

Marketing Your Art

by Arnold White



**The Visual Artist's
Guide to Making
Money**



"The Crown"-Edward Waters

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"My Yellow Brush"-Robert Tanenbaum

FORWARD

Artists are a special breed. They march to a different drummer. Artists have been given a special gift and that gift can be very rewarding as well as very frustrating. The rewards are self-evident. The frustration comes from how to make money from your creative efforts. The purpose of this book is to provide you with the tools to solve this problem.

It is important for the artists to understand that they are the most important part of the art market. Without the artist there is no art market. No art galleries, no art shows, no art books, no art magazines, no art workshops, no art supply houses, no art agents. In fact, no businesses of any kind relating to the art world exist if not for the artist.

Making money will never be your primary motivation, but it must run a close second if you want to make a living from your craft.

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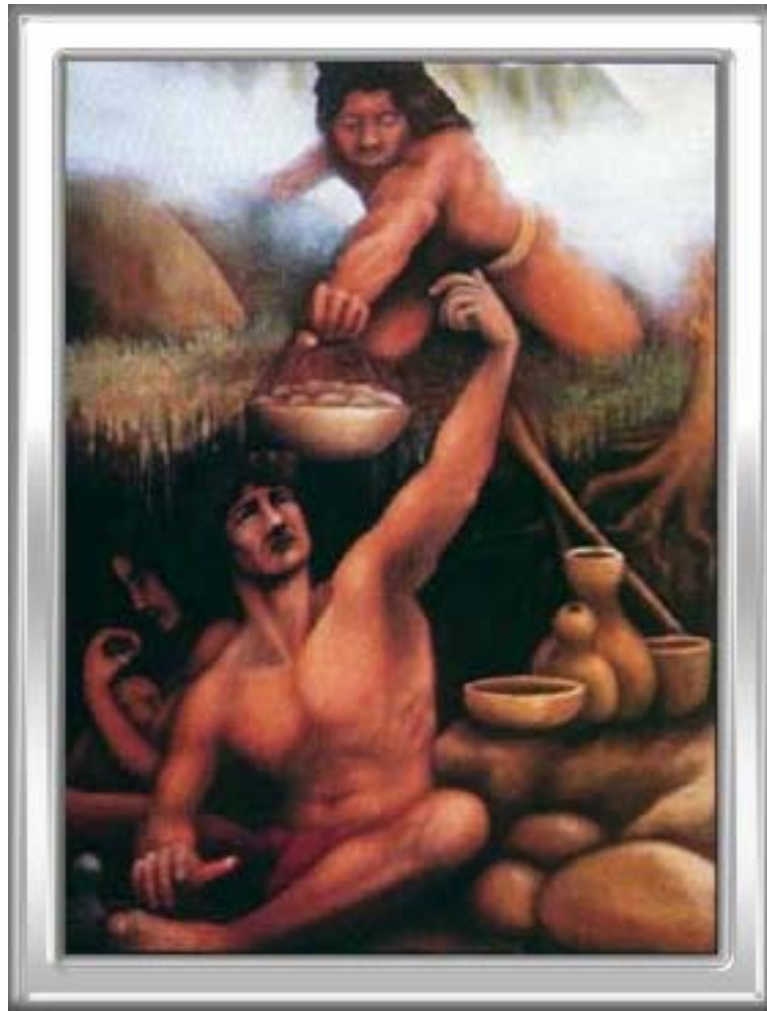
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Prelude to a Luau-Jamen Chai

How to Present Your Work

As a professional artist it is extremely important to put your best foot forward when submitting your art for review. So, let's start with how you communicate visually and let's also remember that as an artist, you are in business and every business should have a professional image. Here is what you will need:

Professional Stationary

Your Letterhead

1. Your Logo should be simple and creative.
2. Should have your telephone #, address, e-mail address and web address.

Your Business Card

1. Should have all the information that is on your letterhead

Your Mailing Envelope

1. Your Logo and return address

Professional Quality Slides and Photographs

What does professional quality really mean? As an artist you are creating a visual product, a product that needs to be seen before it can sell. Slides and photographs are your product inventory. If you are capable of taking a high quality photograph of your work, that is fine, but unless your photography truly captures your work, get a professional to do this for you. It is important when photographing your art that you never photograph your art framed. Framing is fine when your work is sold and hanging, but those reviewing your work are distracted by the framing process.

