

20 Ways to Promote and Sell Your Art

By Leisa Collins

Suddenly dumping your day job and making your living solely from your art may seem daunting. So where do you start? Being that so many artists ask me what promotional actions they should take, I have listed out some really basic ones below. **These are all actions that I took to get my art career up and running.** They mainly apply to visual artists, but can be adapted for any artist who is starting out. Even if you are currently doing your art as a part time hobby while juggling a 9 – 5 job, make a **START** on these actions and you can build on them from there.

This list includes promotional actions within your local community as well as much broader on-line actions. Both are important, depending on your art and the markets you are promoting to, namely people who might want to buy your work.

A word of caution. The actions below are not a magic formula. Every artist is different, just as every artist's creations are uniquely different. Some of these things might work perfectly for you, and some might not. It is, however, a basic foundation of actions which you can use to determine which promotional actions you should focus on regards selling your art.

Don't forget, making anything happen requires **ACTION** on your part. Good luck on putting these 20 points into use and finding out which ones work best for you!

20 Basics Actions to Promote Your Art

1. **First and foremost, create a body of work that you are proud of and eager to promote.**

Organize your schedule so that no matter what, you are continuously creating new art. This keeps you energized as an artist.

2. **Document your art pieces professionally with good quality scans or photographs of each piece for visual art.**

The same applies for music or performance. Along with this, and most importantly, get some professional artist photos of yourself, with your work and/or at work on your art.

3. Take a look at your work and decide what qualities make it unique and write a compelling bio about yourself as an artist.

What's your unique story? Include in the bio what inspires you to create your art? In essence, realize that you, as the artist and the creator, are just as fascinating to people as the art itself.

4. Start promoting your work to family and friends and on social media.

Create a Facebook artist page (or use your personal Facebook page) and get involved in other social media such as Instagram, Pinterest, Twitter and more. Use these to build yourself a constantly growing number of followers. Post as often as you can, but most importantly post regularly, and very importantly, follow up with anyone who shows interest in owning a piece of your art.

5. Immediately start building up an email list of friends, family and acquaintances – basically anyone who has expressed interest in your work.

Keep adding people who purchase your work, reach out to you as well as new people you meet. Always collect addresses at shows or other gatherings. Just tell folks you want to include them on your email list for show invites or just to stay in touch. (Do this in a positive enthusiastic way and no one will say no to you.)

6. Create a website that displays your work so that you have something to direct people to.

It can be super simple – and inexpensive – to start with. Learn what are your key words to use for Search Engine Optimization (SEO) and implement these basics on your website. Most importantly, make sure it is easy to navigate for those visiting.

7. Learn a simple graphic art program as well as the basics principles of graphic design itself.

This way you can create your own promotion, logo and designs that are distinctive and professional. Otherwise find and pay a creative person to do this for you so that your promotion is aesthetic and professional.

8. Always carry business cards on you and show images of your art to interested people on your phone whenever the opportunity arises.

It is also helpful to have a binder that includes prints of your art, media articles, art show invites and programs, photos etc. This is especially useful at art shows and other opportunities you create to display your art.

9. Become part of on-line artist communities where you can display and sell your art.

There are many of these but some of the best-known ones are *Fine Art America*, Saatchi Art, Redbubble, *deviantART* and *Etsy*. Do your research and establish which ones are best for you.

10. Choose an on-line email marketing company which offers email marketing and other promotional interfaces that are especially suited for small businesses.

Choose one that is the best fit for you. Constant Contact and Mailchimp are two of the most popular ones.

Put your first promotional pieces together (such as a general newsletter or a "hot of the easel" newsflash with your latest artwork) and get these sent out on a regular basis.

11. Look around you and make a list of all the possible places you could display your work or have mini-art shows or displays within your local community.

Obviously, galleries are ideal but they are often hard to get into until you have developed a following. So don't limit it to this. See what cafes, restaurants and retail stores might be a good fit. Then go to each of these places and actually TALK to someone in charge and show them samples of your work. Get displays up of your work, along with price tags and have plenty of business cards so that you can be contacted.

12. Write a press release or article with your story and promote any art event or activity you organize or are part of to the media.

Once you have sent it to them, follow up and actually interest them in the story. If you don't know how to write a release, here is a good guide that you can use. <http://blog.hubspot.com/marketing/press-release-template-ht> Remember media articles are free promotion and printed articles are very useful for promotional flyers and displays about you, the artist.

13. Join local art societies and groups within your community.

At the very least sign up for their newsletters so that you can attend or take part in their meetings, art shows, fairs and other events that interest you. Through these activities, make friends with fellow artists for possible partnerships and collaborations as well as new contacts and clients.

14. Join your local Chamber of Commerce or other organizations that promote small businesses.

Attend their mixes and events and make new contacts. Many hold art events, such as art walks, exhibitions etc. that you could be involved in.

15. Display and sell your art in local, regional or national fairs, markets or other art events that you feel are a good fit.

If the booths are expensive, try partnering with other artists who would like to share the space with you.

16. Create your own art blog (which is part of your website) and write articles that promote your work and make your voice heard.

You can include a link to your blog articles in your social media posts or as part of emails you send out to your email list. Try to send these emails out on a regular basis, i.e. weekly, bi-weekly or monthly.

17. Get your message out with the use of video.

This makes great content for social media, and you can include video links in the emails you send out. Create your own YouTube channel through producing and releasing videos about your art. Also use it to direct traffic to your website and social media hubs.

18. Create an art studio with your art on display that you can invite people to come to.

This is often a good way to procure new collectors. This can be in your own workspace or home. Live/work lofts are perfect for this, otherwise hook up with other artists and share a space.

19. Collaborate with other artists or hold your own art shows.

Work out your message, plan it out carefully and create invitations. Make sure you promote the show in advance on all possible channels so you have good attendance. Have an opening with wine and cheese to kick off the show and get

your first sales. Don't be discouraged if you don't sell any or only a few pieces at your first shows. Learn from each of them and do better next time.

20. Enter your art in art contests.

You can gain recognition for your work this way and it is useful promotional material for you.

About the author of this article:

Leisa Collins is the Director of EMA Artists USA and has made her living from her art since 2010. With a passion for architectural subjects, Leisa successfully launched her career and attributes much of her success to applying the Hubbard Management System. She soon discovered that effective promotion was the make-or-break point of success and implemented a 20-point plan of action. Within two years she was making a stable six-figure income. Today she is one of the most prolific architectural artists in the USA, has a coffee table book that includes her work in all 50 states and has been featured in major media outlets. She has now made it her mission to mentor other artists so they too can succeed.

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