

**Title:**

Selling your Art Online - Website Tips For Artists

**Word Count:**

1353

**Summary:**

If you plan to sell your art online with your own unique website, my advice is simple: Be Different! There are hundreds of artist websites online today that are all making the same mistakes.

**Keywords:**

selling your art online, sell your art online, sell my art online, website tips

**Article Body:**

If you plan to sell your art online with your own unique website, my advice is simple: Be Different! There are hundreds of artist websites online today that are all making the same mistakes.

The first problem I would like to note, is the use of long multimedia presentations that artists are incorporating into their websites. I don't think there is anything more frustrating than arriving at a website and waiting for this huge multimedia presentation to download and play. The artist may think it's cool or adds something to their work, but in all actuality, it only frustrates impatient surfers. Not all Internet users have super fast cable or DSL connections. Many are still using dial up modems and if they have to wait for something to download, they will simply leave and visit your competition.

There are also sites that insist on putting unrelated banner ads or other unrelated advertising on their websites. Just the other day I was doing a search for original watercolor art. The first website I arrived at had a big banner at the top of the website advertising a dating site. I am not sure how dating is related to watercolors? This is simply a distraction and you are immediately sending visitors off your website. If you are going to advertise on your website, make sure it's related to the theme of your website and is helpful to your visitors. Do not make it the very first thing they see when they arrive at your home page.

You need to catch your visitor's attention right away. This means putting your most important information near the top of your website in plain view. Your goal is to draw your visitor into your site immediately with a compelling headline so

that they stay long enough to check out what you have to offer. Once you draw them in with a good headline, you must then direct them to take an action. That could be to subscribe to your newsletter, or to check out your latest product(s).

Keep your site navigation consistent throughout your entire site. This means having the same navigation links in the same order on every page of your website. Your goal is to make it as easy as possible for your visitors to get from one place to the next, not to confuse them.

Make sure your visitors can easily contact you. Put a link to a contact page on every page of your site.

If you have testimonials, use them. Testimonials are awesome sales tools. People love to hear good reviews about a product or products they are about to purchase. It really does boost sales. If you have ever received testimonials from customers, highlight a few of them on your home page in clear view. If you do not have testimonials yet, contact people that have purchased from you in the past and ask if they could provide feedback on the product they purchased for inclusion on your website. Make sure they know how you plan to use their testimonial, and ask if you can site their name with the testimonial.

Start an opt-in newsletter. If you do not already have a method for collecting your visitors email addresses, then you may be losing sales. Many people who first come to your site will usually leave without making a purchase. It is important therefore to collect as many email addresses as possible so that you can follow up with your visitors. You could send out an announcement to your list of subscribers whenever you have a new piece for sale. If you regularly attend art or craft shows, you could send out an email and let your subscribers know when and where. You could also send out surveys or questionnaires to your list to get a better idea as to the type of products they are interested in purchasing.

Make certain that you have a variety of different payment options for your customers, especially payment by credit card. Studies have shown that sites, which accept credit card payments, have significantly more sales. Use a service like PayPal to accept credit cards from your website. It's free and easy to setup.

Make sure you have detailed purchasing and shipping instructions in place.

Have a good refund policy. When your customer receives your product, it may not be exactly what they anticipated. By having a good refund policy upfront, you

will gain your customers trust and they will be more comfortable making a purchase, especially if they are parting with a lot of money.

Include a "Privacy Policy". Internet users are a paranoid bunch. People are still somewhat reluctant to part with personal information, so it is your job to make them feel at ease when they use your website. In a nutshell, a privacy policy clearly states what you do with users personal information. What kind of information do you collect from your visitors? What do you do with that information? Do you share it with anyone? If you are not sure how to create a privacy policy, visit the following website to access an easy to use Privacy Policy Generator: <http://www.the-dma.org/privacy/creating.shtml>

Include a "Terms of Use" section. This section outlines the terms and conditions for using your website. For instance, you probably want to restrict visitors from copying or reproducing the images on your website. You would put that in your Terms of Use section.

When adding images of your products, always use thumbnails that can be clicked to show a larger image, so that your pages download quickly. If the larger image is a big file, let the visitor know that they may have to wait for the picture to load.

Avoid putting traffic counters on your site. Counters make your site appear amateurish. If your site is fairly new, and your traffic is not yet established, you are broadcasting this to everyone that arrives at your site. If you need to track your website statistics, check with your hosting company. You may already have a good website statistics program included.

Choose a basic color scheme and only one or two different fonts. If you go overboard on color and use too many different fonts, your site will look out of balance and amateurish. Your website does not have to be a work of art. You are trying to sell your art, not your website.

Use a light background, preferably white, with dark text, preferably black. Don't use images or textures for your background. This makes it difficult for your visitor to read the text on your site.

Avoid adding music to your site. You may think it sounds nice to include your favorite songs when your page loads, but not everyone will agree. If they find the music annoying, they will leave.

Don't make your visitor have to scroll horizontally to view information on your website. Web surfers are lazy. Most hate to even scroll up and down let alone left and right.

Avoid animated graphics and scrolling or flashing text. This only distracts your visitors.

Put prices on all of your products. If people have to contact you to find out the price of something, they will more often than not leave and look elsewhere.

Make sure your site works in all the major browsers. The most popular browser today is Internet Explorer, but there are a good amount of surfers who use Netscape, Opera, and Firefox. Check out <http://www.anybrowser.com/siteviewer.html>. They have a great tool that enables you to see what your site looks like in various browsers.

Lastly, make your website personal. Speak to your visitors. Let them know who you are and what your art or craft is all about. Educate and enlighten. Include a step-by-step article or demonstration on how your work is created. If people have more of a connection with you and your art, they will be more comfortable buying from you.

I hope these website tips have helped. I wish you the best of luck in everything that you do. God Bless!