



Utrecht Art Supplies Galleries: Handling Rejection



When approaching galleries with your artwork, one thing you can count on is that you will face rejection a lot more often than not. It takes toughness, determination and intelligence to hang in there, but what you learn in rejection can become an advantage as you work toward finding the right place to show your work.

De-personalize the experience

Artists tend to be personally invested in their work, often deeply so. It's hard not to take it personally when a gallery doesn't accept our art, but remember, it's not personal on the dealer's part. Whether a gallery accepts your work is almost always based on the degree of success the dealer thinks they will achieve for you. If the dealer thinks their clientele won't respond to your work, they probably won't agree to show it. That doesn't necessarily mean they think your work isn't good, just that it's not consistent with their area of focus. It's also possible for a gallery to become saturated with work or to have as many artists as they can effectively handle at the moment.

Questions? [Ask the Expert](#)

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Accepting rejection graciously

After making a submission, there's a good chance you will have to wait for an answer. Normally, new artists are reviewed in groups several times a year, or annually in very busy galleries. It doesn't hurt to follow up once or twice, but being too persistent isn't likely to improve your prospects for acceptance. Worse, forcing an answer on your terms can lead to an off-the-cuff "no".

Once in a while, you will get the opportunity to meet a representative (or the owner) in person. When you get that chance, and the answer is 'no', it's important to keep in mind that this person is showing you courtesy by not keeping you waiting and wondering. It's usually OK to respectfully ask the reason for the rejection, but before asking any follow-up questions, acknowledge that you accept their decision as final. Make sure to send a thank-you note for the meeting, just like you would after a job interview.

It's true that you can count on rejection as an artist, but the other thing you can count on is that there will be other opportunities. The reasons why your work wasn't judged right for a gallery can be valuable information for the artist to know. A dealer might also give you valuable tips about presentation, framing and other professional tips which will help you succeed with the next gallery.