



artist daily  
*presents*

# ART BUSINESS

*Marketing Art on  
Your Website, Selling  
Art to Collectors, and  
Photographing Artwork  
Like a Pro*

# Set Up a Website That Works for You



Two web designers share their tips on finding a designer and developing a site that is easy to work with.

*by John A. Parks*

*illustrations Scotty Reifsnyder*

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Personal websites have become an indispensable tool for artists; in fact, it's now almost impossible to build a reputation and a career without one. But the task of setting up a website can be challenging and daunting. In addition to choosing from a range of options, there are a plethora of decisions to make about how to organize the site, whether to incorporate e-commerce features, how to coordinate it with social-networking sites, and many more. I recently spoke with Clint Watson and Andy Webster, professional designers who specialize in artists' websites, and got several useful tips.

*How did you start creating websites for artists? What is the nature of the service you supply to artists as a professional website designer?*

**CLINT WATSON:** Many years ago, I was in the gallery business. I also had a background in computer programming, so I was able to create a nice database-driven site for the gallery. One of the artists I worked with at the time, Kevin Macpherson, asked me to create a website for him. I initially said no because I didn't have the extra time in my schedule to manage someone else's site. What I created instead was a system that enabled him to build his own website by simply typing information into his web browser and uploading images from his own computer. That system grew into Fine Art Studio Online (FASO), a turnkey artist-website builder and online art-marketing system. Our templates include a blog, email newsletter, and a domain name. We also offer toll-free support and all kinds of art-marketing resources. I'm really not a web designer, per se; I'm a software developer and build out all the complex back-end stuff. We do, however, work with some great web designers who can add custom designs onto our system for artists who really want that.

**ANDY WEBSTER:** I'm an artist myself, and when I was looking for a website for my own work I found that the cheaper options were always wrong for what I wanted. I also wasn't convinced that hiring a designer would be a much better prospect because I needed to easily update it myself. So I made a site that took all the best parts from the leading artists' websites and also developed a way to edit my site quickly from any internet café if I were traveling, which was a necessity for me.

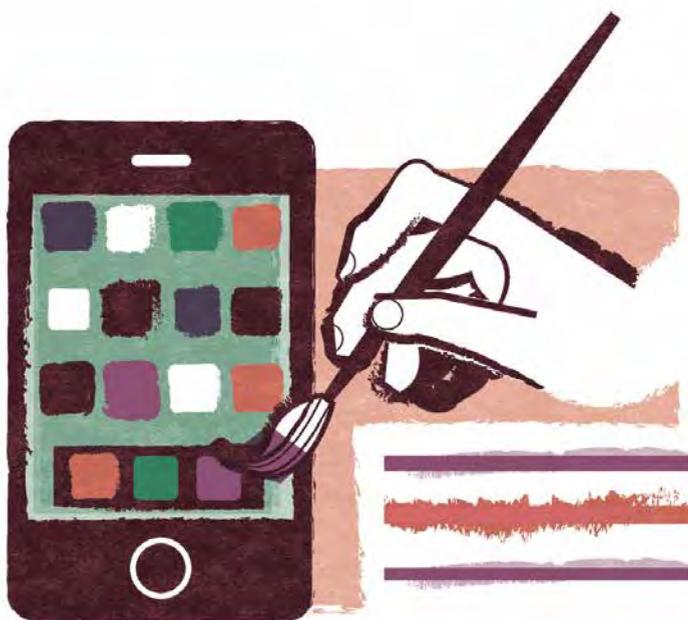
It made sense to offer versions of these sites to artists who interested me and augment my painting income

a little. I told myself that I would only offer sites I would want myself, at a price I could afford, and to not too many people. It's been a nice way to exercise my left brain and to meet interesting people.

*What are the basic considerations for an artist who wants to set up a website?*

**CW:** At FASO, we always say, "Sharing art enriches life." For every hour spent on his or her website, that's an hour less in the studio. I would recommend working with someone who can create a professional-looking art website that is easy for you to use, easy to update, and that allows you, the artist, to get everything done in one place.

There are a few materials that an artist will need to prepare before starting a website, such as high-quality digital images of artwork. I can't stress the words "high quality" enough. Spend some time



drafting a great bio that explains why you create your art. Get your price structure in order. You need to know what your work will sell for, and you need to list those prices on your website.

**AW:** Think about the ongoing fees and updating costs, not just the initial ones. Ideally, you should be able to upload an image yourself in just about any size and from any computer, and it should generate thumbnails, larger details, your layout—the works.

Changing your résumé should also be as easy as editing an email draft. Anything more expensive or complicated will mean it isn't updated often enough (or you're spending too much time at the computer).

**AA:** *Should an artist consider building his or her own website?*

**CW:** In general, I would say no. There are just too many ways to put up a nice website these days that don't require mucking around with html and programming. Plus, as websites become more complex, they are getting harder and harder to do yourself if you're not a developer. I would, however, say that there are exceptions, such as an artist who either happens to be a web developer (or whose spouse is one), or an artist who really understands and enjoys web development. When I see an artist spending a lot of their time on "web stuff," I worry that their art is negatively affected.

**AW:** I did it myself—and it took three years, and I somehow ended up with a web-design business. A well-designed and automatic solution didn't exist when I started, but I would have jumped at exchanging the price of a painting for all that extra time in the studio. If you decide to design your own site, you will need to solve thousands of tiny problems. Consider, too, that it will likely still be a manual effort to change an image or text.

## Finding the Right Web Designer

**Watson suggests you ask these 13 questions before the work begins:**

- 1 What other artists' websites have you created? What do those artists have to say about working with you?
- 2 What technology do you plan to use to build the site? (Html and javascript are good, flash is bad.)
- 3 How are you going to size the images to ensure maximum quality and color?
- 4 Will the site be hosted on my own domain (www.yourname.com)? The answer should be yes.
- 5 How will I be able to easily update the site when you're not available?
- 6 What system will you use to allow people to join an email newsletter list directly from my site?
- 7 Will I be able to send email newsletters to my subscribers in a proper spam-compliant manner?
- 8 Will it be easy to change the design of the entire site if I want to?
- 9 Will I be able to reach you easily by phone if I need assistance?
- 10 Where will the site be hosted and how is it set up to ensure that it doesn't crash?
- 11 How are images stored and backed up?
- 12 Does the site include a separate mobile-friendly design for people visiting on their smartphone devices?
- 13 How do you plan to structure the URLs and navigation to ensure that the site has good SEO (search engine optimization)?

## PITFALLS TO AVOID

***Below, Watson offers a list of do's and don'ts for artists who manage their own websites.***

### Do

*Post retail prices of your art on your website.*

**Set up an electronic payment system so that buyers can purchase art online.**

*Check for broken links frequently.*

**Offer visitors a way to sign up for an e-newsletter. "This is the most common action that interested visitors will take," says Watson, "so make sure the option is available to them."**

*Include contact information on your site. It may seem obvious, but many artists forget this.*

### Don't

**Force visitors to listen to music when they land on your site.**

*Design it so that the browser window is automatically resized.*

**Have outdated information: listings of shows that have passed, images of paintings that have been sold, etc.**

*Become preoccupied with search-engine optimization and social media. "Spend time actually connecting with your customers and colleagues," says Watson.*

**Make your text too small or too light. It should be easy for visitors to read your information.**

*How can an artist be sure that a web designer will create a site that meets his or her needs?*

**AW:** I would try to find out why a designer is building websites. If his or her real passion is golf, then moving on to the next client—quickly and lucratively—is likely going to be the first priority. To test that, I would ask as many questions as possible. If you can't ask questions—or get short, impatient answers when you do—I'd look elsewhere.

Also, find out if they know about your industry. Do they know the difference between the June Fitzpatrick Gallery and David Zwirner's Gallery, for instance? For artists, small differences mean a lot.

*Website designers who service artists offer a variety of business models, some of which include ongoing maintenance for a fee. Certain software allow for easy maintenance by the artist, whereas others require more expertise. Can you give us a simple breakdown of the options and their advantages and disadvantages?*

**CW:** There are several models, but here are three of the most common:

### **Do-It-Yourself General Website Builders**

By now, almost any website should allow an artist to create and post blogs, upload

images, and make basic changes. Sites such as weebly.com, wordpress.com, and blogger.com allow artists to build their own site and are free or inexpensive. However, they don't always work well for art "out of the box." For example, I saw an art coach selling a program on how to use Wordpress for an art site. His program offered 42 hours of instruction—that's time I'd rather see an artist working in the studio. So the general builders are cheap but may require a lot of work to set up the way you want.

