



AN ARTIST'S GUIDE

TO SOCIAL MEDIA MARKETING

A R T W O R K
A R C H I V E

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HOW SOCIAL MEDIA IS CHANGING THE ART EXPERIENCE

WHAT DOES THIS MEAN FOR YOUR ART CAREER?

One thing is clear—social media is redefining how the art world does business. In the past year, over 80 percent of all Generation Y art buyers bought fine art online, with almost half of online buyers using Instagram for art-related purposes, revealed Gotham Magazine.

So, how exactly is social media weaving its way through the art world? From making sales easier to sidestepping galleries, social networking sites are making a big statement.

This is what it means for your art career. You can now:

Go Directly to Your Audience

Never before has an artist had the power to engage directly with their audience. This power comes in the form of Facebook and Instagram, and we don't think it'll be changing anytime soon.

Curbing traditional means of communication, social media allows you speak with your followers about who you are and what you are making. Someone can inquire about a piece, and in an instant, it's sold. And, with one fateful "follow," the respected eyes in the industry can consider your work on a daily basis.

Get Validated Without a Gallery

Guess what? The social media boom means artists no longer have to rely solely on galleries and the art world elite to validate their success. Instead, the masses following your social media accounts are proof enough.

And, a large online presence means your name is being buzzed about, undercutting the need for galleries to spread the word about you. Today, artists are using Instagram as their own curated gallery. They take on the role of not only artist, but dealer and curator—interacting with a growing audience of online fans, buyers and critics. In other words, while gallery representation is still prestigious, it's no longer necessary to go through this middleman.

Dodge Gallery Commissions

Sidestepping galleries and dealers by using social media posts also means that you don't lose any money on galleries taking commissions. Instead, you can use Instagram or your [Artwork Archive Public Profile Page](#) as your gallery and collect the full amount on your art sales.



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Avoid the Eliteness

Gone are the days when artists were required to hobnob with critics and collectors and make their way into shows before being able to sell a single piece. Satisfied with this aspect of the changing the playing field is artist Brad Phillips. He says that Instagram connections are great for artists who don't want to play the "expensive game the art world requires—move to New York, [and] glad-hand at a million openings". What's more, he believes artists can be themselves on this platform while reaching a huge audience.

While you still need to get out and talk to potential buyers, you can do so knowing that it is only one aspect of art world, not the entirety of it.

Finance Your Art Projects

Finally, artists no longer have to fret when it comes to financing their dream art projects—all thanks to social media. With eager Facebook and Twitter audiences at the ready, an artist is able to share a link to his or her Kickstarter page and instantly receive donations from enthusiastic fans and strangers alike.

Social media gives fundraising a whole new meaning and lets you spread the word like wildfire.

You might have guessed it that there would be some drawbacks. Alongside all the positives, with this new social media landscape you ...

Have Less Control

Not all social media impacts are beneficial. For instance, many artists have concerns about the privacy of their images, and for good reason. A screenshot of your work could be passed around so many times that your name (and credit for the work) gets lost in the shuffle.

But don't let this deter you from all the advantages the social media world has to offer! If this is a big concern of yours, include a watermark to your photos with text-adding apps like Quick or a free design site like Canva.

Another problem? Buyers could get turned off by your social media presence if it is not done well. We suggest that showcasing your personality and professionalism, giving viewers a glimpse into the process, and remaining true to your artistic and personal voice.

Now we can't imagine a world without social media.

The worst thing to do with change is deny that it's happening and hold on too tightly to the past. Remember: the traditional art world is changing, but it may be for the better! Social media can help your art business, giving you access to wider audiences and easier sales. Embrace this new marketing tool, and experience the wonders it can do for your career.

5 REASONS ARTISTS FAIL WITH SOCIAL MEDIA

AND HOW TO SUCCEED

SAVE TIME AND SEE BETTER RESULTS BY OVERCOMING THESE EXCUSES.

It's no doubt that social media is changing the way the art world works and how people are buying art.

Perhaps you're aware of the opportunity, and you're giving it your best effort. You log into Facebook and share your latest work. You tweet every other day. But, it hasn't been giving you the results you expected. You get discouraged.

You do even less with social media. Does this sound familiar?

Here are some common reasons that artists struggle with social media and how to overcome them:

I Don't Know What to Write

You probably think authors and poets have it easy when it comes to social media. They always know what to say, right? That may be true, but visual artists actually have the advantage. In recent years, led by the popularity of Pinterest, social media has been trending away from words towards images. According to new Twitter data, tweets with images are 35% more likely to be shared than text-only tweets. And Pinterest and Instagram were designed to be visual platforms.

So, don't worry too much about what you say. Instead, give fans and consumers a glimpse into your world. Share a work in progress or a picture of you in your studio. Snap a shot of your new supplies, or simply share an image that inspires you. It may seem trite, but your fans will enjoy getting a peek into your creative process.

I Don't Have Time

We understand that you'd rather be creating than worrying about posting on social media at certain times of day. Luckily, there are a number of free and easy-to-use tools out there that make this task much simpler. Buffer and Hootsuite are both popular options, allowing you to auto-schedule posts and shorten links. That way you can take care of an entire week of posts (across all your social media platforms) in one sitting.

If you're looking for a way to fill your feed with interesting articles and inspiration from other artists, try out Feedly. This platform lets you subscribe to your favorite blogs and magazines (Art Biz Blog, ARTnews, Artist Daily, etc.), read all their most recent posts in one spot, and easily share articles on your Twitter and Facebook feeds right from there.

I Don't See Returns

When you first build a social presence, it's likely going to be small. It's easy to be discouraged by those small numbers and feel that you're not making an impact, or that your effort is not seeing rewards. Don't give up just yet! When it comes to social media, quality is more important than quantity. It's okay if you only have 50 likes on your Facebook page if those 50 people are actively engaged and sharing your content. In fact, that's better than having 500 people who ignore your posts! Focus on the followers you do have and give them content they will enjoy. When they share your work, it's not just those 50 people seeing your talent; it's their friends, and the friends of their friends.

Over time, if growth just isn't happening, it isn't you. Your target audience might not hang out on the social media platform that you're currently using. Take some time to think about who you are trying to reach, and then dig around to find out where these people hang out online. Design your social media strategy backwards with your audience and goal in mind, and select the right platform based on that goal.

I'll Just Post and Be Done With It

Social media is called "social" for a reason. If you just throw up a post and never engage with your users or the post again, it's like walking into a party and standing alone in the corner. What's the point? Think of it this way; social media is a way to have a conversation with your customers and fans. If you aren't participating in conversations or reaching out to other people, you're not doing it right!

Here are a few strategies: If someone posts a comment on your blog or Facebook, make sure you reply within 24 hours. Even a simple "Thanks!" will go a long way in terms of engagement, because it makes people feel good to know that you're reading their posts and that there is a real person behind the page. A great way to spark a conversation is to pose a question on Facebook. Ask people to name a new piece of art that you created or ask what they think of a show at a local gallery or museum.

I Don't Understand It

Do you ever feel like there's a new social network to learn every few months when you haven't gotten a handle on the first one? Social media can be frustrating and ineffective if you don't know what you should be doing on that platform. Know that you aren't alone in this! Don't be afraid to ask for help. Ask a friend or first-born child if they can show you around a Facebook page. Chances are they'll know enough to make you comfortable and maybe even show you a trick or two. If you've exhausted your personal network and still feel unsure of what you're doing, there's plenty of great content out there to guide you through it.

