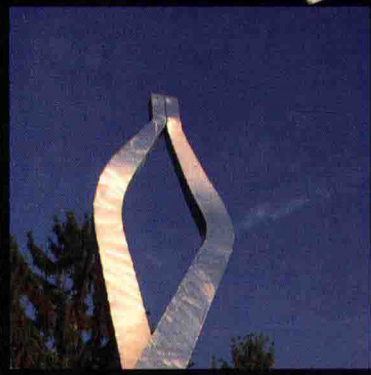
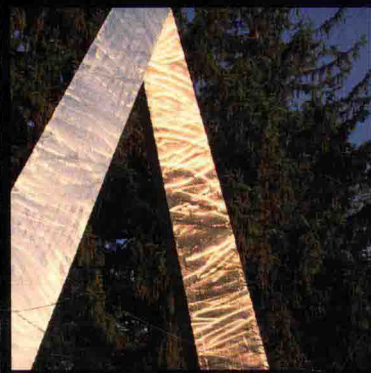


THE GUILD® 8



The
Architect's
Source of
Artists and
Artisans



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of Artists and Artisans

Kraus Sikes Inc.
Madison, Wisconsin

Published By:

Kraus Sikes Inc.
228 State Street
Madison, WI 53703
800-969-1556
608-256-1990
FAX 608-256-1938

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THE GUILD REGISTER:

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Distribution:

This book is exclusively distributed
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Rockport, Massachusetts

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ISBN (softback) 1-880140-03-9
ISBN (hardback) 1-880140-02-0
ISSN 0885-3975

Printed in Japan

Special thanks to our
1992 Review Committee:

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An opportunity is lost when the artist is hired merely as the maker and supplier of a product, rather than a knowledgeable partner whose ideas can be a vital part of creative design solutions.

There are many skills an artist brings to a collaborative project, but none is more important than his or her overall vision, that aesthetic signature which marks the work as the artist's own. Before an idea is realized in glass . . . or metal . . . or granite . . . or paint, it exists in its creator's mind. At this point, before the artistic vision becomes a reality, or perhaps even before it is committed to paper or maquette, what is its value? In other words, what is an idea worth?

Because architects and other design professionals are creative people who live by the power of their ideas, they recognize -- in theory, at least -- that an artist's unique vision is valuable indeed. But when it comes down to a specific project, and when they are focused on issues of control and responsibility, they may be reluctant to use an artist's skills as fully as they might. For both the artist and the client, an opportunity is lost when the artist is hired merely as the maker and supplier of a product, rather than a knowledgeable partner whose ideas can be a vital part of creative design solutions.


At THE GUILD, we see impressive partnerships between design professionals and artists that are getting better and more productive every year. What most of these satisfying working relationships share is a true collaborative spirit, where the artist's design ideas, as well as his or her completed work, are both solicited and respected.

But because the area of design is both the most intangible and the most creative part of any project -- whether it's creating a building, designing a particular interior or envisioning a specific work of art -- this is a place in the collaborative process where there's plenty of room for misunderstanding. There are few clear standards about procedures and fees during the initial design stages of a project; later on, there are firm contracts, tangible work and more fully articulated schedules and responsibilities.

In an effort to help make the partnerships between clients, design professionals and artists most rewarding to everyone involved, we've put together a short checklist based on interviews with artists who work extensively on collaborative projects. While each artist has an individual way of working, this list includes the design issues that most agree should be addressed for a truly successful creative relationship.

Expect to pay for design.

We should say up front that not every artist charges a design fee. Some consider preliminary sketches a part of their marketing effort and figure they will be compensated for their time by the client once the project is approved. But it's more common for an artist to require a design fee of 5 to 10 percent of the final project budget. In some cases, especially when the artist has considerable experience and



reputation in a specialized area, the design fee may be as high as 25 percent of the project budget. That's most likely if the artist is hired to envision specific solutions to complicated architectural problems. Obviously, in this kind of situation the artist is not merely asked to supply a product, but rather is expected to contribute a significant part of the design solution, when ideas and experience are as important as his or her tangible work.

Respect the artist's ideas and vision.

When we hire a doctor, we want a thoughtful, intelligent diagnosis, not just a course of treatment. The same should be true when we hire an artist to work with a design team. Most GUILD artists have become successful through many years of experience, and because of their excellence in technique and aesthetic imagination. Use that experience and expertise most fully by bringing the artist into the project early, and asking him or her for ideas.

