



Thoughts on selecting the Top 50 pieces of art from Round 1 of the 2014 Global Talent Search

by Lilla Rogers

I spent many hours carefully viewing each entry, and as I did so, I felt like the luckiest person on the planet.

I took my responsibility very seriously and examined each piece with a feeling of great respect for the artist's work.

The range of styles and approaches were a delight. You'd think that an assignment on terrariums would produce the same compositions, but no.

Everyone clearly brought their A-game. You could see that the artists had spent a huge amount of time working on the pieces.

Important reminder: I am one person with my own constellation of taste, agency needs, and body of clients. I am looking for our next artist to represent; I am not an arbiter of your worth as an artist.

Having said that, I know that many of you will be interested to know more about my thought process when selecting the Top 50 for Round 2 (the Semi-Final), so here are the key things.

What I looked for



Formal considerations of design: Design – balanced composition; Color – rich, varied colors, perhaps an unusual color or combination



Quality: Every bit is considered and cared for from head to toe



Drawing/styling: Each item, such as an individual leaf, was well designed and brought to the next level. For example, rather than just a plain old leaf, perhaps it was a delicate fern or a deeply veined, highly lobed leaf.



Taste level: Is anything in the piece not up to snuff? Not what my clients would expect from my brand?



Style: Does it say “you” and not someone else or seem generic? Do I get an immediate vibe of who you are, such as soft and watercolor, or hip and quirky, or painterly? Can I see myself promoting you as a unique brand?



Maturity: I’m looking for a mature style. For example, is the art strong but the lettering weak, or the drawing is great but the colors less interesting? Does the artist need another year to get even more fabulous?



Marketability: Can I envision this piece as wall art, or a journal? Can I see my clients licensing it? Does the image pop on my screen? Is it hard to “read” and am I missing important details or texture? Will my clients “see” the piece on our site, in promotions, etc?



Talent: Can I sense that the artist has the drawing ability to execute a wide array of imagery so that they are able to handle a busy and varied career?

The selection process



First, I get cozy with a nice cup of coffee and plenty of hours to narrow down all the submitted images as per the above. This year we had a staggering 999 images submitted.

Though it is difficult, I am able to narrow the images down to 103. This means that these 103 pieces are all potentials for being put forward to round two.



However, due to our competition policy, I must now narrow the number of images down to 50. This gets tough. I may blow a piece up large to see detail, or jump to the artist’s website to see more. This gives me more information to help me decide.



Then I bring in my team to help me narrow the images down to 50. These are the kinds of questions we ask ourselves to decide which to eliminate and which to keep:

- Does the work look too similar to one of my artists?
- Upon closer examination, is there something that is weak but could be improved with another year of work?
- Is the work gorgeous, but not for the markets we sell for?
- Is the work gorgeous, but not for my clients?
- Would another agent be a better fit?

We take images out and add some back in until we reach the magic number of 50 and have our Semi-Finalists.

If you made the cut, you are clearly deserving of the honor! Be very proud of all that you have achieved in the course of growing your art over what I'm sure has been many years.

If you did not get selected for round 2, please do not use this as an opportunity to berate yourself.

Here's what I want you to know. You have no way of knowing that perhaps you made the first cut. Maybe you were one of the 103. This is how competitions work. You don't know if you were very, very close. You took an important step in your career by submitting. It's a numbers game. I'm telling you that you must stay at it, and try again, and keep growing.

A sincere thank you to each and every one of you,

XO
Lilla