

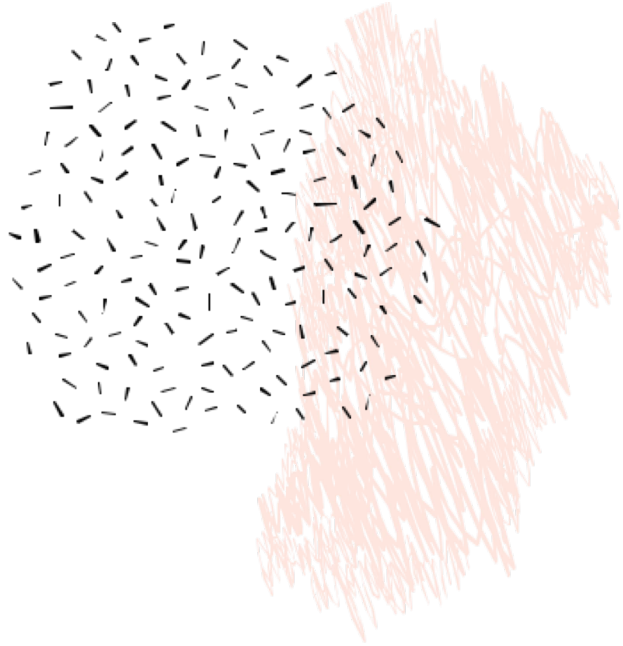


STRATEGIES FOR RUNNING AN ART BUSINESS DURING COVID-19



WHY ARE WE DOING THIS?

- Provide actionable steps you can do right now to strengthen your art business.
- Galleries, shows, fairs, residencies around the world are shutting down in response to COVID19, impacting exposure & sales for artists.
 - According to [American for the Arts recent survey](#), 85% of arts organizations have cancelled an event, performance or exhibition.
 - We will talk about how you can adapt and move your business online.
- We're hearing from artists around the world on how they are being affected by COVID-19—and want to help.
- For you to use as a resource and reference for grants, articles and knowledge about COVID-19 as it relates to running an art career.





WHAT WE ARE HEARING

“A lot of my income, especially in the warmer months comes from art shows and events. Sadly all but one **have been cancelled**—and we’ll see how it goes from here. I’m not sure how I’ll make up the extra funds.”

“My business has been affected since I teach art classes to kids and have paint parties and **all have been cancelled.**”

“My classes, exhibition, store hours **everything cancelled.** My store sign says closed. I can’t afford to pay my living expenses such as apartment rent, Studio rent and other personal and business expenses.”

“The outbreak has **significantly changed** my art practice, and supplemental ways I earn money to support it.”

“Currently, the spread of COVID-19 is having a **huge financial impact** on our business. Our upcoming spring show has just been canceled, our main income source of the year. After paying the booth fees and commissions in advance, and also investing on supplies we needed for our business,, we are currently in a huge debt.”

“Projects have been **put on hold** and **opportunities lost.**”

“I’ve **lost all income** because of event and class cancellations.”

“My freelance **teaching has stopped.** I am looking for other ways to earn revenue.”

WHAT ARTISTS ARE DOING

“I plan to focus more on my personal art making and **online sales**. Less focus on in-person teaching and creativity coaching for money and but will offer some on online. I will use this time to finally finish setting up an online watercolor workshop that I have been thinking about for 5 years.”

“I am brainstorming more ways to **engage people online** and will be diligent about my Mailchimp emails but for now, until we can more easily turn away from the difficult daily news, I am sharing paintings each day on Instagram and Facebook so that people have more art in their lives.”

“I will be **catering to a lower price point** as it is more reliably **sold online**, which will be my primary market source. I will also try to secure more commission work.”

“I’ll be productive, whether it’s revenue-generating or not. I plan to use the energy that would have been spent on events to build up new work, **set new goals** and reorganize my priorities for the year.”

I have been thinking about how to create an interest online, probably creating an **online exhibit**”

“I am a strong believer that when people have outlets to express themselves, they will experience less fear. I am partnering with local nonprofits to continue creating virtually and providing **online platforms** for artists to show their work.”

“I am going to try to **teach online**.”

