

Notes from the Panel Discussion – The Art of Selling Art, Oct 12, 2021

Moderator: Sue Crosby

Panelists: Jennifer Burger, Main Street Gallery Manasquan; Vaune Peck, Monmouth University Center for the Arts & Lucy Kalian, Artist

When someone asks “how long did it take you to make your art?”.....some answers are:

“every moment until it is finished because it is cumulative”

X years (artist’s age)! painting or creating is a lifelong effort

How should a commercial artist transition to “personal” artmaking? A- transition slowly by doing both types of art simultaneously for a while.

Sell your art, don’t hold on to the “best” pieces...keep reaching for that quality

Many buyers purchase art because they have heard about the artist from others.

Brand is built through consistency in:

Subject

Style

Medium

Color palette

Theme

Presentation

Abstract art – do you like it (you don’t have to understand it)

An abstract artist does not need to “defend” the art

The best-selling artist at the Main Street Gallery in Manasquan is Theresa Losa....look at her work and you will see a distinctive brand. https://www.mainstreetgallery.com/portfolio_page/theresa-losa/

Interior decorators select art to “match” furniture and room color.....too often the mistake is made to buy the couch and match the painting to the couch instead of the other way around.

Make what looks good, not what people want or what matches

Pricing

- Go to galleries and art fairs to see how others price their work
- Pricing is one of the advantages of working with a gallery who will help price the work.
- Some use a formula to price work, often related to the size of the work
- Don’t be shy in telling a prospective buyer your price. Stand behind your work and your price. Higher prices lead people to believe the work is something special
- If priced too low, people may wonder what is wrong with it
- Protect your price point...keep your price consistent across venues
- One of the worst things an artist can do is to sell their work behind a gallery’s back (if artist has a gallery relationship, they should honor that relationship always. Build a good relationship with the gallery and it will pay off in the long-run
- One strategy is to price relatively low to get your name and work out there and slowly increase price as you become more successful

Working with a Gallery

- Galleries will choose artwork based on what their clientele wants to purchase
- Many galleries will have a contract with an artist
- If an artist has a gallery contract and sells artwork direct to the buyer (without the gallery), the price should be the same as if it was in the gallery (as to not create a price arbitrage)
- Artists should have 20-30 pieces of AVAILABLE artwork to begin a gallery relationship.
- Galleries will usually rotate artwork that does not sell to keep things fresh for their customers
- Galleries that are looking for additional artists to represent will often have an on-line form to submit
- Very important to take good, representational photos of your work
- Do not go into a gallery with your artwork under arm and expect to have the owner meet with you on the spot.....gallery owners do not like to turn artists down since many take it personally....don't make them feel bad by going in with big expectations that you will be accepted

Framing is very important and sometimes essential. Use neutral matting and many buyers will reframe the work anyway

An online presence is important but not essential. Today, many artists use Instagram as their online gallery.

Best advice

- Paint from the heart, not the head
- Build a brand for yourself....eventually as your body of work grows, it should be possible for someone to look at your work and know it's yours
- Don't "throw spaghetti at the wall to see what sticks"....be consistent, be recognizable
- Refine your craft to gain an identity
- Practice, Be true to yourself, Be passionate, don't put your work in restaurants!
- Write your own review of your work and reflect on it
- Don't create to sell
- Do your best work (don't put work out there that you don't like)
- Put time in the saddle!
- Know your buyer....is it a collector trying to fill a wall?
- Focus on one theme at a time...do a series then move on
- Let the art sell itself!

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<https://reddotblog.com/>