

December 2019 Experienced Members Call

Cory: Hey there everybody, it's Cory. I'm not exactly sure why my video is not working, I may have to restart my computer or something. Can everybody hear me? Okay, great. Well we'll just do this, and hopefully the video will turn on at some point or whatever. Alright, cool. So I'm looking at questions, and I am on site with a client today, so this room is a little echoey.

Okay Nina, I'm going to invite you on so we can talk about it if you want, but Nina's question is "I have a collector who purchased several of my watercolor paintings, he wants a commission but he doesn't want me to offer the prints of the commissioned piece." So Nina, basically he's asking for exclusivity. So you should be asking for anywhere from 5-10 times the cost of your commission. Normally an artist would retain the rights and have the ability to sell prints and whatever, you know, however they want to use the work. If he wants exclusivity, so you don't offer any prints, then I would ask him for 5-10 times the cost, and make sure that you have in your contract, you explicitly state that you retain the copyright. Don't give up your copyright, no matter what. So that's my response there. Hopefully that helps, Nina.

Alright, Moses. I will invite you on. Moses says "How can I effectively use this site/the Association?" So Moses, I'm not sure exactly when you joined, but you should have received a series of emails letting you know when you, or what you can do with- there's tons and tons of resources. So probably the first thing that I would do, it says that your device is incompatible with coming on the video chat, you have to be on the mobile app or you have to use the Google Chrome browser in order to join me live. But I'm going to share my screen here for a second so I can show you some things that will give you a quick orientation of the Association. So you should be able to see my screen here. So this is when you log in to the Association, this is the page that you'll see here. Right at the top, it says Featured. So in the Featured section, there's a bunch of posts that will show you how to use the Association, how to use the membership site. And then everything else, all the courses and everything, are over on theabundantartist.com. So if you head over to theabundantartist.com, hang on. And then click on Courses up at the top of the page, then you'll get a listing of all the courses and you just click on the one you want to get into, and make sure that you're logged in and you just go from there.

One thing I will say on the HTSYAO courses, be sure, you notice the menu on a desktop computer, the menu's on the right hand side. On mobile, the menu's at the bottom of the page. We're actually gonna fix that soon, but it should be beginning of the year. But there's three different courses. 101, 201, and 301 and they're all on the right hand side here. So be sure to pick the one that you want.

Okay. Hopefully that answers that question, Moses. Let me know if you have any other questions.

Alright, I see some other people on here. Jessica, Ingrid, Bart, I'd love to- Taylor, I'd love to hear what you're up to, what you're working on right now. If you have any questions I'm happy to do that.

Yes, Jessica. So a template for commission quotes and contracts, yeah. So I don't have one online, but I have a book that I recommend. If you go to our Resources page, I'm finding it. There it is. So if you go to the Resources page and then, oh it's not on there. Well that's annoying! Okay, let me find the book real quick. There's a couple of them, and I'm looking for a specific one. I'm not at home so I don't have the book right next to me. This is a good one. Nope, that's the wrong one. Where the heck is it? I'm sorry Jessica, when I get home I will message you with that. Sorry I don't have it.

Alright, Bart, Taylor, I'd love to hear what you're up to. You can type in the chat or I can bring you onscreen, whatever works for you. Ingrid? Yeah, sorry, the screen is black Nina. The, uh, what's the word I'm looking for? Well, Jessica I'd love to hear what's going great for you.

Nothing works like it's supposed to right now! Nina, yeah, the screen is black cause I'm not sharing anything anymore and my video, for whatever reason, is not working.

J: Hello?

Cory: Hey there Jessica.

J: Hi Cory! Or, gray square.

Cory: So what's so good about this year, what's going well?

J: Well you know I started working with you and the Association like almost exactly a year ago, and I've, yeah. I mean the year, it took a while to ramp up like you said it would, because although I'd been doing my work as an artist for years I wasn't working on the business side of things in the best way that I could. And I just today made the biggest sale to one person I've ever made.

