

AMP 021: Mathieu Laca on Running a Print Giveaway Contest with ManyChat



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Transcribe

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Patrick: Welcome to another edition of the Art Marketing Podcast. And today, I am joined by the man, the myth, the legend, Mathieu Laca. Mathieu, how you doing?

Mathieu Laca: Very good. Very good. Thank you, Patrick.

Patrick: It's a pleasure. A pleasure to have you. Thanks for coming on. So, I wanted to talk about this print giveaway contest. We had a bit of a contest, huh?

Mathieu Laca: Yeah. It worked really well.

Patrick: Yeah.

Mathieu Laca: Really well.

Patrick: Yeah. I think it worked really well too. So, everyone's going to wonder who you are that hasn't checked out your site or taken a look at your work. Why don't you spend a brief few minutes and give us the Mathieu Laca origin story? Where you from? What do you do? You like dogs or cats and how are you feeling today.

Mathieu Laca: Well, very well. I'm a bit like on a cloud right now because I had the really successful show in Montreal. We sold a lot of works, and it was a pretty amazing experience because we sold really large ones. I mainly paint portraits, but I also paint animals and other scenes with a lot of figures. But I'm a figurative painter, and I tend to put a lot of impasto on my paintings. Well, you really have to see them to understand, because I have trouble describing them.

I've been painting for 18 years. I live in Montreal in Quebec, Canada. Things have been growing really fast for me in the last years. This week, I raised the prices and I don't know, it's very exciting. Of course, it's a lot of work, but I really enjoy it, and it's like a dream come true for me. Yeah.

Patrick: Well, huge, huge congratulations on all that. Sounds like you're an 18-year overnight success. So, congrats. Congrats. Congrats on all of that. I don't know, did you listen to the podcast episode by the way? The last one?

Mathieu Laca: Yes. Yes, I did. Yeah. I really liked it. I'm going to comment later. Yeah.

Patrick: Okay. You comment later. I think most people are coming into the frame of mind, I think I said on that episode. Obviously you heard me say I want to get your perspective on everything that you had to do from your side of things and just to set the table a little bit. I basically ran the paid traffic. I ran the setup of the ManyChat, which was all first time for me. That was the first time going through ManyChat and making that whole sequence. Mathieu, you had to do ... Well you had to write all the copy in both languages, which was and by the way, I learned there was a whole other thing we can do about segmenting me the language. Facebook actually has that built in so we didn't know that at the time.

But you had to write all of the copy in both French and English. Then you had to do a number of different videos in French and English. But that's just the start of it. I do want to focus, because I made such a theme on all the hustle and all the work that you did. I want people to really wrap their head around it, as well as myself, discover what that looked like from an hour commitment. I do want to start there. Where I want to really start is ... okay so that contest wrapped up. We haven't spoken all that much since then. What, if any, feedback did you get after the whole thing was over that I haven't heard about yet and just feedback in general?

Mathieu Laca: Well, people liked it. People thanked me for that contest, that [inaudible 00:03:42]. It's a bit ridiculous, because I just gave away one print for, I don't know, \$40 or something. But it's just a way to share your work with a lot of people, making yourself known. Our goal was to have subscribers and ultimately also having print orders. But it's really, I don't know ... It's not a trap because people like it. But for our perspective it's a bit like a trap. We set this up, and people fall into it, and it's great. I mean, they thank you for it.

Patrick: Yeah. The whole thing is amazing like that. We can get into the trap aspects of it. I mean the trap makes it sound like mischievous or devious or whatever, which it's not. [crosstalk 00:04:42] The trap is just effective marketing.

Mathieu Laca: It's really clear, what it is, and you say it. This is a bot sequence, and you're talking to a robot. If you have any questions, just type them, and then I come in, and I tap, "Okay, this is the real me talking." A lot of people, they really liked it. They liked the sequence. A few got stuck, because people are not used pressing buttons in Messenger.

Patrick: I know. I've seen so much of that since. There's a small portion of the population that just has no idea what to do on these things.

Mathieu Laca: Yeah, yeah. So I had to write, "You have to press on the buttons." But, overall, people really got it, and the feedback was great. They enjoyed it. A lot of conversations started after the robot sequence. People told me, "I really like your work." For instance, "I like Van Gogh, what a great painter. I saw the movie Loving Van Gogh, blah, blah, blah." I got into it and exchanged a few ideas. There are so many diverse people in there. People ask me for advice on their own work because they were artists. Collectors, also in there, very interested in my work, looking to buy. There were people who bought prints, people I know for a long time and new people. I was really surprised on the ad that you did, Patrick, how many Asians liked it. It was totally enormous,

the amount of Asians. I couldn't explain it. You said-

Patrick: That is weird. I gotta go back and look at the statistics on that.

