

FALL 2011



Selling *Fine Art* Photography

An educational guide from



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About PhotoShelter



PhotoShelter is the leader in portfolio websites and business tools for serious photographers.

With PhotoShelter, you also get powerful features and resources to market your photos, such as SEO and social sharing capabilities, in addition to the most options for licensing photography and selling prints online and pro-strength file delivery tools to please your clients.

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What's Inside

So you've got a wonderful collection of art photography. (You know this because your friends and family tell you so.) "You should really sell your work," they say. Generally, the people who say this don't have the faintest idea what goes into selling fine art photography.

When we initially set out to research and compile this guide, we thought it would be another trusty "how to" companion by PhotoShelter to add to our library, perhaps the most comprehensive guide to selling photography as fine art. Yet we soon found that unlike many other photography businesses, finding the "recipe" to selling fine art proved elusive. There is no recipe, but there are common threads. For example, in every instance of success, we find photographers who have made smart decisions about the ways to build an audience and market their work.

This guide is nonetheless very educational reading for photographers looking to get started or tune-up their fine art sales. On the following pages you'll find **nine inspiring profiles** that are filled with unique approaches to building and sustaining a fine art photography business. We explore how photographers found their way into the fine art world and determined their work could sell, how they honed their marketing methods, their pricing and printing considerations, and more. We also spoke to a number of experts in selling fine art online and offline, who shared their tips for breaking through. The takeaways may inspire you to try out new methods for selling your own work.

To learn about some of the more technical aspects and considerations associated with selling prints, check out our previous guide, [How to Sell Prints](#).

Selling Fine Art Photography includes the following profiles
- *we hope you find them helpful!*

- **Ken Kaminesky.** Ken discovered a unique style that suited his passion and now succeeds in selling fine art online to a large and growing social following.
- **Jimmy Williams.** Jimmy returned to his passion after a successful commercial career and now uses PR and media coverage to build an audience for his fine art work.
- **Landon Nordeman.** Landon piggybacks off the access afforded by editorial assignments to indulge his curious eye to capture a different, more contemporary view of his subjects. His work is marketed through the successful online fine art gallery 20x200.
- **Greg Marinovich.** Greg has parlayed his vast collection of historic documentary photography from South Africa to find new success in gallery and museum exhibits.
- **James Bourret.** James opened a gallery to market his Sun Valley, Idaho landscape work, which draws in a regular tourist audience that is then exposed to his fine art collection.
- **Peter Carroll.** Peter captured a natural rarity - the unique way that rain hits one of Australia's most recognizable rock formations - and was instantly catapulted into the fine art world by the public response to his work.
- **Matt Suess.** Matt believes that all fine art sales stem from personal connections and relies heavily on travel to art festivals to meet new people and share the story behind his photos.
- **amani olu.** amani co-founded Humble Arts Foundation, a nonprofit dedicated to promoting the fine art photography of undiscovered artists.
- **Bess Greenberg.** Bess is the director of Manhattan's 25CPW, an artist run gallery space that features a regular stream of community-oriented curated events in a temporarily vacant retail space.

10 Tips to Get Galleries to Feature Your Work

Featuring Gallery Guru Amanda Z. Bowker

Amanda Z. Bowker has worked in some of the nation's top museums and galleries including the San Francisco Museum of Modern Art, the Corcoran Gallery of Art in Washington, DC, as well as the Robert Mann Gallery and Pace/MacGill Gallery in New York City. As an expert in the field with a Master's degree in Art History from Columbia University, she has managed artists, worked with clients in fine art sales, and assisted gallery owners in selecting photographers as well as curating photography exhibitions.

With close to ten years of experience under her belt, Amanda will tell you there is no single formula a fine art photographer can follow to get his or her work on the walls of a gallery, private collector, or museum, but she has a list of tips that will definitely help:

1. Aim for compelling subject matter that is well-executed. Leave potential for your work to be interpreted broadly. This may mean taking risks and deviating from subjects and formats that are typical.
2. If you are an emerging fine art photographer, search for art fairs, galleries or group shows geared specifically towards you. Some collectors make a point to seek out fresh faces.
3. In the beginning, if you are selling your work independently, price your work at a price point that is attractive to collectors. This price may be lower than you would like at first, but it will allow you to get your stuff "out there." With this exposure, you may find greater interest in your work.
4. Schedule face to face meetings. Curators, assistant curators, and some gallery owners and directors are still willing to sit down to review your portfolio.
5. Be aware of upcoming biennial-type exhibitions and submit your work to those selection reviews. These provide good opportunities to exhibit and sell.
6. Seek out opportunities to participate in and attend museum workshops and gallery talks. These are also great ways to meet curators, gallery owners and directors. The idea is not to try to show them your work on the spot, but to become a familiar face so that when you're ready to show your portfolio, you're not a complete stranger.
7. When selecting photographers to include in an exhibition or collection, curators may want to look at a photographer's entire portfolio to get a sense of the artist's range. Make sure you have a wide collection of strong pieces to show.
8. Make it clear that you are a hardworking artist who's in it for more than the money. Curators and gallery owners will appreciate your dedication and commitment.
9. Be patient! The process of getting your work shown and collected can take a long time. It's important to remain positive, create work even if it's not being shown, and be persistent to get your art in front of collectors, gallery owners, and curators.
10. Travel. It can be hard to break into an already-saturated art market in a city like New York. Try going to another city with a strong gallery and museum community and showing your work to people there. This will help you confidently approach more prominent galleries later on.



6 Tips to Get Your Work Featured Online

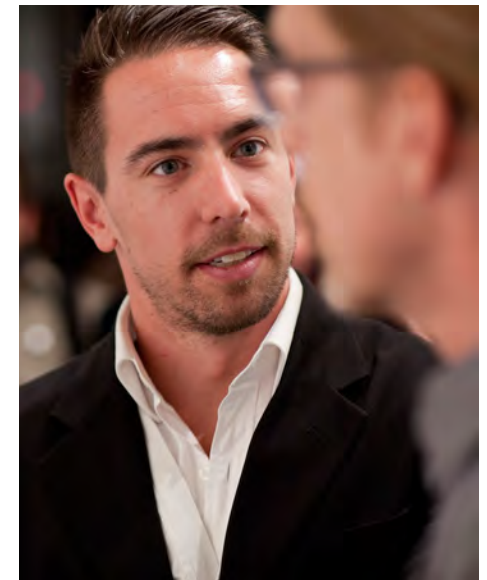
Featuring Jeffrey Teuton of 20x200

Jeffrey Teuton is the Director of the [Jen Bekman Gallery](#) in New York City and works closely with [20x200](#), an online gallery offering thousands of limited edition prints from a wide range of photographers. Founded by Jen Bekman, 20x200 brings together art collectors and artists, selling fine art pieces ranging from \$20 to upwards of \$10,000. The gallery has no official submission process but constantly surveys Hey, Hot Shot, an international photography competition helping emerging artists gain recognition and exposure. 20x200 also digs for fine art photography by searching Tumblr, Facebook, art blogs, websites, and beyond.