When submitting your art for review or consideration, your slides should have at the minimum your name and telephone number, but if you really want to be professional, your slides should also have the title, the medium and the size. The lab that does the developing can do this for you.

If submitting photographs instead of slides, be sure that all of the above appears on the back of every photograph. Every dollar you spend to make your art appear professional is more than worth the cost. Photography is a business expense and tax deductible.

Professional Website

Four or five years ago, artists were not aware of any of the following terms: URL, dot.com, Internet, Hosting, On-line, Search Engines, etc. Only now are they beginning to see the value of this incredible new opportunity for exposure. If you don't already have a website, you soon will if I have anything to do with it. The fact is the Internet offers contemporary artists a unique opportunity to showcase and sell their art. I have devoted an entire chapter for this important marketing tool.

Professional Brochure

A first class brochure can be the most effective way to visually present what you do and how well you do it. A professional brochure can create a better impression than an entire book with cheap reproductions. Your brochure should contain a representative sampling of the scope of your work and should also include your biography. A photograph should also appear on your bio page. Although this is not essential, an interesting picture of the artist can influence the reader's interest in the artist's work. Be sure your brochure is produced using the four-color process and is printed on 80-100lb gloss stock.

Professional Biography

Your biography is basically an artist statement. It is comprised of why you do what you do, who has influenced your work and anything that has been written about you. Your bio should incorporate a photograph of yourself.

Untitled-Colleen Niebur



Who to Submit your Art to for Review

1. Galleries
2. Juried Events
3. Competitions
4. Print Publishers
5. Agents/Reps.
6. Art Fairs and Festivals

"This Song Is You"-Jack Martinelli



Markets for Your Art

First, determine if you are really serious about selling what you make. Selling is what separates the amateur artist from the professional artist.

As an artist you are creating a product. If you believe your product is valuable and you believe people will buy your product then it is essential that you identify the market for your product.

The following are the main areas you should consider: Select two or more (don't put all your eggs in one basket)

Art Galleries

First develop a list of local art galleries that are within 100-200 miles of you. Art galleries are listed in your regular or on-line yellow pages.

Take the time to personally visit each gallery on your list to determine which ones showcase the style of art most compatible with your work.

Contact the owner or director of the gallery by telephone for a firm appointment to show your work.

Print Publishers

The print market is very profitable. When your art is in print, it is available and affordable to the widest possible audience and your originals become more valuable. (See Publishing your Art chapter for more details)

Fine Art publishers can be found in art trade publications such as Décor Magazine, Art World News, Art Business News or on-line. Develop a list of those Publishers you want to contact. Then send them a professional presentation of your work letting them know you are available for licensing.

Art Shows and Festivals

Outdoor shows and festivals are an excellent way for you to generate immediate income and see first hand how the art buying public responds to your work.

Many successful artists get their start and pay their dues with this venue. There are several art show and festival promoters such as Art Fair Source Book (AFSB), American Art Festivals, Sunshine Artist Festival Network that conduct hundreds of these events all around the country. Dates and locations are available in their directories and you can contact them on-line or ask other artists and friends about their experience.

"Seasonal Still Life"-Walter Lynn Mosley



Banks, Restaurants and Corporations

Thousands of works of art are showcased each year in private and public venues. Locations such as banks, restaurants and corporate facilities are ideal for the showing and selling of your art. The artist, the community and local companies all benefit by participating in these art displays.