LEARN MORE HERE



STRENGTHENING YOUR BUSINESS

Organize your business & inventory

- Catch up on tasks that you've been putting off. All of this will not only help you run your business, it will help you apply for relief grants or lost wages grants.
 - **Document your artworks, contacts, and other critical information**
 - **Track past exhibitions** (will need these to prove history of art profession)
 - **Log Income** (will need to this to prove lost wages)
 - **Expenses** (will need for taxes)
 - **Create contact lists** (good for sending newsletter updates)
 - **Organize documents** (create a “toolbelt” of materials for applications and presentations)

Further Reading:

- 01 | [Why Inventorying Your Art Benefits Your Career](#)
- 02 | [How to Inventory Your Artwork](#)
- 03 | [The Importance of Being an Organized Artist](#)
- 04 | [Small tasks to do each day to get your business organized](#)
- 05 | [How to Build a Digital Archive of Your Artwork](#)
- 06 | [8 Tips to Start Archiving Your Artwork](#)
- 07 | [Free Guide to Archiving Your Work](#)
- 08 | [What to Look for in Art Inventory Software](#)
- 09 | [How to Protect Your Artistic Legacy](#)

Refine Your Personal Narrative



- These documents are essential for applying for grants and funds. They also help tell a story about you as an artist.
- **Bio:** Generally one paragraph. Longer bio for publications and shorter one for social media and online profiles
 - Where you're from, your past and most recent work, any major awards, noteworthy exhibitions, and other accomplishments related to your art career.
- **Statement:** Generally a one-pager that contextualizes your work, the ideas behind it, and your medium and techniques. If you are submitting your statement with works, it should directly reference the work that you are submitting. Be clear, be concise, don't overcomplicate, don't use jargon.
- **CV/Resume:** For a visual artists, include solo exhibitions, group exhibitions, publications, teaching/workshop experience, awards, press, collections and your education. It can be more than one page, but keep it as concise as possible.
- Keep your "toolbelt" of information in [My Docs](#)

Further reading:

- 01 | [How to Write an Appealing Artist Biography](#)
- 02 | [Creating a Strong Artist Identity](#)
- 03 | [5 Questions Your Artist Statement Should Answer](#)
- 04 | [What to Avoid When Writing Your Artist Statement](#)
- 05 | [Tips for Writing a Memorable Artist Statement](#)
- 06 | [My Docs on Artwork Archive](#)

Use newsletters to strengthen community

- **Check-in with your contacts:** Foster genuine relationships. Marketing is connecting. See your newsletter as a way of fostering those connections.
- **Let people know what you are up to.** This could be a sale, but it could be something you are working on or excited about. A partnership with a nonprofit or a cause you care about.
- **Keep relationships strong** by communicating when you aren't just selling. Sales are great and there is still a place for them. You can also send out information, classes, or a kind and compassionate note.
- **Offer something exclusive** for your list.

Further reading:

01 | [5 Strategies for your email Newsletter](#) 02 | [Newsletter ideas to keep it fresh](#) 03 | [Using a Marketing Calendar](#)

Recommended Tools:

Mailchimp - Mailchimp offers templates with drag-and-drop features for all types of messages. There are free plans or get added features for \$9/month.

Campaign Monitor - Campaign Monitor allows you to connect your online store to drive more art sales in the body of your email. Plans also start at \$9 a month.

Planning for the future

- **Take a moment to stop & evaluate:** When things slow down we can take time to strategically look at the big picture rather than get bogged down by the immediate details that take over our focus. Look at production and sales over time. Look at the sales of your locations. What changes can you make after we emerge from this?
 - **Feature:** [Insights on Artwork Archive](#)
- **Schedule what you can.** Put down tasks to cement some certainty: grant, show deadlines etc. We will get back to “normal”, come back with a plan
 - **Feature:** [Schedule and reminder](#)
- **Make a marketing plan** organize when and what you’ll be posting as well as where you’ll be getting your information out
- **Set goals** set art career goals and make a plan to make these goals happen as well as a way to check in with the progress of your goals
 - “I plan to use the energy that would have been spent on events to build up new work, **set new goals and reorganize my priorities** for the year. This has been an exercise in flexibility for sure!”—Carolyn Whittico, watercolor and digital illustrator
- **Build up your artwork inventory,** make a new line of work, use the time to experiment if possible. Art doesn’t “Expire.”



LAYING A FOUNDATION ONLINE

Moving your career online: foundations

Update and optimize your website

- **Tell your story** - Make sure your bio, statement and other information are updated.
- **Showcase your work in the best light possible**
- **Optimize for SEO** - [further reading](#)
- **If you don't have one already:** **WordPress** (Free plans. Premium plans \$4 - \$45), **Squarespace** (Drag and drop templates, eCommerce, analytics. Business plans start at \$18 a month), **Wix** (Hundreds of templates, unlimited pages & hosting free. Premium plan starting at \$13/month), **Artwork Archive Embeds** (Website integrations allow you to track the vital details about your art business, while embedding your public profile on any website provider such as WordPress, SquareSpace, Wix)

Selling Artwork Online

- Focus on what's working. You don't need to be everywhere.
- Avoid online galleries or other outlets that are overpromising or overcharging for services.
- For those using Artwork Archive there are many features that help get your work out. Embed, public profile, private rooms.

