

How to Sell Art Online Working Session

CORY: I'm glad you're here! Many of you I recognize, because many of you are working within The Abundant Artist coaching groups or our classes, many of you are new to the community. So I'm excited to have you all here. I see people from everywhere, from the West, all over the United States to Germany, France, Australia. Excited to have you all here! And excited to just kind of work through these very interesting times together.

So my name's Cory, for those of you who don't know anything about The Abundant Artist. I founded TheAbundantArtist.com 11 years ago as a way of helping my fellow artists learn how to sell their art on the internet. We've had thousands and thousands of artists come through our programs, and every once in a while we do an open working session or an open webinar like we're doing here today. So this came together very quickly. Obviously with the COVID-19 virus making its way around the world, the situation is extremely dynamic. We get new updates from leadership and governments every single day. On Monday of this week in our private Facebook group for our members, I did a quick Facebook live where I talked about some strategies to deal with things as we all get locked down. Thank goodness for the internet. And it was suggested that maybe we do another session on teaching online art courses, both teaching them, how to put them together, and how to sell them.

So that's what we're going to do today. We'll have a little working session. This will be a fairly informal event. I will share some of my knowledge, some of the things that I know about how online courses work, and I would love to have some of you come on live with me during this next hour or two. We'll try to answer all of your questions, as many of them as we can get to. I've got some time this afternoon, so I want to try to answer as many questions as possible. I want to bring the artistic community together. I know this is a time of great flux. So I've made some notes here and we'll kind of go through the list. But as I'm talking, if you have questions feel free to post those in the Ask a Question section, or post them in the chat. There's a lot you on there, so I'll try to pay attention to the chat. But if you really want your question to be seen, be sure to put it in the Ask a Question section, because as there are so many of you, I may not be able to see every comment that comes through.

Okay. First things first, what we're going to talk about here is the front end strategy for running any business: selling courses, putting together the infrastructure for the courses, all that kind of stuff. If you have an existing business and you're worried about your sales going away, there are some financial strategies that you may want to take a look at. The government has made, well State and Federal governments in the US and in other countries have made loans available to small businesses. My good friend Tara Newman, who is an executive leadership coach and the CFO of her company, has put together a Facebook Live where they're going to talk about all of the financial options that are out there. I will share that with all of you in an email after, in the follow up email after this session is over, because I'm going to go watch it myself so that I know what my options are. And I'd recommend for those of you who are selling regularly, there's going to be some great options in there for you, I'd imagine.

A few caveats about what we're going to talk about today. We don't really know what's going to happen. The situation is very dynamic. And even just speaking from the United States perspective, different parts of the country are in different phases of quarantine and lockdown.

Some cities are under complete lockdown, where they're not even allowed to leave their homes for anything more than a trip to the grocery store, where other places don't really have any restrictions at all. I'm going to try to address the situation in general, but you may need to adapt specifically to your city or your state or country. The other thing I'll say is be really careful about what information you consume right now. Obviously there is tons and tons of information on social media, and the situation is changing so quickly and so rapidly that anybody who says they know how this is going to turn out and they know what's going to happen probably is trying to sell you something.

Just be really careful and discerning about who you pay attention to, and what information you consume over the next little while. And I want to be clear, the quarantine and the situation where a lot of us are out of work or maybe our business is dipped, could last for months. China just now has seen a drop off. They had no new cases today, which is the first time that's happened since late October, early November. This could go on for several months, so just keep that in mind.

Many artists have day jobs in the service sector or in other businesses that don't allow you to work from home, so you may have lost your jobs and I'm totally sensitive to all of that. Some of the things that I'm going to share today will require some investment. I want to show you how you can do a really cheap version of your classes, and something with a little better equipment, and what some of the high end big investments look like. We're not going to get too much into the high end big investments today, just because most of us aren't ready to go there yet, or don't need to go there yet.

The nice thing, the silver lining in all of this, is there's a lot of people at home who might be bored, a lot of people who don't have a lot to do, who are going to be looking for ways to entertain themselves. Looking for ways to find peace, looking for ways to spark joy within their families, so there's a lot of opportunity for those of us who teach online courses to get some content and some course materials into the hands of people all over the world.

How many of you already teach offline courses? How many of you teach like at a local school or teach out of your studio or at a local studio? How many of you are already teaching? You can leave that as a comment in the chat. Jessica, I know you teach, yep. Jennifer says "I teach online and offline." Yep. Lots of people teaching. Lots of people... great. A lot of you are already familiar with teaching, great. Chelsea has a ton of YouTube content, absolutely.

The interesting thing is, by teaching online courses not only can we reach the students that we were already teaching, but that content can also reach people all over the place. Yesterday I was working with one of my one-on-one coaching clients, Michelle, and she was concerned because she normally teaches once a week. She teaches a studio class at a local studio with five to ten students, and she was concerned that she wouldn't be able to get all those people to come online. And I said "Well Michelle, you're not only reaching those students that come locally, but you're also reaching students all over the country, maybe all over the world." And she smiled and she said "Yeah, that's actually true." She's a relatively well known artist with a collection all over the country, so she has an opportunity to teach in a lot of different places.

I see a lot of you saying that you had to cancel your studio classes. That's really sucks. Having to go on lockdown so you can't have any students in your studio, that's really tough too. I hear that, and I feel your frustration and worry.

Before we get into the how, let's just talk a little bit about my background in teaching online courses. For those of you who are new to The Abundant Artist and don't know me, I've been teaching online courses like this, teaching business courses for twelve years. And in that time, in addition to selling my courses, I've also been a consultant behind the scenes in any number of online course businesses, and I've worked with companies that are doing millions and millions of dollars in sales of online courses. So right now that entire industry is in complete flux because there's so many people who have flooded into online courses. There's a lot of noise, a lot of things happening right now, and a lot of people who previously said "Oh, online courses are not for me," who are now open to at least trying it.

All of that said, how do we address this? How do we do this? We'll talk a little bit about how to get started. For those of you who are already teaching, and you want to just bring your courses online, I would recommend that your first course that you bring online is not your biggest, most expensive course.