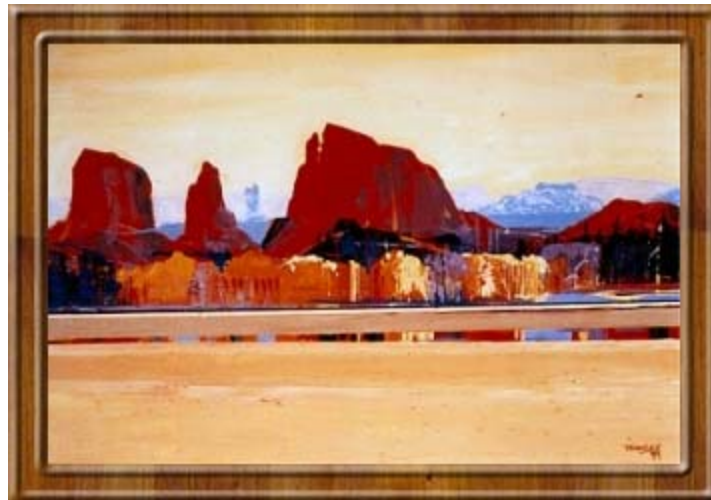
"Jazz"-Sayed Rawi



Co-Op Galleries

Co-op galleries are generally local art associations that establish a location where fellow artists can hang their art. Contact your local art association for details about membership.

"Red Mountains of Southern Utah" -Tyrone Crosby



Commission Projects

Interior designers, architects and art consultants are constantly looking for artists. You can generally develop a list by searching your local phone directory yellow pages or on-line yellow pages. Contact these firms by telephone and send them your brochure.

Your Website

Your website is your own personal on-line gallery, open 24-7. This is a very cost effective way to show and sell.

A first class website is like a first class brochure but, even better, it allows you to change and improve without reprinting.

Your website is of little value if no one goes there to view what you do. We cover how to fully maximize your website in our website chapter.

"The Bridge"-Victor Lafica



Trade Shows and Art Expos

These are high traffic professional events where you can purchase space to showcase and promote your art. Décor Expo and the New York Expo are a few of the major annual and semi annual productions.

Studio Showings

Your home studio is an excellent and inexpensive way to exhibit and sell your work to friends, family and collectors. You should develop and maintain a mailing or e-mail list and should be in contact with this list on a regular basis.

Competitions

Competitions can be good venues, but generally do not produce much income. They can, however, add credibility to your resume or biography. Good sources for dates and locations of competitions are available through The Artist's Magazine and American Artist.



"Me, Marilyn & Joe"-Sue Kutosh

Pricing Your Work

Do you know the value of your work and how to price it? Probably not. I have personally reviewed the work of thousands of artists over the last 30 years and only a handful were able to say yes to that question.

Pricing art is actually not that difficult. It is basically no different than pricing any other product.

The problem with artists pricing their own work is that they generally don't view their work with the same eyes that other businesses do. This is because they are emotionally tied to their product.

Let me make it simple and easy. First, you have cost of materials. Second you have cost of labor.

Materials include anything and everything that you purchase to create your product. Then you must determine a value for your time; only you can determine what your time is worth. Add the cost of your time to the materials you purchased and you have a starting price.

Next, take the price and check comparables. Comparables are works similar to yours in size, style or subject. You obtain comparables by going to actual or on-line galleries, trade shows, fairs or festivals.

If you have previously established pricing for your work, compare it to the formula provided above.

Wholesale vs. Retail

It is important that you fully understand the difference. As the manufacturer of your product, you are the one who needs to establish both retail and a wholesale price for your art.



"Woman at the Gate"-Jorge Bobo

The retail price is the asking price to consumers or collectors - the person purchasing your work to hang in his/her home or office. The wholesale price is the lowest price for which you are willing to sell your product to a gallery or other retail entity. Usually the difference between the retail and the wholesale is 50%. So, if your retail price is \$3,500.00 your wholesale price will be \$1,750.00. It is always better to price your work higher than lower. It is easier to start high and go down than vice versa.