Jeffrey notes that online galleries are “a different beast” compared to offline exhibitions. While the site itself can attract countless customers ranging from high school students to museum curators to interior designers to first time collectors, there is still the challenge of skeptical onlookers who don’t trust a piece of work they can’t see in front of them. But today, working directly with photographers and clients at 20x200, Jeffrey has a list of six key tips for photographers hoping to get their work featured online:

1. Get your name out there in your online community. Curators and gallery owners often read local and obscure blogs to find undiscovered talent.
2. When you’re featured in a blog, be sure the post back-links to your website. The folks at 20x200 get frustrated when they come across a great photograph with no information about the photographer attached.
3. Make sure your photographs have strong composition, great technique, and “strike a cord.” Online galleries like this.
4. Be smart when choosing an online gallery to collaborate with. Many galleries like 20x200 have an exclusivity policy that prevents you from showing your same pieces in other venues. This means that the gallery you pick should have a strong marketing reach that can expose you to a large network of potential customers.

5. Find an online gallery that has a relationship with offline spaces. For example, 20x200 has a close relationship with the Jen Bekman Gallery and the two spaces often cross promote photographers.
6. Online galleries are receptive to emerging artists. 20x200 is not surprised when an undiscovered photographer comes on board and their work takes off - that’s why they make a point to search for fresh faces.



3 Insights from a Fine Art Printer

Featuring Mark Lukes, President of Fine Print Imaging

Mark Lukes is the President and Founder of [Fine Print Imaging](#), a fine art printing company located in Fort Collins, Colorado. Fine Print Imaging has been in business for over 35 years and is today considered one of the top printers for fine art photographers across the country.

Fine Print Imaging primarily attracts photographers from three major groups:

1. Photographers preparing for art festivals.
2. Photographers working closely with galleries and specialized gift shops.
3. Conservation photographers.

The last group - conservation photographers - reflects Fine Print Imaging's dedication to protect and preserve a sustainable environment. With their strong commitment, the organization gives back to conservation groups and conservation photographers by providing printing services and financial support.

As an industry veteran, Mark works closely with fine art photographers and travels the country to host seminars and workshops on selling fine art, art which he defines as "exceptionally executed." With years of experience, Mark offers photographers three valuable insights on the fine art industry today:

1. Regional pieces sell. People from Colorado will appreciate and buy photographs of mountaintops. North Carolinians will be drawn to an ocean view or a lighthouse. Scenes that depict a specific area will always resonate with those living there.
2. There are still many galleries that may not appreciate photography as "fine art." Therefore, to get their work seen, photographers need to seek out galleries that showcase less expensive art ranging from (for example) \$800 - \$1200.
3. A piece's specific finishing and matting affects the work's marketability. Over the past ten years, there has been a direct sale increase in fine art prints made on canvases. A photograph on a canvas still carries a sense of novelty and will attract customers.



Ken Kaminesky

For the past 15 years, Ken Kaminesky has shot commercial lifestyle images, working directly with agencies including Picture Arts, Jupiter Images, Corbis, and Getty Images. But over two years ago, Ken found himself at a crossroads, emotionally unattached to much of his commercial work, and pursued a path that led him to travel and fine art photography.

“I wanted to reinvent myself and do work I was passionate about,” Ken said. So as an avid traveler, he turned his camera to people and places, breaking into fine art as a result of a need for that “something more.” Today, Ken travels the world working directly with tourism boards to capture cities including New York, Paris, and Barcelona.

Like many, Ken’s definition of fine art is subjective and he believes the traits that constitute fine art photography are often up to those who buy. “Fine art is really defined by those who are purchasing,” Ken said. “You could have one piece very close to your heart, which the person next to you has no reaction to whatsoever. That’s why art is so subjective. There’s no right and wrong.”

Initially learning fine art skills through extensive trial and error, Ken launched an online gallery and blog to keep supporters up-to-date with his work and travels. “If you’re going to have an online presence to sell your fine art, you need to put time and effort into making yourself look good,” Ken said. “This may mean hiring a website designer.”

Ken also points out that it’s crucial to be thorough and answer all questions directly on your site. His own FAQ page illustrates just this and addresses all questions potential buyers may have about purchasing his work. “Because you’re taking out that crucial face-to-face connection, you have to make it as easy as possible for people to understand your selling process.”

Prior to structuring pricing for his limited edition pieces, Ken diligently researched the pricing tiers of those producing work of a similar caliber. “I looked to see which fine art photographers had a tier system, what they were printing on, and what kind of resolution cameras they were shooting with. I then compared these factors to what

“If you’re going to have an online presence to sell your fine art, you need to put time and effort into making yourself look good.”



Website:

<http://www.kenkaminesky.com>

Twitter:

<http://twitter.com/#!/KenKaminesky>

Blog:

<http://blog.kenkaminesky.com/>

I was doing,” Ken said. “In all honestly, pricing is really a judgement call. You need to come up with a system that feels comfortable and then stick with it.” Using both brushed aluminum and canvas mats, Ken’s prints range in size from 24”x36” to 48”x72” and in price from \$249 to \$4,995.

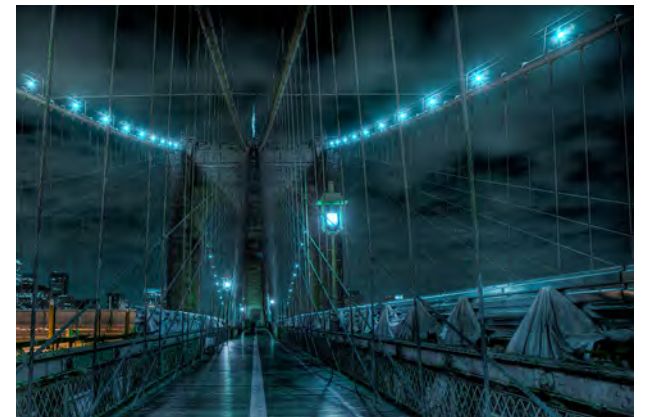
With an emerging fine art business now anchored solely online, Ken relies heavily on social media and his blog to market his work. Tapping into Google+ and with over 33,000 Twitter followers, he’s reached a level of social media success by diligently tweeting and interacting with his Twitter followers and establishing relationships with social media influencers to help spread the word. Ken’s photograph on the [front cover of National Geographic](#) in February also helped launch him to a new stratosphere of social media klout. In the near future, Ken plans to expand his marketing efforts and integrate targeted online outreach via newsletters and email campaigns to potential customers.

