

# LIVE SWAPS 101

*how to get started*

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So, you've been trading Artist Trading Cards (ATCs) online for a while and want to spread the word locally to get a group of artists together and do some informal trading. Seems pretty simple and straightforward, right?

But where should you start? How does one go about getting people hooked on trading little pieces of art with one another? What does it take to get people together in the first place? Whether you live in a large city or a small town, there is a potential to get a good mix of individuals interested in socializing around the concept of art.

The thing to keep in mind is that with a wide variety of participants, you have a wide variety of art. This has its pros and cons: some art will be great, some not so great - much like online trading. So if you are one of those people who sets high standards for the art they receive, live trading might not be for you. If, however, you are open to all kinds of art and just want to enjoy being around a bunch of people who like being creative, then live trading is definitely a wonderful thing!  
To establish if there is going to be any

interest, the first order of business might be to have an Introduction to ATCs meeting – a workshop or demonstration perhaps. Find a venue willing to host it for free – a town hall, grange, public library, campus facility. As this can fall under a community-based event, most venues are willing to host these types of functions free of charge. Once you have established a location, promote your workshop using community forums, bulletin boards, press releases and whatever free promotions are available to get the word out and fill seats. Post flyers at coffee houses, cafes, bookstores, college libraries or anywhere else creative people hang out. Also, don't be afraid to approach professional/serious artists. I will address that in depth in the next article – Talking Up ATCs.

For the demo, bring blank cards, supplies, samples of your work, and a good selection of other work from your collection so people can participate first hand and have the opportunity to do a little trading. Try and make your workshop as broad reaching as possible. Any kind of media can be addressed. If you

are a professional artist, don't be so high-brow as to scare potential participants away. Likewise, if you are a collage artist, don't leave out the traditional media. Make sure you have a wide variety of cards in your displays and samples.

Create some literature to hand out at your demonstration including something that people can take home with a little info about ATCs: the size, acceptable media, websites to check out, as well your contact information and all about the live trading sessions you will be hosting, such as time and place. This does not have to be a four color, full bleed, printed on coated 90lb stock brochure – keep it simple and cheap. Just be creative. Be sure to have a sign-in sheet for people to fill out so you can get the names and email addresses of interested attendees for future communications.



Look forward to our next issue when  
I discuss "Talking Up ATCs!"