



**“Eleven Tips for Success
for Fine Artists”**

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Thank you for tuning in!

We created these tips by working with thousands of artists in all media at all career stages.

You may be a hobbyist who wants to make **art a second career**. Perhaps you are already a **part-time or full-time emerging artist**. Maybe you are **in mid-career and want to refresh your business**. **Success is possible for you. And you can do it at your own pace.**

These tips are a good overview of what it takes to be a working artist. And there is a lot of practical wisdom here you can use right away. If you want more, I will let you know how to get it at the end of this presentation.

Get out a pen and paper so you can write down what you plan to do with this information. It will only work if you apply it.

If you have any questions, please e-mail Aletta@ArtistCareerTraining.com or call me at 650-917-1225 Pacific time.



Knowing what to do is only the start of making a living making art.

Doing what is known to work is the next step.

Making what works feel natural to you is the goal.

What I am going to tell you will probably sound pretty basic.

That's because it is **timeless common sense**. Economies come and go, but there are some foundations that never crumble.

Successful artists have proven that you can make a living in any economy. Want proof? Read profiles of our Featured Artists. <http://www.artistcareertraining.com/featured-artists>.

Some of you may be thinking "I know all this already!" or "Tried that once and it didn't work."

For common sense to work, you have to make it common practice.

And it takes time to build a career that lasts.

Make Your Best Art (and LOTS of it!)



Average time to master anything is
10,000 hours.

Average number of medium sized 2-
D art per show is 20 pieces

Average number of 3-D large sized
art per show is 5 pieces.

Average number of shows per year to
stay in the art game is 5.

Making a living making art is a numbers game. Like any profession, you have to do a certain number of things a certain number of times to get results. And then you do them over and over again – and better each time. When you dance, you take steps in a pattern and repeat them. It's the same for marketing your art. You have to get the word out again and again and again.

A great career starts with **mastering the fundamentals of your medium.** Create from your feelings and your own color and shape sense. Then resolve any problems. This is how you transform your technique and talent.

Some artists can make a good living from original works of art. But maybe you put a lot of detail into each piece, so it takes a long time to complete just one original. Or you work a day job, have a family and only have time to make a few good pieces each year. Make different sizes for different budgets.

You don't have to sacrifice income. You can produce more income from your hard work. Create multiples from your originals. **Giclées expand your audience by providing another price point for your clients.**

Clarify Your Artistic Voice



Become an expert on your “niche”.

Be able to talk in plain language about the history, techniques, materials, influences and inspirations related to your art.

Write a clear Artist Statement and stories about each piece of art you create.

Every artist has to be able to communicate clearly. Without a signature identity to your work, it will be much more difficult to talk about it and that means you will not be able to market it easily.

A strong body of signature work, clear artistic direction and a consistent marketing strategy will ignite your passion and transform a challenging artist’s life into an exciting livelihood.

Once you have enough art, you can begin to see your artistic direction. And once you have your direction, all of the pieces of your art business have a focal point.

In the last century artistic direction was related to the concept of “style” - influenced by the rise of consumerism in North America. Artistic direction is the combination of your subject matter or message, how it is expressed technically, what it evokes in you, what it evokes in the viewer.

Your artist statement is one of the fundamental tools you use to educate viewers about your artistic direction. You let the reader into your world of **inspirations, influences and methods.**

Artistic direction is the archeology of how an artist’s work develops over a career.

When you add a business direction to your artistic direction, you are ready to market.

Design Career-Life Plans and Take Steady Action over Time



You make art in the midst of your life. Make art the focal point of the other roles you play in your life.

Have tri-focal vision: Build on past results, focus on present goals, work towards your future vision.

**Dreams >>>Plans>>>Actions
>>>Results>>>Adjust>>>Repeat**

Your vision of your life as an artist is only a dream unless you also have goals as a road map for your career. Be realistic but at the same time don't be afraid to dream large about your goals. Be prepared to change and re-prioritize your goals as different opportunities arise.

A bird's eye view makes it easier to see where your business is moving and where it is blocked. You can plan alternative flight paths to reach your destination. **But a plan without action is just a plan. And action without alternatives and flexibility can drain your energy.**

Stay present and make adjustments. By the time you land, the path may already have changed. New obstacles show up that you weren't expecting. Obstacles are like that. They rarely give you warning. A lot of artists were doing well driving their businesses along routes they knew. Then the economy hit the brakes. New opportunities will appear if you are alert and use all of your creative senses.

Write your goals down on paper or type them on your computer.

If you don't write them down, they are not as important. **Then post them in your studio where you can see them every day.**

Maintain Your Focus

Results come from consistent action over time. Nothing worth having happens instantly.



“Ready, fire, aim” wastes time, money and energy.

“Ready, steady, go” gets results.

Consistent results feed your motivation and your bank account.