Keep the artist informed of changes.

Tell the artist about changes -- even seemingly minor details -- which may have a significant impact on the project's design. A change in location or materials, or a change in the area surrounding the artist's work may be critical to the way the design is developed, or the work is

actually created. If the artist is working as a member of the design team, it's easier to include him or her in the ongoing dialogue about the overall project and the details that make things go smoothly.

Design ideas are the artist's property.

It should go without saying that it is highly unethical, as well as unfair and possibly illegal, to take an artist's designs -- even very preliminary or non-site-specific sketches -- and use them without the artist's permission. Some artists may include specific language about ownership of ideas, models, sketches, etc., in their contracts or letters of agreement. Even if an artist does not use a written agreement, be sure you are clear at the outset what you are paying for and what rights the artist retains.

Consider a separate design budget for your project.

There are specific conditions when a design budget fee is particularly helpful.

1. if you would like to get lots of ideas from an artist,
2. if you need site-specific ideas that are thoroughly researched, or
3. if you require a formal or complete presentation with finished drawings or models

If you want to look at the work of a number of different artists for a project, consider a competition with

a small design fee for each artist you contact.

It comes down to an issue of professionalism. Artists today have the technical skills to do wonderful and amazing things with simple materials. But they also have sophisticated conceptual and design talents. By making use of these talents and skills, and being willing to pay for them, design professionals add vision and variety to their creative products. In such a partnership, both parties gain, and the ultimate result is a client who is delighted by the outcome of the collaboration.

Myth, Reality, and the Artwork Commissioning Process

Earlier this year, design professionals across the country participated in a survey conducted by Kraus Sikes Inc., publishers of THE GUILD, to better understand the realities of commissioning artwork. Their responses are summarized in this edition of THE GUILD to provide information about the people, processes, and goals of those involved in commissioning artwork -- and to dispel common myths associated with this process.

More than 330 surveys were mailed to a group of design professionals who use THE GUILD and are actively involved in commissioning artwork. One hundred and ninety surveys were completed and returned, producing a response rate of 60%. These respondents included 89 architects, 63 interior designers, 29 art consultants, 6 developers, and 3 resource librarians.

Two-thirds of the respondents belong to small design firms, and over 60% of these firms have an annual dollar volume under one million dollars -- dispelling the myth that only large firms with large budgets commission art. These survey respondents actively commission a wide range of artwork, with work for the wall and architectural glass ranking first and second, respectively, as the types most often commissioned. Over half of the firms responding also commission furniture, painted finishes, architectural metal, textiles and floor coverings.

The following survey results clarify the various facets of the commissioning process, and help to refute the common myths which can create obstacles to commissioning original artwork for the spaces in which we live and work.

Survey Results

Goals

What is the ultimate goal of the inclusion of artwork in a project?

Enhance company image	39%
Provide a more meaningful space	29%
Public relations	13%
Increase property value	6%
Communications with audience not otherwise reached	5%
Other	8%

Decision-Making

Who most frequently initiates the inclusion of artwork in a project?

Interior designer	41%
Architect	28%
Client	20%
Developer/builder	6%
Art consultant	3%
Liturgical consultant	1%
Other	1%

Who usually makes the final decision on the selection of the artist?

Client	66%
Interior designer	17%
Architect	11%
Developer/builder	3%
Art consultant	1%
Liturgical consultant	1%
Other	1%

Generally, was the design of the final artwork:

A collaborative effort	59%
Original design of the artist	37%
Varies	2%

MYTH: Artwork is primarily included in a project to increase its property value.

Only 6% of these design professionals reported that the ultimate goal of including artwork in a project is to increase its property value. There were many responses to this question, reflecting the wide range of opinions on the value of art. But most chose enhancing a company's image and adding meaning to a space as the ultimate goals for including artwork -- emphasizing the aesthetic and spiritual qualities of art much more than its financial worth.

MYTH: Clients direct all phases of the process of commissioning artwork.

In reality, design professionals and clients both take active roles in making decisions when commissioning artwork. According to this survey, interior designers and architects are the ones who most frequently initiate the inclusion of artwork in projects -- which points out the important role design professionals can play in the commissioning process. These results also show the exciting aspect of commissioning artwork is that it's frequently a collaborative effort combining the creative ideas of all parties.