

Please consider these things when using Zapplication to Apply

By Leo Charette (Update January 2018)

With over 700 art shows using Zapp, artists applying to multiple shows will eventually interact with the Zapp system; it is unavoidable. The purpose of this article is to share a few artists' data issues we have encountered when using the Zapplication (Zapp) system.

For us at *An Occasion for the Arts*, the Zapplication system is used only at the beginning stages of our process. The system is helpful for:

- Collect artist information and artwork
- Manage the jury process
- Communicate with artists who have applied
- The Zapp system also provides an enterprise solution for selling products: booth spaces, lunches, etc. and we take advantage of this.

The Zapp system does not print nametags, booth plaques, labels, or generate statistics, etc. In other words, when it comes to managing the details of a show, most of the artists' data must be downloaded and imported into a workflow outside of the Zapplication system: e.g. in Excel or like us, a custom database.

Here are issues we have encountered:

1) Who am I? An Artist, A Collaborator or An Associate?

Three classifications of people are distinguished in Zapplication data structure but there seems to be confusion among some artists and show organizers as to what these distinctions mean and they impact a show:

- Artist = the individual **who creates the art**
- Collaborator = **an individual who creates the art in collaboration with another artist...** in other words, two artists in partnership, both are equal.
- Associate = **an individual who helps the artists but does not create the art...** they might manage the business, help sell at shows, or maybe even mat and frame artwork

Some artists list their name as both artist and collaborator. When it comes to creating art, you can only be one classification, either you're the artist or the collaborator. Listing your name as both artist and collaborator requires manual editing before nametags, or various publications can be created, to avoid duplication.

A related problem is placing the artists and collaborator in one name field. This is to correct a problem caused by many show organizers who miss the collaborator even though he or she is specified. To work around is for some artists to list both the artist and collaborator in the artist's name field (e.g. John and Jane Doe) and leave

the collaborator fields blank. Please don't do this; again it is a problem that requires manual editing before information can go to print. It is important to use the Zapp system the way it's created! Yes, shows need to recognize the collaborator and artist equally, we understand, but work to educate and correct the problem with shows that are at fault by sending a gentle reminder before the start of a show.

2) All CAPS; all lower case; and SomeThing in the MiDdLe

Please only capitalize the letters that need it and don't use all CAPS or all lower case. In order for a show to produce: nametags, reports, or print a lists for publications, booth plaques, etc., artist's information needs to be formatted. What this means is a show has to manually correct the data every single time they want to use downloaded data or publications and websites, looks like crap. About 10% of the applications that I get are downloaded with this type-case problem. For a show that has a 1000 applications, that's 100 applications where each inconsistency must be manually corrected. Yes, it definitely gets you noticed but not in a good way.

3) Don't create different profiles when submitting multiple applications

In the early years of Zapp, an artist would need to create multiple artist profiles (accounts) if he or she wanted to submit multiple applications and apply to different categories within the same show (e.g. pottery and sculpture). That is no longer the case; most shows allow each artist to submit multiple applications under one Zapp profile. Of course many shows (like AOFTA) will allow for multiple applications but only one per artistic category.

A problem we encounter is several artists submit multiple applications using different account within the Zapp system. For shows like *An Occasion for the Arts*, which keep a history of artist's participation over years, this creates multiple accounts for the same artist - often results in multiple mails going to the same artist. If a show allows multiple applications, it is better to have one artist's profile (account) in the Zapp system and submit multiple applications to a show from that one account.

4) To add black borders or to not add black borders, that is the question?

In the help section on the Zapp site, it seems that adding black borders to make your image a 1920 pixel square is no longer necessary. From the Zapp help section:

