



Artists' Network

Learning. Networking. Exhibiting. *Building Success.*

Town Hall Meeting  
Saturday, June 10, 2011

Summary Report

# Artists Network Town Hall Meeting – June 10, 2011

## Introduction

The Board of Directors of the Artists Network holds Town Hall meetings every two years, to work with members to identify priorities on which we should focus over the ensuing two years. On Saturday, June 10, we held the most recent (and second one) of these.

The process we followed this time was to conduct an initial online survey, to give us some idea of our current membership demographics and to provide us with a “heads up” on any matters on which we should focus during the Town Hall session. The demographics were presented to the group at the outset of the session, and the results are presented here in *Appendix A*. Generally speaking the survey indicated that for the better part, members are satisfied with services provided by the Artists Network, but that there are also areas where we could be doing better, and these mirrored what we discussed during the Town Hall meeting.

## The Town Hall Meeting

About 22 participants attended the Town Hall session on Saturday, including several board members. Initially we worked in 5 groups to brainstorm any and all priorities that came to mind in terms of areas on which the Network, moving forward, should focus. You can see these results in *Appendix B*. Naturally, there was some duplication and crossover from the groups. We took a break after this round and consolidated duplicate points to facilitate voting on the most important issues. Jim Turner was particularly helpful in pulling this together.

As a result of the group vote – dotmocracy – we ended up with four clear priorities:

1. The website
2. Promotion
3. The gallery
4. Education

This part of this document is a transcript of the results of the work done in these four groups.

There’s a fair amount of overlap between these four areas – they’re all pretty interdependent, as you can see. There are a couple of clear trends, though:

- The website is seen as a primary vehicle for promotion, communication, and member interaction. There are lots of suggestions in each of the four areas.

- Participants are not all clear on the benefits and services they get as part of their membership – we need to communicate this more effectively
- Participants feel there is a need for the AN to network more with other networks and take greater advantage of promotional opportunities for member artists as well as the AN at large
- Along with the current networking sessions, participants feel a need for more in-house mentoring and guidance
- The gallery needs work.

There was a lot of enthusiasm in the room, and participants signed up to be kept in the loop about developments, as we indicated a need for member involvement to make things happen.

All of us on the board greatly appreciate the energy, creativity, enthusiasm, and optimism of everyone who attended the meeting and completed the online survey. For those of you who signed up to help out in particular areas, thanks for your commitment – members of the relevant committees will be in touch with you shortly!

What happens next? As we did after the last Town Hall meeting two years ago, the Board will develop strategic directions and operational plans based on your feedback, to ensure we're focused on key priorities over the coming years. As we mentioned during this and the last Town Hall two years ago, we may not be able to tackle everything identified during the meeting, but we'll do everything possible, with your help, to ensure we achieve the best possible results.