Today, with 100% of Ken’s sales online, the pieces that are selling the best are his urban shots including one of Times Square in New York City. Ken’s typical customers tend to be corporations, doctors or lawyers who are looking for interesting pieces to decorate their offices. “The best part of selling my work is that I even have repeat customers,” Ken said. “The idea that someone wants to buy my work again is the greatest feeling in the world.”

But selling fine art prints online comes with its fair share of challenges, including the astronomical costs of shipping. “It’s brutally expensive to ship outside of the States and with a large piece of art, the shipping itself can run up to \$400 or \$500. This is just too expensive for customers, which is why I’m researching printers who can produce the same kind of work but are located closer to where the customer is.”

Meeting challenges and successes along the way with his online gallery, Ken is now getting his work ready to present to offline galleries. But there is still much to do before reaching that point. “I’m not ready to approach a gallery quite yet,” Ken said. “You only get one chance to give that great first impression, and I want to make sure my portfolio is expansive and diverse.”

To expand his work, Ken is planning trips to Egypt, Iceland, Italy, and Southeast Asia. “After I feel I have a complete portfolio, the next step will be to work with my connections to explore exhibition opportunities. It’s important photographers know that it’s not about contacting the right person, it’s about being introduced to the right person. If an unknown Picasso walked through the door of a gallery without a proper introduction, even he would be out of luck.”



Takeaways

- When selling fine art online, include a FAQ page for all potential buyers. This will prevent confusion about your purchasing process.
- Mirror your price structure after similar photographers.
- Shipping your work is expensive. Do research to find printers located closer to your customers.
- When approaching offline galleries, have a complete portfolio with a diverse range of pieces. More is always better.

Jimmy Williams

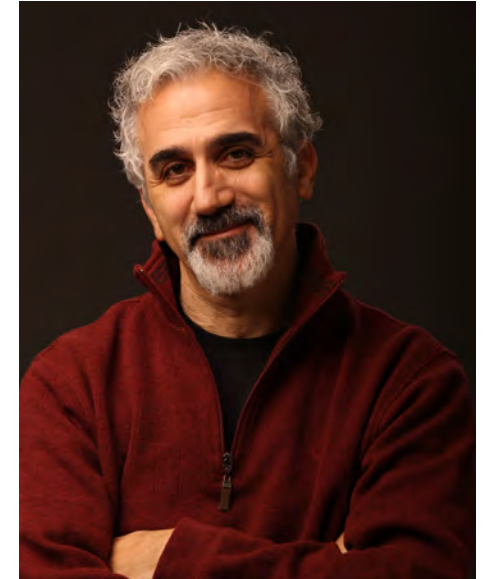
North Carolina-based Jimmy Williams is a photographer of 35 years and owner of JW Productions. Jimmy works closely with commercial clients in the hospitality, healthcare and travel industries, but in the past decade has expanded his collections to include fine art photography. Among a long list of accolades, Jimmy has been honored by the International Photography Awards and the International Spider Awards for his fine art work.

Looking back, Jimmy recalls rediscovering his love for fine art photography. “For almost 30 years, my finest photographs were hidden in the studio, buried in folders, forgotten by a busy schedule,” Jimmy said. “But about eight years ago, I opened the file cabinet and dusted off the film. I liked what I saw and I decided it was time to invest some time in me and my personal fine art photography explorations.”

Jimmy’s exploration into fine art photography began slowly, as he reached out to expand his network. Partnering with a gallery in his hometown, Jimmy continued to strengthen his relationships within the local art community. Building a reputation and producing well-received fine art pieces, today Jimmy’s work is featured and available to buy in online and offline through galleries in Texas and New Mexico, as well as through his own fine art website: www.JimmyWilliamsFineArt.com.

Jimmy’s acclaimed fine art photographs include his “Music Makers” series, an ongoing collection which pays tribute to Southern musical traditions, as well as “Tuscany”, a series which showcases the region’s breathtaking landscapes. Stylistically, Jimmy strives to capture a timeless quality in each of his fine art photographs. And when done right, “this timelessness often manifests itself through the subject matter and the overall emotional story that unfolds in the photograph.”

When showcasing his work in galleries and exhibitions, Jimmy’s personal preference is to print his photographs on archival museum-quality watercolor paper. “For the majority of our fine art prints we use Hahnemuhle Museum Etching paper. The paper has a good weight and substantial feel to it.” And although his team used to outsource all mounting and framing, they now do everything in-house because it became more cost effective and efficient. Jimmy’s limited edition prints are also produced in-house in his studio so he can oversee every step.



Website:

<http://www.jimmywilliamsfineart.com/>

Facebook:

<http://www.facebook.com/JimmyWilliamsPhotography>

Twitter:

<http://twitter.com/#!/JWilliamsPhoto>

Welcoming sales, Jimmy said that determining the quantity and price of these limited collection prints took a great deal of time and research on his end because there is no clear standard to mirror. Ultimately his decision was based on the combination of three factors: his art, its worth in today's marketplace, and its perceived future value. Through his personal online gallery, Jimmy's fine art collections are released in a series of 25 limited edition prints ranging in price from \$600 - \$1500 and in size from 16"x20" to 30"x40", with framing options available.

Jimmy's fine art work is primarily sold through gallery representatives, traveling exhibits, and as a result of interest generated by the press and the larger art community. For online sales alone, Jimmy says sales are often low. "Right now, online selling is not our strongest channel for sales but it is invaluable as a research tool for our customers. Our buyers will often peruse our online gallery and then contact us to talk about the work and complete sales."

Jimmy likes to promote his work through gallery mailers, show exhibit mailers, and general art interest mailers. And with JW Productions' own growing list of contacts, Jimmy and his team also send emails to a very targeted list of potential buyers. "But hands down, the best marketing tool has proven to be a third party – the press," Jimmy said.

"I've been very fortunate to have been featured in a number of articles and cover stories that have by far generated the most interest."

Represented by two galleries in addition to his own, Jimmy enjoys these partnerships because just like photography, running a gallery is a labor of love. "My advice for photographers is that when looking for a gallery to work with, make sure that the owner and curator is invested in your work for the long run, and they have a genuine interest in what you're doing. They should also demonstrate a financial investment in marketing and advertising your work."

Today, Jimmy believes that the challenges of selling and showcasing fine art photography is due to the country's economic downturn and has shaken the fine art market as a whole. "But you overcome these challenges by standing firm by the worth of your limited edition prints and try to find creative ways to bring in supplemental income via alternative channels like publishing or creative image licensing," Jimmy said.

