

Questionnaire
For Potential IDAL™ Board of Directors Nominees

Name Patricia Swanson

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EMAIL NOTE: please clearly mark the SUBJECT LINE, I don't have spam but delete 300 junk emails twice a day, and don't want to delete accidentally.

Background Questions

-What is your employment history? Please include all relevant positions, including self-employment and give a brief description of your job responsibilities.

1978-1981: Worked as a **scene painting apprentice** at Barter Theater, The Williamstown Theater Festival, The Virginia Shakespeare Festival and at the College of William and Mary, while getting **BA in Theatre and Speech at William and Mary.**

1983: Continued some scene painting while attending **The British American Acting Academy**, while on full scholarship for (and earning) the **Master Certificate** in Acting in London, England.

1984-1992: Worked as an actor in Regional Theaters, Off-Broadway, generally in NYC and the East Coast. Successfully completed voice over narrations of over 40 documentaries, industrial films and commercials. **(Relevant, as I'm a trained public speaker and feel at ease in front of audiences.)**

1992-1995: Worked at **Business Manager** at Nihon Language Services: and after diligently doing damage control, took the company from having 10 freelance interpreters, to having over 65 freelancers. I wrote numerous proposals, interacted with clients from all over the world and arranged transportation to and from the US, Tokyo, and other venues with complicated scheduling conflicts solved. We provided interpreters and translators for large-scale legal cases, scientific conferences, medical procedures, other technologies, and one-hour meetings in Tokyo. I was responsible (because of my damage control skills) for increasing gross sales from **60 K per annum to 1.5 million per annum.** – And did this while painting faux finishes in NYC part time, and raising children.

1987- 1998: Part time and full-time work, **painting faux finishes in NYC.**

2003-2008: Part time **teaching** of Faux Finishing classes through **Pima College Extension Program.** Taught Faux Marble, Faux for Walls and other classes to over 500 students receiving a unanimous "5-star Excellent" ratings from every student (as well as the then director of the program, who took the class out of curiosity because of the kudos he heard.)

1998 - Present: Owner/Artist of **Finishes First** in Tucson, Arizona. Managing, teaching numerous assistants, painting full time, working with designers, architects, and clients. Designing a huge spectrum of original finishes throughout Arizona and in other states. In most years we have grossed over 100K in sales. www.finishesfirst.com

2017: Painting titled: Circle of Fifths was placed on permanent display at the Tucson Musician's Museum, Tucson, AZ

2019: Present: Built and own a small sound studio in my house (great for possible future podcasts or possibly recording information for IDAL. I am a union member of the Screen Actors Guild and Actors Equity Association, and experienced in recording and editing voice overs.

2005: Present: Was vetted and accepted as a member of **The International Decorative Artist's Salon**. As a member I have exhibited and demonstrated my work to the public at Salon conferences: Philadelphia PA, Aarhus Denmark, The Hague, Netherlands, Chicago IL, Bergamo Italy, Versailles France, Atlanta GA, Tokyo Japan, Seattle WA, Lecce Italy, St. Petersburg Russia, NYC, Leeuwarden Netherlands, Chamonix France, and Bergen Norway.

2020: Awarded "**Decorative Artist of the Year for Arizona**" by Build Magazine.

-Please describe any relevant educational history.

Aside from two college degrees (mentioned above) I've completed several business classes at Pima College; and have studied Faux Finishing at the following studios: The Day Studio, The Faux Institute, Faux Effects Studio, Faux Works, Dundean Studio, Faux Masters, The Finishing Source; and also attending a lengthy professional artisan's class at Atelier Nadai in France. Over the years I've had the pleasure of studying with Master Artists: Patrick LeHayne, Michel Nadai, Carolina D'Ayala Valva, and Pierre LeFumat. I've also taken numerous classes at four IDAL Conventions; and attended dozens of professional lectures at Salon gatherings.

-Have you ever served on a committee? Which ones? What was your position and what were your responsibilities?

No, but I was raised in a family of state politicians in Virginia. I campaigned throughout my childhood when my father, cousins, and uncles ran for state offices. As my father was also a State Commander of the American Legion (later he held a prestigious position on their National Finance Committee as well) and my mother, a State President of the American Legion Auxiliary – I often attended and assisted them in committee meetings at national conventions (mostly during high school.) These meetings gave me a sound education in old-fashioned parliamentary procedure.

-Have you ever served as officer in an organization? Which ones? Which offices and what were your responsibilities?

I was Sargent of Arms, at my high school during my senior year, and president of my Tenants Association at my apartment building in NYC for several years (during which time we hired an attorney to deal with landlord issues.) ☺

-Have you ever served on a board of directors? Which ones? What was your position and responsibilities?

