

Belmont Art Association Meeting: January 25, 2022

Location: Our fourteenth Zoom meeting was brought to order by Naomi and Dari with sixteen people, including our presenter, attending:

Attendees: Sarah Beardslee (guest speaker, Chair of Beadesigner International), Sheila Benedis, Nicole Bernstein, Juliette Carignan, Jessica Caruso, Naomi Ellenberg-Dukas (Co-Chair), Bert Halstead (Treasurer and Membership Coordinator), Louise Halstead, Laura Hern, Kirstin Ilse, Katia Muser, Sally Naish, Dari Paquette (Co-Chair), Magnus Snorrason, Fleur Thesmar, and Jane Wentzell (Recording Secretary).

Business Meeting

- 1. Utility Box Public Art Project:** Dari reported that the Belmont Cultural Council awarded the BAA funding for a third year of designing and painting utility boxes for BAA's "Transforming Belmont" public art project. This grant is much smaller as last year's, when the Council received fewer applications due to the pandemic, but it is gratefully received. The grant will allow us to paint two boxes this summer. Glenn Clancy is now the point person in the Belmont town government to be consulted about which boxes are available to paint. A Call for Entries will go out in the spring.
- 2. Belmont Media Center "Transforming Belmont" Video:** The BAA is grateful to Frédérique Rigoulot, who went above and beyond to produce and edit a wonderful documentary about our "Transforming Belmont" public art project. Fred is starting an exciting new job at WGBH after four years at the BMC, where she created a new, hyperlocal news program called "Belmont Journal."

During her last week at the BMC, Fred spent a lot of time reviewing hundreds of hours of raw video footage, mostly filmed by Meredith Holch over the summer, plus her own camera work and an additional artist interview filmed by Dari. What Fred did with the overwhelming mountain of material is masterful. She distilled it into a cohesive, coherent film that makes us beam with pride! This video can be viewed on YouTube at <https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=U92eRCkAauo>.

Fred has done so much to promote both the BAA and BGA during her tenure at the BMC. We are so pleased that she wants to stay connected to the local arts community and are delighted to welcome her as a new member of the BAA. We wish her all the best as she embarks on her new venture. Congratulations, Fred!

- 3. "Correspondences" Show at BGA:** We discussed the current Belmont Gallery of Art exhibit of the photographs of members Bert Halstead and Magnus Snorrason. This past fall, BAA treasurer Bert Halstead made a photography trip to Iceland, fulfilling a long-held dream. Native Icelander Magnus Snorrason, who now lives in Belmont, posts a photo a day on social media, capturing Boston area urban and natural scenes. The exhibit was curated by both photographers and encourages viewers to identify and contemplate the "correspondences" between the two photographers' visions. There are 15 sets of paired photos in the gallery, one by each photographer. Bert said that the way he and Magnus chose the pairings was an involved process that resulted in a show that is more than a sum of its parts.
- 4. BGA Call For Entries:** The next show will run from mid-March through April and will be comprised of mosaic, collage, and assemblage pieces. To be titled, "Bits And Pieces," the deadline for submission is Feb. 20th. Information can be found on the BGA's website.
- 5. Time to Pay Annual Dues:** Bert, in his capacity as Membership Coordinator, spoke about members sending in their dues before the end of January. You can visit our website, belmontart.org/join for directions to pay via PayPal or by check mailed to Bert. Yearly dues are \$35, but if anyone is in a tough financial situation, let Bert know and he will waive the dues.

Presentation

Our presenter, Sarah Beardslee, is President of ArtsMedford and Chair of Beadesigner International. Her presentation was called "Tips for Marketing your Artistic Endeavors." Sarah has 14 years' experience selling the jewelry and beaded gifts that she and her mother make. Sarah said that in the last two years of Covid lockdowns and many fewer craft shows, she has made her own marketplace to sell their handmade jewelry using the tools she can access on social media.

This well-structured talk covered information on every aspect of marketing and selling handmade goods. From creating a brand and negotiating terms with galleries, she spoke to the financial aspects of running a small business.

- Craft shows and open studios: indoor/outdoor – gauge your comfort level
 - Branding: needs to be consistent. Business cards, website, gift cards, packaging
 - Engagement: communicate and engage with everyone coming by. Say hello to everyone within earshot and invite them to come look at your work.
 - Online: answer any inquiries promptly, emails, etc.
 - Finances: Create a separate DBA account— "Doing Business As" account. Your name plus DBA, ie Jane Doe DBA JDoe Fine Art.
 - Use Square and PayPal connected to that dedicated bank account.
 - Get name plus two forms of direct contact for customers.
 - Helps with tax filing: separate tax ID for art business, both federal and state
 - Helps you charge sales tax to customers
 - Tax can be wrapped into purchase price or not
- Galleries and Boutiques: outright purchase vs consignment
 - Increases prices to make up for markup/commissions
 - Believe what you create has value
 - State terms and conditions everywhere to protect yourself and customers
- Insurance: a must for doing shows – liability. Business insurance needed to do events: Injury, theft, damage.
- Motivation: What makes your work special? Who is your dream client, and why? Listen to your customers.
- Marketing:
 - Mail Chimp is free. Get customers to sign up for a mailing list at events.
 - Social Media: easy, free. Make a separate business page for Facebook and Instagram. Invite friends to like the pages. Post consistently to keep engagement and activity levels high. *Make sure to watermark all your images. You can get sales without paying for promotions with a little effort. Highlight your uniqueness in all marketing materials. Toot your horn! Do demos via Zoom or Facebook live. Reinvent and change things up if why you try first doesn't get results.
- Networking: the opposite of Not Working. You need to network with other people for ideas or places. Every day do at least one revenue generating activity. Call an interested customer, ie.
- Outsourcing: taxes, social media, photography, packaging, website, e-commerce. What do you want to handle yourself?
- E-commerce: Etsy, Amazon Marketplace, Artspan (recommended). Weebly, Squarespace for website building. Never put up a website and neglect to update it!
- Is this a hobby or a bona fide business? How much income do you need to make Square or insurance worthwhile? There is value in investing for beginners – you have to spend money to make money.

We all learned a lot from this excellent talk.

Recording Secretary: Jane Wentzell, 617- 489 - 0412
Edits and additional notes by Dari Paquette