard formatting. Reformatting them to meet one show's requirements is another expense placed upon them, and there is no way the artist can know what their final images may look like. Consider the implications this would have if all shows required artists to reformat differently just for their one show.
- 5) Shows offer to convert artists' images to digital format for an extra application fee. Often this means the show is scanning the images, but **unless done carefully and properly with a scanner of sufficiently high resolution, with critical attention to size and proper color correction, scanning seldom gives good quality, jury-level results**. Ultimately, it shortchanges the artist and their chances of acceptance. And often, the artist never even has a chance to critique their own images because the show never gives the artist a copy of the images they paid to have scanned.
- 6) Lastly, **resizing and repeated compression changes the artist's image**. It is totally unnecessary to do this if you use a standard size that artists are already familiar with and have most likely already created.

We realize that a show's intent may be to give artists an option that it feels is fair and workable. Unfortunately, that rarely happens.

Last year, the National Association of Independent Artists (NAIA) issued a list of advocacies for shows. Each advocacy is backed by a position paper that discusses and explains its purpose. The advocacies and papers are also available on our web site at

http://www.naia-artists.org/work/naia_advocacies.htm.

In particular, we direct you to the section on "Image Formatting & Viewing". NAIA member Larry Berman also has a good primer on standard format digital images at <http://bermangraphics.com/artshows/digital-jury-image-recommendations.htm>. We ask that you adopt this 1920 x 1920 standard as an equivalent of the "Red Dot" standard for slides.

The purpose of this bulletin is to make you more aware of the issues that additional formatting of digital images cause for artists. The NAIA wants to see you have a successful show that attracts applications from the quality of artists you are seeking. Our concern is that if you develop your own standalone digital requirements, many artists will stop applying to your show because of the extra work, expense and uncertainty that it entails.

We welcome a discussion with you about digital standards, or any matters about your show. Please feel free to call either of us at any time.

Sincerely,



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*Plan to attend the **2007 NAIA Directors Conference, August 29 – 30, 2007, in Lancaster, PA**, immediately prior to the Long's Park Art & Craft Festival. The NAIA Directors Conference is the only conference of its kind that focuses specifically on the issues of art festivals. For information, visit <http://www.naia-artists.org/work/dc/2007/index.htm> or go to www.naia-artists.org and click on link to "2007 Directors Conference Information" on the left side of the page.*

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The **National Association of Independent Artists (NAIA)** is a non-profit membership organization whose mission is to strengthen, improve and promote the artistic, professional and economic success of artists who exhibit in art shows. For more information, go to www.naia-artists.org, or email ArdathPrendergast@naia-artists.org.