Cheers

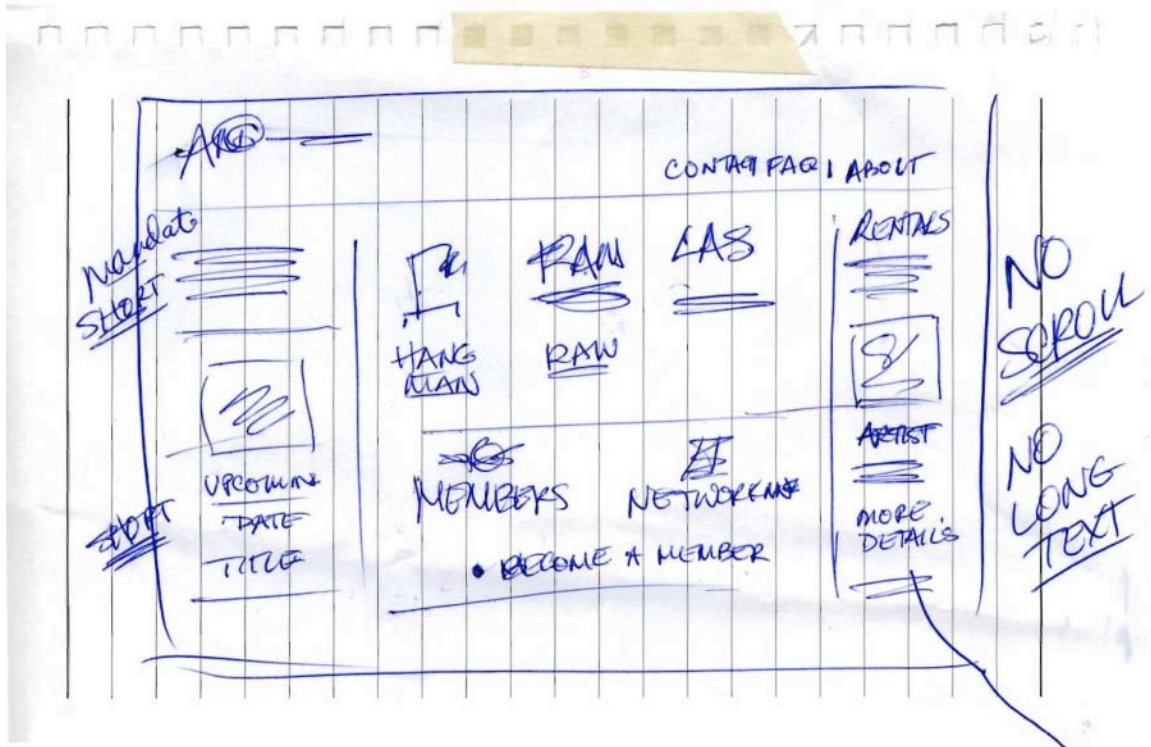


Chris Hutcheson  
Facilitator

# The Final Round – Four Areas of Interest

## 1. Website Priorities – Final Round

### General - “Front of House”



(Graphically enticing – we're artists)

#### Home page content

- Newsletter
- Schedule/hours
- Submission
- Artist Spotlight
- Openings
- Collectors Section
- About Page Edit
- FAQ
- RAW gets own section that's visible
- LAS gets own section
  - Preview
  - Submission (online?)
  - Online bidding

- Networking
  - Schedule
  - Volunteer
  - Suggestions
  - Submit to present
  - Registration that works with payment
  - Bios
  - Workshop materials

### **Members' Section**

- Easier to use member page with more art
- Categories – photo/painter/etc.
- Take members list offside and do a member section with list, category, spotlight, and member shows – all member stuff
- Benefits/partner info
- Renew/signup
- Volunteer
- Info on education
- Seminar, instruction on how to use your web page and CMS
- Resources
- Spellcheck/grammar and limited use of text colour
  
- Private members only section (password) for forum/bulletin board
- 1 type of artist list – get rid of alpha thumb artist list and consolidate into one list.

### **About Section**

- History/Staff/Committees/Board – with emails

### **Rentals**

- Info on renting
- Catalog
- Inquiry forms
- Categories for artists/medium

## 2. Promotion (marketing/communication) Priorities

1. Of the AN
2. Of the Gallery
3. Of individual members

### 1. Of the AN

- Increase free listings
  - Bravo (web free)
  - Rogers
  - CityTV (web free)
  - Etc. – Canadian House and Home – featured artist
- Find a PR person as a volunteer
- Increase \$\$ spent for advertising/marketing
- Blogging – outreach
- Feature Artists
- YouTube videos
- Use **existing** members as promotion
- **Membership drive**
- **More resources**
- Create a new member kit
- Train staff to be “good promoters” (training (i.e. bloggers)
- **Need the bodies** to execute the ideas
- Instruction on website – “How do I update?”
- What are the resources members already have? – Info access
- Encourage other arts orgs to link digitally to artistsnetwork.ca

### 2. The Gallery

- Create digital “trees” for promotion
- Encourage all members to get on social media and to link to AN
- Don’t underestimate power and connectivity of social media
- Membership encouragement – your gallery
- Everything to do with the gallery
- **Foot traffic** - sandwich board/visibility/street/pixelboard