Ultimately know that you aren't going to do anything with one post that will ruin your entire career. This is a low-stakes, high-reward activity that can be career-changing!

WHICH PLATFORM IS RIGHT FOR YOU?

If you are nervous about using social media to market your art business, let us reassure you: you're not alone. For starters, each platform is so different—from how you use it, to when you are expected to post, it can feel like you need to master every single site. After all, you want to reach as many fans as possible.

But the thing is, you don't have to do it all! Depending on your art business, your personality, and who you are trying to reach, some social media channels are going to be better suited for you than others. It's actually better to start with one or two that you can focus on doing really well than have a bunch of neglected accounts.

To help you navigate this crazy online world, we've gone over the pros and cons of each social media platform, so you can choose the ones that work best for your art business. Check it out:

Facebook

Expected Use: Post once a day on average and interact daily

Pros:

- Share all kinds of posts for your art marketing (including photos, videos, links to websites, Artwork Archive updates, podcasts, blogs, etc.)
- Easily link to other social media channels and share posts from Twitter, Instagram, and Pinterest
- Schedule posts directly on Facebook with a free business account to save time
- Receive free insights on your fans and follow how well your posts are doing
- Enjoy a wide audience of users
- Join Facebook groups that share everything from art business tips to pieces up for sale
- Share a wealth of information about yourself in the About section, including your artist statement, links to your artist website, and links to other social media channels
- Make selling art easier by making a call-to-action button leading to your website
- Create photo albums of your art
- Caption photos of your pieces with important details
- Use your cover photo and pinned posts for art marketing

Cons:

- Social interaction is a must
- It takes time to reply to comments and like other people's posts, which is expected

- If your posts and pictures are not done well, it could turn away fans and damage your online art brand
- Algorithms are becoming more focused on paying for your posts to be seen in the news feed

Twitter

Expected Use: Post multiple times a day and interact daily

Pros:

- Schedule tweets ahead of time with scheduling sites
- Form relationships with this channel geared towards communication
- Posts can include links, photos, and videos
- Hashtags (or keywords) can help people discover your tweets
- Organize who you follow into different categories (art business tips, galleries, etc.) for easy reading
- Use cover photo and pinned tweets for art marketing

Cons:

- Tweet often or else you can get lost in someone's busy feed
- There's a character limit on tweets, so you must keep your bio and tweets short
- Highly interactive which can overwhelm introverted artists

Instagram

Expected Use: Post daily or multiple times a week and interact daily

Pros:

- Channel known to be used by art collectors to find artwork
- Suits artwork sales since it's a visual-oriented platform
- Use hashtags to help people easily discover your artwork
- Save drafts of your posts to publish later or use scheduling tools
- Post directly from your phone without needing to use a computer
- Show all facets of running an art business, including behind the scenes studio pictures and works-in-progress
- Advertise and receive insights with a free business account
- Easily share Instagram posts on Facebook and Twitter

Cons:

- Direct links to a website only work in your bio, not in a post's caption
- Only works on mobile, not on a computer

Pinterest

Expected Use: Pin a few posts per day at different times

Pros:

- Suits artwork sales since it's a visual-oriented platform
- Easily save and organize images and website links into different boards for artwork, inspiration, art business tips, etc.
- Add your own descriptions to pinned images
- Advertise and receive insights with a free business account
- Build an emotional connection by sharing your art & inspiration with followers
- Linked images drive traffic to your website where fans can buy art
- Enjoy the community of artists and collectors
- Less social interaction required than other social media channels
- Sell art directly with "buyable" pins
- Schedule pins ahead of time with scheduling sites

Cons:

- Bad pictures and descriptions can turn away potential buyers
- Reach on Pinterest is not as broad as social media sites like Facebook

LinkedIn

Expected Use: Keep profile and posts up-to-date

Pros:

- Join groups that promote artist opportunities and art business advice
- Connect with artist associations
- Build a professional profile of your art career
- Highlight your achievements, skills, and projects
- Share blog posts, links, photos, videos, etc.

Cons:

- Not where buyers look for art
- Users aren't as active as other social media sites
- Socializing is on more of a professional level than a personal one

Now it's time to decide.

What site do your potential buyers use the most? Do you need a place to share your art blog? Are you worried about having to socialize? How much time do you have for posting?

Now that you've seen the pros and cons of each social media platform, you need to choose the ones that work best for your art business. Asking yourself questions like these will help you align the right social media channels with your schedule, personality, and art business needs. With a few well-done profiles, you'll boost your art brand online and actually have more time to focus on your art.

- What are your client's goals and how does your art help the client achieve them?
- Where do your customers buy art?
- Where do these buyers live, travel, or hang out?
- What are their hobbies? Attitudes? Style? Interests?
- What type of buyers understand your work?
- Why do your clients buy art?
- What connection can you find between you, your art, and your buyers?
- What kind of marketing would reach them best (word of mouth, email, social media)?

With these answers, you can set up a well thought out plan of attack for your art marketing strategy. You can go where your buyers go, form important relationships, and know exactly how to talk with them confidently about buying your artwork.

DEFINING YOUR SOCIAL MEDIA BRAND

(WHILE STILL FEELING HUMAN)

Follow these four principles used by professional marketers to build your art business brand on social media.

When you're ready to turn your art into a business, the same approach holds true for you as it does for any business: you need to develop a strong brand that will drive your marketing plans.

This can sound easier than it actually is, especially if you're not quite sure what the difference between branding and marketing is. Or, where to start.

So what exactly is the difference between branding and marketing?

We reached out to Bonnie Glendinning, a brand strategist for artists and creator of The Artists' Mentor, to nail down the difference between branding and marketing and why they both matter for your art business.

Follow these four principles used by professional marketers to build your brand and grow your business.

Dig Deep to Discover Your Brand

For artists who find it challenging to develop their brand, the first step is to throw out the misconception that a brand is just a logo and a website.

Branding is a process of self-discovery. You will need to think about what your brand will mean to your audience once you present it to them.

Why do you make the kind of artwork you do? Do you have a common message you are trying to get across with your art?

This message will be your unique mission and value proposition. It will be what people think of when they hear your name and it's what will set you apart from other artists.

"You are selling an emotion and experience to your customers," says Bonnie, "your brand will bridge the relationship gap from a stranger to a customer."

Leverage Your Brand to Engage an Audience

Your brand is the compass that guides your marketing—it leads you to a strong following. You will market to your following and earn their trust. Trust is what leads to sales.

Branding could even be considered more important than marketing for scaling a business.

"Your brand is the foundation of your business and makes you relatable to your customers," says Bonnie. "If you are not a re-

latable brand then you will not have customers to market to."

It is easy to commit to your brand if you keep your personality a part of the message. If you are true to yourself and your beliefs, it will most likely be reflected in your brand. Plus, it should lead you to an audience that can relate to you not just your product, but the lifestyle and values around your artwork.

When you have a relatable brand, selling your work will feel more natural to you and the marketing aspects should come easier.

Interact With Your Customers

Marketing is simply an expression of your brand. If your goal is to increase sells, which it is for most art businesses, then you have to promote your branded message.

Artist Christine Rasmussen of My Art Resources defines marketing for your art business simply as your pitch. It is how you tell someone why they should buy your artwork.

You use marketing to interact with your customers and community.

If you want to take it one step further, you can use your defined audience to determine where to market to them. If your ideal customer likes to go to local farmers markets, place some of your marketing materials in that area. If your brand is focused on making people feel connected to the earth, try creating a campaign where you donate portions of the proceeds to an environmental nonprofit. This will make your brand recognizable and set you apart from other art businesses.

