The Complete Artist's Success Guide

A step-by-step painting guide by Richard Robinson

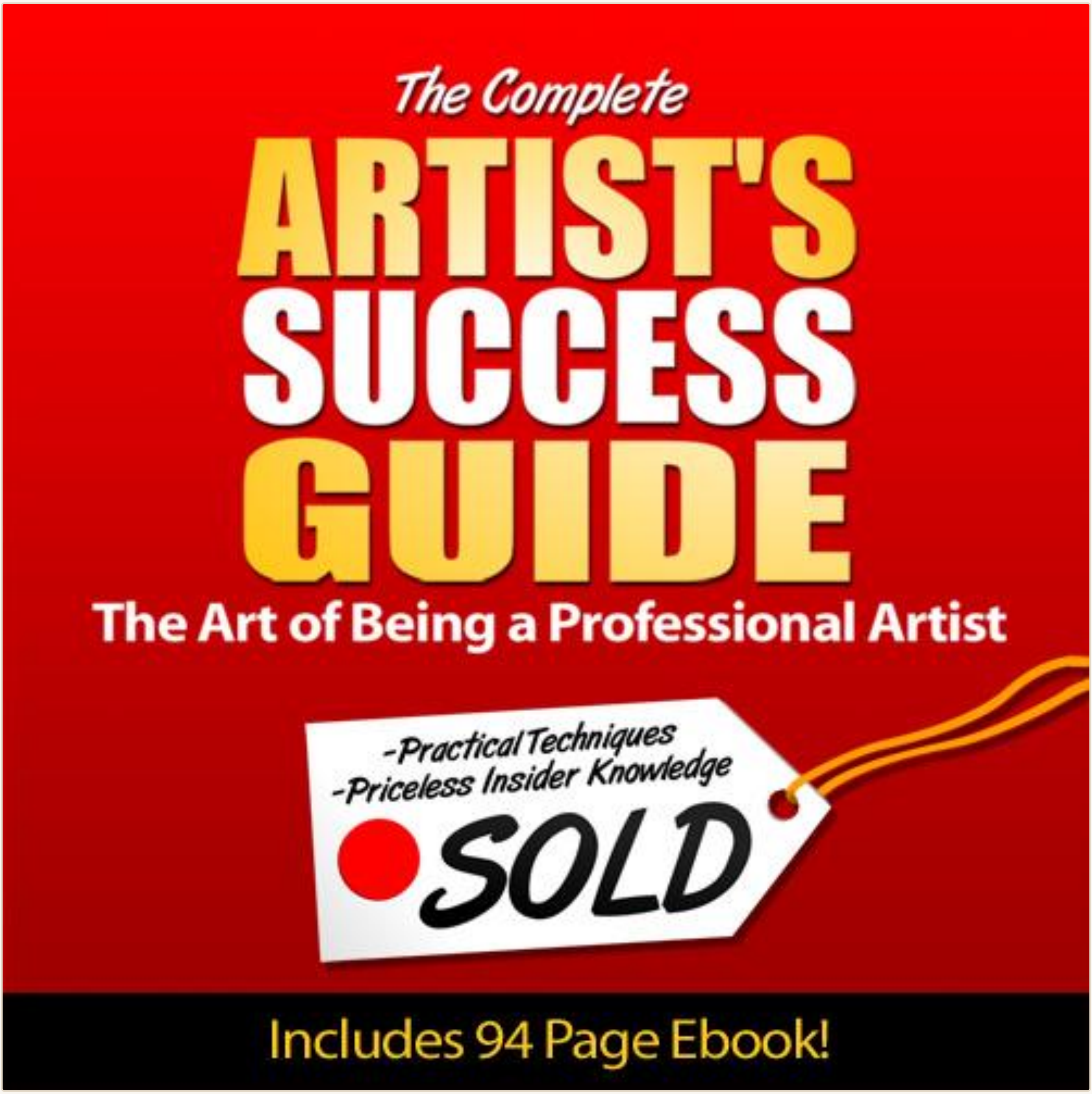
Watch the full lesson at https://mypaintingclub.com/lessons/129-The-Complete-Artist-s-Success-Guide

MY PAINTING CLUB

Introduction

In this chapter, we delve into the crucial aspect of Business Development for artists, a topic that often goes unaddressed in traditional art education. As I learned early in my career, being a successful painter is closely linked to being a savvy business person. Relying solely on galleries to sell your work can limit your income potential, as I discovered when my accountant pointed out that despite selling more paintings, my earnings had decreased due to high gallery commissions. This realization prompted me to take charge of my sales process, and now I work with multiple galleries while also exploring private sales and other avenues to boost my income. In this section, I share strategies to enhance the perception of your art, improve your marketing skills, and ultimately increase your earnings. By recognizing your paintings as products in the art market, you can balance creativity with market awareness, ensuring your work remains both passionate and original. This chapter is dedicated to equipping you with the tools to take control of your art business and achieve the success you desire.

