

# Digital Jury Image Recommendations for Art Shows Considering Their Own System

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## Summary

The most important considerations when asking for digital images are:

**1** – Ask for something that the artists have. Most artists don't have the skills to resize or reformat, or even prepare their images to begin with. Many artists have looked elsewhere for help. Additional sizes and formats will cost them additional money.

**2** – That the image size requested is fair for all artists. That means asking for *square pixel dimension images* so horizontal and vertical jury images display at the exact same size.

**3** – There are over 20,000 artist profiles on ZAPP, so asking for the ZAPP size 1920x1920 pixel dimension images will be the easiest size for most artists to comply with. At the time this document was prepared, over 60 art shows are using ZAPP.

## Introduction

There are many excellent reasons for shows and artists to embrace the digital jury process. For shows, advantages include the potential to automate the application process, greatly simplify the handling and management of hundreds, or even thousands of submitted images, and tremendously reduce the time and effort required to collate and analyze the scoring data that the jury produces. For artists, the digital jury process can make it easier and faster to apply to shows as well as increasing the accuracy with which their work is presented to the jury. Additionally, artists could receive valuable feedback from shows that are using a digital system to score applicants.

There are several issues that need to be addressed to insure that a digital jury is a positive experience for both the shows and artists. Our recommendations begin with practical considerations and then address the technical issues.

## Practical Considerations

Perhaps the single largest factor that will speed or inhibit the wide use of the digital jury process is adoption of a standard image submission format. If artists are required to produce digital jury images in different formats to

apply to each show, the result may be confusion and a reduced number of applications. Shows that do not specify the exact image requirements in pixel dimensions, or plan to resize images, give the artist little or no control over the quality of their images.

A standard format will keep time, effort and costs down for artists, improve the quality and accuracy of the artist's jury images and will reduce the number of incorrectly prepared images that shows will receive. A widely accepted standard may even have the potential to increase the number of applications that shows receive.

A standard submission format will also reduce the fear and uncertainty that less technically adept artists may have toward the new process. If standards vary widely, or are not clearly stated, even technically sophisticated artists may decide not to submit an application, fearing that they would be wasting their jury fee because the process would not fairly represent their artwork to the jury.

No matter what process a show ultimately decides on, artists who are considering applying to a digitally juried show should have access to detailed information that will allow them to properly prepare their digital images so the digital images accurately represent their art work.

### **Technical Recommendations**

File type, image size in pixel dimensions, color space, color temperature and gamma of the display device all play a critical role in the accurate display of digital images. For those who have no experience in color management these factors may initially be confusing, but are actually fairly simple to deal with. What follows is a discussion of how those factors will affect the accuracy and quality of submitted digital images, as well as our recommendations for optimum settings.

#### **Image type and size:**

Because image files can be quite large, they are usually compressed before transmission over the Internet. We recommend that the baseline JPEG (Joint Photographic Experts Group) be the standard file format that shows ask for. JPEG's are readable by all programs and browsers and are the most efficient way for artists to send images to shows. Even with minimum compression, files submitted as JPEGs will be relatively small and simple to transmit and store.

Image size (in pixel dimensions) is critical because changing the size of a JPEG has the potential to significantly degrade it. If an artist knows the how their images will be displayed, they then can optimize their images for that size and be confident that the jury will see those images with the quality intended. Most new digital projectors use the XGA standard (1024x768 pixels) as their native resolution, and 1024 pixels wide by 768 pixels high is also the most common desktop monitor resolution. Unlike slide projectors that can project both horizontal and vertical images, most digital output devices are restricted to displaying a horizontal format.

Taking all these factors into account, we are recommending that art shows standardize on the following image size. It would allow artists to submit horizontal, vertical or square images, selecting the aspect ratio that would show their work accurately, knowing the jurors would have no problem viewing their images fairly in comparison to other submissions.

Digital jury images can be submitted as JPEGs using the 1920 pixel square format specified by the ZAPApplication digital jury system. Thousands of artists have already prepared digital images for ZAPP that can be viewed using equipment such as the Roku media player and a digital projector. Viewing of 1920 pixel square images need not be limited to specific hardware as long as the program used *fits the image to the screen*, which is usually the default setting when showing an image larger than the viewing device's native resolution.

Please note that when describing the dimensions of an image that will be displayed electronically the only size element that actually is meaningful is the number of actual pixels. DPI (dots per inch) and PPI (pixels per inch) are terms that are only meaningful for images that are output on paper.

### **Color Space:**

A color space describes the actual gamut, or range of colors that can be displayed. Our recommendation is that shows ask that images submitted be prepared in the **sRGB** color space. **sRGB** (standardized Red Green Blue) is the default color space for viewing images on a monitor and in a browser. It is also the default color space for most digital cameras and projection devices. If an image is prepared in a larger or smaller color space than the display space, the result can be a washed out or darker than intended image.

**Color Temperature:**

Also called white balance, color temperature refers to the color of gray at different levels from black to white. **The default color temperature for sRGB is 6500 Kelvin.** Many monitors are set to between 7000 to 12000 degree color temperatures when shipped, as higher color temperatures cause the monitors to appear brighter when seen on a showroom floor. Correction to the 6500 degree standard can be easily made to most monitors and projectors using built in adjustments. We recommend that shows adjust their monitors and digital projectors to 6500 degrees Kelvin before a jury process begins. The digital projectors that ZAPP uses have the capability to be set to the sRGB color space.

**Gamma:**

Gamma is the relationship between the voltage input and the brightness of a monitor. Monitors compensate for gamma to show the desired gray values. A Gamma of 2.2 is the standard settings for monitors in the PC world. Macintosh computers default to a gamma of 1.8. Images prepared using a monitor with a different gamma than the one used by the juror will either look washed out or too dark. We recommend that shows use equipment set to the Windows standard gamma of 2.2,

**Viewing Issues:**

Some shows are attempting to use PowerPoint to view the artist's images. It's very difficult to size images accurately in PowerPoint. The same pixel dimensions and file size images appear at different viewable sizes if their pixels per inch (resolution) is different. Thus each image would need to be imported and resized separately, taking up a great deal of preparation time.

We recommend using the **ACDSee** image viewing program, or a program with similar features. It allows you to scroll from image to image using the mouse wheel and can easily show images full screen without any distracting information or tool bars. We can provide optimum setting for viewing jury images in **ACDSee** on request. <http://www.acdsee.com>

**Conclusion**

It is our hope that standards will emerge that will make the digital jury process a simple, reliable way for artists to accurately show their work for judging by show juries.

Whatever image specifications you decide on, artists applying to your show will need to know the details so they can properly prepare their images. The

more the artists (or those they hire to prepare their images) know of your system, the more accurately their work will be presented to your jury.

And though we may not have stressed it enough, whatever image size you ask for should be able to display both horizontal and vertical jury images equally, not requiring scrolling to see the image in its entirety if viewed in a browser. Just because the most common display devices use 1024x768 resolution, asking for that size will display horizontal images approximately 33% larger than vertical images and be unfair for any artist who submits vertical jury images.

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