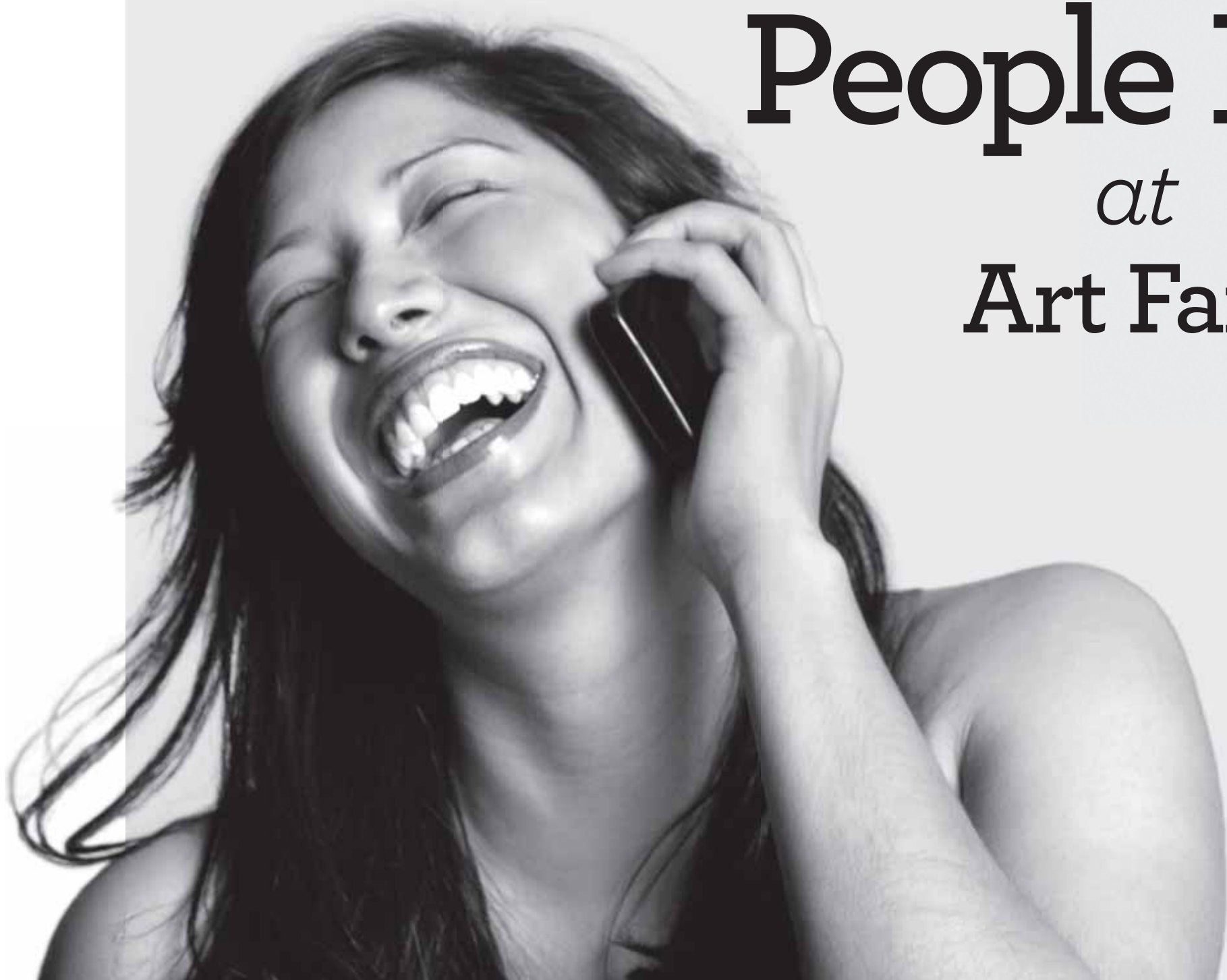


Dumb Things People Do at Art Fairs



By Howard Rehs

Our gallery started participating in art and antique shows more than 25 years ago, and over that time, I have witnessed some astounding behavior from people visiting our booth. This is a follow-up to my previous article, “Dumb Things People Say to Art Dealers.”