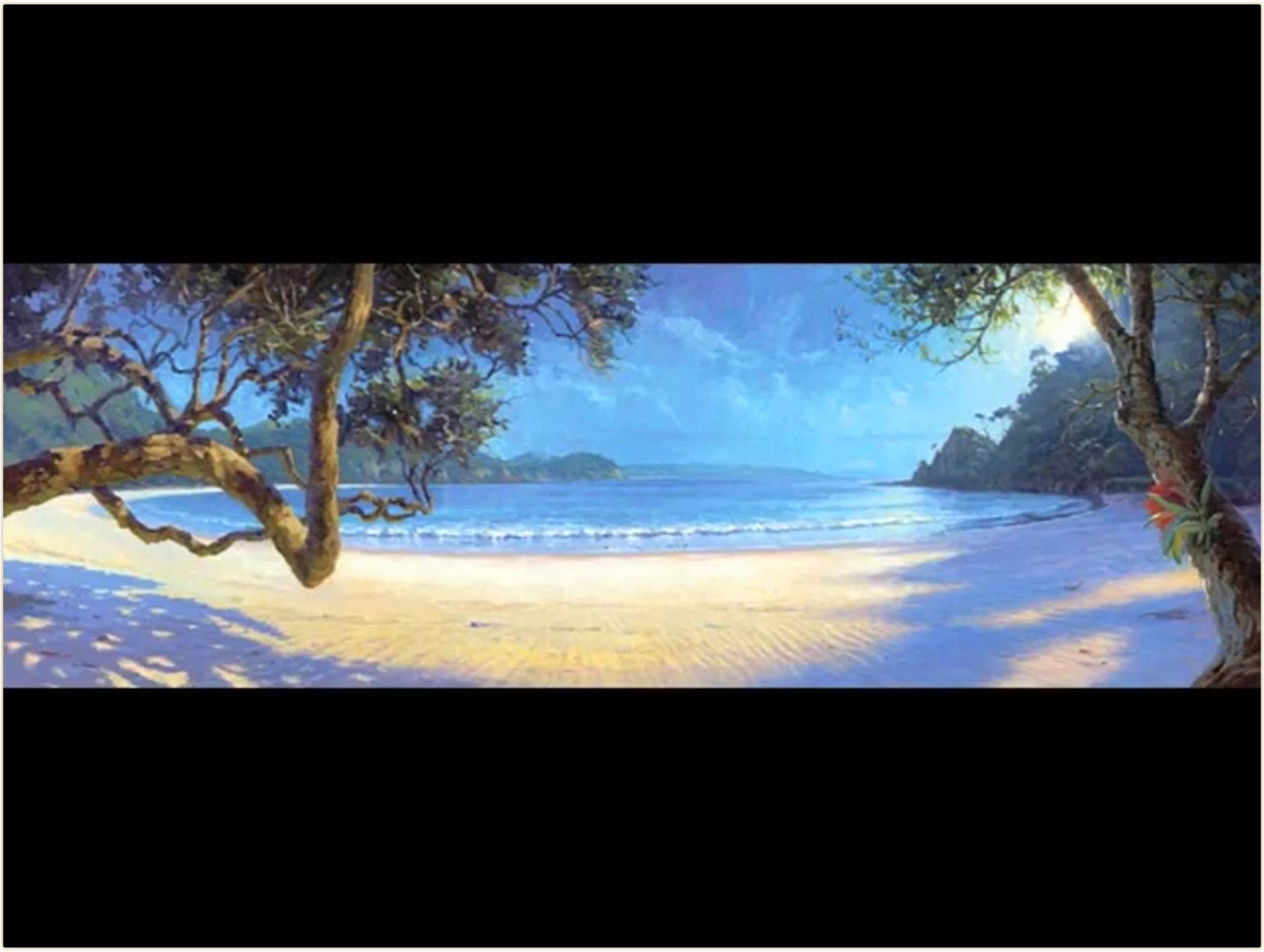
"The Complete Artist's Success Guide" by Richard Robinson.



REFERENCE PHOTO

The scene as Richard found it.

1 Product Reality in Art



Understand Your Product

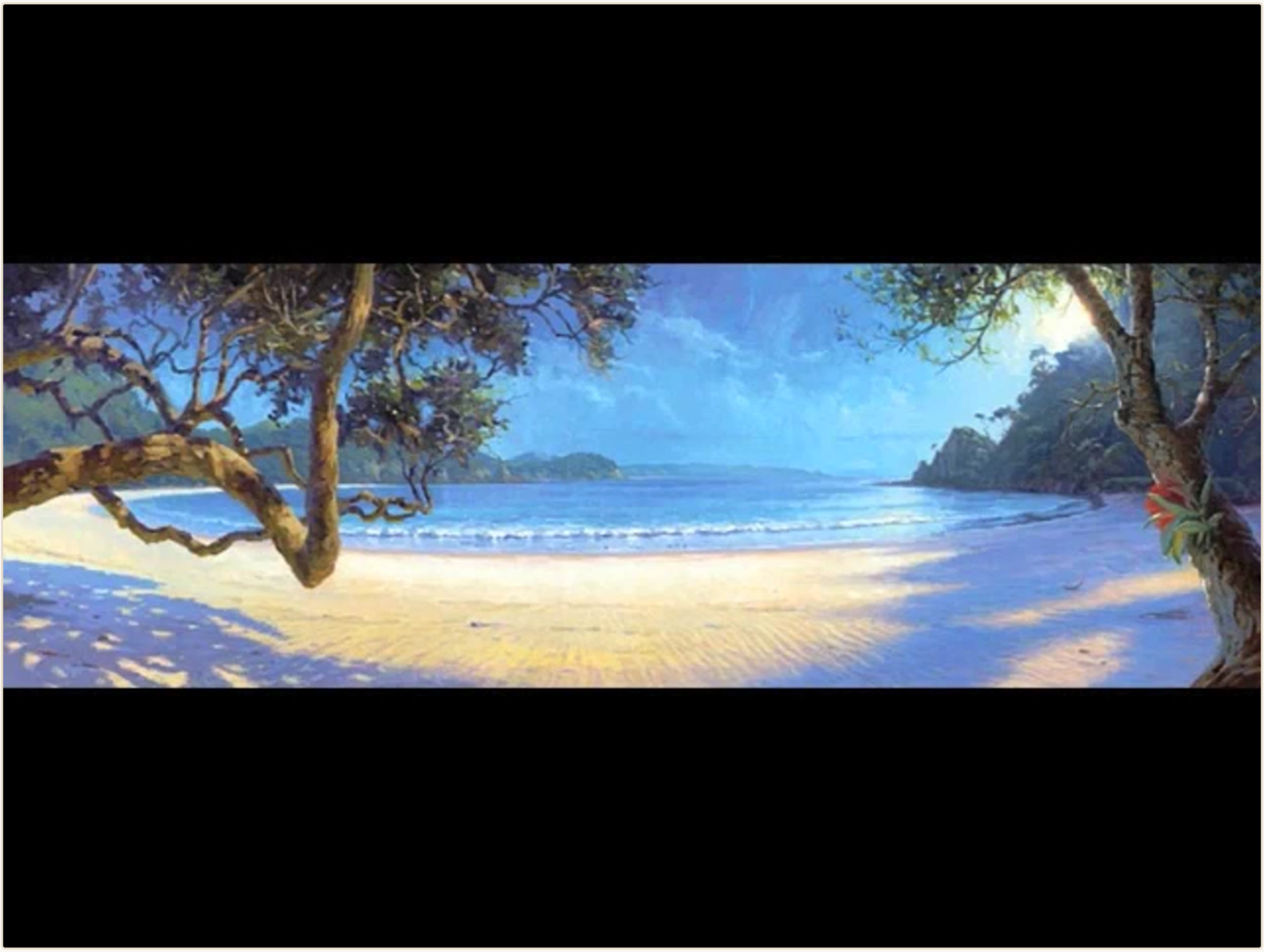
Recognize that your paintings become products in the art market. This understanding helps you approach your art with both creativity and market awareness.