Recommended Tools:

- **Private Rooms** - Easily prepare online viewing rooms to share custom collections exclusively with your contacts.
- **Artwork Archive Public Profile** - This online gallery (along with all those important details) can stand alone for your web presence or be embedded into any page on your own artist website—so you can skip the double data entry and get back to the studio.
 - Buyers contact you directly about a sale, too, so you get 100% of the profit. ([Free for 30 days](#))

Pricing for online sales

- **What artists are saying**
 - “The next couple weeks I am going to be maintaining production, focusing on creation new exciting works. I will be **catering to a lower price point** as it is more reliably sold online, which will be my primary market source. I will also try to secure more commission work ”
- **Accessible price points:** Smaller works, prints, cards, limited edition apparel
- **Make it shippable:** Easily shippable so long as postal service is still working
- **Bottom line:** Art is still essential to our wellbeing as a society. People still want to support their communities, culture, and artists if they are able.
- **Tools to create prints or alternative products**
 - **Society6** - Make smaller priced items by turning your artwork into products ranging from gallery prints, iPhone cases, and stationery cards. Society6 uses only the highest-quality materials, you keep the rights, and they sell the products for you. A great way to get some extra income in this time of uncertainty.
 - **Blurb** - Multiple income streams are what you should be focusing on now. Blurb is your go-to site for designing, creating, publishing, marketing, and selling print books and e-books. You can even easily sell these professional-quality books on Amazon through the site. So if you've ever thought about writing down your knowledge to share with others, now is a great time.

RESOURCES FOR BUILDING AN ONLINE PORTFOLIO

- 01 | [Building the Best Online Portfolio for Your Art](#)
- 02 | [The 8 Online Platforms Artists Should be Using](#)
- 03 | [5 Reasons Your Art Might Not Be Selling Online](#)
- 04 | [Get Inspired by these Public Portfolios](#)
- 05 | [How to Photograph Your Artwork Like a Professional](#)
- 06 | [Land More Sales with Your Online Portfolio](#)





SOCIAL MEDIA STRATEGIES TO STRENGTHEN YOUR ART CAREER RIGHT NOW

Social Media Strategies during COVID

What artists are saying:

- “I am sharing paintings each day on Instagram and Facebook so that people have more art in their lives. While making a living through art feels hard right now, **I can do my part** to make confinement less stressful.” —Lisa McShane, Artist
- **COVID-19 art hashtags** to help share what you are working on and to connect with other artists and viewers looking for art and art experiences from their computers. Participate in one, or create your own.
 - #stayhomebuyart online auction from Nina Fraser, Multidisciplinary Artist
 - #artuniteschallenge
- **Show your process/ give a virtual studio tour** master the how-to video to demystify an art-making process and to connect with your audience
- **Do a social media audit:** Is your information the same across all platforms? Do the links to your social media accounts work? Are your bios strong and accurate?
- **Create new content:** When was the last time you made a time-lapse video of you working on an artwork? Is there something you can teach or share about your process to engage your audience?
- **Further Reading**
 - [Free Guide to Social Media Marketing For Artists](#)

Tools for managing social media

Buffer - With Buffer Free, you can schedule up to 10 social media posts in advance for a specific time and day, and you can see which posts perform well with Buffer's basic analytics. Buffer Free allows you to connect one profile on Twitter, Facebook, LinkedIn, and Google+. It's simple and very user-friendly.

Hootsuite - Keep your social media presence active, even when you're not. With Hootsuite's Free plan you can manage three different social profiles and up to 30 scheduled messages. You can even use the Hootsuite mobile app to easily edit, approve, and manage scheduled messages on the fly!

Facebook Publishing Tools - If you haven't gotten yourself a free business account on Facebook, now's the time! Because it can do so much more for you than a regular, personal page—including scheduling unlimited posts directly on Facebook to save time. Plus, it's a great option for when your other scheduling tools limit the number of profiles you can connect.

Art Mockup Apps - Catch the eye of collectors, designers, consultants, etc. who are stuck inside by helping them envision your work in the larger context. Because while your work is stunning on its own, it can turn an ordinary room into a work of art, too! Illustrate exactly how your art makes a room complete with an app that previews your art right on the wall. There are a bunch of art mockup apps out there, but we love how quick and easy it is to use is [WallApp](#).