Don't Touch the Artwork

Yes, people seem to like to touch the art. At a show in Baltimore I was amazed, and shocked, as I watched a man bend down to look at a painting and proceed to run his fingers across the entire canvas.

Let me say this in the most polite way: the paintings in dealers' booths are their property; and unless they give you permission to touch them, don't! Personally, I do not want to see your fingers on my paintings—so until you own it, please do not touch it! Not only is it inappropriate, but if you also happen to damage the piece, are you ready to write a check?

Don't Be a Brochure Hog

These are people who walk into booths and take every piece of free printed material the gallery has (some take multiple

copies); and the worst part is that most of these people never look at the works on display. Some of them even wheel around little carts to hold all their spoils.

I have always wondered what people do with all of the material they collect? Decoupage? Wallpaper the living room? Frame and hang the images? Sell them at a local flea market? Someone has got to let me know.

Here is something these people need to keep in mind: all of that printed material costs the gallery money and each gallery only brings a limited supply to any particular show—so please don't become a brochure hog.

And if you must take the items, at least spend a few moments looking at the original works hanging on the walls—at least the dealer will feel there might be a reason why you took the brochures.

Don't Be a Chair Hog

These are people who have no interest in the works being shown, but take a seat in someone's booth and sit there for an awfully long time (I have seen people sit in booths for more than one hour).

In addition, many of them see nothing wrong with talking on their cellphones the entire time they are seated. Sorry, but that is just rude. That booth is the dealer's place of business; so if you need to take a break, most shows offer public areas where you can sit, rest, and even talk on your phone. In addition, I do not want to overhear intimate details of your or your friend's personal life—especially in such a con-



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finied space.

Don't Be a Space Hog

These are people who block the entire front of your booth in order to stop and talk to their friends (and I have seen people stand in front of a booth for 30 minutes or more). Again, please have a little courtesy for the dealer. Not only do the booths cost a great deal of money, but we are also only there for a short period of time. If you need to catch up with old friends, find one of the public spaces in the show.

Don't Try to Pitch a Sale

I know that many people who work in art-related industries think that going to a show is a great opportunity to see a whole group of dealers in one location—and that is correct. But what you should remember

is that the dealers have spent a lot of time and money to prepare for the show and want to spend their time talking with potential buyers and current clients. If you are going to stop by, then make it a quick hello—most of us do not want to spend 20 or 30 minutes (during the show hours) listening to a sales pitch.

Don't Take Photos Without Permission

While some dealers do not mind people taking photos of their works, others do. Do not assume that you can walk into someone's booth and photograph the works on display. It is important to ask before you start snapping away.

In addition, if they do give you permission, make it quick. I normally have no problem with people photographing our

works—though I often wonder what they are going to do with the images.

At the recent show in Baltimore a woman stopped by our booth and asked if she could photograph one of our works. I told her no problem. Well, the next thing I know, five women are standing in our booth, blocking a large section of the entrance, taking dozens and dozens of photos.

As I have stated before, dealers participate in shows in order to sell their works—not to create a photo-op. And if that dealer is kind enough to let you photograph a work, please make it quick!

Please Corral Your Children

Before I get into this one, please keep in mind that I love children and have some of my own. However, it is really important when visiting an art or antique show that you keep a tight hold on your youngsters.

Many times I have watched a toddler start running for a painting that is sitting on the floor, only to be scooped up moments before impact. In addition, try not to let your children bring toys that they may throw or swing—I have seen children playing with yo-yos or dragging their favorite toy behind them on a long string. I can tell you that is a recipe for disaster and maybe an unwanted expense.

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