

Justin Anthony from Artwork Archive

Cory: Alright, hey there everybody, it's Cory: from The Abundant Artist. I'm excited today to speak with Justin: Anthony from Artwork Archive. Just a little background, I first talked with the Artwork Archive guys right when they had the first version of their product and they were looking for people to help spread the word a little bit. That was seven years ago! And it was like right after The Abundant Artist started, we'd been around for about a year. And it's been really fun to see how Artwork Archive has grown, obviously our companies have both grown and changed quite a bit. So it's fun to have Justin: back, we're gonna talk today about Artwork Archive, but also sort of at a higher level, what it's like to run a company that serves artists and how artists can benefit from better organization in their lives.

So Justin, thanks for being here!

Justin: Yeah, happy to be here, thanks for having us.

Cory: So you've been helping artists get organized for 7 years, the Artwork Archive story is, it's a great story, your cofounder John, his mom needed something to get her better organized with, and experienced artists will recognize this problem of having hundreds or even thousands of pieces of art out there, how do you know, like which piece is showing where? You know who did you sell it to, can you go borrow that piece for a show, you know. Like there's a lot to manage when it comes to the individual inventory, and then of course you guys have added a bunch of other stuff. So tell us a little bit about how Artwork Archive got started and we'll go from there.

Justin: So John, as you said, his mother's an oil painter from Colorado Springs, Colorado, super talented, and was really looking for a better way to stay organized. I think similar to a lot of artists, there's just so many different roles you have to play. And it is not always easy to kind of get and stay organized whether it's with outreach to clients, keeping up who bought what when, where your pieces are at any given time, so one of the other things that I think was a real challenge at that time period was there wasn't really any solution out there that wasn't download only. And download only programs suffer from a lot of limitations, none the least of which is what she suffered from, which is a loss of hard drive. So she had spent so much time entering the information, creating this system and kind of a living body of her work, only to have everything perish in flames when her hard drive went out. So one of the things that we early on tried to set up to address is to be the first cloud-based product, both John and I had a lot of experience in that. And we wanted to make sure we created something that really served the needs of the modern-day artist. So accessible anywhere, anytime. And then the biggest challenge we wanted to take head-on was most of the existing solutions were basically repurposed file maker or an excel spreadsheet or something that was meant to be kind of a one-size fits all organizational solution, versus something that was truly custom-tailored toward the needs of the artist. So not only did we sit down with her to create something that in a perfect world she would like to handle all facets of her business, but we started sitting down with a lot of different artists from all over the world, and saying "What's missing? What would you love to have, what are your biggest pain points?" I mean I had artist friends who were invoicing on post-its.

Cory: Oh no!

Justin: No, I have a space as well that some artists show in, and it was always on us to let them know that they had a piece that were still there. So it does get hard to keep track of things, especially as your body of work grows over time. So we really wanted to set out to create something that truly served the needs of kind of today's artist, and felt there was a gap, and you know we've kind of had a blast watching that grow. And you know, I think one thing that's remained true since our origin was this concept of kind of almost crowd-sourced evolution. So ninety percent of our product evolution has been from calls with you. So early on, we went to the experts. You guys are talking to artists all the time, you know what makes them tick, you had a much better understanding of the pain points. We had a lot of anecdotal information based on conversations we were having with our friends and other artist groups and things like that, so this combinations of getting information from you guys, but then also making sure we're interacting with artists on a day-to-day basis, 90 percent of our product evolution is fueled by artists. And every single member of the company to this day including myself and John have to spend at least a half hour a day doing customer service, just so we maintain a finger on the pulse of what people are struggling with. So-

Cory: Oh that's really clever, I like that. Yeah. That's a really good idea. I have a client that I'm working with that is in a similar growth position to you guys, and they have, we're now implementing a process of spreading the customer service stuff around. So that seems like a pretty good idea.