Be Consistent With Your Brand in Your Marketing Efforts

Once you have nailed down what defines your brand, it will carry through in everything your customers come into contact with: email correspondence, social media, live events, print and digital materials, vendors, partners, and all marketing aspects.

Bonnie leaves us with this: "Being consistent with your art brand across all touchpoints will ultimately provide market differentiation and leverage, engender a loyal following, inspire diversification to cross into new growth areas, and help command a premium price."

Have Fun and Stay True to Yourself

Most importantly, have fun with your art business. Incorporate your creative strengths into your marketing, be authentic to yourself in crafting your brand, and make your art and art business come together in a cohesive and meaningful way.

GROWING YOUR AUDIENCE ONLINE

As an artist, it can be intimidating to see a world full of opportunity yet not know how to navigate through it to reach potential clients.

Digital marketing has been used in every industry and plays a key role in expanding businesses, even in the art world.

It isn't surprising then how powerful it can be to have a strong presence as an artist online. Social media, in particular, is bridging the gap between artists and buyers.

The way you go about marketing your artwork to an audience determines their success in maintaining a fan base and establishing new ones.

Here are six tips to help artists get started in the rapidly expanding online visual art market.

Test Your Options, But Narrow Your Focus.

Social media is a powerful instrument to gain popularity for your work. You have probably heard that you should be setting up accounts on Facebook, Instagram, Pinterest and Twitter, and staying active by interacting with fans.

The only problem with this is that it often turns into a full-time job. And, what's worse is that unanswered messages and abandoned accounts can often have a negative impact on your art business.

If you aren't sure which channel is right for you, commit to one or two and do them well. Instagram has become the top choice for many artists as it is the easiest way to post progress photos, show a glimpse into your life as an artist and connect with collectors.

Setting up a professional portfolio of your work online is also a great way to share a polished and comprehensive body of work with your social audiences. You can do this at the click of a button on sites like Artwork Archive. You should be showcasing your professionalism as well as connecting with your fans.

Encourage User-Generated Content

User-generated content is defined as content that has been created by a customer of your product that is publicly available to other potential customers. In this context, it can mean clients promoting your artwork through pictures, testimonials, tweets, blog posts, hashtags etc. to encourage prospective clients into browsing through your art.

According to Easil, 92% of customers worldwide say they trust word of mouth more than advertising.

With this in mind, try asking clients to write reviews of your work and share them on your site or social media accounts. You can also run a contest on Instagram that requires users to repost an image of your artwork with one lucky winner getting to take home that piece. This is a great and low-cost way of getting fans to genuinely interact with your brand and share your artwork in their networks.

You may see other ways that people do this online.

Alex Pardee is a hugely popular artist on Instagram. In one of his posts, he mentions fellow artist Greg Aronowitz's work and speaks very highly of his creation. So, don't just make it all about you all the time! Participate in the community and give a little back. You have to give a little to get a little. Good karma goes a long way.

SOCIAL MEDIA, IN PARTICULAR, IS BRIDGING THE GAP BETWEEN ARTISTS AND BUYERS.

Plus, it's a fun way to engage with other artists and take some of the pressure off of always feeling the marketing stress of having to post "on brand."

Share Special Offers and Promotions

Special offers and promotions are a tried and true way to ramp up your sales and acquire new artwork enthusiasts. Doing something out of the ordinary, for example, posting a limited discount code, having a one-day online auction for a new piece, or asking people to share a screenshot of your work for sweepstakes, is a fresh and attractive way to draw in clients.

The key is to sprinkle these into your regular mix. You don't want to diminish the value of your work by constantly discounting it. But, finding fun ways to get people excited about a deal or a new limited edition print or product.

Use Live Features

If you are going to an event, sharing your process, or doing an artwork reveal, it helps to post content updates of a live event. This allows you to start conversations around the event and provides a response to your work.

Facebook, Instagram, and Snapchat all have live options for creating instant content. This type of interaction is seen as authentic and behind the scenes and helps you can stay connected with your virtual audience.

Make Tutorials on YouTube

If you aren't into using the live features and want something that will have a longer shelf life, consider making YouTube tutorials. This can be an especially good option if you have a highly developed skill or unique technique.

A short tutorial on how to make an intricate piece of art, with the processes you use to create it, will keep your audience involved and curious about the final outcome. This raises the bar for you as an artist as you are willing to share your creativity with a wide variety of people.

The video about how to draw a realistic eye by illustrator Mark Crilley has been viewed over 24 million times and viewers keep coming back to see what he has made.

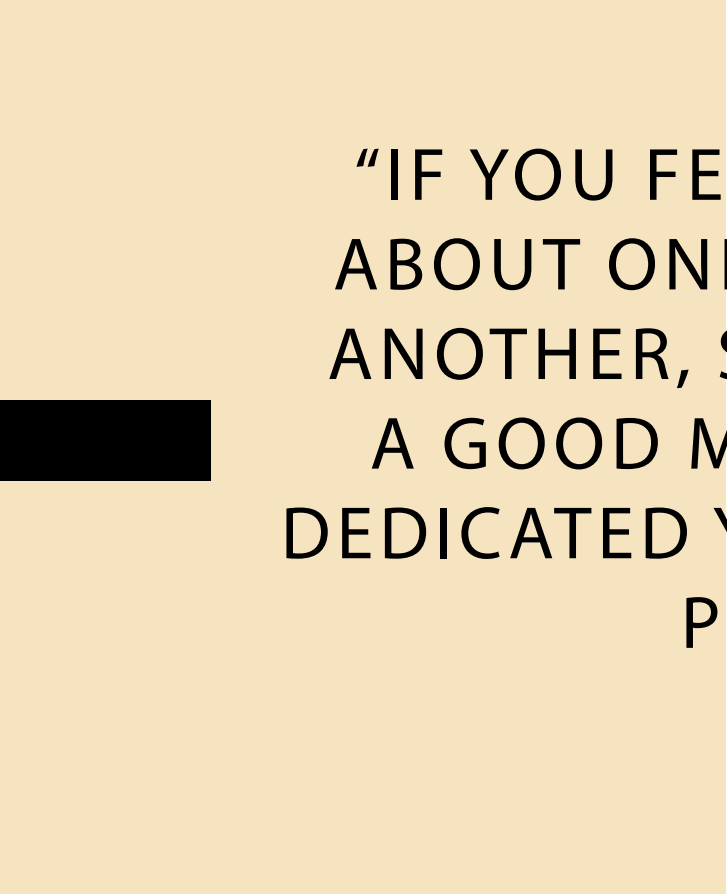
Share Your Blogs

Another great way to share techniques and your experiences as an artist is through a blog. Just like videos, you will get the attention of people online looking for tutorials, art advice, and anything else related to your art practice.

If a reader is able to connect with the story behind the piece of art he is more likely to purchase it. A story always makes art more relatable and popular.

Need inspiration? Janice Tanton and Kristen Kieffer are two examples of artists who take their art to their audience through the written word.

You don't need to do it all. You do need to do it well. Use these ideas as a jumping off point for building your audience online. If you feel more excited about one platform than another, start there—it's a good measure of how dedicated you will be to the process. Don't feel like you need to do everything, but rather focus on what you think you can do well.



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GETTING YOUR FIRST 1000 FOLLOWERS

THE FIRST THOUSAND FOLLOWERS ARE USUALLY THE HARDEST TO ACQUIRE.

You've seen the stats. You know that when done right, Instagram can become a huge asset to your art business.

