

AMP 015: Greatest Time Ever to Be an Artist?



Show Notes

- [How A 26-Year-Old Artist Makes 40% Of Sales Through Instagram](#)
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Welcome to another edition of The Art Marketing Podcast, and today, we're asking the question, is it the greatest time ever to be an artist? Yes, it is. I want to make that case, though. See what you think.

Why this episode? Why now? Thought this podcast was designed to be about hardcore marketing strategy and tactics, and it is, but we felt this was an important episode that lays a foundation that we plan to build on. We really hope that this episode gives you the why, the why you should be executing on the hardcore marketing tactics we go over, the why you should be working harder than ever, the why now is the time to take your art business to the next level. This is the reason that Art Storefronts exists as a business, this is the reason this podcast exist. We really do believe it is the greatest time ever to be an artist.

Let me make that case and let's talk specifically about how the Internet has changed everything, little bit of history, little bit of context, then let's talk about how that change applies to the art world, and then let's finish up with what we believe an artist should be doing to take advantage of this new world, this brave new world as it were. The Internet really has changed everything. I mean, it's hard not to agree with that statement. Sounds cliché, but it's just so true. It has changed everything, it continues to change everything, and will continue changing everything, and I think on what feels like a daily basis. Recently, the pace is really just quickening, quickening, quickening.

Let's talk some of the history, some of the themes, some of the terms for some context. I think regardless of what industry that you talk about, they all have their own paths, and some of them disrupted more than others, but let's talk about some of these themes that continue to emerge. I want to tease out some of the themes and some of the terms, and then let's pull those from other industries, and then let's apply them to the art industry.

I think as you get into this entire operation, if you will, the Internet buzzword, the zeitgeist, the term that you hear the most often to refer to, whether it's businesses or technologies or apps, is this term disruption. Something that came out that disrupted an entire industry.

The classic examples, Amazon, when it first got started, completely disrupted the book business, the way that we buy books both online, offline, the game's forever changed by Amazon. That industry got completely disrupted when they came on the scene. Bookstores all across the United States went out of business almost overnight. It comes, and it swings a big hammer, this disruption.

Uber, with the taxi industry, the exact same thing. Came out of nowhere, forever changed transportation worldwide in just a short period of years.

Airbnb, same thing. All of these houses that were not available for rent and not widely available, not widely known about are now available in countries all over the world that you could stay in. I've stayed in several in them. I love staying in Airbnbs.

All three are some of the classic examples people love to reference when they talk about disruption. Some companies, if they're amazing enough, if they're run by such visionary leaders can actually disrupt individual industries multiple times. Classic examples, Amazon, what have they disrupted? Absolutely everything. An example I love talking about, though, love, love, love, is Netflix. Keeps things nice and simple. I like the rule of thirds. Do you realize that Netflix has been three completely different businesses, all equally disruptive, and that's a crazy thing to think about.

Business number one, let's call that bye-bye Blockbuster. Netflix reinvented and re-imagined the way that you might rent movies, and some of you millennials won't even probably remember these days, but you used to have to go into Blockbuster, get your VHS tape or get your DVD, watch that, return it after the fact, pay these owners late fines, and then have to waste that time doing that trip and everything else.

Netflix comes along, completely disrupts that, and it absolutely obliterates Blockbuster's business, and I think one of the recurring trends in this whole entire disruption phase is the established player never sees it coming. I listened to a podcast just recently, and I ... The name of the lady escapes me. I'll put a link to it in the show notes, but she was HR of Netflix during multiple phases of Netflix's business, and she said they used to listen to the Blockbuster earnings calls and say ... This is why they had already gotten rolling, Netflix had, and they were disrupting Blockbuster's business, and Blockbuster didn't even know it. They were so stuck in their old ways, cave-man status, they didn't even realize it.

They would listen to the earnings calls and be like, "Do they know about us yet? Do they know about us yet? Are they telling investors that we exist yet?" and they hadn't. At the very end, like a last-ditch effort, and just, again, how clueless Blockbuster was, at the very end before the ship completely sunk, they were out of business, they ended up copying Netflix website verbatim, like copied it verbatim and literally just changed the Netflix to the Blockbuster logo and used the Blockbuster colors thinking that that was going to save them last-ditch, and they just didn't even realize that they were so blown out, it was so far gone, nothing would've saved them. Amazing story. That's business number one, bye-bye Blockbuster.

