

P.R.E.P.C.A.L.M.

- precise.** Make clear in the invitations any special details for your party.
- reliable.** Be ready when your guest arrive.
- engage.** Greet guests when they arrive.
- prepared.** Have the food prepared in advance and cocktails ready when your guests arrive.
- catalyst.** Circulate and introduce guests. help start a conversation before moving on.
- aware.** Keep drinks refilled and meet other guest needs.
- leader.** Start eating promptly, guests are following your lead here and in other areas.
- mindful.** Pay attention to details and make sure everything is and remains well-prepared.

Presented by Hideous Beast

Our hosts Gibran and Wil joined us for a cocktail party and etiquette workshop as part of 2nd Floor Rear 2015.

Saturday, February 7, 2015
5:00-7:00 pm

hideousbeast.com

Survival: Etiquette



Invitations: The art world is a competitive arena. Being invited to an event, to exhibit your work, to give a talk, to curate an exhibition, and so on, reinforces the competitive nature of this environment, strengthening the art world’s ability to be exclusive and selective.

Know your audience (plan well): It is critical to know who you plan to have as guests. If you subscribe to the notion that the art world is a system of social networks and currently is dominated by social entrepreneurs, than you might see guests as your target audience, much like advertisers see an audience for a product. You might also interpret this as an opportunity to determine relationships you want to foster, be them intellectual, economic, social, etc. Think of artists and art spaces you would like to affiliate with, specifically those that align with your values, ideas, politics and approach to the art world. These are the people you will turn to when you need council, support, and opportunities. Start a list of names and emails. We suggest creating a spreadsheet that can be exported as a formatted CSV file, and easily imported for creating group contacts in a variety of email applications. A popular one is Mailchimp—an “online email marketing solution to manage contacts, send emails and track results.”

RSVP (Répondez s'il vous plaît): Reply if you please is more than a way to gauge the amount of food and drink you’ll need for your event, it’s an opportunity to establish the exclusivity of your event. Depending on who you’re inviting, this can be a strategy for creating connections between your guests, presenting your event as an opportunity for all those who attend. Adding an RSVP to an invitation also implies that the recipient is obligated to attend. This is important primarily because no matter the reply, your recipient has received the gesture of being invited.

Precise: Make clear in the invitations any special details for your party. Such as: attire, required contributions (gift, potluck, etc.).

Event Preparations (food and drink): Now that you know your audience, plan accordingly. Cheap beer might suffice for a crowd of young artists and curators fresh out of school, but to impress seasoned artists, collectors and dealers, consider including wine, cocktails and hors d’oeuvres. If your budget allows, hiring a catering service can project an aura of glamour and importance, though doing-it-yourself has its own charm and may convince your guests/audience of your multi-faceted abilities and wide range of cultural knowledge. Creative culinary choices can also provide a topic of conversation and a perfect ice-breaker for guests.

Be Prepared (drink): Get everything ready well before your guests arrive, so you can feel relaxed from the very beginning (and have time to serve yourself a drink). Projecting an image of effortlessness is as important with hosting as it is with fashion or painting. Set up an area that clearly shows guests what drinks are available and how they may be procured. This makes it possible for guests to serve themselves and others—another potential icebreaker and maybe less work for the host. Conversely, if there are too many “randoms” or unwanted guests, you may wish to obscure the source of beverages to intentionally slow traffic and potentially increase the feeling of exclusivity at your party.

Be Prepared (food): Like cocktails, hors d’oeuvres are another clearly legible symbol of class and taste. Provide a number of options that would satisfy a variety of tastes (and ideological positions). A meat, seafood and vegetarian option would cover a

broad range of guests. Including a vegan or gluten free option would show an even more specific accommodation for the needs of your guests, though this might weaken your casual, effortless image. Make certain to provide cocktail napkins to your guests, another signifier of class (and a discrete spot for guests to discard unwanted appetizers). Provide bowls for pits, tails and shells. A bowl for olive pits should never be placed where it would be mistaken for a bowl of nuts.

Be Prepared (facilities): Keep the bathroom clean and well stocked. Make sure it has plenty of toilet paper, soap and hand towels before your party. A plunger, scented candle and matches will provide insurance against any potentially embarrassing scent or scene. Like the white-washed spaces of museums or galleries, bathrooms provide a place for people to purge and to cleanse.



The Event:

Welcome: Make sure to greet each guest as they arrive, even if you are busy preparing food or drinks, or chatting with another guest. You might not have another chance to interact with the new arrival, who may become an important contact for your future career in the art world. If the person seems to be of lesser importance, you will still project the image of being gracious and open to the rest of your guests.

Don't use your phone: Very casual, mingling situations like big cocktail parties and open houses are a bit more forgiving when it comes to sneaking a peek at your phone, but as a rule you should keep your devices stowed, with ringers off, at parties of all types. Avoiding the distraction of a phone ensures that you are clearly communicating with and actively listening to your guests. The use of a phone is acceptable only if you are showing images of your latest exhibition, pet or newborn child.

Spills: Accidents happen. Learn to shrug them off or work through them. Don't freak out over spills. Whether you are the host or guest, try to deal with spills and other upsets quickly, calmly and with good humor. Having a stain-fighting kit on hand in advance would be helpful. And if you are the spiller, do offer to pay for cleaning or a replacement if you caused serious damage.

Remain calm: Giving a party can be enjoyable, especially if you approach it with simplicity. Get help if necessary, and don't let your guests think you're huffing and puffing. They'll feel far more comfortable if they don't have to wonder whether they're causing you any trouble.

Keep your guests feeling welcome: Make sure guests are warmly greeted, then made to feel welcome throughout the party. Look after each guest as much as you can. If you notice that a guest has an empty glass or if there's one person standing alone, remedy the situation as quickly and cheerfully as possible.

Be flexible and gracious: Have a fallback plan for food or social emergencies. The uninvited guest? As discourteous as it is for someone to spring a surprise on you, be gracious. No polite host would ever send an uninvited guest packing.

Be appreciative: Thank people for coming as you bid them goodbye. And don't forget to thank anyone who brought you a gift.

The art world, like many other professional fields, is a dynamic sphere, complicated by social networks, political perspectives, economic divisions, class structures, and an always present, but ever increasing competitive spirit. Being prepared for this “art world,” in order to survive its fluctuations, is critical for anybody attempting to succeed as one of its producers. There are many players that encapsulate this social sphere—artists, curators, gallerists, museum directors, art collectors, patrons, etc., and each play a role in shaping this flexible and adaptive organism. For *Survival: Etiquette* Hideous Beast will prepare you for an often overlooked aspect of surviving in the art world—being a good host and by implication, a good guest.