Cory: Nice!

J: And this year I quadrupled my art income from last year.

Cory: Oh my gosh, that's amazing Jessica.

J: Yeah, so I made almost the same amount in art sales as I did in my day job. Which I'm leaving this week.

Cory: You're leaving? Oh my gosh, I'm so excited for you!

J: Yeah, thanks! So yeah, I mean, I've put in to place all the things from your book and from your workshop and I finally had some friends hosted an art party for me, which they combined with their annual Christmas party. So it wasn't in the same format that you had recommended, like it wasn't small, at all. It was a hundred people. And I thought, what the heck! I'm gonna ask them if the work can be for sale. And I'll increase my donation to the, I donate 5% of all my art sales to one of the local environmental nonprofits, and they promoted in the invite to the party that I would give 10% of any sales from that night to that nonprofit. So I sold 2 paintings that night, and they introduced me to a friend of theirs who then proceeded to buy these two very large paintings, and then we're talking about a commission for a bigger piece.

Cory: Oh my gosh, that's great.

J: So yeah, thank you!

Cory: Yeah! I'm so excited! That's, I know it feels like it was a long time ago, but when I was out there last year just, it's just, it's not that much time. So congratulations!

J: Thank you. You know, I'm very grateful to you and the Association. So Moses, you can get a lot out of the Association. You know, if you put the time in to do the work and connect with people. And I have like a Mastermind group that I work with every other week, people who I met through the Association as well.

Cory: Nice, I love it. Yeah, that really warms my heart. That's a great way to be wrapping up the year. I just spent a good chunk of last week thinking and planning for 2019, so yay! Awesome. So you leave your job in a week, and what's the plan for all the free time you're gonna have?

J: I haven't really been talking about it because there might be another job, but in the arts. But it's so unsure that you know, either that'll happen or I will keep on doing what I have been doing, just minus the day job. So I have been teaching occasional classes at some of the universities, I've had a few speaking engagements this year, and this year I also started fundraising for a big installation that I mentioned I think before. That's happening in March, and I have funders and yeah. So I've been working on fundraising to cover those costs, because I don't want it to be out of pocket. So, yeah! I'm just gonna keep working on building the business around my artwork.

Cory: That's awesome. Well I'm so proud of you for putting in the work. I know that it was a little bleak there for a bit. So I'm glad that all of this is working out, that's really fantastic.

J: Thanks! I mean I have perspective too, I know it's not going to be all hunky-dory all the time and I know that I won't always have as many sales as I've had in the last quarter, and so I recognize that I can have on the business end of things are in art sales but I feel like I'm at a point where I feel very successful in my practice as an artist, and I have things in place so that when maybe I'm not selling as frequently, you know, like obviously I've been saving money and I'm ready to leave my job. So when sales are slow, but I can keep, I'm proud of my practice as an artist and I can be successful in the studio and that's a different kind of success. And there are some shows I'm having next year.

Cory: Awesome. You brought up one thing that I want to point out to everybody: you said that you're ready for maybe other times when you're not gonna have as many sales as you had this quarter. It is very realistic that a lot of artists make half their income or more in the fourth quarter. Right? So that's not true for everybody, but you know, if you do really well in Q4, don't be disappointed if your sales drop 50% or more in Q1. Right? Because everybody spends all their money in Q4 and then other things happen at the beginning of the year, everybody puts all their money into fitness and other things, and then sales start to pick back up in the spring when the shows start up again. So yeah, that's not true for everybody but if your sales do drop off a lot, it's usually not your fault.

J: That's good to know.

Cory: Yeah. Cool, thanks so much Jessica. Uh, Taylor says "I was named as one of fifty artists of the year through Artist and Illustrations Magazine." Awesome! So they're gonna be doing some sort

of voting thing and you can go tell all of the Association members later. So nice, congratulations Taylor, that's fantastic.