Let's talk about business number two, the streaming business. I want to introduce a term. You're going to continue to hear this going forward once you're aware of it if you're not aware of it already. It's called all content OTT, over-the-top, which is really a broadcast term to say content-created. The traditional way was to go through a network. This way, you just stream it over the Internet without anybody in the way, so OTT. You'll continue to hear it. I'll reference it more, but early on, Netflix started the streaming business, business number two.

All of a sudden, everybody that had content was like, "Wow, look at Netflix. They have this incredible infrastructure. Let's give them all of our content," so all of the movies, all the TV shows, not all, but a healthy amount, a tremendous amount ended up on Netflix. You could stream it. Massively disrupted. Massively disrupted. All the early adopters started cutting the cords saying, "What do I need cable? Let's just stream everything." New behaviors emerged out of this. Hello binge-watching. I mean, I had never watched an episode of *The Wire*. That show was amazing. I'm so glad I missed it because I was able to just binge through every single solitary season in chronological order at my leisure, and I enjoyed every bit of it, but Netflix now, I think available, by the way, 190 different countries. Anybody know of any Blockbusters in those countries, by the way? Probably not. Probably not, right? But a massively disrupted phase, a phase that completely changed the game, changed the face of society.

The thought of content streaming directly to your house, the utter total complete elimination of DVD players and VHS. I mean, do you even need any of those things? Hello Laserdisc. Bye-bye. All of that is gone. Another massively disruptive phase, the streaming business, and what's been interesting to see during the course of this business, which Netflix is still in, but it's pivoting towards number three, we're now in the second, is during the occurs of this, everybody else that owned all the content, that owned the TV shows, that owned the movies, early on, they're like, "This is so new. I don't like change. Change is scary, but let's just sign a deal with Netflix. We'll give them our content, and we'll see how this whole thing pans out."

Others saw the writing on the wall right away, was like, "Okay, we need to create our own streaming infrastructure immediately. Get on it," and others have just recently in the last month, two months, six months. I mean, I think Disney pulled all their content from Netflix like six months ago, a year ago, and they have now the DisneyNOW app, but what happened was is that everybody realized, "Wait a minute. Owning all the content is absolutely, makes me king. Let me stream it," and so Netflix has slowly seen their streaming business and the number of titles that they have available decline because

the original content creators are like, "What the heck do we need Netflix anymore? Let's start peeling these things back a little bit."

During the course of that, what does Netflix realize? "Wait a minute. We're losing titles. Wait a minute. We now have a hundred million subscribers. What in the Sam Hill do we need those guys for? We don't," and so enter business number three of Netflix. "Let's create our own content. We have a hundred million subscribers," i.e., attention, how often do I love talking about attention, "We don't need them for anything, and I'm sure that was a profound learning for them. We're to going to be held hostage by Disney or 20th Century Fox or Miramax or any of the rest of them." What do they do? Hello House of Cards, Orange is the New Black, Narcos, Marco Polo. I mean, doing show prep for this thing, I just checked, Netflix has 29 original shows coming out in October, 29. I mean, that's crazy. It's like, "We don't need to license no stinking content. We'll make our own."

This is just an amazing and far-reaching trend. That's business number three, by the way, that Netflix is in now. They're creating their own content. They are not beholdng to anyone. They realized they don't need anybody to be wildly successful, and you're not going to let anybody have that type of control over you and just weaken that aspect of your business. Everybody's following suit with this now by the way.

Amazon, despite the fact that their studio had just resigned, embarrassing, but Amazon's doing it, Facebook's doing it, hello Facebook Watch. Apple's going to get into the fray here pretty soon. Even Snapchat and Instagram are part of this with this OTT type of broadcast video content direct to the consumers.

Let me tell you, the cable companies that survive off of these bundle packages of content, 200 channels, are in a lot of trouble, which is a good thing. Everybody hates the cable companies. It's like the most hated company, period, ever. Anyone have anything nice to say about a cable company? Maybe because your wife works there, your husband, but, all right. The biggest takeaway in all of this though, if you have the content and you have the attention, hello Netflix, a hundred million subscribers, hello Netflix, Orange is the New Black, Marco Polo, all the rest of it, you hold all the cards. You hold all the cards. You have all the power.