### **Art-Specific Websites Builders**

Some examples of these are my company, faso.com; artspan.com; and foliotwist.com. These generally cost more to start but are much more artist-friendly. Those of us focused on the art world also tend to bundle in a lot of "extras" that are great for artists. You'll also get access to support staff that specializes in working with artists. I think there are tons of pros to going in this direction, but, of course, I run a company in this area. If there is a downside to this type of service it might be that, for some, it can cost a bit more than other services. The other "con" might be that if you want extreme customization you might need something higher-end.

### **Customized Personal Site**

If, for some reason, you need a highly custom solution, you can hire a web developer to program a custom site just for you. This will cost a lot more money to design and implement but will have the advantage of giving you *exactly* what you want. I would suggest not considering this route unless you're willing to spend at least \$5,000 up front. However, it can be worth it when you have highly specialized needs. One great option, if you must go the custom route, is to have your web developer use the open-source version of Wordpress at wordpress.org. You can then build your site on Wordpress and customize it to your needs. This means that you, the artist, will still have a login that will allow you to easily

add art and make changes—which is critical, no matter what route you take.

*What are some of the most common mistakes that artists make when designing a website?*

**AW:** The biggest mistake I see artists making is using a cookie-cutter site that doesn't lend a sense of professionalism. Your artwork doesn't need a busy-looking gallery to hang in, so why should your website be visually cluttered? However, it's not easy to get a minimal site that doesn't just look bare. Successful, subtle design really does require an expert touch.

Another big mistake is artists having expensive sites that they cannot use or that they have to pay to update. You want to be able to make changes as quickly as possible, otherwise your site will just sit there. I've seen too many fossilized artist's sites.

*What are the best ways of promoting a site once it is up and running?*

**CW:** Contrary to what many artists have heard, selling art is not a numbers game—it's a demographics game. You don't need lots of buyers; you just need the right people. With that in mind, don't waste time with "driving traffic." If anything, you should try to rank your full name so that interested people can locate you. The exception to this rule is if an artist works in a very specific niche that isn't too competitive and gets a lot of searches.

**AW:** There are lots of different things I've done for artists—search-engine optimization, social media, blogs, and other online promotion. But the best advice is really to make great strides in your offline career. That way search engines will look for you (rather than the other way around). ■

*John A. Parks is an artist who is represented by 532 Gallery Thomas Jaeckel in New York City.*



**Tips for Promoting Your Site**

ONCE YOUR WEBSITE IS UP AND RUNNING, YOU STILL HAVE TO BUILD AND MAINTAIN INTEREST. HERE ARE A FEW SUGGESTIONS:

- Send an email newsletter on a regular basis. "Start with people you know and build it from there," says Watson. "Just be sure to get permission before adding anyone to a mailing list."
- Get artist friends to recommend your site, and do the same for them.
- Write a guest article for a highly followed art newsletter or blog.
- Send a postcard announcing the site to your best followers and collectors. If you don't have that list, sit down and make it. Having an organized mailing list is critical to marketing art.
- Start a special email list for your very best customers that will give them a first look at your new art (and the first opportunity to buy it).
- If you like blogging, a blog is a good way to connect with your fans. "Sending your blog post as an email newsletter will be more effective than just an online posting," says Watson.
- "Use Facebook and Twitter sparingly," stresses Watson. "They'll take up all of your time if you're not careful. Use them to engage prospective buyers and guide them back to your website."
- Every time you post new work, send an email update announcing it.
- Identify artists who reach the same type of customer as you, and partner with those people.

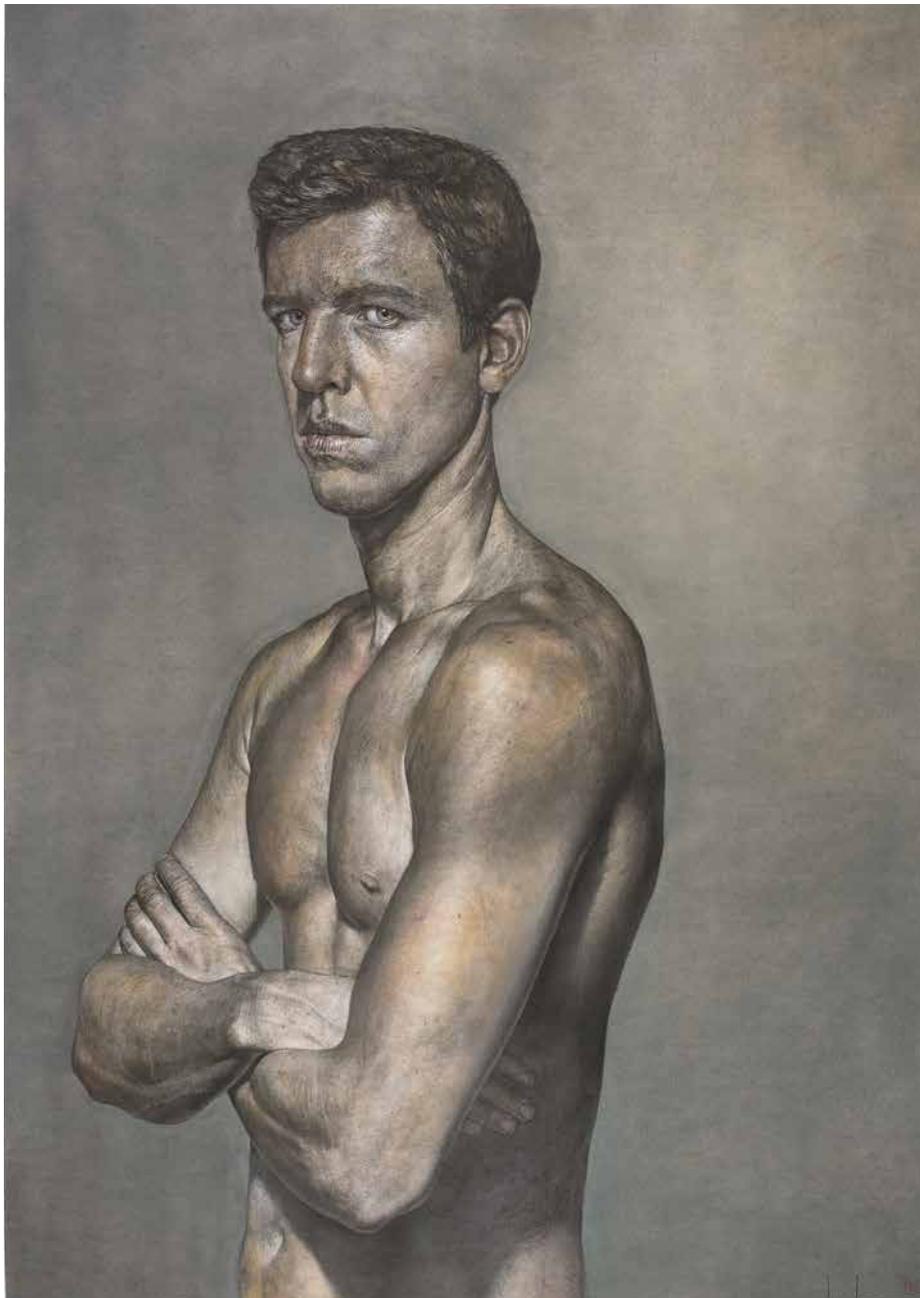
**ABOUT THE EXPERTS**

San Antonio-based entrepreneur **Clint Watson** earned a degree in information systems in 1993 and went on to become a partner at a national art gallery. In 2001, he launched Fine Art Studio Online (FASO), a website and art-marketing service. For more information, visit [www.fineartstudio-online.com](http://www.fineartstudio-online.com).

**Andy Webster** is an artist and freelance web designer who specializes in websites for fine artists. For more information, visit [www.artistwebsite.org](http://www.artistwebsite.org).

# Collector *and* Collected

*by John A. Parks*



**Self-Portrait  
as Father**

by Ian Ingram, 2008,  
charcoal, pastel,  
and watercolor,  
54 x 39. Courtesy  
Barry Friedman  
Gallery, New York,  
New York.