Mathieu Laca: Yeah, well it's just a detail. It's not that important, but it surprised me.

Patrick: Yeah, that's an interesting learning. Let me ask you this. To get back to something you said earlier, which I think was a big eye opener, and I definitely alluded to this in the previous episode. I'm getting feedback coming out of your speaker a little bit. I don't know if that's on purpose or what. We said early on, we're going for subscriptions, and I said early on too, "Hey, we're really trying to get as many print sales out of this as possible." But it really was those conversations, wasn't it? I mean, that ended up being the biggest win by far, those conversations that you had were insane.

Mathieu Laca: Yes. Yes. When people relate to you, because they exchange a few words and a few impressions, they come to trust you. And trust is the basis ... if you want to sell works, people have to trust you. If they talk to you, it's because they like your work already. When they talk to you, they exchange ... you know, conversations lead to trust, and this is making warm traffic into burning traffic.

Patrick: Yeah, yeah. It was sort of insane, too, to see the volume. I think that's an important aspect too, to touch on too, because I think I'm going to be hammering this thing for the foreseeable future. When I say this thing, Messenger bots, specifically the Facebook contest, because I think it's ... I've ranted and raved about it, but I'm not going to stop ranting and raving about it, because this thing was Christmas morning on how effective it is.

But I really wanted to frame up and get directly at your [inaudible 00:08:24], so we did this, however many days it was, six or seven or eight days.

Mathieu Laca: It was something like six days. Yup.

Patrick: Six days. So, I mentioned in the previous episode that you responded to every single, solitary comment. I mentioned in the previous episode that you responded to every single, solitary chat you had inside a ManyChat. Give me, because I haven't even asked you since, and I'm actually curious, give me your gut sense on how intense was that? How much time did it take you to respond to everybody?

Mathieu Laca: Yeah, it was pretty intense. At the end of the day, when we went, I really had this huge headache. Responding, even though it's just an emoji, you have to read, and you have to think, "Who's that person, and what is she expecting? Is there something ... What should I do?" You have to ask yourself these questions for each answer you give. The image you use of speed dating with 400 people is totally accurate. It was-

Patrick: Honestly, that's what it felt like observing it. I do give you ... I said in the other episode, I do give you a tremendous amount of props, because I wasn't telling you, "Hey, you have to respond to every single, solitary person," and you responded. If you looked at the podcast landing page, I actually made a video, "There he is responding again, and again, and again, and again." But, man, the bond that that creates, even just responding to every single, solitary comment and making that many people feel important, in addition to those actual conversations that you were having, I think, is amazing. And, also ... and, by the way, I think I've since found out, I still have to do my homework on this, but I've since found out that I think it is actually a violation of Facebook's policy to require people tag people to enter, right?

Mathieu Laca: Well, was that a requirement, or you just ask people to do it?

Patrick: Well, yeah, we asked people to do it. It wasn't a requirement. It wasn't a requirement to enter, but let's not give away all the tricks just yet. They would get entered regardless, but I don't want to talk about that. But, I guess from Facebook's standpoint, I'm going to ask my Face ... I've got a Facebook gal that I have calls with, because I spend on ads. I'll ask her whether or not it truly is, but right after we ran your contest, it worked so well, I went and ran one for Art Storefronts, and we gave away software for a year, and we did the same thing, and we didn't get in trouble. No one called us out. I think they leave it up to be, probably, a gray area. I think in both your case and in Art Storefronts' case, people had such a wonderful time with it, no one was going to complain or get us banned, but I don't want to leave the impression that they can do it.

Where I was going with all of that was that you got a tremendous amount of first-time people that saw you and entered after they got tagged. I thought that was pretty striking too, so using that technique was really effective at first-time people being exposed to your brand and your work.

Mathieu Laca: Yeah, yeah. That was incredible, and it reached a lot of people that we wouldn't have reached without that tagging technique. Yeah, absolutely.

Patrick: Yeah. I thought so too, which was really quite striking. If you had to do what we were doing at that clip, and, granted, it was new, so the excitement level was probably higher than it would be normally. If you had to do that every single, solitary week, would it crush you too much?

Mathieu Laca: Yes. I wouldn't answer every single comment. But I would get an assistant do it for me.

