

Art World News

NOVEMBER 2023

THE INDEPENDENT NEWS SOURCE

VIRTUAL FRAMER SOFTWARE LAUNCHES

The new Virtual Framer software is a comprehensive business management program with instantaneous frame/art visualization that provides immediate access to tens of thousands of mouldings, frames and framing elements that make up its comprehensive visual vendor library. Go to page 14.

FOCUS ON FRAMING: NEW FRAMING PRODUCTS

In this month's Focus on Framing, new custom framing releases are highlighted from various companies with new moulding collections, line additions and extensions and catalogs. Page 26.

MAXIMIZING HOLIDAY ART AND CUSTOM FRAMING SALES

ADC Fine Art's Litsa Spanos discusses how to get the most out of this year's holiday season with creative ways to curate unique collections, host events, promote special offers, setting a festive scene and more. Go to page 20.

ART FAIR PLANNING AND STRATEGIES

Gallery Fuel's Katherine Hébert presents the benefits for art galleries participating in art fairs with advanced planning, strategizing and how the right marketing can lead to a more enjoyable process with even higher rewards. Visit page 22.



Peter's Custom Framing & Gallery in Costa Mesa, CA.

CUSTOM FRAMERS LOOK TO TRENDS FOR REPEAT SALES

Custom framers know that in order to create repeat customers, one must be able to stay on top of trends in design, materials and the buying habits of their customer base. Keeping conversations going can help to motivate people to want to transform their walls and/or present their artwork in a new way by updating its framing. They are constantly changing furniture in their rooms, painting walls new colors, buying new flooring, etc. All of these things are opportunities to present the option of updating the client's custom framing or present the work in a new style. Staying ahead of trends can help make the sales process easier as the customer will see the business as an authority on design and technique. Some of the top trends today include products that are eco-conscious and sustainable, mixing materials to create

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QUOTE OF THE MONTH:

"I believe that a healthy passion for art, culture and design outside of custom framing is what keeps my design eye fresh."

Seth Weber, page 18

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Shown is
"Translucent"
by Lisa Cuscuna.
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Framing Trends Boost Repeat Sales

Staying ahead of custom framing and interior design trends can help make the sales, and repeat sales, process easier as the customer will see the business as an authority on design and technique.

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Virtual Framer Software Launches

Virtual Framer software is a business management program with instantaneous frame/art visualization and provides immediate access to mouldings, frames and framing elements.

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Maximizing Holiday Sales Potentials

Litsa Spanos discusses how to get the most out this year's holiday season with creative ways to curate unique collections, host events, promote special offers, set a festive scene and more.

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New Framing Products

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What's Hot in Open Editions

This month's What's Hot in Open Editions features a variety of the latest best selling open edition prints, some available as print-on-demand images, and it includes contact information as well.

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IN OUR OPINION

FIGHTING THE ILLUSION

The dynamic of most purchase decisions have a psychological component. Even before the emergence of an urbanized middle class a degree of purchase decisions were made with a component of emotion, especially when choices were involved. In the early days of consumer product branding, marketers were keen to recognize that catering to their consumer's basket or needs, aspirations and wants was just as important being responsive to what is in their purse.

This reality has been the spine of consumer spending for generations—both predictable yet volatile in equal measures. Now, is a period very much of the latter and is becoming quite confounding to most retail business. Consider consuming spending over the last few months whereby, with exceptions, expenditures have held up surprisingly well. The traditional interpretation of ro-

bust spending is that consumers are feeling good and optimistic about the future. The conundrum: virtually every consumer sentiment survey illustrates that their feelings, attitudes and beliefs suggest a bleak feeling about the economy.

Every art gallery and frame-shop wrestles with this disconnect on a daily basis. The challenge to navigate through the negative psyche of their clients is without end. The best salespeople within our industry know no bounds. Instinctively, the position value of art and framing can transcend the limitations of negative and certain feelings. What we sell yields a lasting delight well beyond the life cycle of most consumer goods. Consequently, our industry fares well above the fray of most competing retail segments. The days might be growing darker but the chance to burn brightly is expanding.

John Haffey
Publisher



Redefining
print on demand

"Christmas Magic"
by Michael David Ward.



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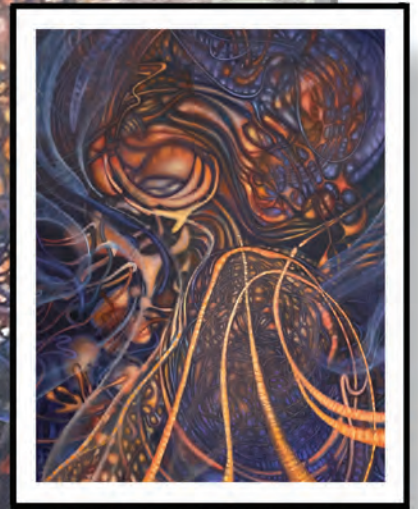
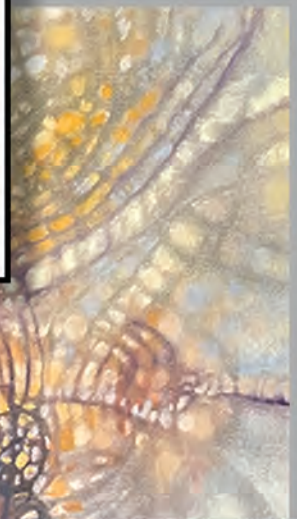
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John Peter Glover

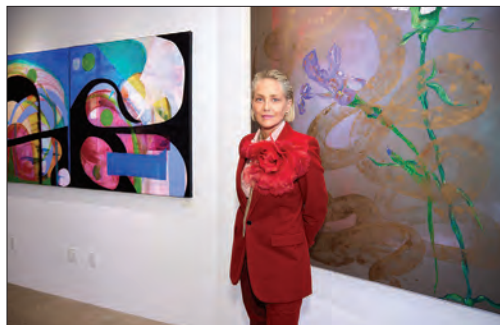
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ARTISTS & PUBLISHERS

C. Parker Gallery Debuts Stone's Work

The C. Parker Gallery, Greenwich, CT, presents the acrylic on canvas work of artist, activist and actress Sharon Stone in the new exhibition titled, *Sharon Stone: Welcome to My Garden*.