Art collectors are the most passionate of art enthusiasts. Looking at art is something that accompanies the rhythm of their days, and most display it in every corner of their homes. I once visited a man who had purchased one of my pieces and was surprised when he took me upstairs to show me that he had hung it in his bathroom. “Don’t be offended,” he said. “I spend more time looking at your picture than any other painting in the house.” For a collector, art enlivens the space in which it is displayed. The work resonates with his or her soul, so much so that it must be purchased. This connection compels them to find more pieces that spark a similar interest, either from the same artist or those of similar subject matter.

Ken Stone is a New York-based collector who concentrates on portraiture. “I started out by buying a few landscapes many years ago,” he says, “but I soon shifted dramatically when I decided that I really wanted portraits. I define the word loosely; it could be a person, an animal, or a cartoon. But it must have a quality of depth and insight

as opposed to being simply a straightforward rendering.” Like most collectors, Stone reports that his tastes have changed and evolved over the years. “I think I have a strong eye for looking at and spotting new artists,” he says. “I’ve had the good fortune to do that a couple of times. It’s a great opportunity to find an artist early in their career.” Stone enjoys establishing a relationship with the artists he collects. “I think that there is often an intense dance back and forth between the collector and artist,” he says, noting that some artists have been affected by seeing their work in the context of his collection. Stone is proud to find himself lending works he’s purchased to museums and has twice had pieces shown at the annual Smithsonian portrait competition.

“I’m buying for personal enjoyment,” Stone says, “although I suppose there is a degree of investment. I’m proud to say that I still own everything that I’ve bought over the years, right back to the landscape days. I’ve had the good fortune to travel and have established relationships with artists and galleries all over the country. A lot of it is about trust and dealers knowing what you are interested in.”

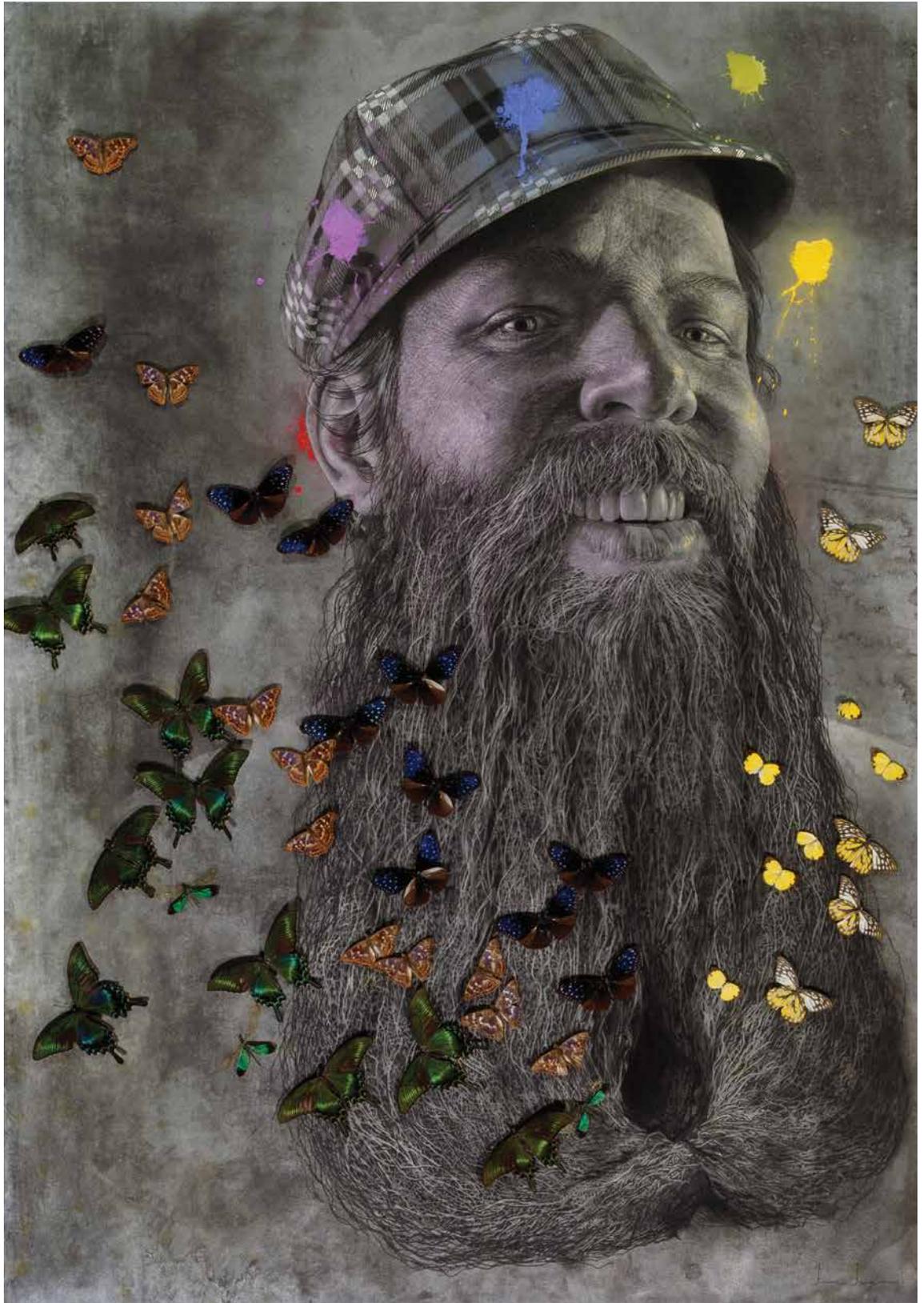
Stone has begun collecting the work of Santa Fe-based artist Ian Ingram, whose intense large-scale self-portrait drawings pack a big dramatic punch backed up by a sustained sensitivity to the nuances of form. “I spend most of the three months it takes to make one of these drawings in front of magnify-

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**Our Koruna Muse**

by Ian Ingram,  
2009, charcoal,  
pastel, silverleaf, and  
butterflies on paper,  
55 x 39. Courtesy  
Barry Friedman Gallery,  
New York, New York.



ing mirrors of different strengths,” says the artist. “But I will use any tool that helps me see more accurately—photos, tinted lights to remove the confusion of full spectrum light, various measuring devices—anything goes.”

For Ingram, collectors are a vital part of his creative process. “The relationships I have with my collectors mean the world to me,” he says. “I spend years working alone in a dark room and have a few pieces to show for it when I’m done. They then have a brief celebratory song and dance at an opening and then start their own lives. Very few people spend more than two minutes looking at a drawing, so it is a very rare bird indeed that is willing or compelled to look and then decide to live with one of my drawings. I find that we may be very different types of people but that there is some exalted passion that I share with my collectors. This common ground is the experience of art that resides just out of reach of our limited vocabulary. I make art to try to put a finger on this elusive experience, and when someone decides to buy a piece a circuit is completed. Someone ‘gets it,’ and that is deeply gratifying. Aside from this somewhat spiritual connection, collectors are also the lifeblood of my daily survival. They put their money where their heart is. A ‘good’ collector then gives the piece a full life after it leaves the exhibit. I have been lucky to have a number of great collectors who sing the praises of my work without abandon and I don’t think many people would have seen my work without their efforts. I find it incredibly easy and gratifying to sustain relationships

with these collectors.” Ingram is also represented by Barry Friedman, a reputable dealer in New York, who keeps collectors and admirers up to date on his latest artworks. Such representation also reassures the collector and spawns another interesting relationship, that between collector and dealer.

Looking at the collector-artist relationship is worthwhile considering what fuels it. Stone is interested in work that focuses on a particular kind of subject matter, and Ingram has been steadfast in exploring this subject. The artist’s work has changed somewhat over the years that Stone has been collecting, primarily in moving from small- to large-scale pieces. Stone has collected examples on both scales. It seems that if an artist remains committed to work of a certain kind, then he or she will continue to enjoy the support of collectors who share that interest; changing one’s style or subject matter risks alienating fans and collectors alike.

As an artist’s career advances, collectors can take pride in being able to lend work to exhibitions and enjoying bragging rights at being an early supporter. Many are as ambitious for the works to achieve recognition as the artists who made them. If an artist can keep this sense of excitement present for the collector by keeping him or her informed and interested in both the work and the progress of his career, then the relationship will continue to blossom—with a good outcome for all. ■

*For the artist, a collector is not only a committed fan but also a necessary figure if the enterprise is to work as a business.*



# Photograph Your Art Like a Pro

*by John Hulsey and Ann Trusty*

All the hard work and unique vision that we pour into our painting and drawing can result in artwork that we are proud of. The next step is to make an accurate photographic record of our art to share with friends, collectors, galleries and perhaps to enter into juried exhibitions.

