

## Selling your Art

Many artists sell their art out of their studios, or online, at co-operative galleries, gift shops or even at one of the thousands of art fairs that are popular. But just because you're an artist, doesn't mean that you know how to sell your work.

Before I discuss how to sell your art there are a few questions you should ask yourself before taking the big step of selling your art.

**First, who** is your ideal audience and what is their common attribute?

For instance, do you appeal to a particular group of people? Do you know who you are selling your art to, or are you creating art without any thought of who your potential buyer may be? It is important to know why you are doing your art if you are intending on selling your art. It is important to know if your art is relevant and if it is sellable. Know who your audience is.

**Second, what** makes you an artist?

Does your artwork speak for itself? Start with formulating an artist's statement that is compelling, brief and readable, with less discussion on your feelings. A strong statement is the best way to sell your artwork. Your art and words must be in sync with one another. Help to find a way for your viewers to see the depth of your work. Don't talk about techniques that you have accomplished, rather, work on a story about your journey in your creation. Educating people about your work, and engaging them in a conversation with you, will go a long way to building your clientele and followers. Whether you are at an art show or a social media website, remember to tell the story and not the technique. Draw people into what you created. Don't bore them with your methods unless asked. And finally, let them know what your next adventure is to retain and captivate your audience.

**Third, where** do you sell your artwork?

Some of us would like to have our work in a gallery or museum, but that isn't always realistic and it may be a dead end of wasted marketing time. Start with getting your work out by developing a website, being a part of a group of artists like the Art Guild of Naples, gift shops, art shows, social home party events, charity events, word of mouth opportunities and donating some of your work for social causes. Anytime that you are submitting your work through various call-for-entry websites, be prepared to follow submission guidelines. It is good public relations to support communities and organizations. Do your research, sign up for a few mailing lists and listen to what others say whom you trust, to critique your art before you start selling your art. Be creative in how you pursue selling your work. Think outside the box.

**Fourth, when** do you sell your artwork?

Always be ready to sell your art by having marketing materials such as business cards and a website address. Have your work documented with all of your professional materials ready to go at a moment's notice. Opportunities do not wait for you; you have to get out there and pursue every possible avenue that is relevant and realistic to sell

your art. You never know when you might meet someone who could open a door for you. Be prepared.

**And finally, how** do you charge for your art?

The answer is, "I don't sell my art and I have no idea what its worth". Never assume that if you are a new artist that you can't place a value on your art. Don't underprice your art. Value yourself as an artist, especially if you have been practicing your craft for many years. Art is subjective. Look at your competition, your fellow artists. How much do they charge? Look at prices online and visit galleries to see what the competition charges. Keep a record of your pricing on art sold and use it for future pricing. I find it helpful to bring my artwork to a gallery to see what they would sell my art if they were to represent my work. They are experts at knowing how to sell art.

If you are pricing your art for the first time, calculate all the productions costs as your baseline price, then decide on the profit margin you want to add. This can be done by determining how many hours you spent and how much you want to make per hour.

Another way artists calculate their fees is by charging per square inch and multiplying that by a dollar amount. As a professional, I charge \$6.00 a square inch which doesn't include materials.

To capitalize further, you can sell your art as limited additions. It creates scarcity and perceived value. Create an online store as merchandise, prints and giclée's. When you design your website offer the option to purchase merchandise from your original art. Capitalize on your time. The more you market your ideas over and over again the greater chance you have of selling your creations beyond the original art.

Another way to sell your art is an eBook. Promote your eBook by creating your own blog. If you are blogging, it will help build your audience and it is much easier to promote and sell your eBook to people who are interested in your work to consider you as an expert. If you've already built an audience who trusts you through blogging or social media channels, you can start selling them tutorials in various forms: pdfs, videos and webinars.

Teach an online class or start a workshop. It's not easy to set up your own webinar or online classes, but you can start by subscribing to some of them to see how it's organized, or use an already established platform that offers online courses.

Takes risks and work outside of the box.

In conclusion, the bottom line is **PERCEIVED VALUE**. An old expression goes about your time and worth. "It is 25 cents for the material but it's \$250.00 to expertly know where to put it". Always find out how much people are willing to pay. A purchaser will value your work, when you create the perceived value that **YOUR ART IS WORTHY OF THE PRICE!**