

Tips on How to Conduct Studio Visits and Gallery Interviews

If you are lucky enough to have scheduled a gallery interview or studio visit, it's a good idea to keep some key issues in mind that will help make the experience a more enjoyable and profitable one for all concerned.

1. Be prepared to talk about your work in an intelligent way. Be able to note your major influences, sources of your imagery, and discuss your particular medium. Have a clear understanding of where you fit into the current contemporary art market and the role of your work in an art historical context.
2. If you are walking into a gallery for an appointment, stop for a moment to observe the exhibition. After all, if you want them to be interested in your work, you should express an interest in theirs. Gallery dealers invest more than time and money in the artists they represent. Show an appreciation of their efforts.
3. Be aware of the personal space around you. Don't walk in carrying an unwieldy load of 30 paintings. Arrive carrying only what you can comfortably carry in one hand, preferably your left, to make your right hand available for shaking. Greet the person with a handshake, offer them a resume or slides to look at, while you go back out to the car to fetch the rest of your work. At least that way you have made a decent first impression.
4. Allow the dealer to conduct the interview. Don't jump in with a prepared text explaining your work. Give them a moment to look at the work or your slides -- don't be afraid of silence.
5. Keep in mind that art is a very personal experience. There is nothing you can do to "sell" them on your work. It's not like selling shoes. They will either respond to it or they won't. Allow them the option of turning you down gracefully. And, remember, it is not a personal rejection of YOU. It merely means that that particular gallery doesn't feel they have a market for your work. Most frequently if a gallery is at all interested, they will ask to be kept abreast of your progress. By all means, don't interpret that as a rejection, and be certain to follow up in six months or so with new slides. If you feel it is appropriate, you may ask if they have any recommendations whom they feel would be receptive to your work.
6. Always send a thank you note for their time indicating how much you appreciate their personal attention and feedback.