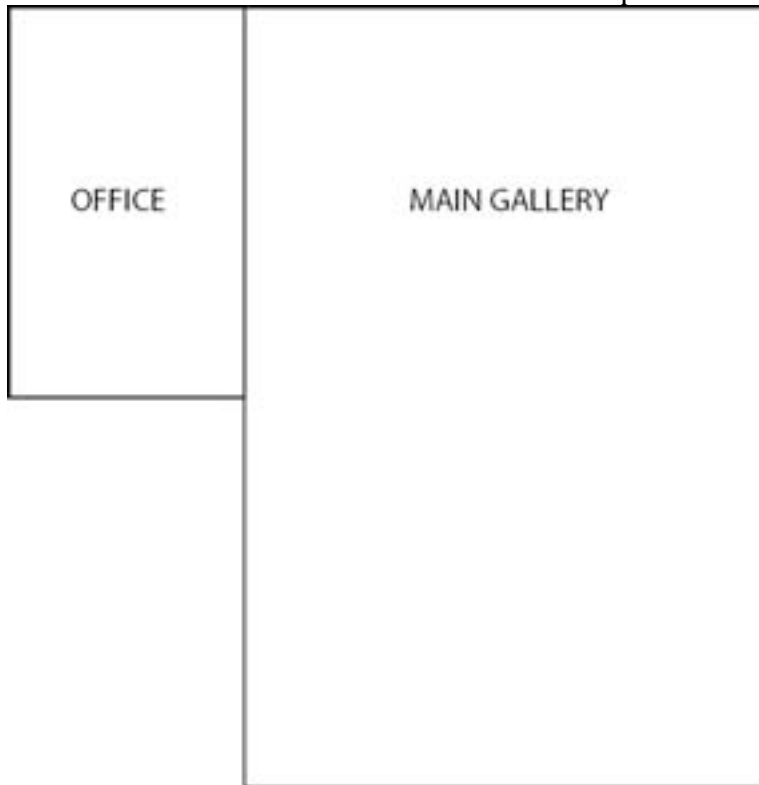
### 3. Individual Members

- Provide PR package/info lists:
  - Tips/contacts/exhibits (existing)
  - What are the tools existing/for new members
- How to cross promote members’ shows

- Need a venue/tools/methodology to enable artists to promote **their** show within the AN
- Calendar application for website that members can update with shows
- The process to push out - social media
- Update “Featured Artists” more frequently – focus on new members
- Find a dedicated “personelle” for online individual promotion

### 3. Gallery Priorities

- **Signage!** – Hang Man & Network
- Lighting of sign
- Clean up clutter – back clutter display
- Better/more hanging hardware
- Consider elimination of salon to create more professional main gallery



- Finish work on ceiling and lighting

#### **Promotion**

- Links with BIA website – advertising
- Facebook/Social Media for Gallery
- Active promotion
- Links from AN
- Opening hours to match street traffic
- Outreach to artists/local merchants
- Artists talks at gallery – **promoted** – in magazines, Riverside, Metro Mag
  - Designers, art consultants as well
- U of T Artists Talks – Canadian Art Mag
- Sponsored articles
- Use BIA skills and contact network

- Designer talks – how to decorate your condo
- Expand mailing list – more community penetration
- More interaction – Ding –
  - First contact
  - Community based gallery
- Staff training – customer service and sales (Walmart Greeter)

## 4. Education Priorities

*A.N. (that is, what the AN needs to provide)*

- Speed mentoring Form on website when members register to track skills and needs
- Bootcamp – photograph work, web, social media
- Hub of resource on web – accessible anytime
  - Member & partner resources
  - Video sessions to post
- Educate buyers “how to buy art” (artspeak dictionary), “How to hang”
  - Turnkey evening to sell to firm (fm serv) show work and talk about it and education
- Speed mentoring and artists and buyer
- Topics (offer multiple times)
  - Social media website, workplace hazards (WHMIS), marketing, legal, framing and presentation, business planning, pricing, selling, branching, archiving, digitizing your work, art 101, selling internationally (Gary B)
- Understanding what buyers are looking for
- Member certification to receive discounts for completing education
- Educate – “technical education” (Winsor Newton, Liquitex, and other vendors)
- Artist talks
- Marketplace for members
- Publishers > educating public
- Youtube Channel (interviews)
  - Jury talk
  - Curator talk
  - Gallery talk
- Mix up days and dates of education sessions **or** tape them for display (members only)
- Established Artists – Education
- Art History talks
- How to break into new areas – group shows in other cities/countries
- Calendar of events
- Galleries – PR to send to other galleries (AGO) and to National Galleries (sent by AN (Gary B)
- Educating other buyer vehicles – stagers, film industry, designers, art buyers (cap)s