Some artists have a very hard time keeping focused. They can be all over the place. What that all eventually leads to is frustration and an attitude that it can't be done.

Avoid the myth that being creative is only a right-brained activity. Even composition takes left-brain skills. **The trick is to be whole-brained and to never give up.**

Once you have translated your dreams into your goals, and identified actions, **stick to them until they are achieved or until experience tells you that you need to change them.**

Use your goals as a filter. Run every possible opportunity or thought that comes up through your goals. See if what you are considering will keep you on track or take you away from your goals. Use a daily planner and monthly wall calendar to help you **stay accountable to yourself.**

Successful artists have many points in common. **Develop good work habits. Keep regular studio hours, week after week. Persevere in the face of adversity. Life goes in cycles. Ride them out. Take chances. Start with what you have. And keep going!**

Know Your Audience and Market



Know who likes your work, why, where they like to look at art.

Study who shows in your “niche”.

Study what collectors, galleries, art representatives and museums want from artists.

Artists often ask me how to discover their audience. When I ask what steps they have taken so far, most respond that they have had open studios, entered local shows, put up a web site. **If you build it, you need to ask them to come.** Each person you meet is a potential collector or knows someone who could be your next business manager or buyer. **Publicly and proudly present yourself** daily to everyone you meet as an artist making a living making art.

Once people start to look at your work, get to know as much about them as possible. Dialogue with the people who accept your invitations to your events, view your work in shows and visit your web site. And remember to listen twice as much as you talk, or you will miss the clues they will give you about to where to find the art lovers you want to attract.

To show in galleries and museums, do your research. Read and analyze a variety of arts related journals, books, newsletters, blogs and e-zines to figure out where the audience goes for work like yours.

Your work will change and progress as long as you are an artist, **and the people who buy your work and where you find them will change accordingly.**

Photograph your Work and Document your Career.



Select, manage, describe and preserve records of historical value for your retrospective.

Create a Professional Portfolio and keep it up to date monthly.

<http://www.artbusinesslibrary.com/art-marketing/#portfolio>

Keep a Master copy of all photographs, print and electronic files offsite.

Ninety percent of your viewers will not see your work in the original state (if at all) so your **photographs better be good!**

Have a labeled record of every piece you have created. **Document each accomplishment in your career** with your resume, bio, artist's statement, press coverage and critical attention, visuals, and an inventory list with prices. Store digital files on your computer and back them up on gold-metal-backed CD-ROMs. Consider having a microchip embedded into each art piece. Make sure to keep a hard copy and electronic **master** as well as a **back-up** off-site and natural disaster-proof.

Most portfolios and web sites are reviewed in less than one minute. You need to make a strong impression instantly with collectors, gallery dealers, museum curators, arts writers, bloggers and other artists. **Customize each hard copy portfolio to the person who will make a decision about your work. Make sure that your web site speaks to anyone you want to attract.** A gallery dealer is interested in the visuals, your prices, and your resume. A museum curator generally looks at your artist's statement and experience. The arts writer is interested in the critical attention in various media that you have received. And your collector is looking at the consistency of the artwork to see if there is anything they want to buy.

Inventory Your Work and Your Relationships.



Keep a master inventory of each piece of work while you create it, as you show it, after you sell it.

Put the 5 groups in your audience into sub-categories on your electronic mailing list. Use your mailing list at least 4 times a year.

Create a master database of details you need for showing, selling, insurance and copyright : e.g. thumbnails, image sizes, media, date of creation, date of sale, collector information, submissions to galleries, museums, media/press.

Your mailing list is one of the most efficient and cost effective ways to stay in touch with viewers and buyers, as well as to make new professional connections that expand your art audience. Use a spreadsheet to capture contact information and notes about 5 groups: fans, friends and family; viewers and collectors; alternative/ traditional gallery dealers; museum curators, docents and staff; arts writers, bloggers, media; arts professionals like artist reps, art consultants, residency managers.

Your mailing list is an asset so update the information often, just the way you update your resume. If it gets unwieldy, and you don't know some of the names on it, send out a card asking people if they want to stay on it. Be careful of deleting your previous buyers. It can be several years before they want to purchase another piece.

Integrate electronic and surface mailings into your marketing strategy at least seasonally. A "hit or miss" approach will get the scattered results. Give thought ahead of time to what you want the viewer to do once they receive your postcard, brochure or newsletter.

Cultivate Role Models and Mentors.



Identify your strengths and find role models who embody who you want to become as an artist.

Identify your undeveloped skills and find mentors who will help you learn through experience.

Mentor less experienced artists to hone your own skills.

Every successful person has someone or many people who helps them.

Employees have managers and whole departments to help them do their jobs. You must find these people yourself.