Balance Creativity and Market Demand

While acknowledging your paintings as products, maintain your creative integrity. Paint with passion and originality, not solely for market trends.

> **PRO TIP**
>
> *Recognize your paintings as products to better navigate the art market, but stay true to your artistic vision.*

2 2003 UK Art Market Survey



Infuse Soul into Your Art

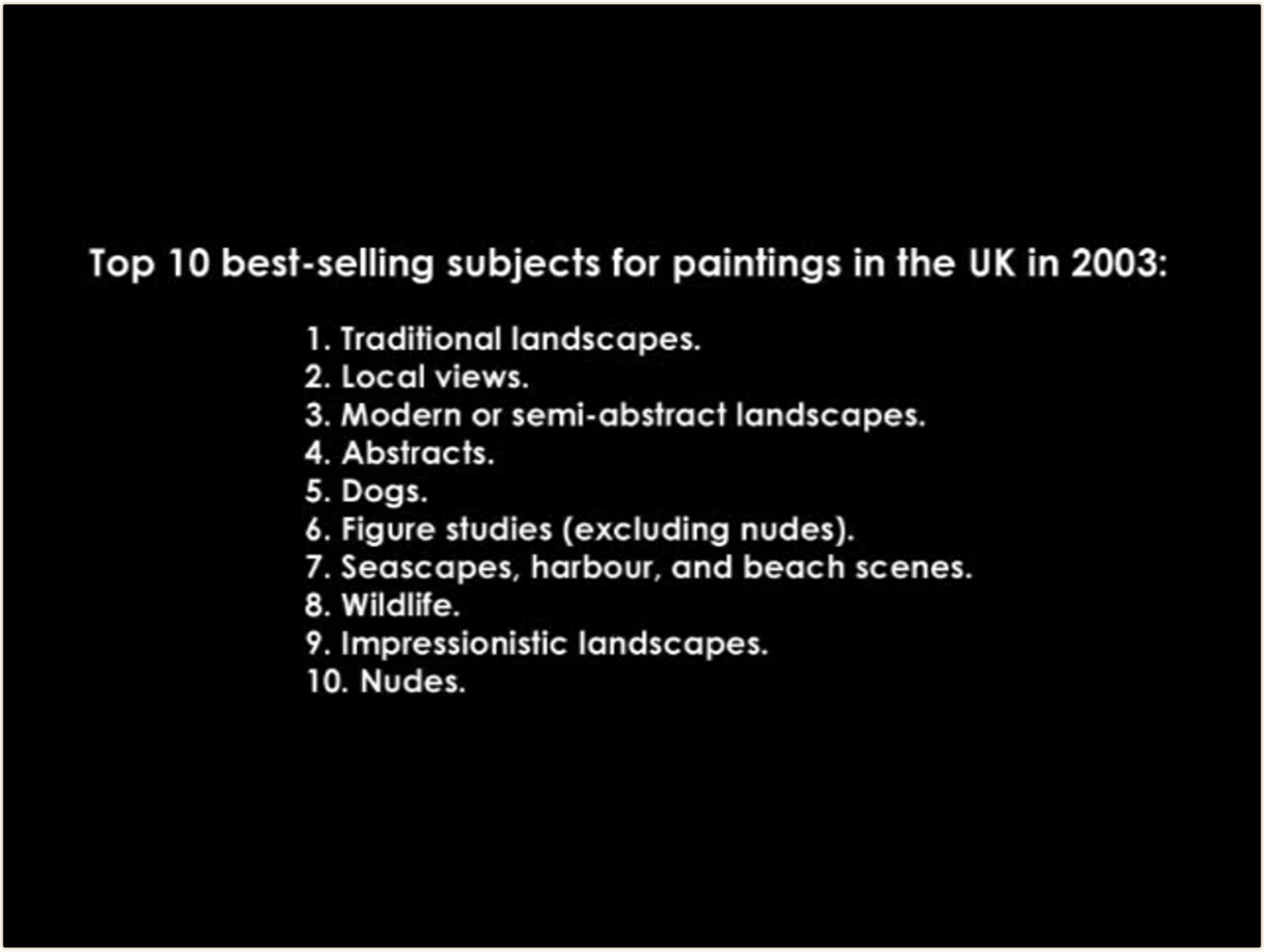
Pour your soul into your work to enhance your enjoyment and increase appreciation from buyers.

Understand Market Trends

Review the 2003 UK Art Market Survey conducted by Art Business Today for the Fine Art Trade Guild. Over 800 galleries provided insights into best-selling paintings and prints.

> **PRO TIP**
>
> *Focus on popular subjects to align your work with market trends.*

3 Top Selling Painting Subjects



Familiarize yourself with the top-selling painting subjects to guide your artistic focus. Traditional landscapes, local views, and modern or semi-abstract landscapes are the most popular. Consider exploring these themes to increase the appeal and marketability of your work.

> **PRO TIP**
>
> *Focus on traditional landscapes, local views, and modern or semi-abstract landscapes for higher sales potential.*

