

self promotion



play the market

Estelle Lovatt offers a beginner's guide to marketing your art, from social media to approaching the press. Illustrations: **Bett Norris**



ou're an emerging artist who wants to be a professional earning a decent amount of money

from your art. Your studio is filled with finished works, now how to move them from there to your social media platforms, to be viewed and hopefully sold?

In the past, potential buyers had to come to you, visiting a gallery space or the walls of your local coffee shop. Only through the expensive mass-posting of press releases could art be brought to the client. Now, you can optimise a press release by using keywords and phrases most relevant to you.

When approaching journalists, use these keywords in a punchy headline and throughout the text, making every single word count. You'd be surprised what works, I couldn't resist looking up one man who sent me a press release signing himself off as, 'The World's Most Adorable Art Critic'. Even David Bowie used a press release to launch the 'biography' of fictional artist Nat Tate; the book, written by William Boyd, was an elaborate art hoax.

Most journalists will be bombarded with emails, but it's still the best means of contact – phone calls can feel intrusive without an introduction, so make your work stand out in your initial message, or try to catch their attention on social media first.

Your art needs to be seen to be bought and quite frankly art sales, like any other product, is simply a numbers game. The more exposure, the more sales. So you'll need to think like a business-person; that means building up your social media. Social media can be challenging to an artist because what artists do is so personal. Thankfully some images speak for themselves, so always photograph your artwork, and make sure it looks as professional as possible.

Make a splash

Don't be afraid to make big statements: promote, market and advertise yourself as an artist



through Facebook, Twitter and Instagram. Of course there are others, including Pinterest, Google Plus, YouTube, LinkedIn, Vine and Vimeo. Different platforms reach different audiences; many make the mistake of signing up to everything, but it's better to concentrate on those that best fit your artistic style. There's no value in being a jack of all trades if you're a jack with three followers who hasn't Tweeted since 2011.

you more space to explain who you are; your art philosophy and influences. Discuss what your work is about, how you make new art; talk about your processes, your concepts, obstacles and thoughts.

This allows readers to connect with you; and if there's one thing the internet loves, it's a behind-the-curtain story. "Social Media provides an artist with immediate feedback from their fans and a means for communicating directly

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If you enjoying sharing your painting process online, try Instagram, if you're into art debate, join the conversation on Twitter.

Let's get digital

First thing's first, create a webpage for your art. Content is fuel, so optimise it by including your CV, biography and artist's statement. Talk about exhibitions you're in, competitions, art fairs, open studios, group shows, awards you've won and previous commissions (but don't mention clients by name without permission). Offer a Newsletter to keep up communications with potential buyers.

Regular blogs can be difficult to maintain, but this feature will give

with their audience, providing an unprecedented means by which artists can communicate directly with collectors," says Kathryn Roberts, creator of The Art Selling Optimization Sequence.

Click to buy

Link and upload your artwork to online galleries. Sally Vaughan, co-founder and director of the online platform for figurative artists, Go Figurative, says "artists understand and use social media to communicate concepts, generate and germinate ideas, garner feedback, build a following and share with peers, and to sell." If you want to be seen, have plenty of art to show and sell. Make sure everyone is able to buy something >

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irrespective of how little they have to spend – this is how Tracey Emin made a living as an emerging artist, selling t-shirts and ashtrays. Perhaps barter or trade your art for goods or services; it worked for Picasso – when he couldn't pay for his food he'd exchange a meal for a drawing on a restaurant serviette.

Share and share again

When used productively, a Facebook page will encourage others to share your work – introducing it to new audiences. Don't be tempted to post the same content as you have on your website or blog, give a little extra, an incentive to 'like' your page. Post your best work on your website gallery, and use your Facebook page and Instagram to post sketches and works-in-progress so that your fans can feel more involved. Promote new shows or openings, and share pictures of the event when it's still fresh in people's minds.

People respond to video storytelling, so get started with a YouTube channel where viewers can watch as you discuss your artwork and creative process.

Try sharing practical information about your painting techniques;



The circle

Social marketing helps the artist build a picture of who they are, what they do and what they stand for with their art. So feel free to tell your followers what you are currently working on; you could even comment on the current events and how they are affecting your painting.

Nigella Lawson engages with her

Blog. If they publish your write-up, they'll give you a link back to your site, and if they have healthy traffic, you can expect people to find their way to your site.

Social media is all about building an audience; it's a gradual process and it means providing fresh content on a regular basis to give those followers a reason to come back to you.

Even if you're a traditional artist in your medium, you've also got to be a digital artist in your actions to stay afloat. "Every artist can benefit from using social media. If your work isn't online, it doesn't exist," says the photographer and visual artist Cristina Schek adding, "You make the work and you have to share it with the world. Of course, the levels of exposure an artist receives – how well we hashtag and what time we post according to mainstream traffic times – is what measures how successful public response is.

"It takes a bit of skill to use social media tools properly; it's a matter of repetition, of constantly, consistently and creatively putting on tiny social 'performances'. And the same as with your art, time translates to skill." **as**

You can find Estelle on Twitter, Instagram and YouTube.
www.estellelovatt.com

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you could even film a time-lapse video of your artwork being made.

As pages and channels look similar, it's important to brand yours as 'yours' by personally customising it. This improves visibility and helps your page stand out. Or, if you prefer to stay off camera altogether, experiment with a podcast; get a charismatic group of artists in a room to discuss the burning topics of the day, and press record.

Using social media to market your art cannot, and will not, solve all your artistic problems, but it'll share your art with more people, and help them find out what you have to offer.

followers by sharing what she eats for breakfast each day. Why not post your favourite artist or artwork of the day? There's no shortage of sources, including gallery and museum sites, the highly recommended Google Art Project, and personal websites of artists. But remember to always credit your source when sharing.

Like and link to other artists' websites, comment on their artwork to strike up a conversation; network, in every sense of the word. The artist you're linking to may just give you a shout-out too. Offer to write a guest post – your top art tips or an art tutorial for someone else's