

INITIAL CONTACT

Jamie and I only really met each other at indoor soccer games or parties generally, when I was with my ex. So really, we don't know each other incredibly well as he wasn't one of the regulars that hung out with the group, just a distant acquaintance almost. He contacted me prior to our exhibition, so I invited him and his business partner, Mike. He came along to our exhibition proving his interest in wanting me to work with him, but stressed that not much money is involved as they're only just setting up the gallery. We then coincidentally met again later that night at a bar, so we had a few drinks together.

MEETINGS

Meeting with Jamie. Tuesday, 5 September, 5pm at the gallery

This is the first official meeting with Jamie and it was mostly to talk about what the job entails and establishing a deadline and so forth. The space was relatively empty, as they're still trying to renovate the place. We were seated on some couches around a coffee table and he started explaining what was needed.

He showed me some horrendous ideas that he and the artists came up with for the invites. I showed my reluctance and he appreciated that I was being honest and he admitted that he knows nothing about design so he was prepared to leave the reins to me. We spent some time mulling over some images from both artists and he pointed out that the artists had some preference over which images to use. He mentioned that he wanted the invites to be entirely different for every show they have. This was just to be different to other galleries who mostly had a consistent brand throughout their invites.

I made him explain what the show was about so I could get a sense of how to approach the design and to see what would be appropriate to the show. He mentioned that they both reference religious themes with undertones of gothic aesthetics. It was a little weird for my liking but I let it slide. We started throwing some ideas around and in the end decided that looking in the direction of prayer cards would be appropriate to the themes and aesthetic of the show. So I said I'd investigate this idea more.

We drifted off from talking about the job to talking about other unrelated things. The beauty of this relationship is that we are acquaintances from a while back, so it was purely informal and less awkward to talk about anything else. It happened to be the graduating painter's exhibition opening night that evening, so we proceeded to the opening with his girlfriend after the meeting.

Further discussions after the meeting

He mentioned that he needed 1000 invites done, 500 for each artist. I thought this was a ridiculous amount but he expressed that it was what the artists wanted. Talk of screenprinting then surfaced somehow. He wanted me to screenprint the decorative border (that I had mentioned would be appropriate to the design). For some reason, I stupidly agreed, thinking it wouldn't take me too long. The sheer number of sheets I had to screenprint didn't quite register in my head at the time. I didn't expect to get paid much for the job of designing the invites—but I requested that I get paid additionally if I were to screenprint them.

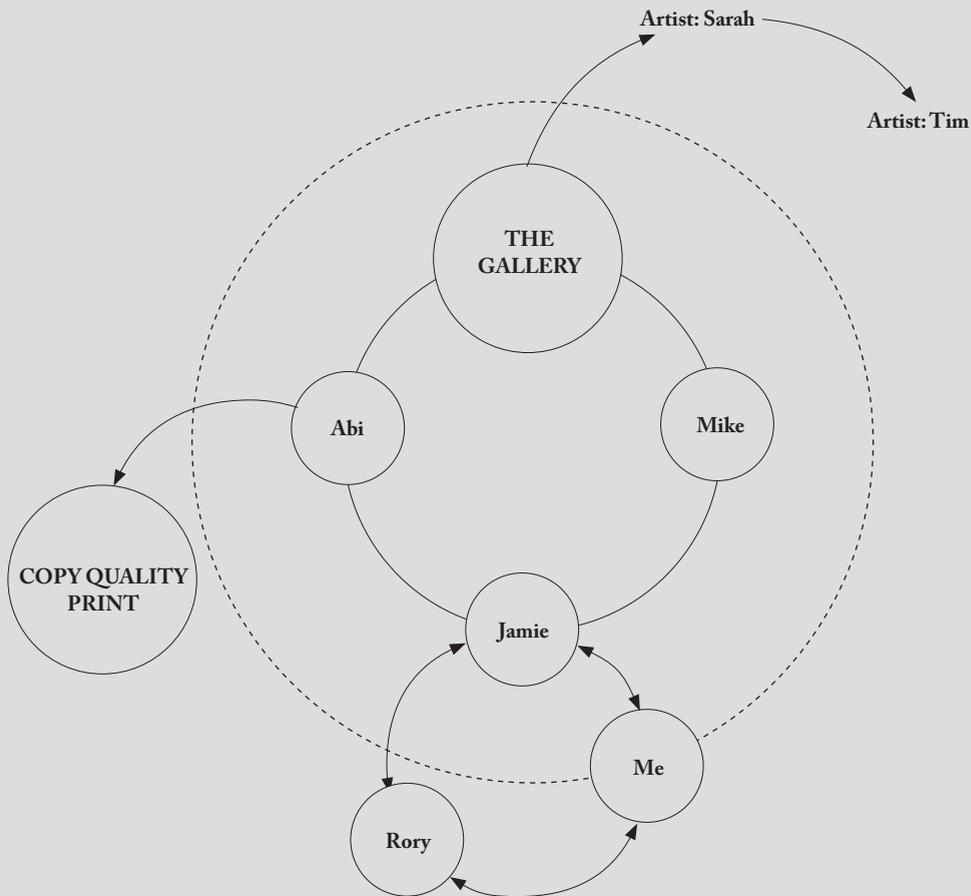
Meeting with Jamie and Abi, Friday, 8 September, 2pm at the gallery

We decided to catch up and see how the progress was going, and so his girlfriend, Abigail, who happened to be the co-curator, joined in the meeting and the three of us sat down to talk about my designs. We were gathered in a small kitchen area which was unusually cluttered, almost to the point of feeling claustrophobic (they live in the gallery space, which had their living area partitioned off from the gallery space).