When asked to define fine art photography - a definition often left up to personal interpretation - Jimmy believes that a piece of fine art photography must have a synergy composed of unique artistic vision, technical skill and subject matter. "When these three criteria come together, an emotional connection and message is clearly conveyed to an audience and that audience responds in kind. Fine art is a two-way conversation, and I believe my photos do just that."

“But hands down, the best marketing tool has proven to be third a party – the press.”



Takeaways

- To get your work noticed, start local. Connect with galleries and curators in your own community.
- Do your research before you price your pieces and compare your work to artists of a similar caliber.
- Don't be discouraged if your online sales are down. Your website is a key marketing tool that when done right, can attract attention from offline galleries.
- When looking for a gallery to work with, make sure the owner is invested in your work and will provide financial backing for marketing and advertising.
- Diligently collect contacts and send thoughtful emails to potential buyers in your own network. Word of a mouth will always be your most powerful marketing tool.



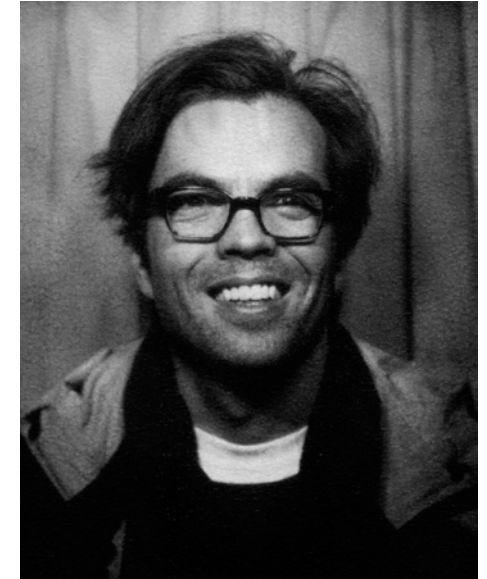
Landon Nordeman

Landon Nordeman started his career as a self-taught newspaper photographer in Charlottesville, Virginia. He loved the fast paced environment, but missed the idea of creating photo essays and telling the story of a particular subject or event over time. So he left the newspaper world for graduate school at Ohio University, where he put together his first official photo essay about the Staten Island Ferry and then submitted it to *The New Yorker*. Since that first self-assigned project, Landon has completed multiple photo assignments for *The New Yorker*, as well as *Saveur*, *National Geographic Magazine*, *Smithsonian* and more.

As a full-time professional photographer, Landon enjoys a mix of assignments and personal work. While Landon travels for many assignments, what makes his personal work interesting is that it's often an extension of these editorial assignments. "Projects have stemmed from assignment work often because I couldn't have gotten access to a place or subject or thought of the idea on my own," he says. The shots he took behind the scenes at the 135th Westminster Dog Show for *The New Yorker*, for example, turned into a larger series of photos that Landon calls his personal work.

He likes the challenge and opportunity of doing assignment work, but thinks that it's also extremely important to photograph what you're curious about. For Landon, that means "looking, seeing and watching," he says. "My work is about finding the unexpected in the everyday. I always have an idea of what I'm looking for, but I never know exactly what it is until I see it."

Though proactive in trying to sell his non-assignment work, Landon doesn't necessarily call it fine art photography. "I think of myself as an explorer first--I need to go out there and look and photograph, and what happens after that is secondary." In his opinion, if a viewer walks into a gallery where his work is displayed and calls it fine art, so be it. "I don't think of it like, 'I went out and tried to create fine art.' The more important distinction is, does the photograph work--whatever the context."



Website:

<http://landonnordeman.com/>

20x200 Site:

<http://www.20x200.com/artists/landon-nordeman.html>

To gain exposure for images not used by his editors, Landon is both upfront and passive in his outreach efforts. He frequently submits his work for competitions and galleries' group shows, while at the same time working to make good personal connections with editors and curators and then collaborating with those contacts when the time is right. For instance, Landon has had situations where someone who judged his work in a competition didn't choose his image, but later contacted Landon about a gallery show that he was curating and asked to include one of his prints.

Landon's more aggressive outreach is somewhat equally unplanned. When deciding which galleries to reach out to, Landon says that he doesn't have a real formula for choosing: "I feel like you just have to put the work out there and see who responds to it. Sometimes if I see a gallery that shows a certain kind of work that I like, I'll try to show them my work because I think it's the right fit."

One online gallery that thought Landon's work was the right fit is 20x200, whose underlying philosophy is that there are plenty of people who want to buy quality art, and tons of artists who want to sell--they just need a place to find each other. The name 20x200 came from the original practice of selling editions of 200 for \$20 each. Today, other sizes are available but still for specific prices in limited editions.

Landon's work was selected for inclusion after he first applied to the gallery's "Hey, Hot Shot" competition in 2009 (for which he received an honorable mention), and then was later contacted about his "Nice Pants" photo that started selling on 20x200 in 2011. Of the gallery, Landon says: "I think they're a great organization with great people, and they do an excellent job of promoting the [artists'] work." He also commends 20x200 for their continued support, especially beyond the work that he has listed in their gallery. "Whenever I have work published or an image in a gallery show, I always share it with them and they always promote it to their audience." Landon really appreciates his relationship with 20x200, and continues to update them on new work and projects that he's involved in.

Working with an online gallery is a unique experience that has been largely positive for Landon. He has sold prints and received commissions based on showing his work online. However, he always makes the work come first, and says that his motivation for showing his work is just to get in front of a broader audience.

And when he finally gets an audience in front of his work, Landon is content: "In order to make the work whole, it has to be seen. In a sense, that's what makes the photographer's process complete."



Takeaways

- When assignment work gets you access to special places, events or subjects, you can often use the opportunity to shoot for personal work.
- Maintain your connections with good contacts. Even if you don't win first prize in a photo competition, the judges may contact you for another opportunity.
- Work with galleries that are supportive of their artists and even open to promoting your work after your exhibition.

Greg Marinovich

For over 25 years, Greg has traveled the world as both a photojournalist on assignment and freelance photographer capturing events that, when brought to life in print, shock us in their reality. Some of his most famous photographs are those shot during South Africa's transition to democracy in the early '90s. Greg later co-authored a book with Joao Silva, *The Bang Bang Club*, detailing his experiences photographing and living in the terror of that time.

Greg has received the kind of recognition that many photographers work for their whole lives. But when talking about photography as fine art, he always returns to the same notion: passion. "If you can continue to shoot the work that is close to your heart, and if you can dovetail that to a paying client, then that's brilliant," he says. Greg is very familiar with doing photo assignments for the world's top publications, but learned early in life that what's most important, in his words, is to simply "shoot what you like."