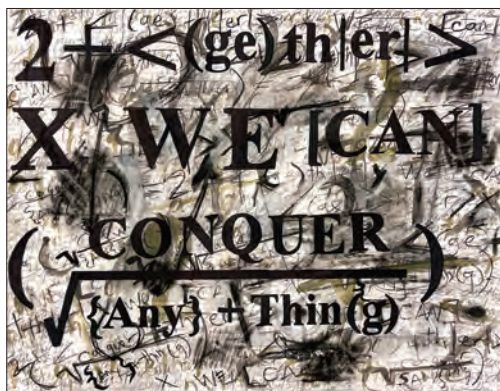


Sharon Stone is pictured with her work at C. Parker Gallery in Greenwich, CT.

"This new exhibition offers a never-before-seen panorama into Sharon Stone's creative prowess. The artist invites viewers on a journey through the vibrant landscapes of her imagination, reflecting her inner world. A testament to Stone's profound talents," says gallery owner Tiffany Benincasa. The exhibition features 19 paintings by Stone, and is the first time her artworks are exhibited outside of Los Angeles. For more details, phone (203) 661-0205 or go to: www.cparkergallery.com.

Gabriel Delgado's Inspired Collection

Contemporary artist Gabriel Delgado's extraordinary act of donating a kidney to his wife, Melissa after she was diagnosed with Stage 4 renal failure, is the inspiration of a new series of artworks by him titled *Sacrifice*. Burgess Modern



"Together We Can Conquer Anything" by Contemporary artist Gabriel Delgado.

+ Contemporary, Ft. Lauderdale, FL, is presenting a special reception at their Art Miami 2023 booth, in honor of Delgado, his wife and family. A percentage of the proceeds generated from the sale of artworks from the collection will be donated to The Memorial Transplant Institute in Hollywood, FL, and The National Kidney Donation Organization (NKDO). For more information, call the gallery at (954) 524-2100 or visit the website located at: www.burgesscontemporary.com. For more information on the artist, located in Miami, go to: www.gabrieldelgadoart.com.

RFA Decor Debuts Cuscuna's 'Horizons'

RFA Décor, a Rosenbaum Art Company located in Boca Raton, FL, presents *Horizons*, an exhibition of landscape and abstract paintings by Lisa Cuscuna. The artist first experimented with pouring jars of paint together over flat can-



Artist Lisa Cuscuna is shown during the artist reception for her show, 'Horizons.'

vases on the floor. She later developed ways of pouring backgrounds to look like landscapes and beaches, to which she then added detail with brushes. She next became a surrealist, combining poured landscapes with visions seen through translucent doors and windows. The *Horizons* exhibition includes works in each of these styles. For more information, call the gallery at (561) 994-4422 or go to: www.rfadecor.com. For more on Lisa Cuscuna's work, visit: www.lisacuscuna.com.

Trailside Galleries Offers Moyers Work

Trailside Galleries with locations in Jackson, WY, and Scottsdale, AZ, is offering "Chant On Spirit Mountain" by John Moyers. From a private Texas collection, the painting is the first public offering since the work's initial acquisition. Moyers grew up in an artistic environment in New Mexico and is the son of well-known Cowboy Artists of America member



"Chant On Spirit Mountain" is an oil on canvas, measuring 38 by 40 inches and retails for \$42,500.

William Moyers. His subjects range from Native Americans, cowboys, landscapes and themes from both Old Mexico and New Mexico. Call (307) 733-3186 or: www.trailsidegalleries.com.



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RED BANK, NJ—**Beacon Fine Arts Gallery** is celebrating its 25th Anniversary with special pricing for its collectors featuring 15% off of custom framing and 20% off serigraphs and giclées. The gallery specializes in regional and international paintings, sculptures, glass work and more, from nationally and internationally renowned and collected artists.

Beacon Fine Arts Gallery owner, Dave Griswold, was previously owner of a leading international fine art atelier and publisher of fine art. Shown is "Bottle of Health" by Irena Roman and is a watercolor measuring 16 by 23 inches. The artist has recently joined the gallery. Prior to devoting herself exclusively to fine art, Roman was a freelance illustrator creating artwork for clients such as *The New Yorker* magazine, *The Atlantic*, Harper Collins Children's Books, Little Brown Publishing, the US Postal Service and many others.

For further information, telephone (732) 936-0888 or visit the Beacon Fine Arts Gallery website located at: www.beaconfineartsgallery.com.

CREATING REPEAT FRAMING SALES

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unique designs, bold colors and minimalism.

