



Brooklyn Waterfront Artists Coalition

# Members Handbook

2024

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## Mission and History

Our mission is to help artists develop professionally and deliver programs that connect art to community in innovative, inclusive, and impactful ways.

The small group of artists who founded BWAC in 1978 had one main thing in mind: to help one another advance their art careers. In 1992, BWAC moved to its current location on the Red Hook waterfront, giving members a 25,000-sq. ft. gallery in which to exhibit. This magnificent space allows for multiple shows at once, including music performances, spoken word events, and more, and affords our artist members and partner organizations opportunities to exhibit and sell their work in both juried and member shows throughout the year. BWAC presents quality work to a wide audience, bringing together collectors and artists regardless of the stage of their careers.

Community is important to us, whether it's our members supporting one another or BWAC partnering with allied arts groups such as Art Yard Bklyn, Red Hook Open Studios, BCAT, and community resources like the Red Hook Public Library. We strive to make the experience of art accessible to all through classes and workshops, gallery talks, and performance events that are inexpensive or free.

The Brooklyn Waterfront Artists Coalition has grown to become Brooklyn's largest artist-run organization. We take pride in our all-volunteer operation, where our artist-members serve as management, leadership, and board.

The Brooklyn Waterfront Artists Coalition is a 501(c)(3) non-profit corporation.

## Membership Benefits

### **Member Shows**

Members have the opportunity to exhibit in any and all of the member shows throughout the year, whether virtual or in the gallery. One wall panel is the standard space you are given, assigned by the member show curator at the time of installation. The panel's size and location will depend on your work. Additional panels may be available for purchase when space is available (no guarantee). See BWAC Dues and Fees section below for details. For three-dimensional work, we have a limited number of pedestals and platforms available (generally up to two per artist).

### **Juried Show Discounts**

Discounted entry fees to all of BWAC's national juried shows.

### **Promotional Opportunities**

- Your artist profile in our BWAC website artist directory with images of your and links to your website and/or social media.
- Promotion through BWAC publicity means (email, social media, other commercial means).
- Display business cards, QR codes, basic self promotion next to your artwork to drive gallery attendees to your website/social media.

### **Solo Shows**

Opportunity to create your own Solo Exhibition (additional fee applies; see FEES section for additional details).

### **Further Opportunities**

- Network with other BWAC members through member-only events and workshops
- Participate in BWAC mentoring, where you can learn valuable skills in:
  - General questions and guidance
  - Curation
  - Gallery Management
  - Art Installation
  - Art Handling
- Artists who wish to be a vendor in the BWAC Artist Market are eligible for a discounted vendor's fee and the commission fee (contact [sandy@bwac.org](mailto:sandy@bwac.org) for more information).
- Engage with BWAC gallery attendees directly about your art during shows

### **BWAC Member Responsibilities**

BWAC is an artist-run organization. For each in-gallery member show in which you participate, you are required to give 12 hours of volunteer work.

One of the most important jobs we have is helping in the gallery during shows (two 6-hour shifts helping in the gallery during show hours fulfill your show obligation), but there are many ways to fulfill your hours, and other types of volunteering are possible.

An additional six hours of volunteer work is required at any time during the year. This does not need to be fulfilled in a single block but must be completed by the end of your membership year. A great way to meet this requirement is to volunteer on an organizational committee (details below).

## Member Setup Checklist

There are a few tasks you'll want to take care of ASAP to ensure you're getting the most from your membership. All of these can be done online via BWAC's Member Portal. You should have received an invitation to the BWAC Member Portal, <https://bwac.softtr.app>, when you completed your membership application.

Once you log in, do the following:

- Make sure BWAC has your correct name, address, email, phone, and Social Security number. (We need this information for tax purposes for when you sell work).
- Create your Artist Profile. Add an artist's statement/bio, some representative artworks, and a profile picture. Your profile appears on the Artist Directory page of the website.