The question is, what does Greg Marinovich like? Being a former conflict photographer, he's drawn to a certain type of shot. Still, Greg's understanding of fine art photography goes deeper than what subject or setting is actually caught on film. First, it's whether "the value of the work stands out over time" and second, "knowing what it's like to get the print just right. Seeking, visualizing and seeing it through until you print it."

Despite being an award-winning photographer, Greg still pays attention to marketing his work. He writes a powerful [blog](#) that's all at once opinionated, shocking and inspirational. When you post a photo series of sickly, malnourished children in Somalia, people want to know the story--not the circulated story that they've seen on the news, but your story on what happened--something that Greg has been able to accomplish. By relating your experiences, people feel drawn to your work. And that in itself is enough to draw visitors.

"If you can continue to shoot the work that is close to your heart, and if you can dovetail that to a paying client, then that's brilliant."



Website:

<http://gregmarinovich.photoshelter.com/>

Blog:

<http://gregmarinovich.com/blog>

Regardless, he remains committed to the notion of fine art photography as “something developed in the dark-room.” Then it comes as no surprise that Greg continues to make prints from his negatives taken in the time before digitization, and still shoots film for his personal work. It’s his historic black and white prints that he sells to national museums and in galleries.

Given the historic nature of his images, Greg often works with galleries that specialize in vintage prints, and museums that want visuals of some of the world’s most memorable and important events. He finds that desirable fine art has a “collectability” element, which explains why he’s asked again and again to reprint old negatives. He’ll still take the occasional editorial assignment, but editors almost always want color photos and he needs to continue taking black and white for his “own personal well-being.”

To support fine art sales, Greg says that it’s all about having a presence in the right environment. According to Greg, his “right environment” is galleries. When asked about its advantages and disadvantages, he says that the biggest benefit of working with a gallery is that someone else does the work to present you and your work. He also finds that it’s “easier to speak well of someone else’s work rather than speaking about your own. You need to convince--it’s a selling job.” Thus Greg’s best piece of advice is to find someone who has great contacts, because that’s what will help get you connected with the right people. The hardest part about working with galleries, in Greg’s opinion, is finding gallerists who are “totally on it,” and committed to you and the task at hand.

At the end of the day, he advises photographers to find gallerists that you really like, because when times get tough or there’s a disagreement, it’s important that you actually like and respect that person in order to work well together. And while Greg recognizes that there are many other marketing techniques out there besides working with galleries, he finds that they are the best approach for him.

Takeaways

- A blog with good content attracts an audience and it helps drive traffic to your website where you can promote your work.
- Use your blog as a chance to tell the background story of your photographs.
- If you have a hard time speaking about and selling your own work, then try working with a gallerist.
- Be sure to form a good personal relationship with your gallerist so you’re able to get through the good times and the bad.



James Bourret

To many, Jamie Bourret is the go-to photographer for shots of Sun Valley, Idaho's exquisite landscape. Jamie developed a passion for photography early on in life: he became passionately involved in photography in high school, and stayed with it throughout college, but later found it difficult to continue working without easy access to a darkroom. Flash forward to the digital era, and Jamie was able to pick up his passion once again using computers. Then in December 2010, Jamie opened his own gallery in Sun Valley's neighboring town of Ketchum, Idaho.

"I didn't have professional training, but I had the creative drive," he says. "I had been involved in the visual arts throughout my career and I began exhibiting at local venues, and did so with moderate success. My confidence was boosted further after a portfolio was published in LENSWORK Magazine. Finally I decided that I needed a venue to display my own work."

For those not familiar with Sun Valley, this popular ski and outdoor resort has been called home by many famous celebrities such as Clint Eastwood and Arnold Schwarzenegger. Ketchum is the adjacent town and sees many of the tourists who come to visit Sun Valley year round, making it a great location for the gallery, which showcases a wide array of Jamie's Idaho and mountain landscape photos.

Despite his well-received landscape work, Jamie dedicates a fair amount of time to fine art photography. For Jamie, fine art photography constitutes of "work purely driven by my own desire to create something expressive." One look at his Motion, Edge Condition or Floral series, and the creative element is undeniable. Due to market demand, Jamie has sold more landscape photos than his personal fine art photos--though that hasn't stopped him from displaying personal projects such as "Motion" in his gallery.

"Once someone steps into the gallery, it's pretty clear what they're interested in," he says of his gallery's visitors. "Only a few people pay any attention to the fine art photography. A small landscape print might sell for \$175 to a tourist, but the sale of a \$500 for the limited edition print from the 'Motion' series is far more significant."



Website:

<http://jamesbourret.photoshelter.com/>

Facebook:

<http://www.facebook.com/pages/James-Bourret-Fine-Art-Photography/274207610915>

So being the boss of your own gallery is all fun and games, right? Not always. Jamie will be the first to tell you that it takes a lot of energy to run a gallery: “Psychologically, it’s difficult. I don’t know if I’m going to have a run of five days of nothing, and then a huge day. A big day sets high expectations for the days to follow.” He adds that being responsible for the gallery has also tied him to one physical location, making it near impossible to pursue other projects and go out and shoot as he would like to, especially during prime tourist seasons.

But there are some clear advantages: since opening his gallery, Jamie has watched his sales increase from roughly \$300 per month to upwards of \$7,000 per month. And while about half his sales used to come from online purchases, almost all of today’s sales are from the gallery.

Jamie’s marketing efforts has focused largely on the local market. He frequently posts information about his gallery in local newspapers and online calendars, and gets his photos included in tourist guides and brochures. He usually includes information about gallery walks and new work being featured, and sometimes special promotions. Jamie also has photography displayed in several of the town’s restaurants and visitor center, which he says has brought a good amount of people to the gallery.

Of course, getting people to the gallery is only half the battle. Often times, it’s obvious that they’re there just to look, not to buy. Jamie’s happy for the visibility, but understands that it’s not the productive kind of foot traffic that he’s looking for. “There’s no consistency in buying,” he says, echoing many photographers’ thoughts in today’s tough economy. Still, Jamie asks every visitor to take his postcard and sign the gallery’s guest book. Even though it asks for visitors’ email addresses, Jamie says that few people actually include it.

Jamie also understands the importance of online marketing, and so he has put together a short to-do list of tactics that could help get his website more exposure. Interestingly, one of the places he’s seen the most web traffic from is StumbleUpon.com. Jamie submits links to new images and galleries that are automatically added to the photography section so that other users who indicate their interest in photography will “stumble upon” his work. He cautions, however, to submitting your site too frequently because StumbleUpon will enforce a limit.