Justin: Yeah, and there are times when it's just- I cannot tell you, I have never had a customer service kind of session result in nothing. Like there's always a little bit of wisdom, there's always a little bit of "Hey we could be doing that better," and a lot of times it's hey- eighty percent of the people are asking for this particular thing? And it ends up getting into the, you know. Just a quick anecdotal story on that- we started getting people saying you know I'm in more and more shows, or I'm in more and more competitions, but you're helping me remember where my stuff is, you're helping me remember who I'm selling to and who I should follow up with, but I keep forgetting these important deadlines. So that's how the reminder system that we created was born out of where just wanting to kind of scratch that itch for people. So now they have a system in place that can tell 'em when's the submission deadline? When do you have to pick up your things? So you're not just organizing all other aspects, but you're also keeping track of show and competition related stuff as well.

Cory: Yeah. So one thing that has come up as I've talked to like a lot of artists will ask us about you guys because we blogged about you before, and one of the things that comes up over and over again is the really high quality of your blog posts and other content where you're teaching artists about shows, about all the things that are on your blog. How do you guys create this content? Because I think as somebody who teaches marketing to artists and they will often come to me and say what should I be blogging about, what should I- you know what kind of marketing content should I be creating? It's easy to look at what you guys are doing and think how is it even possible to do something like that, but you guys, you know you started out with just the two of you, and grew a team, so what did that, what does the evolution you know of your content creation process look like?

Justin: So John and I both had a little bit of background in kind of a little bit of content creation and content marketing to begin with, and both have a very strong opinion that if you're truly serving the needs of your audience on all fronts, it's just beneficial to both parties. And one of the things we've found really important from the beginning was to make sure that we're not delivering just self-serving content. Organization is important, so sign up for Artwork Archive. Really focusing on those topics, trends, or anything that our audience might be interested in, and once again, this ends up being almost a crowdsourced-type function of our company as well. When I'm talking to an artist about a particular feature they might be interested in, I'm also asking hey, what do you struggling with lately? Or what are some of the things you'd love to hear more about? And this, this turns into one of those situations where I think Katie, who's one of our main, she is our main editor and responsible for content, does such a great job at quality control, making sure that the things we put out aren't just interesting, but also are just well-written. Have great imagery, as a matter of fact if you're advising anybody else on, make sure that at the very least you're putting quality into it, because it's riddled with typos or grammatical errors it does tend to take- it detracts from the overall experience.

So that's kind of like the 101 level, but I think to take it to the next level, it really does mean interacting with people with influencers, talking to people like yourself, so one of the articles we recently did on struggles a lot of artists face or challenges or things that hold artists back, you know we're going to experts like you and asking in your conversation with artists, what are some of those things that are holding them back? How are they talking it through? And then we'll talk to the individual artists themselves. But you know we're doing a piece coming up soon that's gonna be kind of a gallery-related guide, because a lot of people have simply asked us, hey, you guys provide a lot of professional reports that make us look like true professionals when we're presenting to these galleries. But what are the dos and don'ts of having those conversations? How do we get representation? So instead of just getting advice from artists that have had a really good success rate, getting great representation, we're talking to some of the top gallerists around the world so you hear it from both sides. And I think that idea of making sure that all parties involved in the process, making sure they're represented makes it easier for us to provide a more kind of holistic view of that answer.

Cory: Yeah, that's a great idea. And I'm thinking about- I'm thinking about like how artists could benefit from that process and thinking about like there's a lot of artist collectives out there, right? So if artists are getting together and marketing their work together, they could definitely use the similar, the same kind of process. They could either, you know, either creating the content themselves, or hiring somebody to create marketing content around their art. And thinking about who are the people who are buying their work? Who are the people who are potentially going to be collecting the work? Talking to them and creating marketing content that's relevant to those people.