## BWAC Member Portal

As stated above, you should have received an invitation to the BWAC Member Portal, <https://bwac.softtr.app>, when you completed your membership application. Once you log in, you can do the following in the Portal:

### **Edit your BWAC Personal Info**

You can update your address, email, website, Instagram, etc. from here. Note that if you want to change your name or email address, you'll need to contact [membership@bwac.org](mailto:membership@bwac.org) to make that update.

### **Edit your Artist Profile**

Your artist profile appears on the BWAC website and is meant to give visitors and prospective members an overview of who you are as an artist with some sample images. In the Member Portal you can edit your profile and it will be updated in real time on the website.

If you need assistance with your profile setup, an instructional pdf file can be downloaded [here](#).

### **Volunteer shifts**

From the Home page, you can sign up for and manage your volunteer shifts. Once shifts are completed, you'll see a complete history of shifts worked here for your current membership year.

### **Changing your password**

When you're logged in to the portal you can change your password by clicking the circle with your initials (upper right corner of menu) and selecting "Change Your Login." Don't change your email or you'll get locked out, but you can change your password here.

## Exhibitions

Show dates, registration deadlines, and other info will be emailed to you well in advance of the show. And, the website and your member portal are always up to date with upcoming exhibit opportunities.

### **Member Shows**

BWAC usually runs four member shows, Spring through Fall, and we encourage you to participate in as many as you can. Themes and accepted media are decided by the Board of Directors and Exhibition committee chairs. Register for BWAC member shows using the member portal (see below for instructions).

Unique feature: These shows are not juried. Curators have ultimate discretion on which pieces will be selected for a particular show as well as their placement within the show. If you have questions about appropriateness, please contact us ahead of time at [membership@bwac.org](mailto:membership@bwac.org).

Member shows have a theme. Members are not required to meet the theme in order to show in that member exhibition. For all shows, although it is not required that work be recent (unless specifically required for a particular show), it is strongly encouraged that displayed work not be repeated from previous BWAC shows.

### **Juried Shows**

In addition to member shows, you can register for our national juried shows. These Juried shows are open to non-members as well. As a BWAC member you can take advantage of a discounted entry fee for these shows, using the discount code found in your membership weekly email. Themes, selection criteria, and accepted media are detailed in each show's prospectus. Register for juried shows using SmarterEntry per instructions in the prospectus.

### **Submissions**

Submissions to juried shows are open to BWAC members and non-members alike unless otherwise stated in the prospectus. Discounted submissions are available only to members in good standing. You'll be notified by email if your submission has been approved for the show.

### **Waivers and Rights/Indemnification Form**

The submission form for each exhibition includes a waiver of responsibility of the Brooklyn Waterfront Artists Coalition, Inc. for any damage or loss of work incurred in any BWAC sponsored exhibit. Every precaution is taken for the care and protection of submitted work. By submitting to any exhibit, the artist permits BWAC to use images of their submissions to promote BWAC and the exhibit.

### **Artwork Criteria**

Accepted Media may vary by show and is determined by the Board of Directors and identified by the exhibit prospectus. Submitting artists must accurately disclose on entry forms and labels the process and media used for each piece. Work must have been completed within five years prior to the entry deadline, unless otherwise stated in the prospectus. Work must be ORIGINAL and created by the submitting artist. Art rendered from photos is acceptable only when photos are taken directly by the artist. Images by other individuals or protected by copyright are forbidden unless the artist has documented permission from the original photographer. Any member may contest the originality of an accepted work. The complainant must provide the source from which the contested work was copied (e.g., book, magazine, calendar, etc.). Verbal challenges with no documentation cannot be considered. Work that violates submission guidelines will be removed from the exhibit.

### **Exhibition Publicity Note**

Submitting images for any member or juried shows grants BWAC permission to reproduce the image for publicity purposes, e.g., on our website, in social media, or made available for outside publication insertion. Should errors be made in the labeling or presentation of the artwork in those platforms, whether made by BWAC or outside agencies, reasonable efforts will be made to correct the error, but BWAC cannot be held liable for the errors or corrections. It is recommended that you contact a board member if you find an error in representing your work. We are all volunteers, so in the case of outside publications, you may want to reach out to the entity yourself and let BWAC know you have done so.

