



Arts Midwest • 2908 Hennepin Ave • Suite 200 • Minneapolis, MN 55408
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Midwest Arts Conference, September 17-20, 2008, Kansas City, MO

INDEPENDENT SHOWCASE FAQs

Why should I showcase at the Midwest Arts Conference?

If you are interested in giving presenters a glimpse of your artists' work showcasing is an effective way to get your artists in front of presenters. Many presenters use showcases as one of the methods of evaluating which artists they will book for their upcoming seasons.

Here is some of the presenter feedback on Independent Showcases captured from the 2007 Conference evaluation:

- 72% of respondents said that they attended Independent Showcases because they were looking for artists for their season and/or venue.
- 25% of respondents said that they attended 10 or more independent showcases.

Independent Showcases are independently produced, coordinated, and marketed showcases by artists and/or artist managers/agents who are represented in the Marketplace exhibit hall. Typically there are an average of 30-40 independent and group independent showcases taking place at or near the Conference site over the four days of the event.

What should I consider when producing an Independent Showcase?

There are many things to consider before deciding to produce an independent showcase. It requires significant time, planning, and financial as well as professional resources to produce a successful showcase. Some factors to consider:

- You should have work of high artistic quality that is ready for current bookings.
- Are your promotional packets ready to sell your production?
- Do you have a sufficient budget to cover Conference registration, exhibit space, travel, lodging, shipping, technical assistance, venue rental, advertising, and promotional costs?
- Find the appropriate venue most suitable to your production.
- Scheduling, rehearsal, and soundcheck considerations.
- Do you know artists and colleagues who want to collaborate on a group independent showcase?
- Offering enticements, such as food or beverages, may enhance attendance.
- Do you need to provide transportation to your showcase venue?

When should I schedule my Independent Showcases?

Scheduling your showcase during published Conference activities is strongly discouraged and may reduce attendance.

Here are some time slots that do not conflict with scheduled Conference events:

- Wednesday, September 17: 8:30 p.m. – Midnight (following the Opening Night Party)
- Thursday, September 18: 9:30 p.m. – Midnight (following Spotlight Showcases at the Folly Theater)
- Friday, September 19: 9:30 p.m. – Midnight (following Spotlight Showcases at the Folly Theater)

The Conference schedule posted online will give you a good idea of the flow of events and which events are scheduled at the Conference hotel and the Convention Center.

Where do Independent Showcases take place?

Artists or groups of artists will rent a meeting room in the Conference hotel, Convention Center, or a performing arts venue near the Conference site. Venues may include theatres, clubs, churches, or cafés depending on the availability and appropriateness for your performance and budget.

How do I find an Independent Showcase venue?

In May, Arts Midwest will provide a list of potential Independent Showcase venues through our Web site. This list will provide some ideas and contact information for some venues located near the Conference hotel and Convention Center. The list is by no means exhaustive and artists and managers are encouraged to do their own research on venues in the Kansas City downtown area.

How do I schedule a Group Independent Showcase?

Consider teaming up with an interested colleague who will be exhibiting at the Midwest Arts Conference to save on rental and production costs. Please check the “group and independent showcasing” box in the “Exhibitors Only” section of your registration form, available in mid-May at www.artsmidwest.org if you are interested in connecting with other artists to coordinate a group showcase. Arts Midwest will send you a list of artist contact information via e-mail in June, following the exhibit lottery deadline, for those who have indicated that they are interested in group showcasing and have registered for the exhibit lottery.

How do I promote my Independent Showcase?

There are several ways you can promote your showcase both before and during the Conference.

Pre-Conference:

- **Mailings and E-mail blasts** - Use your presenter contact information (included with your exhibit package) to do promotional mailings and e-mail marketing to presenters registered for the Conference. The early set of presenter mailing and e-mail addresses will be sent to exhibitors via e-mail on *July 11*. The late set of presenter contact information will be e-mailed on *August 19* and will contain a larger number of registered presenters.
- **Web site** - Promote your showcase on your Web site. Our online exhibitor directory will link to you or your agency’s Web site.

Onsite:

- **Advertising** - purchase ad space in our Conference publications, distributed to more than 900 attendees onsite.
- **Independent showcase listings** - for a small fee you can list a 75-word description of your showcase in our print Program Book by filling out our Independent Showcase Listing Form, posted on our Web site in May. Independent Showcase Listings are *due by July 14, 2008*. These listings will also be posted on our Conference Web site in August.
- **Marketplace** - promote your showcase from your exhibit space, or place a flyer on a designated table near registration.
- **Signage** - speak with your venue about where you can post signs to advertise your showcase.
- **Take attendance** – collect business cards of presenters attending your showcase and have someone checking name tags at the door.

Post-Conference

- **Follow-up** – contact presenters who attended your showcase and get them additional promotional materials when requested.

Additional Questions?

We hope that this tip sheet is helpful when planning your independent showcase at the Midwest Arts Conference. If you have additional questions, feel free to contact Ann Christensen Arndt, Midwest Arts Conference associate, at 612.341.0755, ext. 17, or ann@artsmidwest.org.