Justin: I think you just hit on one of the kind of most key kind of strategies to overall content creation, is kind of know thy audience. If you are trying to create content that is appealing to all types of people, it's very challenging to do a one-size-fits-all content. I think discovering your voice and discovering- and really clearly identifying, even if it's something like doing a persona exercise to say these three people are the most likely, like this is who we're going after, you talk about collectives, you know and I have conversations with collectives and they talk about strategy. The

first thing I'm saying is, who are the people you're going after? What is the voice that they're going to respond to the best? And sometimes that takes some testing, but also, if you're using a collective, make sure that you're capitalizing on the total sum of your parts when it comes to all of your social influences. I will openly admit, there are some times that we will interview someone that I know has a big sphere of influence, because one, they help bolster our- they basically help add credence to our reputation, and I know for sure that they're going to help amplify the message. No matter how great your content is, if it's not getting out there, if it's not getting circulated, if it's not getting shared, you're helping less people. So our goal when we create something is not just to put out a really quality product that we feel will be relevant to the users, but also to make sure that we're tagging enough people along the way that that message will get out. And our audiences continue to grow exponentially as a result of it.

Cory: Nice. Yeah, I think there's a couple of art collectives that I think are doing a really good job with content creation and marketing. One of them is [Meow Wolf](#)? Do you know these guys?

Justin: I know them well, they're actually a couple blocks away from where we are in Denver. They're doing a little pop up shop there. And even them- even watching that little pop up and all of the effort that's gone in, and all of the different type of content they've created around it to create a buzz, it's been amazing.

Cory: Yeah. It's really interesting to me, I think a lot of artists when they think about marketing they sort of freeze up. And they think oh, I don't know what to- how to market myself. But if you kind of step back and think it's not so much about marketing, but how can I communicate about my art in a way that is relevant to me and my audience, something that fulfills my artistic vision and is fun. Meow Wolf is such a great example of an artist collective that does that. Cause they've got their vision and their art that they make, and then their message is really funny and intriguing, and-

Justin: And that's their voice and it resonates, you know. We've chosen to adopt kind of a more colloquial tone, you know. I like- I think that customer service thing I referred to before, we're hopping on phones with artists, we're talking to them on a regular basis back and forth. So I- I think all of us in the team prefer to have more conversational tone. Going back to the Meow Wolf thing and just with that marketing paralysis, I think a lot of the things we see, you know you and I have talked in the past about some struggles artists face, is the sheer volume of outlets. Do I need to be, like which sales portal do I need to be on? Which marketing platform makes most sense? Which social platform? And I think one of the best pieces of advice I hear experts like yourself give, is really more is not more. Less is more in a lot of cases. And really narrowing your focus to those outlets that you feel are best capable of reaching the audience you're going after. So in the case of an artist, statistically speaking, if you look at the rise in consumption of Instagram as you know from a collector's point of view, every single report you'll read in the last five years shows exponential growth of collectors using Instagram to discover artists. So it's a natural play. Facebook is another one that I think depending on the audience you're going after, there's no other platform that allows you to kind of narrow in on the audience you're going after. And there's a lot of tools out there that can help you connect Facebook and Instagram, so you only are doing single posts to save yourself. So I think it is super daunting, just with the overwhelming amount of different things you can do. And everyone I

think should just take a deep breath, focus on doing one or two things really well, and I think you'll get significant more benefit than trying the shotgun effect and seeing what sticks. Cause it can be super confusing.

Cory: Yeah. Yeah. For sure. We actually have a, incidentally, we have a blog post coming out this week, this wasn't planned. But we have a blog post coming out this week on The Abundant Artist about [how to pick the right social media platform for you](#).

Justin: That's a great topic.

Cory: And we're gonna break down Facebook, Instagram, and Pinterest and when you should use each. So it'll be really fun to put that out and stay- stay tuned to the blog for that.

Justin: Yeah, for sure. And that's something that we get asked about on a regular basis.

Cory: Cool. So you run a business that is serving artists, and I want to ask you this question and I hope it doesn't come across to those listening like,

Justin: I can't wait for this.