What's the point in all of this? Yes, the Internet has absolutely changed everything, and boy, by the way, it's just getting started, and I think one of, if not, my favorite theme, theme number two of this whole thing, so that was disruption, theme number two that I love is the absolute obliteration of gatekeepers. Obliteration. Break it down to some industries.

Let's talk about music. Back then, you needed radio airtime, you needed a record label. They were the gatekeepers in control of that. You would have to go sign a deal, sign away your rights, give them your originals. I mean, that business has been disrupted massively too, but that's how it used to be back in the day. What do artists do now? They're recording, they're putting their music online, they're getting followers on their own, then they're getting record deals.

Just read about an artist. He's a hip-hop guy named Russ from Atlanta, actually I like his music, but it was an interesting story because he started putting all of his music onto SoundCloud, doing this, I think, for like seven or eight or nine years, got up to about a hundred million downloads on multiple songs on SoundCloud that he did on his own with no record label, no help whatsoever, and started selling out concerts. He started small, he started slow, he just started hustling and grinding it day by day. Just signed a record deal in 2017, and let me tell you, I'm sure those terms were quite favorable to him. The gatekeepers were forced to come to him on his terms. Amazing, right?

Let's talk about audio, spoken word content. Back then, if you wanted a radio show, yep, you guessed it, you were going to need permission from a group of letters that either started with a W or a K, KABC, WABC, whatever the case may be. You would need a radio station, probably pay for airtime. What do you do now? You start a podcast in your bedroom. You have the potential to reach 100X what you would've if you even got on that one station or the two stations. Your antenna reaches worldwide. The airtime was either free or close to it. You just need to go and cultivate and get that attention. By the way, should be mentioned, here in the United States, I think one of the biggest radio station owners is iHeartRadio. They're on the verge of bankruptcy. On the verge of bankruptcy. Disruption going on there, but also no gatekeepers.

Let's talk about video. What was it back then? It was a bus ride to Hollywood, and you probably ended up on Harvey Weinstein's casting couch, that sick son of ... What is it now? Now, you turn on a camera, and you start broadcasting yourself. You put your stuff on YouTube. You start grinding at it, you get a massive amount of followers, and now the movie studios and the TV studios, they come to you and they say, "We'd love to put something out." YouTube, Netflix, Amazon, Facebook, Apple. It's amazing what's going on in there. We could talk about print, but how boring is print. Yes, blogging has annihilated every photo/print journalism that there is.

This concept, it doesn't matter. It is regardless of the industry. The gatekeepers are either gone, they're on life support, or they are losing power by the minute. I think the

biggest takeaway that you need to have from this that there's absolutely no one standing in your way from what you want to accomplish, not like there used to be.

Let's talk about the trend, number three: Retail is absolutely getting destroyed, at least as we knew it. This one's been happening for years now. Everybody's seen the effects. Amazon's responsible for a lot of it, yes, but even Netflix, hello Blockbuster, but the smalls shops, the mom-and-pop places are getting annihilated. Toys "R" Us just went bankrupt, I think in the last couple of weeks. The stats say that 25% of malls are going to be gone in five years. What are they going to do with all that real estate is the question.

Really, though, the doom and gloom stats aside, you read article after article after article about how much trouble the shopping malls are in, and they are headed for serious trouble. I believe they are. Yes, the strong ones will survive. They'll create experience as they make awesome places to hang out. Some are, you're going to iterate and do that and thrive, but a lot of them are going to go out of business, and they're just getting, they're getting disrupted, they're getting destroyed. I think the traditional ways are just getting harder and harder in terms of retail, not ever easier. It's not something to get emotional about. Changes happen, and you just have to be aware of it. Now, let's get out of retail. Retail's kind of boring.

The next trend that's equally profound is the ability to reach more people than ever before at any time in history, and it's only getting better. Eight new Internet users are added worldwide every single solitary second. The data that we have internally on this is absolutely amazing. Orders coming in from every single solitary corner of the globe, web traffic coming from every single solitary corner of the globe. I mean, I think anyone that's active on Instagram and has a good following or a few viral posts can speak to this. If you look and you run the analysis of where your followers and potential buyers live, they are all over the world. Everywhere. It's just amazing to even thinking about that.

I was talking the other day in a Facebook Messenger conversation. Nice gentleman down in South Africa, an artist, and we were hammering messages back and forth on the phone in Facebook Messenger. He's sitting in South Africa in some coffee shop in Cape Town telling me about art scene in Cape Town in South Africa in general, how he's doing in galleries, how he's selling online, the fact that he's not selling online, and the fact that he is kicking butt in the galleries. We just had this conversation back and forth, and it was just no big deal. It was just a normal part of the day, which is just crazy. How could you possibly do something like that 20 years ago, 10 years ago, even seven years ago?