I have not served on a board of directors... I do own three incorporated companies, however and understand general procedures.

-Which business skills do you believe to be your main strengths?

I'm very detailed (type A personality) in planning all activities. I usually have a plan A, supplemented by plan B and C and thus am creative in damage control and solve problems quickly. But even though I'm a type A personality, I know when to let go of control of a situation when we have done our best (usually this involves plan C and loosening up dreams of perfection.) I write very detailed and specific communication letters/emails (my husband is a retired attorney – and his expertise is useful in tricky situations.) I am direct and forthright in communication (without rancor or being too personal.) I use my frank yet diplomatic communication skills when someone needs to hear bad news (I've never been a fainting violet)– and have found that this engenders trust in my employees and others.

-Write a brief personal history.

See everything I've written so far... 😊

Board Service

-Do you have the time and flexibility to commit to serving on the IDAL Board of Directors for three (3) years?

Yes, not easy – but given my age, I'm slowing down my painting business and will make time.

-What qualifications do you believe are most important for a Board of Directors nominee?

Direct, detailed and forthright communication skills – willingness to learn and to work hard. I'm interested to hear from other board members, as to advice and suggestions of what past Education Chair holders did (and didn't do.) At all times I'm thinking 3 to 5 steps ahead, and solving problems when they occur. Add to this joyfulness, humor, and a sense of dedicated empathetic service to all the members of IDAL.

-Describe what personality or character traits you have that would contribute to leadership and/or teamwork on the Board of Directors.

See above, it's in the last question... those are my leadership skills.

-What skills, talents, experience, etc. would you bring to IDAL?

For this particular position, Education Chair: I have a large working knowledge and friendship with numerous qualified teachers of the decorative arts in both the US and Europe. Some teachers might offer video lectures at a conference, even if we can't bring them here from Europe. For instance: at one of the Salon gatherings during Covid – some of the lecturers gave lectures over Zoom for the entire membership... we could add something like this to Convention.

For my particular skills, see my answers to the other questions.

-What three or more questions would you ask membership in order to better serve them?

We need to know the goals of every member... we need to seek ways that help with these goals. From the board: I'd like to know the pitfalls and achievements of past Education Chair board members. I want to know the history of what's been done right and the difficulties encountered.

-Is there a particular goal you would like to see accomplished in the next three years? How would you recommend this goal be achieved?

I understand what makes great teachers great; and want to bring a larger number of skills-oriented teaching to the conventions. I think members would also need more encouragement to take these skills-oriented classes. I know the "fast-sample-board classes" are the hot tickets that sell at IDAL, but if interspersed with skills-oriented classes that are promoted and encouraged correctly, we can get students to pursue them. Additionally, we will need to find a way to reach out to art-school students (many of whom have not yet considered a career in the decorative arts.) We need to get younger students interested in these careers. Business classes are also needed every year, and evening lectures on running a business would be important (and continuing the excellent new one-day program for newbies.)

I'm aware that 80% of decorative finishers are going out of business within 3 years; and 95% are out of business in 5 years. We need to address this with real business skills (lectures on writing contracts, dealing with licensing in various states, and how to cope with difficult clients) and the mentorship program would be good to expand as much as possible (I want all members to see the benefit in these lectures.) Let me emphasize that although the "sample board classes" are a ton of fun and needed; every member should be enhancing major skills at every convention.

-Do you see a particular issue in IDAL that should be resolved? How would you resolve it?

See the above paragraph... I'd like to create some short videos from long-time artists on their business practices. Maybe other teachers would share short skills-oriented videos that they've already sold before online. It would be great for IDAL members to have access to something throughout the year maybe occasional zoom classes and zoom lectures (or even a podcast interview) that reaches out to members and chapters who have never attended a convention. I'd like to advertise these, to students at art schools, see if we can convince them to consider careers in the Decorative Arts. Possibly even offer a student discount membership to IDAL for college students who are thinking about careers.

In Europe, there are many technical training schools where 2 to 5-year degrees are offered in the decorative arts. Every year, large groups of these students attend Salon with their professors to watch, discuss and learn from Salon artists. We don't have these technical schools, but we need brainstorm ways to extend ourselves to potential future artisans.

-Describe what being a member of IDAL means to you.

Camaraderie cannot ever be discounted. We all work mostly in a bubble in our businesses – so IDAL is and will always be a source of information, help and sisterhood (with a few brothers) giving American painters access to help and advice and skills to continue their careers successfully.

Thank you –

Patricia Swanson

Finishes First Studio

November 2022