Framelapse - A full-featured app for Android™ devices, artists can record and create high-quality time-lapse videos of their works-in-progress—perfect for engaging followers on social media.



STRATEGIES FOR ADAPTING TO AN ONLINE SPACE

Virtual teaching or workshops

- **Artists are moving their regular workshops, classes or conferences online**
- **Adapting your class to an online format**
 - Use materials that most artists in your field will have at home
- **How to use video to ensure a successful experience for your students**
 - Make sure to get close up and clear images of how you are working
 - The focus is on your hands, not your whole environment
- **How to make money from your classes**
 - You can offer classes on your website through a formal check-out system
 - You can also use Zoom, Google Chat, etc. and accept Venmo
- **Artists are using classes to give back to their community**
 - “The one change I made immediately to **offer 200 seats free** in my introductory Independent Study Skill Building Masterclass in oil painting. This is to support artists and casual painters to get started painting in water-mixable or traditional oils while they are self-isolating. Many artists and other individuals have had learning how to use water-mixable oils on their list of things to learn for a long time and even have their supplies already. It is a small thing but I is a way I can **support others** during these extraordinary uncertain times. In just a few days, almost a hundred students have registered”—Terrill Welch Full-time Artist
 - “I plan to focus more on my persona art-making and online sales. Less focus on in-person teaching and creativity coaching for money and but will offer some online. I will use this time to **finally finish setting up an online watercolor workshop** that I have been thinking about for 5 years.”—Helen Klebesadel, visual artist

Tools for teaching online

Zoom - For art organizations or art teachers that don't want meetings or classes to go on hold for weeks, Zoom's video conferencing (perfect for small or large groups) still lets you get creative! The free plan can host up to 100 participants for 40 minutes, perfect.

Google Hangouts Meet - With easy-to-join video calls, you can meet face to face while still adhering to the social distancing guidelines. Meet is fully integrated with G Suite, so you can join meetings directly from a calendar event or email invite.

Loom - Art is a visual industry, so why not make online meetings or emails visual as well? With Loom, you can capture your screen, voice, and face and instantly share your video in less time than it would take to type an email. And for artists that just want to record & share quick videos, it's free to use!

BlueJeans - This video conferencing software offers a variety of tools so that important client meetings, and even art openings and workshops, don't have to be placed on hold. Make any room a one-touch video, audio, and web conferencing room where you can host and live stream interactive events for large audiences. Plans start at \$10/month.

Google Duo/Skype/Facetime - For artists who just want to stay connected, see a familiar face, or casually show what you're up to in your studio, these are all great (and free!) options for video chat on your smartphone or computer.

Facebook or Instagram Live - Live is the best way to interact with the art fans you already have in real time. Host a workshop, demo a new skill, host a giveaway, field their burning questions about your art—and most importantly stay connected with your audience. Hear what's on their mind, and check out their Live Reactions to gauge how your broadcast is going. The best part is that internet usage is going to increase in the next few months, so seize the opportunity to connect while you have their attention!



RESOURCES FOR HOSTING A VIRTUAL WORKSHOP

- 01 | [How to Plan a Virtual Event on Vimeo](#)
- 02 | [How to Host a Watch Party on Facebook](#)
- 03 | [Preparing to Teach Your First Workshop](#)
- 04 | [How to Record Art Tutorials or Demos with Your Phone](#)
- 05 | Patreon, [Venmo](#), [Brown Paper Tickets](#), [EventBrite](#) (accepting payments)

Consider exclusive content

- **Exclusive line of work** created during this time
- **Subscription membership** for those that want to support you with added monthly benefits
- **Add exclusive gift card** options to your website.
- **Seconds sale** or flash sale on social
- **Limited commissions** or themed items.
- Consider a **dedicated landing page** for COVID-19 specials and announcements
- **Subscription-based offerings:** Small painting of the month club, print of the month, mug club, etc.

Tools for creating subscription-based exclusive content

- **Patreon** - While your contact with the outside world may be limited, you can still reach buyers and make income with Patreon. With a subscription-style payment model, fans pay their favorite creators a monthly amount of their choosing in exchange for exclusive artwork or a closer look into their creative journey.