Another item on Jamie’s marketing list is to stay active on Facebook by posting links to his website’s most recent images. Jamie almost always includes some comment about the shot or question for his readers, so he often gets comments and “likes” on his posts. He also consistently contributes to photographers’ forums, but finds that this usually generates visits from other photographers, not buyers.

In his efforts to exhibit his fine art work, Jamie is in contact with an art consultant who looks for ways to place his prints with collectors. Another great connection is with an interior designer who acts as an art consultant and promotes Jamie’s work to other interior designers. From time to time, Jamie contacts galleries that he’s researched and can reach out to discuss including his work. In the interim, he continues to tackle the joys and struggles of running his own gallery, while still finding some time to focus on his personal photography projects.



Takeaways

- Tourist guidebooks and magazines, local news and even local restaurants and hotels can be very strong promotional platforms for your photos of tourist destinations.
- You can post links to your photos on StumbleUpon, which can help drive traffic to your website.
- Keep a guest book at your gallery and ask people to include their email addresses. Then you have the option of sending them newsletters with information about new work and other gallery events.



Peter Carroll

In October 2010, Peter Carroll witnessed a unique event at one of Australia's most prized natural wonders: Uluru, a sacred rock formation in central Desert Country. It was one of those rare times of torrential rainfall, causing short-lived streams to run down the red rock and create dramatic color changes--all of which were captured on film by Peter. He sent one of the images to an Australian newspaper, and soon after the image was being showcased by major magazines and radio stations in both Australia and overseas.

Before the Uluru photo, Peter was introduced to photography in the late 1980s by the owner of International Park Tours, where he worked as an eco-adventure tour guide. It was a natural progression to want to capture the landscapes he spent so much time exploring. A camera was everpresent, but never seen as a way to earn a living. On returning to Australia in 2005, he felt his photography was at a level to take it on seriously, and began to sell prints and cards at local art outlets and markets. Then, there was Uluru: "It began my career at least a year earlier than I would have looked [to start it] otherwise. I'm not complaining--it was the biggest kick in the pants and necessary in some ways."

Everything since then has been a massive learning curve for Peter. He talks about not really knowing how to sell his work, and after the Uluru images were taken on by several major publications, he got what he calls a "hard message" from a photographer friend: "He told me what I was doing wrong--that I was basically giving [the images] away, and I wasn't doing photography any favors."

Since then, Peter has been on a journey to learn more about the business side of photography. "I never wanted to be in business--it never interested me. But this journey has blossomed into learning about business and I've found out that it's fascinating," he says. "I'm not kidding that PhotoShelter has probably been the most important factor in learning about what can be done [for your photography]. It's a lot easier to learn when there's an active crew behind the product feeding you information." One of Peter's takeaways has been to utilize Google Analytics to monitor his website's traffic and see where his visitors come from. When Uluru first came out, he saw massive spikes in his traffic, but as Peter says, "when the hoopla finishes, it drops right back down. I've really learned that it's important just to get traffic to the site, because as the traffic numbers drop, so do the requests for your images."



Website:

<http://www.petercarrollphoto.com/>

Blog:

<http://petercarroll.visualsociety.com/>

With that in mind, Peter has been looking at other sales avenues to sell not only more editions of the Uluru images, but his other landscape photography as well. He sees a market for his work in hotels and resorts, which would want to exhibit the surrounding landscape as art in their guests' rooms. With the increased exposure, he hopes to drive more traffic to his site where potential customers could buy prints.

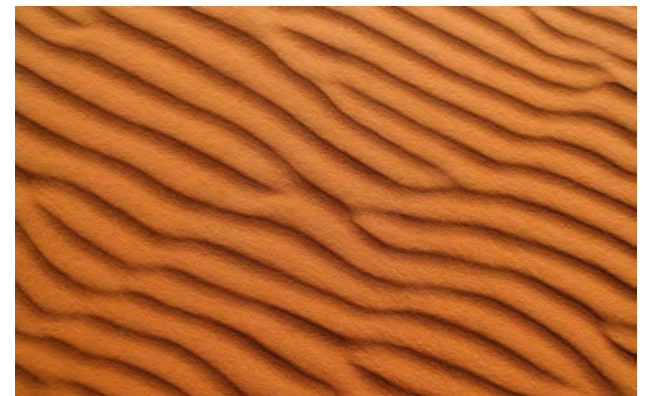
But before anything sells, Peter must be totally satisfied with the quality of the print. "It's important to produce the best quality work that you possibly can, so that you can stand 100% behind that work and people can know how much you've gone through to get the print to that point," he says. In fact, Peter came to realize that quality printing can make or break your fine art photography. "Beautiful paper," he says, "changed my whole idea of presentation. Part of fine art is making the best quality print from the file, and there is a lot of work that takes place." Today, Peter works with Master Printer Macris of Giclee, Australia who's helped him nail down the best printing process for his images.

"For me, the physical print is everything. It must be museum grade archival quality, and Macris has the experience and passion to print your vision without compromise." Peter prints most of his work on Canson rag Photographique 310gms, but he also looks to experiment with other high end art papers, depending on the image or series.

For Peter, fine art is also about the time that he spends in the environment and what he goes through to get the shot. "It's all about waiting for the right time and light, traveling to the right destination and learning about the subtleties of how the weather affects the scape and how you want to capture it." His method is not to take hundreds of shots, but a handful that really capture the feelings that he had while viewing the landscape. "With fine art landscapes," he says, "I've realized that you really have to have the 'hero photo' and then have a series of 10 or 12 images that capture and sum up the experience."

Another piece of advice that Peter has for photographers in general is to refrain from posting your images to social media sites like Facebook and Twitter right away. "You want to show them off and you've got so much emotion flying through you, but it's important not to give away too much. Sit on them until they're ready." Another piece of advice from Peter, specifically when reaching out to galleries, is to find out how each gallerist wants to be approached by photographers, since everyone has different preferences. Peter has found success in bringing physical books of high-quality prints to the gallery so that people can look through his work, which he says has gone over well with the gallerists that he's visited.

Peter knows the value of self-promotion, but he'll be the first to tell you that he still considers himself a family man and father first, and a professional photographer second. Currently he's spending three full days per week taking care of his two young sons, who often pop up on his blog's photos. Peter also takes on many photo assignments, which are obviously time consuming. Still, after spending the last few years collecting photos from his personal work, he says that he's ready to start going after more fine art sales and hopefully find the next big thing.



Takeaways

- Maintain and build your website traffic. When traffic drops, so do requests for your images.
- Research galleries before you contact them. Each one has different preferences for how they want you to submit your work.
- If you're selling your work as fine art, then treat it like fine art; work with the best printer and highest quality printing materials possible.
- Refrain from posting your work to social media sites like Facebook right after a shoot. Sit on the images and wait until they're ready for an audience.



