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M A G A Z I N E

SHAPE UP YOUR SHADOWS
SO THEY WORK HARDER FOR YOU

FROM CRASHING WAVES TO COLORFUL
UMBRELLAS, HOW THE SEASHORE
PROVIDES ENDLESS INSPIRATION

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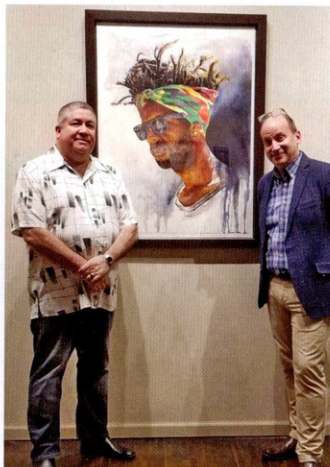
KEEP IT CLASSY

Get more from entering a painting competition — win or lose — with these essential etiquette tips from a pro.

— BY TONY ARMENDARIZ —

When was the last time you spoke to a competition judge or juror about your work? Or even simply thanked them for considering it — whether you won an award or not? When you don't take the opportunity to talk to a judge, you're missing out on several important steps in the development of your career.

I've both entered and judged my share of shows over the years and have had experiences that cross the spectrum. In the beginning of my career, I often left award ceremonies feeling like I'd missed something. Later on, as I started to judge shows, I would tell the group in attendance



I attended the awards reception for the 2021 Annual National Juried Exhibition at the Wausau Museum of Contemporary Art, where **Modern Man** (watercolor, 40 x 30 in.) earned the Award of Excellence. Judge Peter Trippi, editor of Fine Art Connoisseur, was also present, giving me the chance to talk with him directly.



at the awards presentation that I was going to hang around for a while and would be glad to talk with anyone about their work. Sometimes a few artists would approach me, sometimes nobody would. In the instances when an award-winning artist could not attend the reception, I thought, "Oh, too bad, but I'm sure I'll hear from him or her later." The truth is that didn't happen as much as you would like to think.

MIND YOUR MANNERS AND GET AHEAD

Let's play out the scenario. You've decided to jump into the show arena. Good for you. You've taken an important step in the development

My painting **Man From Jaimanitas** (watercolor, 16 x 20 in.) took First Place in the 2019 Pennsylvania Watercolor Society's International Juried Exhibition. After the show, I reached out to the awards judge Matthew Bird via social media to thank him. He responded with great feedback on my work.

of your career. Then you get the big letter. "Congratulations, your work has been accepted into the show!" Just getting into an exhibition is a big deal. For starters, a judge or jurors of selection have spent a good deal of time looking at your work in order to make the decision to include it in the show. Right there is the ice-breaker that should be the impetus for you



Although accepted into the Richeson75 International Figure/Portrait 2016 exhibition, **Jasmine** (watercolor, 28 x 20 in.) did not win an award. Having the opportunity to talk with judge William Schneider about my work at the reception was reward enough.



to reach out to them at some point, first to thank them and then, if you're fortunate enough, to engage them in a conversation about you and your work, hopefully in person on awards night.

"Oh, I'm just not good at talking about my work," you say? Remember, the only bad questions are the ones not asked. You're on these folks' radar now. Not only can you learn about the jurying process and get specific comments on your work, you open the door to future opportunities and new relationships. Look at it this way: you're meeting important players in the art world and getting recognition (i.e., starting to matter) — and the evening's just getting started.

Now it's time for the awards announcement. Your name is called. Congratulations again! Now what? First things first. It's time to thank the folks who made it happen. Think about all those Oscars speeches you've seen on TV. Clutching their trophy, the appreciative actor approaches the lectern to thank the Academy, the other actors and behind-the-scenes people, their families, and last but not least, their agent. Hokey as some of those speeches sound, you'd better believe people remember that stuff. And when they don't get thanked, they remember the slight even more. Sure, that's Hollywood, but it's still a nice example to follow.

The show is wrapping up. You've thanked the judge or jurors of selection, as well as the judge of awards. If you weren't able to be there in person, then via e-mail. (Some of us even indulge in an old school handwritten card.) Perhaps you even posed for a photo with the judge while talking about your work — always, always, always talk about your work. You may have exchanged business cards and shared social media contacts. And to what effect?

Now that you've been rewarded publicly for your work, your peers and the art crowd will start talking about you. You've made connections and learned some things in the process. Doors of opportunity have just opened. Step through them. 📧

TONY ARMENDARIZ is an award-winning watercolor artist living and painting in Palatine, Illinois.

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ART MARKETING Q&A

Q. I feel like I should network with other artists more. How do I find the right society or group for me and my style of painting?

— Dylan (from Homer, Alaska)

A. Well, Dylan, you're right. There's tremendous value in networking with others. Not only is it fun, it's nice to meet new people and to learn that others have the same challenges as you. You're going to learn something from everybody you meet, even if they paint differently than you do. They'll stimulate new ideas, and offer critiques and instruction. Plus, it's nice to be part of something bigger, part of a community.

I'm sure you'll find a lot of other artists there in Homer, Alaska, if you just start digging around. Go to your local art supply store or library and post a message on a bulletin board. Look up local art clubs. If your town doesn't have one, start your own.
— Eric Rhoads, publisher of *PleinAir Magazine* and author of *Make More Money Selling Your Art*