

HOW TO SELL YOUR STUFF by Marty Kremer © July 2009
(originally presented at a glass fusers' gathering)

Introduction- I've been trying to sell glass stuff since 1982. I started in complete denial and stayed there for years, despite a spouse with an MBA.

My first studio was half a bedroom; my second was my in-law's garage (until they suggested that their car needed the space more than I did).

I then went to a rented space with 8 employees but that's another story.

The main thing is that I've made a lot of mistakes and I'd like to give you the benefit of the experience.

Now that we know how to make neat stuff in the kiln, what do we do with it when a) there's too much stuff on the shelves, b) your spouse is looking for a return on his or her investment in your hobby, or c) you think you deserve better.

I'll assume most of us started as hobbyists (and some of us still are- that's nothing to be ashamed of) and gave away our first pieces to amazed and grateful relatives. Then we realized how expensive the glass was, and how much time we were spending on this hobby, and the relatives started asking for more, and we sort of woke up a little. The result was seat-of-the-pants-pricing; you know, the glass didn't cost much because it was scrap left over from something else, and I did it in my spare time, and I'm just starting out, so you can have this 12" plate (4 firings and 20 hours of my time) for \$35. Well, we need to wake up a lot more.

Let's start with **pricing**- and it doesn't matter whether you wholesale or retail- at this point there's only one price.

My basis for pricing is my **wholesale price**. This is what I need to get for making the piece and getting it out the shop door.

Materials have to be ordered, paid for, shipped to my studio and stored. Each of those involves money and/or time, and as Einstein proved, time=money. I mark up my cost of materials from 10-20% to cover those costs. Know how much the materials cost you for a given or typical piece. (You may be able to weigh the piece to get an accurate figure or just keep a log). Buying at wholesale is obviously desirable, but even if you pay retail, you must know your actual materials cost.

Overhead- My studio's in my basement, yours may be the spare bedroom or the garage or a rented space. If it's part of the building, figure out the square footage you use for working as a percentage of the total space (ie. the rest of the house) and use it to determine what portion of the mortgage or rent can be attributed to the studio. Add the applicable share of the utilities. Insurance. Repairs to equipment. Taxes, garbage pick-up, phone, bookkeeping. This is overhead, what it costs you to have a place to work. Figure it out for a month, then a week and then for an hour; keep a log of the time you put into a particular or typical piece, and assign it a proportional chunk of overhead.

Labor- Let's assume you work alone. What's an acceptable wage? \$10 an hour? \$35 an hour? \$1.75? It really doesn't matter as long as you're honest with yourself about it. Employees complicate the equation, so let's leave them out of this.

Now let's add it up. That bowl is a production piece- you've got it down- no dithering, no development time. Materials cost \$20, it took you (not counting kiln time) 2 hours and you pay yourself \$20 an hour. 2 hours of overhead runs you \$10. Add some fringes like profit (10%) and maybe another 15% for advertising, promotion, packing, credit card fees, wholesale sales expenses (shows, travel) etc. You'll need to get about \$90 to make it worthwhile.

And that's just to get it out of your studio.

Look at the piece- it'll need to be at least \$180 at the retail level, and we'll get into the why of that soon. If it's competing with a lot of other work that costs less then you've got some tinkering to do. You can cut your wage or hire someone who will work for less than you do, figure out an easier way to produce it, use cheaper glass, make it look like it's worth more, and so on. Or make something else.

Your cost is \$90, so retail is \$180; but suppose there's nothing out in the market remotely like it, and the local gallery says they can sell it for \$400 retail. Your share is \$200 and you can now buy all the coldworking equipment you ever wanted.

This brings us to **retail pricing**. A complaint I hear from neophytes is "why should I give someone HALF of the sales price? I made the piece!!" Well someone has to sell the work- it could be you, it could be a gallery or co-op or catalog or a rep (sales reps usually take a 15-20% commission- account for that in your wholesale price if you'll be using reps). Selling costs money, and if done properly, it WILL cost as much or more than the piece cost you to make.

