

A MONTH-BY-MONTH GUIDE to promoting your show

- By Jessica Wood, Founder, Arts Media Contacts -

FOUR MONTHS AHEAD: GET READY

WEBSITE. Get your website up-to-date with details of the show. Make sure all the listings information is accessible with opening hours, transport and links to maps. And place a button at the top of your homepage for visitors to join your mailing list. Use the free Arts Media Contacts Press Planner to create a wall chart with media deadlines www.artsmediacontacts.co.uk

CHECK YOUR EXHIBITION TITLE. Put the title of your show, your own name and any hashtags you are planning to use into Google and Twitter to see what comes up in order to avoid clashes or blunders.

WRITE YOUR PRESS RELEASE. Remember it is a marketing document and not an essay. Focus on the things journalists look for: Who What Why When Where. Describe the medium you use, what a visitor should expect to see when they come to the show, how many works you are showing and some background to them. Convince the press they should cover the show and that visitors should flock to it. Include fantastic images. Only include career highlights – not a full bio. Add quotes by yourself and the curator.

FACEBOOK AND TWITTER. If you don't already have professional Facebook and Twitter accounts, then sign up and make sure that

all the details you post match those on your website and press release. Post a few warm up messages announcing the exhibition and include images wherever possible.

VIDEO. A video of you in your studio will hugely boost traffic to your website and social media accounts. If you have the budget then get one made professionally. Decide whether you want it just for this show or to last beyond it, and talk about your work with that aim in mind. Axis make videos especially for artists. www.axisweb.org

FIRST PRESS RELEASE DISTRIBUTION. Send your first press release to the glossies, quarterly art magazines and long-leads. If you don't have a media list then use Arts Media Contacts via the Axis discount scheme. If you don't have a full press release yet, then send an image with a few lines about the show and the dates.

ADVERTISING. Look at ads in art magazines and the regional press. We recommend Galleries magazine and Apollo for artists, but ask around. Find the publications that would be right for you, design the ads and book them in ahead so you don't miss deadlines. www.galleries.co.uk





LONG LEAD PRESS

CAMPAIGN. Send your press release to the monthlies, art magazines, international art magazines, regional magazines, lifestyle and specialist press. Follow the email distribution with calls and messages to key journalists, encouraging them to cover the show. Think broadly about what types of journalists might be interested in the art, especially if it has a news angle. A painting about privacy might be used to illustrate an article by a paper's technology or law correspondent. All the journalists' emails and social media details are listed in Arts Media Contacts.

MAILING LIST. Put together an exhibition mailing list from the visitors to your website and other groups of people who visit galleries or buy art. Send everyone a 'date-for-your-diary' email to make sure they note the private view. Give news of what you are doing and some studio shots to get them interested. Note the bounce backs and check the email addresses are good.

PRINT PROMOTION. Think about printed material - private view cards, flyers and posters. Are these right for your show? If it fits your plan and budget, then get some designed and printed. Printing costs have dropped dramatically in the last decade.

LISTINGS. Send out and post your listings information. Remember to write excellent preview text to encourage visitors. As with the press release, dwell less on the meaning of the art and more on why visitors should come see it. Arts Media Contacts has direct links to all the listings magazines and websites included in the package. There are other services that do this too including evvnt.com.



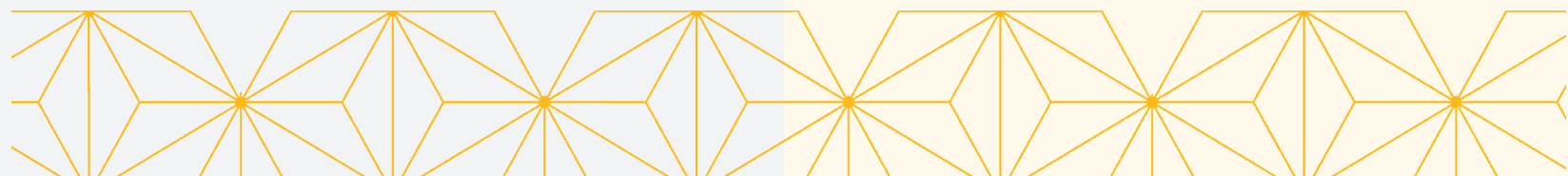
SHORT-LEAD PRESS

CAMPAIGN. Send this out to all short-leads, weeklies and monthlies according to their deadlines and follow up with calls.

PRIVATE VIEW CARD. Send this out to journalists and your mailing list. Upload your mailing list to Arts Media Contacts to do it all in one go.

VIP. Invite a celebrity or the local VIP e.g. the mayor to open the show.

IMAGES. Make sure your camera is working and that you can upload video and pictures directly to your website and social media. Get any kit you need e.g. tripod for phone. Test the technology before you need it.





SHORT-LEAD PRESS CAMPAIGN. Send press release and press view invitation to dailies and weeklies, the online press, freelancers, bloggers and news press. This is the largest media group, and the right time to emphasise any connection your show has to news or current affairs.

BROADCAST MEDIA. Pitch the show to radio and television. National media can be surprisingly approachable if the art in your show has a news angle or illustrates issues that normally have no sound or image.

PINTEREST. Spend a day creating pinboards with prices and links for buying the work if it is a commercial show. Pinterest is the number one social media platform for selling art.

PRINT. Put out or top up flyers and posters in the locality near your show.



REMINDERS. Make it a high priority to send reminders about the private view as so many of us need a nudge to remember dates. Do this via email, social media and phone. Text everyone the day before.

PICTURES. Photograph the whole show as soon as it is up and start posting images and video.

VISITORS BOOK. Make sure you have one and it is placed where people will definitely fill it in.

REVIEW. Ask a journalist or fellow artist to review the show ahead and post it on a-n yourself. A year's subscription to a-n for an artist costs very little. You get loads of benefits and can upload your own reviews or blog posts which appears on page one of google. www.a-n.co.uk

NEWS PRESS. The news media works a few days ahead. So make sure you re-send the press release and follow it up with calls.

SOCIAL MEDIA. Post pictures and videos of the private view night as soon as you can.

COLLECT CUTTINGS. Collect major press cuttings and put them out in the show. Collect all the URLs and offline press and put them together in a report for sponsors. Coverage Book (www.coveragebook.com) has a free service to do this for you.