Cory: You know, what – the question is what is it like running a business that is to serve artists? And the reason I ask this question is because you know, our audience that's listening to this is primarily artists. So I want them to hear what it's like to run a business, for them. So that they can kind of get an idea of where they might be able to best take advantage of companies that are serving them, and I mean take advantage in a positive way. To use. And also where artists can tend to make it difficult to work with them. So take it away. What's it like to run a business serving artists?

Justin: The last part of that sounds like a bear trap. So on the former stuff, what, like, it is literally what gets all of us up in the morning. My job is basically to walk in, and work with crazy creative amazing people that are doing things that I can't even pretend to do. So you know, if there's any frustration, it's born out of having a conversation with someone you know is so amazingly talented. So we actually office out of a gallery here in Denver called Redline. And Redline has a residency program, so very often we get to have conversations with emerging artists and things like that. And I think the only frustration that I at least personally ever run into is I'm having a conversation with a person that is so unbelievably talented, that is getting in their own way with this kind of analysis paralysis. Should I do this? Should I do this? Should I do this? And it's just this sheer burden of choice and my frustration is like, if I could guide this rocket, you know, just in one direction, I mean they are gonna be so unbelievably successful. And they're probably going to be successful without my guidance or not just because of the raw talent there, but I think for all of us one consistent element of the team. Katie is an artist, John is an artist himself, I'm more on the collector side, but all of us are patrons first and foremost. All of us are art lovers before anything else. So the fact that we get to make a living working with people who are making a living doing what they love, and the thing that fuels the team is testimonials. You know, customer service can you know, there's obviously the hey I'd rather we be able to customize this font versus that, and there's stuff like that, but for the most part it's hey, you really helped me do xyz. How can I better leverage this system? So I think that drives everyone. This idea that we actually get to make a fundamental difference. I think the struggle that a lot of

companies that are serving artists go through is this, so- this is probably more on the online gallery space, is by nature you're creating a business that makes money off the backs of the artist. And how do you make sure that you're providing enough value? You know, and I think the trouble a lot of them run into is you're lost in a sea of millions of other artists. Whether this is a sea, and I'm not gonna name direct, you know, online galleries cause it's just a different space than we are, but I think it's hard for a lot of them to justify additional value add, because it's very difficult for artists to get noticed on that. Which doesn't mean they don't provide a valuable service, it's just I think a struggle for a lot of businesses that have tried to serve artists- how do we add the most value?

Cory: I want to, I just want to interrupt for a second and just clarify what you mean when you say that, because I think I know, but I don't want to assume. When you say that these online galleries are it's hard to stand out, or hard for them to add enough value, are you talking about- this is what comes to mind for me, there's an online gallery x and they say any artist who wants to can set up a page on that gallery, and it's- so then there's thousands or tens of thousands of artists on that site. And then the gallery takes whatever percentage of the sale they take, but they don't actually, you know they market the gallery, but they don't market the individual artists, so it's very difficult for the individual artist to make any sales at all and the gallery makes lots of sales that are one or two pieces from each individual-

Justin: But spread across thousands and thousands of artists. So if you look at traditional, if you take a traditional gallery, and obviously there's good galleries and bad galleries, but let's assume we're talking about good galleries. If you get gallery representation, they are hustling on your behalf as an individual artist, and basically driven to make sure that your career evolves, providing you professional advice, I mean if they're a good gallery they're doing the things that you should expect your gallery to do. I think one of the struggles with some of the online gallery models is you're simply a free sign up that they only profit from the sale of your art, and because volume as you just referred to is the thing that drives ultimate product, it's hard for them when you have fifty, sixty thousand artists on your platform, to really give any individual attention. That is not to say that they are not valuable services they're providing, they're not valuable entities providing a valuable service to artists, because think- you're getting free web exposure and an e-com portal without spending a dime and you're basically just uploading your things to them. And so I don't want to take away from that industry, but I do think it's tough because I've talked to a number of owners of those businesses, and their struggle is how do we get people to stand out without making a pay-to-play model? Which then how do you, how do you surface emerging artists that could be every bit as talented or what people are looking for because they can't pay the freight of getting top listing? So it's- that whole, the online gallery space is a really interesting thing to watch and I think it's a struggle.