A few years ago I looked into a retail space in my town- a nice storefront with room for a studio in the back, a gallery in the front. The numbers were terrifying: \$2000 per month rent. \$500 plus for utilities. About \$1000 per month for advertising for at least the first two years. Goddess knows how much for staff for the gallery. I'm still in my basement but I have a new respect for those who do run galleries.

By the way, when I say "gallery" I'm talking about any venue that sells your work for you.

But you can sell your own work at retail and keep all that money, right? Another personal example, admittedly extreme: the American Craft Council runs a show in San Francisco in August, wholesale for 2 days (last time I did the show) followed by a 3 day retail show. I take a 10x15 booth (about \$1800), pay for electricity and pipe and drape (\$200), ship my display and stock (\$1100 round trip including drayage), fly there and back (\$300), stay in a hotel for 7 nights (\$700), eat well in SF! (about \$400), local transportation (\$150), for a total of \$4650 in expenses. Let's say I sell hardly anything wholesale and I take in \$10,000 during the 3 retail days.

Marty-Glass-R-Us retailer bought that merchandise from Kremer Glass Studio for \$5000. I figure I've got \$350 out of the deal for the time it took me to get ready for the show, for being out of the studio for a week, and for down time when I get back

to recover from the trip. Good Deal! Sign me up for next year! And I haven't even paid myself for being the salesman in the booth!
But \$10K in sales sounds pretty good, doesn't it?

On the other hand, your local arts show may cost you \$200 for a space, and you'll take in \$2000? Of which you (the retailer) earns \$1000, having paid you (the manufacturer) \$1000 for the merchandise. \$800 net for a local show, outdoors, nice weather (well, we can dream) - not bad. And not the rule either.

So the gallery has to keep regular hours and look good, hire, train, and keep staff, advertise, promote, and turn a profit showing and selling your work for you. I see it as a full time job, and I've already got several of those.

Let me make a pronouncement: any gallery that takes less than 50% is not doing their job properly. And any gallery that takes more is greedy and should be shunned. Of course there are exceptions- you may find galleries that can offer slightly better arrangements because their costs are lower or they're not-for-profits, perhaps associated with an arts center. 60/40 is nice, 70/30 sounds even better, but you generally get what you pay for. Some galleries have such enormous expenses that they must push the retail price close to 2.5 times the wholesale price or more. Again, you are getting what you need at your wholesale price. Then there are problems like price parity- my website says bowl A is \$750 retail but Gallery X is selling it for \$800. What happens when the retail customer starts asking why? You cannot undersell your galleries- they will find out and they will drop you. Decide what the purpose of your site is- to sell? Information? Publicity? I recently took prices off my site- I thought prices would qualify my buyers by eliminating the tire-kickers but my 2x wholesale prices were conflicting with some higher gallery prices. I'd rather have the galleries deal with the retail public; I'm not good at that.

Getting paid

Payment terms- You want to get paid up front in cash; the gallery wants to send you a check long after the work sells. It's often negotiable. There are all kinds of ways of coming to terms and I think I've done all of them.

Consignment- you are lending the work, it remains your property until it's sold. The gallery doesn't have to lay out money for stock- it helps their cash flow. They might also not feel that responsible about moving the work (something new comes in and yours may go in the back). **You need a consignment agreement in writing** specifying things like how long, how much, when you get paid, who pays for loss and how much, who ships there and back, etc. There are good sample agreements available for adaptation.

Some galleries will only work this way. You decide if you want to be in those galleries.

Proforma is like COD but you get paid before you ship the work. It's useful with new galleries, ones with bad reputations, etc. Get a credit card number or let the check clear before you ship. (I don't see the point of COD anymore but if you ship COD, put

a tag on each carton for the value of that box's contents, and don't forget to add those charges to the shipping costs that the gallery pays).

Net 30 is common, it gives the gallery 30 days respite; they pay (theoretically) 30 days after receiving an invoice. Get references and check them.

As a matter of fact, get references for everyone. Find out which gallery in a given town is best for you. Check websites. Email the featured artists. Try not to sign exclusivity agreements but respect the galleries' needs for unique product. Stay in touch with the gallery but don't be a nudge.