Peter Maxson, owner of Peter's Custom Framing & Gallery, located in Costa Mesa, CA, says that his customers are quite educated and are often looking for a specific style when getting custom framing. "Today it's about a cleaner, more contemporary look, similar to Restoration Hardware and Ralph Lauren, as well as mixing old images with contemporary frames. Over the last 44 years that we have been in business, there have been many changes in the industry, from posters and signed and numbered original graphics in the 70s and

80s to serigraphs in sky colors to jewel tones to neo-classical. From there, it became reframing neoclassical to contemporary. Now, in addition to original works of art, we are printing giclées to custom sizes on canvas and various papers, with or without a frame."

The years have meant changes in how a custom frameshop, not only conducts business, but also in what products and services are offered. "When we started framing in 1979, we finished most of our mouldings from Foster Moulding's selection of raw woods. There were very few manufacturers or dis-

tributors and our most expensive moulding was a 5-inch Italian gold frame that sold for \$10 a foot. Today there is a significant change as most any of the smaller profiles are \$10 or more.

"In recessionary times, we started doing art installation," Mr. Maxson says. "This got us into homes and offices where we always ended up repairing, updating or providing more art and framing to the customer."



Peter's Custom Framing & Gallery in Costa Mesa, CA.

The key to Mr. Maxson's longevity has been his ability to change with the trends and look to new ways to present one's products and services.

"Any business needs to evolve with the times. As consumers' homes changed with technology, the framing of TVs was inevitable. However TVs, took the place of two major locations of framed art, over the fireplace and in the primary bedroom. We had a customer whose wife wouldn't let him put the TV over their fireplace unless he could cover it with art. So we developed the TVCoverUp product in both a manual

and motorized version and got our patent. We market it on the web."

It is creativity and innovation like this that have kept Mr. Maxson's customers returning. "One of the most creative jobs that we have done is for a piece of stained glass," he says. "A customer chose two particular frames he liked which included a carved perimeter and a sgraffito panel. I researched the web for an-

tique frames with those elements, and made up a drawing. We executed it with a hand-carved perimeter, around a custom moulding. We then included a base and back lighting. We then finished it in 22K gold leaf and a sgraffito panel."

When it comes to marketing, he has learned that a positive customer experience has been his best tool. "Customer referrals that come from a quality product and service is the best advertising. Also, to market to, and attract, customers, a good personalized website is important. Being an owner-run business is also a draw because customers know that they will be a priority when they walk in the door."

Offering a variety is also helpful. "We have 25 steel frame paneled sample doors

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Bittan Fine Art is proud to feature the work of
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TURNER CARROLL GALLERY HONORS NATIVE AMERICAN HISTORY



SANTA FE, NM—Turner Carroll Gallery celebrates Native American history by presenting the work of Virgil Ortiz, Douglas Miles, Jaune Quick-to-See Smith, Diego Romero and Jeffrey Gibson. November is Native American Heritage Month in the U.S. in which tribute is paid to the cultures, traditions and contributions of Indigenous Americans. Miles is an artist, photographer, curator, writer, muralist, public speaker, and film director. Quick-to-See Smith is a curator, as well as, a visual artist whose work addresses the myths of her Indigenous ancestors in the context of current issues facing Native Americans. Romero is a Cochiti Pueblo potter and printmaker. Gibson is an American Mississippi Choctaw/Cherokee painter and sculptor whose highly sought work employs a sense of movement, often drawing on Indigenous and western dance traditions. Ortiz is an artist working in clay, fashion, decor, video and film. Shown is his high fire clay and glaze piece with acrylic detail titled "Incubator Pod." For details, call (505) 986-9800 or go to: www.turnercarrollgallery.com.

FRAMING TRENDS *continued from page 10*

that swing open to reveal more frame samples behind them and on the wall. Displaying more than 6,000 corner samples—including the simplest aluminum frames to welded steel, stock mouldings to hand-carved 22k gold—shows customers how we can personalize their projects. Also effective is presenting the attitude that if you can't find it, we'll make it."

At Blue Door Framing in Nashville, TN, lead designer and showroom manager Evelyn Greene says that customers are often looking for inspiration when it comes to updating their spaces. "Re-framing a piece is such an easy way to give a room new life," she says. "It can also help to visualize further updates the customer may want to make to the room as well. Some trends that people in our area are seeking out has definitely been midcentury modern. We are based in East Nashville, so people love to curate a vintage vibe here."

Branching out beyond just catering to consumers and looking to interior design professionals is also a good way to generate sales Ms. Greene says. But they

can also be a great way to learn about new trends in the industry. "We work with a lot of designers from McALPINE (a residential architecture and interior design partnership) and from



At I've Been Framed in Portland, OR, this project was created using Omega Moulding and Crescent Select products.

local design firms, so I love to pick their brains on what



Blue Door Framing is located in East Nashville, TN.

people are loving at the moment. We also have a great relationship with our moulding vendors and they often help keep us up-to-date."

Offering personalized service often helps to bring in customers with one-of-a-

kind requests. "We recently framed a snakeskin that was completely intact," she says. "It was a fun, unique project. I love framing out-of-the-box things such as costume jewelry, flowers, napkins, etc. We really pride ourselves on the creative abilities of everyone here. We all bring something different to the table, so we love to let current, and future, clientele know that we are always up for a creative challenge. And, people really seem to be recognizing the importance of having something properly framed. I always tell people that you do it right the first time and then it's yours to enjoy for the foreseeable future."