4 Top Selling Media

Understand Top Selling Media

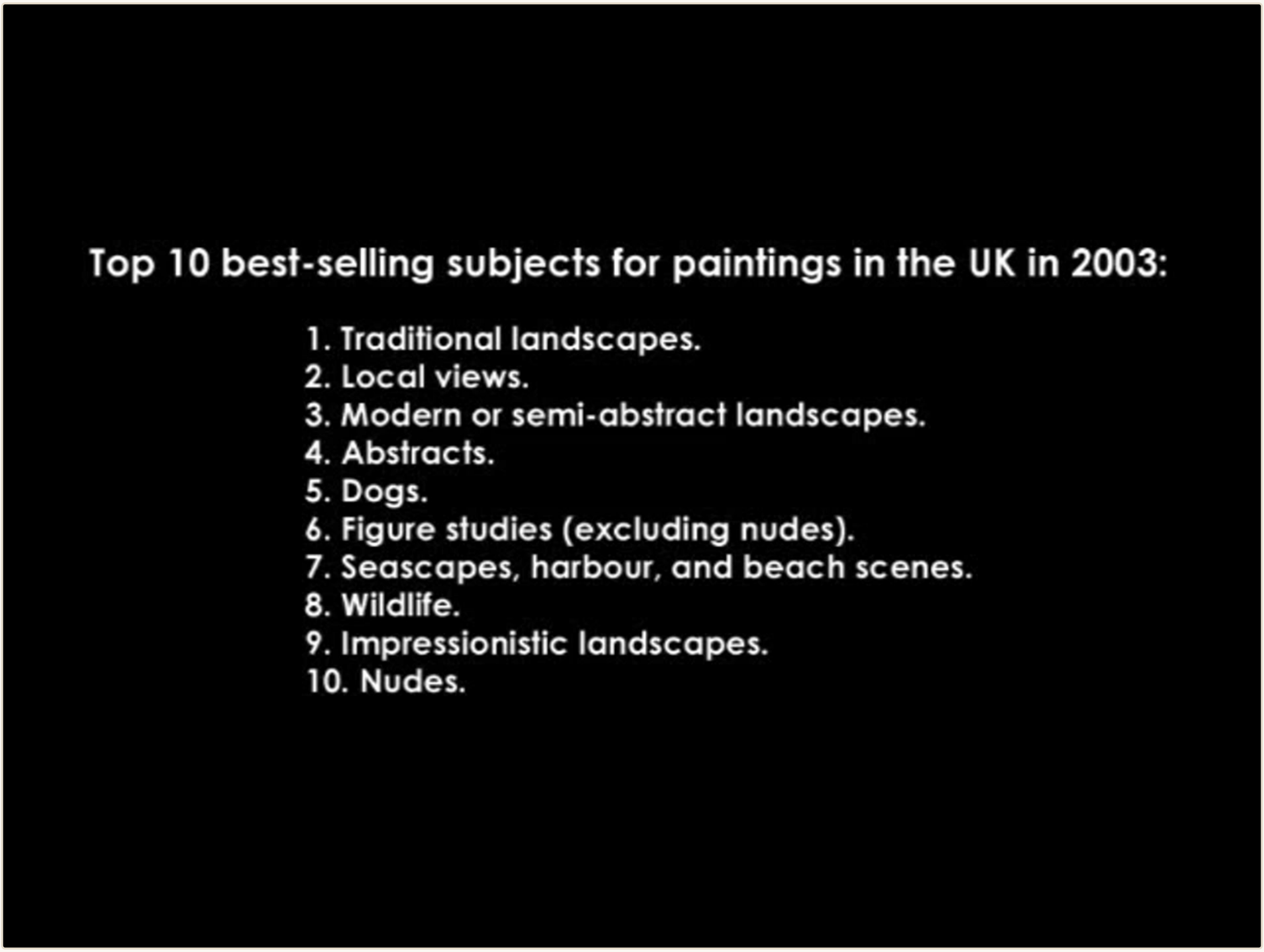
Recognize the top-selling media in the art market. Limited edition offset litho prints are the best sellers, followed by limited edition giclee prints and open edition offset litho prints.

Explore Other Popular Media

Consider oil and acrylic paintings, watercolors, and artist's original prints like etchings and engravings as popular choices. Open edition giclee prints also hold a place in the market.

> **PRO TIP**
>
> *Focus on creating limited edition prints to tap into the top-selling media categories.*

5 Adapting to Market Demands



Research Local Market Demands

Visit local galleries and talk to the owners or curators to discover which types of paintings are best sellers in your area. This will help you understand what the local market desires.

Balance Passion and Market Needs

Decide whether to focus on painting what sells easily or what you love. If they align, you have no issue. If not, consider splitting your work to cater to both market demands and personal passion.

Create a Sustainable Work Strategy

Develop a strategy where your 'bread and butter' work—pieces that sell easily—supports you financially. Meanwhile, continue creating your passion projects to build your reputation and eventually make them your main income source.