I love end of the year wins! Yeah. Chelsea says "Are we posting our year end updates here in the chat?" Yeah Chelsea, I'd love to hear any big wins or anything you might be struggling with or need help with right now. Definitely let me know. I haven't heard from Ingrid yet, I know she's alive. And let's see, Daniela, I can see that you're on. Bart is further up. Oh, Bart. "I'm working on a painting a day for 100 days. I'm about halfway through, some nice PR and a few small sales." Nice, congratulations, Bart. I'll invite you on if you want to discuss it or whatever, but congratulations, that's awesome. So you're 50 days in for a hundred-day challenge. I'd love to hear Bart, I'd love to hear what's working for you. What have you learned? Renee, I'd love to hear from you. MaryAnn, you're lurking, I'd love to hear from you.

Let's see- Bart, you rejected my invite. I'll try again. Chelsea says "This is my first year truly selling my work more than just a print here or there or a commission. Sold a couple thousand dollars' worth of originals that I made just for my own enjoyment. It was absolutely mystifying that something I made for myself would get me paid." That's awesome. And you only started selling on October, that's fantastic.

Hi Bart!

Bart: Hi.

Cory: Do you have a set of headphones? Your computer is feeding back into your speakers.

Bart: No kidding.

Cory: Sorry Bart, you'll need to get a set of headphones. Let's see, so Chelsea, I would love to hear, I'll invite you on if you want to join us. I'd love to hear what you did, that you sold a couple thousand dollars of local art. [Unintelligible]

Renee says "I'm just plugging along, [unintelligible]."

[Call quality unintelligible for several moments.]

Hey MaryAnne, yeah, let's have you on!

Hey Chelsea, hey MaryAnne! So I invited Chelsea on first, so Chelsea, let's hear real quick from you, what have you been doing since October that's working?

C: Yeah, so October was my first show, it's the first time I got in front of people, or got my work in front of people. I just went to- or, asked around and someone recommended a popup opportunity. And I spent about a month making as many paintings as I could, and I came and I had about thirty 6x6" oil paintings, which is kinda hilarious cause it was in this big room and I had to somehow space all these pieces out so it looked like I actually had thirty pieces. But I had you know, a lot of friends and family coming to support me. I intentionally made small works that I could price at like \$125. I had several people tell me I need to up the price. That being said, a lot of times when people see a piece and say this should be, you should be asking more for this, they don't just turn around and then buy the piece, which I feel is like a truer indicator. But nonetheless, that's been really good. And I've done one other little show since then, a

holiday market. And beyond that, I set up an Etsy shop a couple years ago which hasn't really done a lot for me, but because I already had invested in it and my mom actually makes just about her full living through Etsy, she has a brick and mortar shop selling jewelry, but because she knows the ins and outs, I invested a bit of time understanding its algorithm and what works as far as selling on Etsy. For instance, you know, you cannot do it if you have fewer than 100 listings. So I prioritized making as much art as I could. Putting time into that, putting time into Instagram, I have a day job in Marketing, and I leveraged that. I'm using a service to build out my Instagram, and that's been going really great.

Cory: What's the service you're using on Instagram?

C: It's actually really small and I was really hesitant to use it because I couldn't find anything about it, it's called Engagement Genie, it's just people doing follow unfollow like anyone could be doing but it's just very targeted. I sent lists of other artists whose followers I would like to be engaging with, and I had a pretty decent Instagram number before, but I'm about to pass 10k and I just had a post from yesterday actually pass 2,000 likes which is my highest to date. So I have mixed feelings about it, because I kind of feel like a fraud not just having like totally organic Instagram success, but people are liking it. You know? I get like genuine comments from collectors and other artists. So I guess I can't knock it too much.

Cory: Alright.

C: But yeah, I would love for the coming year to get more sales that are from strangers. I think I've sold maybe \$1,000 worth of work to strangers so far.

Cory: That's a great start for October to the end of the year.

C: Yeah. It's been interesting, cause I really don't have a whole lot of data yet because I don't, the reason friends and family are gonna buy work is much different than what would draw a stranger to it. But I'm really excited.