If you normally have a course that is a week-long retreat, and you have twenty people in there and they're going to be in there 8-10 hours a day learning with you and painting with you, I would not recommend that you do that as your first online course. It's great to try out a couple of hours, one day, just to make sure that the technology works, that you're comfortable with what you're doing, and that you are able to give each student in your class the attention and time that they need in order to do it.

When you teach online, things take a little bit longer. There's lag with internet, your speed may be different than their speed. You're going to have to work with technical issues with people's internet coming in and out, and people dealing with microphone problems or camera problems that happened right at the top of this call today. Keep in mind that the first couple courses you do, everything is going to take just a little bit longer than it normally would.

A couple of options when it comes to online art classes. There's teaching a real time online art course like what I'm doing right now, where I'm talking to you in real time and you're able to ask me questions. I'll bring some of you onscreen here in a little bit to talk. And then your students can actually show you what they are working on on their canvas or on their wall. They can put their phone cameras or whatever on that so that you can see what they're working on. That is a completely different experience than a pre-recorded course, something that you film yourself doing and talking to the camera and showing them in detail every little step that you do in high definition, and then you sell lots of copies of that class for cheap.

They're two completely different experiences, they're both valid, and they both can work really well. But you have to think about what is going to work best for you. If you struggle with technical things and you have never done an online art course before, I would recommend that you start with a one or two hour class with a small group of people that you invite by hand, and you do it live via CrowdCast or Zoom or some other platform. Just try out teaching over the web for an hour or two so you can get a feel for how it works.

If you're technically savvy and you feel really good about doing a lot of video and audio editing and you have resources to help you make that happen, then great, do that. But if you have that trepidation, then start small and that's okay.

Chelsea, this is such a great question. Chelsea says "A lot of artists in my niche sell tutorials on a single painting start to finish, and they usually end up at 1-3 hours long. What happens if we need way more time than that to finish a single painting?" A couple things that you can do there, Chelsea. Your tutorial can be a smaller, simplified version of your painting, and this is something I recommend for all artists whose work is advanced or work is, if you paint very large, scale it down, make something small. Do an 8 x10 or even a 4x4, especially if you're teaching beginners. Especially if you're doing one of those start to finish courses where you do the whole painting in 1-3 hours. Make something smaller and simpler, and if you need to spend a day in your studio figuring out how you would make something smaller and simpler, do that. If you're teaching advanced students who are capable of painting what you can paint or getting close to capable of what you can paint. Don't do a beginning 1-3 hour long video that shows the whole process. Do some small group tutoring, some small group classes, where you have something like this with 5 people. That's what I would recommend for you Chelsea. If you're going to do one of your big pieces that has a lot of layers and complexity, offer it as a multi-day thing, or find something very simple that you can do.

This is something that has come up in a number of conversations that I've had. Allow for social time. This is time when we're all quarantined, a lot of us, especially the extroverts like myself are going to be craving the opportunity to connect with new people, to talk a little bit about how crazy everything is, and then gradually sink into getting started on the course material. I would highly recommend that you consider a way to build in some conversation time around your courses. We'll talk about how to do that here in a little bit.

Catherine, yes. There will be a recording here at this same link. To that end, it's easy, if you're in a small group, if you've got 10 or fewer people on a CrowdCast or a Zoom call, it's easy enough to just invite everybody on, tell everybody to mute themselves and monitor their own audio, and just let people talk. Have people introduce themselves, have people talk a little bit about their skill level and background, what interested them in the class. If you are planning on having a large group of people who are taking your class, you might consider starting a Facebook group or something on Mighty Networks, or something where people can interact and connect with each other and share the progress on their paintings or on their art as you're working through the materials. But keep in mind that running a Facebook group or a support group of some kind is additional work beyond teaching. So keep in mind that that will create a lot of extra work. It's not necessary. Especially if it's just a small group, you don't need to offer some sort of group. Down the road a bit, if you want to continue selling to those people and you want them to have an opportunity to talk and share with each other and you're not feeling overwhelmed and you feel like you've got the capacity and bandwidth then you can add a support group, but it's not necessary right away.

Chelsea, let's get to the pricing thing a little bit later. Yeah, I want to talk about pricing for sure.

Maureen says "I'd like to be able to have some real time art class with a small group on a platform that allows students to share their screens." Yeah, there's a way to do that.

Holly says “If I teach a class online, how long should the class overall be, and is there time to critique each student?” So Holly, all of this is doable, all the questions that you all are asking, all totally doable. I want to talk a little bit about some tools and things that you’re going to need to have in place in order to teach an online class. First things first, you need some sort of a computer. I would highly recommend that you do it from a computer rather than from a mobile device, because you’ll be able to plug it in, it’s easier to be steady. If you are going to teach from a mobile device, I highly recommend that you get a mobile tripod, a smartphone tripod. You can do it that way. It’s going to be harder, but the tripods are great.

A couple of course platforms. If you want to sell a pre-recorded course, there’s a couple of things you can do. The most time-intensive, if you have a technical background and you want to create all the bells and whistles and give people every option that you could give them, then something like WooCommerce with the Sensei plugin on a WordPress site would be the direction to go. I would only recommend that if you are a developer, or you’re married to a developer who has the time to help you build it, because it’s going to be pretty complicated.

The other option is you use a platform like teachable.com or doki.io, Doki’s run by a good friend of mine. Either of those platforms, and there’s lots of them out there, allow you to click a button and it fills out a big course. You tell it how many lessons there’s going to be, and it pre-creates all the pages for you and you just upload your videos and other content to that course. Teachable or Doki is the name of those platforms.

Deb says [LearnDash](#) is a great plugin, fairly easy to use if you get WordPress. Yes, but that’s only if you’re already familiar with WordPress. Don’t go learning WordPress just to do this. Kajabi is fine, whatever platform you’re familiar with, whatever platform you’re comfortable with, but any of those are going to do what you need. Kajabi might be overkill for something like this. LearnPress plugin, that’s fine too if you’re familiar with WordPress.

Jennifer says “I prefer LearnDash,” yeah, LearnDash is great. [Ruzuku](#) is also fine. Any of those platforms will do a basic course.