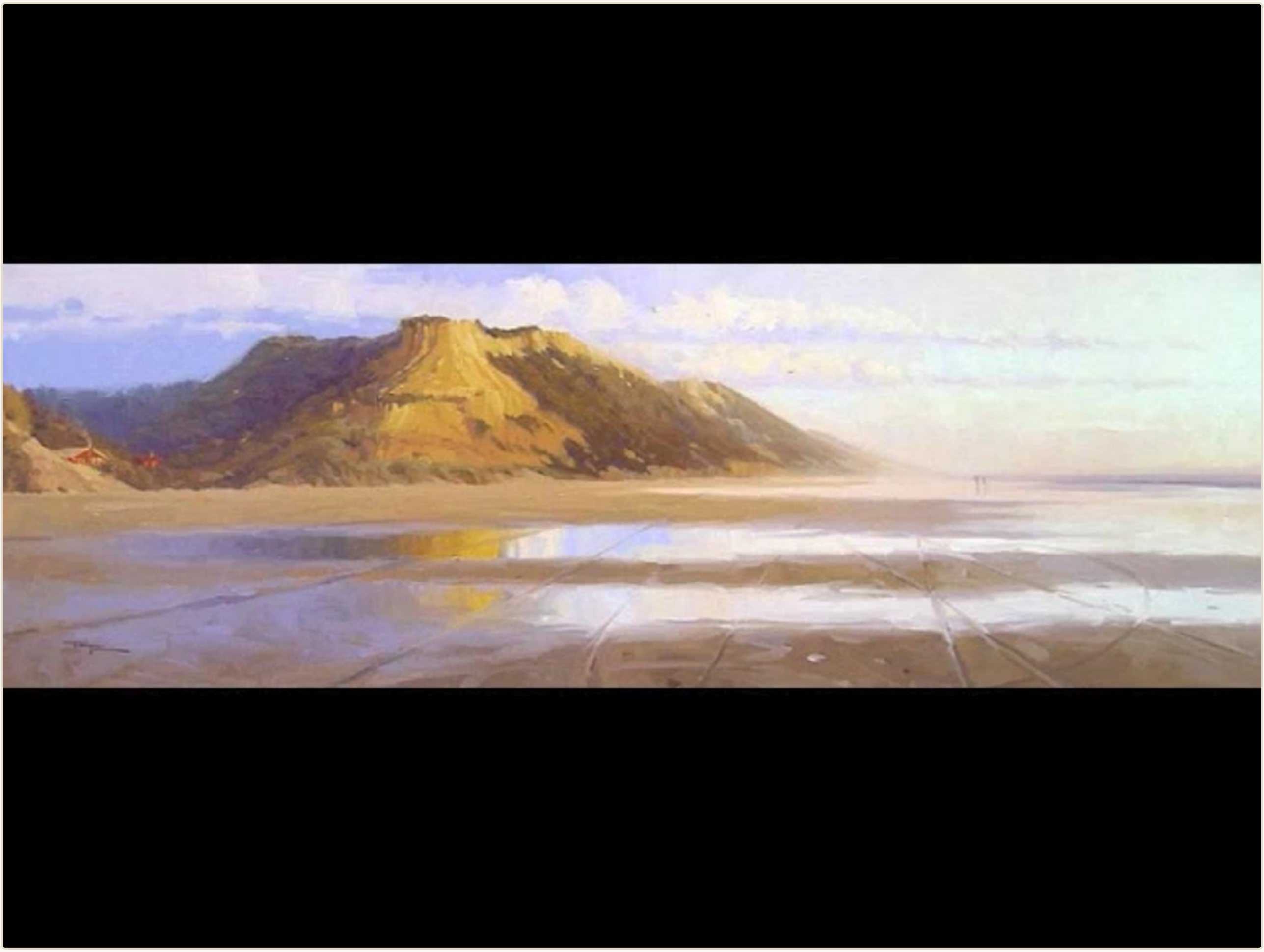
Consider Market Expansion

Explore the possibility of finding a market where your passion art sells well. This may involve moving to a new location or spending more time analyzing different market niches.

PRO TIP

Visit local galleries to understand what types of paintings are in demand in your area.

6 Artist Relocation Success Stories



Consider Your Painting Subjects

Reflect on the subjects you are passionate about painting. Determine if relocating could provide better access to these subjects, enhancing your artistic inspiration and opportunities.

Evaluate Relocation Benefits

Assess the potential benefits of moving closer to your preferred painting subjects. Consider how this change might improve your work and open new avenues for artistic growth.

Embrace Determination

Adopt a determined mindset to pursue your artistic goals. Understand that dedication and willingness to make significant changes can lead to long-term success in your art career.

> **PRO TIP**
>
> *Consider relocating to be closer to your preferred painting subjects for enhanced inspiration and opportunities.*

7 Developing a Unique Product

Focus on a Successful Product

Once you have a product that sells well, continue to develop it. Concentrate on one subject or style to become an expert in that area.

Refine Your Unique Work

Keep pushing deeper into your chosen area, developing and refining your work. This will create a unique product that stands out because no other artist is producing what you are.

Adjust Pricing and Enjoy Success

As your work becomes a rare commodity, you can increase your prices. Take the opportunity to relax and enjoy the success of your efforts.

Explore New Avenues

Be aware that focusing on one product can become tiresome. Before that happens, start exploring other avenues to maintain your interest and create more top-selling paintings.

> **PRO TIP**
>
> *Concentrate on one subject or style to become an expert and create a unique product.*

8 Artistic Purity vs. Market Reality

Understanding Market Reality

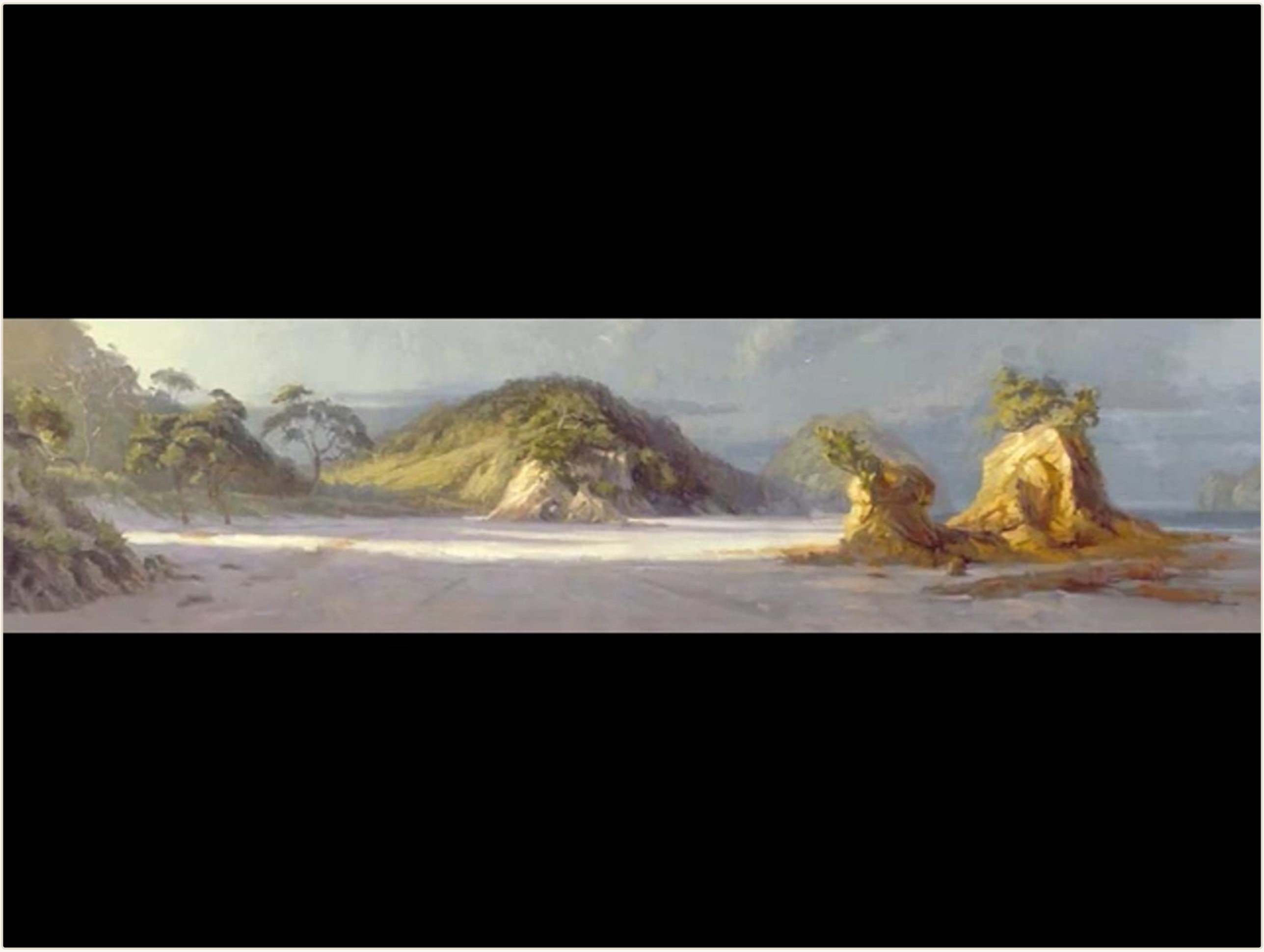
Recognize that while the artistic profession is often seen as pure, it also involves producing products for a market. Accept that people may initially buy your work to match their home decor.