When selling your work directly to a collector or consumer it is essential to protect the integrity of the retail price, otherwise you will be in direct competition with your gallery affiliations. If you are still having difficulty with the pricing of your art, feel free to call me.

Every year the cost of living increases and so should the price of your art. A good rule of thumb is to have a yearly increase of between 5 and 10%.

"Still Life"-Paul Everhart



Publishing Your Art

There are many reasons why artists are attracted to the print market. First and, perhaps, foremost is the fact that publishing your art makes it available and affordable to the widest audience in the shortest period of time. In a matter of weeks after publication, a limited edition art print is in a position to be seen and purchased by galleries, distributors, collectors, print dealers and a wide variety of art buyers. This type of exposure adds credibility and recognition for you, your art and your career. The print market is probably the most profitable market for the visual artist.

The dramatic growth of the print market has been extraordinary. Just a few years ago there were only a handful of publishers representing a few artists. Today, there are hundreds of publishers representing thousands of artists.

There are basically two ways to enter the print market and we will cover them both. They are: *Self-Publishing* and *Royalty Publishing*.

Self-Publishing

Self-publishing means what it says - the artist creates, reproduces, and then markets their own images.

Many artists have attempted to self-publish their own work only to find that marketing their own product was too difficult and too time consuming. Most artists do what they do best, make art. They generally don't have the skills necessary to bring their product to market.

There have been a few self-publishing success stories, but most artists who have achieved success in self-publishing have done so by having significant help. It would be wise for you to have someone experienced in marketing to take charge of that end of the publishing process.

"C&T RR Chama. NM." - William "JC" Riley



Right now more than at any other time it is possible for an artist to self-publish with less financial risk because of the Giclée process of reproduction. The Giclée process allows the publisher to "Print on Demand" which means that the whole edition does not need to be printed at the same time. This relatively new process (in the last 15 years) permits the publisher to print a reproduction one at a time. When a sale is made the print is made.

Even though this process is now cost effective, it still requires a proven aggressive marketing plan. So, don't attempt to self-publish without one.

The Giclée process is of a very high quality and commands higher prices. There are several Giclée printers available to choose from. Finer Image Editions and One World Art are just two examples. Others can be found either on-line or in any of the following publications: American Artist, The Artist's Magazine, Art Business News, Art World News and Décor Magazine.