My current preference is credit card **proforma**; I get paid before shipping and include the merchant charge in my wholesale price. I have no bookkeeping hassles, and don't have to worry about collections. The gallery gets 30 days to pay and frequent flyer miles as well. It's win-win IF I can talk them into it. I have told them "I can either make glass or do collections- not both, and I prefer glass". But I offer almost unlimited exchanges (they pay shipping both ways) to compensate for being such a hard-nose. And sometimes I do have to do it their way because I want to be in their gallery and that's the only way they do business.

Approaching galleries (cold calls)- Send out your wholesale packet, give them a week or two and call: "Did you get my information...?" Send out postcards of new work. I know my stuff would look great at Heller/ Riley/ Traver etc. but they may have other priorities. Be politely persistent but patient. It may take months or years or may never happen. There are lots of venues for our work. OK, so much for getting paid and galleries; let's talk about shows.

Wholesale vs Retail

Wholesale is easier- we'll start there. You rent a booth at a trade show (Buyers Market of American Crafts, ACRE, ACC, NYGift, regional gift shows), build a display, light the heck out of it, put out your samples with wholesale prices clearly marked, and have printed information ready to hand out *but only in exchange for a prospect's business card*. You've determined that your minimum order is 3 pieces or \$400 (or whatever) to discourage personal shopping and to encourage a store to put out a decent assortment of your work. At these shows personal appearance is important, as is an outgoing manner. I find this kind of sales interaction very rewarding because it's so easy. The buyers have stores, I've got stock. They pause in front of the booth- "Hi, how are you, let me show you my new work, where's your shop, do you sell glass? Why not? Let me tell you about this glass. I'll trade you my info for your card". And further, "What sort of glass do you carry, what colors are easy/hard sells for you? Price points? When would you like the order shipped? You might consider adding this piece to the order- it's popular and I'll take it back if it doesn't sell..."

Before you do a major show- visit and walk the show (and this applies to retail shows as well)- talk to exhibitors if they aren't busy with customers! Get last year's list and call several glass artists. Make sure you'll be in the right area- for example, at the

NYGift show you want to be in Handmade or Accents, not with the reps or the costume jewelry downstairs. If you can, recognize and avoid the Siberia sections. I think all of the shows I mentioned will happily give you a guest badge if you explain your mission- some have programs for prospective artists.

Don't expect any show promoter to do all the work- the good ones will do the best they can. You need to send out a mailing to your customers, or rent a mailing list, or do some advertising before a show. I'm not as diligent as I should be and I can see the difference when I've been too lazy or busy to promote my presence at a show. After a wholesale show, contact everyone from whom you got a business card and either thank them for the order (and confirm delivery dates and terms) or thank them for stopping in your booth- "let's stay in touch". An aside on delivery dates- don't promise anything you can't deliver- and if you end up not being able to fulfill an order, call and apologize as far in advance as you can. Offer free shipping or something on a later delivery date. You want to stay on very good terms with your customers. Keep sending them stuff- photos of new work, Christmas cards, whatever.

Now, I'd rather sell at trade shows- the transaction is simple. I get gallery exposure and I get to stay home most of the year and work. At retail shows I don't know if the customer/visitor is shopping for a gift, or for their own collection, for something to match the sofa, or just killing time, looking to steal ideas, looking to have a conversation, educating the kids, etc. It's work and I'm basically lazy and asocial.

But let's say that you can't produce enough to wholesale, or you just don't want to, or you like doing retail. There are retail shows at every level from the local church Christmas Bazaars to the Smithsonian Show and the Philadelphia Museum show. Prices will run from \$25 for a table to over \$3000 for a 10x15 at ACC Baltimore Winter wholesale+retail. Listings are in the Crafts Report, Art Calendar, Sunshine Artist or the GAS newsletter. Or try your local guild or arts center. The main point is to make sure you talk to people who did the show last year if you can't visit it yourself. Ask about the promoter, attendance, ease of set-up and break-down, what the general feeling among craftspeople was, what price points seem to sell best. For what it's worth, I have a bias against outdoor shows- I want a gallery setting with a level floor and lots of spotlights. No wind. No entertainment. No funnel cakes or corn dogs. As little jewelry and wearables as possible. No face painting.