The essential component to that sharing process these days is the making of a professional-quality digital recording of our art. We have two choices—pay a hefty fee to have a pro shoot our work, or invest a

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This view shows the Impact Universal Film Holder frame attached to my light stand, along with a 500-watt Tota-Light and heat shield.



This shows the Lexan/polarizing film sandwich I made to fit in the film holder frames. The LINEAR polarizing film can be purchased in various sizes and cut to fit, if necessary. You can also skip the Lexan if you want and attach the film to the holder directly, but take care not to get it too close to the light or it will melt.

small amount of money to purchase our own professional equipment and learn how to make these photographic exposures ourselves. Ann and I have done it both ways and believe that, in the long run, it is far more economical, efficient, and fun to handle the photography ourselves.

This introduction will give you the basics, but to learn what you need to know to get perfect results every time, read the complete tutorial at [The Artist's Road](#).

Regardless of which brands of lights, stands and filters you use, it is essential that you purchase a camera with a good-quality glass lens. Every image must first pass through a lens of some kind, so it is far better to get a camera with good optics but perhaps lower megapixels than the reverse! Buying a good used professional camera is a smart way to do this. Canon makes one of the best little point-and-shoot cameras which will also make

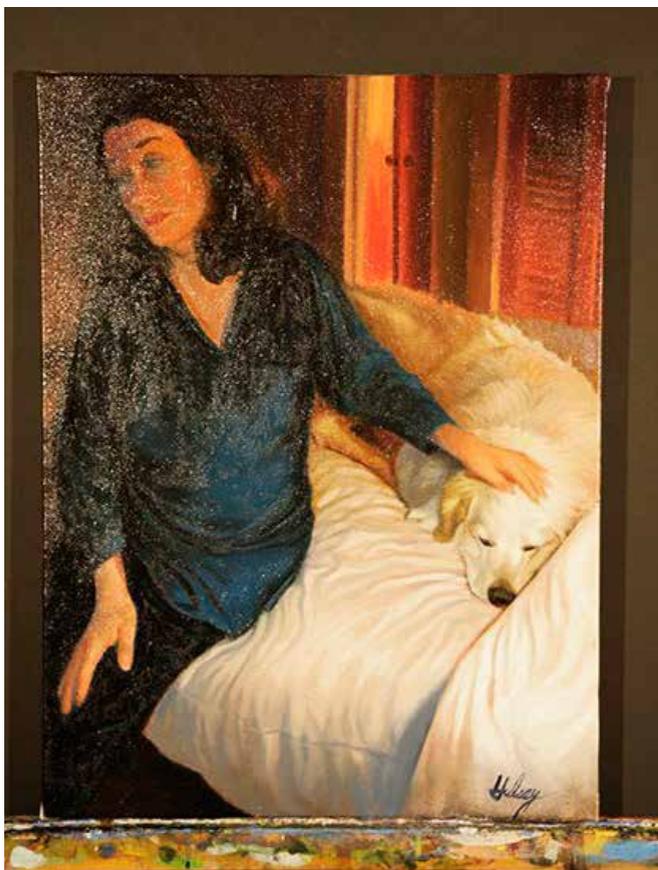
RAW exposures for archiving. We have been using the G-11 (10 megapixel) for a couple of years and the results have been outstanding.

You can really see the difference that polarizing made in these two images of my oil painting, *Another Night*. On the left, no polarizing, and a useless image. On the right you can see how the spectral highlights (hot spots) vanished, leaving well-balanced, rich tones without the heavy influence of the red-yellow tungsten light spectrum.

All that was needed was to crop the image and tweak it a little here and there in Photoshop. We hope it's clear from this demo that a small investment in the proper filters and lights pays big dividends in the results. With most juried shows relying on the quality of our photographs to decide who will make the first cut, it is imperative that artists get professional with their photography. Without top-notch high-fidelity images to show, there is no way to get a fair assessment of our work. And that is entry-fee money down the drain. So learn all about taking professional-quality photos of your art. It is easy and fun, and all the info is at [The Artist's Road](#).

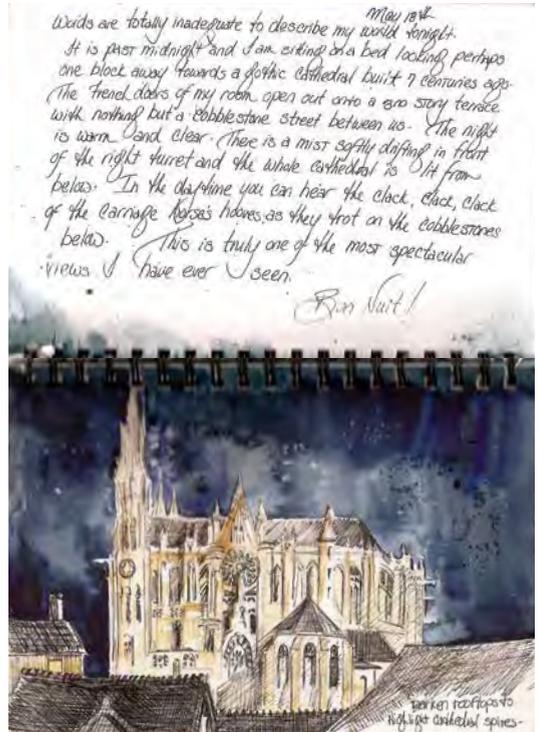


Note the Tiffen linear polarizing filter on the lens. When the filter is rotated to 90-degrees from the orientation of the films in front of the lights (cross-polarization), the hot-spots and glare on your art will magically disappear, and the colors will increase in saturation, depth, and fidelity. The linear filter works better with this system than a circular filter does.



# Authenticating and Archiving Your Artwork

by  
*Peter Ouyang*

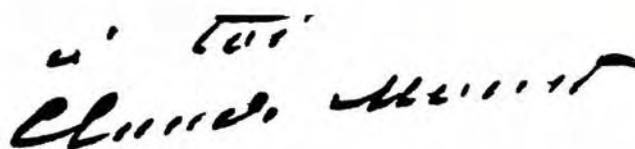


**ABOVE**  
These preliminary sketches and accompanying journal entries of finished work done by Massachusetts artist Susan Pecora show the process some artists use to document their artwork from conception to final creation.

**BOTTOM**  
**Senlis Cathedral, Midnight**

by Susan Pecora, 1996, watercolor, 22 x 30. Collection the artist.

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This set of signatures by master artist Monet shows how handwriting analysts will sometimes cross reference an artist's signature from past paintings and personal documents to verify the provenance of a piece.

Most artists know the pitfalls of using fugitive materials that cause their artwork to deteriorate, but they are often less cognizant of other threats to the future quality and value of their art. Chief among those is the lack of documentation about what they created, how they executed their work, and how they pursued their careers. Those considerations can affect the validity, future marketability, and potential value of an artist's creation. Notable cases exist of artists with large bodies of work that have been scrutinized, exhibited, and studied extensively but are still in dispute because of inaccurate record keeping and questions of authenticity associated with their output. For example, the ongoing dispute over paintings purported to have been created by Jackson Pollock may never be resolved because the artist didn't sign or document much of his work.

## AUTHENTICATING YOUR ARTWORK

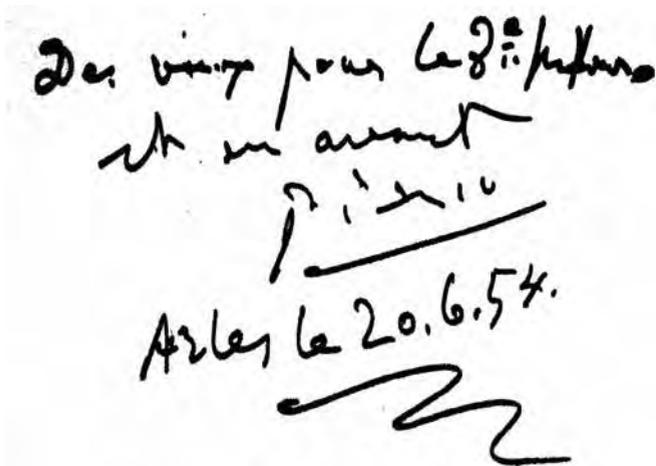
Artists can avoid authenticity issues that may arise by considering the importance documentation has on the

validity of their work. There is always a personal aspect to art, and those who collect it value their associations with living artists and appreciate evidence left behind by those who are no longer alive. For that reason, it is beneficial for artists to establish archival records to protect their future prospects and their patron's interests. "When an artist takes the time to develop an archive of their work, they demonstrate that they are serious about their art, treat it with respect, and act responsibly," believes Peter M. Fairbanks, the president and co-owner of Montgomery Gallery, in San Francisco. "Picasso was a good businessman who kept meticulous records and marketed himself well. Robert Motherwell was also scrupulous about tracking his paintings."

