

Wiregrass Gallery

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Welcome Statement

Welcome to Wiregrass Gallery! We are so glad you joined us. We are an Artists' Cooperative, meaning the members work to keep the gallery operational and open. We are open from 11 a.m. to 5 p.m. Tuesday through Friday, as well as for special events throughout the year.

As a Wiregrass member, you have an outlet to display and sell your artwork, and the opportunity to network and commune with your fellow artists. Wiregrass welcomes all types of fine art and fine craft, and strives to offer an exciting art venue for Thomasville, GA and the surrounding area. Our artists come from all areas of south Georgia and north Florida.

We promise to treat all our members fairly and make sure they are fully prepared and aware of our policies and rules, and are fully trained to perform requested duties. This handbook should answer most, if not all, your questions.

Expectations

As a co-op member, you are highly encouraged to work in some capacity to help support the gallery's operations. In addition to working the desk, the various committees need your input. Although it is understood that some members simply cannot work the desk for some reason or another, everyone can and should find some way to help. Staffing the desk is our first priority; if we are not open, no sales are made, and everyone suffers.

The application package defines specific levels of commission paid by the artist per the hours worked. Hour-for-hour credit is given for working the desk, as well as for working during special events. Certain offices are given hour credits due to the amount of time required to perform the duties of the office. Currently, the president, treasurer, and staffing manager receive 12 hours credit; the vice president, treasurer's assistant, gallery display chair, events and promotions chair, and membership chair receive 6 hours credit; and the secretary, finance chair, and website chair receive 3 hours credit.

If a member accrues at least 12 hours credit per month, they pay a 20% commission; 9 hours is 25%, 6 hours is 30%, 3 hours is 35%, and zero hours is 40% (which, by the way, is a fairly standard gallery commission for this area).

Please consider how you can help make our gallery successful!

Perks of Being a Working Member

As a working member, you will be entitled to benefits not afforded to non-working members. Only working members may be Artist-of-the-Month and display their work in the front window. (One window is reserved for this artist and the other is used to display all artists on a rotating basis.) Only working artists can be Spotlight Artists on the website.

Future perks may include profit-sharing. The feasibility of profit-sharing is currently being investigated.

Leadership Structure, By-Laws, and Fee Structure

The co-op has elected positions for president, vice-president, treasurer, and secretary. Committee chairmanships and other vital tasks are voluntary. The elected officers and committee chairs constitute the Board of Directors. The board meets periodically to assess the progress and needs of the gallery, address problems, and vote on changes. All members are invited to join these meetings; however, only board members may vote. Topics for discussion may be forwarded to the president prior to the meetings.

The co-op bylaws are available as a separate document. Copies may be requested from the president. The by-laws define the organizational structure of the co-op, and provide policies and procedures. The by-laws may be changed by majority vote of the Board of Directors and approval by 2/3 of the co-op members.

Artist fees are clearly stated in the application package. There is an annual fee of \$100, payable in January, and pro-rated for artists starting at other times of the year. Space rental is calculated at \$1.00 per square foot of wall space, or specific rental fees for floor space, pedestals, and display stands. The minimum rental is \$20.00 per month. Wall space may not be known until a new artist's work is hung, at which time it will be calculated. If an artist changes their space, either to increase or decrease it, they must notify the gallery display chair so that their new rental amount may be calculated.

Committees and Jobs

Gallery Display Committee

The Gallery Display Committee is responsible for the look of the gallery. It is a vital committee, since our visitors' first impression may influence their desire to spend money in our gallery. The committee hangs and displays artwork, installs new members' work, changes out display areas to keep the gallery looking fresh, and has control of the placement of displays. The committee may also work with maintenance personnel to address cleanliness and neatness issues. The gallery display chair should expect to spend 3 to 6 hours per month in the performance of these duties. The committee size varies, from 2 to 6 people. More hands make for lighter work!

Finance Committee

The Finance Committee works closely with the Treasurer to handle the gallery's finances, and to help with budgeting and financial planning. One key task of this committee is to enter and track daily sales so that all members get credit for their sales, and to make bank deposits of the day's take.

Membership Committee

The Membership Committee is responsible for fostering and maintaining gallery membership. The chairperson maintains a supply of hardcopy artist applications at the gallery, receives applications, and relays the applicant's information and images of their work to the rest of the committee. The committee then votes whether to accept the applicant. The committee should consist of an odd number of members, no less than seven, and should represent a variety of media. After the votes are in, if a majority of the members voted yes, the applicant is accepted and notified by the chairperson. The chairperson works with the gallery display committee to have the new artist installed. The membership chair also notifies the scheduler so that training may be scheduled, and the president, who will add their contact information to the membership list.

Events and Promotions Committee

The Events and Promotions Committee organizes and helps put on special events throughout the year. Past events have included First Friday Sip-n-Strolls, Victorian Christmas, sidewalk sales, Bras on Broad fundraiser, and other fundraisers. Special events draw attention to the gallery and may attract shoppers who might not otherwise visit us.

