

MARY VIRGINIA SWANSON

PHOTOGRAPHY CONSULTANT

FIVE POINTS FOR MAKING A DIFFERENCE IN YOUR CAREER

A brief presentation by Mary Virginia Swanson to the participants at the Maine Photographic Workshop's Summer Faculty Lecture Series, August 10th, 2006

- 1) **HAVE A DIALOGUE** with your peers and our industry
Attend portfolio reviews, join membership organizations, pursue continuing education

- 2) **DO YOUR HOMEWORK** towards your work and your career
Attend gallery expos; subscribe to art magazines, photoeye book list

- 3) **GET YOUR WORK OUT** to all appropriate markets on all appropriate platforms.
Enter juried exhibitions, grants and other competitions to be more likely to be in consideration for anonymous nomination awards.

Establish websites for yourself and your projects, consider appropriate advertising.

Be your own best marketer! Learn to write press releases and promote your work

- 4) **KEEP IN TOUCH** with those with whom you wish to have a relationship
Send promotional pieces, thank you notes and when appropriate, email notices
When you have a representative – be a partner to your marketing partner

- 5) **GIVE BACK** to your community
Donate prints and photographic services, be a mentor, host interns

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URL's viewed during the presentation by Mary Virginia Swanson 8/10/06, plus a few more:

Point #1: HAVE A DIALOGUE:

www.fotofest.org - next event 2008; watch the website for exhibition opportunities and registration for "The Meeting Place" portfolio reviews
www.sfcf.org - Review Santa Fe – the only juried review in the US; deadline for application will be January 15, 2007 ; watch for info on grants to photographers
www.festivaloflight.net - listings by location of international photography festivals; some have exhibitions and portfolio review opportunities - look for the Bratislava Portfolio Reviews Fall 06
www.rhubarb-rhubarb.net (where you book your own schedule of reviewers!)
www.acpinfo.org (Atlanta Celebrates Photography, offering programming year round)
www.spenational.org (look for your regional's website and fall conference information, as well as job listing and scholarship/volunteer info for the SPE 2007 National Meeting in Miami 3/07)

Point #2: DO YOUR HOMEWORK

www.sfcf.org - see info on upcoming fall educational offerings: "The Long Term Photographic Project: From Concept to Audience" September 15-17, 2006 and "The New Curator" at Photo NY on October 8, 2006
www.artfairsinc.com - Photo LA, SF, NYC and Miami Gallery Expos; watch for educational programming at each event coordinated by SFCF (the SFCF seminar 7/06 theme: Publishing, NYC seminar 10/06 theme: "The New Curator")
www.aipad.com - The Photo Show, April 12-15, 2007 NYC
www.photo-london.com Photo London gallery expo, mid-May
www.circapr.com Puerto Rico's photography festival, late May
www.paris-photo.fr Paris Photo Gallery Expo, mid-November
www.photography-guide.com Photograph Magazine, with comprehensive lists of exhibitions
www.photoeye.com - we looked at Photographer's Showcase for keywords, also see the pricing/editions terms set by artists, and the Publisher's Showcase on the home page for books
www.artonpaper.com Art on Paper Magazine
www.artnews.com Art News Magazine – 25 Top Photo Collectors article (annual)
www.artandauction.com Art and Auction Magazine
www.artinamericamagazine.com Watch for their 2006 Guide to Galleries and Museums – Available NOW!!
www.dwell.com - article on collecting art
www.photoeye.com - we viewed the Booklist covers, articles on publishing photographic books
www.mvswanson.com - "Marketing Guidebook for Photographers" a great resource!

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Point #3: GET YOUR WORK OUT to all appropriate markets

www.artdeadlines.com - watch for photo shows to enter
www.c4fap.org - frequently holding juried shows
www.artantiquies.net - annual photo competition
www.artcalendar.com – Art Calendar magazine
www.pdnonline.com submit your work for publication, watch for competitions and grants
www.alecsoth.com - we viewed his success from Santa Fe Prize, submitting to grants
www.radekphoto.com - example of business statement - what do you want to ask for?
www.tmpp.org - The Missing Peace Project exhibition site
www.ashesandsnows.com - view PRESS ROOM
www.revealingchicago.org website for exhibition and book
www.savingbodyandsoul.com website for publication
www.purpleheartsbook.com website for publication, exhibition available too
www.laurenshaw.com - website for self-produced publication, and exhibition
www.heavenearthtequila.com - view entire site for great example of complete project!
www.mediastorm.org - see how the above site is marketed through Media Storm
www.vickitopaz.com - great, simple website
www.americanruinsexhibit.com - book/exhibition proposal
www.blueearth.org - Blue Earth Alliance – join!
www.foundationcenter.org - fantastic resource for fundraising sources and courses
<http://cds.aas.duke.edu/grants/index.html> - Honickman First Book Prize
www.dewilewispublishing.com/EUROAWARD/EUROAWARD2006.html - Leica European Publishers Prize
www.nostringsfoundation.org - No Strings Foundation