Display- we obsess over display. In the next life I want to come back as a jeweler with an inflatable booth that fits on my motorcycle. There are lots of ways of showing your work effectively and safely. Simple pedestals work for me- black floor, black drapes (or white walls), and about 2000 watts of halogen spotlights. You see no distractions, just the glass. I'm learning to put less work out each time, give the work some room, make the work seem more precious. We don't need to show every size and color and "wait, I do this in this other shape too!" Put your best work out; that's what will sell first.

Walk the shows, look at displays, watch what catches peoples' attention, note what catches your eye (and why), look at traffic flow through a booth. Ease into the display cult with inexpensive ideas- folding shelving units, Sono tubes or painted cardboard cartons or homemade collapsible plywood pedestals and carpet remnants. When you plan the lighting for your booth, make sure the lights don't shine in your customers' eyes. The lights should also not be set up so that people looking at the work block the light on the work.

As you get more experience you'll narrow your choices and you won't have invested too much money in the wrong display.

I should disclose that one of my last booths cost me a bundle, but I've been at this for a while, and it was not all bought at the same time. Pipe and drape- \$300, puzzle mat flooring \$300, 16 Abstracta pedestal frames and plexiglass tops cost about \$2000, and the lights about \$1200. 4 hours to set up, 3 to break down, fits in a Minivan with lots of room left over for glass. I've recently gone to solid wall panels and folding plywood pedestals with the plexi tops. And now I've got to rent a commercial van to get to shows- there's another \$600.

Let's back up a little here- you have to get into the shows first.

Keep a calendar of deadlines and show dates and cancellation dates so you don't miss any.

Don't complain too much about the application fees- yes, there are shows that count on them for revenue, but it does cost a lot to send out applications, to screen slides, to send out notifications, etc. And besides, if you want to do the show you don't have any choice.

Photos- The first thing you need (after the work itself) is fabulous photos.

Applications typically ask for 5 slides, sometimes a booth shot too. Fill the frame with the piece, show it on a neutral background (not outside on the grass or the kitchen counter), light it so the work sings! A little digital cheating is ok for corrections.

Don't be afraid of showing a detail shot if it helps explain the work. Ideally the slides should show a coherent body of work that looks like it came from the same artist at roughly the same time and was shot on similar backgrounds by the same photographer. The jury doesn't need to know that you can do vases and plates and jewelry and... The promoter needs to know that you'll show approximately the same work that you applied with; that you are not going to show up with junk spread out on a sheet on the ground (hence the booth shot requirement). The bottom line is that your presentation should look professional.

Slide descriptions are important but all they want is clarification. "This piece was inspired by a sunset I saw while on vacation last year" is not necessary. "Glass bowl, 15" diameter x 4" high, fused and slumped, sandblasted" is all you need and all they want. The photos will tell the story.

A personal note (I hope you remember that these are all personal notes) on working with photographers- even after working with the same photographer for several sessions, I find the best photos result if I am there to help with set-up and to look through the camera viewfinder. It is a tedious, painstaking way to spend 3 or 4 hours but absolutely necessary. And plan on paying for a good photographer; up to \$75/hour or even more for a pro in a big city. Agree beforehand that if you're not satisfied with the results that they will be re-shot at no additional expense. I don't like paying for x number of slides; I don't want to get involved in piecemeal work, I want the photographer's full attention for as long as it takes. Bring lots of work to shoot just in case things go smoothly- it's the initial set-up that's the hard part. Once the shot is set, get blacks and whites too, they're good for publicity. Also- you own the images and negatives, not the photographer. It may take several tries- I had a great photographer who was incredible with my opaque work but couldn't seem to light my Ventana bowls for beans. I'm not convinced that digital is the way to go- I think there's a richness to film (I've been called a Luddite before)- but we often shoot both formats at the same time. If you only shoot one format, it's easy and inexpensive to transfer images from one to the other later.