I think it's an amazing thing to think about. You have the ability to reach more people than ever before, and this is, just goes more than just artists, it's whatever business you're in. It's just crazy what the Internet has brought to us.

Now, I think underpinning so, so much of this, possible not to talk about this, our cell phones. The computers in our pocket that are with us 24 hours a day and always connected. In terms of all the themes, disruption, obliteration to gatekeepers, retail getting destroyed, and the ability to reach more people than ever before, nothing has played, continues to play a bigger role than the phone. Everybody has one. Everybody spends a huge chunk of their day on one. It's the single biggest disrupter of them all, and boy, it is the early days. It's just getting started.

Now, I think the great thing about disruption, and all of these things, really, is that every time it happens, it's scary, yes, but a myriad of opportunities open up if you're ready to capitalize them. The new currency in this world is attention. Perhaps it's always been, and those that know how to get it are going to win. Everything continues to change, but attention, in the attention piece, it just never does.

I mean, what's coming next? Hello more cellphone everything, the Internet of things, which are all of the devices in your home connected to the Internet. Hello VR robots, AI chat bots, machine-learning, Amazon Alexa, Google Home, Apple, Cortana from Microsoft, all of the stuff that's happening on with voice.

By the way, really quick aside, have you guys used Google Photos yet? If you want to see ... It's early. A lot of smart people are saying really interesting things about AI and machine-learning. The robots are going to come to get us and kill us. Whether or not that's the case, check out and for an early implementation of it that will immediately make sense to you, sign up for a Google Photos account. Upload them a hundred photos.

Let's say you and I, we took a vacation to Hawaii, we went kayaking, and we went and got a sushi dinner after the fact. We can upload the thousand photos we took of those various different activities, let the Google AI machine-learning run through it, and then go into the search bar and type in sushi, and Google knows what a photo of sushi looks like and will show us all the photos of sushi. You can type kayak, it knows what photos of kayaks are and will show us all the photos of kayaks. You can type beach, it knows what a beach looks like and shows all photos of beach. Amazing. It knows, as a result of machine-learning and running through so many photos, what those things look like and could automatically characterize them for you, and that's just one early example.

The change that's coming is just, it's massive. It's just getting stated. It's the early days of all of it, and the pace and the speed just keeps getting quicker and quicker. It is impossible to not say it is a remarkable time to be alive. I think people probably always say that regardless of what time they live in, and they're probably right. It's likely, but I think it really is just an exciting, exciting time to be an artist.

Let's talk for a second about how all of this applies to the art world, and I think all of the aspects that we just went through, they all apply to the art world. Each industry, yes, goes through its own disruption in phases and chapters, whatever you like. Let's just throw some of the art stuff out there, whether it was rich benefactors back in the day, some people still talk about that like it's a thing. Was that 15th Century Europe when that would happen? That model got disrupted.

What about university or art endowments where that would pay artist to be full-time artist. Does anybody know anybody that's doing that anymore? What about the early days where art galleries were the thing, where art publishers were the thing? If you could get in their catalog, if you could get past those gatekeepers, you would kick butt, you'd be rocking. They kind of got disrupted a little bit, didn't it?

What about art fairs? How many artists can we talk to that said that art fairs back in day were kicking butt, and then it just a massive [inaudible 00:18:39]. Really, really successful, and then since then, you could still do well, but I ... Overwhelming, it's declined. It's been on the wing. I think, what about the online marketplaces? Art.com, Etsy, eBay, Saatchi, Fine Art America, any of them. I think in the early days, there were some arbitrage opportunities to get there before everyone else, and it started working well. The vast majority of artists that we talk to, they're not working as well as they once were. They're on the decline.

It really, underpinning a lot of this in terms of our own individual intelligence is we just talked to so many artists over the last few years, and nearly all of them, point to one area or another, take your pick in any of those things, where their business has been disrupted. It is not performing at the same level that it was in years past because they were reliant on one of these individual sales channels, and it's just not producing at the clip that it was. We just hear that all the time. I think if you talk to any artist that's been in the game for a while, most of them, 99% of them, I feel like, would say something like that.

