

OLD TOWN ART FAIR MEETING

CHICAGO, IL
JUNE, 1995

Dear Artists and Craftspersons:

On Sunday morning, June 11, 1995, a group of approximately twenty-five Old Town Art Fair artists and artisans met informally in the Old Town Triangle Association building to discuss concerns and interests regarding the current state of affairs in the art/craft world. Included in the discussion were such topics as artist safety at shows, the decline of some major shows, establishing new venues in major markets, opening up channels of communication between artists and show committees, the need for artists to have a published vehicle of communication that would be national in scope, and (even) the lack of a nationally accepted standard for jury slides. The result of this was the suggestion that artists and artisans across the country be queried about the possibility of forming a nation-wide independent artists association.

Photographer and publisher of the Art Fair Sourcebook, Greg Lawler, stated that there are at least 5,000 artists and craftspersons exhibiting at shows across the country. Another artist noted that according to statistics recently released, approximately 67% of the nations adult population attends at least one outdoor art activity a year, a figure that exceeds attendance for professional sports activities. Photographer Gordon Bruno accurately noted the lack of fine art festivals in the East. "From Baltimore to Boston there is a population of forty million people and not one major art festival." He went on to suggest that it would be wonderful for artists to have an organization that could approach promoters about opening new shows. Cherry Creek and the new show in St. Louis (Clayton) were cited as examples.

Painter and printmaker Dale Rayburn discussed the positive results that have been generated by the Atlanta Arts Festival's recently created "Artist Advisory Board." He stated that, "These are local artists who exhibit at the big shows. They work with the Atlanta Arts Festival and help both the artists and the sponsoring organization in whatever way they can." As a result, the shows committee has become more artist oriented and communication between both participants and sponsors has greatly improved. At most shows, artists are given questionnaires by the committees sponsoring the shows, but what happens to them? In many cases they appear to go unread. Wouldn't it be great if every show committee had artist representatives expressing our needs and concerns in the same type of win-win fashion exhibited at the Atlanta show?

Therefore, the group concluded that an Association of ArtFestival Artists might be an idea whose time has come. The three most compelling ideas that emerged were:

1. **Working to expand major art shows** into major metropolitan areas that currently don't have any. Examples would include New York City, Philadelphia, Boston, Washington D.C., etc.
2. **Encouraging a program to establish category advisory groups** to represent artists concerns to show committees/sponsors.
3. **Establishing a newsletter** to gather independent artists from all over the country into a community where we can exchange ideas, concerns, opinions, information, advise and help.

What's important now is your thoughts. This is a new idea and while it's in its infant stage, remember that all great ideas and all great organizations started in just this same way. Please approach this new concept with a positive posture; speak with your friends and neighbors in the field, give the possibilities some serious thought, and informally write down both your musings, ideas and suggestions. Finally, send them to one of the artists listed below, talk to us at a show, or give us a call. We look forward to both your input and help.

Lynne Krause
Gordon Bruno
Ginny Herzog

**Bob Brudd
Rick Preston
Kathleen Eaton**