Getting the envelope: If you get rejected, feel free to wallow in self pity for a short time but get over it quickly. Rejection comes hard- it's probably easier to get into medical school than the Smithsonian Show- but keep applying. There's often no rhyme or reason to the selection. You walk the show that turned you down and you wonder "what were they thinking?" and "how did that get in?" and "I should be here!" There's a story (I *think* it's true) about a glass blower who got first prize at one of the top shows in the country one year and got rejected the next. Juries change. Maybe the quality of applicants suddenly took a leap, either way. Frit happens, keep trying.

You should also be aware that in some shows a sizable number of artists may be "invited" or jury-exempt. A reputable show like Crafts Boston will disclose the fact that you'll be vying with all the other applicants for only 60% of the available slots, the balance given to "invitees".

Show etiquette- It's generally accepted that it's rude to watch TV in your booth, but reading novels is OK. Seriously, you're spending a small fortune for that 10x10 piece of real estate, not to mention the time involved etc. Every minute the show is open, your job is to sell.

A short story- at my first big wholesale show I sat in my chair and if anyone came in the booth I murmured something like "if you have any questions let me know". Pathetic. And so were sales. At the next show I got rid of the chair and was on my feet accosting anyone who even slowed down as they passed my booth, greeting and interacting and writing orders. The work hadn't changed. The booth was pretty much the same, but I was selling. It was a great show.

Bruce Baker has made a mini-industry of showing craftspeople how to use mainstream sales techniques. I felt foolish forking over \$15 for his tape and even

more foolish practicing the interactions on it but it has made a difference. We had to learn how to make stuff; now we have to learn how to sell it. I'm still working on it- closing a sale is the hardest part for me.

Thou shalt not enter thy neighbor's booth if she or he is talking to someone. If you're in his or her booth and a customer or looker comes in- leave. Just drop the conversation mid-sentence and go.

If you have to eat, try to keep it to finger food and avoid the onions.

If you do shows alone, be kind to your neighbors. Offer to cover for them for bathroom breaks and they'll do the same for you.

Don't obstruct anyone else's booth, keep your selling in your booth and out of the aisle, respect your neighbor's territory. This is all common sense.

Marketing

PR and Publicity-

You want to get good at these- they can be free.

Anytime you win an award, get into a show, introduce a new body of work, volunteer your time teaching glass in the local high school, repair a church window (I know, we all USED to do stained glass), etc., write up a press release and send it in. The NY Times may not be interested but your local paper usually will be. Save it in your pr file. You'll find that pr tends to multiply and gets easier with practice.

There are conventions for writing an effective press release- see the Crafts Report, Wendy Rosen's books, etc.

Publicity is much the same, except that you can buy it as well if you're impatient.

An aside here on hiring help: Ask yourself if the bookkeeping/cleaning/PR/anything-but-glass is what you want to be doing. Even if it comes out equal financially, how do you want to spend your time? Sure, I can do those things (some of them well) but my goal is to spend as much time in the studio as possible.

Laura Rosen, Wendy Rosen's sister, is a publicist in the DC area with reasonable rates who is familiar with the craft community. I used her for a specific project once and found that she did nothing I couldn't have done myself but it would have cost me more money and much, much more time. And I probably would have chucked the whole idea before I finished it. I had just won a major prize and wanted it known- she got me exposure and press that paid off for over 2 years. All for less than the cost of a small ad in American Craft. Send a packet of photos with bio, artist statement, and copies of the aforementioned PR to trade publications. Address the package to a specific editor (call and find out who handles "new on the scene" or the Home or Arts section). Find out how they usually want images sent. Follow up with a phone call- "did you get my stuff? Is there anything else I can send you? Do you expect to use it in the near future?" It's something like selling wholesale- they've got to fill space with features, you've got the news. If they print, don't be surprised to see your press release either used verbatim or changed so much that it might have been a restaurant review.

With advertising, generally you have to run an ad 3 or 4 times to get a decent return. However, show specials in American Craft, the Crafts Report, Niche Magazine, American Style, and so on, are probably worth my investment if I'm introducing a new body of work. It gets me visibility fast but it is expensive and I can't afford to do it often enough. You can try to get some of your galleries together to chip in on co-op advertising. Everyone gets a mention in a larger and more visible ad that highlights your work and the cost is shared or even covered by the galleries.