At Portland, OR-based I've Been Framed, frameshop manager Seth Weber says that people in his community look to the business for quality work, as well as creativity. "Many of our customers are pretty open-minded about design when they arrive for an appointment. We will often end up creating a simply elegant design with a single or double mat and a thin wood

tone or black frame. Our design philosophy is that less is more, but I also love coming up with extravagant designs with customers for whom the philosophy is more is more. Basically, we stay

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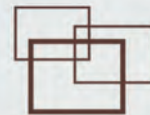
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DENVER, CO—Mirada Fine Art is taking the time to celebrate the holidays alongside the gallery's 14th anniversary with an opening reception and debut of brand new work from many of their most popular artists such as Jill Shwaiko, Bruce Marion and Lyudmila Agrich. Shown is Agrich's "Winter Evening," an oil on canvas measuring 20 by 24 inches and retailing for \$3,200.

Additionally, new work from artists Carrie Fell and Carol Tippet Woolworth will also be on display. Open in 2009, Mirada Fine Art's first location was in the foothills west of Denver and located in the historic Indian Hills Trading Post. In 2021, after having grown out of their original location, the gallery then moved to Denver's LoDo (Lower Downtown) neighborhood and into the historic Neef Brothers Building (a saloon from the late 1800s). The event also featured live music and artists in attendance to meet with collectors throughout the night.

For further information, telephone Mirada Fine Art at (303) 697-9006 or visit the gallery's website located at: www.miradafineart.com.

VIRTUAL FRAMER SOFTWARE LAUNCHES

Virtual Framer, a portable picture frameshop in software form and only available to picture framing professionals, developed by Khaled Feki, is officially launching at the 2024 West Coast Art and Frame Expo held in Las Vegas in February. "For the custom framer it's like having the workshop and all possible design options for the customer in their pockets," Mr. Feki, founder and CEO, says.

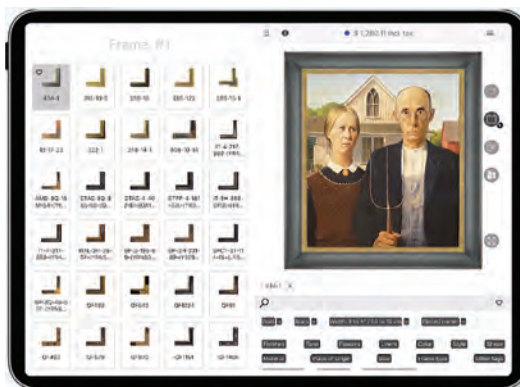
Virtual Framer is the first comprehensive business management program with instantaneous frame/art visualization for the user and includes closed-corner, length moulding, liner, mat, fabric and glass options, taking the design possibilities beyond just what the framer has on-hand. The software provides immediate access to tens of thousands of mouldings, frames and framing elements that make up a comprehensive visual vendor library and runs off of most platforms—but runs most smoothly off of an iPad. Virtual framer has been available as a soft launch but will officially be introduced during the West Coast Art and Frame Expo, held February 5 and 6, 2024, at the Horseshoe Hotel & Casino (formerly Bally's) in Las Vegas.

"Virtual Framer is a progressive visualization, pricing and sales tool that's been specifically created for our industry," says Rob O'Donnell, director of U.S. operations.

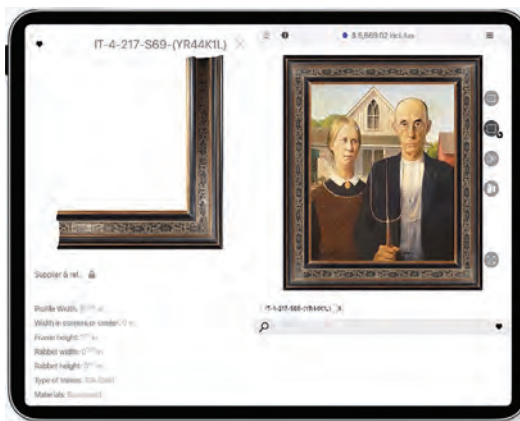
"In a nutshell, it's a portable picture frameshop in app form and only available to picture



framing professionals. Since the fall of 2021, Khaled Feki (the app developer and founder) and I have worked tirelessly readying the app for



the U.S. market. We've spent countless hours filling the vendor library with the best length moulding, closed corner, fabric and matboard companies in the industry. During the soft launch period,



we have already secured over 125 subscribers; and that's just by word-of-mouth." Also part of the team is Olivier Renard, director of France operations.

Virtual Framer is a valuable sales tool as it provides cut-

ting edge visualization, pricing and instantaneous frame design to show customers not only what their project will look like, but also all of the components that go into it, making it easier to understand the price and amount of work involved. The state of the art point-of-sale and customer relationship management program helps to keep records of purchases and client information for repeat sales.

The process is simple. An image of the artwork is uploaded into the program and using a series of easy-to-use filters or vendor codes, the framer can readily narrow down the choices. With one click, each corner is then visualized instantly onto the artwork. As the design process proceeds, options such as float inserts, liners and matboards are offered. Framers can also stack frames and mats and show the customer a 3-D version of the design to show the different layers and depth they will provide to the artwork.

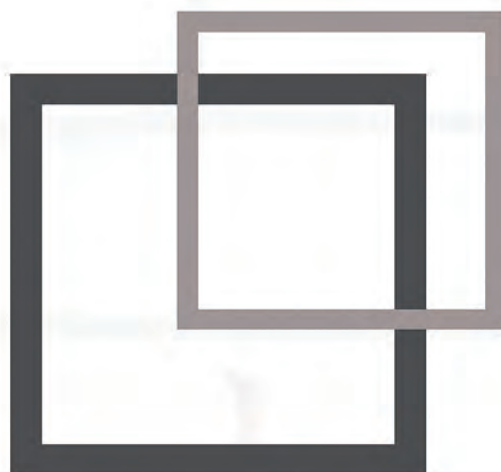
Additionally, the framer has immediate pricing on every element of the finished piece. As the user adjusts the design, the price updates in real time and reflecting appropriate margins. Each variation on the design can immediately be saved to the in-program dashboard.