Fairbanks' experience directing a gallery that specializes in 19th- and 20th-century work, as well as Old Master paintings, makes him keenly aware of the importance of diligent

record keeping. "There are American artists who kept careful logs of their work, but who didn't document their locations," he explains. "For example, John George Brown (1831-1913) didn't keep track of his paintings, and today we don't know where his paintings are located. American artists in the 21st century should organize their paintings in a sequential order. The Smithsonian's Archives of American Art ([www.aaa.si.edu](http://www.aaa.si.edu)) shows the logs of American artists, which are great for art historians who want to track a painting's existence, or for contemporary artists who want to see how the work of past artists has been documented."

A key factor in artists authenticating their work is making sure the materials they use to sign their paintings or write accompanying commentary are of archival quality. Handwritten annotations are not only prized by collectors but are also essential to art scholars who research an artist's life and work,



Picasso was known as a diligent businessman and marketer when it came to his artwork, always signing and documenting every painting he created.

so ensuring that the signature endures is imperative to this process. Artists should sign a work while the paint is still wet, writing the signature on the back with a date. By using fade-resistant, nonfeathering, water- and chemical-proof ink, as well as acid-free paper or stationery, artists can ensure their signatures and commentary will last for generations.

Beyond a long-lasting signature, some artists like to further establish the link between generations of creators and collectors by keeping handwritten journals chronicling motivations for creating a work, significant life experiences, relationships involving the work, and living locations. It's also a good idea to track the dates and location of exhibitions, any accompanying press coverage from those events, and perhaps photographs of the artist and artwork at the exhibition. Creating a list of patrons that purchased an art piece—complete with their name, date,

gallery/exhibition location, and where the artwork resides—is also a good step toward providing the chronology of a particular piece.

Many contemporary artists are using more modern methods to organize and preserve their work, including photographing their paintings and arranging them in a portfolio with appropriate captions; or storing digital files on their computer in folders marked with specific subject matter, medium, and the year created. Longevity issues should be considered for these instances as well: regarding photographs, silver halide black-and-white photos last longer than color; and if digital files are going to be stored, it is best to save them on gold-metal-backed CD-ROMs. Some artists will even have a microchip embedded into an art piece, and if this is being considered, it is important to determine the lifespan of the chip and how long it will last in the embedded environment.

## THE VERIFICATION PROCESS: SCHOLARS, SIGNATURES, & SCIENCE

*Provenance* and *catalogue raisonné* are two key terms used by art scholars or appraisers that are associated with the authentication process of artwork. Provenance refers to the history of ownership of artwork and the details of when an art piece was created, its size and dimensions, and dates of acquisition and sale. Art scholars compile photographs, documentation, and the provenances of an artist's work (even if the piece is lost or destroyed) to create a *catalogue raisonné*. *Catalogue raisonné* become the ultimate reference of an artist's lifetime body of work.

If an artwork is unsigned or if the authenticity is in question, extensive research will be conducted to determine the creator of the work. Although appraisers can point out inconsistencies in an art piece, they are generally not considered authorities in determining the authenticity of a work. In fact, no single authority can be used to decide a painting's creator, but it is rather a collaboration among many researchers and experts in the field. This group effort can involve the expertise and research of art scholars, scientists, and signature analysts, among others.

During the verification process, an art scholar will first visually inspect a painting to establish the artistic style and method used, determining when the piece was likely created and whether the signature reflects the same time period. "Historical elements of the piece corroborate the time period," explains Fairbanks. "I look at the clothing fashion, furniture design, the landscapes, and building architecture, all of which can indicate time periods and geographic locations of where the painting took place." If an art piece is not signed or the signature is in question, a handwriting analyst will research signatures from various time periods of the artist's life.

Initially, the handwriting analyst scrutinizes the placement and fluency of the signature, as well as the congruity of the handwriting within the painting itself. This visual check includes looking for dates that may be recorded or handwriting that is integrated into the art. "I look at signatures within the context of the artist's style," remarks Heidi Harralson, the certified document examiner for Spectrum Consultants. "An artist's signature can be as expressive and stylized as their artwork—if their artwork is detailed, their signature may have a lot of detail as well." In an examination of Frida Kahlo's works, Harralson researched and compared journal entries, personal letters, and phrases found in paintings, as well as writing on ceramics.

The documents reviewed during the signature-verification process can include business transactions—such as checks, wills, or contracts—and personal correspondence, including letters, journals, or notes. Ten to 15 signatures are the minimum requirement for comparison, and these usually fall within two years of the creation of the artwork. The attributes of the signatures are compared within the time period, the medium, and other signatures in the artist's business and personal life. An artist's signature confirms the originality and can point

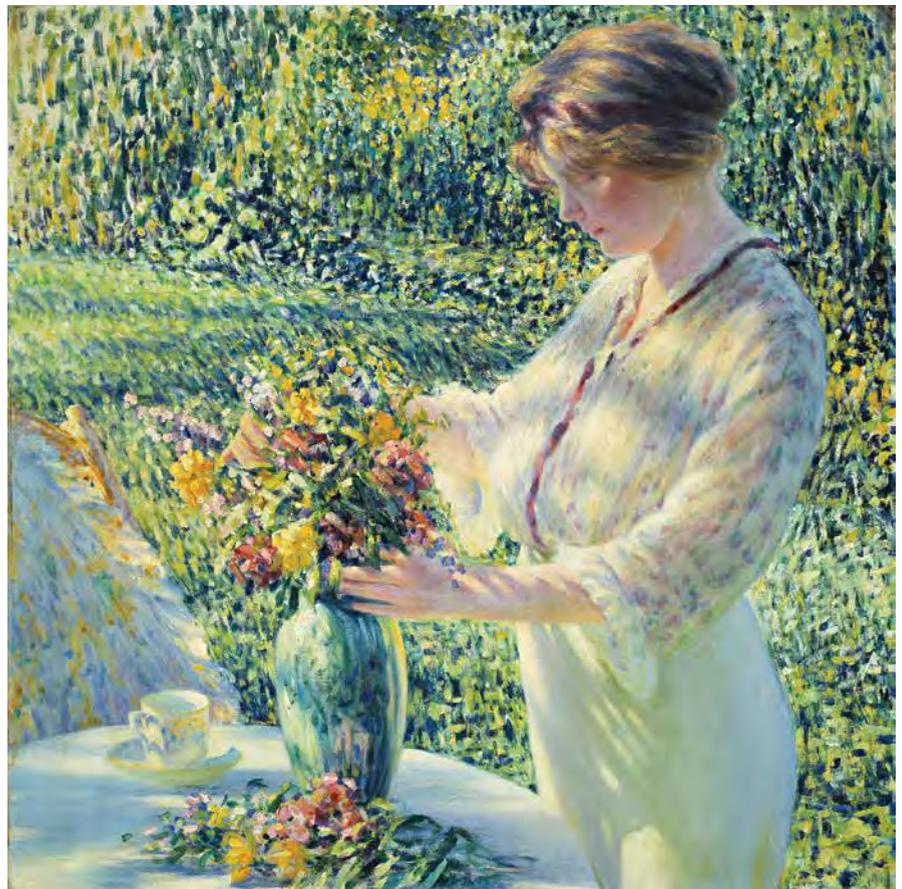
to the actual time period when the artwork was created.

Scientific examinations of the materials used to create the artwork help determine the time period in which a painting was created, whether it is real or a reproduction, and if it can be connected to the artist. "Identification of the paints, based on the crystalline properties of the color samples, reveals the pigments used to create the work and when the piece could first have been created," states Joseph Barabe, the senior research microscopist and director of scientific imaging at McCrone Associates and the leader of scientists who analyzed the ink on the *Gospel of Judas* codex. "If we find that the materials were not available at the time the artist painted, then the authenticity is questioned. Material science can only point to authenticity; historical style and provenance are also essential compo-

#### **Dejeuner (Breakfast)**

by Louis Ritman, ca. 1914, oil, 36½ x 36¼.  
Private collection.

This painting was never signed by the artist and is one of many that Peter M. Fairbanks, the president and co-owner of Montgomery Gallery, in San Francisco, researched to determine the origin and author.