I mean, I personally responded to thousands, if not tens of thousands at this point having been at this for a couple of years, of comments to artists on Facebook and Instagram about how these channels are just not what they used to be. We talk about the themes. Disruption has happened all up and down the art world. We talk about no gatekeepers. It's just not the deal anymore. You don't need an art gallery, an art publisher, or anyone who controls to hold you down. You can get on the Internet. You now have the ability to reach more people than ever before. The data we have on that is crazy, and you can start grinding and get your own following and make your own sales. There's no gatekeepers. You have the ability to reach more people than ever before. 2013 was the first year where more art was sold online than off. Yes. Plenty is still sold offline, but more art is sold now sold online than off.

Retail is getting destroyed. Galleries are going out of business. There's less and less of them around. Less art is being sold in malls nationwide, we talked about that, and yes, of course, the cellphone is changing everything in the art world especially. The amount of artists that are in their 20s that have harnessed Instagram alone while living in some place in middle America and are being successful is just striking. I mean, there's just amazing data and stories out there. I'll put a few in the show notes, by the way. I just read some incredible ones, even just recently.

Again, is it the greatest time ever to be an artist? Are you going to sit here and tell me that an art industry has been completely disrupted, that gatekeepers do not exist in the slightest, that more art is now being sold online than offline, that you can now reach more buyers across this country, across the world than any time in history, that you have the ability to reach this international cadre of buyers on what is effectively a mobile billboard they're carrying around on their person or right next to them 24 hours a day, that if you learn to identify where this phone screen time is spent, hello Instagram and Facebook, and you learn to story tell in those places, literally nothing is holding you back from a consistently-selling full-time artist, as big as you want to be and as your talent will carry you? I believe the answer to all of that is yes. Yes.

What's an artist to do? Great. "Patrick, fine, I'll agree with it. Even if I don't agree with you, the Internet certainly does feel like everything has changed. I get that. What am I supposed to do? What is an artist to do?" I think what we believe is that artist need to set themselves up to succeed. We believe we've entered a new phase in terms of the art world and art sales, and in this new phase, I mean, it's the reason why we exist. It's the reason why this podcast exist. Let me frame up what I think an artist needs to do to be successful in this new phase.

In this new phase, you need to run your own art gallery. What? Let me come at that from two angles. One, think about the psychology of this. How are we trained to think about buying as well as viewing art? I would answer that with art galleries and museums. If that's the case, it makes sense then to design your online experience to mimic what we already have as established patterns in art-viewing and buying. Do that, and your prospects will be in the right frame of mind to purchase as it just feels right. There's psychology at play there.

I had a comment recently on Facebook from some gal the other day, riving the fact that all the Art Storefronts themes are usually white and minimalist. Of course, they're white and minimalist. They wanted a respond. I let it go. I didn't respond, but they're meant to mimic art galleries. It's all about the art, not the site design. It takes conversion rates when you have these big, pretty portfolio sites that have wonderful design that draw the attention away from the art.

It pivots to the next point, which is you need a proper art gallery website that is set up to transact commerce, that is set up to sell art. A pretty portfolio site really, business card site has never gotten that done. You ask anybody that has them, how has that sales volume worked out? You also need the back office tools you need to run an art gallery online: orders, framing, shipping, database, et cetera, all the nuance stuff towards running what would normally be considered a brick and mortar gallery online. You need some marketing tools and a marketing strategy.

Again, I get it. This might sound a bit biased coming from me. It's what we sell after all, but it doesn't make it not true. It really is just true regardless whether you get it from us or the man in the moon. It's not meant as a sales pitch though, so let's keep rolling.

With your art and online art gallery in place, you need to put in consistent and focus work on growing your traffic, your email list, your social following, i.e., attention that you own. Think Netflix and their 100 million subscribers. Good news here, you don't need a hundred million subscribers. You can start by just getting 1,000 true fans. 1,000 true fans, start there. You already have those? Start moving up from there and leveling up from there.

I think in this new phase, you need perspective, and I think it's fair assumption to say overall, blanket statement coming, artists have lagged a bit when it comes understanding the change Internet has brought and how to best take advantage of it. Not all, of course, but a large majority of this is true. We talk and have talked and continue to talk to a tremendous amount of artists over the years, and everything from

those just getting started to those who've been at it for years, in some cases, 20, 30, 40 years, in most cases, regardless of talent, regardless of experience, even regardless of previous sales, most are digital newbies.