Mailings

I want to go back to mailings as part of PR: they are essential- as I said before, I don't always do them, and my shows suffer when I don't. You need to build and maintain your lists, divided by region and type (wholesale and retail). Postcards are cheap and can be gotten quickly. For the wholesale shows I try to do something to make it hard for the recipient to throw it away without opening it. I've made glass business cards (they cost \$5 each to make and mail, and I sent out 300 of them) and I've sent out transparent envelopes with 2 postcards inside back to back- very colorful.

To build your list- ask friends and relatives who travel to pick up business cards from any likely-looking shop or gallery. Most artsy communities publish a gallery guide- call the Chamber of Commerce for a copy. Go through the magazines (American Style, American Craft, Glass) and add the featured or advertising galleries to your list. GAS rents their list out to members. Troll the internet for galleries. For your retail list, ask anyone who shows interest in your work at shows to sign your book (get email addresses too).

Websales

I use my website for marketing and information, not direct sales. I'd much rather refer retail prospects to a nearby gallery and I try to link to the galleries I sell to. This is a good place to put in a plug for my webguy- Zino- who has also written on the subject for the Crafts Report. He's good, he's reasonable, and I can't recommend him enough. Go to the first page on my website and scroll down to the site credits to find him.

By the way, keep your site simple and dramatic, easy to download and navigate and make sure it's all about the work. I love my Bernese Mountain Dogs but if they want to be on the web, they can get their own site.

Catalogs-

I mentioned selling through catalogs. Look at Sundance or Guild's Artful Home or Chicago Art Museum or any of a vast number of catalogs. If you can visualize your work fitting in with their mix, AND YOU CAN MAKE THAT QUANTITY OF WORK, call the catalog and get the name of the buyer who specializes in table top or glass or jewelry or whatever. Talk to or email the buyer and ask if you can send images or samples for consideration. If you send samples, find out if you'll get them back- some catalog companies can't be bothered to return them. If their policy is to return

them, send a memo invoice with the samples. You should follow up but realize that they make take months to decide. The decisions are made by lots of committees in lots of meetings. Ask for references and check them. Terms and conditions will vary- some will have you ship quantities to them- they store and ship; some will have you drop ship to the mail order customer. Some catalogs, like some stores (most notoriously the museum shops) need to mark-up 3x or more instead of the usual 2 to 2.4. That may push your retail price too high and they will not be able to carry it.

The advantage to catalog sales is volume, the disadvantage (for me, at least) is making the same thing over and over.

I've been dealing with Guild.com's Artful Home catalog for the past 6 years very successfully. They email me an order and I confirm a ship date and send the piece directly to the customer. Guild pays for shipping. They pay me my wholesale price 30 days later. I had them put as much disclaimer in the catalog copy as they could reasonably print, just to give me some leeway in the production, to counteract the boredom potential. And a couple of times I found out just how far I could stray from that catalog photo- I've had pieces rejected by the customer for not being close enough to the photo in the catalog.

There are some odious practices common to the larger companies, be they catalogs or department stores: charge backs, advertising allowances, overstock returns, etc. Have a contract that spells everything out. Don't be afraid to say no.

Packing and shipping- It's an important part of selling, after all, the stuff has to arrive safely. UPS's website has info on how to pack so the goons they hire around Christmas can't ruin your day. I use several stock sizes of new cartons, large rolls of bubble wrap and sheet foam, upholstery foam scraps, lots of Styrofoam chips or peanuts, the best packing tape I can afford. Find a distributor who will supply you with a reasonable minimum, given your needs and storage capacity. Buying supplies from Mailboxes Etc. at retail is not cost-effective. You can make the rounds in your area and have people save cartons and packing peanuts for you- saves money and recycles too. Just be aware that the time involved in scrounging supplies may not be worth it.