Cory: Cool! Well thanks so much Chelsea, I appreciate you sharing what's working for you.

C: Thank you.

Cory: Hey MaryAnne. There we go, now I've unmuted you. Okay. Awesome. How are you?

MA: I am well, how are you?

Cory: I'm doing really well. It's always good to see ya.

MA: It's good to be here!

Cory: Awesome. So what's your big takeaways for the year? What's working for you?

MA: Oh my gosh, well you know, Facebook works for me. But the big takeaway is groups and within the groups, like I'm part of two that are collectives that we basically are like a co-op, like a brick and mortar co-op, but we're a Facebook co-op. And we sell our art through that, and we're all pulling into it and they're exploding. In fact we kind of had a year end meeting in one of the groups, and we started that group in April, so for nine months and there's probably I'd say 20

artists in there, some come, some go, but for the most part it's 20 artists. We hit over \$55,000 in that group alone.

Cory: Nice.

MA: And so our goal for next year is \$100,000 to see if we can do that. So it's kind of cool.

Cory: Let me make sure I'm clear about this- it's a FB group that you're running as a collective?

MA: Yep

Cory: You're basically putting stuff up in there for sale?

MA: Yep, yep. This last year we had weekly shows, every Sunday/Monday. For the most part we do it auction style. But yeah, weekly shows, we promote, we you know, talk about which artists are going to be showing, and then as a collective those are the numbers we did. And it just barely started.

Cory: That's awesome. So how do you get buyers in there? Do you all just invite your own people?

MA: Yep, we all invite our own people, we all have our own- and I mean, to be honest, for the most part I mean, I'm getting new collectors, I'm still doing the periodically try to get more likes on my business page, and then I do my own thing, like we learned in your class, and then basically then say I'm showing in here this weekend. Here's the link. I'm showing in here this weekend. And slowly but surely we're just building it up. And the other group I've been in for two years now, and we're growing, we're going strong. The groups, the one group only has like 1800 members and the other one only have like 2300 members, but the number, I mean you know, if they're collectors or just other artists wanting to get in, but if they're mainly collectors, it doesn't matter that the number's really small. So that's the part that's really really cool. And the people I've partnered with really have good business sense. So we talk about the business end of things, too. So it's really really nice. We don't have the drama, we don't have the- it's just like you're required to do these things, this is what you- and it's been really really cool.

Cory: Nice. I love it

MA: Yeah.

Cory: So private sales groups on Facebook. I've seen people do that before but I wasn't sure if anybody was making it work. So that's pretty cool.

MA: Yeah, ours, just so everybody knows, the one I'm talking about, I belong to two. One is called Artistic Souls Gallery, and I can put links in here. And the other one is called Soul Sisters United. And the Soul Sisters one, we do once a month themed auctions. And we probably sell about \$4,000, there's only 10 of us in that one, we sell about \$4,000 a month in that one. And then in the other one, the weekly one, although we're now gonna go to every other week cause we were dying trying to manage that every week, but that one is the one that's only been started since April. So yeah.

Cory: Nice.

MA: Yeah. So I'll put the names of the two groups. But those two, pretty much been the biggest thing. Cause one of the things I think that I took away from a lot of your teachings, that you're doing in this group and then you also say like do it in your local community. And because I tend not to go out in my local community, it's kind of like I've built a virtual world on Facebook.

Cory: Nice.

MA: Yeah. So that's the biggest win this year. And then tons of other little wins. Tons of commissions, jewelry, tons of my prices have gone up, but tons of that kind of stuff. My Facebook likes on my biz page are now over 3,000, so last year when you told me to get my likes up I was at 1800. So they're all just like holy cow!

Cory: Nina said "How do you organize a FB collective like the one MaryAnne discussed?" MaryAnne maybe you and I can just talk offline for just a little bit and see if we can find the time to sort of break down what you're doing.