You'd never run your own online art gallery. You've never really had your own website that you've been very intentional about driving traffic at. You never were consistently driving traffic or running ads or building your email list or building a social following. Yes, that's a generalization. Yes, there are some that have kicked butt at all of that. I get it, but overall, for most artists, that's the case.

To take advantage of this next phase in art sales, you have to have the perspective that you are just getting started, digitally speaking, and it's going to take a while to get that momentum to get going, and that is a really hard one for most people because they've been selling art for 5 or 10 or 15, or creating art for 5 or 10 or 15 or 20 years, maybe even had some great success selling offline in art fairs, but they have no social profile, and they have no email addresses, and they have no website traffic. When you come online, the Internet is binary. It's ones and zeros, it does not give a damn about how awesome you've been at art fairs in the past or how much you've sold offline in the past or anything, really, you done in past.

Now, don't get me wrong. Those connections, that experience, and those sales, those customers, you're going to be able to parlay that into some help, but still, digitally speaking, you're new. You're going to be a newbie, so you have to come with the proper mentality that's going to take you a while to get things going, get the momentum, and really start selling online. You need patience. Nothing good is going to come overnight, and it takes years and years of grinding digitally to get yourself into a really good place, and I think ...

I hate the Internet. I hate the Internet, Instagram, hip-hop music. For this, it infuriates me. Why? Because it's a bunch of selfies, the luxury cars and hotels and pools and swans and drinks and champagne and stack of cash and private jets and Lord knows what else, and none of that is true. It's completely BS and unreal, and I think 99% of those people are faking it. It's just not real life, but that's the expectation.

"What's up? I'm 22 years old, and I'm getting on this jet this weekend to go to Vegas, and I'm going to be at some night club." It's like, that is not real. That is BS. You're just getting your life started. You didn't achieve any of that.

Anyway, the expectations is what comes off kilter. Great stuff online. It takes time, and it takes patience. The flip side of this where we see it manifest, it's like, I'll see new people come online, and we have this Facebook Group for our customers, and so there's back and forth in there, but you'll see people that have come online. They've been at it for like four months, and they don't have any sales yet, and they're pissed. They're like, "What? How, have any sales. I'm four months into this," and so you start the conversation. It's like, "Steve, what have you done so far?" You get into a conversation about what Steve's done, and Steve has put in like three and a half hours of worth of work, and he can't figure out why he's not selling anything anymore.

It's like, dude, fish do not jump in the boat. What world do you live in where the inputs don't equal the outputs? That's just not the way that it goes, so you have to have patience, you have to come on board realizing that you're going to have to grind this out and get this going, but once you do, it's amazing. I think the perspective and the patience, as Tom Clancy likes to say, an overnight success, 10 years in the making. You gotta be patient, but when you mix those elements together and you come with the right mentality and you realize that you have a lot of time left in your life to really make something like this incredible, you set yourself to the task of marketing and getting better every day, and it's a game of pressure over time. That's it.

Peter Drucker once said that people often overestimate what they're can accomplish in one year, but they greatly, greatly underestimate what they can accomplish in five years, and I think, yeah, it's just so powerful and it's so true, and even more than just art. It transcends anybody attempting to do business online. It's just the same rules for everybody.

Did somebody say something about the good news? I would say this. There are a lot of things to like about an art business in this new world. In this new world, you get to decide when you work. Full time, 80 hours a week, you're going at it, you're a thriving artist all the way down to a side hustle in the margins of your life, in the morning or at the end of the day. You can do both of those, put in work on the daily, and continue to get better and get there. You get to determine where you work, and anywhere will and can do, whether you're grinding at home on the side, you're a roadie for a traveling band and grinding from the road at different city every other night, or you're my buddy Bill Stidham, living the dream in San Miguel de Allende. It's all, all possible.

It's also inexpensive to launch something like this. You're not signing some two-year lease, first and last and a deposit. For a building down on Main Street, you gotta paint the walls and hook up the business Internet where they really take you to the cleaner's. I

think that low overhead gives you a long runway to get your business up and running, make a ton of mistakes, start building momentum, put in the time when you can, and it's all you. You're not, as an artist, that creates it yourself. You are not waiting on some injection molding to come back from China for six weeks before you can even think about creating your prototype and then putting all this money in to order it. To get it online, it's like, you guys create everything. You are 100% the product, and you're not reliant nor dependent on anyone for anything, and I think it's amazing.