Matt Suess

“I want to bring my years of experience living on this planet and try to portray that in my photographs,” says Matt Suess, a fine art photographer who travels around the American Southwest in his RV attending juried art festivals. While he’s always been a full-time professional photographer, Matt made the big move in 2006 from photojournalism to fine art photography and never looked back. He now attends an estimated 30 festivals every year, where he displays and sells his work to both newcomer enthusiasts and high-end collectors who have followed his work for years.

First and foremost, Matt emphasizes a deep connection to the people who buy his work. “Fine art photography is something that goes beyond just what the camera captures. I’d like to think that when people look through my photos, they can really tell who I am because I put a lot of me into them.” Though traditionally known for his landscape photography, Matt has since broken into an entirely new space using HDR techniques. Today, Matt can be found taking multiple exposures of the same image (typically antiques like a rusty pickup truck fondly referred to as “Old Betty”) and digitally blending them to create a finished print. This approach has allowed him to capture all the different light, detail and shadow experiences in one print. Says Matt: “The camera is really just the beginning point of me getting to a fine art print.”

Matt does all his own printing, mounting and framing for every image taken on the road. Since the majority of his time is spent at festivals, his sales cycle differs from that of many typical gallery-focused photographers. He finds that connecting with the buyer has become the most important point in making a sale. “My customers are those that respond to my work and respond to me as an individual,” he says. “You [as an artist] are really connecting on a completely different level, where if they don’t like you, they’re not going to buy.”

Once potential buyers make that initial connection with Matt, he invites them to visit his website and view more of his work, especially if they’re not ready to buy right then and there. Matt has a very comprehensive site that plays a key role in his marketing efforts; plus, he’s an avid blogger who’s been online since 1999. He constantly adds fresh content, which has been integral in increasing visitors to his site, and getting search engines to read and rank it on a consistent basis. Matt says that linking up his blog with PhotoShelter has also been huge in driv-



Website:

<http://www.MattSuess.com>

Google+:

<http://www.MattSuess.com/+>

ing traffic to his site and increasing its ranking in search engine results. He adds that he also pays close attention to his site's reports from Google Analytics to see where traffic is coming from and where he can improve.

Still, at the end of the day, it's all about the personal connection for Matt. "People who don't buy from me [at festivals] will go to my website and learn more about who I am before they're ready to spend money on my work." Given that Matt's prices are in the mid-to-upper range, he finds that he doesn't make many online sales with people who haven't seen his work in person. "They can see pretty pictures online, but there's no guarantee about how it will look in print. I've always preferred doing it in person because I'm going to be the best seller of my work--I'm going to be able to explain it the best."

"I recommend really evaluating your own work and seeing where it fits in with similar photographers. It's better to start low and then raise your price."

Another marketing tactic that has been effective for Matt is the newly unveiled Google+. Essentially a new online social platform, Google+ is a way to share links and images with your network. Matt uses Google+ to connect with other photographers and spread the word about his workshops. He's actually found many photographers who are also art collectors and end up buying his work.

Asked what challenges he's faced as a fine art photographer, Matt brings up the uncertainty that many photographers face when deciding how to price their work. "When I started selling my work, I had no idea how to price them," he remembers. His advice? "I recommend really evaluating your own work and seeing where it fits in with similar photographers. It's better to start low and then raise your price." Matt also reminds photographers to think about the volume that they're selling their work in: high volume, low price or low volume, high price?

In his personal experience with limited versus one-of-a-kind editions, Matt has tried to think more about the uniqueness of the event that his images capture. "Sometimes you have to look at the rarity and just decide that it's one of a kind." And then somewhere between the emotional connection viewers make with Matt's prints and the intimate contact they make with him, there will be a sale.

To keep potential buyers in the loop, Matt keeps a growing list of email addresses, and sends monthly e-newsletters with updates on his work and information about the workshops that he has started offering to amateur photographers. He also maintains a presence on Twitter and Facebook, posting links to his e-newsletters and a place to subscribe to them by email.



Takeaways

- If you want your fine art photography to appeal to people's emotions, then they often need to see it in a physical space before they're ready to buy it.
- Consistently add fresh content to your website, whether in the form of blog posts or new images, so that search engines realize that it's not a static website. This can help it rank high in search engine results.
- Google+ is a great way to connect with other photographers and showcase your work online to a new audience.
- Give out flyers at gallery shows and art festivals with a link to your website so that people can revisit your work and see additional images online.

Humble Arts Foundation - amani olu

amani olu is the Co-Founder and Executive Director of Humble Arts Foundation, a New York City-based 501c3 dedicated to promoting new art photography by undiscovered artists. “Humble Arts Foundation is a community that provides emerging photographers with the opportunity to connect with curators, gallerists, collectors, artists, and other art professionals all over the world,” said amani. Founded in 2005, the organization is committed to supporting photographers by providing them opportunities via online and brick-and-mortar exhibitions, publications, bi-annual artists’ grants, as well as through educational programming.

Today, the organization has attracted interest from thousands of hopeful fine art photographers particularly through their “group show” series - a unique online gallery showcasing a single photograph from 18-24 individuals. The foundation then brings the series to life through various group show inspired exhibitions.

The online and offline group shows, as well as their solo shows featuring the work of a single new artist, have gained widespread popularity because of “common sense,” as amani puts it. “If you feature 24 artists who have never been featured before, they are guaranteed to tell their friends, who will then tell their friends and so on.” And through this type of word of mouth marketing, 3,000 people joined Humble Arts Foundation’s mailing list within the first six months alone.

amani believes that the definition of fine art photography is often convoluted and misunderstood, as he sees hundreds of group show submissions that miss the mark completely. “We used to feature group shows online once a month,” said amani. “But I see less and less work that I consider to push the boundaries of the medium, and I refuse to pick a submission to accommodate a monthly schedule. The photographs have to be special.”

So what is fine art? Through amani’s eyes, producing credible fine art photography comes down to one question - has it been done before?



Website:

<http://hafny.org/>

Blog:

<http://hafny.org/blog/>

Facebook:

<http://facebook.com/humbleartsfoundation>

“This is one of the toughest questions a photographer can ask him or herself. We want to collaborate with photographers who are working with their camera like an artist works with a canvas. Don’t expect to take a photograph of your attractive friends sitting on a bed staring off into the distance as sun beams come through the window and expect to be featured in one of our shows. It’s just not that interesting. It has to attempt to be different.”

amani chooses a single work to represent each photographer in their online group shows because he believes at times, a series of photographs – or a narrative – from the same artist can be distracting. Instead, he encourages artists to create a powerful self-contained narrative that can stand alone within a single photograph.