A couple other things. From a student’s perspective, or if you’re doing a live course, you’re going to want to have a HD webcam. Most laptops have a camera built into them that are relatively low quality. You want to get something that’s a little higher quality. In the follow up to this session, I’ll share links to my favorite tools, like the tripod for a smartphone and the HD webcam. The one I use is by Logitech, but there’s lots of options out there.

Now a lot of people say “If I wanted to do a real time video, what should I use? Should I use Zoom or CrowdCast?” It doesn’t matter, either is fine. Zoom is probably a little bit easier to use. From an administrative standpoint it’s easier to set up. Glenda says am I talking about doing the lives or videos from the Facebook page? We haven’t talked about that. That’s also another option, you can teach while broadcasting live on Facebook. There’s lots and lots of options.

If you’re doing a prerecorded course, the most important thing is that you have a high-quality camera. If you have an iPhone 10 or 11, the camera is good enough quality that you could definitely record a class just using your smartphone. You just want to get a smartphone tripod, and if you’re doing something a little larger that’s up on the wall you’ll want to get a full stand

tripod and connect the smartphone holder to that tripod. The other thing that you'll need to do if you're going to pre-record a course is you're going to need some good lighting. Right now I've got good natural lighting coming in. The midafternoon tends to do pretty well for me, but you can see I've got some shadow over here, so it's going to change the color and the shading of anything that's over on this side. You want to make sure that you've got some good lighting. I'll send some links to lights as well when I send the follow up email. Make sure that you've got good lighting.

Catherine says "Would an iPad Pro work?" Probably not. The iPad Pro cameras are generally not as high quality as the iPhones. If you have a brand new iPad Pro, it might work, one that came out in 2019 or newer. But I don't remember the specs on the camera for an iPad Pro. But either way, the more important thing is that you have good lighting, because good lighting will make up for a mediocre quality camera.

The other thing I was going to say is if you're a digital artist, if you're doing anything on your computer, if you're showing people how to do Photoshop or doing any sort of digital stuff on your computer, you'll want to use some sort of screen recording software. The one that I use is called [ScreenFlow](#), which I find really, really easy to use. ScreenFlow lets you literally record anything that's happening on your computer, and then you can chop it up into pieces. You can add text to it so there are subtitles. You can chop up the audio and rearrange it however you want. It's an awesome program. I think it's \$97.

Richard Camela says Apple launched an iPad Pro with the same camera as the 11. I think it's 2019 when they put out that newer iPad, so the newer iPad might work.

A couple of things, and then we'll start bringing some people on to talk in real time through some of this stuff. Stay in contact with your people. Everybody is in the same situation. Everybody's on lockdown. The thing you don't want to do as a teacher is disappear. You don't want to hide from your students and pretend that nothing is happening. Reach out to your students and say "Hey, sorry that my studio stuff is canceled, but we all want to respect public health. I am planning on doing some online art courses. If you would like to participate, here is the date and here's how you can participate. And if it's something as simple as email me and let me know you want to participate, that's a good start. The worst thing you can do is disappear and hide and do nothing. So your people who love you and support you and the people who show up and buy your work and take your classes over and over again are going to be anxious to support you assuming they're still in a good financial situation.

I didn't mention this earlier and I meant to. A lot of us who are artists, we supplement our income with service jobs like working at restaurants or working at retail stores or whatever, and if those jobs are closed it can seem like everybody that we know is out of work and doesn't have any money. But keep in mind that there's a whole world of people out there, mostly professional office workers, who are now working from home. They're making their same salary, they're still making great money, and they're going to be locked down and bored. They can't go to the opera, they can't go to the symphony, they're going to be looking for stuff to do and those are the people that are going to have money to spend on your classes.

I want to start inviting some people on to talk with you about your teaching experience and getting people to come take your classes.

I'm going to invite Chelsea on. I'm just going to wait for her video to boot up. Nobody's said boot up in a decade.

Hi Chelsea.

C: Hi, I don't have headphone because I'm literally cooking myself lunch, is there feedback? Is it ok?

CORY: You're fine. Cool, cool. What are you making for lunch?

C: I'm making a breakfast sandwich. I baked some bread yesterday, and I'm doing like a ham egg cheese breakfast sandwich with my fresh bread.

CORY: That sounds fantastic.

C: Thanks, you inspire me with all your baking posts.

CORY: I'm going to make dark chocolate brownies with tahini and dried cranberries.

C: Okay mine's not that exciting, but that sounds amazing.

CORY: It is going to be amazing. Okay Chelsea, you said "I see tons of artists at all levels selling at tons of different price points, from master painters selling 6-hour tutorials for \$20 to painters selling a 2-hour tutorial for \$150. My art hero is someone selling 2-hour tutorials for \$20, how do I compete with that?" Pricing is 90% psychological and 10% strategic. It's just a mess, and it's really hard to figure out. Generally speaking, a really well known artist, because of their name and their brand, they can sell tons of classes. So what they're trying to do is sell a pre-recorded class at a low price point so that they can sell tons of them, and they make money by doing volume.

If you have the ability to pre-record a class and sell it, do a one-hour class for \$20 or a two-hour class for \$20, whatever it is, then the challenge for you is marketing. I'm not convinced that that is necessarily better than getting 5-10 people in a 2-hour session one-on-one, where you can actually work with them directly.

C: Yeah, and my one-on-one rate is a 2-hour for \$200. That was my in-person rate before this. And yeah, it's tough because with my art hero being one of the people that's selling these \$20 pre-recorded things, I talk about him all the time. So I figure these students are just going to put it together and go buy one of his downloads.

CORY: People who want to take a class from you won't necessarily want to take a class from this other person. They may want to take a class because they like you. And that will be true for all the other teachers out there. People want to take classes from teachers that they know and love, especially those who have a big local following. They're not going to just find some other teacher online if you're offering classes, they're going to take it from you.

C: Good point.

CORY: So hit up your audience, and say “Hey, I’m doing a class!” The way that you would prefer to do it is probably the best way to do the class. Especially the first couple of times that you do an online class.

C: Yeah, it sounds like it’d be really cool to do a split between pre-record something so I can have something totally passive that sits there for not just right now but forever, but also offer a weekly private YouTube Live where people can share paintings to get critiqued. We can go in-depth on question and answer, and that way there’s the split between having the evergreen asset and also having that personalized touch that could justify a higher price point.

