



How to Survive Even Though You're an

Artist

HEREWITH WE BEGIN AN ADVENTURESOME UNDERTAKING. WITH ANY LUCK AT ALL, IT WILL BENEFIT FAR[®] MEMBERS AND VISITORS TO THIS SITE. WE'RE BEGINNING A SERIES ON THE SUBJECT OF MARKETING, SPECIFICALLY HOW TO MARKET YOUR ART.

We're going to take a look at how marketing has traditionally been done in the art world and how the Internet leveled the playing field and changed the way the art world works. (In affluent Palo Alto, south of San Francisco, two brick and mortar galleries have closed and another has moved, all within a few blocks of each other and all in the past month.) We'll explore ways to use the web to exhibit your art and once people see it, to sell them some of it. You'll find out from

artists who've become very successful selling on the Internet and they'll tell you how they do it.

Along the way, we hope to encourage YOUR participation. We envision this as more of a two way conversation, something dynamic. We hope to generate as much discussion as we do to impart information. So, if at any time you feel like dropping a comment, a suggestion or a bomb on this series, have at it. No one has any Ph.D. in art marketing. If you have found successful ways to

market your art, we would love to hear them and we will publish them on the FAR website so that other artists can benefit.

IS MARKETING A DIRTY WORD?

To many, marketing is a nine letter spelling for a four letter word, and not without reason. Marketing is a Pandora's Box from which spring the evils of advertising. Nowadays, marketers have found ways to intrude into the visual and aural spaces of everyone except the deaf, dumb and blind Tommy of Who fame, and have helped create a generation of kids with the attention span of a fruit fly. You sometimes lose perspective of how bad it is until you visit a place like Sweden and watch an entire World Cup Soccer match with not a single commercial break. Watch a football game here at home and it's: Touchdown! Extra point. Commercial. Kickoff. Commercial, three or four more plays, commercial, on and on all afternoon. It's little wonder then, that in any survey of the most admired professions, advertisers are the bottom feeders (no joke). (Firemen are at the top, in case you're wondering.)

What fuels this rant, however, is the abusive use of marketing and advertising, and now that's out of the way, let's look at some basics.

A market is an open space or building where

buyers and sellers convene for the sale of goods or services. It comes from the Latin, mercatus, "to buy" from merx, meaning "commodity."

Marketing is simply "the activities involved in transferring goods or services from the producer to the consumer." To you, the artist, this means all those actions that result in you selling your art to someone, getting it into their hands, and getting paid for it.

EXCHANGE IS NO ROBBERY

Basically, it all has to do with the subject of exchange, giving something to get something. I give you my Picasso, you give me \$139 million. (Whoops, I just put my elbow through it. Damn!)

But you get the idea. Whatever complexities we want to add to it, those are some basic simplicities. And we can add a lot of factors. Some are generated by others. Many we generate ourselves.

There are people's opinions of what art is worth. The brick and mortar gallery requires its cut. The critics' reviews (some of whom can't tell shit from burnt umber) can influence what the public feels it's supposed to think about art. Maybe we don't

know what our art is worth. We don't know where to start. Selling one's art is tantamount to selling one's body or one's soul. We don't like selling, or shy away from it or it's beneath us.

Some people have removed their art outside of the realm of exchange and wouldn't think of selling it. One elderly, very excellent water colorist hoarded her work under the bed and was greatly offended at the notion of selling even a single piece. That's okay if you have some other way of paying the bills. But this artist falls at the far end of the spectrum.

Most artists would like nothing better than to make art full time and still be able to eat. It sure beats working in a cubicle all week and painting on Sundays like Gauguin did for years. In fact, being able to survive through one's art would be a dream life for any artist. What greater joy is there than creating? And on top of that to get paid for it?!

None of above opinions, rationalizations or considerations alter the fact that marketing is simply the exchange of one valuable for another valuable.

Getting back to the concept of exchange for a moment, there are several degrees. These could

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be expressed as different levels. Starting at the lowest level, we find nothing for something, like when you get mugged on the street and you give up your wallet to a robber. In exchange, you get nothing. Or you pay your income tax and for your money you get ... the military-industrial complex along with deteriorating roads and schools but no healthcare. In other words, a rip off.

The next level of exchange is partial exchange. You pay to have your car washed but when you drive away you discover the windows are still dirty. It ticks you off for the rest of the day. You didn't get what you paid for.

Compare that to a fair exchange, where you pick out a new pair of shoes, you pay for them, you've got a new pair of shoes and you're satisfied. All's fair and square.

Finally, there's exchange in abundance, where you get more than you bargained for. Like dinner at a sidewalk restaurant on the Champs Elysees where the service is so extraordinary, the flowers on the table so fresh, the strolling musicians so perfect, the evening so beautiful, that the food itself, wonderful as it is, is only part of the story. You ordered dinner and got an evening to remember. That's exchange in abundance.

If you want to make a living out of your art, then you should definitely go for fair exchange or, ideally, exchange in abundance. One artist sold some paintings for a decent price but when they arrived with the client, she was amazed at how beautifully they had been packed for shipping and at the quality of the certificates of authenticity that accompanied them. Just by tagging and registering your work with Fine Art Registry™, you are giving your clients more than they expected which, assuming they already like your art and feel they are paying a fair price for it, puts you in the exchange in abundance category without further effort.

So, you're perfectly willing, even desperate, to exchange your art. Many artists give their art away, receiving in exchange admiration from friends and family and maybe that's exchange enough to keep you going. At some level, that appreciation is always there no matter how successful you become monetarily. In fact, the resonance your art evokes is probably why you're painting or carving or singing in the first place.

Now, can you convince or inspire or persuade people into giving you enough in return so you can afford to keep creating?

One registered FAR® artist began selling her paintings for under \$10 each just a few years ago. Now she is driving a Rolls Royce Silver Shadow and can't keep up with the demand for her work, and her prices are MUCH higher than they were. But more of this later.

That's where marketing comes in and that's what this series is about. When you strip away the additives, it's not complicated.

We are EAGER for all our artists to be

successful. That of course means different things to different people. But it's highly likely that whatever "success" means to you as an artist, it's going to involve marketing your work.

So, let's get a dialogue going here. What does "success" mean to you as an artist? Send us your definition or your criteria or your comments on how you envision artistic success. We'll post them and see where it leads. ✍️