*Members (that is, what members can contribute) “You get out of AN what you put in”*

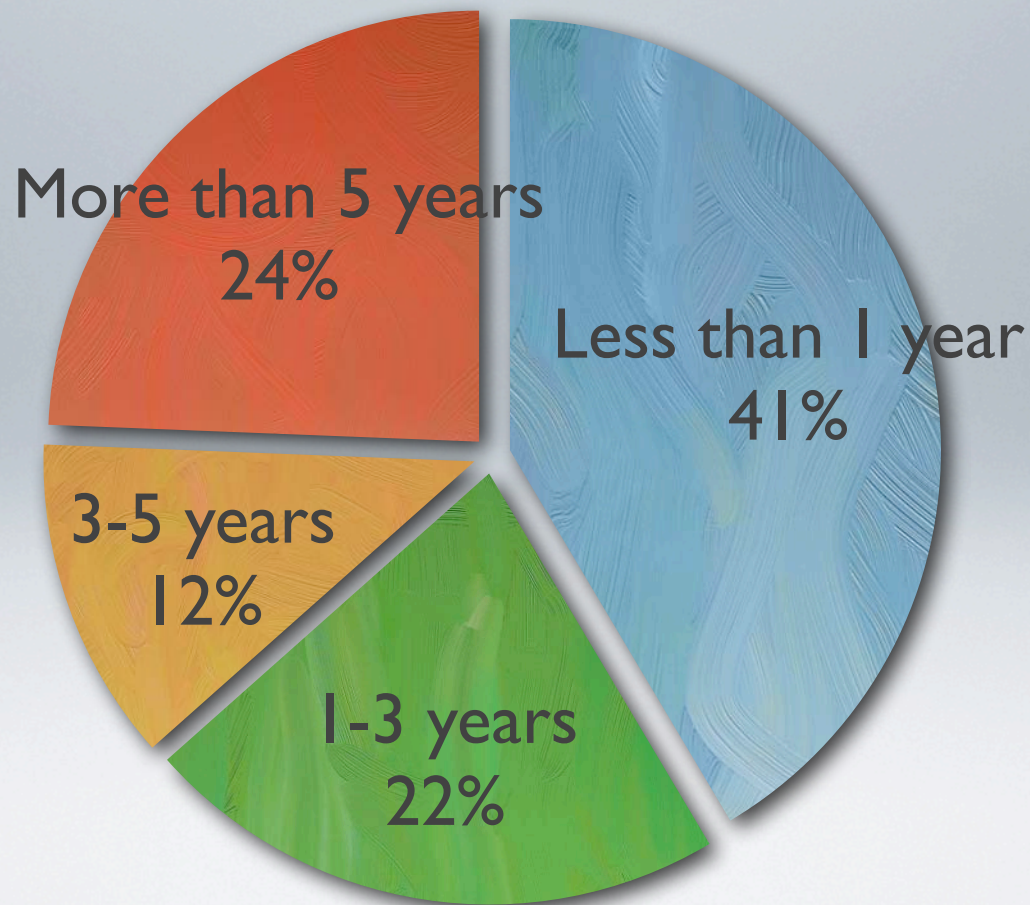
- Module created online to mine member skills for Education Sessions
- Mentoring – link via web – sign up. Online forum – “Artist to Artist”
- Contribute to Resource Forums to build the library (a WIKI might be an option here)
- Participate in turnkey education sessions
- Leveraging contacts
- Opportunities to volunteer and upgrade knowledge and contacts
- Run education form
- Artists talks
- Mentor
- Be part of a website community
- Twitter account – AN and have artists contribute (library)
- Set up/leverage accounts on LinkedIn and Facebook

