

MENTOR DOCUMENTS: BODY OF WORK
Image Selection and Photographic Presentation
Sharon Bass, JAM Mentor

*The Guidelines for Juried Artist Member Application can be found on the SAQA website:
www.saga.com/JAM.*

BODY OF WORK: The JAM Review Panel (JRP) looks for work that collectively presents a unique, **cohesive** body of work. Here's what that means: The submitted images hang together well. They are the product of a singular vision and approach. The portfolio of work is not a sampler. Remember, when applying for JAM you are being asked to edit your work and present an organized and cohesive portfolio, one that would be welcomed by jurors, museums, galleries and publications. In other words, you and your work are good to go.

Applicants often submit a variety of work to demonstrate a range of skill. As a result, the work submitted looks like a sampler. It fails to show the artist's depth and engagement with a subject. Successful JAM applicants present work that shows a clear voice and a unique vision.

The seven (7) images presented should convey a working style and way of seeing things. Your vision, or voice, comes across most clearly when developed as an extended exploration of content and/or composition.

Think of your 7 images as a mini-exhibition. Answer these questions:

- Are they among your best works?
- Do they work well together?
- Are they clearly related, yet not repetitious?

PHOTOGRAPHIC QUALITY: The JAM Review Panel expects the successful applicant to submit images that meet a high standard of professional excellence

You must have professional-quality photographs. The edges should show against the background. The work should be well lit across the entire surface. The image should be sharply focused with the camera lens aligned with the hanging art (no keystone), the edges should be visible (not cropped out) and the background should present no objects, shadows or distraction. The detail images must be unique photographs of a part of the work. They cannot be cropped parts of the full images.

Selection and Presentation

Presenting a cohesive group of pieces for JAM consideration requires that you edit your existing work. What are your best works? First, choose 12 or 15 that you think are THE best. Then select 7 of those that have similarities and relate to one another. Or select 7 pieces that show evolution and strengthening of your work.

Do keep in mind the age of the pieces you select. A great piece of work from 5 years ago may indicate the beginning of a new direction when presented with other recent works in the same vein. However, it might look lost if presented by itself.

You can enter your images in any order you choose. Order them so they best presents your work the way you want to show your portfolio to the reviewers.

Captions: On the Submission form you will be asked to provide the title, dimensions, year completed, and to provide **brief** information about the materials and techniques.

A few final notes from former panelists and one applicant:

Applying for JAM is similar to entering a juried show. It is not prudent to enter three pieces with entirely different styles, as that usually gives the jurors the impression that your art is “all over the place” and any successful piece might just have been a happy accident.

Showing unrelated pieces only tells them you are still looking for an artistic point of view.

No one in SAQA or the JAM Review Panel means to discourage experimenting and pushing the envelope in your work. The committee *wants* to see work that falls outside standard treatments and techniques, but all the pieces must have some thread of connection to each other.

Here are a couple of on-line articles that one JAM applicant found helpful. She wrote that the following article was “the best explanation...for folks like me that struggle to see the definition of a body of work or why it is really desirable or necessary.”

“Reasons for Artists to Make Art in Series/Advantages to Bodies of Work Over Single Pieces,” by Alam Bamberger at [ArtBusiness.com](http://www.artbusiness.com). You can use this link:

<http://www.artbusiness.com/advantages-for-artists-to-making-art-in-series.html>

And later on she sent this one that also makes the case: “Staying on the Bus” at this link: <http://quiltartnews.com/stay-on-the-bus/>