The packing story is simple. Wrap your glass in bubblewrap. Put it in a small box and fill the voids with chips. Seal the box and put it in a larger box with at least 3" of chips on all 6 sides. Mound the chips a little higher than the top of the box so that you have to compress them to seal the box. Any puncture to the outside will probably not penetrate the inner carton, and there will be enough protection against shock when it falls off the conveyer belt 8 feet to the cement floor at the UPS depot. Insure it for full retail value (and make sure that whoever returns your work to you to does the same and packs it well).

I include packing supplies and time in my wholesale price and bill the customer for the exact UPS charge. Some people add 5% or more for handling in addition to the

shipping costs. I can't tell you which is better, just that those extra charges annoy me when I'm on the receiving end so I don't do it.

The Post Office is decent for small stuff. I haven't used FedEx because I can't get the insurance from them that I need. I also have not yet shipped common carrier- my work is still small enough for UPS- but I will have to look into that in the near future as my work gets bigger. I'm told that Greyhound Bus is an underused and effective option sometimes for larger work.

Back to the beginning-

I want to recap wholesale vs retail. Once you're aware of the costs involved in selling both ways you can make a decision to do the one or the other or combine the 2 in any of a number of ways. I used to knock myself out at retail shows, got frustrated at my low sales (while watching the public clean out the \$400 handmade sweaters across the aisle) and went exclusively wholesale for years. Then, I don't know what happened, maybe I got hopeful (or forgetful), maybe I got tired of talking to myself in the studio, or needed some feedback from the public, and I started doing selected retail shows as well as supplying my galleries. I settled into a comfortable mix- I did 2 to 4 retail shows and 1 or 2 wholesale shows a year. I got out of the studio to see the reaction people had to my work, the galleries were steadier sources of income, I played with new ideas and sold the experiments at the retail shows. It's funny, when the show applications come in, they're so full of promise; and then a month before the show I'm trying to think of an excuse not to go. Now I give my wife most of the applications and ask her what she thinks about going to Sarasota for a show. She throws them away for me.

You have to decide for yourself what works best for you. Actually it's not so much a decision as an evolution. And you are your own boss- you can change midstream if you want. Right now I'm planning on doing very few shows. Obviously the economy plays a part but I'm also taking some time off to make new work, to teach and to think about opening a public access studio (I should probably check my meds!).

Don't give up your day job yet unless you've got deep pockets or a supportive spouse. Get a body of work together and get a critique from a gallery or teacher or an experienced artist who you trust. Try a small local show or shop or gallery first. Don't give your work away cheaply.

Apply- to shows, exhibits, competitions, for grants, prizes, residencies.

Network- join guilds, arts councils, web boards, associations.

Renewal- get out of the studio at least once a year and take a class. Marketing, glass, art; it doesn't need to be immediately relevant.

Selling your work Resources-

Obviously warmglass.com for a wide range of experience, advice given freely (if sometimes contentiously).

I've found [The Crafts Report](#) incredibly useful for all kinds of advice on shows, business matters, photography, etc. in the past. Jones Publishing bought the magazine recently and it's been a bit thin lately.

www.jewelersresource.com is a wonderfully comprehensive site on business matters- contracts and the like- don't let the "jewelers" part put you off.

www.americancraft.com is Wendy Rosen's organization- wholesale shows, books, Niche and American Style magazines, the Arts Business Institute, discussion board.

www.glmshows.com runs the NY Gift show and others.

www.craftcouncil.org The American Craft Council- shows, insurance, credit card services, mentor program

www.modernpostcard.com postcards fast (there are other companies)

www.artcalendar.com

www.glassart.org Glass Art Society

www.artresources.com an eclectic list of galleries

www.jiverson.com Craftsmarts(tm), business info.

A few recommended books

Photographing your Craftwork by Steve Meltzer (The Crafts Report)

Making and Marketing Better Artwork by Milon Townsend (BlueMoon Press)

Art and Fear by Bayles & Orland (The Image Continuum)

Crafting as a Business by Wendy Rosen (Rosen Group)

At the prestigious Philadelphia Museum Craft Show each November, hordes of high school art students are let loose the first morning of the show, each clutching a clipboard, with instructions to find an artist and interview him or her. Their last question is usually "What advice would you give a young artist just starting out?" I answer "Marry well!" It's not a requirement but it sure takes some of the pressure off.

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