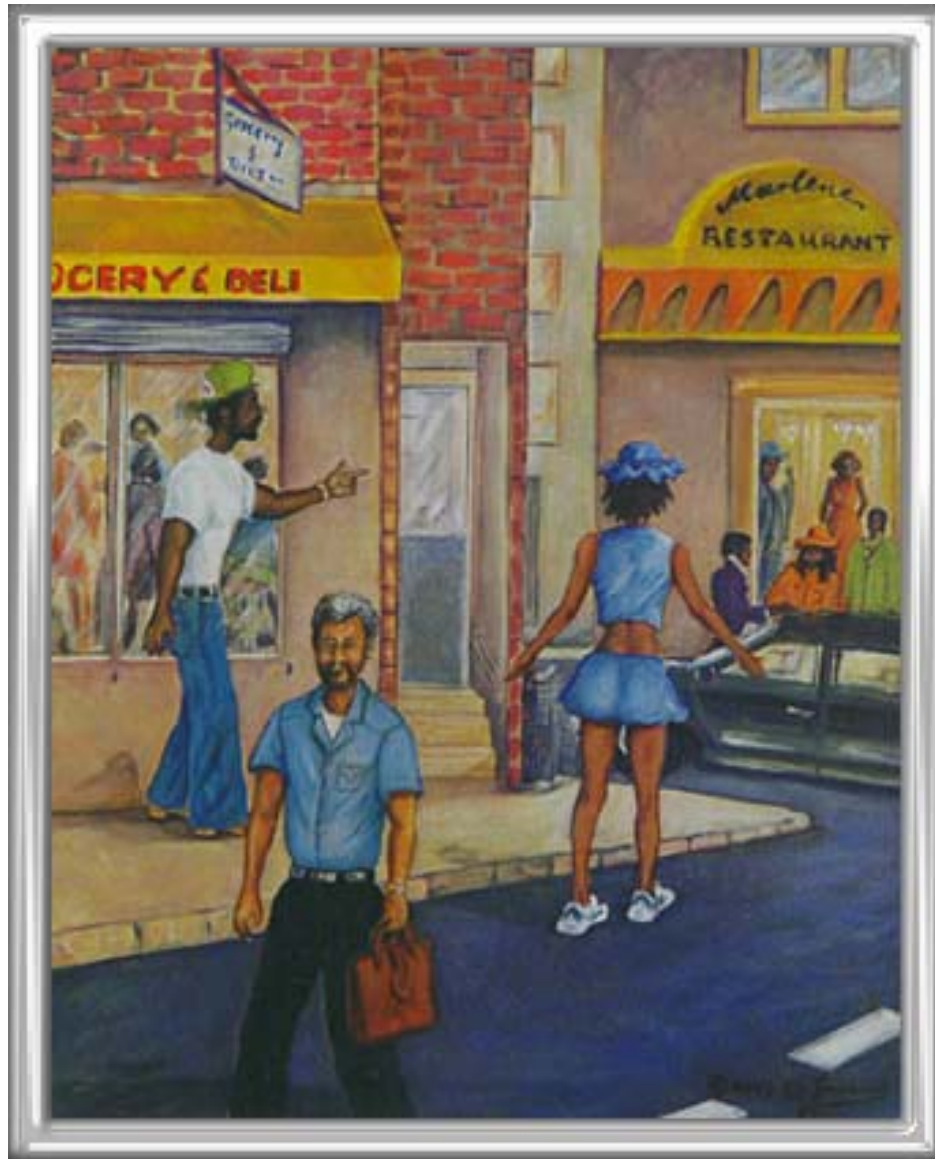
Royalty Publishing

The most common and, usually, the most profitable way of getting your art into the print market is by signing with a royalty publisher. First, royalty publishers take all of the financial responsibilities of publishing an artist's work. They then do everything that is required to reproduce, sell, market, promote and distribute the artist's work. The artist is paid a royalty on all sales. Royalty publishing leaves the artist free to spend all of his/her time on the creative process. The relationship between the artist and a royalty publisher is very similar to that of an author and a book publisher.

When working with a royalty publisher you are actually licensing the publisher to reproduce specific images. Under the terms of most artist/publisher agreements the artist retains the original. The publisher pays the artist a specified percentage of the sales, plus a certain number of artists proofs. Other possible arrangements can be a one-time cash purchase and the rights to reproduce with no royalties.

"Full Service"-Penny Murphy





"In the Hood"-Orette Francis

You can find Fine Art print publishers and a current sampling of what is going on in the print market by subscribing to or getting a copy of Décor Magazine, Art World News or Art Business News.

Artists are the essential ingredient for the print market as they create the product. Without the artist there would be no art prints period. But, it is important to understand that print publishers prefer to work with professionals, not hobbyists. If you are interested in entering this lucrative market it is important to put your best foot forward when submitting your work to a print publisher. Your presentation should include the following:

- Good quality slides or photos of your work (unframed).
- Slides or photos with, at minimum, your name and phone number.
- A cover letter on you letterhead.
- Biographical information, if available.
- If possible, include a four-color brochure of your art. A brochure of your work is a professional statement to a publisher. I have personally developed literally hundreds of professional presentations for professional artists and all of them included a four-color brochure.
- SASE, Self Addressed Stamped Envelope, for the return material.



"Lotus Blossom"- I-Fang Wen

Your Website

Let me be honest. I know very little about websites, although, I had one of the first art-related sites on the Internet. I recognized the marketing potential of this powerful new medium and I believe in the division of labor. So, I got professionals to do what I could not do myself.