To help with the sales process, Virtual Framer has a way for customers to access

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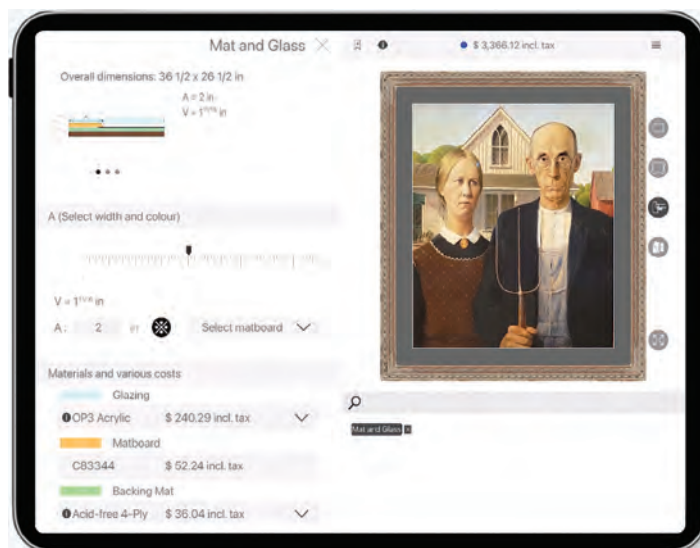
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VIRTUAL FRAMER continued from page 14

their project but with the framer's control on what information they see. "When a framer gives access to a client, that client does not have the same access to the information," Mr. Feki says. "The guest would see no prices and no information on the vendors used in the project. They will see a random reference number chosen by the framer and there will be no filter for them to search

signs and then send some quotes with visuals to the client. Framers can also go through the design process live in a zoom call. The framer can share their screen and can discuss the job no matter where either the framer or the client is located at that time." Once the final selection is approved by the client, the framer can easily generate quotations, invoices, receipts and even work orders to get the project moving.

In the U.S., Virtual Framers



by vendor. They also do not see the financial information. The emphasis is on the design itself, as well as other options to help them decide on the final project of their choice."

Another part of the software's sales tool is seeing the finished piece on a wall setting helping the customer to visualize what it will look like in their own home or office. Virtual Framers also allows frameshops to make sales with those unable to come into the brick-and-mortar business. "For people that cannot come to the shop due to distance, etc., the framer can receive an email with an image of the artwork, create some de-

costs \$125 a month or \$1,375 per year (reflecting one month free). There is no special computer or external hard drive needed to work the software. As it's an app, iPad and telephone versions also exist and there is also a desktop version available for PCs. "Elements of the app work best on the iPad as it was optimized to be used on this platform, but it has many options for other platforms. It also easily integrates other software information into Virtual Framers making the transition easy for the framers."

To watch videos on how to use Virtual Framers' features and learn more about the software, visit the website at: www.virtualframer.com.

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FRAMING TRENDS
continued from page 12

open-minded and truly listen to customers so that we arrive on a design that fits each customer's unique taste."

Sharing ideas with others in the industry, from fellow business owners to vendor salespeople, can help to stay ahead of the game. "I stay up-to-date on trends through my conversations with friends who work at other shops and by reading trade publications," Mr. Weber says.

"I also believe that a healthy passion for art, culture and design outside of framing is what keeps my design eye fresh. That passion is fueled by continued dialogue with artists in all trades that I know through, and outside of, the shop, such as cartoonists, filmmakers, graphic and interior designers, and musicians, too. Staying interested and engaged with all arts is important for me to be able to bring a fresh design eye each day."

When it comes to updating the framing on a piece of art, he says that his customer base is well aware of its benefits. "Reframing art projects come to us almost every day. Many customers want to update framing that was passed down to them through their family and while the art itself may hold sentimental significance the framing needs to be updated to reflect their personal style."

For Mr. Weber, creating a custom framing project that, on its own, is one of quality and enhances the artwork itself, is the priority. "We generally don't pay on-site visits to our residential or commercial customers, but these customers do often bring a photo reference of the space their framed art will be hanging in," he says. "I subscribe to the philosophy that if the art looks good in the frame then it should look great wherever it hangs.



Shown is a reframing project created by Westwood Gallery located in Westwood, NJ, and featuring a photograph printed on glass with 24k gold backing.

But I am also open to taking the space into consideration when working on a design. I am currently framing dried flowers from the 1800s, a dead tarantula and a couple of sports jerseys."

When it comes to marketing, Mr. Weber says that it is mostly about showing the work that they are doing on social media and creating a buzz around it.

"We post projects and ideas on Instagram to inspire our customer base, but most of our marketing is word-of-mouth, which alone keeps us so busy that we

can barely stay caught up. We don't share our customers' projects without their verbal permission, but we do challenge ourselves to create designs that we hang around the shop."

At the end of the day, a framer's expertise is what customers seek out. "As much as I like to work with customer design considerations, I am a big fan of three or more inches of mat and a bottom weighted mat," he says. "Our cus-



tomers seem to prefer thinner mats these days, maybe it is because they have lots of pictures on their walls and are running out of space, but I would like to see this trend swing back in the other direction."