Your profit margins are crazy high as businesses go. Original art can be set at profit margins of over 90%. Prints on average can, over 65%, and ask around. Most business owners would die for those margins, except the ones that sell ink cartridges, damn tyrants are at the top. Somebody needs to disrupt the ink cartridge people, by the way. I hate them.

Now then, it does not matter if you just created your first piece and you're 14 years old, or if you're 65 and you've been in the game for 35 years. The playing field, digitally speaking, is level. You can get started today and really start doing damage. I mean, it's a democratization of business, which is amazing.

One further point that needs to be made is it's not zero sum game. Let me emphasize that point again. I get this all the time. We get this all the time. We run all these ads on Facebook, and without fail, I constantly talk about that, you should see how much time we have to spend [inaudible 00:31:12] comments, but once a, not even once a quarter, like once every two weeks, somebody will come on, and it's an ad, and so it's from a company, and there's that perspective. They'll fire on like, "I don't need this service. I don't need you guys. Why would I need you guys? I've been selling for Etsy for 10 years, and I'm doing great, and I sold in 190 countries last year."

I think ... I don't know where they're coming from where they're leaving that statement, but they leave that statement, and I think they're expecting me to come back with piss and vinegar, and I'm like, "Awesome. Amazing. Of course, if that's working for you, double down on it. Triple down on it. Start spending money on ads on Etsy." Can you do that on ... I think you can.

Look, the bottom line is, is I don't care if it's offline or online, whether it's a third-party marketing place, here, there, anywhere, if it's an online gallery, offline gallery, whatever it is. If you've got something that's working, stay at it, ride it, hit it as hard as you can, double down on it. Just make sure that it's in addition to and not in lieu of building your own following and your own customers and your own attention. Just make sure you are

doing everything you can to peel as much of that attention away from those other platforms as possible to an area that you own.

It doesn't matter if it's Etsy or Fine America or saatchiart.com. There is a reason that these people do not give you the emails or the names of your customers and let you know who they are, let you email them directly. Notice that theme is interwoven with all of those, doesn't matter which one? You don't own those buyers. They're not yours. You're only renting them, and the rental contact can be changed at any time at a whim, and you don't control it.

It's the whole reason that you need to own your own spot on your own gallery. Everybody has some context on this. How many of you guys were infuriated when you spent all this time, energy, and effort for people to come and like your Facebook Page, and everybody saw all your updates, and then guess what? Facebook decided that everybody's not going to see your updates anymore, and everybody's arms went up in the air and were infuriated, "How dare you, how could you do that?"

Everybody's saying the same thing on Instagram, even right now. I've seen a bunch of these comments, even just recently, and guess what? Those likes are not yours. Facebook decides. You're on rental territory. Same with Instagram. Those are not yours. You don't get to decide. You also should not be emotional about it. You should know this going into it, and you should actively be working to peel as much of that attention as you can, to put these platforms to work for you, and drive those eyeballs to your site, something that you own.

I think the most rewarding part of all of this in my eyes is you're building your castle, if you follow through with this, you're building your castle on land you own and you will own in perpetuity. It's your domain, your URL, you own it. It's your email list, you own that. No one could ever take that away from you. You've got the title in hand, nobody can foreclose. There's no loan. Once you start that grind, knowing all of that is in place and knowing that you're building towards it, it becomes an extremely, extremely rewarding process, and again, yes, this is true for art, but yes, it's true for any business that you start online.

What did Peter Drucker say again? People often overestimate what they can accomplish in one year, but they greatly underestimate what they can accomplish in five years. That becomes the question. What are you going to accomplish in the next five years? Yes, the Internet has changed everything. It's going to continue to do so. The opportunity it

presents, though, is tremendous, and I think not only are all industries going to continue to get disrupted, but the art industry, especially.

Hello VR, virtual reality, I think in particular, is going to be huge for the art world as soon as it matures. Virtual art gallery displays that you're able to walk through, let alone seeing people's art on the walls of our house with our cellphones, which is here now, but I think in order to take advantage of those opportunities, you need to be working incrementally towards building attention you own. You own. Nobody knows for sure what change will be coming down the pike, but running your own art gallery online, owning it all, and building attention you own is the greatest hedge you can have against any disruption to come.

Is it the greatest time ever to be an artist? The answer to that question is up to you.