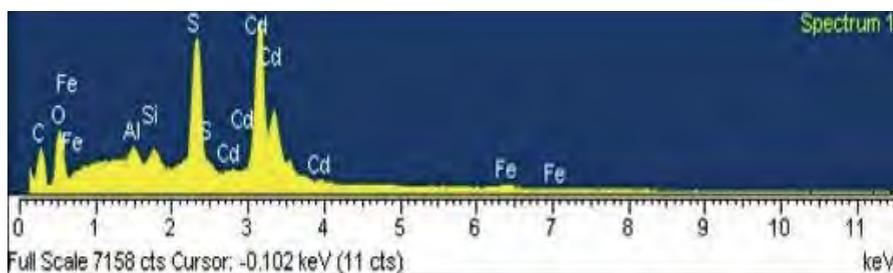
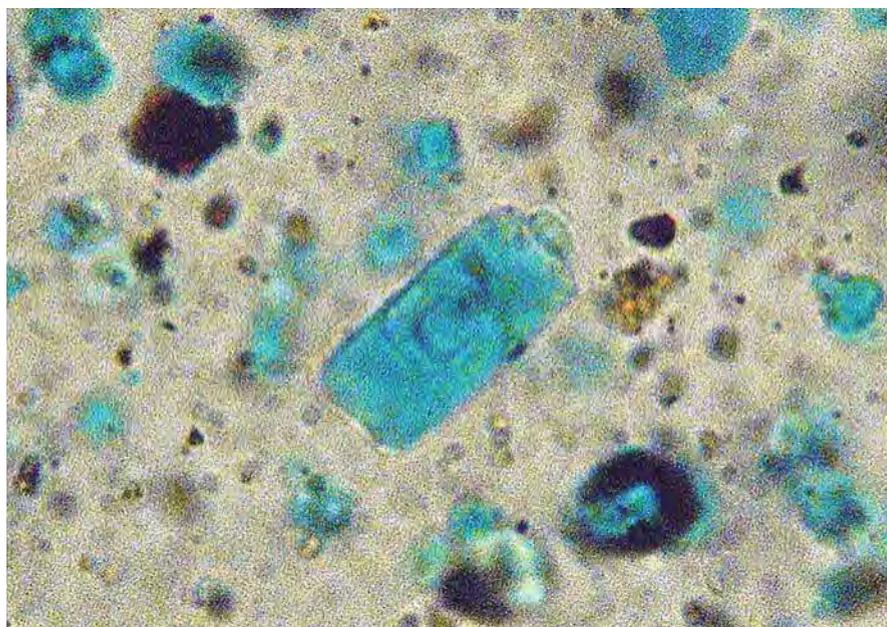
nents, and signature analysis is of growing importance.”

Simple to complex scientific measures used to examine art pieces include regular bright room light, a low raking light to show texture, and ultraviolet light to stimulate fluorescence. Infrared reflectography may show underdrawings, and X-rays can show underpaintings. The paint can also be sampled and analyzed using a polarized light microscope (PLM) or a Scanning Electron Microscope (SEM) with spectrometers for elemental analysis. Other analytical instrumentation commonly used includes infrared and Raman spectroscopy and X-ray diffraction.

## SUITABLE ARCHIVAL PROCEDURES

“Although the Smithsonian’s Archives of American Art does not take an official position or have any guidelines on the types of information artists might gather about themselves and their work,” states Richard Manoogian, the chief of reference services for the company, “we certainly encourage them to preserve careful, complete documentation of their work and career so they may be of benefit to scholars.”

The authentication process can take a long time, and it can take just as long to reach an agreement among art scholars regarding the results of the research, all of which is conducted well after the lifetime of the artist. Planning for and keeping archival records can avoid this process, solidify an artist’s reputation, and maintain the genuine connection to artwork that was created to last for generations. “Artists aren’t librarians or accountants; they may not pay attention to tracking details, and it could be difficult to get them into the habit of record keeping,” says Fairbanks. “For this reason, artists should select a tracking method that is as simple as possible.”



Provenance handwritten by the artist confirming the details of an art piece is one of the most valuable sources of documentation in the authentication process. An artist’s records validate that his or her artwork is genuine and reinforce the connection of artist to audience, which in turn helps patrons feel the artwork value is equitable. Journal memories and insights can be shared with generations to come, and archival-quality ink pens and stationery allow the artist to provide permanent documentation. By initiating suitable archival procedures in the present, an artist creates assets for future artwork transactions, and long-lasting family heirlooms. ■

*Peter Ouyang is the vice president of marketing and product development at Sakura of America, a manufacturer of writing instruments and artistic media, in Hayward, California.*

**TOP**  
This pigment is manganese blue, seen at 1,000X magnification. Manganese blue is very easy for researchers to identify because of its unique anomalous rust-brown color when magnified.

**ABOVE**  
This elemental profile of cadmium-yellow pigment found in a watercolor by Degas is an example of the kind of analysis researchers conduct to determine if the pigment is characteristic of the artist in question.

# Advice for Sustaining an Artistic Career



**Twilight Marsh**  
by J. C. Airoidi.

We surveyed dozens of professional artists and asked what advice they would give someone looking to build and maintain an art career, and their responses constitute a trove of hard-earned wisdom.

As you would expect, many artists had differing or even contradictory views. It goes to show that there are many ways to succeed. Ultimately you must discover for yourself which of the many paths to an artistic career is right for you. So peruse these recommendations, find the ideas that strike a chord, and then give it your all.

On some points, though, artists are almost unanimous in their opinions. You'll find a few thoughts echoed over and over in these pages, and these are of paramount importance. Be yourself. Put your art first. And don't give up.

- Paint, paint, paint. There are no shortcuts. Paint as many hours in as many days as you can, but don't forget to live your life, as that is what feeds your artistic soul.

- Find artists of the past and present you admire, and devour everything you can about their work and their methods. Then, step away, veer off, and listen intently to your own voice.

- Paint what you love, and then knock on doors until you find the market. Don't paint for the market, paint for you. —J. C. AIROLDI

“Photograph all of your work, carry it in your iPhone or a small portfolio, and show it daringly to everyone you meet. You never know who is hanging around.” —STEPHEN BENNETT

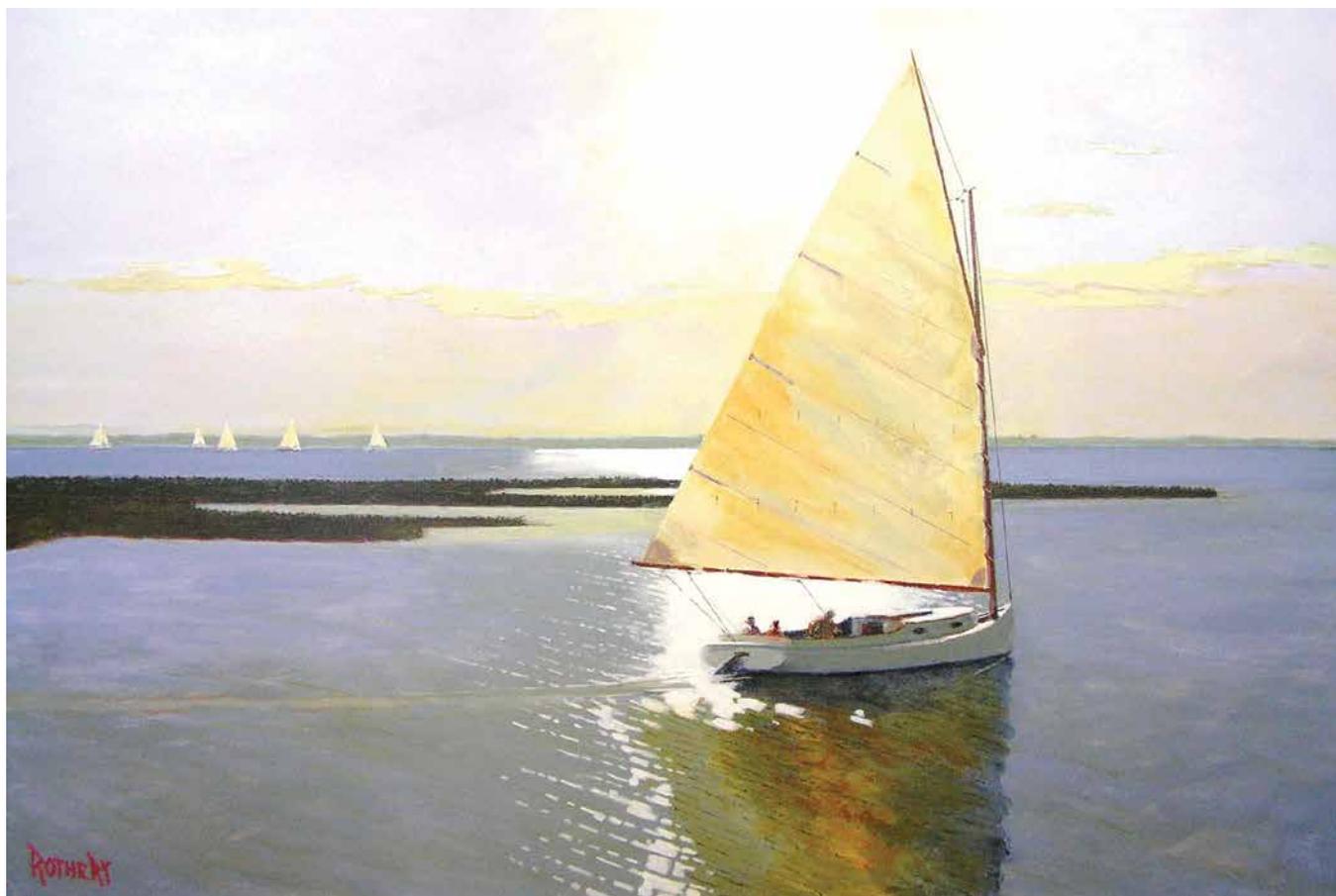
“Find a master or school where you can train and develop your skill. Skill never goes out of style. Being competitive doesn't hurt either. Do everything you can to become a master of your craft. You will have time to develop the business side of things later.” —KERRY DUNN