Michael Fitzsimmons, owner of Westwood Gallery, located in Westwood, NJ, says that much of his knowledge of trends comes from reading trade magazine, as well as working closely with those in-the-know, such as interior designers. "I am seeing a lot of clean, contemporary lines and finishes, along

with neutral colors and floater frames. One way that we help to create a relationship with our customer base is to offer services such as delivery and hanging—even if we didn't do the framing."

When it comes to framing unconventional items, Mr. Fitzsimmons says that getting creative in what can be framed is a good way to inspire customers. "We have worked on things like tapestries and rugs, and occasionally a fireplace surround. We will market our art conservation and restoration services which can lead to some interesting projects. One was the reframing a photograph printed on glass with a 24K gold backing. We had to platform the inner frame on glass, adding a recessed neutral mat for the backing so that the wallpaper would not show through the glass. We then added a complimentary outer frame."

Custom framers are tasked with educating consumers on the possibilities that exist for updating their space and their artwork, whether it is reframing a piece or creating a new gallery wall. Some trends to keep in mind include using sustainable and eco-friendly products, mixing materials and textures, creative use of mounts for multiple layers and extra wide borders, and oversize art projects and gallery walls.

Koleen Kaffan is Editor in Chief of Art World News.



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ART INDUSTRY TRENDS

MAXIMIZING HOLIDAY ART AND FRAMING SALES

By Litsa Spanos

The holiday season is a bustling time for retail, and art galleries and frameshops are no exception. With people on the lookout for unique and thoughtful gifts, your gallery has the potential to shine during this festive period. Here are some strategies to ensure you make the most out of this holiday season and boost your sales.

Curate a Festive Collection:

Consider curating a special holiday-themed collection that captures the spirit of the season. This can include winter landscapes, holiday-inspired artworks or pieces that evoke warmth and coziness. Highlighting these works in your gallery can attract customers seeking the perfect gift or a unique piece to enhance their holiday decor.

Offer Limited-Time Promotions:

Create a sense of urgency by introducing limited-time promotions or discounts for holiday shoppers. Consider bundling services like framing with the purchase of artwork or offering a percentage discount on select pieces. This not only encourages immediate sales but also drives foot traffic as customers seek to take advantage of these exclusive offers.

Host Special Events: Plan events that bring customers

into your gallery and frameshop. Consider hosting art openings, live painting demonstrations, or even themed workshops. These events not only engage your community but also provide an opportunity for customers to connect with the artists and the stories behind the artworks.

Online Presence and E-



commerce: In today's digital age, it's essential to have a strong online presence. Showcase your holiday collection on your website and leverage social media platforms to create excitement. Consider offering online-exclusive promotions or discounts to attract virtual shoppers. Ensure that your website is user-friendly and optimized for mobile devices to capture the growing number of mobile shoppers.

Collaborate with Local Businesses: Partnering with local businesses can be mutually beneficial during the hol-

iday season. Collaborate with nearby boutiques, cafes, or even local holiday markets to cross-promote your gallery. This can involve joint events, shared promotions, or even placing some of your smaller pieces in their establishments.

Create Gift Packages:

Simplify the gift-buying process by curating gift pack-

ages and create a warm atmosphere that encourages customers to linger and explore.

Loyalty Programs and Gift Cards:

Encourage repeat business by implementing a loyalty program that rewards customers for their continued support. Additionally, offer gift cards as an attractive option for those who may be unsure about specific artworks but still want to share the joy of art with their loved ones.

A successful holiday season requires a combination of strategic planning, creative marketing and a customer-centric approach. By curating a festive collection, offering promotions, hosting events, strengthening your online presence, collaborating with local businesses, creating gift packages, enhancing the shopping experience, and implementing loyalty programs, you can ensure that your gallery stands out during this busy and lucrative time of the year.

Litsa Spanos is the President of ADC Fine Art and works with private, corporate and commercial clients for 30 years. Her mission is to support contemporary, living artists and her company ranks as the top 2% of women-owned businesses in the nation based on revenue. For more details, visit the ADC Fine Art website located at: www.adcfineart.com.



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BUSINESS STRATEGIES

ART FAIR PLANNING AND STRATEGIES

by Katherine Hébert

Advanced planning and strategizing for art fair sales and marketing can lead to a more enjoyable process and higher rewards. Being creative with lead-generating strategies can also provide valuable insights for other gallery marketing initiatives. In this article, I discuss art fair sales and marketing strategies that your art gallery can use to maximize all the opportunities fair participation provides and increase your gallery's visibility.

Art fairs have firmly established prominence in many art galleries' sales strategies. Fairs are often a considerable financial risk to a gallery business but can also bring great rewards. Increasing sales, meeting new collectors, and expanding the gallery's reputation in new markets are the primary motivations for participating. They also provide an opportunity for valuable peer networking.

Goals your Art Gallery Could Create for the Art Fair

What will your gallery's overall goals be for the fair? How will you define and measure success? Think carefully about your goals for participating. You may want to introduce your star artists to a new market or launch an emerging artist onto the scene. Art fairs can also be an incredible platform to bet-

ter understand how collectors and critics will embrace a potential new artist.

Your goals may not necessarily include generating a profit or breaking even on your investment, but be clear on how much cash will be required. Start with a

consider carefully the resources you have to work with, both financial and human.