Patrick: Yeah, that's a hard line to cross. How does it appear to be you and authentic versus not. We sort of settled at the one-month technique. One thing, while we're still on the subject, that I thought was very interesting that I want to point out to the listeners, which I just want to have you speak on because I thought it was a pretty interesting tactic. The way that it works is you enter the contest, for someone who hasn't seen this, they enter the contest and then they, basically, just get put into a chat window. When you say a chat window, think Slack or Skype or Instant Messenger, whatever chat window you use, you're essentially engaged in that type of a conversation. I'm monitoring the contest from afar, so every once in a while I'm just making sure that people are flowing through the ManyChat [inaudible 00:13:17] and flows, but flowing through the flows, and everything's working and there's no bugs or typos, there's always typos.

I saw you engaged in some of these conversations, and I thought it was really interesting because you had this one conversation with what, presumably, was a collector, and might have mentioned this on the earlier piece. I loved that you went to the sale right away, and I popped into the conversation, and I remember seeing, "Hey, I love this piece of work." You're, like, "Yeah, I'm sorry it's sold." Then you offered up another piece of work that you had, and he's like, "No, I've never liked that guy, but I really liked this guy, so if you paint him again, let me know." You immediately went to the sale, and you're like, "Can I consider that a commission?" I remember being so proud of you, because you were really, really pushing for the sale, but is that a normal part of your technique, asking like that and going through that? How often are you having conversations like that?

Mathieu Laca: Well, I know this guy was on my collector's email list. I don't really know him personally, but I know his name. So, I knew that he was really interested in my work. When people are really interested, it's just a matter of finding the right fit for them, the one painting that will totally satisfy them. He really had a crush on two paintings that I already had sold. This happens a lot. What happens is that, with these people, I just offer them, "What subject do you want me to paint? What can I do?" There's just an inch before he buys, so it's

really a matter of pushing them so they commit, that's it. He didn't buy, but I'm sure he will buy in the next weeks or months, or in my next show or whatever. These people, I email them if I have new works and just to be sure that they see everything.

It's not a technique I use with everyone, but when people are that interested, and I know that they have the money, and they're collectors, basically. When I know these people, I just try to find a way to have a relationship with them, and to make sure that they see every new work that I paint.

Patrick: Yeah, yeah. I think that was awesome. I think the sales portion, let alone the marketing portion, that's hard for a lot of artists, in terms of how it shakes out or how their brains are wired. I don't even know if it's a construct, and everybody's bought into it, but it seems to be an area that a lot of them struggle with, so it was interesting to see you in that mode and do that. I think that's going to continue to benefit.

Mathieu Laca: Well my advice to give to other artists would be to always keep in mind your interests, but to do it in a casual way. That's my advice.

Patrick: Yeah, I think that's really solid advice. To that effect, I'm curious, because I like how you break down your interest groups, and I think it's a subject I'm interested in delving into more. It's a little bit of a tangent, but anybody that listened to the first podcast on this, and I put links in there that show you links ... I didn't talk about this, but I put links that show you the flow with the mind map looking thing, that routes everybody through. What Mathieu and I decided to do, based on our conversations, is he's always thought very seriously about who his collectors are versus call it just fans. One area he's not thought very seriously about is the print side of his business, right?
[crosstalk 00:17:20]

Mathieu Laca: Yes, that's totally true. Well, for me, prints were always a way to promote giveaways, and my mark-up was so ridiculously low that it wasn't something that I thought would be interesting to sell. It was just a way of promoting myself, but with that ManyChat draw and contest, I got a lot of orders. I'm thinking more of considering the prints as a ... well, also, my originals, the price is higher, so prints become more interesting for people who are not able to buy originals.

Patrick: Yeah, and that's where I was going with it. One, it's going to be different for everybody, depending on the kind of business they have, right? Some people are just prints in the sense of photographers. Some are just originals, and some aren't doing prints at all. I think the print portion of it is irrelevant. What I find fascinating, and by the way, especially for you, your stock in trade is paint that comes an inch and a half off the canvas, right? That's pretty doggone hard to duplicate in a print fashion, right? That's a completely different product. I think what's interesting about it is, I'm twenty [inaudible 00:18:50] into this podcast, what do I bang on about all damn day in this podcast is how difficult it is to get attention, how difficult it is to create fans and followers. If you're going to create this attention and all of these fans and followers, and they're going to come to your website, and the cheapest item that you have in your store is \$500 or \$750 or \$1,000, well then there's a whole bunch of people that you're missing out on, right?

I don't even care if it's a print side of the business, or if you're selling t-shirts, or mouse pads, or iPhone cases, or whatever kind of thing it is. It's less for me about the item as it is about the price point. To go back to where this whole thing started, in Mathieu's case study, we had a survey after we announced the winner. In terms of the contest, that is the most valuable message you could send. Here's who won the contest. Talk about 100% open rate, that's the one, that's the highest open rate you get. It makes a lot of sense to ask some questions. We asked some questions, and he was able, through some tags, and you can see the flow, it's in that first episode, and you can actually look at it.