This chapter is written not by me but my son, Jon. Jon is an Internet and website nerd. He is as good a website marketer as I am an art marketer. I know you will find this chapter informative and profitable.

Which Came First - The Website or the Web Host?

By Jon Heller

"Build it and they will come," was the cry of the 90's. All you needed was a domain name and an idea and Wall Street would throw money at you. Literally. Flash forward to 2005 and Joe and Jane Middle America with a dial-up AOL account have no idea what this Internet fad is all about. But they can get pictures of the Grandkids by e-mail, so it must be OK.

It doesn't matter how many books Amazon sells or how many computers Dell delivers. The Internet is still dominated by one thing: Information. That information includes everything from an owners manual for a 1976 Pinto to the resumes and works of thousands upon thousands of artists. That's where you come in. Your role on the Internet as an artist isn't (for 99% anyway) to sell your art. Just ask yourself how many artists you know personally that have sold more than a few pieces. All from a \$5,000 website that Joe and Jane Middle America will never find, let alone navigate through.

Your job on the Internet is much more important than selling a few Limited Editions. Because if all the Joe and Jane's of the world learn about art and begin to really appreciate it in all its forms, artists and the words "day job" would not be heard again in the same sentence.

So how does an artist with limited funds develop, build, host, promote and market his/her own website? And what do they do if people actually find it? And what, exactly, is a host?

Let's get simple...and stay simple. Simple websites always work best. Just ask Google. The front page of Google has exactly 27 words on it. You'll need a bit more for yours, however. About 320 more.

"River's Edge"-Cyndi Kitson



But first, your domain. A domain is the name of the street that your website lives on. You get a domain by leasing it for as long as you want by paying yearly fees of between \$7.95 and \$39.95. Why the difference in prices? A domain re-seller can charge however much he wants, and an uninformed buyer will pay it. One recommendation I have is Host-Boy.com. Simple, easy and inexpensive. And they answer the phones at 3 A.M. Buy the .net as well as the .com to "protect" your names and keep in mind that the "Big Three" search engines (Google, Yahoo, MSN) will score you markedly higher when you have keywords in your domain name.

"Colours of My Mind"-Georgina Heskin



While "ReaAlleyTeeScapes.com" maybe a hit with your friends, "local-seascape-artist.com" will outrank it 100-1 on domain name alone.

Next, web site hosting. A host "broadcasts" your website to the Internet using your files and pages and pictures that are stored on their servers. A good host will offer flexible monthly plans, the ability to add-on features and services, and real-live customer service. Statistics, search engine submission, and tools for creating and working on your site are often included in the monthly rate.

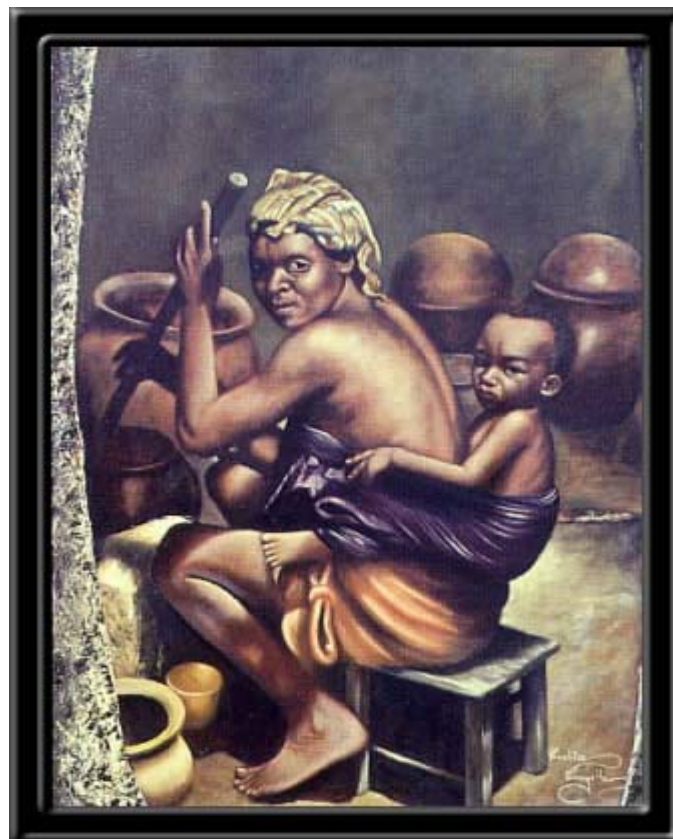
*A word about "free" hosts. I have yet to see even one free-hosted website in the Top 50 of any competitive search term. The fact is that search engines hate free hosted sites because they are abandoned so often, leaving behind nothing but dead links.

