## Selling Your Artwork: Options and Considerations

by Linda Schnell

The following article outlines various options for selling your artwork along with considerations and general costs to determining your return on investment. When deciding whether or not to sell your art, the first question to ask yourself is how much is your time worth? The second, where are your target customers going for art?

### Online

Your own hosted website and/or a hosted sales site such at Etsy.

Time commitment: After initial set up, multiple hours a week for adding or changing new work, responding to inquiries, and optimizing for search engines.

Environment: Online.

Positives:

- You can work from anywhere at anytime.
- Anyone from anywhere can see your work online.
- Sales sites can track your sales and collected sales taxes, plus provide shipping options.

Costs:

- Shipping sold work. Tip, shipping costs may be built into the final sale price.
- Site hosting costs may be $30 or more a month.
- Ongoing time preparing and posting items.
- Advertising as you're competing with thousands of others for online attention.

### Artist Studio Tour

Organized by an entity such as the PNW Glass Guild.

Time commitment: 1-3 weekend days

Environment: Individual artist studios with the possibility of multiple artists at one studio.

Positives:

- No travel if it's your own studio.
- Potential customers come to you.
- The entity typically provides online and physical promotional materials.
- Sell your work in person, no shipping.

Costs:

- Low to no entry fee.
- Time to clean up the studio and prepare your art for sales, possibly 5 hours.
- Promoting the event.

**Local Community Event**

Hosted by a Chamber of Commerce, local community center, high school, club, etc within easy driving distance.

Time commitment: Half day up to 2 days

Environment: Indoors with space for a table and chairs. A room with a variety of sellers including crafters, food providers, non-profits, and professional services providers.

Positives:

- Interact with other local artists and crafters.
- Network with community members.
- Easily invite friends and neighbors to come.
- The host typically provides online promotional materials.
- No need for a hotel.
- Sell your work in person, no shipping.

Costs:

- Typically $50-200 for the space to sell your work
- An application fee that will be posted on the event website. May be $25-50.
- Your time to prepare, set up, present, tear down, and store your art. For a weekend event, this may over 20 hours.
- Promoting the event.

**Outdoor Festival**

Organized by a festival committee such as Issaquah Salmon Days with hundreds of vendors.

Time commitment: 1-3 weekend days

Environment: Outdoors in a park or downtown streets with space for a 10’x10’ or larger booth. A variety of sellers including artists, crafters, food providers, pet products, clothing, non-profits, and musicians.

Positives:

- Fresh air and lots of people walking around.
- The host typically provides online promotional materials.
- Sell your work in person, no shipping.

Cost:

- Typically $300-500 for a 10’x10’ space to sell your work.
- An application fee that will be posted on the festival website. May be $30-50.
- An outdoor pop-up booth with soft siding to reuse for other shows. Available on Amazon.
- Time to prepare, set up, present, tear down, and store your art. For a weekend event this is typically over 25 hours.
- Hotel or other overnight costs if not local.
- Promoting the event.

**Juried Art Show**

Organized by an art show committee such as the Bellevue Arts Fair in WA, and Art in the Pearl in Portland, OR, with hundreds of art vendors.

Time commitment: 1-3 weekend days

Environment: Typically outdoors in a park or downtown streets with space for a 10’x10’ or larger booth.

Positives:

- Among other accomplished, juried artists for networking.
- Customers looking for higher end art.
- Promotional materials provided by the show committee.

Cost:

- Typically $800-1,000 for a 10’x10’ space to sell your work.
- An application fee. See EntryThingy.com and Zapplication.org for examples.
- An outdoor pop-up booth with professional shelving and walls to showcase your work. The jury process will include a picture of the booth.
- Time to prepare, set up, present, tear down, and store your art. For a weekend event this is typically over 30 hours.
- Hotel or other overnight costs if not local.
- Promoting the show.

**Galleries**

There are multiple types of gallery situations, all include a commission on sales. The following outlines an example participating in an artist cooperative gallery.

Time commitment: 2-3 days a month for working at the gallery, rotating art, and activities related to running the gallery.

Environment: Juried artists with 2D, 3D, and jewelry art on display in a physical storefront. Art is also available for sale on the gallery's website.

Positives:

- Juried member of a business with other artists supporting one another.
- Your art can sell and ship at anytime without your involvement.
- Opportunities to learn from other artists, meet potential collectors, and attend art related events.
- The gallery collects sales taxes.
- Commission is lower for a member, 25%, than a guest artist, 50%.
- The gallery posts on social media and provides marketing support.

Costs:

- Typically $50-150 a month for allotted space to sell your work.
- Time and travel working at the gallery, possibly 1 business day a month.
- Time and possible travel completing responsibilities during the month to run the gallery.
- Time for a monthly member zoom meeting.
- Time and travel to rotate your art every 2 or 3 months. And replace sold work as needed.
- Promoting the gallery and your art art the gallery.

If you're running an art business, then many of the costs above may be written off on your business taxes including app hosting, show entry fees, membership fees, booth space, insurance, and travel. Consult a tax professional for your specific needs.

All the best on your art sales journey!