But when you only have a few hundred followers (let's face it, mostly family and friends), it can feel like an eternity waiting for that coveted notification to pop up—the one announcing you got another follower.

If your only plan is to post a picture, sit and wait, it's going to be a long road ahead. The truth is, building your Instagram followers takes a healthy dose of effort and strategy.

Now, smaller accounts can be harder to build.

The internet is filled with tips and tricks to grow your followers, but most are either geared toward already large accounts, or they ignore the fact that not all followers are created equal. Cracking a thousand engaged followers on Instagram is no easy task for artists, especially because small accounts get little attention and aren't favored by the algorithms yet.

But hope is not lost! Cracking a thousand followers is not only possible but completely doable with the right strategy.

Get started with the basics

There is a tried-and-true recipe when it comes to Instagram success. Yes, different cooks will throw in different spices from time to time, but no one can ignore the main ingredients. Without them, the recipe simply won't work.

So, what are we talking about in terms of using Instagram? Let's dive in:

Images: First and foremost, always, always, always post high-quality photos. That includes good composition, lighting, cropping, etc. Use filters very carefully and sparingly when it comes to posting shots of your artwork. People will not stick around if your images aren't up to par.

Username: Use your art business name, if it's available so that it's consistent with the rest of your online presence. Typically it will be your full name with a keyword like "art" attached. Remember, you want it to be as easy as possible for people to find your account.

Bio: Keep it short, sweet, and attention-grabbing. Make it extremely clear what sort of value people will get from following you. Use keywords that your audience would search for in the description.

Privacy Settings: If you are using your account to promote your art business, it should not be private! Otherwise, there's no point wasting time on social media.

When people come to your page, having these bases covered will help ensure they stick around.

Ignore those "quick fixes"

You may have heard of the "follow back" trick on Instagram—where following a random account will prompt a notification from your page, and once they click to see who you are, hopefully they are enticed enough to follow your page, too.

While this can work in certain situations, there are a few problems with using this as your entire growth strategy.

One, who has time to find a thousand random accounts to follow? Two, what are the odds they actually follow you back? And three, what are the odds that the people who follow you back are the people you actually want to be reaching?

Having a bunch of Instagram followers is swell, but it won't do your business an ounce of good if they don't actually care about supporting your art.

That's why it's important to always make sure you are going after your target audience when you are trying to grow your account. Here's how to gain followers the right way.

Connect with the right people

While you've probably already connected with family and friends (learn how here), the next step is to identify some Instagram accounts connected to your target audience. This could be galleries, interior designers, art consultants, fellow artists, artist organizations, etc.

The first step? Start following them. If they follow you back, great! But that's not where the story ends.

Step two: slowly but consistently start liking and commenting on their latest posts. Be complimentary or pose questions, but always be insightful. There's nothing worse than an Insta user clearly using you for their own gain.

The goal is to be social as possible so that these accounts (and the ones following them) see your comments and are impressed enough to check you out. You'll not only spark curiosity about your own page, but you'll begin to build relationships. And, these interactions will make them want to engage with your posts as well.

Which brings us to the Instagram algorithm...

Like with every relationship, communication is key

Thanks to Instagram's ever-changing algorithm, it's now estimated that you see only 10% of the posts from people you follow. And, the same goes for the people following you!

So, what's the trick? Engagement.

In fact, the more people engage with your post, the higher it appears in your followers' feeds. And the people who engage with you consistently are more likely to see your posts in the future.

So if you'd much rather schedule a post and be done with it, think about it like this:

The more engagement you get on your posts, the more people will see it in their feeds and search results. Which means a higher chance for even more people to engage with it and discover your account. And the more engagement you get, the more people will want to follow you. Hence, the more followers you will get!

The bottom line is, you get out what you put in. You need to engage with others so that you will get engagement and followers yourself.

But that means you have to spend the time communicating on other people's posts (so they remember you and eventually come over to your account), as well as posting amazing content of your own that people will want to interact with and follow.

Post the best content possible

Remember the very first item on our list of basics? High-quality images.

Think about the posts you hit "like" on as you're scrolling through Instagram. Friends may forgive a blurry photo because they know and love you. But, when you're trying to pique the interest of collectors across the world, they may not be convinced when your photos—and captions—are poor.

Your photos need to catch their attention. Excite them. Leave them in awe of your abilities as an artist.

And, there are so many creative ways for artists to post on Instagram and Instagram Stories. Consider the possibilities: progress posts, before and after shots, behind-the-scenes in the studio, a timelapse of your process, quotes that fuel your practice, voting between two works, a quick video tutorial, testimonials about your work, a revelation you've had, exciting news, etc.

And your caption is just as important as the image itself. While it may be easy to throw up a piece's title and price, your followers yearn for more. They don't want to be blatantly sold to, they are bombarded with ads all day long.

No, they want to be enticed. They want to be told a story—who you are, what you're feeling, your inspiration, the problems you solved, how the artwork came to be. You've literally painted a picture, but now you need to do it figuratively.

Every post should start a conversation. The goal is engagement, don't forget!

One of the best ways to do this is by asking thoughtful questions at the end of your posts. Even if your followers don't respond at first, eventually they will. Especially if you respond to others'. Keep asking and keep engaging.

Finally, before you post anything, ask yourself if you would engage with this post. Is it worth it to share? If your answer is no, or you doubt if you would engage with the post, then maybe something needs to be tweaked.

Find the type of voice and posts that speak to your audience, then do more of it!

#Hashtag like the best of them

Hashtags wield fascinating powers. They are the keywords and phrases that make an image searchable, so your post gets discovered by the viewers most interested in seeing it—A.K.A your target audience.

But to harness these targeting powers, you have to use the right hashtags. If your mind is racing with keywords, that's a great start. But, the first rule when it comes to hashtagging is to narrow it down.

While #art is extremely popular (it's tagged in over 350 million posts), it could also apply to anything: someone strolling through the Met, a box of pastels, a styled plate of food, or even a sunset—all extremely different results.

That's why you need to get specific.

Marketing maven Hubspot explains, "As a user, I'm more likely to find what I need if I search for something specific, and when your business comes up for my specific search request, I'm more likely to be happy with what I found."

Think about the exact keywords your audience will search for. For instance, #abstractart may be more specific than #art, but #blueabstract might be specific enough to bring you a new buyer.

You want your hashtags to be popular enough that people are searching for them, but not so popular that you get lost in the competition. Type a hashtag into Instagram's search bar, and it shows you related hashtags to add to your list. Or, take a look at what other artists and influencers with the same audience are using, and try them for yourself.

Instagram allows you to use up to thirty hashtags at a time, but different numbers work for different people. The magic number could be seven or it could be twenty, reminds HubSpot. The best way to figure out what works for your art business is to simply test it out.

Social media success is all about testing the waters and adjusting your sails accordingly.

And for faster posting, keep an updated doc full of different hashtags for different kinds of posts. That way you can just pick and choose the ones that fit and copy and paste.


Make a plan and stick to it

When you post regularly, you stay on your followers' radar. And, you are able to build a connection where they consistently like and comment on your posts.

So when you aren't consistent with posting, you are more likely to lose engagement and get lost in the dreaded algorithm shuffle.

Even if it's a few times a week, pick a posting schedule you feel comfortable committing to. Enough to get on people's radars, but not so much you burn out. You need time to create art, too!

With a free business account, Instagram offers insights such as fan demographics, how often your post was viewed, if they found you through hashtags, when your followers are online, and more. Knowing the right time to post can make a huge difference when it comes to engagement. And the faster you get engagement, the better.