Two respectable hosts are SolidWeb, based in Portland, Oregon and HandsOffHosting.com where even a basic account comes with a free domain name. Quality hosting with a fair amount of features should cost an emerging artist no more than 19.00-39.00 a month.

You now have a website name, a website address and a place to hang your art on the walls. Virtually. If you welcome your visitors with blinking text, cute animations, flash menus and pages that change colors, have fun with your new career...at Starbucks. Your visitors, not family and friends who are obligated to say ooooooh and ahhhh, came to see art, learn about art and maybe even get to know an artist. So help them! Show your art, have links to more art, different art and even Art's art. If you insist on having a shopping cart built into your website, fine. But be subtle. If your art has value, the selling of it will require a lot more than a single visit to your site. But every time a visitor returns, your chances of selling a piece of your art for a fair price increases dramatically. Spend more of your time adding to your site so that people return and you will sell more art. Period. Art is real. It is tangible. It is emotive. The last thing you want to try and do is "sell". The first thing you want to do is build real relationships with real people.

Cost is always a factor in developing a website. Notice the word "develop". The design of a site is only as good as its functionality and its visibility. Having your web site guest book filled with signatures of your family and friends is great - really it is. But trust me when I tell you that there is nothing better than having thousands of people on your web site. All at once.

"African Mother and Child #2"-Cochise Couyette



Can an artist design a website? Of course. Can an artist strategize a navigational structure that insures visitors will find deep content? Probably not. And can an artist, while trying to make a living creating art learn and then implement the hundreds of little things it takes to achieve good search engine placement? No. The solution is to Get Help. Cut back on the flash and bells and whistles and use the money for some coaching, a class, or the hiring of a website optimizer/marketer. And here's a secret that you'll hear nowhere else. Search Engine Marketing and Search Engine Optimization are not magic or voodoo. Everything you need to know, including the fact that search engines don't care about keywords anymore, can be found in...you guessed it. The search engines.

One more "secret" before I close. Run far away from companies that claim they can "Guarantee" Top Ten rankings or that they'll submit your web site to 1200 search engines. Not even Google can tell you who will be Number 1000, let alone Number 1, until it happens. And those 1200 search engines? There are only three that matter - Yahoo, Google and MSN. Together they make up over 96% of all searches.

"Psychedelic Sand"-Jane Nassano



Remember that the look of your site matters far less than the three cardinal rules: Content, Content and Content. Have articles, reviews, and press releases. Put up absolutely everything you have that's text based. But don't put it all up at once. Google likes to see growth...and that's the main reason new sites are now added to the Google search engine in 3-6 months instead of 3-6 weeks. You have to earn it.

Build slowly and add on, especially adding links from other relevant sites in exchange for one from yours. In fact, you can get started right now by getting your first links from www.YourArtLinks.com. Google looks at those links as "votes" for you...so play to win. The bottom line is the more relevant, topical information you provide, the more important you become.

Remember that the search engines are only middlemen; the consumer gets the information from you. The more you offer, the more they'll visit. And that's more time they'll spend looking at those wonderfully framed pieces of art on your Internet walls.

Jon Heller is the owner of HellerNetWorks, an Internet Marketing firm specializing in the marketing and development of web networks for medium sized businesses. Shelly Webber designed this amazing page-turning e-book and is the owner of HuntWebber, a Memphis, Tn. based website design firm. Together they are partners in JRT, inc. and are developers of topical themed Internet directories.