### **Sales Commission**

Whether juried or member show, a 30% sales commission will go to BWAC for art show sales and sales from any referral contract through BWAC. (For three months after a show, sales commission still applies.) A complete listing of all fees is in the BWAC Fees and Dues section below.

### **Committees**

As a member-run organization, BWAC's committees are composed of members led by a member of the Board of Directors. These committees attempt to address the various needs of the organization as outlined below by developing ideas into proposals for action that may be approved by the Board of Directors.

If you feel you have something to contribute to any or all the following areas, we want your input. BWAC is your organization. Please consider participating and know that we can improve and grow only with your active and ongoing participation.

The current committees and their functions are:

**Membership**

- Develop programs to deepen member engagement
- Recruit new members
- Evaluate membership policies
- Coordinate Volunteer assignments (the heart of our organization)!
- Make sure that all Members are heard and valued

**Exhibition**

- Plan the calendar of exhibitions
- Set show themes
- Provide content for publicity
- Oversee the on-site show registration
- Oversee performances, music, and other events

**Fundraising/Grant-writing**

- Research and pursue grants and sponsorships
- Develop ideas for fundraising campaigns and mission-driven programs that can generate revenue

**Publicity**

- Work with Exhibitions/Events and Membership to promote their programming and partner on content
- Ensure a consistent brand identity across all channels (website, social, email, print, partner programs)

**Strategic Planning**

- Develop long term visioning and planning for the organization
- Implement technology to support operations and streamline communications

**Ad Hoc Committees**

- Address organizational needs as they arise

**Fees and Dues**

**Annual Membership Dues**

First Year	\$300
Renewal	\$250
Student Member	\$100

Note: You must be at least 18 years old to be a member of BWAC.  
You must show proof of current enrollment to receive the student rate.



## **Exhibition Fees**

Member Shows: Every member is entitled to one free panel per member show. Additional panels may be available (pending curator approval and availability) for an additional fee, as follows:

Each Small panel = \$25

Each Large panel = \$50

For juried shows, fees are set by the Board of Directors and must be paid upon submission.

Solo exhibitions require an additional fee (once a prospectus has been approved and a show has been scheduled), the amount depending on the amount of space used and utilities required:

For members, the minimum fee is \$500.

For non-members, the minimum fee is \$1,200.

## **Volunteer Exemption Fees**

In-Gallery volunteer exemptions are granted pending approval from our Membership Committee (by contacting [membership@bwac.org](mailto:membership@bwac.org)). If an additional arrangement cannot be made to replace your in-gallery volunteer hours, each BWAC Member will be required to pay \$75 per 6-hour shift.

## **Code of Conduct**

BWAC's Bylaws set out the means, rules, and NYS requirements governing non-profit corporations. They can be reviewed by members upon request. The Bylaws delineate a Code of Conduct.

**Conflict of interest** No members who are not on the board may enter into any negotiations as "representatives of BWAC" without prior notification and clearance from the board.

**Grievance Policy** The aim of the Grievance Policy is to settle grievances or complaints for any member of BWAC, including employees, member artists, officers, and/or board members, fairly, simply, and timely. Every effort will be made to resolve issues at the earliest possible stage, and at each stage efforts will be made to avoid proceeding to the next stage and to settle all issues amicably. The Grievance Policy is available to all members of BWAC to ensure that everyone within the BWAC Organization is aware of the formal process to report a grievance or complaint. As a matter of course, BWAC members are encouraged to first take steps to see if they can resolve any issue on an informal basis. However, if the issue is serious and remains unresolved, the member can raise a formal grievance in accordance with the Grievance Policy. The Grievance Policy can be obtained from the Arts Administrators. It contains full steps and processes, in addition to the necessary forms with which to report the grievance.

Our organization follows a ZERO tolerance policy toward all forms of aggressive and/or abusive language or behavior by members or visitors directed at artists, members, board of directors, staff, or visitors. Violation of this policy, as stated in the Bylaws, can result in termination of membership.