## Appendix A – Member Demographics

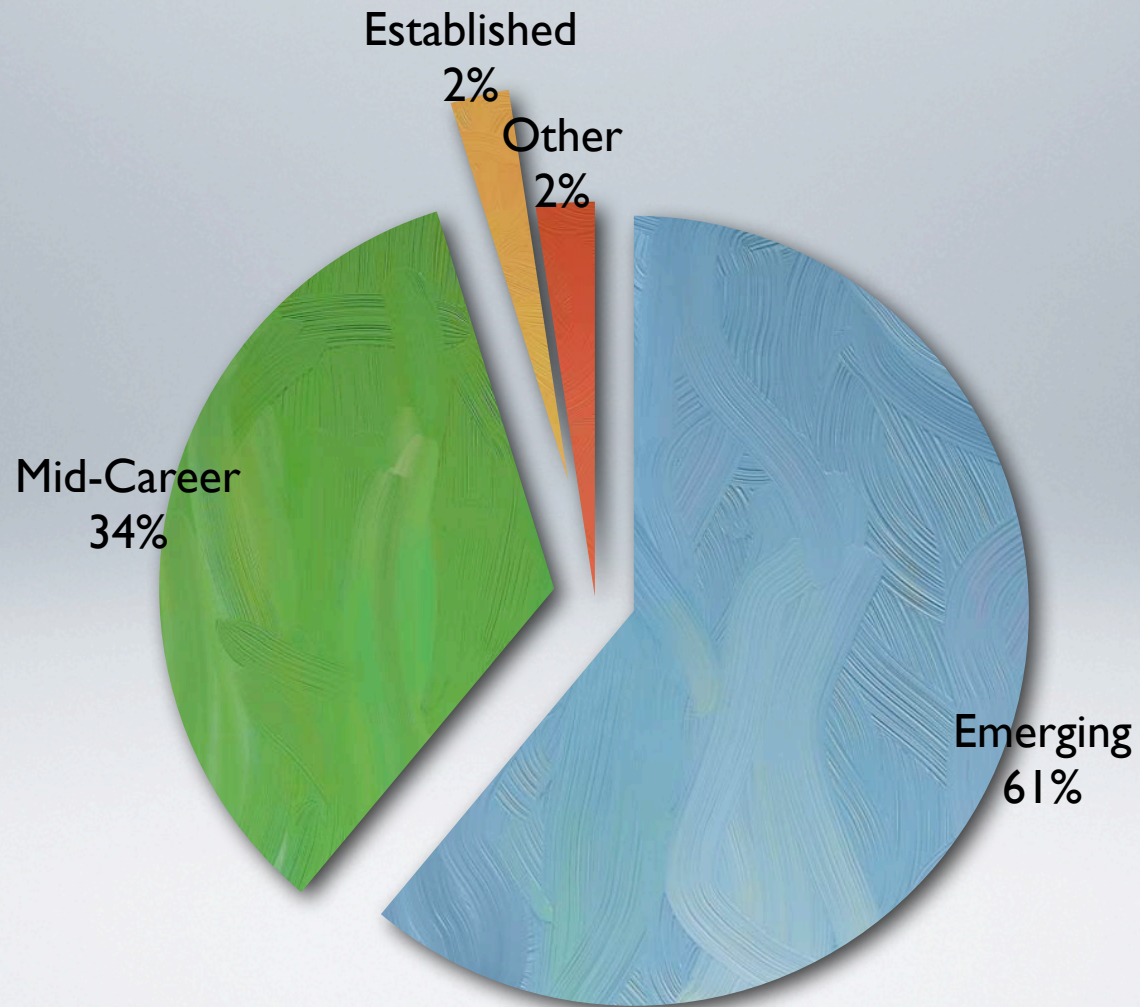
42 members – slightly less than  $\frac{1}{4}$  of our total membership – responded to the online questionnaire between March 23 – the start of the survey period – and the week before the Town Hall session.