But if you take businesses like ours, that you know, our main focus is to help artists get organized and stay organized. And manage their careers with confidence, so we like to make all aspects of their professional business, including some of the showcasing of their work, easier and I think most of it is just great and I don't have a lot of struggles to associate with it, because for us we've been fortunate enough to have things spread by word of mouth, and you know, we get asked how do we charge, what we charge, it is volume. Because one of the most interesting things I think and one of the things, one of the rare things we kind of pat ourselves on the back

for, is we have ninety percent retention of the people we started with seven years ago. And I think one of that is because we have a free trial, we want to make sure that when people sign up, they genuinely feel their benefiting for it, and I do think we price things as such that artists of any age and any stage can benefit. An ongoing evolution. If you see a company that's not remaining stagnant and actually listening to your feedback and putting that into the product itself, I think it makes a difference. That was a really long-winded, I'm not sure I even responded...

Cory: No, that's great. It brought up a lot, and you know you talked about figuring out how to promote the artist without making a pay-to-play model, and it's not just online galleries that have that problem. Like Freize magazine just this week published, put out an article about how of the top fifty selling artists in the world right now, a huge portion of them, like more than half, come from wealthy families or wealthy backgrounds.

Justin: I have some strong opinions on that topic, but what we say when we have artists have conversations with us about well what kind of exposure are you gonna get us or how are you gonna make me sales? We pretty much have the same feedback to all of them in that our personal belief bar is that you have a wide variety of platforms that you can, you know, get exposure from, and I think in, I'm gonna speak, I won't speak for the rest of the team. In my personal opinion, the onus is on the artist. We will give all kinds of advice on best social platforms, I mean you're familiar with our blog, we're constantly doing everything we can to promote our artists, to give advice on how to best get exposed, but ultimately it is on the shoulders of the artist to promote themselves. To have- so, I'm, I'll not turn this into a rant, but contact management. Follow, like good follow up with clients. We advise everyone how important it is to stay in touch- has someone bought a painting of a horse that you created before? If you're doing something that's about a horse, talk to them about an upcoming commission. Proper client follow up. Doing all the things you talk about on a regular basis to maximize your kind of social footprint and things like that and social exposure. There's so many things an artist can do that are outside of an individual platform that we really try to push them towards. The things we try to do to facilitate that are we have a full contact management system, so you can set a reminder if you need to follow up with Suzie, a collector of yours one month from now to make sure that she knows about a show you're doing, you can set a reminder and it will let you know about Suzie. If you have a gallery that said you know what, we're gonna be taking on new artists in 3 months, talk to us in 2.5 months and give a presentation, you can set up- so we try to facilitate things with technology to make those things you should be doing to promote yourself a lot easier. And a lot of that comes in just the form of being able to make yourself look more professional. I can tell you if you walk into a gallery and just dump a bunch of photos on the table you are going to leave a different impression than if you put a professional report with an outline of the body of your work and a CV on top of it. I mean it's just a- a different impression.

Cory: I love, like, I think both of us are pretty passionate about making sure that the artists that we're working with are being given every opportunity to put themselves forward and do the work so that they can get the results they want. And I noticed it was either last year or the year before, you guys put up a discovery platform.

Justin: Yeah.

Cory: Like you started, basically however many users you have, and I think you realized that gosh we have all these people registered on our system, why not create a public facing version of their body of work so that people can find it? And now you've promoted that discovery engine to you know a link on the homepage of your website. So you've really put a lot of emphasis on it. So tell me about how that came about and sort of what the vision for that is.