Balancing Art and Market

Decide whether you want to ignore market demands and risk being a starving artist, or find a balance between creating art you love and art that sells well.

> **PRO TIP**
>
> *Find out what you can happily create that also has strong market appeal.*

9 Finding Your Market



Assess Local Market Preferences

Ask galleries in your area which paintings are the most popular. This will help you understand the tastes of your local market and guide your artistic direction.

Identify Broader Opportunities

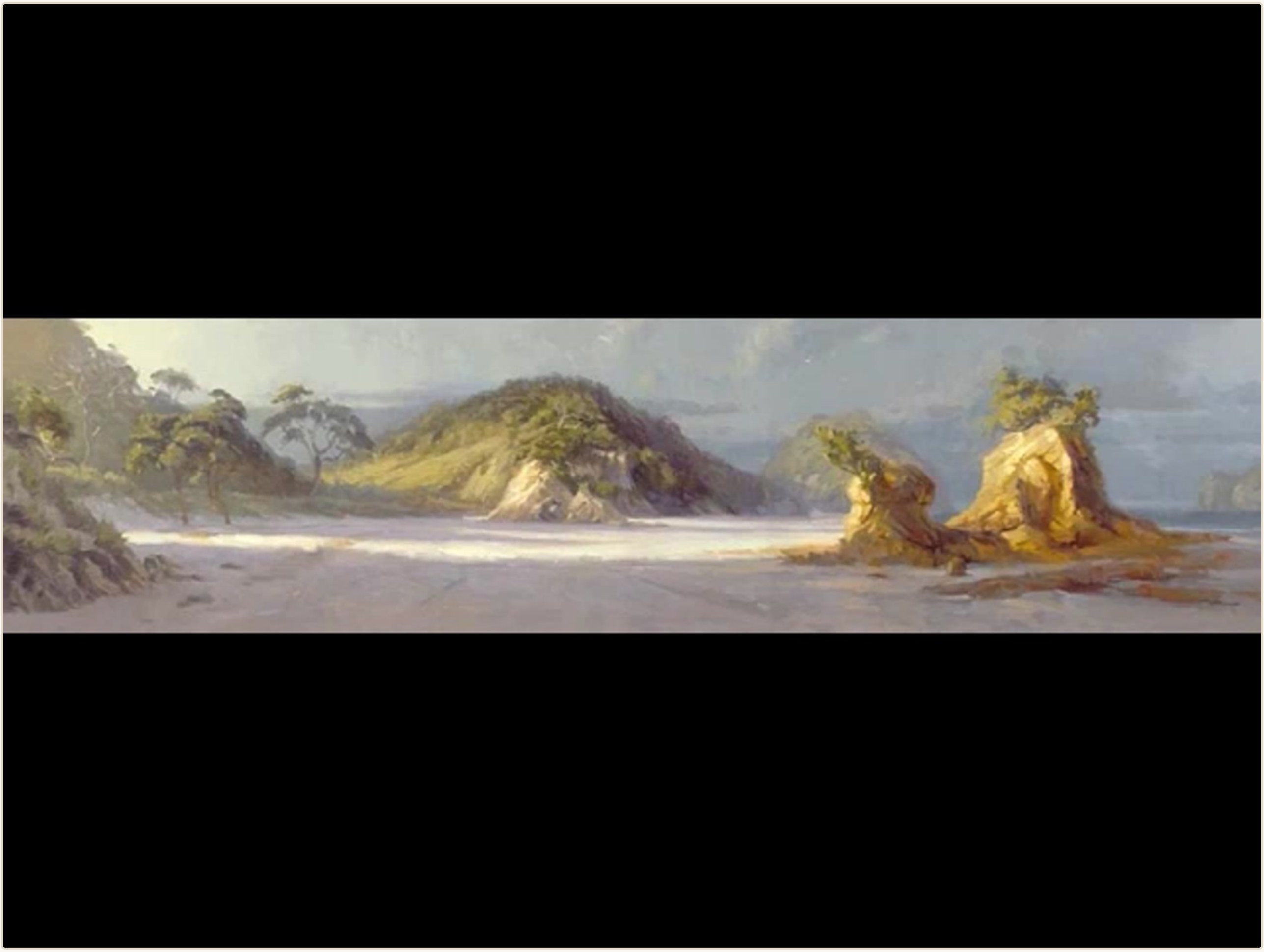
If your paintings don't sell locally, explore other markets where your art might be appreciated. Research different regions or online platforms to find potential buyers who resonate with your style.

Connect with Potential Buyers

Invest time in connecting your art with its new owners. Believe that there is at least one buyer for every well-executed artwork, and focus on reaching them through various channels.

> **PRO TIP**
>
> *Research different regions or online platforms to find potential buyers who resonate with your style.*

10 Starting Locally



Focus on Local Sales

Concentrate on selling your art within your local community. This approach leverages existing connections and familiarity, making it easier for people to relate to your work and for you to gain recognition.

Utilize Local Connections

Engage with local people who may already know you or have heard of you through friends. This network can help spread the word about your art and increase your visibility.

Adapt Quickly with Small-Scale Marketing

Start by marketing your art on a small scale to test what strategies work best. This allows you to make quick adjustments and refine your approach based on local feedback.

> **PRO TIP**
>
> *Build your sales locally first to leverage existing connections and gain quick feedback.*

11 Events as Market Opportunities

Identify Suitable Events

Consider which events your potential customers are likely to attend, such as art fairs, home shows, and group exhibitions. Research events in your area to find opportunities to showcase your work.

Observe and Learn

Visit these events to observe what art or art products are being sold and assess their success. Use this information to learn about effective selling strategies without directly copying others.

Prepare for Participation

If you decide to participate in an event, ensure you have products ready to sell. Consider offering a range of items, as smaller pieces may sell better than larger ones.

Engage with Prospects

Use events as an opportunity to collect potential customers' details. Organize a raffle or a competition to gather contact information and build your customer base.

PRO TIP

Offer a variety of smaller items for sale, as they may sell more successfully than larger pieces at events.

12 Online Marketplaces

Explore Online Marketplaces

Once you've seen some success selling locally or if your work doesn't suit the local market, consider the internet as your next marketplace. By showcasing your paintings online, you enter a global market where your art can reach a wider audience.