CORY: Totally, yep.

C: Is there necessarily a rule of thumb I might want to consider when pricing in terms of, it’s not totally a private lesson, but I’m also not reaching hundreds of thousands of people because I have some massive YouTube channel, or I won a huge competition so every working artist knows my name?

CORY: Sure. Pre-recorded classes are going to range from \$20 to a couple hundred dollars. A short 1 or 2 hour class, or anything up to 5 hours is probably going to be less than \$100. But then you look at people like Flora Bowley. Her class [Bloom True](#), which is her intuitive painting class, is something like a 4-week class, and it’s \$300. It’s \$300. And it’s all pre-recorded, like you said. I think Flora’s class has one live session each week on a video chat like this, where students can check in and share their experiences. And then she has a Facebook group. So those \$300 courses tend to be a little longer, with a little bit more support.

C: Yeah, it seems like \$300 is, regardless of what industry I see, that’s a bread and butter online course price. I see \$300 everywhere. It seems like people have a thousand or multi-thousand dollar offering, they might have some inexpensive offerings, but the bulk of their income and the bulk of the interest is in a \$300 course.

CORY: Yep. Let’s not get overwhelmed with the options here, because there are a lot of options. Generally speaking, your bread and butter course for most artists is that \$300-\$500 price point, and it’s a couple weeks long. It’s going to teach you how to do one whole painting that might be relatively complex. And then your entry level course, your \$20 course takes an hour or two. It’s very small, it might just be a trading card size piece that you can teach somebody how to do in an hour. And then you once you have those two things, you have the beginning of what’s called an ascension model, where you can spend money on ads to get somebody into your class for \$20. Then as long as you’re spending less than \$20 to get them into the class, then you’re neutral on your revenue, and you can then sell those people into your more expensive class. And then you can sell them the annual retreat for \$5,000. But that’s way beyond where we’re at right now, with a lot of artists just getting started.

Just getting started selling your first online class, I’d recommend doing a small group class, just so you can feel comfortable with the technology.

C: Awesome, thank you Cory.

CORY: Yeah, absolutely. Did you have any other questions?

C: Let me actually look at my thing here. I had a kind of dry technical question about if I do want to sell standalone pre-recorded videos. My site's on SquareSpace. I assume Gumroad or Vimeo would be good options for that cause they're hosted in the cloud, and I could probably tie in easily with my website. Is that kind of your take too?

CORY: Yeah, so do you have any sort of online payment option right now? What are you using?

C: I'm using SquareSpace's engine for that.

CORY: You don't need Gumroad. You can just set up a payment for your online course on Squarespace, and then you can host the simple download on Vimeo, or you can just put the file on Dropbox. After somebody signs up and pays for the product, you should set up an email that automatically emails them and says "Here's a link to download the thing you paid for."

C: Awesome, thank you. I could probably geek out with you for an hour, so I'll save that for our mastermind call with Sarah that's coming up.

CORY: Sounds good, thanks Chelsea.

Alright. Lots and lots of good questions here. I'm going to invite Maureen on. Maureen, if you want to chat in real time. Maureen says "I would like to be able to have a real-time art class with a small group on a platform that allows students to share their screens and for me to see my students. The course is real time, but I can't see the participants. Is there a way to do that? Yes, there is Maureen. Probably the easiest thing to do there is just to set it up on Zoom. Zoom is really cheap. You can have up to 100 people on a call for 40 minutes or less. If you have a school email, if you're already an accredited educator, you can get it for free, and then you can have 100 people for an unlimited amount of time. So it's really easy to do what you're talking about with Zoom.

Alright, hope that answers that question.

Let's see, Holly says "If I teach a current class online, how long overall should each class be, and is there time to critique each student ten or less?" Yeah, Holly, this all depends on how you design the class. I'll invite you on to talk about that if you want, Holly.

And Sarah, you wrote "Divi?" I don't know what that means. Melissa says "I haven't taught a course ever, but I want to. Would it be a wise marketing move to do a free Instagram live course or teaser to show followers?" Yeah. Doing 15-20 minutes of teaching on Instagram live is a great way of giving people a little feedback on what you're doing.

Doing it on Instagram Live or Facebook Live, TikTok, whatever you want to do, giving people a little preview. Pre-record something at home in your studio, and put that on your website. All of those are great options.

Holly says "Do we charge the same for online class as in-person for our existing students?" I would say yes. You can charge a little bit less for an online class, just because people will sometimes feel like they're not getting the same thing. Especially if you're doing in-person teaching, real-time teaching, you might charge a little bit less online because you're not there and you can't pick up their hand and move it or whatever you do as a teacher.

But the price difference doesn't have to be huge. Alright, Amanda says "Most of my students in my groups are pensioners enjoying retirement time. Their pensions are taking a huge hit." That sucks. "Would you think it's a good idea to offer a reduced rate?" Amanda, I'll invite you on to talk about this. "If I translate my real time classes to online classes?" It says Amanda's connecting. I'll let her connect. Hopefully the internet connects from over there in France.

So the short answer to your question, Amanda, is that yeah, if you put a price out and people are telling you that it's too expensive or that their pensions are taking a hit because they're pensioners or whatever, yeah, you can offer a discount. I mentioned at the top of today's call that there's a lot of flux. There's a lot of change, a lot of dynamics in the market. Listen to your people and respond to them. Let them know "Hey, I'm going to be doing this course. I'm thinking this price point, let me know if you're interested." And if people don't respond or they tell you that's too expensive, listen to them and get them on board. Respect yourself, respect what you're worth, but also listen to your people and allow them to tell you what's actually happening.

Jill says "The quality of the video here could be better." Yeah, that's one of the challenges of doing an online course. So how can that be improved? A couple of things that you can do to improve the video quality and the audio quality of an online course when you're doing it in real time. The best quality is always going to be pre-recording it and then uploading it to the internet. But if you are doing a real-time course, the best thing you can do is plug your computer in to your internet port or your ethernet port so that the cable goes directly from your wall to your device. That's always going to be the best internet connection, it's going to give you the best quality video. Even then it's not going to be guaranteed, so you want to make sure that you get the best quality you can. But you can't guarantee it when you're doing it in real time.