MA: Okay, totally.

Cory: Perfect. Thanks Nina, that's a great question. I will follow up with MaryAnne on this. Alright. Let's see, Ingrid says "Lots of progress, working on more PR. Did a few open studios and exhibitions which helped me understand my audience and what kind of style works for me." Great. "I almost made two sales, but the buyers backed out at the last minute, so my question is how do I approach people when they express interest in sales?"

This is a great question Ingrid, I just set up, we are going to be doing a training for Association members on Thursday, January 17th at 10:00 a.m. Pacific. It will be recorded for Association members, so you'll all have access to it. We are going to allow other people to join, but it will be a paid training for anybody who's not a member of the Association. And then, so the short answer that, so there's the plug for the sales webinar.

And we're gonna talk about things like this exact situation, like how to talk to people who have expressed interest in sales. But sort of the broad view of it, Ingrid, is some percentage of people will never buy. Right? So there's these different stages in the sales process. There's the discovery stage, which is people finding you. Right? And then some, not everybody who sees your work will be interested in it, right? So let's say 50 percent of the people who see your work will be interested in it. And that's way too high of a number, that's just a number that I threw out there. Of those 50% who are interested in your work, half of them won't have any money. Right? So then you've got 25% of the people. And then of that 25%, it would be bad timing for them. They'll be moving or they won't have any room on their walls, or a variety of other objections. Right? So really, you're looking at narrowing into the 5-10% of the people who see your work, depending on how they're seeing it. If they're seeing it online, then you're gonna get a much smaller percentage. If they're seeing it at an art show where they specifically went to look at art it might be as much as 30% or 40% of the people who see it want to buy it and can't buy it. And then from there, is a matter of uncovering objections that aren't really objections, right? People find art confusing or it's frustrating, or it's a little scary. So you need to be able to figure out how to answer their questions. And that's the stage that you're in right now Ingrid, if you're just doing your first shows and you're just starting to talk to people and you're just

figuring out your style, then you're in this stage where you're just figuring out what the questions are about your work and how to answer them. So give yourself a little credit, let yourself off the hook a bit, and start writing down what are the questions that people ask? And write down what the people say to you, what are the reasons they give you for not being able to buy your work? And then you know, you can answer all of those questions and you can overcome all of those objections. But at the end of the day you just have to let people decide for themselves. And you can't hold onto it too much because then it starts to feel desperate. And you don't want to like turn people away and upset them, because they might come back and be customers later. So I hope that is a good sort of overview, Ingrid.

Let's see, thanks for the link MaryAnne. I appreciate the link to the group. Daniela says "This year's been a little disappointing for me. I'm about to do an assessment of my progress and I've still not really got to a point where I'm making any income at all." That's frustrating. "I think I'm spreading myself too thin. I realize that art licensing is too hit and miss while I send work off and hoping it gets picked and seeing it takes a long time for royalties to come through." Yes. "I've decided I'm going to focus more on paintings and my print on demand stores." Okay. "I now have an Etsy shop which I've just opened. It's getting some attention. I'm selling my art on tea towels as they make a lovely canvas. I've completely updating my website and trying to write blog posts about my progress." Okay. So Daniela, I'm going to invite you on. You can join us if you want. And I have a couple of thoughts about what you're trying to do here.

So first of all, Daniela, going from selling licensing like going from art licensing to selling originals and prints is a completely different audience. And you're essentially throwing out all of the effort that you've already made to build a brand new audience. Other than money, is there any particular reason you're doing that?

D: I suppose- can you hear me? I'm not sure. I suppose I would probably still put my illustration work and out there and see the same, like the same audience. They're already aware of my paintings, it's just that the paintings would stand out more, I suppose, because they would appear more often. Yeah. My problem is I get bored. And I sort of, I can't see the smaller paintings, which is the illustrations and such, change. But I thought I would do more big canvasses and show work in progress and see how that goes.

Cory: Okay.