Justin: I mean you pretty much hit the nail on the head by saying we've got all these amazing artists that are storing their work on that, why not add it as an additional benefit? You know, we made a conscious effort from the beginning when we were trying to figure out, like, who we are and what we wanted to be, we wanted to be someone that helped artists make a living doing what they love with a primary focus on professional tools. So that kind of organizational professional tools aspect- discovery was something that we just couldn't resist doing, because if your work is already there, we started to rank for so many things, when we turned on that first public profile page and did discovery we started to get artists saying hey, someone just bought a painting, like someone just discovered us on Artwork Archive, and all of us just got kind of a selfish kick out of that, because it was like hey, we wanted to get you organized, but now we're helping you get discovered. So we have never ever touted it as a main benefit for Artwork Archive, we keep it kind of under the radar, we do not want to be seen as a standalone website although many artists do use us as a standalone website.

How we look at it as- we look at it as a complementary or supplementary presence for you on the web. On the public profile page, which by the way all of your information is private by default. You have to opt in to the public profile page. We advise every artist to do so, because it will help from an SEO standpoint, you can link all your social things for it, so none of it is designed to drive traffic back to us. For us it's- we want to foster genuine connections between buyers and collectors so they can't even click Buy. They actually, if they're interested in a piece, they have to click something that will get them to interact with you as the artist directly, because some galleries, not all, won't let you know who's buying your work. Not- you know. I loved this idea of creating something where if we've got- and by the way, we have a whole entire other side of the business that is collectors world renowned collectors and organizations all over the world using the product to organize and manage their collections that just so happen to be using discovery. You know, we've got interior designers that will just, let's say they're doing a hotel in Detroit, they'll do a Detroit search on the discovery platform to find local artists in Detroit. So it's been so fascinating for us to see these consumers come in, hotels, that will say you know what, I want to create art in, or I want to have art in my hotel in Denver that has Denver based artists. So starting to see them leverage discovery as a means of discovering artists, it's been, it's been really cool to see that evolution. And we're actually in an upcoming upgrade going to make some enhancements that make that kind of an even more powerful aspect. But I want to be clear so that entire you know, your audience that our goal is not to be a standalone website. I love the idea of artists flexing their creative muscle and having their own non-standard formatted cookie cutter website, you know. I like the idea of having a presence out there that is entirely your own. This is just a way to shine, you know, a bunch of extra spotlights on what you're already doing.

Cory: Nice. So any plans for my personal, my- what am I trying to say? So I have like a personal super intense interest in seeing machine learning artificial intelligence stuff being applied to art discovery. And so I'm curious to know whether you guys have any plans to implement anything like that, and if not that's totally fine, I'm just curious.

Justin: So John is the mad scientist between the two of us and is constantly coming up with ideas that will not only kind of benefit the basic features, but he's always thinking the next step ahead. So there have definitely been conversations about things we can implement into the discovery platform that would make it easier for people to get to what they want. I think when we talk about prioritization of evolutions of Artwork Archive, we've got two really cool things coming up in the next couple of months, early next year we kind of already have a schedule of things we know we want to do. I think the discovery platform factors into that in the early part, I think when you start getting into some of the more advanced things like machine learning, Google and a couple other companies are coming out with things that are making it so much easier to auto-tag things without the user having to do any manipulation or tagging manually or otherwise that we're looking into, we've got a local company here that is making some significant advancements on that front that you know, when they share information with us on how to do it we're picking up everything we can as to how we could potentially implement it, but probably a little further down the path for us. In the meantime a lot of the advancements that will come to discovery will come in the form of making it easier for artists to share things like their CV, their body of work, their presentations, their portfolios. Right now it's pretty easy, but a lot of it's internal in the system. We're going to be adding some additions that make just overall sharing reporting and professional outputs even easier than they are now. And we're pretty excited about that.

Cory: Nice. Yeah, the whole concept of using technology to help people discover art is really interesting to me and I- there's been a lot of noise in the tech world around trying to do this. Right? There's been several, tens of millions of dollars invested in companies that have- that are trying to sell art online, like there's Artsy which has like 25 million or something that they've-

Justin: Over a hundred now.