Betty says "I'm offering a Paint with Betty live session at half price." Betty, I'd love to have you come on and talk about that a little bit if you're interested.

Yeah, Jennifer, that is absolutely correct. Some people will have great internet connections and some won't. If you are doing a real time course, make sure that you stipulate that in the sign up language, in the sign up page, that people do need to have a high-speed internet connection and that they do need to have access to an HD webcam.

Hey Betty!

BETTY: Hi Cory, how are you?

CORY: I'm well, how are you?

BETTY: I'm doing great. The sun is finally shining again in California, so I'm really happy about that!

CORY: And you've sequestered yourself where in California?

BETTY: I'm in San Jose, so I'm in the bay area. We are in shelter-in-place restrictions, so I am not going out other than going for a walk, which I did this morning. For me, honestly, it's not that much different than other days. I'm really kind of an introvert so I like to spend my time in front of my computer doing work, and in front of my artwork doing art.

CORY: Yeah. I'm the same. I've been working from home for seven years, so the shelter in place order hasn't come down in Portland, but I'm sure it's not far away. And we've got our three-month food supply and we'll see what happens. But until then. So Betty, you've been selling your art and you've been teaching for a while, right?

BETTY: You know, I started teaching last year. I had a really good year last year. This year, I thought I would take the show on the road and honestly, this wasn't a good year to do that. So I had to postpone. I postponed my Albuquerque, New Mexico workshop that's supposed to be happening next weekend, and what I've decided to do instead is a Paint with Betty live session where I invite as many folks as want to join me for 2 hours, and I kind of do a mini workshop in those two hours, and I actually create a piece on paper from start to end so they can watch my entire process. I did one back in January and it was hugely successful, and I thought "Well, I can't hit the road, so I might as well get back on the internet."

CORY: Excellent. Break down for me, what platform did you do that on?

BETTY: I used Zoom, which was great. However, what I did learn, and you just talked about this, is to get the cable plugged in directly to my computer. I'm actually having my brother help me with that next week, where we need to bring it from one section of the house all the way over into the garage where my home studio is.

CORY: A hundred-foot ethernet cable?

BETTY: Yeah, so we're going to do that. A CAT5 cable, we're going to get that put in place. And then I'm hoping to get better connectivity than I did last time. But you know, people were really happy with the session even though I was kind of cringing. I wasn't extremely happy with the quality, but nobody complained about it. So this time the quality will be better, and I am recording it. And one thing that I learned from my local computer shop guys is to put my own camera on while I'm doing the live session, because Zoom does allow you to save the recording, but they do it in the lowest resolution possible. You can imagine a 2 hour session, and running on a really low resolution. I'm going to record it with my own camera. I'll have that mounted up above, actually I just ordered a second tripod with that really long pole so that it can be right above my workspace. I'm excited about getting that done with my camera, which is a much higher quality, and then I'll upload that to... I think to YouTube, and just have a private link for folks who purchase the program to be able to re-watch that. So that's kind of my plan right now.

CORY: Fantastic. Well I so appreciate you sharing your wisdom with us. And is there anything that you need help with right now?

BETTY: You know, I was tuning in because I just wanted to listen in on what people were doing in terms of equipment and how to present it and how to get folks to join, to participate and to be able to teach folks remotely now. I always like to listen in and get some tips and ideas and see what I can apply to my own business.

CORY: Okay, great. I think there's a few other people on here that are doing some online classes too, and we'll try to get them on to share what they're doing. But we've got lots more questions, so let's try to bang 'em out. Thank you so much.

BETTY: Thanks for letting me be here and thank you for doing this, I appreciate it!

CORY: You bet. Jill says "How did you just do the split screen?" That's built into CrowdCast. It's built into any of the video chat services whether it's CrowdCast, Zoom, or something else. You just invite people on and that'll happen in real time.

Doreen says "I do a lot of different things as an artist, from digital illustration to hand drawn art. I'm overwhelmed on what to teach because there's so many classes out there already. Any advice on how to pick what to teach?" This is such a great question Doreen. I'm going to invite you on to talk about it. You should get a little button that says "Do you want to go on live?" If you want to come on live and talk about it Doreen, I'd love to have you because this is a great question that I think a lot of artists are going to have.

Doreen, we'll come back to you. But the short answer, it's not going to be a short answer. As far as deciding what to teach, I would say if you've never taught before or if you've never taught your stuff before, pick the thing that you're doing that is the easiest to do. Pick the thing that is easiest to do. And you may have some curse of expertise as an artist where you think something is easy but it's not. You may not know how to teach, but that's okay. We're all learning together, we're all figuring it out. Basically, you take the simple thing, the thing that you think is going to be the easiest to teach, and you start with that, and just experiment. Experiment with what works, experiment to find out what works. Offer a digital painting course, and see if people respond. Jennifer says "Experiment with the length of the videos within your course?" Yes, absolutely. Have a couple of 2-minute videos that show one specific thing. Have some 5-minute videos, have some 10-minute videos, see how people respond to different lengths of videos. It's best if you can take each step of the painting and divide it up into the smallest steps possible so that people can go back to a section that they're having problems with over and over again.

Sarah says "I've taught a few evening classes in person. I'm looking to start teaching online, but there are so many host sites for classes I don't know where to start. What things should I consider when choosing a site for my class?"

Sarah, I'll invite you on. I'm not sure why the audio...

Hey Sarah. Can you hear me okay?

SARAH: Yeah.

CORY: Okay, great. Sarah where are you sequestered at?

SARAH: Schenectady, New York.

CORY: Where is that? The first Huff that came to the United States lived in Fishkill, and he lived to be 128 years old according to the record. I don't think it's accurate. Cool. So as far as which platform you should use, I'm assuming that you're talking about wanting to do a pre-recorded class that you upload and let other people watch?

SARAH: I think so, but I think one of my friends that teaches art, she was just telling me she's been invited to be teaching on this new teaching platform that does live classes, and so there's just so many options right now.

CORY: There's two options. The best thing you can do is look at 3 or 4 and pick one, because otherwise you'll just go forever. Personally, I think Teachable is a great platform. It's built for stuff like this. But there's lots of them out there, and none of them are necessarily bad, it's just which one works for your particular style. All of them are going to allow you to do things like upload a video, upload some images, upload some PDFs. All of them are going to allow you to do things like take payments and restrict access. They all perform those basic functions.