Creating online events

- **What artists are doing**
 - “I’m planning to host a **Facebook Live exhibit** to walk people through my studio and to share the work I would have shown had the event been open to the public “—anonymous visual artist
 - I have been thinking of how to create interest online, **creating an online exhibit**, or a Live events on Facebook and Instagram where I present new paintings. —Leticia Herrera Visual Artist
- **Facebook Live as an event for people to look forward to**
 - **Recommended reading:** [How to do Facebook Live](#)
- **Online auctions or flash seconds sale**
 - **Recommended reading:** [Running a successful flash sale for artists](#)
- **Online classes and workshops**
- **Studio tours or collaborate with other artists for virtual studio visits**
- **Artwork Archive collections for online exhibitions**
 - [Making collections](#)
 - Using collections for group exhibitions



FINANCIAL GRANTS/ RELIEF FUNDS

Financial Relief (US-based)

The CARES Act (for US-based Artists)

- The CARES Act includes provisions for self-employed workers and makes financial disaster relief available. There are also steps you can take to ease financial strain from the cost of housing, car and credit card payments, and health insurance premiums.
 - [COVID-19: CARES Act and Steps You Can Take](#)
- **Pandemic Unemployment Assistance**
 - **“File for Unemployment:** The Department of Labor is still drawing up guidelines for Pandemic Unemployment Assistance (PUA) which will be available to self-employed workers. This will include an extra 13 weeks (39 rather than 26), and an extra \$600/wk added to the payments. Unemployment offices are swamped, so you will need to apply online! There are provisions for being mailed a cash card, but the best course is to have your bank account information ready and have it direct deposited.” - From CERF+
 - Apply through your state unemployment office.
 - If you have W2 income and qualify for state unemployment, you will receive regular unemployment. If you are self-employed and ineligible for state unemployment, you must still apply and be declined in order to apply for PUA when it is available. So the sooner you get a rejection the better.
 - For PUA, you will need your tax records such as Schedule C for the last year or two. If you have low or zero net income, apply anyway. It is likely that you will receive compensation based on 50% the average payment in your state plus the \$600 per week. The base amount will vary widely by state.
- **Payroll Protection Program (PPP) Loans** are intended for small businesses to use to maintain payroll and cover other business expenses during the COVID crisis. All or part of the loan will be forgivable if you are able to keep employees on your payroll. These are available to sole proprietors and self-employed workers. It is uncertain exactly how this will work for very small operations. Applications are made through a bank.

Financial Relief and other COVID-19 Resources for Artists

- 01 | [Financial Relief Resources for Artists During COVID-19](#)
- 02 | [How Artists are Dealing with Coronavirus Cancellations](#)
- 03 | [Americans for the Arts COVID-19 Resources Center](#)
- 04 | [How to Support Artists and the Arts During COVID-19](#)
- 05 | [Creative Prompts for Art Projects During Social Distancing](#)
- 06 | [How to Experience Art & Culture During Coronavirus](#)
- 07 | [Meditations to Ease the Artist's Mind](#)

Find resources for your region (US-based)

- 01 | [Americans for the Arts COVID Center](#)
- 02 | [Volunteer Lawyers for the Arts](#)
- 03 | [Springboard for the Arts](#)
- 04 | Check with your local arts & business council

Applying for Grants/Funding

Read the guidelines & Qualifications: Not every grant is for every artist. Save yourself the time and up your chances of getting funding by applying to the funding that includes your region, discipline and specific situation.

Thorough documentation goes a long way. Use this downtime to compile the information you need for applications and streamline your process. Granting institutions are giving, but they get a lot of applications and need to make decisions based on information. Provide them with that information.

Proof of cancelled contracts or commitments For grants that give based on a loss of income, you will need to prove your loss of income. Gather letters, emails and contracts that show the dates and rate of pay that were cancelled. Document everything that has been cancelled that would have brought you income in the upcoming months. This can be outside of your art career as well (service job, teaching etc)

Record of past sales. You will need past records of sales if you will be estimated lost wages from cancelled shows, exhibitions or fairs. If you have an Artwork Archive account, you can do this in the Income feature by easily filtering your income by date or filtering by similar shows in the past year - 2 years.

Prove your professionalism Funding institutions get thousands of applicants. The first matter of business is deciding who is qualified and who is a “career artist” who has lost wages due to the outbreak. The easiest way to quickly convey this to panelists is through an updated resume, website, bio and statement. Social media links, exhibition and publication history can also contribute positively to an application.

Questions:

Artwork Archive

- Artwork archive provides the tools for artists to organize, manage, share and showcase their artwork. From inventory and consignment reports to sales and invoices, contacts management, and location tracking, we provide everything you need to get organized and manage your career.
- Free trial can be found at www.artworkarchive.com
 - Try it free for 30 days
- Our blog is at www.artworkarchive.com/blog
- Contact us at info@artworkarchive.com