Point #4: KEEP IN TOUCH

www.johnpaulcaaponigro.com - viewed annual self-produced calendar
www.elizabethstonephoto.com - saw her mailer of project with local Humane Society, was published in Bark Magazine
www.allisonvsmith.com showed her mailers; visit her website – personal and commercial
www.heatherwalsh.com showed her mailer announcing the website w/homepage card
www.eirikjohnson.com showed his website and email announcing book nearly out of print
www.bethdow.com showed Review Santa Fe promotional CD-Rom
www.todddeutch.com showed Review Santa Fe promotional piece
www.millerprojects.com showed Review Santa Fe follow up promotional package

Point #5: GIVE BACK to your community

www.fwab.org - showed cover of last year's auction catalogue; visit site!
www.chrisjordan.com - showed his benefit print sale for Katrina victims/Red Cross

A BRIEF LIST OF SELF-ASSIGNMENTS FOR ARTISTS

by Mary Virginia Swanson

GET TO KNOW:

- 1) **YOURSELF.** Define your interests, your abilities, your budget, your limits. Find your focus, in all aspects of your life, and stay on track.
- 2) **YOUR SOURCES OF INSPIRATION,** in the works or words of other creative individuals or the forces of nature. It may be knowledge of that place near your home or in your mind that brings clarity to your ideas. Experiment - find ways to access inspiration when and where you wish. There are no barriers to imagination unless you put them there.
- 3) **YOUR VOICE** as an artist. A hundred artists will depict a tree in a hundred different ways. Find the one that speaks your voice. Until you do, experiment with your materials, and by all means take risks. Only you can decide what you have to say through your artwork and only you can determine how to best interpret that that voice through your final art object.
- 4) **YOUR INDUSTRY** and its history. It is essential to understand the evolution of your medium and its masters, as well as what drives key decision makers. Take time to study the history of collecting art, publishing photography - past and present, commercial commissions and licensing. Know the role of the curator to their institution and constituency, and the role of the gallery to collectors and art makers. Learn as much as you can about all aspects of our field.
- 5) **YOUR GOALS.** Don't try to be all things to all people. Time and money are necessarily limited, so work hard to make solid decisions towards what is important essential to your creative life. These decisions may determine where you live, the environment you work in, and the company you keep.

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- 6) **YOUR MARKET.** Define through research what audience is most likely to respond to your work. If your work has a definable subject, that is the gateway to a much larger audience. If more abstract in nature, a smaller yet perhaps more sophisticated audience awaits you. Once you know to whom your work speaks, you can better clarify your path to that audience.
- 7) **YOUR PROFESSIONAL IDENTITY.** With the work completed, and audience and aspirations defined, present yourself as an artist with the utmost professionalism and clarity or purpose. All promotional materials should have a unified style and coherent message, whether in print, CD-ROM or website format. There is only one chance to make a first impression.
- 8) **YOUR TOOLKIT.** You are an amalgam of what you know. Take command of your materials; strive to be no less than an expert with your resources. Embrace the WWW. Listen and learn from other practitioners. Challenge yourself technically and intellectually. Join professional organizations, subscribe to related publications, and keep an open mind, always. Never stop learning.
- 9) **YOUR COMMUNITY.** Scale will not matter, from a small group of neighbors, to a large number of like-minded people throughout the world. Access can be face to face or via technology. You can participate in a dialogue anywhere, anytime. Do not allow yourself to work in a vacuum, however habit forming; there is much to gain from interaction. Partake of many communities
- 10) **YOUR GIFTS.** Give back to your community and your industry. Become a mentor or an intern sponsor. Teach. Volunteer your services to non-profit organizations. Donate prints to support causes that matter to you. Never forget to credit those who helped you become the artist and person you are today. Give back and you too will receive.

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Visit Ms. Swanson's website to download other recent lectures on such topics as publishing your work, extending the life of your book project as well as a calendar of her upcoming lectures and workshops:

www.mvswanson.com