A mentor is an individual, usually older, always more experienced, who helps and guides you. Guidance is not offered for personal gain, but for the satisfaction of paying it forward or simply in the spirit of service. A mentor can be a businessperson you admire or an artist that has succeeded on a level that you want to reach. Identify people who are expert in areas you want to develop. Ask if they would consider being your mentor. Let them know why you selected them and what you hope to learn from them. Ask how much time they can offer. Let them know what you will do with what you learn and what you will contribute to the relationship.

Mentoring artists who are less experienced in an area you have mastered is a great way to hone your own skills.

Role models are artists and others who possess the qualities that you would like to have. You may never actually meet a role model and still learn from their experiences and wisdom. Find them on the internet and through publications. Study them and apply what makes sense.

**Network with your peers, neighbors
and audience.**



Set up critique groups for feedback to develop your art.

Join artist organizations for feedback on the art market.

Join business groups for involvement in the local economy.

Set up salons or critique groups to improve your art and to share information about art marketing opportunities. Gallery dealers are often open to referrals by artists they already represent. And only artists will tell you the full truth about whether the gallery treats them well, pays on time, etc.

Get out of your environment or studio on a regular basis. Join arts organizations to meet other artists in your area. Go to openings to see what is happening. Talk to all the arts professionals you know like your shipper, framer, photographer, gallery dealer about the art world.

Use the internet to find artist-related forums, blogs, social networking sites like Facebook and Twitter where artists promote, critique and share ideas.

Join local business groups like the Chamber of Commerce and Rotary Club to make yourself visible in the local community. Volunteer in service organizations and fundraisers to build your goodwill. You will often be the only artist there and be first in line for opportunities to promote and sell your art.

Be a visible participant in the art world.



Go to art events in your media and other media.

Have shows in traditional alternative venues.

Participate in social networks online and offline.

Go to lectures, openings and arts event that pertain to your work, as well as other media. You never know where a new creative idea will come from or who you might meet. Let the local college or museum know that you are available for demonstrations or talks about your specialty.

If you are an introvert, start off with observing what goes on. Eventually you will begin to recognize regulars and feel comfortable approaching them. Introduce yourself to dealers, curators, collectors and critics as your comfort increases. Museum curators and gallery dealers love to see artists at their events and appreciate the support.

“Exposure = Success” so make sure to have shows on a regular basis in all kinds of venues. Start with shows in your studio or arts organizations Open Studio Tours, restaurants, libraries and bank lobbies – anywhere there are people with time to look at your work. If you want representation, explore galleries and museums.

Make your artistic presence known to the outside world – you are your own publicity agency! Send out press releases several times a year and announce new work and exhibits on social media.



***Invest as much in your business skills
as in you do in your art talents.***



Establish a business “office”,
equipment, marketing systems.

Set up your business legally and
financially.

Learn daily through reading, classes,
internet resources.

Treat your art business like any other serious profession. The business of art is creating unique work of high quality and value to your viewers. The art of business is consistently building sustainable relationships through strategic work habits and well-organized business systems.

You need to know and use essential elements of the law that allow you to protect your work, while at the same time promoting and selling it. Aside from your art, your most tangible assets are talent and public recognition. Make sure that you have registered your business, have a sales tax ID and vendor’s permit. Get a bookkeeper or accountant to help with your taxes and keep on the right side of the IRS. Have a space dedicated to your business equipment and records.

If you want to grow as an artist and grow your art business, you must keep learning. No one has all the answers, especially these days. Share what you know, and what you want to learn, in classes with the company of other artists. Get your resource library together with books and magazines. Surf the web.



But wait, there's more....

- Thank you for taking the time to see how Artist Career Training can help you make a better living making art.
- Please visit <http://www.artistcareertraining.com> and <http://www.artbusinesslibrary.com> to find the resources that will help you take the next step.

I inspire fine artists to make a better living making art in any economy.

<http://www.artistcareertraining.com> supports part-time, emerging and full-time artists who are serious about a career in fine arts. We make art marketing easier and the business of art simpler. Mentors generously share their experiences to help working artists double their income and create more time to make art.

We know that you probably have "other duties as assigned," so we take that into account. Artists in the vibrant on-line community learn to be focused, organized and confident in all art business matters. Art world experts share insider information and step-by-step instructions in lively group telephone classes, on-site workshops and seminars. Personal consultations allow in-depth work on specific projects. Independent study is available through <http://www.artbusinesslibrary.com>.



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Finally a word about your **mindset**. **Playing safe** sends you (and others) the message that you aren't very capable or confident. Growth requires "stretch" goals. **Expecting the moon** sometime in the future when you don't have the skills, resources or ambition to get there will frustrate you. **The journey of a 1000 miles begins with the first step. Start now. Write down one action you will take today to get one step closer to where you want to be.**

If you want help deciding what would work best for you, please call me at **650-917-1225 Pacific time**. I will help you create a path to success that builds on your strengths and honors your budget of time, energy and money. **The first 15 minutes are on me.**