“If you are drawn to one style and one type of subject matter, go for it. Stick with it, and you'll become known for it and increase your success while doing something you really enjoy.”

—GEORGE ROTHERY

“Don't be afraid to make mistakes—they're opportunities to learn what's not working. Be humble, and know there is always more you can improve—no one is ever perfect. Be persistent and work hard. Don't compete with other artists, compete with yourself. Most important-

**Sunday—Race Day** by George Rothery.



ly, enjoy and love what you do!”

—MICHIO FUKUSHIMA

Learn to build a supportive network. We're fortunate to be in a profession that is so supportive and shares knowledge freely. Take the time to use social networks, events, and shows to connect with other artists, collectors, and dealers. But although you should listen to advice, always follow your heart when you express yourself in paint.” —ED TERPENING

- Creating a work of art is a journey, and the real joy of the creation is in the creating. Don't try to envision the “style” or the end result—that can be the death of the process. The end will reveal itself if you are committed to the process. Listen carefully to your paintings. They will direct your next decision.

- Stay committed to the discipline of drawing—I have drawn from the model every week for more than 40 years. As young painters we are so eager to jump into the paint box that we neglect our foundations. After all, we wouldn't step onstage at Carnegie Hall without warming up with scales.

- Enjoy what you are doing, and if you are not enjoying it, put your brush down. Stay true to your own voice as an artist, and stay focused and humble.

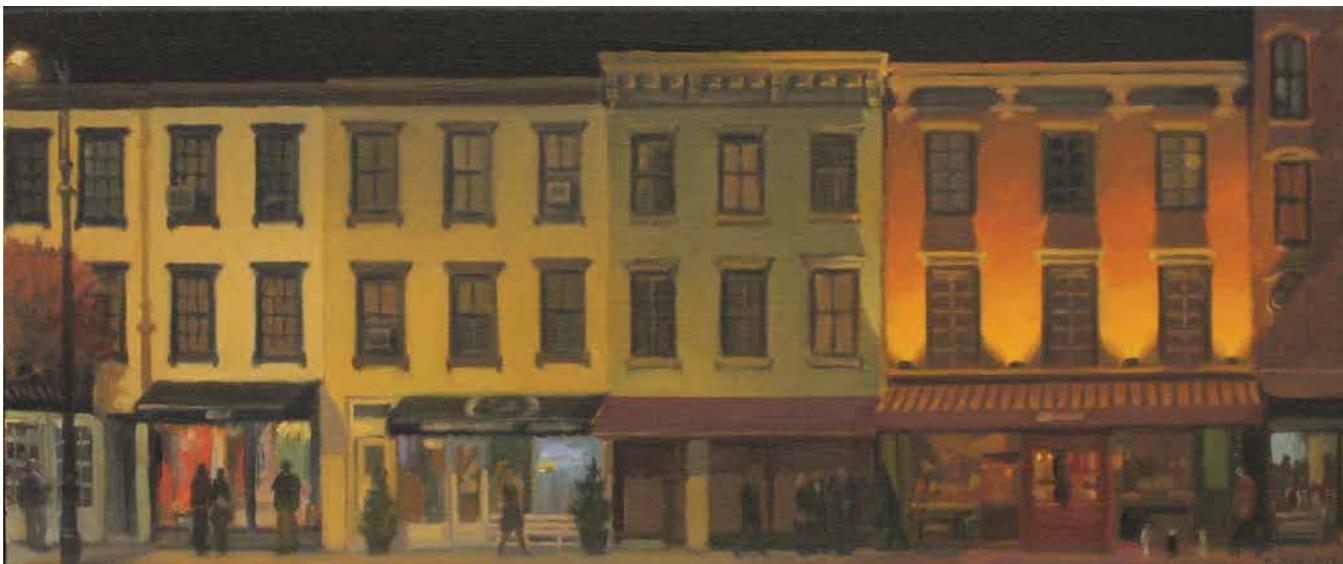
—PAMELA DULONG WILLIAMS

“Don't give up. When I was studying art in college, one of my professors told me the greatest challenge I would face in my career would simply be having the fortitude to stick with it. He was right.” —FRANCIS DIFRONZO

“Get the best art education early on that is available to you. Be bold. Take your portfolio to an established artist



**Sunset, Rugged Point, California**  
by Ed Terpening.



**Greenwich Avenue Evening** by Michael McNamara.

who you admire. Ask if he or she will be a mentor to you. In return, you can work in their studio as an apprentice, clean their studio, wash their brushes, and ask for time to just sit and watch them paint. This is the way most of the Old Masters learned their trade. If you do not know who the best artists are, do some serious sleuthing. Check out the best galleries, ask other artists, and never quit searching for the best that is available to you.” —URANIA CHRISTY TARBET

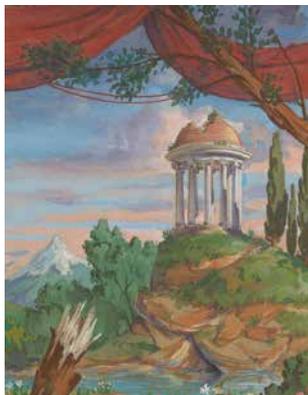
“The best piece of advice I was ever given was ‘be visible.’ Have your work shown in as many venues as possible.” —LORENZO CHAVEZ

“Be professional when it comes to doing business— courteous, organized, punctual, and accommodating. Try to make it a good experience for the people with whom you are working.” —MICHAEL MCNAMARA

“Diversify. Look at the careers of the Old Masters—many were portrait-

ists, landscape painters, muralists, and designers, all in one. The modern gallery artist is really an anomaly in the history of art, and it can force a rather narrow, artificial, market-driven model on the creative process. Explore, aspire, take risks, and make connections with other creative people outside the “fine art” world. You’ll be in the company of Raphael, Titian, and Michelangelo.”

—DAVID MAYERNIK



**Pastoral—Set Painting for La Descente d'Orphée Aux Enfers, Haymarket Opera Company** by David Mayernik.

“Don’t fear failure, meet it head on. Persevere! I hung all of my rejection notices around my easel. It forced me to look at my work with a more constructive and critical eye. Those rejections were steadily replaced with acceptance notices and awards.” —MIKEL WINTERMANTEL

“Learn to be ruthlessly self-critical of your own work on a formal level. Always be honest, and control your ego.” —JIMMY WRIGHT

“Forty years ago I received advice from Ramon Kelly that I still share with my students. He said to be patient with yourself—it takes about 1,000 paintings to get good at this. What I wish he had said was that it takes less time to do 1,000 small paintings than 1,000 large ones. To speed up your learning curve, do lots of little paintings.” —DOUG DAWSON

- Nurture relationships with people and develop a contact list. Use the list regularly to share new work and infor-

mation about upcoming exhibits and your career. Continue to build relationships and add to the list.