Details matter in your selection process so you can submit a well-researched, comprehensive, and compelling fair application. As

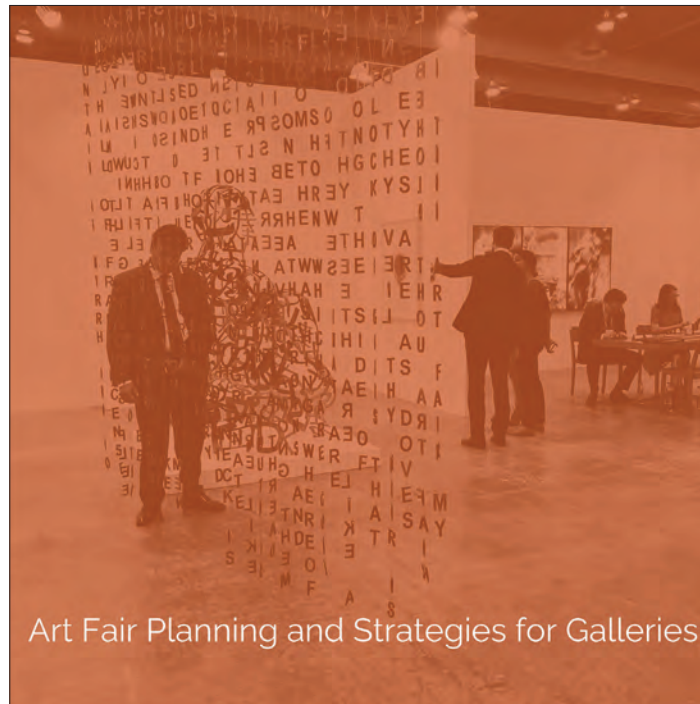
to other dealers about their experience. Also, try to connect with fair organizers, who can often provide the best advice for getting included and booth locations. Your research should also enable you to understand the risks and options available to exhibitors offered by the fair. Network and gather as much information as possible to make the best decision and minimize risk.

Art Fair Financial Feasibility

Many art galleries have put themselves out of business by investing too heavily in art fair participation that did not deliver the anticipated sales and leads. It's easy to lose focus on the gallery's core strengths, such as all your artists and exhibitions.

You must try to estimate the costs of fees, rentals, storage, travel expenses, insurance, shipping, and any client entertaining you want to do. Compare the sales statistics the fair promotes with what other gallery participants similar to your gallery have told you. You may have to assume a little padding, as everyone wants to appear in the best light.

Forecast how much artwork will need to be sold from



Art Fair Planning and Strategies for Galleries

smaller fair, or look for a partner gallery for booth collaboration to test the waters.

Research Considerations Before Applying to an Art Fair

With hundreds of fairs to choose from internationally, you must select and apply to the right fair for your gallery program. You should

part of your research, consider the location of the fair and your business objectives for the gallery. Don't let legislation of a foreign country or essential add-on services take you by surprise.

Attend the fair as a spectator first to get a sense of the type of potential buyers it attracts and talk

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what you will present at the fair and how many warm or hot leads you have to work with before the fair begins for those sales. Do you have existing clients who will visit your booth, or are your sales primarily coming from new prospective buyers?

You need to determine if having a booth on your own makes sense or partnering with another gallery to share the financial risks.

Designing the Perfect Art Fair Booth

Once your application is accepted, it is time to plan your booth and what artists to exhibit. A finely curated booth can make or break your experience and future participation.

Decisions will need to be made regarding wall colors, installations, and lighting, all of which will impact the draw of prospective buyers to your booth. Consider the feel of your gallery space when designing your booth and selecting furniture and fixtures. I don't recommend a dramatic departure from your gallery's personality unless it is to complement your art exhibit.

Your booth design is all about drawing people in so you can begin to establish new relationships and connections. Consider booth traffic flow and how best to use tools for capturing contact information and writing up sales. How will visitors learn to find the gallery on social media, hashtag your booth, and visit your website? You will want to draw

a layout of your booth space to anticipate the needs of gallery staff and visitors.

Art Fair Sales and Marketing Strategies

Begin your art fair sales and marketing strategies by segmenting your contact list for sales leads, to which you will want to market your booth more personally. Ideally, you want to start this process a few months before the fair. Find leads predisposed to buying works in your booth or who you be-

Begin your art fair sales and marketing strategies by segmenting your contact list for sales leads, to which you will want to market your booth more personally.

lieve will attend the fair. With contacts identified, plan your communication strategy to be informative about the opportunity your booth provides and have a soft-sell approach.

Determine what sales tools you will need to present works in the booth to new prospects. Inventory databases must be comprehensive so that you can move quickly, answer questions accurately, and email interested collectors promptly. I also recommend creating your talking points about the artists and artworks in the booth beforehand. You will only have a tiny window of time to spark a browser's interest. Your pitch needs to be both compelling and efficient. Sales staff also

needs to have a level of consistency.

Most galleries promote their presence at an art fair by listing the date and booth number on their website and then linking to the art fair's website. Why would you send prospects away from your site to get information?

Instead, create a separate page for each of your upcoming fairs to highlight what you will have in your booth and how your participation aligns with your gallery pro-

mation and provide more tailored service when a prospect visits the booth.

Plan in advance your email marketing and social media strategies, such as sending save the dates, invitations to view a preview catalog, VIP tickets, and fair-related events your gallery is hosting, and follow-up communications after the fair. The more buzz you can create around your participation, the better.

You may want to consider running a location-specific advertising campaign on social media to promote your participation with art lovers in the region. You could include a call to action link to your website to view the preview to capture their contact information. After all, one of your goals may be to attract new collectors in that market.