Join Artist Directory Websites

To quickly get your art online, join large artist directory websites that offer free or inexpensive portfolio services. These platforms have already established an online presence, making it easier for you to showcase your work.

Select Suitable Platforms

Consider platforms like BoundlessGallery.com, Yesi.com, ArtistRising.com, PicassoMio.com, ArtistPortfolio.net, NewArtCollectors.com, and MyArtspace.com. These sites are useful for establishing a web presence and engaging with online artist communities.

Manage Expectations

Understand that being on these sites doesn't guarantee discovery by thousands of buyers. Use them as a starting point for your online presence and continue to invest in marketing yourself online.

PRO TIP

Join large artist directory websites to quickly establish an online presence and connect with artist communities.

13 Using eBay for Market Assessment

Assess the Market on eBay

Consider using eBay to evaluate the online market for your art. As the largest marketplace globally, it offers a vast collection of art for sale, indicating a large pool of potential buyers.

Stand Out from the Crowd

Identify your unique selling proposition to differentiate yourself from other sellers. Determine what makes you and your art distinct from others.

Learn from Top Sellers

Examine the top sellers on eBay to understand what they are doing successfully. Use their strategies to avoid the trial and error process and improve your own approach.

> **PRO TIP**
>
> *Identify what makes your art unique to stand out in the crowded eBay marketplace.*

14 Blogging for Market Engagement

Understand Blogging's Potential

Recognize that blogging started as an online journal and has evolved into a powerful social networking tool. It allows artists to generate large followings and engage with interested people.

Leverage Search Engines

Take advantage of blogs' word-heavy and continually updated content to attract search engines. This can increase your visibility and reach a wider audience.

Consider Replacing Your Website

Explore the possibility of using a well-organized blog as a replacement for your website. Blogs allow for easy interaction, with features like comments and sharing, making them a digital word-of-mouth advertising tool.

Use Blogging for Market Assessment

Pay attention to the comments and interactions on your blog to assess your market. This feedback can provide insights into who your audience is and what they are interested in purchasing.

Identify Your Market

Make note of key demographics such as age range and gender of your buyers. Understanding who your market is will help tailor your content and offerings to meet their needs.

> **PRO TIP**
>
> *Use your blog to engage directly with your audience and gather valuable feedback on your art.*

15 Market Assessment Techniques

Gather Market Information

Collect data on what types of paintings are being purchased, including size, style, color, and subject matter. Identify what is not selling as well. This information will help you tailor your offerings to meet market demand.

Analyze Sales Timing

Research when sales are occurring, noting any seasonal trends or peaks during holidays or weekends. Understanding these patterns will guide you in preparing your inventory at the right times.

Understand Buyer Motivations

Determine why people are buying your art. Are they purchasing small items as gifts or larger pieces for special occasions? This insight will inform your promotional strategies and target audience.

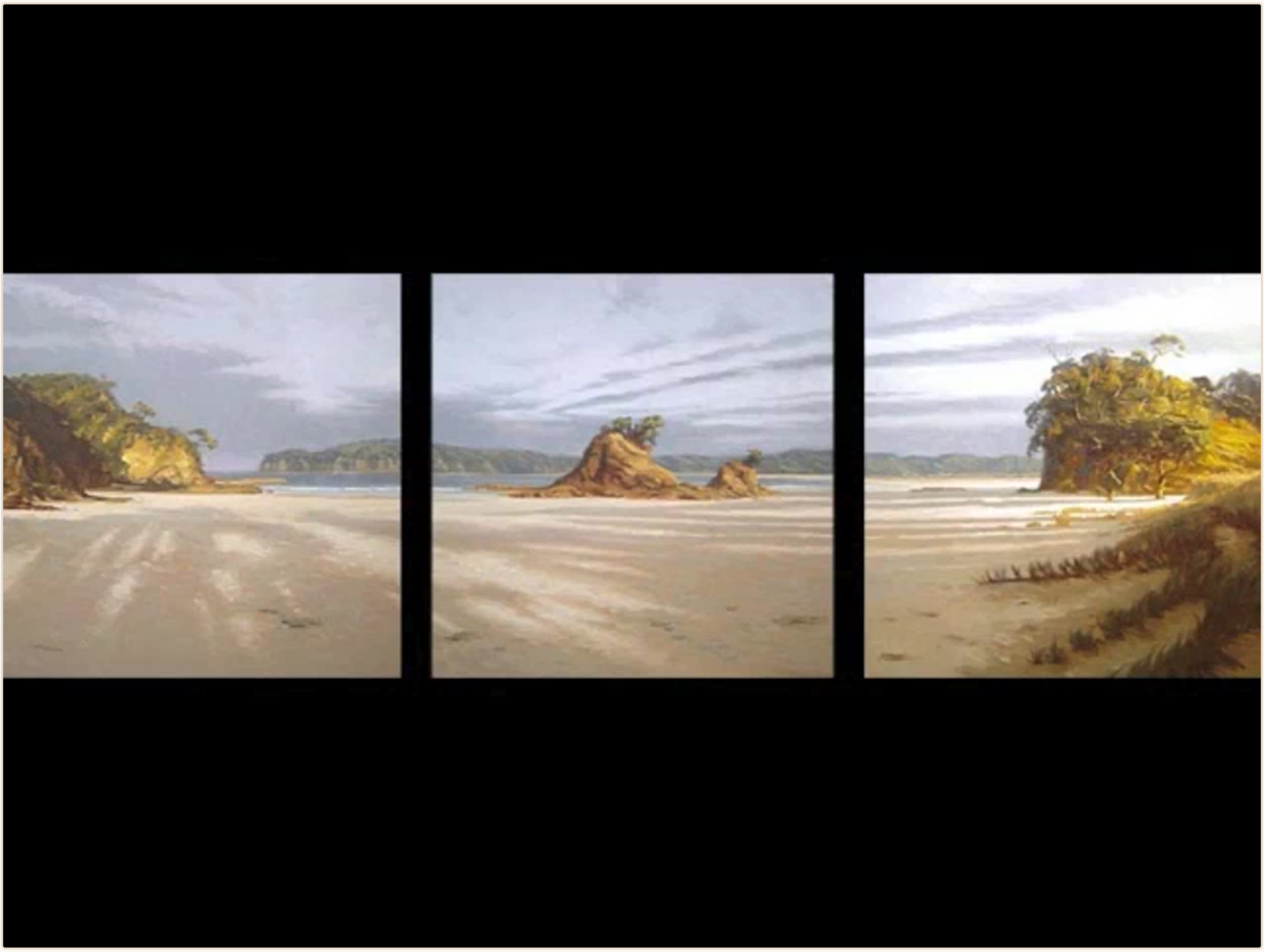
Prepare and Adjust Inventory

Use the winter months to prepare your inventory if sales peak in the summer. Align your production schedule with market demand to maximize sales potential.