Cory: Yeah, yeah. And there's all the others that have come and gone. But it seems like the market is all concentrated on the artists whose art is represented by those top 50 blue chip galleries.

Justin: Yeah.

Cory: Rather than sort of the average artist.

Justin: Well think of it from a nonprofit standpoint. If you look at nonprofits, the nonprofits people know are the nonprofits with the most significant marketing budgets. It doesn't mean there aren't equally deserving, equally impactful organizations out there that are doing every bit as much good as the larger ones. It's hard to get attention.

Cory: Yeah. It is hard to get attention.

Justin: But the machine learning removes that whole entire thing and allows you to truly be brought to those things you'd be seeking out regardless of-

Cory: I want to see somebody be able to like, this was the promise of Artsy when Artsy started. Artsy won a Crunchy award, a TechCrunch award for their technology back in 2011. I wrote about this in my book. They created a technology that could have made them the Pandora of fine art. Right? They created a technology that has all of this really sophisticated curation and rating of each element of the piece of art, and then instead of releasing that technology and making it something that's widely applicable across the industry, they decided instead because their board of directors is just is these gallery owners, they decided that they would only use that technology for a very small number of artists. And it's- the technology exists to make it so that you and I could just upload an image and say I want a piece of art similar to this from an emerging artist that costs less than a thousand dollars. And they just decided not to do that. And I find that really- it frustrates me. Because the technology exists but nobody's gotten behind it yet.

Justin: I- okay so without talking about Artsy because we try to stay away from talking about anybody else in the space, I would say you just brought up a key factor, the thousand dollar mark. Seventy nine percent of the works bought online last year roughly seventy nine percent were sub five thousand dollars. When you're talking about a commission-driven world and sites that exist to- sites that exist to profit off that commission, that's their means of income, it is more difficult to do that when you've got that, that data saying no one's buying over this amount online. Or very few people.

Cory: Sure. It- but the thing is, like if Amazon can make a ton of money off of books that are fifteen dollars each-

Justin: No doubt, all manner of books from all level of artists.

Cory: Yeah, so there's obviously a lot of people, like I went, I was in New York a few months ago and I was a private party with several pretty successful people who all definitely have enough money to decorate their homes with lots of art. And I said you know what's- why don't you have more art on your walls? And they all said, every single one of them said I would love to have more art on my walls. Finding art I like is too hard.

Justin: Yeah.

Cory: Yeah. So anyway, it's an interesting problem and you guys may not be the ones to solve it and I don't know who will. But I think it's a really interesting problem.

Justin: It's a tempting problem to solve, but I think one of the things that I should be the lot of our kind of success and growth to is knowing who we are and staying in our lane, and really focusing on being that tool, like for you know. That professional aspect of your art career has served us well because the temptation to get into- John and I have regular conversations about how much we'd like to disrupt the online gallery space and it is- I think a lot of people have tried and not necessarily done so successfully at this point. And so I think there's a lot of room for innovation there, but we really like to kind of unapologetically be that organizational tool. And it's worked out.

Cory: You have to. Like every business has to have a core thing that they do. And if you try to do everything then you end up failing and that's just sort of the way business works.

Justin: You're gonna go on a little laptop journey with me for one second while I grab a plug.

Cory: Are you gonna die? Okay.

Justin: No we're going soon, but keep going.

Cory: Okay so I'd love to hear you know, we've talked a little bit about some of the core tools that Artwork Archive has. I would love to know what the standout use of what you guys are doing, you know, how are you, how is what you guys are doing helping artists grow their careers? What's a standout use case?

Justin: So the most, I think one of the most common bits of feedback is this concept of putting organization to chaos. And are you referring to kind of an individual use case?

Cory: Individual or organizational, I'm fine with either.