For your free listing and free link visit YourArtlinks.com, an Internet directory of Art and Artist resources for the emerging artist, art suppliers, publishers and more. Free Art Classifieds are coming soon.



"Foggy Morning"-Bernadine Fields Shiplet

"Cristo Street"-Pedro Villarini



Art As Business

Most artists create art purely for the pleasure of creating with no plans of making money. These artists are considered hobbyists. Producing art for sale is a business enterprise. Artists in this category are entitled to all the benefits that come with being in business for themselves.

Benefit and Tax Deductions

Education

Anything related to furthering your skills and your craft are fully tax deductible - workshops, college or university courses, seminars, etc.

Promotional Materials

Includes all printed items such as brochures, stationary, mailing costs, slides, photographs and your website.

Travel

When you travel be sure to keep a record of all your travel expenses. They are fully tax deductible if they are business related. Most travel expenses such as auto and airline are deductible when you are presenting your work to galleries, collectors, and consultants, etc. When you travel take business cards with you. Contact galleries on your trips. Give them your card and get theirs.

"Shaolin Martialist"-Shirley Love



Art Supplies

Paint, paintbrushes, canvas, paper and all materials used to create your product.

Your Studio

Your studio may be fully or partially deductible. If your studio is in your home you can deduct a portion. If it is a stand alone, take a full deduction including utilities, telephone, etc.

Entertainment

Related to your art business can be fully or partially deducted.

Record Keeping

Record all of your expenses by keeping receipts, a diary and notations in your checkbook.

Copyrights

All that is required to protect your original work is the placement of a © in a prominent place in the lower portion of your image with the year of completion and your signature.

Legal Contracts

Contracts are usually designed and written by attorneys in legal language. Most artists find contracts difficult to understand, especially, the fine print and terminology.

If you receive a contract from a gallery, print publisher or art agent, be sure you fully understand everything the contract means. Have an attorney review the contract so that you will be sure to understand and agree to all terms and conditions.

Your Social Security Account

As a self employed business person the first portion of any federal taxes you pay will go directly into your social security account.

Joint Filing

If you are married and your spouse is employed by a company that automatically deducts taxes from his/her salary, you are entitled to deduct all of your business expenses from your joint tax liability.

"North Wharf Approach (Nantucket Scene)" - Harriet Mottes



Your Accountant

Always consult with an accountant to make sure you take advantage of all the business benefits and tax deductions that you are entitled to. It is important to know that most businesses do not show a profit for the first three years. Business losses are part of doing business and losses are deductible.

Budget

It is also extremely important that you establish a yearly advertising and promotional budget for your art business. At least 10% of all your sales should be set aside for this purpose.

Remember, it takes money to make money. All business requires capital (money) to get started and remain operational. As an artist your investment will be smaller than that required by most other kinds of business enterprises. Nevertheless, you must be fully committed financially to your business if it is to succeed.

"Alec"-Nathaniel Tatum





"Timberwolf and White Tail Sheds" - Daniel Brown

Some Final Words

This book is a work in progress. I will continue to add new ideas and ways to help you make money from your creative efforts, so come back often and remember that Marketing your Art will always be a work in progress.

"Caribbean Convoy-British Outpost Circa 1750" - James DeMarche





"Space Interexchange"- Robie Julian

About the Author

Arnold White has been a publisher and distributor of fine art prints for over 20 years. He is the president of Winner's Circle Gallery, a firm that represents artists seeking to enter the print market. Mr. White is currently reviewing work from artists wanting to enter this market. To submit your work send slides/photographs and your telephone number with a SASE to: Winner's Circle Dept. AB P.O. Box 4814 Palm Springs, CA 92263 or call (800) 748-6400. All subjects and mediums will be considered.

Many thanks and my appreciation to Sherry, Shelly, Mary and Jon.