Maintenance Committee

Members responsible for gallery maintenance help keep the gallery looking good by replacing lightbulbs, keeping the floors and bathroom clean, patching and painting walls where needed, and arranging for window washing. All members are encouraged to help with gallery maintenance, as their talents permit.

Website Committee

The gallery website, www.wiregrassartcoop.org, was created and is maintained by a non-member who works closely with the gallery regarding content and changes to the website. The Website Committee oversees the site and watches out for issues and problems.

Our website features a photo of each artist, along with their medium, office(s) held, and email contact information. By clicking on the artist's name, you are directed to a page showing their artist statement and images of their work.

Improvements to the website are ongoing. Any suggestions should be directed to the website committee.

Scheduling

Scheduling is normally done by one person, who makes sure all desk slots are filled each month. This can be a daunting job, and sometimes an urgent plea goes out for unfilled slots on very short notice. All members should help out whenever they can, and respond quickly when scheduling emails are sent out. Members may schedule their work days months in advance if desired.

Application Process

Since you are already a member, you know about the process. This information is provided so that you can tell prospective members about it. Many application packets are given out to curious folks who visit the gallery and think they might like to join. The initial step is to obtain an application packet. If there are none at the desk, inform the membership chair so that one can be emailed to the prospective member. After they have filled out the forms in the package, they should be emailed, along with 3 to 6 images of their work (in jpeg format please!) to the membership chair. Make sure to mention that the images should be high quality and represent their best work. Membership applications may also be accessed on the website. After jurying by the Membership Committee, the applicant will be notified of their acceptance/non-acceptance. If accepted, they will plan their installation with the Gallery Display chair and/or the Membership chair.

New Artist Installation

The newly accepted artist should get in touch with the Gallery Display chair and/or the Membership Chair to plan a date and time for their installation. They should give an approximate area needed so that the display person can make an appropriate space available. Upon installation, they should expect to pay the annual fee (pro-rated as needed) plus their first month's rent.

Working the Front Desk

Prior to working the desk alone, all members will be trained by and experienced member.

Key points for working the desk include:

- Be familiar with opening and closing procedures.
- Greet guests as they come in, and offer help if they request it.
- Don't hover! This makes many guests uncomfortable. Be available, but not pushy.
- Make sure you understand how to fill out the customer receipts correctly and completely. An example is posted on the desk.
- Identification of the artist on the receipt is critical to make sure they are credited with the sale.
- Make sure the Square reader is put on the charger at the end of the day.
- Clean the desktop and frequently touched items and surfaces at the end of the day.

Special Events

Wiregrass participates in several annual events and is always looking for more events and ways to showcase the gallery. Some of the events we have done on a regular basis include:

- First Friday Sip-n-Stroll
 - From March through December, the gallery is open until 9 p.m. for Thomasville's First Friday Event. We treat the Artist of the Month to a "mini-opening" to promote their work, which is also displayed in the front window. The artist is responsible for light refreshments.
- Victorian Christmas
 - On the second Thursday and Friday of December, the gallery participates in one of Downtown Thomasville's premier events. Members dress up in Victorian wear or holiday wear and keep the gallery open until 9 p.m.
- Bras on Broad
 - During the month of September, guests are invited to decorate a bra at our decoration station for a suggested donation of \$10, to go to Kickin' Cancer of Southwest Georgia. During October, the decorated bras are displayed in local businesses. Starting in November, the bras are offered for "sale" at the gallery, with proceeds to go to the cancer center.
- Downtown Thomasville Sidewalk Sales
 - Held twice a year. The gallery displays sale items and provides artist demonstrations on the sidewalk in front of the gallery.
- Fundraisers for Vashti Center
 - Several fundraisers have been held to benefit the Vashti Center, a social services charity in Thomasville.
- Downtown Thomasville offers many other events throughout the year. Wiregrass may choose to remain open later during these events, which draw many visitors to the downtown area.
 - Antiques Show and Festival (February)
 - Rose Show and Festival (April)
 - Covey Film Festival (October)
 - Plantation Wildlife Arts Festival (November)
 - Holiday Open House (November)

Safety and Security

The safety and security of our members is very important to us. We have some suggestions to help you feel safe while working the desk:

- We try to have two people working; however, this is not always possible.
- If working alone, lock the back door.
- Know where the Thomasville Police Department number can be found. It is taped to the desk.
- Keep pepper spray handy if you feel the need.
- Arrange a signal to your co-worker to let them know they should go to the back and call the police.

Work safely in all tasks you may be performing for the gallery. Only climb ladders and use tools if you are capable of doing so safely. Use ladders and footstools when necessary; don't climb on chairs or pedestals!

The cleanliness of the gallery is important. Make sure to follow the closing procedures regarding cleaning surfaces and taking out the trash.

Thank you for joining us!

Working together means success for all of us!