IT'S NOW ESTIMATED THAT YOU
SEE ONLY 10% OF THE POSTS
FROM PEOPLE YOU FOLLOW—
THE SAME GOES FOR THE
PEOPLE FOLLOWING YOU.

SO, WHAT'S THE TRICK?
ENGAGEMENT."

Remember, besides posting, you need to make time for quality interactions with certain accounts. Creating a marketing calendar can be a great way to keep track of it all.

Don't keep your account a secret

Sometimes all it takes to get more Instagram followers is a little visibility. Get the Insta word out by including a link to your account on your other social media pages, and remind new fans to follow you periodically.

Don't stop there! Put an Instagram icon on your Artwork Archive profile, and add your username to your business cards, event materials, and more. Have a newsletter? Share your account with your email followers. All these steps can add up to get more eyes on your art account.

It can be done!

Getting those first thousand followers can feel like a never-ending battle. While it takes some time and hard work, these tips are meant to compound one another. Taking care of all of these elements will eventually help your small Instagram account turn into a booming asset for your art business.

Then, when you start making sales, you can keep everything organized on Artwork Archive. Mark which pieces have been sold, generate invoices to get paid and track sales insights so your Instagram account stays profitable.

MAKING MONEY ON SOCIAL MEDIA

"I can post a painting and it will sell before the paint is dry."

It's the truth for artist Ashley Longshore, who sells her eccentric pop art for upwards of \$30,000 straight off of Instagram.

And, she's not the only one. Artist Chris Austin enjoys "flash sales" of his latest work, getting emails from eager buyers within minutes of posting on Instagram.

With these examples and more in mind, it's safe to say Instagram has become the social media platform for artists. It's launching careers, eliminating the need for big-name critics to call the shots, and helping artists connect with buyers across the globe willing to pay for their work.

So, how does an artist turn their Instagram feed into another revenue stream?

It all comes down to getting more engaged followers. Because, the more popular your account is on Instagram, the more in demand your art will be.

But the truth is, gaining followers doesn't happen overnight. It takes a healthy dose of effort and strategy. So, whether you need to post better content or learn how to hashtag the right way, it's time to step up your game.

Check out eleven ways to attract more followers and make Instagram more profitable for your art business.

Post the best of the best on your feed

You wouldn't dream of letting a piece out of your studio until you were satisfied with it, right? Well, you need that same attention to detail in your Instagram posts!

Your Instagram account is an extension of who you are both creatively and professionally. Blurry, poorly-lit images give off a bad creative vibe—pretty much saying you don't understand design. And, who wants to buy art from an artist who doesn't understand, or at least care about, good design?

A clean background and natural light are always a good option when it comes to capturing your artwork. Set your art up by the nearest window, and remember to tap on your phone screen to focus!

Don't forget to edit your photos if needed, so they look like the real thing! If the colors and lighting don't show the true quality of your artwork, potential buyers are either going to be turned off from your Instagram feed altogether, or they'll be annoyed that the piece they thought they were buying doesn't match what they got in the mail.

There are a bunch of apps available these days to get your art looking as true-to-life as possible.

How would you explain your work in 3 seconds?

Branding can be a foreign concept for those artists without a marketing degree. Basically, it means posting images about different things, but using a cohesive style (both aesthetically and in writing) for each post.

We know what you're thinking, why should artists care? But, it's really a magical thing!

With the short attention spans of people online these days, you only have an instant to grab their attention and make a statement. With the right branding on your feed, followers will understand who you are and what your art is all about, all at first glance.

And, the more impressive and succinct your Instagram feed is, the more credible and professional you will seem—giving you an edge up when it comes to collectors. If you're ready to get started, think about what kind of art you create and the kind of people that buy it. What will they respond to the most? Will your posts be friendly and colorful or edgy and bold? Use these answers to determine your brand strategy.

Whether you use a certain filter, hashtag, writing voice, etc., stick to a style that represents you and your art so that your target customers are poised to buy.

Don't underestimate the power of creative content

We've said it before, and we'll say it again: always go for quality over quantity when it comes to social media.

Think about the posts you hit "like" on as you're scrolling through Instagram. Friends may forgive a blurry, spontaneous photo because they know and love you. But, when you're trying to pique the interest of collectors across the world, they may not be convinced when your photos—and captions—are poor.

Your photos need to catch their attention. Excite them. Leave them in awe of your abilities as an artist.

If you are scrambling to find something to share, consider the possibilities. Try posting progress posts, before and after shots, behind-the-scenes in the studio, a timelapse of your process, quotes that fuel your practice, a vote between two works, a video tutorial, testimonials about your work, a revelation you've had, exciting news, etc.

Or, do a little digging on artist accounts you admire, then make their ideas your own!

Instagram is a wonderful chance to share your experience as an artist with your fans. Stay enthusiastic, authentic, and follow the 80/20 rule, and people will flock to your intriguing account. The door is then opened for you to sell more art and hear about other profitable opportunities.

A picture says a 1000 words, but words also say something

"Here's a picture of my art you know nothing about and here is the price"—something seems a bit off about that sort of caption, doesn't it?

While it may be easy to throw up a piece's title and price, your followers yearn for more. They don't want to be blatantly sold to, they are bombarded with ads all day long.

No, they want to be enticed. They want to be told a story—who you are, what you're feeling, your inspiration, the problems you solved, how the artwork came to be. Letting people in on your inspirations, process, and story behind the work can be the tipping point for customers to click emotionally and pull out the checkbook.

Of course, you can acknowledge when something is still for sale, but be creative about it. Ending with, "Excited to see where this piece finds a home!" does the trick without being too boring.

Every post should start a conversation. The goal is engagement, don't forget!

One of the best ways to do this is by asking thoughtful questions at the end of your posts. Even if your followers don't respond at first, eventually they will. Especially if you respond to others! Keep asking and keep engaging.

Finally, before you post anything, ask yourself if you would engage with this post. Is it worth it to share? If your answer is no, or you doubt if you would engage with the post, then maybe something needs to be tweaked.

Find your posting “sweet spot”

Social media gurus at CoSchedule determined that posting one to two times a day on Instagram is the sweet spot. If you post more than once, remember to mix up what type of content you are sharing with your potential art buyers to keep their attention.

But no matter how many times you post, keep it regular! You need to stay fresh in people’s minds, not forgotten.

When you post regularly, you stay on your followers’ radar. And, you are able to build a connection where they consistently like and comment on your posts. So when you aren’t consistent with posting, you are more likely to lose engagement and get lost in the dreaded algorithm shuffle.

Even if it’s a few times a week, pick a posting schedule you feel comfortable committing to. Enough to get on people’s radars, but not so much you burn out. You need time to create art, too!

The best time to post?

With a free business account, Instagram offers insights such as fan demographics, how often your post was viewed, if they found you through hashtags, when your followers are online, and more. Knowing the right time to post can make a huge difference when it comes to engagement. And the faster you get engagement, the better.

Remember, besides posting, you need to make time for quality interactions with certain accounts. Creating a marketing calendar can be a great way to keep track of it all.

And these days, you don’t have to sit around and wait for the clock to strike posting time. Work smarter and save yourself some time by using a scheduling tool for Instagram. Instagram didn’t always allow scheduling, but now that it does, artists should hop on board A.S.A.P.

Become an influencer yourself

Here’s yet another way to make money from your artist Instagram account that you might not have realized: when your following becomes big enough, companies might be willing to pay you to promote their products in your posts!

Of course, you need to truly love and believe in the quality of that paintbrush, clay, or watercolor paper, but it’s a great way to rake in some extra money for your Instagram efforts.