They approved the designs with only some minor changes to the details, but they were expecting to send it to print later that afternoon. I told them that it was impossible because I needed time to set up the files and that would take a good few hours. They had a great sense of urgency to get the invites distributed at the start of next week. I told them to send it to print first thing on Monday and I would screenprint them on Monday night (little did I know that this was an incredibly short amount of time to screenprint 60 sheets of A3). I advised them that it was unusual to distribute invites for a show three weeks prior to the opening and there was actually no real urgency to distribute them this early, but they expressed that the artists really wanted them this way and it wasn't really up for negotiation.

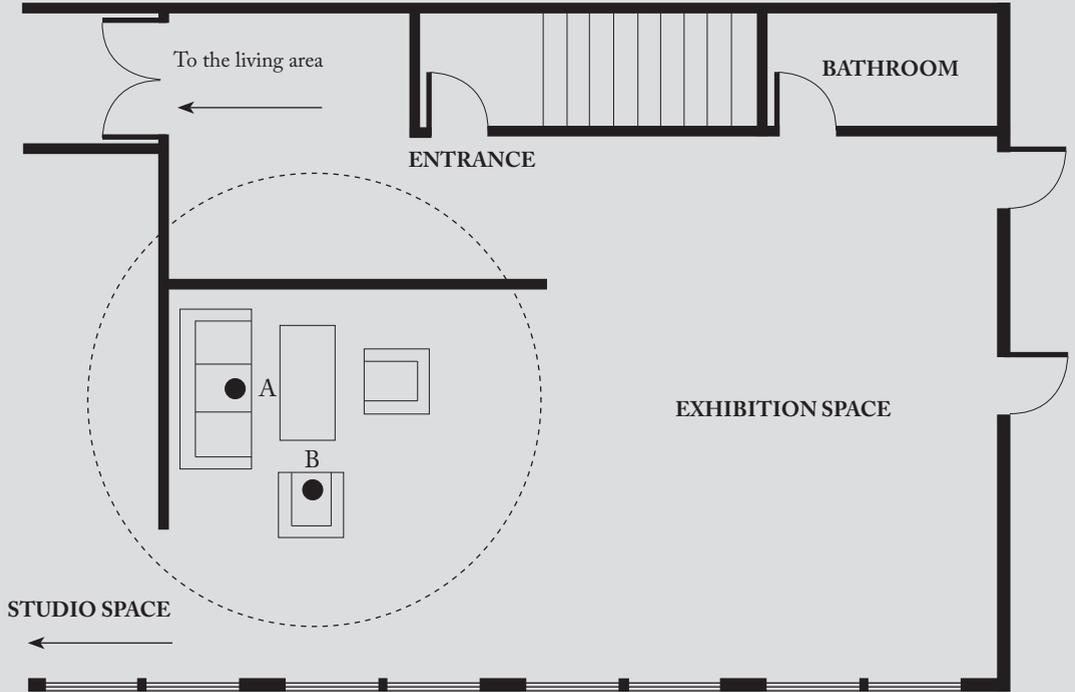
INTERNAL AND EXTERNAL RELATIONSHIPS

Interactions between various participants in the process



MEETING AREA

Floorplan of the gallery space



- A Jamie
- B Me
- Meeting Area

OVERWHELMING STRESS

Most of the time you'd think a simple job like this would require little time—but this job turned out to be a nightmare of a job. I started screenprinting on Monday night from about 6pm to 1am. In that space of time I managed to screenprint only about fifteen sheets in total (I might add that I'm not a good screenprinter and I was wishing that I didn't agree to screenprint in the first place). There were about sixty sheets altogether so I was bracing myself for an exhausting process. I texted Jamie, informing him that it was impossible for me to screenprint everything by tomorrow and I requested a pay-rise for the amount of hours I was spending. I told him I wasn't aware that the process was going to take this long. He replied by saying he can't do much about the pay as it was the artists who are paying me not him. So he said the best he could do was to talk to them and see how they feel about paying me more. At this point, I was completely exhausted with the process and was feeling incredibly annoyed (to put it mildly) that he didn't understand the process of screenprinting. I was tempted to say—if you think it's so easy, do it yourself!

So the next evening, I was screenprinting from 4pm to 12am. Most of them actually didn't turn out that great either, but I was completely over it by the end. Although this job has been the shortest job (in terms of time), it has been the most frustrating job because of dealing with the technicalities of screenprinting and the fact that my client was unappreciative of the time-consuming process. And his demand for great urgency on the job when there was essentially no need for it. Additionally, the negotiations with pay didn't go as smoothly either, which resulted in me being slightly under-paid.

Furthermore, just to add to the frustration, I had suggested a way of tying the invites together (as they requested that the two artists' invites get attached in some way), with a piece of black satin ribbon. I specifically advised that they make a very small slit at the centre of the cards and slide the ribbon through the slit, looping it around and securing it with some glue. I initially told them that tying it together wasn't necessary at all but they argued for the need to get it tied. I received the final invites in the mail, only to discover that they were tied with gold string with a hideous hole punched through them. I was highly disappointed with the fact that they disregarded my suggestions.