Searching through photographs to feature for their online group shows, solo shows and The Collector’s Guide to New Art Photography, amani keeps his parameters in mind and advises photographers that, “If you want to establish your own voice, you have to ask yourself uncomfortable questions about your work like:

- Is this work really challenging?
- What am I trying to say? Has this been said before?
- Is my work derivative of another artist?
- Am I working hard enough to create art that ignites interesting discussion?
- Am I just making this work only because it will get me exhibitions, interviews, and sales?

He points to [Cristina de Middel](#), their winner of this year’s Lightside Individual Project Grant recipient. “She has produced photographs unlike anything you’ve ever seen before.”

Today, Humble Arts Foundation does not directly sell or promote the sales of the fine art photographers they feature, but instead provide online and offline viewers with all photographers’ contact information to allow potential customers to get in touch with artists. “Our goal is to broaden a photographer’s network. We stay out of sales.”

Although removed from all transactions, amani points out that the correlation is clear between an artist who appears in their group shows, solo shows or in their Collector’s Guide and the increased buzz and appearances of their work. With a solid grasp on the industry, amani also advises emerging photographers that when pricing their fine art work, they should initially aim to be more affordable. This position may shock some.

“Fast money is bad money. I realize that artists have their own costs that they need to account for, but you need to think about the longevity of your career. So when you start, price on the affordable end to increase your chances of getting your work into important collections. When you’re starting out, the most important part is that more people see your work.”

amani adds, “And if you want to get noticed just make something weird. And then get weirder. The more uncomfortable you are with your work, the better.”



Takeaways

- To establish your own unique style of fine art, create work that is interesting and deviates from the rest. This will get you noticed by online galleries.
- When you’re starting out, price your work lower. This will increase your chances of attracting more customers and expanding your network.
- Aim to include your work in online galleries that feature multiple artists. Each artist will encourage their own network to visit the site and ultimately see your work, too.
- Make sure your full contact information including phone and email is listed online. This will make it easy for potential buyers to reach you.



25CPW - Bess Greenberg

25CPW, a gallery located at 25 Central Park West in Manhattan, is the brainchild of Bess Greenberg. After graduating from college, Bess spent five years playing professional basketball in Europe. She then received a scholarship and returned to New York City where she completed an MFA at the International Center of Photography-Bard College.

When she graduated, one of her professors introduced her to the developer of a retail space that had been sitting empty for over two years. “25CPW wasn’t planned. I just jumped into it, that’s for sure,” she says. “I was a recent MFA graduate and struggling with finding the right context to share my work, and I definitely wasn’t the only photographer out there with that frustration. Ultimately, when I met the developer and saw the space, that original struggle led me to a vision of what the empty space could become. It was the kind of space and location that could bring artists, their work and the public together.”

“An artist’s intense need to create with the desire to communicate is something I can relate to,” she says. “This is not to say that selling work and being able to financially sustain one’s passion isn’t important, but I’m not interested in work without a personally invested intention. And I’ve found that many people are drawn into buying work with concern for the intentions it was created with.”

Since Bess opened 25CPW in 2009, she has continued to be driven by this vision. “The way I’ve approached running the gallery is to not have my focus on simply selling artists’ work. Rather, I want to bring people together with artwork and ideas that would generate energy and help develop a community. I want the artists and events to inspire the public and for the public to inspire the artists and events.”

Upon opening the gallery, Bess reached out to artists she knew both here and abroad. She also says that much of the gallery’s growth has been organic. “Because of the location,” says Bess, “we get a lot of diversity. People don’t expect us to be here since it is and always has been a residential neighborhood. At first the nearby residents were baffled to find us here, and inquisitive about our mission. Now they are regulars at events, and are very supportive and interested in what is happening month after month.”

The space at 25CPW has been used for independent shows, group shows, music events, panel discussions, performances, fundraisers for social causes and launch parties.



Website:

<http://www.25cpw.org/>

So what does it take to get your work up at 25CPW? “I don’t have a checklist of what somebody has to have or in what way I need to be introduced to artists and their work. I try and stay as open as I can,” she says. “I have had people walk in the door for the first time and the timing has been right. I see their work, and things have taken off from there. Other times I find myself searching for something until I find it. What I’ve learned is that artists work from different places within themselves and people receive work from different places just the same.”

When it comes to selling artists’ work, in most cases, Bess will pass along any potential buyer to the artist. Occasionally, she’s acted as a representative for an artist, but she prefers to allow the artists to represent themselves. “I wear different hats, depending on the situation and as things evolve, I adjust with it. I can represent artists when it is appropriate, but my motivation in running the gallery is not to be an artist representative. I want them to do well, but I want them to keep ownership of it all, which is something that I can relate to as an artist.”

Bess plans to bring a stronger 25CPW online presence. “With a separate online existence, we’re enabling another place for them to grow,” Bess said. 25CPW already puts artists’ work up for sale on their website, and she hopes to represent more work and possibly partner with other online galleries who have already built the necessary technology. “With all of the avenues and possibilities that have exploded due to technology, being a jack-of-all-trades can be exhausting and draining. Collaboration enables people to streamline responsibilities and avoid wearing yourself thin.”

She also emphasizes the importance of collaboration within the art community in regards to selling: “Even though you want to sell your work independently, you can collaborate with other artists to reach a broader audience, but still maintain an independent voice.”

Bess encourages artists to think outside the box and beyond the gallery when searching for avenues to show their work. “Stop thinking that the traditional gallery is the only way to show your work. Redefine what a gallery wall is. This is a time where we have the tools to create new ways of reaching people.” She adds, “It’s true that people want to connect with the artists’ work in person, but people are also connected through technology. And honestly, I really couldn’t have started the gallery without Facebook.”

When asked what advice she has for artists looking to be featured in 25CPW, or any other gallery, Bess says: “Grab my attention, but have your feet on the ground. Definitely be true to yourself, but be thorough and precise.”

25CPW is not a place where artists and shows are scheduled out for years, and her constant collaborations with other organizations present a frequent opportunity for artists to submit their work. Moving forward, Bess wants to keep the work at 25CPW fresh. “It’s important for me not to confine the space too much. I want it to maintain its alive nature, and allow it to continue to breathe on its own.”



Takeaways

- When emailing a gallerist, collect your thoughts and send a thorough message. You want to make it easy for the person receiving it to digest all the information.
- Try to grab the gallerists’ attention so that when they see the email, it sticks with them.
- Think outside the box--and gallery! Today’s technology presents many ways to get your work noticed, such as social media sites like Facebook.
- Be open to collaborating on shows with other artists. It works if everyone has a similar goal, and you can still keep your independent voice.

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