SARAH: It's just making a choice and going with it, I guess.

CORY: Yeah. If you want to combine some real-time feedback like what we're doing now, you can use Zoom. Zoom is the easiest thing.

SARAH: Okay. So that's something I was thinking about. I'd really like to do something where I have a prerecorded part where I say "Everyone go watch this and do the homework, and then after you've watched it I have some live time where I give feedback and make sure everyone understood it," and do a hybrid. Cause that's why I've been in person classes up to this point. I teach a basic level drawing, and to be able to point out drawing problems that people are having or even say "Okay, I see what this person did right," or be able to show everyone what everyone else in the class is doing. You lose that trying to choose either or, I feel like you lose a lot.

CORY: Yeah. The thing you do really need that we haven't talked about yet is some sort of email marketing system, whether it's [Mailchimp](#) or [ConvertKit.com](#). ConvertKit offers a free 30 day trial now, for those of you who want to try ConvertKit, which is the email platform that I use that we recommend. Mailchimp is free if you have less than 2,000 users, I think.

Just having something where you can email everybody in the class, and if it's only 5 or 10 people you can just email them from your Gmail account. Just being able to email them and say "Hey, the next section of the course is up," and then email them and say "Hey, the live session is Friday at 5:00, and here's the link."

Keep it as simple and easy as possible, and the easiest way to do that is to just have it be as low-tech as possible. Just an email from your Gmail account is fine, a Zoom call is fine. Where people get bogged down is they start looking at all the bells and whistles on all the different platforms and saying "Oh, I can automate this and I can automate that," if you've never taught a class you have no idea what you need to automate. So just keep it as simple as possible.

Jennifer says "[ActiveCampaign](#) is better than ConvertKit." Fight me, Jennifer. No, I'm just kidding. ActiveCampaign has more features than ConvertKit, absolutely. It's a more mature product, it does more stuff. However, it is also more complicated. ActiveCampaign is overwhelming for someone who just needs simple email marketing features. Keep that in mind when you're signing up for things. Active campaign is awesome though, and lots of people use it and love it.

Okay, any other questions Sarah?

SARAH: Not right now, now.

CORY: Okay, good luck!

SARAH: Thanks.

CORY: Let's see. Doreen says "Is it worth having a YouTube channel and teaching through that?" Doreen, Youtube is a broadcast platform where you can show people what you're doing. People can comment, but you can't really teach through YouTube. You can't see and hear what people are doing and give them feedback and stuff. However, that said, Chelsea has a YouTube channel that's growing quickly, and she seems to get a lot of value out of that. And she can speak in the comments to why she likes teaching on YouTube.

Let's see, Carly, "Any suggestions on finding students for a beginner?" Just start by emailing your friends and family and say "Hey, I want to teach this course. And if you know anybody that's bored, then here's when it's going to happen, here's what I'm going to charge." Just starting with your friends and family or your existing collectors is a good place to start.

Jillian says "How to put a promo on YouTube in order to attract people?" You record the promo and you upload it to YouTube. I'm not sure how to elaborate more than that, Jillian. You record the promo and you put it on YouTube, and then you share that promo with the people that you want to see it. I will say, everybody and their dog is putting a new class on the internet. Simply putting something on YouTube or simply putting something on Instagram or whatever is not going to attract any new people to you. There's too much noise, there's too many people competing for attention and creating content. The best thing that's going to happen is for you to reach out directly to the people that you want to take your classes. Email your friends and family. Email your collectors. Let them know "I'm doing this class at this time." If you know anybody that would be interested, let them know. That's the best thing you can do.

Janet says "Social media promotion is a good way to find students easily as well." Sure.

Jill says "What would students need to do to connect and share their work in progress on Zoom?" Jill, yesterday I emailed you and said "Hey, we're doing this session, here's a link to the session." You do the same thing with Zoom. You get the link to the session, you email the people who are in your class and say "Here's the time, here's the link." They show up, they click on the link. It should set up everything on their computer automatically. Then there's a little button on their Zoom that they click, a big green button that says Share Screen. Then that would allow them to share their screen, or they can just turn their camera to their easel or whatever. It's that simple.

Diane Stavers says "Besides an iPhone 11, what's another recording device that you would suggest for prerecorded videos?" If you have an iPhone 11, just use an iPhone 11. Another thing you can use is a DSLR, but that's going to be \$500. So you might as well just get a new phone.

Chelsea says "I'm curious about the discounts generally, should we offer an intro rate for our early supporters who want to purchase our courses?" Sure. I think having a "Hey, this is my first online art course and it's a beta, so you get it for half off, and the next time I do it it'll be full price," is a totally valid marketing strategy.

Carly, great question. How do you make sure that your students have the right supplies? For those of you who already teach online courses, I would be curious how you do this. What I have seen other artists do in the past, is you can pre-buy all the supplies and then ship them out to

people. That's a huge pain and you've got to charge a big markup to do that because it takes you time. The other thing you can do is put together a pre-curated list of the supplies that you would use for that art piece. Then in the course sign up materials, let them know that you will need to purchase supplies. You need to give them enough time. You need to give them a week or two so that they have time to get the supplies and have them shipped to their home. And say "When you sign up for this course, be sure to order these supplies." And have links to where they can buy the supplies online, whether it's on Amazon or Blick or some other website. Make sure it's a link to where you would buy the specific supplies you would use.

Jennifer, that's another good idea. You can have a lower price if they sign up. If the course starts in a month and if you sign up this week you get a certain price. If you sign up in 2 weeks you get a certain price.

Jennifer, if you want to talk about what you're doing I'd love to have you come on to talk about this a little bit as well, if you'd be open to that.

Having an affiliate link with Dick Blick or Amazon is definitely a good thing, you make a little bit more money off of recommending certain supplies. Maureen says "Would it be a good idea to email a quick start guide to live class participants so you can minimize the tech issues?" Yes, absolutely, Maureen. All of the platforms, whatever you're using, Zoom, CrowdCast, whatever, they have quick start guides already that show you how to use their technology. So just grab their quick start guide and email it to your students.