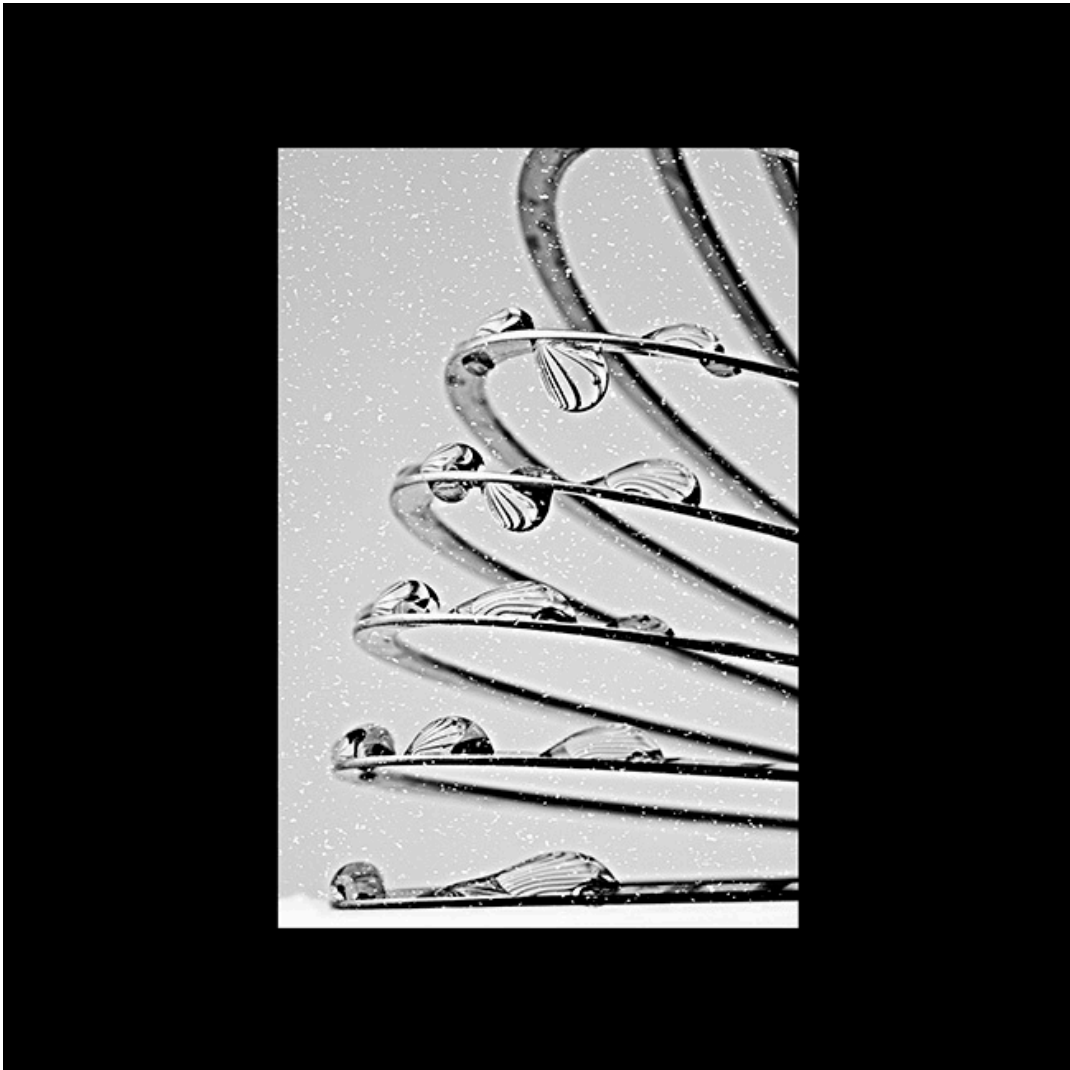
Black borders are no longer required. A majority of the events using ZAPP® jury using the monitor method, which displays artists' images on a black background. The system will automatically add black borders to images that are submitted to events using the projected jury method.

Recommended Dimensions: 1920 pixels on the longest side. Note: To assist artists who do not have images that are 1920 pixels or larger, the system will also accept images that are at least 1400 pixels on the longest side.

The problem is once an image is uploaded to your profile, you will probably submit it to some shows that use projected jury method and others that use a monitor jury method. On a projected jury, Zapp will take your image and convert it a 1920 pixel square by adding the black borders and then re-saving as a jpg. This will result in some lost of detail. As a photographer, I don't want Zapp to mess with my image. I spend a great deal of time insuring that it is exactly as I want it (correct sharpening, white balance, etc.) before uploading. I encourage you to do the same; upload your image so it is a 1920 pixel square with black borders added on the shortest sides.

Though the Zapp system allows it do not upload an image that is smaller than 1920 pixels even if the system allows a 1400 pixels image. For projected juries, the Zapp system will convert the small image to 1920 pixel by adding black borders to all four sides of the image to insure consistency. The result is your image will appear much smaller to a juror than images from artist who uploaded the proper size 1920.

Here is an example of what your image will look like once converted (not to your advantage):



Show administrators cannot download artist's images directly from the system; images need to be requested from Zapp support and then set by a Zip file or CD. What Zapp provides are images that have been converted to the projected jury format. We get some images like the one above, a smaller image surrounded by heavy black borders. You can see this by visiting some of the artist's profiles in our 2017 online artist directory at aofta.org

To be clear, the border issue is not a problem for us during our jury process. We use a monitor approach to jurying artist's applications. Jurors view images from a computer monitor, so they see exactly what you uploaded. It becomes more of an issue when promoting artists on our Facebook page, web site and in various publications.

In closing the Zapplication system is here to stay and overall it is fantastic. No more sending slides with red dots and arrows. The Zapp organization is good; they are continually improving the systems and effectively supporting their customers. However, as artists, you need to pay attention to a few things when using the system and this will certainly assist everyone involved. I hope this helps.