We asked whether or not they were interested in prints or originals, and we segmented people out. Now, Mathieu's got this list in ManyChat with people that are tagged, and he can message and speak to the people that like prints differently from the ones that like originals. It's not to say that there won't be crossover, but one, I think that should become a very interesting part of your business; two, I want to see you expand it. I think just going forward that the critical part of having those various different price points, which by the way you will note, you just raised all your prices, well done. I think having those different price points and having that diversification is critical for survival.

Mathieu Laca: Yeah, I totally agree. It's a good move. I just had to raise my mark-ups, because before I found it was a bit ridiculous. I was selling paintings for less than \$3,000, and then I was selling prints for \$15, and I was doing \$10 or \$5 for each print. Just the amount of accounting that I had to do when I sold prints was enough to discourage me to sell them.

Patrick: [inaudible 00:21:12] [crosstalk 00:21:16]

Mathieu Laca: Prices are a bit higher, so it becomes more interesting. If I can sell a good amount, it will become interesting. Also, the originals being more expensive, probably more people will buy prints, because I'm starting to refuse people who commission me small portraits. They want to pay with installments for a year. That's impossible right now. All these people will end up buying prints in the future, I think.

Patrick: Yeah. It ends up becoming a beachhead. I don't know if that translates properly to French, but it's, you eventually want that original hanging on their wall. Let me tell you, there's no better way than getting into the game, right? It's like buying a starter house outside of town a little bit. It's not really where you want to be at, but it gets you in the game. It allows you to level-up, and then, eventually,

you get that big sale.

I think all of that's fantastic. I think we can reveal offline that it's pretty much time to double down and go right back into the next contest. I know we're excited to give it another shot and continue to learn and see. I think there's even more trade craft that can go into it, but I think, relative to me pitching this, and you can say honestly, or not, don't let me influence you. Based on everything that you've seen from that technique and running it, would you strongly recommend other artists give it a shot and go through the learning curve of learning how to do it?

Mathieu Laca: Absolutely. Absolutely. For years, I worked on newsletters, and, you know, it's a lot of work to build a newsletter so it looks nice and everything. This is ... the work is similar, but it's so instantaneous, and you reach so many people right away. Just the open rate, it's amazing. It's 100%.

Patrick: I know.

Mathieu Laca: That's awesome. It's new, also. People are not used to it, so they open it, they answer, they react. Totally, I totally recommend it. It's important to learn that technique.

Patrick: Yeah, the arbitrage is for sure there, because it's so new. People don't know what it is. As a final question, have you sent any broadcasts to the list after the fact?

Mathieu Laca: You mean after we revealed the winner?

Patrick: Yeah, after we did the contest. Did you send any broadcasts?

Mathieu Laca: Well, I sent just a Merry Christmas message, with images from my exhibition and a link to my website, I think. Something really, just a way of reminding people of my show and of me, you know? So, that what I-

Patrick: Got it.

Mathieu Laca: Very simple.

Patrick: And how did it go? Did you get any good feedback? Were there more conversations?

Mathieu Laca: Well, it was not really as engaging as the previous broadcasts, but, I got feedback too. It's just a way of keeping in touch and reminding people that we exist, and what you're doing.

Patrick: Got it. Got it. Love it. I'm going to continue hammering it. Obviously, we're going to double down and go right back into it. We've been talking out loud about what the right cadence is for this. Given your workload, I certainly think the soft target is one a month and see where it goes. The bigger you can get that list, the more you can broadcast to it, I think the more powerful it's going to end up being.

As a final, unless you have any final statements, to wrap it up, where do you want people to find you online?

Mathieu Laca: My website? Well, Instagram is really, really kicking ass. I get so many inquiries on Instagram, it's incredible. I really love it. So, just follow me on Instagram.

Patrick: Okay, and I'll put a link to your-

Mathieu Laca: My website.

Patrick: Your profile.

Mathieu Laca: Okay.

Patrick: Because you spell Mathieu in the French fashion.

Mathieu Laca: Mathieu Laca.

Patrick: Yeah. I mean, I can't spell that Mathieu thing. That's just too weird for me. I make typos on it all the time. But thank you, honestly, thank you very much for coming on for the time. Congratulations on all your success, and look forward to getting you on a future episode.

Mathieu Laca: Thank you Patrick. And thanks a lot for your work. You did work a lot for this, and it paid off. I'm really, really glad you did, because it will pay off in the future. It already pays off, so, thanks.

Patrick: For sure. My pleasure. Alright, have a great day.

Mathieu Laca: You too.