And it’s not just giant accounts that are getting benefits. Artists or individuals with 5k-20k followers are considered micro-influencers and companies often reach out and seek these artists because of the high engagement rates on their accounts.

So, you don’t need a million followers to start seeing the benefits. Start small and build your account in genuine way.

In the end...

The bigger the Instagram fan base, the more interested buyers will be fighting over your art. Following these steps for getting more art fans on Instagram will help you turn the social media app into something profitable for your art business.

Then when you start making sales, you can keep everything organized on Artwork Archive. Mark which pieces have been sold, generate invoices to get paid and track sales insights so your Instagram account stays profitable.

USING YOUTUBE TO PROMOTE YOUR ART

Did you know that YouTube has over a billion users—almost one-third of all people on the Internet? Imagine that many people having access to your art!

Take your art marketing one step further with YouTube as you share videos about your art that will give your customers a unique glimpse into your life as an artist. So, where do you start?

We've put together some YouTube tips for artists to impress potential buyers and spread the word about your art business, so you can sell more art.

Film a Demonstration Video

If deciding what to share on YouTube has you stumped, try out one of these ideas. Showcase your expertise as an artist with demonstrations, a timelapse of your art being finished, or a review of your tools and materials while you create. Or, simply sit down and speak about your best art business advice.

Videos that share your techniques and process are hugely popular in artist groups and on other platforms like Facebook and Instagram. And don't think you are giving away all your secrets!

Educating potential buyers about the process also gives them a whole new appreciation for your art and craft.

Target Your Audience

As much as you would like everyone to enjoy your style of art, there's no use in trying to sell abstract, metal sculptures to someone who collects oil paintings of impressionist landscapes. Your precious time and resources are better used when marketing your art to the right crowd.

Brainstorm which keywords customers would use to describe and search for your type of art online. Whether your keywords illustrate the medium, color, or style of your art, include those words in the title, description, and keyword tags of your video to help your target audience more easily find its way to your art.

Keep Length in Mind

Hold onto a potential buyer's attention by keeping your videos no more than five minutes long. On "The Artist's Guide to Youtube," artist and blogger Natasha Wescoat suggests aiming for a video between thirty seconds and three minutes long. Edit your videos with free editing software like Windows Movie Maker or iMovie for Mac.

Call Customers to Action

"What is the one thing that you want people to do after watching your video? Join your mailing list? Bid on an auction for your art?" asks artist Lori McNee. Answer this question, and at the end of your video mention what you would like fans to do next.

Mention that viewers should click on the links in your video's description. Tell them to see more pieces on your Artwork Archive Public Page, visit your artist website to sign up for your newsletter, or come see your work at your latest showing.

Brand Your Business

Lori McNee also recommends including your logo and quickly introducing yourself and the name of your art business at the beginning and end of your videos. This will help your brand stay present in the minds of your viewers.

Another way to spread awareness of your brand? Be social on YouTube. "Like" other artists' videos, add a comment, or share the fascinating videos you come across on social media.

What should you do after making your video?

Promote Your Video

Don't waste time waiting for people to come across your video. After you've uploaded it on YouTube, share the video on your social media, newsletter, and artist blog. Make sure you include a link to your YouTube channel on your artist website. The more potential buyers can learn about and see your art, the better!

Get Insight

The final step is to track how well your videos are doing with YouTube's Analytics. See how engaged your audience is, which geographic locations are watching, a video's performance over a certain amount of time, and more.

Use these insights to inform your art marketing strategy and see which videos help your art business the most.

Now get filming!

COMMON QUESTIONS ABOUT FACEBOOK

You may have questions about what to write and the best ways to engage your new audience.

Luckily for you, you don't need to complete a social media marketing degree to gain useful, actionable information for your artist Facebook page.

From the best times to post to catchy writing tips, we answered four common Facebook questions artists have, so you can skip the stress and go straight to helping your art business thrive using this great marketing tool.

What Time and Day Should I Post?

Everyone wants to know, "What's the best time to post on Facebook?"

According to a Buffer study, the best time to post to Facebook is between 1pm – 3pm on during the week and Saturdays. They also found that engagement rates are 18% higher on Thursdays and Fridays. However, other studies uncovered other "best times" to post. Hubspot found that it's Thursdays and Fridays from 1 p.m. to 3 p.m., TrackMaven uncovered that it's Thursday at 8 p.m., CoSchedule found 1–4 p.m. late into the week and on weekends were best, while BuzzSumo's study suggests posting in off-peak hours.

Clearly, posting at one certain time does not guarantee success. "Whenever you post to Facebook, you're essentially competing against at least 1,500 others post for a place in the News Feed and timing is only one of a number of factors that determines which content appears," the Buffer blog explains.

As with any marketing endeavor, you have to see what works best for your art business. And, Facebook has an easy tool to help! Facebook's Business Page Insights allows you to see a bunch of statistics, including what times and days your fans are online, so you can experiment with what times your followers respond to the best.

"A comprehensive understanding of your own audience on Facebook and how your content is performing will bring more success than generic insights drawn from studies on a wide variety of Pages from a range of industries and brands," explains the social media management site.

What Should I Make My Cover Photo?

By now you know that your profile picture should be a professional, friendly, and high-quality photo of yourself. But what should you put as your cover photo?

Your cover photo is a fantastic space to capture attention for your art business. It's the biggest feature and probably the first thing your fans will see when they visit your Facebook page. That's why it's so important to make it look good, whether it's a bold, colorful picture of your art or a small marketing blurb about your art business.

You can get creative by adding text to your picture or making a collage with Canva, just don't go overboard! People are more drawn to pictures than words, so HubSpot suggests making your photo mostly visual, keeping text to less than 20% of the image.

**A CRUCIAL PART OF
BUILDING YOUR BUSINESS IS
LEVERAGING SOCIAL MEDIA,
NOT ONLY TO GROW YOUR
AUDIENCE, BUT ALSO TO
CONNECT WITH CLIENTS AND
OTHER ARTISTS.**

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How Much Information Should I Include?

The real question is, “Are you including enough?”

We recommend including as much information as possible in your About section—without writing a novel. Not only does it make your art business seem more professional and organized, but it shows potential buyers that you put effort into seeing your business succeed.

Adding a short description or your mission as an artist allows fans to build a connection, while including your website and other contact information lets them reach out if they are interested in looking at or buying your art. You can even include multiple websites at once, so feel free to put in links to your personal website, blog, and Artwork Archive Public Page.

Drive people to your website with the goal of selling your art by always including a link to where your artwork is available in the caption of your photos. You can also add a “Call to Action” button at the top of your Facebook page to direct people to your artist site too. Simply click “Create Call to Action” located next to the “Like” button at the top of your page and follow the prompts.

You can choose what the button says from a number of options including “Learn More” and “Shop Now”. You can also choose the website page that the button takes people to when they click.

What Should I Write?

When people can scroll so easily through their Facebook newsfeeds, you have to make sure you capture their attention quickly. The Social Media Examiner argues that the first three or four words of your post are crucial to grab focus.

The biggest tip to remember?

Don’t be overly promotional. Even if you don’t mean to be, it can make you appear too salesy. Only posting images of your newest pieces and their price probably won’t be as effective as showing your followers your whole art business—your process, your inspiration, interesting art-related articles, your successes and struggles, and even your peers’ successes, too.

What’s the bottom line?

Your art business is unique and so are the potential buyers and fans coming to your Facebook page. Start with these tips to find what works for your particular audience.