- Pay attention to your best work, and ask yourself how it came about.

- Take extra time in image selection and image development. This is the only way to ensure that each painting is your best.

- Don't give up. Hang on to the things that inspire you, and paint, paint, paint. —LAURA LEWIS

“Paint what you like, and don't just pursue what you think will be marketable. Commercial success is a consideration, but when it is the sole pursuit, the results are usually a disappointment. For every Keith Haring or Mark Kostabi, there are thousands of imitators who are

unsuccessful and spend their days doing work they don't believe in and know is not good. And, unlike the struggling artist who loves his work, they are left with a pile of paintings that they are embarrassed by.” —BRAD MARSHALL

“I came to painting later in my life, which has given me both some disadvantages and advantages. The big advantage I have is stick-with-it-ness. I know that all circumstances—bad and good paintings, criticism, failures, and successes—add to my becoming a better painter. Every experience has its merit.” —JOAN BECKER

“Value your time, and take your art seriously. Put as much of yourself into it as you can. Get to know your materi-

als and your vision.” —DAVID GRAEME BAKER

“Only a very small percentage of artists will be able to make a living as a full-time artist and maintain a pure aesthetic—what they think good art is. Prepare yourself early for this with a second career that makes money. I've done it by being a self-employed art teacher, teaching locally, and then traveling and teaching workshops. This keeps artists from painting only what they know will sell.” —ALEX POWERS

“Paint every day, and always raise the bar.” —LISBETH FIRMIN

- The learning process is continuous, and each painting is a new learn-

**A Thousand Shades of White** by Laura Lewis.





**Pink Lady**  
by Alex Powers.

ing experience. You learn by doing, so the best advice that I can give is to paint.

- Be a sponge and soak up as much information and advice as you can from other artists, students, and teachers.
- Set goals for yourself and work to achieve them.
- Enter competitions and keep your name and work in front of the public and your peers.
- Rely on your instincts and emotions. Believe in yourself, and paint to your own satisfaction. —MARY BACKER

“Alice Neel said it best: ‘You should keep on painting no matter how difficult it is, because this is all part of experience, and the more experience you have, the better it is—unless it kills you, and then you know you have gone too far.’” —MARK MESSERSMITH

“New artists always want to be like the artist next to them, but it is so important that who you are comes out on the canvas, just like your signature. Work on having better brushwork,



**Autumn Eventide** by Mark Messersmith.



**Patchwork** by Mary Backer.

edges, values, composition, and color harmony, and just be yourself, whether that is traditional or abstract.”

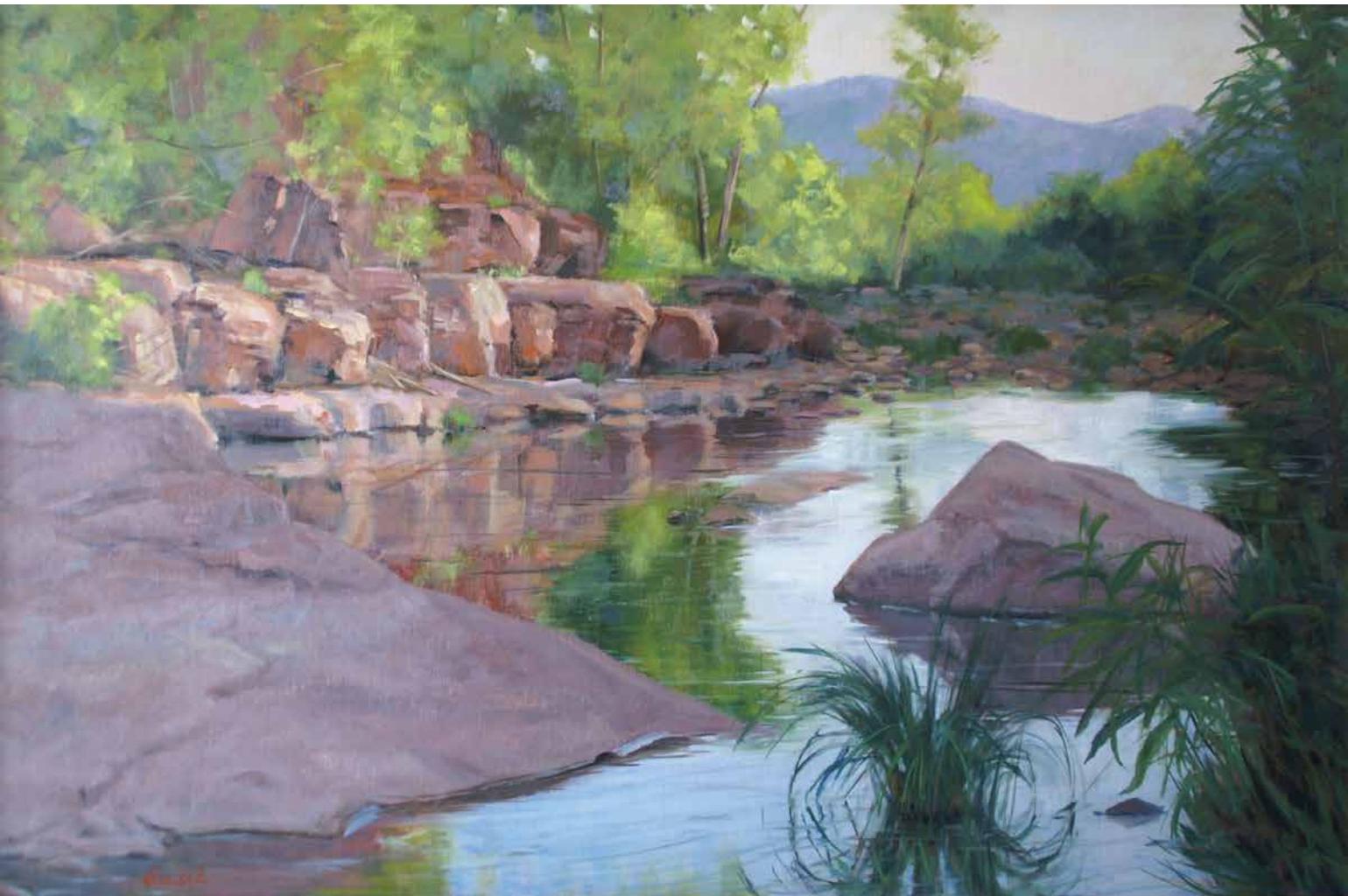
—PATTI ANDRÉ

“Van Gogh supposedly said that an artist is always seeking without absolutely finding. That’s beautifully

put. Keep re-evaluating your work and yourself. Keep experimenting, pushing toward new ideas, and challenging your technical abilities. If you stop growing, your work becomes stagnant.”

—MARK HAWORTH

- Be as original as you can. I’d rather



**Reflections at Dusk** by Patti André.

sell shoes than create derivative works in someone else's style. Doing that may make you a few bucks but will never make you truly successful.

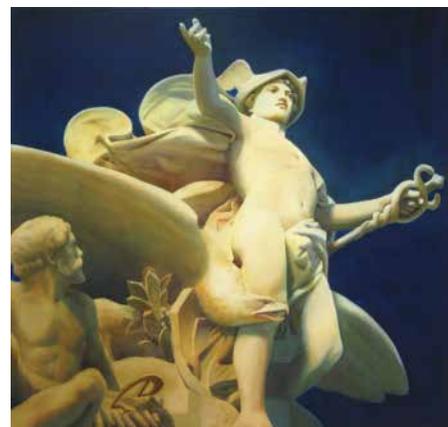
- Paint what you know and what you love. You can be a master of all images (portraits, landscapes, cars, interiors), but that makes you invisible in your career. Try and narrow it down to what you love most and do best.

- Maintain a website and perhaps a blog. Keep the graphics simple—I hate seeing fine artworks overpowered by graphic overkill. And you can spend so much time on the net that you aren't

producing much, so stop texting the moment you enter your studio, and put the phone on hold, if you can.

- If you enter the gallery system, do your homework before putting your work into someone's hands. Contact artists that the gallery represents and ask if the gallery takes good care of the consignment art and pays on time. See if you can get opinions from local curators, other gallery owners, or any of their suppliers.

- Art is a hard career to pursue, but the rewards are outstanding. —STEVE FRENKEL



**Mercury-GCT** by Michiyo Fukushima.

# Top Resources for Artists



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