## FAQ

### **How will I know when to come and hang my work for the show?**

Read your BWAC emails! We send informational emails to members several times a month. Please read them to keep up to date on all things BWAC.

You will receive a member email that will list the days available for installation. There will be a link to schedule a specific time and day. Also in the email will be a link to the show label form. If possible, print this form at home and fill it out with the requested information. Page two of the form has hanging requirements for you to review and familiarize yourself with.

### **What happens on installation day?**

On the day of installation, please come with your pre-filled show label form to facilitate the production of your labels. At the gallery, the registration/installation process is divided into stations. The first station is where you will sign up for your volunteer time. After that, you will be showing your work to the member show curator(s), who will help you choose which piece to hang (if necessary) and assign your panel. Bring what you would like to hang, but the member show curator has the final say what is shown.

### **Can I fill my panel however I like?**

Some people have asked why they cannot just fill their panel. BWAC does not exhibit in a salon-style manner; rather, we are building cohesive exhibitions of our members' work. The hanging requirements (listed on the show label form) help us keep a unified look and provide a professional presentation.

### **How should I label my artworks?**

Be prepared to label your work on the back with your name, contact number, name of piece, price, medium. If you do not have your work labeled prior, BWAC will provide a blank label for you.

### **How do I hang my artwork?**

The gallery has some tools, and our provided screws are the preferred method for installation. However, you should plan on bringing anything you might need, including measuring tapes, level, power screwdrivers, etc.

Once your work is hung, the member curator will approve your panel. When approved, you can retrieve your labels and place them under the lower right hand corner of each piece.

**Can I make an additional donation to BWAC?**

Yes. Donations help BWAC provide ongoing education, support, and visibility for artists through a variety of programming that includes juried shows, outside exhibits, awards, free artist talks and demos, community outreach, studio sketch groups, workshops, and more.

If you work for a company that donates to arts organizations, any information or contacts you can give us regarding your company's policies is appreciated. Also, many companies have matching gift programs that can double the amount you as an employee give.

**Do you accept corporate sponsorships?**

Additionally, BWAC is always on the lookout for organizations to partner with us as sponsors. We have several exhibit and event opportunities of which anyone can be a significant part. Being a BWAC exhibit benefactor helps us as a 501(c)(3) achieve our goal of promoting excellence and community involvement in the fine arts. It also carries with it sponsor benefits such as private receptions. We ask all members to be aware of any organization that might be interested in being a benefactor or sponsor.

**What if I know someone interested in joining BWAC, but they are not an artist?**

All are welcome to join, even if they are not artists.

**What if I have questions or suggestions?**

We welcome all suggestions and strive to answer all questions. Email is the best way to reach us.

**Who should I reach out to for...**

Exhibitions - contact Art Admin Garfield Harry [garfield@bwac.org](mailto:garfield@bwac.org)

Billing/payment - contact Art Admin Pat Dignan [pat@bwac.org](mailto:pat@bwac.org)

Membership - contact Membership Manager David Finck [membership@bwac.org](mailto:membership@bwac.org)

Member portal or website questions - contact Robyn Mierzwa [robyn@bwac.org](mailto:robyn@bwac.org)

General - [info@bwac.org](mailto:info@bwac.org)

We are an all-volunteer organization, so please understand that phone and email are not monitored 24/7.

**More help**

If requested, new members can be assigned a BWAC Mentor for the first year. This person should be able to answer most questions and will guide you through the registration and installation process for your first showing in the gallery. Should you want a BWAC mentor, please email [membership@bwac.org](mailto:membership@bwac.org). You'll receive an email with your mentor's name and contact information.

Once again, we welcome you and look forward to your contributions to BWAC!

## 2024 Board of Directors

Alicia Degener, President - [alicia@bwac.org](mailto:alicia@bwac.org)

Sandra Forrest, Vice President and Secretary - [sandy@bwac.org](mailto:sandy@bwac.org)

Roxalana Jordan, Secretary/Treasurer - [rox@bwac.org](mailto:rox@bwac.org)

Nora Aresti – [noraaresti@gmail.com](mailto:noraaresti@gmail.com)

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