Focus on finding the right time and day to post to your followers, having a cover photo that enhances your brand, including enough information so your fans can connect with you, and posting engaging content that illustrates all the great aspects of your art business.

Mastering these Facebook elements is just one more great way to help your art get discovered.

SOME ADVICE FROM THE EXPERTS

**YOU HAVE THE VISION.
YOU HAVE THE DRIVE. BUT,
YOU HAVEN'T DONE THIS
BEFORE.**

Looking for an art marketing expert? Cory Huff of The Abundant Artist is a tried-and-true online art marketing whiz! He has been teaching effective internet marketing to artists since 2009. Through blog posts, coaching, podcasts and webinars, Cory empowers artists to take control of their art business. We asked Cory to share a few tips on how artists can effectively market their art online.

Depending on who your audience is, social media can be really useful. Cory suggests narrowing your focus to Facebook and

Instagram.

Share and Advertise Your Art on Facebook

CH: Facebook is huge—there are so many users, groups, and subgroups. I see lots of artists getting a good foothold in Facebook by joining groups. For example, if you're an artist that makes spiritual art, there are a couple dozen mindfulness and meditation groups on Facebook. Participate in these communities and talk to people who are potentially interested in your art. You can also create your own Facebook page. Showcase photos of your work in progress, in the studio and displayed in buyers' homes.

I do recommend having an advertising budget. You can get away with \$5 a day for a couple of weeks and get good results if you know what you're doing. Facebook is generally a loss leader strategy. If you want to sell \$10,000 pieces, odds are you probably won't be able to on Facebook. But, artists can sell \$1,000 and \$2,000 pieces online and often sell quite a few works for less than a \$1,000. Later on, upsell these buyers once they know you and your artwork. Facebook can lead you to bigger sales in the future. Target people based on their interests and activities. For example, I worked with an artist in Hawaii who created traditional Hawaiian art. We targeted just people who live in Hawaii, are age 25-60, speak English, and have college degrees. We ran ads targeting this specific audience. The artist spent \$30 on Facebook ads and sold \$3,000 worth of work. It doesn't always work like this, but it can.

Attract Dealers and Collectors on Instagram

CH: Instagram is an image only and mobile only network. People can comb through images on their phone and people can easily scroll through artwork. It's perfect for artists who want to capture the attention of art dealers and agents. Instagram is a must do if you're looking for those. You can also use Instagram to market directly to art collectors. There are lots of art collectors on Instagram looking for the next best artist. Artist Ashley Longshore has sold \$30,000 worth of art on Instagram. Vogue says Instagram is the best new way to sell art online. It's full of well-heeled people looking for the next great artist.

Take Advantage of Email Marketing

CH: Email marketing is probably the most underrated form of art marketing. Artists shy away from it to their own detriment. They usually jump on social media without ever sending out an email. The challenge with only marketing on social media is that people are mainly there to socialize. Your images are competing with thousands of other distractions on social media. Email is a direct line to someone's inbox.

Build Relationships Through Email

Your emails should be about building a relationship with your contacts. If you sell a small piece to a collector and you get his or her email address, you should send a thank you email. Also say "if you're interested, here's a link to my website/portfolio." Another week later, send an email that tells the collector why you make the art that you do. Give insight in what creating your work is like in the form of a video or link to a blog post. People love

behind the scenes and previews of what's to come. Every few weeks give them a teaser. This could be upcoming work and past successes - such as your work in other people's homes. Seeing your work in another's collection gives people social proof.

"Someone buys a new piece from Jolie Guillebeau off every email she sends." -Cory Huff

Send Emails as Often as They Can Be Interesting

Artists often ask me how often should I email? The more important question is, how often can I be interesting? I know some daily painters that email artists three to five times a week. Daily painter Jolie Guillebeau creates a new 100 piece series two to three times a year. She emails her list three to five times a week, with a new piece from her series. Someone buys a new piece off every email.

**"FACEBOOK CAN LEAD YOU TO
BIGGER SALES IN THE FUTURE."
-CORY HUFF**

TIME SAVING TOOLS

With a full to do list, it can be hard to remember to post regularly. So, what if you had a tool that automatically posted a line up of social media posts? Well now you do and it's at your fingertips!

How to Save Time with a Social Media Scheduling Tool:

1. Plan all your weekly social media posts in advance.
2. Schedule them with your social media scheduling tool of choice.
3. Save!
4. Let social media handle itself so you can get back to creating art.

Free Social Media Scheduling Tools:

Buffer

With Buffer Free you can schedule up to 10 social media posts in advance for a specific time and day. And you can see which posts perform well with Buffer's basic analytics. Buffer Free allows you to connect one profile on Twitter, Facebook, LinkedIn, and Google+. It's simple and very user-friendly.

TweetDeck

TweetDeck (just for Twitter) is for a more frequent Twitter user. You can schedule tweets in advance, but there's so much more. You can create different columns for content such as favorites, mentions, or specific hashtags. This allows you to easily see how people are reacting to your tweets. You can also connect multiple Twitter accounts to your TweetDeck. This is perfect if you have a personal account separate from your art business account.

Hootsuite

Keep your social media presence active, even when you're not. With Hootsuite's Free plan you can manage three different social profiles and up to 30 scheduled messages. You can even use the Hootsuite mobile app to easily edit, approve, and manage scheduled messages on the fly!

Facebook Publishing Tools

If you haven't gotten yourself a free business account on Facebook, now's the time! Because it can do so much more for you than a regular, personal page—including scheduling unlimited posts directly on Facebook to save time. Plus, it's a great option for when your other scheduling tools limit the number of profiles you can connect.

Canva

Want beautiful graphics to enhance your social media pages? Look no further than Canva, a simplified graphic design tool online. It's as quick and easy as drag-and-drop, and they offer hundreds of templates. And with Canva's newest publishing tools, you can cut out the middleman and publish your designs directly to Facebook, Twitter, Pinterest, LinkedIn, and more.

SMQueue

SMQueue Free allows you to schedule up to 12 tweets at a time. You can schedule each post for a specific day and time. And get basic analytics reports to see which posts had the best success. SMQueue Free also lets you manage up to three profiles at once. They support Twitter, Facebook, and LinkedIn.

Start saving time and schedule your social media posts today!

THE IMPACT

What does it mean to be introduced to the art world through Instagram? How will you display an artist's 50-year retrospective when their 2016 exhibition is a series of GIFs, contained on a thumb drive?

Technology is forcing the art world to grapple with questions like these, and young art collectors have the answers. We spoke with art world insiders to examine how emerging trends in the art world are shaped by technology. Here's what they had to say:

Social media fuels engagement in the arts

"Facebook in Detroit is huge," explains Paulina Petkoski, Co-Founder, Playground Detroit. "It's the number one way that people are able to find out what's happening in the city."

Facebook is now 13 years old and has 1.8 billion active users. The likes of Instagram and Snapchat are even younger. These platforms have altered the way we communicate, and they connect artists and collectors like never before. They're disrupting the traditional gatekeepers of the art world and creating opportunities for new players.

Technology is opening the art world to new people

Augusta Morrison, Education Associate at the Museum of Contemporary Art Detroit agrees.

"Instagram is one way that people are learning a lot about art. Even Detroit contemporary art."

Two of those new players are Paulina Petkoski and Samantha Banks, founders of Playground Detroit. They've found a sweet spot by using social media and local engagement to drive involvement in the arts. Young collectors gravitate towards this scene and they've gained a considerable following by connecting emerging artists with collectors and resources. The scope of their influence is fast eclipsing traditional galleries and dealers.

