

CVW July 19th Meeting Panel Discussion “Finding Your Own Market” (by Mike Sorge)

Do what you love; love what you do. Create & offer a meaningful assortment of quality work that you’re proud of. If you’re proud of it, there’s a good chance others will like it also. Some categories include:

1. Production Bowls; utilitarian bowls, plates & platters
2. Production Spindle Work; ice cream scoops, bottle stoppers, pepper mills, spinning tops, Christmas tree ornaments, etc...
3. Production Signature Work; unique work you produce regularly; may not be as easy to produce. Ex: Mike’s signature works are geometrics & unique winged natural edge.
4. “One Off” Signature Work; unique work that you do not duplicate regularly. Ex: Mike’s “One Off” Signature Work includes “Stacked Geometric Boxes” & “Stacked Hollowed Out Wood Cairns”.

Arts & Craft Shows vs. Retail Galleries.

1. Arts & Craft Shows are a lot of work (I consider setting up art shows as good physical exercise). They take more time in travel and set-up, and have separate expenses in gas, food, lodging; but you keep a larger % of each sale.
2. Selling to retail galleries is much easier but at a 40% or 50% discount off retail.
3. Many Turners sell through both art shows and galleries; some combination is advised. The exposure from both art shows and galleries leads to more sales & custom orders.

Selecting the type and number of galleries you can sustain.

1. The type of work you wish to market will often reveal the type of retail gallery you can approach.
2. In your own words, prepare a one or two sentence “Artisan’s Statement”, a brief but concise description of your work (have photos available to include if appropriate), and a short “Bio”. Mike’s artisan statement is simply, “Mike enjoys rescuing, revealing & preserving the inherent natural beauty of the fallen tree through creative improvisational woodturning, sculpting signature works, heirlooms for generations of enjoyment.”
3. Nothing ventured, nothing gained; no need to shy away from approaching any gallery you like. The worst that can happen is they simply say they’re not interested or don’t have room at this time. Galleries can be found on line. Seek galleries anywhere in the country. Each gallery sets their own criteria for artist submission. Find them, read their criteria, apply to those you wish.
4. Honor your commitment; once in a gallery, make sure you can re-supply them adequately. It’s unwise to be in so many galleries that you’re unable to restock items in a timely basis.

Hook up with a local tree service. Tree service individuals talk with property owners regularly and may be willing to offer your name to the owner, especially when taking down a beloved tree or two. Owners often are excited to have one or more items made for themselves and/or for loved ones from their tree; wonderfully meaningful gifts.