Membership demographics were presented at the outset of the Town Hall session and a copy of the presentation content is included in this Appendix.

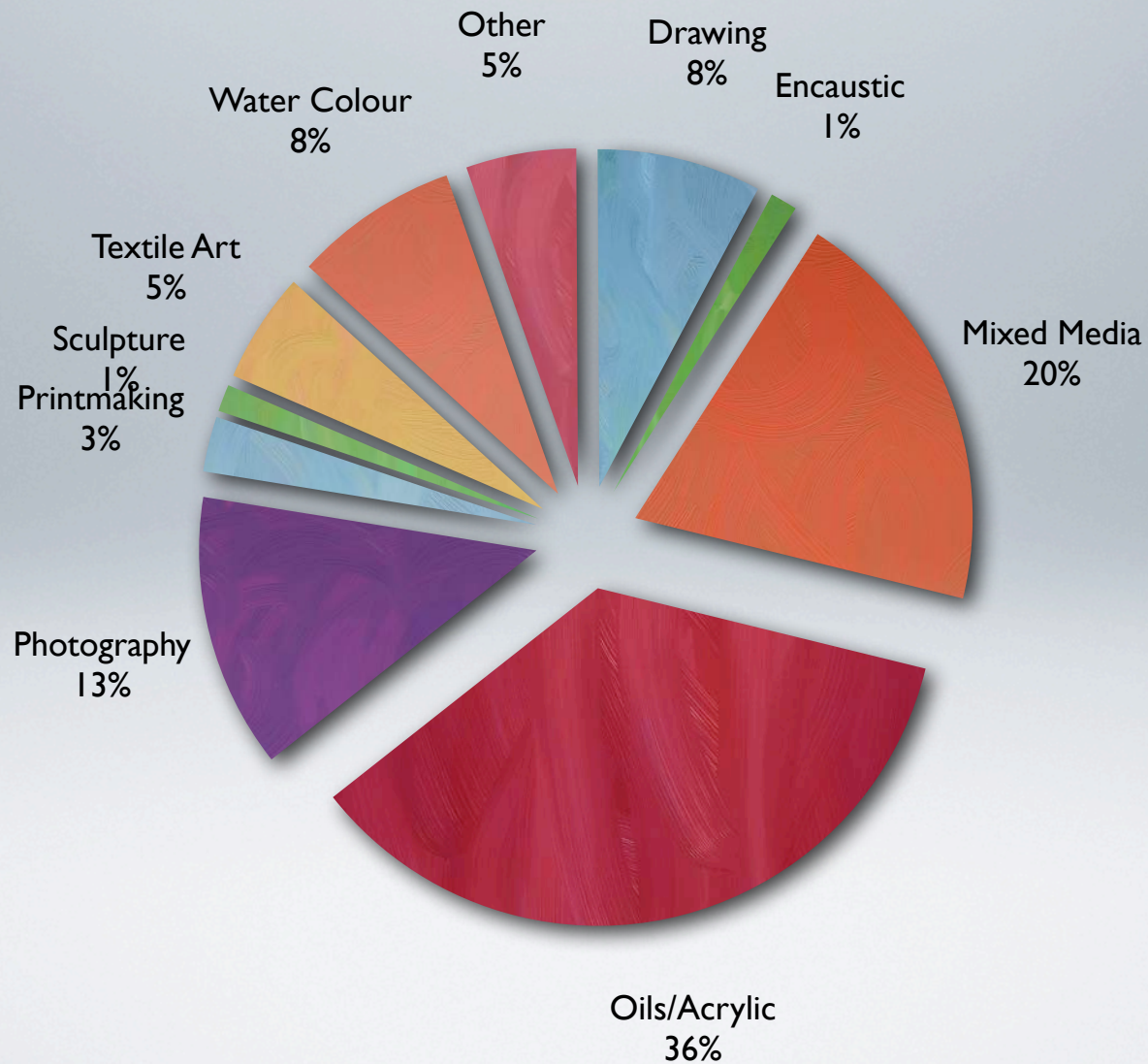
# HOW LONG HAVE YOU BEEN A MEMBER?