D: And basically what I thought what I might do is then I have a friend who's a painter too, and she's actually really starting to get lots of licensing deals. But she just paints. And her paintings are now being made into pattern designs and greeting cards, calendars, napkins, and so on. So I'm thinking I might just sort of follow licensing through that way. But in the meantime sell paintings.

Cory: Right. Okay. So in the 101 course, I talk about there's different business models for artists, right? There's licensing, there's galleries, there's selling original works direct to collector, there's selling prints and there's selling products with your art on them. The reason that I break it down into these five areas is each one requires a very different way of doing business. Does that make sense? Yeah. So I usually will recommend that you pick one of those five areas and concentrate all your marketing effort on one of those areas until you've reached you know, a significant

amount of revenue. It might be \$60,000-\$100,000 a year. So have you done any licensing deals at all yet?

D: I have, and I even had an agent approach me to become like one of their artists, but I didn't think that their aesthetic suited my work. So I turned them down but it was non-exclusive, so I suppose I could go back and say you know, do you want to sell some of my work in this way? But I sort of thought if I accept their proposal, that then that would stop me from being able to work with some other agents that I would probably really prefer to work with. But at the same time, yeah, I just, I'm just getting fed up with sending designs out. Recently I sent out some Father's Day card designs, and they liked one out of five designs and they got back to me to make a few changes, and I'm still waiting back to see if they're still going to go ahead with that one. So you know, it's just-

Cory: How long have you been pitching for licensing deals?

D: I probably need to put more effort into it.

Cory: But how long have you been pitching?

D: Probably the last couple of years.

Cory: Couple years, okay. And what's your motivation for selling your art? Do you need it to make money or are you doing it just for fun?

D: I used to make a regular income working as an ... and so I'm used to making my own money. And I would really like to be able to go back to being self-sufficient, moneywise.

Cory: Yeah. So I understand the desire to pivot to selling originals and prints. And I think it's probably a good decision for you. I guess my area of concern here is I don't want to see you pursue selling originals and prints for 6 months and then pivot back to licensing.

D: No, I'm thinking- I do realize I had listened to Seth Godin the other day talking about his new marketing book, and he kept going on too about picking one area and doing that well before doing anything else. And I thought, I'm not doing that. I'm just trying to do too many things. So I think that what I might do is really push the paintings and take it from there. Just really go into that. But my thing is, I'm not sure whether I should be setting up changing my website so that the paintings will have to the homepage rather than the illustration.

Cory: Mhmm.

D: But, yeah. I'll sell prints through my Etsy shop, that's the plan too aside from fabric with my art on it.

Cory: Right. So my concern is how you're spending your time. If you're spending, you know let's say you're working 20 hours a week on marketing and business. You should be spending 80-90% of that time marketing one aspect of your business. Right? Like if you're gonna sell original paintings, spend 80-90% of your business time marketing original paintings. If other stuff comes up, like if you get a licensing deal because it just happens to fall in your lap or you have some print sales that's great. But you really do want to focus that time that you're spending on selling.

D: Yeah, I think that's what I'll do. Okay, thank you for that.

Cory: Okay. Keep it up. You bet. Take care, Daniela.

Chelsea, yeah. That looks like a pretty good Q1 goal. You won't have another show 'til March and Q1 is tough, that is absolutely true. \$3,000 for the quarter seems pretty good. No, so the asking for bios, images and links, that's not for today's call. No, we'll be featuring those starting at the beginning of the year and through the end of the year depending on how things go. We can't feature everybody in a year unless we did like two a day. So yeah, we're gonna be taking those and start featuring them in the first week of January.

Cool cool. Well thanks so much everybody, I have notes here to go talk with MaryAnne about Facebook groups and also to talk to Jessica as well about her experience quitting her job. If anybody else has any questions or any other victories to share, please feel free to do so. Otherwise we'll call it a day and I hope everybody has a very merry Christmas if you celebrate. And if you celebrate something else, I hope that's great for you as well.