PRO TIP

Collect and assess market information continuously to simplify your marketing efforts.

16 Dealing with Clients



Exude Confidence

Project honest confidence in your abilities and pride in your work. This will instill confidence in your clients and make them feel good about their purchase. Avoid pointing out deficiencies in your work, as clients will focus on what they like.

Provide Reasons to Buy

Offer clients reasons to purchase your art, such as allowing them to take the painting home to see how it looks in their space. This helps them visualize the art in their home and often leads to a sale.

Trust Your Clients

Trust that clients who meet you and see your art will treat you and your work with respect. If necessary, collect contact details or a down payment, but understand this may imply distrust.

Enhance Client Experience

Offer unexpected extras like a discount, free print, or even a cup of coffee to make the client's experience more enjoyable. This effort will lead to referrals, return visits, and goodwill.

Collect Client Contact Details

Gather contact information to keep clients informed about exhibitions, new work, and promotions. This keeps their interest alive and encourages future purchases.

> **PRO TIP**
>
> *Offer to let clients take the painting home to see how it looks in their space, increasing the likelihood of a sale.*

17 Collecting Client Contact Details

Ask Interested Clients for Details

If people show keen interest in your work, ask them for their contact details. This is the simplest way to keep them updated on your art and events.

Create an Enticing Newsletter

Develop an online newsletter that people can subscribe to. Make it more appealing by offering a prize that all subscribers have a chance to win.

Host Competitions for Contact Information

Run a competition, such as a raffle or auction, that requires participants to provide their contact details. This method is effective at events like art exhibitions, but avoid using it at galleries to maintain good relationships.

> **PRO TIP**
>
> *Offer a newsletter prize to make subscriptions more enticing.*

18 Shameless Self-Promotion

Understand the Power of Persona

Recognize that the public often has a romanticized view of artists as enigmatic and passionate figures. Embrace this perception to enhance your marketing efforts, whether in a grand or subtle way.

Share Your Passion

Let potential buyers in on the passion you feel for your work and the struggles that have shaped your art. This connection can enrich their experience and make your art more appealing.

Enhance Buyer Experience

Remember that buyers are purchasing both the artwork and the experience of acquiring it. Enhance their perception of you as a serious artist to increase their satisfaction and willingness to invest in your art.

> **PRO TIP**
>
> *Embrace the romanticized perception of artists to enhance your marketing and connect with buyers.*

19 Advertising Strategies

Generate Word of Mouth

Impress your clients by exceeding their expectations. Treat them like gold, give them more than they asked for, and maintain a positive relationship. This approach turns clients into inadvertent sales representatives for your art.

Write Newspaper and Magazine Articles

Write your own articles to ensure accuracy and control over your message. Newspapers and magazines are always looking for content, so provide them with well-crafted articles about your art. Avoid being listed as the author to maintain a professional appearance.

Utilize Internet Articles

Submit articles to online magazines, especially those focused on home and lifestyle, where potential buyers spend time. Use high-quality photography of your work, possibly placing it in a modern home setting using Photoshop for added appeal.

Participate in Art Donations

Donate art to schools and charities for fundraising auctions. This not only raises your profile but can also provide free media coverage. Ensure you set a reserve price to benefit both you and the charity.

Send Contact Letters

After a sale through a gallery, send a contact letter to the buyer. Introduce yourself, thank them, and share insights about the painting. Direct them back to the gallery for future sales to maintain a good relationship with the gallery.

Furbishing

Display your paintings in locations where people relax and spend money, such as hotels or restaurants. Choose venues that enhance your art's image, like furniture stores or show homes, to attract potential buyers.

Include Painting Notes

Attach well-designed notes to your paintings, including your name, painting title, medium, size, date, and a brief story. This information can generate interest and help sell your work by providing context and connection.

Enter Competitions

Participate in art competitions for potential career boosts and media coverage. Research judges' tastes to guide your entry. Remember, winning is a lottery, but even being a finalist can be valuable advertising.

Start a Daily Painter's Blog

Create a blog to post daily studies of still lifes or scenes. Link these posts to sales pages on auction sites like eBay. Use your client email list to notify them of these affordable pieces available for auction.

Explore Art Rental

Consider art rental businesses in urban centers for additional income and exposure. Your art can be displayed in corporate settings, providing advertising and the potential for sales.

License Your Art for Products

Collaborate with product manufacturers to feature your art on their products. Ensure you have a clear contract specifying usage rights. Attend image licensing trade shows to connect with manufacturers and explore this income stream.

> **PRO TIP**
>
> *Write your own articles for newspapers and magazines to ensure accuracy and control over your message.*

Summary & Key Takeaways

Embarking on your painting journey with an understanding of the art market transforms your creative process into a balanced blend of passion and pragmatism. Recognize your paintings as products, but let your artistic integrity guide your brush. As you explore popular subjects and media, like traditional landscapes or limited edition prints, remember to stay true to your unique vision while aligning with market trends.

Navigating the art market requires adaptability and strategic thinking. Engage with local galleries to understand regional demands, and consider relocating if it aligns with your artistic goals. Develop a dual strategy where your commercially successful pieces support your passion projects. This balance allows you to maintain financial stability while nurturing your creative spirit.

Expand your reach by leveraging both local and online platforms. Start by building a strong local presence, then explore global opportunities through online marketplaces and blogging. Use these tools to connect with potential buyers and gather valuable feedback. Remember, each interaction is a chance to refine your approach and grow your audience, ensuring your art finds its rightful place in the world.

LESSON POINTS TO REMEMBER

- Recognize your paintings as products but stay true to your artistic vision.
- Focus on traditional landscapes, local views, and modern or semi-abstract landscapes for higher sales potential.
- Visit local galleries to understand what types of paintings are in demand in your area.
- Concentrate on one subject or style to become an expert and create a unique product.
- Join large artist directory websites to quickly establish an online presence and connect with artist communities.
- Use your blog to engage directly with your audience and gather valuable feedback on your art.
- Collect and assess market information continuously to simplify your marketing efforts.
- Offer to let clients take the painting home to see how it looks in their space, increasing the likelihood of a sale.

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