# YOUR CAREER STATUS

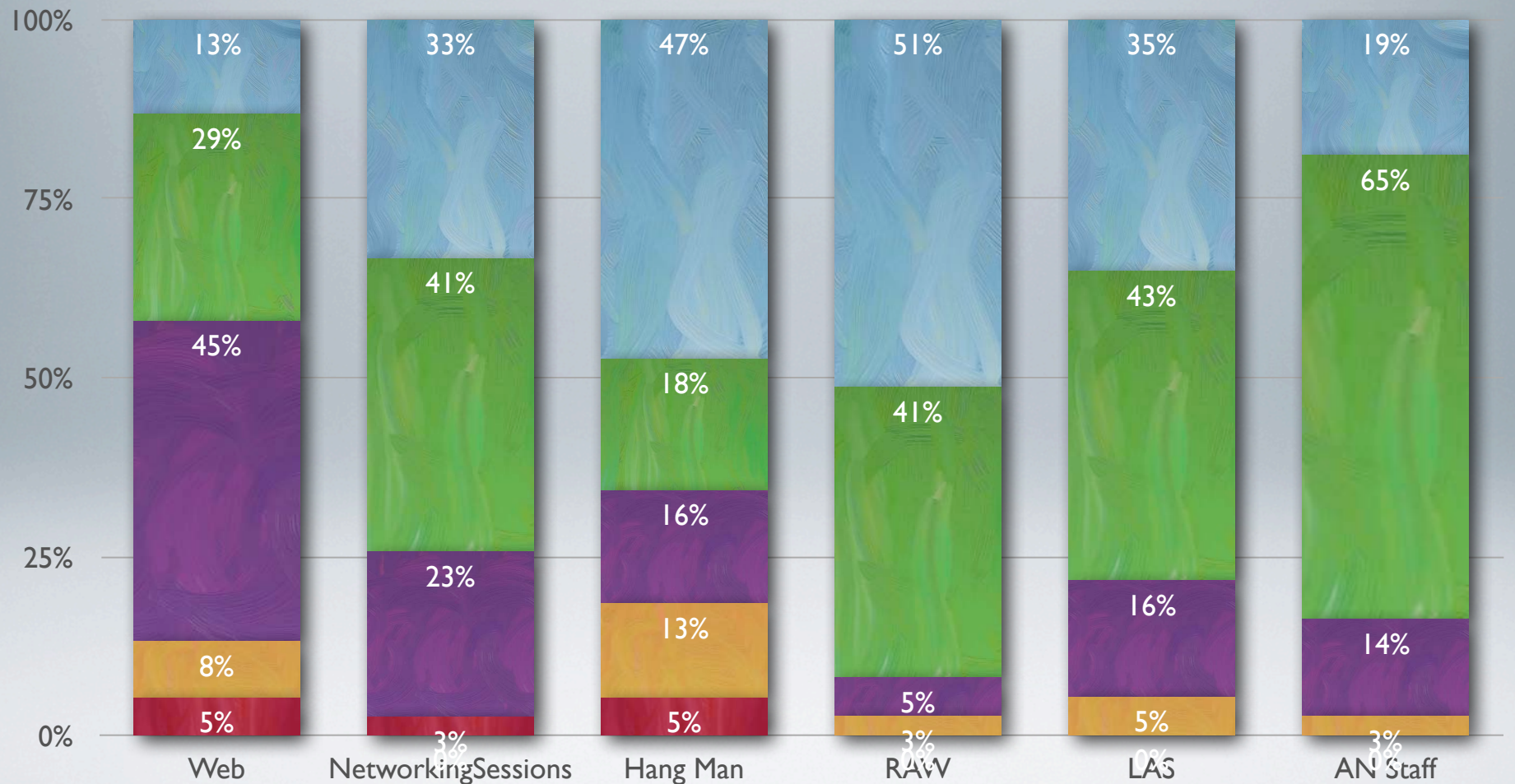


# MEDIUM



# SERVICES

■ Not at all satisfied   
 ■ Somewhat dissatisfied   
 ■ Somewhat satisfied   
 ■ Very Satisfied   
 ■ No answer



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## Appendix B – Round 1 Results

This is a listing of all items raised by the workgroups in the initial round of discussions. Groups brainstormed and flip charted ideas. Some of these lists were overly operational, so we summarized some and used those for voting purposes. I've grouped the results under arbitrary headings.