Justin: So okay, I'll go quickly through both. I think from a macro standpoint, the vast majority of our feedback comes in the form of I'm just trying to get my arms around things. I'm just trying to organize- I've either, I'm an emerging artist and want to start off on the right foot, or I'm an artist that's been doing this for thirty years and everything's in a card catalog or this or- So being able to provide something that they have access to anywhere anytime, that organization to chaos is probably one of the most common bits of feedback. The other most common bit of feedback is you make me feel like a professional. So whether it's being able to one-click create a certificate of authenticity, or being able to create an inventory report or portfolio presentation for a gallery you're trying to put your best foot forward with, that's really I think where we've made the most difference. Saving artists time, undoing the things that they have to do in the course of their professional careers. So, you know, I think the general case like organization is kind of the dominant theme. Who'd you sell to? Where's your work at any given time? All these things, but where things start to kind of go to the next level is in the timesaving and insights that come from it. So if you're a really established artist and you want to determine which gallery is performing best for you, that's really difficult to think of anecdotally. You know, when you can see things on a big screen saying oh, that's driving the majority of my sales, or this type of work is selling better than another type of work. I think it helps artists get to where they need to be faster, or get them to where they want to go faster. And there's the "we do the thinking so you don't have to" aspect to this, that has come from the reminder system, the show scheduling and all that stuff. Because the funnest stuff for us is all the, all the kind of adventures in being an artist and all the things you can forget and all the things you have to manage, cause you have to be an entrepreneur. A marketing expert, a salesman, you know. And your own accountant. And it's so daunting and the struggle, you know. I think it's I almost swore. I think it's BS.

Cory: You can swear, that's okay.

Justin: Yeah I think it's an unfair stereotype, so two stereotypes we hate. All artists are disorganized by nature. I think that's BS. I think artists have a really difficult time, because one, you're putting something out there that, like, you're birthing something into the world that's very personal, and that's a difficult emotional thing. And you've got all these other business aspects that you've got to manage to make a living doing what you love. And I think that's really daunting for

anybody. So I don't think by nature, yes, creatives, you can say tend to be you know more one side of the brain versus the other, but that's one of the stereotypes we really like to help buck.

The other thing is the starving artist stereotype. You know, it's so fascinating to me when we do any articles that are on the topic of profit or doing this, you know. People, it's so interesting to watch the comments just rain down of if you're doing it for money then you're doing it for the wrong reasons or things like that. But I'm thinking to myself, you know we want to empower people to be able to continue to create and have these successful careers, and there's nothing wrong between the marriage of business and creativity cause the two can coexist. They're not mutually exclusive. So anything we can do to help that. You know, standout individual cases I would say we've had some really interesting people come to us and saying they've either been discovered or their career was launched because of it, or people at the tail end of their careers saying you know what, I never believed, like I'm getting to the later stages of my career where I'm not creating anymore and I want to leave a legacy for my family. So that's been the most interesting thing. Watching some of our audience age or some of our user base age and starting to leverage the tool as passing this along to their estate, continuing the legacy. I mean Artwork Archive is meant to be a living body of your work that will endure. So that's been fun. You gotta really cut me off on these long winded answers.

Cory: No, I didn't want to cut you off, this is great. I really appreciate that Justin, I think there is probably a pretty good place to wrap up. I really appreciate you sharing all of your insights and all the good stuff that you- that Artwork Archive is doing. And I hope that those who are listening found it insightful to hear what it's like to run a business that is serving the art industry and serving the artists themselves. If people wanted to learn more about Artwork Archive and figure out whether or not it's a good service for them where should they go?

Justin: You know, you can, this just occurred to me actually. I was gonna say you can go to artworkarchive.com, there's, the blog is artworkarchive.com/blog, but one thing we do just because Cory had given us some really great advice in the beginning, is anybody that's part of kind of Cory's network and audience has a landing page, and do you put show notes or anything like that, cause we I think it's artworkarchive.com and is it TAA or forward slash TAA?

Cory: I think so.

Justin: And that actually gives your audience a discount. It's not something we publicly put out on the internet, but there it is.

Cory: Alright. Cool. Well thank you so much Justin, I appreciate it. And we'll be in touch.

Justin: Thanks for the time, see ya.