

Approaching a Gallery

If you're interested in getting a gallery to carry your work, there's no better way than a direct personal call. Although many artisans (and gallery owners) will tell you to make an appointment first, EVERY professional salesperson will tell you that asking for an appointment will almost always be refused. It's entirely too easy for an owner to respond, "We already have enough of that", or "We're not interested". Showing up personally will get you 10 times more accounts than calling ahead for an appointment.

A protocol? Gallery owners will tell you they prefer an appointment. Fine. Show up and ask for one. DO NOT phone for one - or fax - or email. That's just spam. You MUST be selective about where to place your work and not just make a list of possibilities and shotgun all of them with a request for an appointment. Select an outlet that you honestly believe is appropriate for your work - then approach them personally.

I have shops I initially approached about 15 years ago that have been buying steadily from me ever since. Not one told me they would have preferred I made an appointment. Instead, they thanked me for taking the trouble to come to them. I make a standard practice of always (wherever I travel) carrying a small sales pack that includes business card, catalog, price list, brochure, bio and a couple of samples. It's a primary rule in every business to ALWAYS BE SELLING. You never know when you'll spot a little craft gallery that turns out to become one of your top selling sales outlets. When I go to exhibit at Las Vegas GlassCraft Expo I know that nobody at that show is interested in buying finished product, but I still take my sales pack. I even took one when I went to Japan - if for no other reason than it helped support my claim that it was a tax deductible business trip.

There exists no better way to establish sales outlets for your work than traveling around and finding them. Second best is to exhibit at places potential buyers visit. Calling for an appointment is a waste of time - yours and the gallery owner's.