Traditional gallery roles are changing

"Artists don't necessarily need a gallery to put them on a pedestal because they can find their own following and be their own face to the world," said Morrison.

Getting into a gallery can be a career boost for artists starting out. It means they'll meet collectors, dealers, and influential players in

the art market. However, being featured on the right blog or social media feed can leapfrog an artist beyond these tenuous first steps and make them into an overnight sensation.

Careers can be launched virally

“If there’s an artist highlighted on a popular art blog one day, the following week they’re inundated with requests” Thad Mighell, Assistant Chief Animator, Museum of Contemporary Art Denver explains. “Everyone goes to an artist’s site and crashes the website.” -

In the past, a new art phenomenon would percolate slowly into the collecting scene, sometimes only emerging long after the artist was deceased. Now, artistic renown can begin at the tip of someone’s finger—as they double tap a picture on Instagram.

So what drives these waves of viral interest online? Imagine if you could try every food in the world on demand. Your tastes might become daring as you sought out new flavor combinations and textures. If a lot of your friends discovered a new delicious food, chances are you’d want in.

Collectors are becoming more adventurous

“Another habit of millennials driving art collection is that they’re not afraid to search on the internet and discover new things,” Mighell continues.

“They use non-traditional ways of discovering art and it’s exciting to find an artist no one has heard about it.”

The internet offers a limitless buffet for tech-savvy art enthusiasts. Collector’s today have access to more artistic content than any prior generation, and in an effort to try something new and discover a fresh artist or trend, they’re willing to push boundaries.

Thanks to the combination of an adventurous spirit in young collectors and an unprecedented, endlessly scrollable, stream of art—unheard of trends can emerge overnight.

Young collectors are pushing boundaries

Collectors as tastemakers are increasingly expansive in what they consider collectible art. They’re validating new forms of art based on their personal interests instead of collecting within prescribed lines.

Kristin Bueb, of Culturehaus (the young art patrons group) at the Denver Art Museum has observed the way young collectors are shaping the new art collecting landscape.

“Maybe [young collectors] don’t really like Picasso but really love this video game designer and have the capability to promote that artist,” she explains. “Their confidence is helping shift the idea of what art is.”

Art patrons are seeking the unusual

In a gallery, a collector lingers near art, but the same is not true for Instagram.

“Social media artists are thinking in really poppy images,” said Augusta Morrison.

“Emojis, video games, and digital art is becoming an interesting thing that people are collecting. Young collectors are not so much interested in the more accessible stuff. I know a lot of people that want the weird. They seek out the edgy and the weird.”

Art that is unexpected and unusual is more likely to catch the content-saturated eye of collectors in the digital realm. The desire to capture the fleeting attention of an online audience shapes what kind of art is discovered and elevated by young collectors.

A personal touch still matters

Another way young artists and collectors break through the scroll cycle is by leveraging social media to form a deeper connection.

“I think the fact that people are getting to know the person behind the artwork is one of the best reasons to collect something,” Kristin Bueb of Culturehaus suggested.

Through social media, collectors can tour a studio they might not otherwise be able to visit. These behind-the-scenes glimpses into the artist’s world are a driving force behind engaging collectors.

Authenticity and experiencing the story behind art is a huge draw for today’s collectors. Many buy art because they want to support artists and foster a connection with the arts. Collectors and artists on these platforms are part of an extended network online.

An art community is being built through apps

Young collectors are not only expanding the boundaries of what is considered art, they’re changing what it means to be part of an arts community. On platforms like Facebook, Instagram, Pinterest, and Twitter, they’re forming communities that share ideas, create trends, and shape the market.

“Certain people treat Instagram as a gallery. It’s a virtual extension of that community that they’re part of,” said Thad Mighell.

These forces are part of an exploratory and democratizing force in the art world, spearheaded by young collectors.

THE BOTTOM LINE

Social media is constantly changing

You should feel free to use social media to the extent that feels right to you and your business. While these are some guidelines about how other artists have grown their accounts, there isn't a one-size-fits-all. You also don't have to participate at all if it doesn't bring you joy.

The number of likes or followers you have doesn't determine the quality of your artwork.

Above all, the focus should always be on your art and craft. If you feel like exploring how to expand your reach through social media, there has never been a better time.

You can cultivate real and lasting relationships with social media

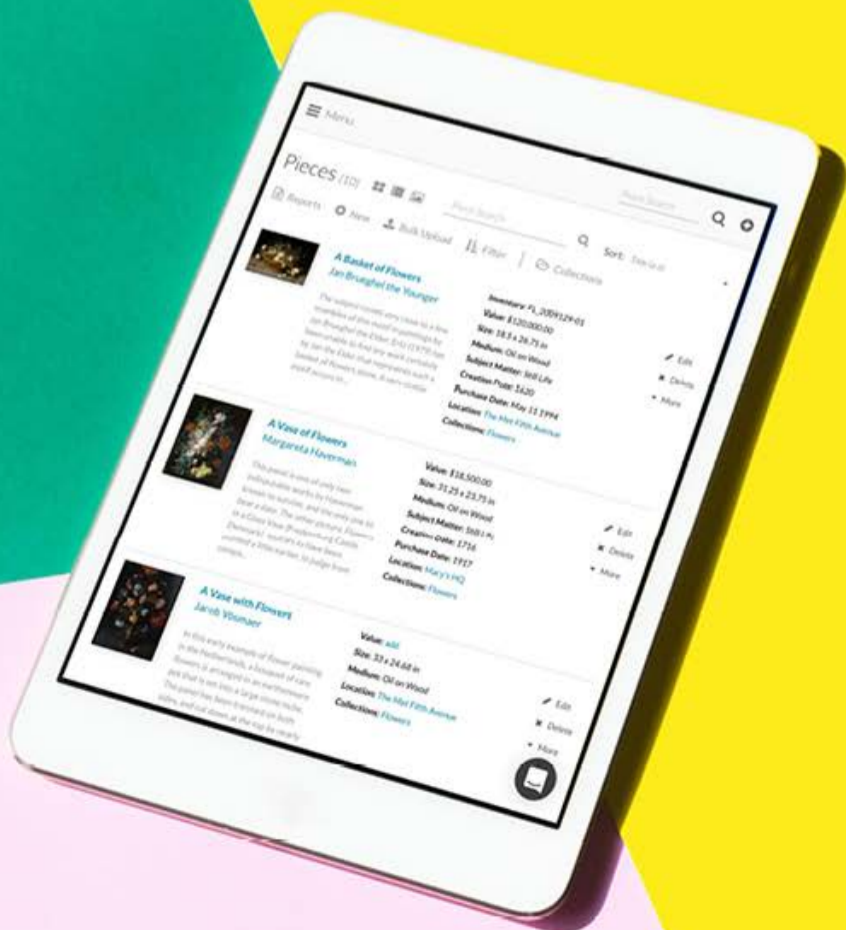
There is a real opportunity to build and grow art relationships over social media today. Most artists, galleries, and curators have at least one social media account. Follow, share and engage with the people online in the same way you would in the real world.

That is to say — seek genuine connections.

Real connections lead to more things than hundreds of thousands disengaged followers. Try to remember that social media can be used to form real relationships and doesn't have to feel like a popularity contest.

The bottom line is: take the tips that work for you and leave behind what doesn't serve you. Social media can take on a life of its own, but it also has a lot of positives for artists. You can choose how to interact with it and how much of your energy to give it.

The best advice? Simply keep making what you are making. Share it when you want and stay true to yourself.



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