Exhibition and Installation

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Different kinds of venues for displaying and/or selling artwork.

An outdoor art fair.

Individual booths for each artist, artist pays a booth fee but usually keeps all proceeds from selling at retail prices (vs. wholesale or gallery/consignment prices).

Generally artist mans the booth, all day, every day (usu. 2-3 days)
Art fair in a city.
Hard to know what will sell, and what to have more of (lower price points? higher price points? paintings? photographs? drawings?)
Potentially lots of ‘looky-loos’ but also possible to make a lot of connections with people who may make purchases in the future.
Detail of a booth.
Artist must price work, know ahead what you will take - people love to haggle.
Cash sales can be shielded from IRS so possible discounts for cash buyers?
Know sales tax rules for your state.
Have an invoice book to keep track of sales.
Another option: showing in a commercial business space that is not an art gallery per se. Cafes are popular alternatives. Usually artist just leaves contact info - cafe (or whatever business) tends to not deal with your sales or promotion of your work. Can be good if you have a lot of work that you just want to be seen. Social media makes it much easier to advertise where to see your work in person. Generally no ‘opening’ event.
Another cafe.
May be either ‘solo’ or ‘group’ shows, but rarely ever ‘curated’, so it may be a mixed bag of artwork, although primarily it’s always 2-D work.
Sometimes also office lobbies, bars, salons and spas may also show artwork this way.
Group show in an alternative gallery.

‘Alternative’ gallery often means artist-run or non-commercial. Selling the work on display is not a primary source of income, if a source at all. Space may be associated with an artist collective, or artist studio building or residency program.

Exhibitions may be based around a theme, or a genre or a particular group of artists. Artist may not have much say about how or where the work is displayed. Solo shows may not be a high priority.

Actual gallery space may be a bit rough around the edges.

Gallery deals with actual sale. Different arrangements for pricing, and what percentage gallery would keep. Sometimes none at all (rare), but generally less than 50% of sale price.
Group show in a commercial gallery.
Generally a first step in a relationship with a commercial gallery, helped along if your work sells! Artist may not have much say about how or where the work is displayed. Gallery staff deal with all sales and promotion; gallery keeps 50% of sale price. Know what you need to make from selling an artwork, pad that a bit, and gallery will double it to arrive at sale price.
Promotion for a group show. Often a little anonymous due to the number of artists involved, but this often can guarantee a good crowd at an opening. More people (and other artists) will see your work.
Another group exhibition in a commercial gallery space. Note the sightlines- artists in group shows usually don’t have much say in what is shown next to what. In this case, a sculpture blocks a view of several 2-D works, and may even change how you perceive the 2-D works, for better or worse.
Exhibition in a commercial venue in an ‘alternative’ space, or a pop-up space. Here in a what was once a home, sometimes in derelict institutional spaces (hospitals, prisons, schools- PS1 in NYC a shining example). The space can have a bearing on how or what the work is. The building’s former use or architecture can influence how the work is ‘read’ or interpreted. The artwork is not so distinct or separate from its environment.
Your work is exhibited through/ with a gallery at an art fair.
Art fairs: kind of similar to the first slides except here, it is galleries that are setting up booths, not individual artists. Gallery dealers, usu. in consultation with the artist (that the gallery represents), will select a range of work. It may be the responsibility of the artist to make sure that no other gallery is also planning on showing their work at the same fair. Great exposure to serious art collectors. Galleries pay high booth fees so often show expensive work that they are behooved to sell.
Solo show at a commercial gallery.
Even galleries have a hierarchy, but a solo show is always more prestigious for the artist no matter where it happens. Usually these are 1-2 years in the making.
Big commitment on the part of the gallery, so again, motivated to sell your work. Gallery organizes an opening, promotes your work, tries to place it in private or public (museum) collections. Maintains an inventory of your work at all times, even if your work may not currently be on display.
Gallery shot, but this could also be in a museum, the next step up from a prestigious gallery exhibition. Gallery (or museum) would have staff that deal with placing, hanging, installation, lighting and labelling of artwork. Also, any packing and shipping of sold work. Usually very professional operations, although never any guarantees that galleries will pay on time!
Looking at artwork in very particular exhibition spaces and how that might influence how you see the work.

Takashi Murakami *Flower Matango* 2006

Here shown in the Hall of Mirrors at the Palace of Versailles. Obvious contrast to the French Baroque architectural style, yet the lushness of the surface relates to the luxe/lushness of the space. Both are over-the-top. Hall of Mirrors also all about ‘surface’; Murakami famous for ‘superflat’ movement, pervasive lack of depth.
Takashi Murakami *Flower Matango* 2006
Same piece in a space with other Murakami pieces. Almost disappears, camouflaged, doesn’t stand out the same way, lack of contrast. Instead, an endless field of cartoon-y, stylized floral motif. Cutesy, but also fetishized, a little ‘off’
David Hammons.
In the famed performance Bliz-aard Ball Sale (1983), documentation of which is on view at both the Studio Museum and the Grey Art Gallery, Hammons stood on the street alongside other vendors on Cooper Square, selling snowballs in different sizes (from XS to XL) to passersby. By assigning value and appearing to seek profit from a commonplace, short-lived object, Hammons draws attention to both the arbitrary nature of the art market and the precarious financial conditions of many working-class New Yorkers.
Taken from Radical Presence, NY website.
David Hammons *Concerto in Black and Blue* 2003
A continuation of pieces involving blue/ blue light. Here, gallery is completely darkened, gallery visitors take a blue flashlight and navigate the cavernous space. No actual 'objects', a performance, an experience facilitated by the viewers, yet in keeping with his pattern of disruptions, of calling out the art world.
Maurizio Cattelan *All* 2011 retrospective/ survey exhibition at the Solomon R. Guggenheim Museum in NYC. Very distinct architecturally iconic space designed by Frank Lloyd Wright. Spiral ramp, usually the exhibition spaces but some artists have used the large atrium. Here, Cattelan has suspended every one of his works - lack of reverence, preciousness, but at the same time, made visible common themes (incl. lack of reverence, preciousness).

Recently, same artist installed a solid gold toilet in one of the public restrooms.
Another view of All
Ron Mueck  Boy  1999
Oversized but hyper-realistic sculpture. Context is needed to give a sense of scale.
This is at Aros Museum in Aarhus, Denmark. Lots of space around sculpture, boy looks like he could stand up and walk away, doesn’t seem threatened or threatening.
Ron Mueck *Boy* 1999 in a different exhibition venue. Lower ceilings seem ominous, pillars almost imply some containment, no obvious daylight, boy seems somehow trapped, or exploited or possibly malevolent.