Elise says "I set up an Amazon storefront so I get a percentage of all supplies." Yep, totally.

Hi Jennifer!

J: Hi, so if you do set up the Amazon thing, keep in mind, I can't remember if it's like 90 days or a certain amount of sales that you have to hit to get that affiliate thing. If things go slow and you don't hit it right away, you can always circle back after that lapses out for you for those of you who want to do it. I'm in an unusual position, I have a doctorate in art history as well and so I used to teach at the University of Arizona until I had some health issues. So I've worked in this world in a weird way as an artist, as a curator, and as an art historian. So I taught a diversity of types of classes. And for me, I'm certainly sensitive to the idea of the cost of some of the platforms. I've tried to weigh out not only the cost but also some of the limitations. I think Teachable is great for a lot of people, but I also am sensitive to the idea of wanting to have something that's on my site so that I'm directed there and not lost in the cacophony of some of those things. So I ended up going with LearnDash as a WordPress plugin, and in part because I was doing a lot of research and doing a comparison between Sensei and some of the other ones. And a lot of the universities actually use LearnDash, and I liked that there was the customization. But I know not everybody is at the point where they're jumping in and paying somebody to do stuff. But I'm sure, Cory, that you're advising people and moving forward with their careers that sometimes you want to take that jump and offload the stuff that you don't want to do.

And I'm telling you, there's been chunks where I've invested a little more money and there's times where I float for a while and don't have anything. But once I did that I have never looked back. And I had shared in the link, Kelly Curtis, her husband teaches ceramics at Temple

University, and she does websites for a lot of artists. An easygoing kind of person, and she's been really great, cause she'll do little or a lot or whatever. So that's been really nice to offload that kind of stuff. But I think a lot of it is thinking about what you've discussed: pedagogy. What's the best way to do this? I think that with people who are stuck with the "What am I teaching?" Even when you do pick something, keep it simple. At most, what are the three things you want somebody to walk away with, having done your class? Whether it's one little painting that they're executing, but what are the three things that you want them to say... and they should be able to tell you I learned these three things. Keep it simple, break it down, and don't overwhelm people. I think that sometimes one of the big mistakes is that you feel like you've got to give people everything.

CORY: You can't teach everything you know in a single class, yeah.

J: Yeah, and even if you're doing a higher end class, it overwhelms. But it's also like, this is why people continue to take classes. You've got this, oh! And then this, and so if you're thinking about stuff, how could this lead into the next thing? So that would be my recommendation. If you're sitting down and thinking about what your class is going to be, and you're thinking okay, what would be the first three things, and what would you build on those next three things so that people keep it so it's not only manageable for themselves, but that. And I do think that nowadays people are wanting more smaller consumable nuggets. So even if your total content is a couple of hours, could you break it down into little manageable times? Especially now, like our target audiences are people who may be doing these even with their kids, whether it be high school or little kids. Or they're trying to do it themselves. They may not have a long period of time to sit down for even a 20-minute video or 30-minute video.

CORY: Yep, totally. I just realized something that we should do. So I'm going to have our team take this whole discussion, this last hour and fifteen minutes that we've been talking, I'm going to have our team transcribe it and organize it into a written guide, and I might reach out to some of the people like you and Betty and just get some additional input that we can add to this guide. If you have any recommendations for teaching pedagogy, like book recommendations for how to learn how to teach, I would love any resources that you have there.

J: Yeah! And the other thing too, is also we're as artists very visually and spatially oriented. But we're not necessarily always teaching to people who learn that way, or we're dealing with people who have accessibility issues. And I'm excited, since people were talking about the quality of the videos. My husband, he's working from home for the next 3 weeks and we're all fighting over bandwidth, even though we have good high speed. And he's like "What's going on here?" And I was uploading videos from our mastermind. Because I organize a mastermind group for artists, and he's like "What's going on?" He goes "Well that's a really high quality video," and I'm like "Well if you want me to..." so I was in Zoom seeing if I could adjust the quality down. But the other thing that was interesting in Zoom that I did not know, and being hearing impaired myself it struck me, is there's an option to check if you want to be able to allow for closed captioning. So I want to play around because I know you can do something like [Rev.com](https://www.rev.com) and have that transcribed. But I got to figure out what the integration is, if you want to have transcription there. There's all these sorts of things you can look at. For those who aren't familiar, there's a lot out there. I've used Rev.com. It's another gig economy problem because

there's been reports of them not paying their transcribers well. But if you're looking for transcription services for your videos too, that's an option. They can also do captions and stuff for things.

There's a lot of sources. It did used to be \$1 a minute for their top end, and now I think it's \$1.25, and they've upgraded their automatic computerized one too, which is now up to \$0.25 a minute. But I will tell you, if you want really accurate one, I've done both, and as an art historian when I interview artists and I cheap out and I go "Damn it, there's a lot of editing on that."

But the thing that's amazing is that we have so many technological options out there for us to connect. I would say the thing to encourage is to think about different ways you can create community and the ways you can support people. Between Facebook groups and even just having, like how you're doing this right now, one could do it on Zoom or another platform, or even Facebook live. Having an interaction moment where you say you have office hours. Even if it's, say, an evergreen course that's already built and there's not direct consultation, you can still offer once a month or every other week or something like that. An opportunity for people to do that. I did share in there, one of my friends who lives in the UK, and I think she does amazing online courses, Jillian Lee Smith. Her courses are like college-level, and not in an overwhelming way, but just in the thoughtfulness and the way they're broken out. So there are some people who are doing some really rich, deep things. And not that that's the gold standard, but I just think that there's some ways to think about how you can... there's so much you can do without having to go crazy with platforms.

CORY: Yeah, totally. And I do love... so you've given us a lot to think about and a lot of options. And I really appreciate where you're coming from here, and I do think that one of the things that we're going to see the biggest need for just as a species as humans over the next few months is community. We're going to have a lot of people who are isolated in their homes, and people are going to want to take online courses and have the experience of being able to connect with other people because they are stuck in their homes, especially those who are on the more restrictive lockdowns. Thank you so much Jennifer, I appreciate it.