Shipping Practices

Shipping is a crucial part of art fair participation. Look to the fair for guidance if you don't currently use a shipper specializing in fine art. Ensure you choose the right freight forwarder to provide services such as temporary export, quality wooden crates, and assemble at your booth.

Packaging will depend on the mode of transportation and journey the artwork must take. If traveling by road, bubble wrap and blankets should be sufficient. If transporting by air, crates, and boxes will need to be constructed.

For artworks traveling outside of the European Union, use the ATA Carnet, which

gram. You can also include a map for your clients directing them to your booth, request fair passes, RSVP for events you are hosting, etc.

A booth preview could be in the form of a digital catalog. Try a lead generation strategy by asking interested prospects to enter an email address to access the preview catalog or email it to them. This strategy creates an opportunity to follow up personally and pre-sell works. Those that respond have prequalified themselves as being warm leads to buy.

Managing warm leads can be streamlined with fair specific tags in your database. Using tags this way helps ensure booth staff can access background infor-

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BUSINESS STRATEGIES
continued from page 24

is an international customs and temporary export-import document. Professional art shippers should be able to advise you on these kinds of documents.

Shipping for art fairs is a significant investment that can destroy your chances of a successful fair if it goes wrong. Protecting your artworks is essential when transporting them from the gallery to the fair or storage facility.

You might also document the condition of a piece with detailed photos.

Like with most things, the more upfront planning with your art fair sales and mar-

keting strategies, the more enjoyable the process and the higher the rewards. Art fairs can be overwhelming but valuable for meeting new buyers and networking in the

your best leads should start months before the fair with a soft touch. Make finding your booth and learning what you will present easy by creating a dedicated page on your

Be creative with lead-generating strategies to draw people into your booth. The lessons learned from trying a new approach will be valuable for other gallery marketing initiatives.

art world. Be confident in your goals and your resources before going into it. Focusing too much attention on fairs can sometimes strain relationships with your gallery artists and other clients.

Personalized marketing to

gallery website for each fair.

Be creative with lead-generating strategies to draw people into your booth. The lessons learned from trying a new approach will be valuable for other gallery marketing initiatives.

When you return home, you will be exhausted, but do not forget to send a personalized "thank you" email to all your new contacts.

Columnist Katherine Hébert specializes in art gallery business sales and marketing strategies, as well as the founder of Gallery Fuel, a subscription-based service that helps fine art galleries be more competitive in today's art market. Gallery Fuel is dedicated to helping fine art dealers and galleries grow and improve their businesses. To learn more information about Gallery Fuel, read more from Katherine Hébert and become a member, go to the website located at: www.galleryfuel.com.

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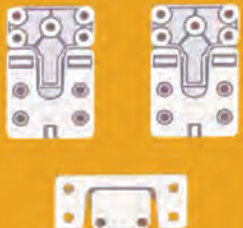
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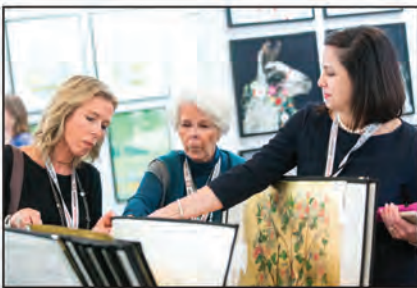
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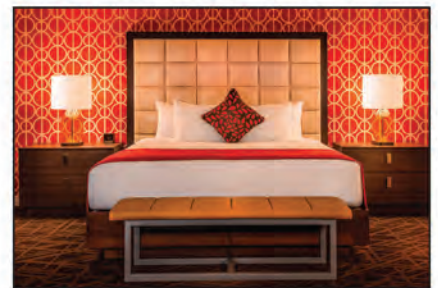
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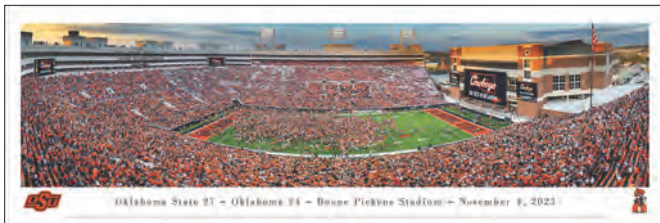


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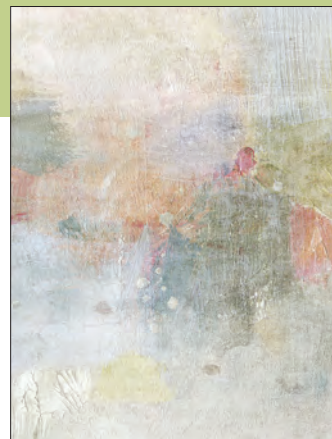


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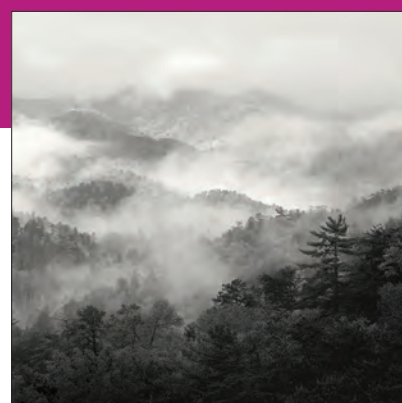
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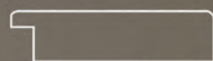
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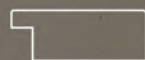
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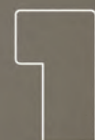
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