Participants' comments were consistent with what we heard during the Town Hall session itself.

The areas of interest are arranged in order of the total number of votes each received.

<b>EXHIBITING/GALLERY</b>	<b>Votes</b>	<b>Combined</b>
New opportunities for events and exhibits for artists	8	Exhibiting
How do we increase participation of AN artists in AN exhibits	3	Exhibiting
Attracting collectors to the Gallery - "Make the Collector"	15	Gallery
Increase public awareness of gallery and its artists (Artists Network)	14	Gallery
Increase professional appearance of the gallery	12	Gallery
<b>TOTAL</b>	<b>52</b>	

<b>PROMOTION</b>	<b>Votes</b>	<b>Combined</b>
Increase cross promotion of artists	8	Promotion
Increase foot traffic to gallery	9	Promotion
Promotion <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>- local art scene</li> <li>- broaden exposure beyond Riverdale</li> <li>- AN as proposal to Luminato/Nuit Blanche</li> </ul>	15	Promotion
Art rentals/Sales – get going	3	Sales
<b>TOTAL</b>	<b>35</b>	

<b>COMMUNICATION/WEBSITE</b>	<b>Votes</b>	<b>Combined</b>
Status updates – e.g. art rentals, artists cells	3	Communication
WEBSITE <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>- front page too cluttered</li> <li>- not enough visuals</li> <li>- easier navigation</li> <li>- prioritize information</li> </ul>	20	Communication
WEBSITE <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>- Use social media</li> </ul>	4	Communication
Increased transparency from the Board – e.g. financials	5	Communication
<b>TOTAL</b>	<b>32</b>	

<b>LEARNING</b>	<b>Votes</b>	<b>Combined</b>
Education <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>- where to find things</li> <li>- new member package</li> <li>- How to photograph/catalogue work (boot camp)</li> </ul>	3	Learning
Research – trends, etc.		Learning
Mentoring opportunities	2	Learning
Increased education on: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>- mentoring</li> <li>- photographing work</li> <li>- creating websites</li> <li>- scans</li> <li>- programs/books/catalogues</li> <li>- Photoshop</li> </ul>	12	Learning
<b>TOTAL</b>	<b>17</b>	

<b>DEVELOPMENT/FUNDRAISING</b>	<b>Votes</b>	<b>Combined</b>
Sponsorship <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>- how to increase funds</li> <li>- multi-year</li> </ul>	10	Development

<b>ENGAGEMENT</b>	<b>Votes</b>	<b>Combined</b>
Increase membership participation	13	Engagement
- quality		
- submissions		
- participation		
- volunteering		
- socials		

<b>MEMBERSHIP</b>	<b>Votes</b>	<b>Combined</b>
Diversify membership/Increase Established Artists Memberships		Membership
Data mining of the membership – increase available information	2	Membership
Increase membership	1	Membership
Membership categories		Membership
<b>TOTAL</b>	<b>3</b>	

<b>NETWORKING</b>	<b>Votes</b>	<b>Combined</b>
Expand/focus – networking opportunities	4	Networking
Establishing links with other art organizations	5	Networking
Outreach by members – schools		Networking
Member Partnerships with other groups/organizations	8	Networking
<b>TOTAL</b>	<b>17</b>	

<b>RESOURCES</b>	<b>Votes</b>	<b>Combined</b>
How to leverage \$\$ value resources – tents, supplies, etc.	2	Resources
Best practice forms and resources (online) – legal contracts, copyright, (binder?)	4	Resources
How to provide increased services and connections to established (and mid career) artists	11	Resources
<b>TOTAL</b>	<b>17</b>	