J: And one last thought too, that's not necessarily a class, but some people it's harder sometimes to get an audience jumping on. You have think about how you're going to seed it, but some people, instead of maybe you don't want to do the full structure of a class, you could still do a Patreon site where you're giving a little. It doesn't have to be cohesive per se, but it's those kind of touches that people might want to do, and which might be a nice way to bridge into something that might be seeding for more structured courses. Thanks Cory, it was great chatting with you and thanks for doing this.

CORY: Yeah, good to meet you! Take care.

Alright. Amanda, sorry you lost the audio. When the recording finishes, Amanda, you can go back to your question and click on that. It'll take you to the point in the video where we were talking and I answered your question. But the short answer is listen to your audience, and let them know. Hear what they're saying, make them an offer. Say "This is what it's going to be, when it's going to be, what the price is," and if they come back and say "I can't afford it," or "it's

too expensive,” then make a decision there on whether or not you’re willing to lower the price. And just listen.

Holly says “How do I do Zoom if there’s a 40 minute time limit?” You pay for it. If you need more than 40 minutes you pay for it. It’s \$15 a month. If you can’t afford that, then you do a class with a 40 minute time limit. You work with what you’ve got. The other thing you can do, there are free platforms. You can use Google Hangouts, a free video chat platform that will allow you to... I’m not sure what the length is there, but it’s lower quality than Zoom and it’s harder to use. But that is one thing you can do.

Doreen says “Is it more profitable to do classes on your own, as opposed to a site like Skillshare?” Yes. If you do the class on your website or on something like Teachable, then you’re taking 100% of whatever people pay you. With Skillshare, they’re paying you a percentage based on... if I remember correctly the way Skillshare pays you, I used to have a class on Skillshare. The way that they pay you is they look at their overall subscriptions for how many people they have, and then what percentage of those people are spending what percentage of time on your class, and then they pay you out. It’s based on a complicated formula there. You make more money if you sell the classes on your own. Skillshare is more like a marketing platform for your classes. You put a simpler class on Skillshare, then you have your bigger, more profitable classes on your own website.

Jill says “What’s the simplest way to develop a prerecorded video? Filming a recording and recording audio separately as opposed to trying to talk and paint at the same time?” Yeah. Jill, you can just put a tripod in front of your painting, do the whole thing, and then you can voice over and talk your way through it and teach it as you’re going. You can edit in a voiceover later. You can do that with a simple program like iMovie that comes with any Mac.

Just reading the comments here.

Karen says “Zoom is giving away free accounts with unlimited time right now.” Yeah, that’s a marketing thing. They want you to start using Zoom, so they’re giving it away for free. Then after the crisis passes, they’re going to put the limit back in place.

Casey says “Why is ConvertKit better than MailChimp? The short answer there is I like ConvertKit more than MailChimp because ConvertKit uses tag based organizing, and MailChimp uses group based organizing. When you have a larger mailing list, it makes managing your list much more difficult. Mailchimp is going to have to re-factor their whole back end to change to tag based organizing eventually, because that’s what every other email marketing service does.

Jamie says “I have a DSLR, do you have a pixel recommendation?” I don’t. Doing video on any DSLR, as long as you have good lighting, will be more than high enough quality for what you’re trying to do.

Jack Providenti says “I have a website with a PayPal button. If I use Zoom to conduct a class, do they first pay through my website?” Yes. Set up a Paypal button for your course. Then once they have made the payment, then send them a link to the Zoom class.

Michelle says “If my ethernet is not in my studio, will it work to teach a live class over Wi-Fi?” I mean, you can do it Michelle, and certainly Betty mentioned that she did it, others have done it, you can totally do it. Just expect your video quality to go in and out just like it has during this call. That’s what’s going to happen. It does it even if your ethernet is connected, but it goes slower over Wi-Fi and it’s more unreliable over Wi-Fi.

Chelsea, great point. Most DSLRs have a 30 minute recording limit. You shouldn’t be recording a class that’s more than 30 minutes at a time anyway. You should be doing it in small chunks. So that shouldn’t really be a problem, but take that for what it’s worth. Jessica says “MailChimp has added tags.” Great! I haven’t used MailChimp in a long time, so awesome.

Urina says try Mailer Lite. Yeah, there’s lots of email programs. There’s lots of things out there that you can use. Use the tools that work.

Maureen says “Is ScreenFlow the same as iMovie?” No, it’s not. iMovie is a video editing software, ScreenFlow is a screen recording software with some editing built into it. It doesn’t have all the same features as iMovie, it’s just meant to record what you do on your screen.

Maureen says “I’m a studio artist. I’ve been teaching in person classes for 5 years. I thrive on the dynamic created in a class of 6-8. I can give them a lot of individual attention. Something about being able to see what they’re doing in the class as they’re doing it.”

Yeah. So Maureen, you can do that on Zoom. All the other people that join you... it’s not like what we’re doing right now. It’s like when someone comes on the screen with me. With Zoom and with CrowdCast too, you can have lots of people on the screen at the same time. Then as long as they have their cameras turned towards their easel, you can see what they’re doing. If you give them some instruction and then give them 10-20 minutes to work on whatever the next thing is, you can just make sure that all of them have their camera pointed at their easel, and then you can just be watching all of them like you would when you’re walking around the room. Then you can come on audio and talk to whoever it is and say “Hey I noticed you’re doing this, make these adjustments,” Whatever, you can do that with Zoom.

Great. I don’t see any more questions. Thank you so much everybody for taking the time to be with me and to be with the community here. This recording will be available as soon as we’re done. It’ll start rendering it, and just refresh the page when it’s done and the recording will be there. Our team will turn this into a guide... it’ll probably take us a week at least, because 90 minutes of text takes several hours to transcribe, and then we’ve got to organize it and put it on the website. So it’s going to take us a week to get it done, but thank you so much. I appreciate all of you, I appreciate Jennifer, Betty, others who have shared their experiences. I may reach out to you for some further links or additional stuff that you might have. Stay safe out there everybody, and let me know again if I can do anything for you. I know it’s tough times right now for some people, so I hope you’re all staying safe and you all have community that you can rely on. If The Abundant Artist or I can do anything for you please let me know. Have a great rest of your day everybody, take care.