

Art World News

OCTOBER 2025

THE INDEPENDENT NEWS SOURCE

ARTIST SVETA ESSER CELEBRATES 30-YEAR CAREER

Artist Sveta Esser celebrates 30 years as a professional artist next year—a career that has amassed a collector base from worldwide, exhibited her work at various galleries and museums, having been featured in dozens of art fairs around the world and has invented Pixel Art. Page 28.

ROB ZOMBIE ARTWORK HAS GALLERY DEBUT

Morrison Gallery, Kent, CT recently held the opening reception for the first ever gallery exhibition of artist and singer Rob Zombie's paintings with a show titled, "What Lurks on Channel X?" Go to page 10 for more.

HOW MODERN TECH EMPOWERS SMALL BUSINESSES

Sheila McCumby discusses how embracing and educating yourself on the valuable technological tools available to art and framing retailers, such as AI, POS systems, CMCs, scheduling apps and virtual assistants can efficiently streamline a business and increase profits. Visit page 22.

TURN FESTIVE CHEER INTO YEAR-ROUND SUCCESS

Litsa Spanos says that during the holidays, connection sells better than any promotion ever could, and that relationship being built can last throughout the year. Go to page 30.

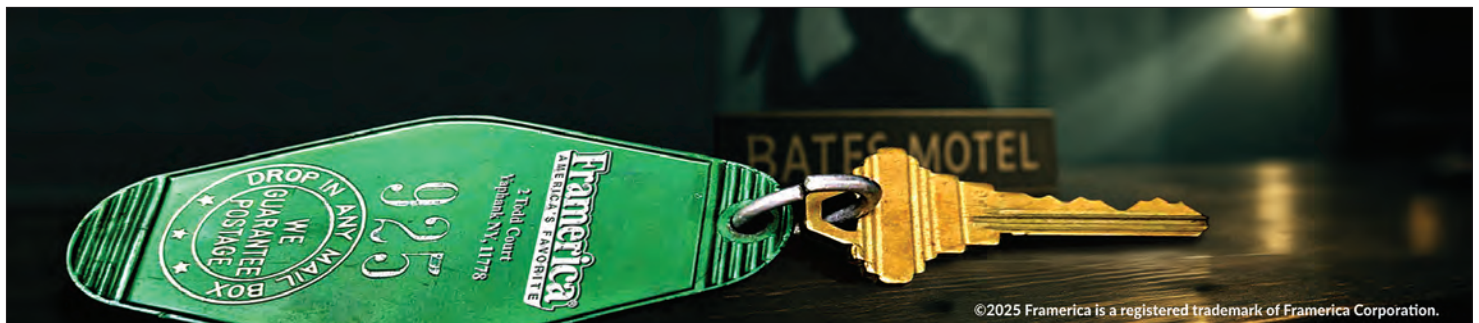


Robert Lange Studios is located in Charleston, S.C.

HOLIDAY SHOPPING SEASON BRINGS UNCERTAINTY

A successful holiday shopping season can make or break a retail business for the year, and art gallery and frameshops are no different. Getting the attention of new and existing clients during the holiday rush can create repeat sales for years to come. The surge in holiday sales from November and December made up an average of 18.4% of total annual retail sales in 2023—with some specialty retailers, such as gallery and custom frameshops, crediting more than 25%—based on data from Statista. But a recent PwC survey states that the 2025 holiday season could bring in an average of 5% fewer sales than the previous year as consumers feel pressured to put their money towards essential items and less on gift-giving. The silver lining for art and framing retailers is that, while the available sales may

continued on page 12



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QUOTE OF THE MONTH:

"In a world where most consumers are pulled in countless directions, our goal is to reintroduce them to the feeling of connection that art can bring."

Philippe Horowicz, page 14

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DEPARTMENTS

ARTISTS & PUBLISHERS
Page 8

**INVENTORY
FOR SALE**
Page 15

**FRAMING
THE FUTURE**
Page 22

**ARTIST
MILESTONE**
Page 28

**RETAIL
STRATEGIES**
Page 30

NEW ART
PAGE 33

**WHAT'S HOT IN
OPEN EDITIONS**
Page 34

**OPEN EDITION
PRINTS**
Page 36

CLASSIFIEDS
Page 37

AD INDEX
Page 38

Shown is "Cosoletto,"
an acrylic on canvas,
by Svetta Esser from
Smart Publishing.
Go to page 28.

Holiday Season Brings Uncertainty

A recent PwC survey states that the 2025 holiday season could bring in an average of 5% fewer sales than the previous year as consumers feel pressured to spend less of their money on gift-giving.

Page 1

How Modern Tech Empowers Business

Sheila McCumby discusses how embracing the valuable technological tools available, such as POS systems, CMCs and virtual assistants can efficiently streamline a business and increase profits.

Page 22

Artist Sveta Esser Celebrates 30-Years

Sveta Esser celebrates 30 years as a professional artist next year—a career that has amassed a collector base from worldwide, exhibited at various galleries and has invented Pixel Art.

Page 28

Festive Cheer Into Year-Round Success

ADC Fine Art's Litsa Spanos says that during the holidays, connection sells better than any promotion ever could, and that relationship being built can last throughout the year.

Page 30

Presenting New Art Releases

We present the New Art section featuring current releases of work in an array of mediums, edition sizes, image sizes and price points, as well as company contact information.

Page 33

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, most available as print-on-demand images, and it includes contact information as well.

Page 34



IN OUR OPINION

Strong Brands: The Tonic for Soft Markets

From hurricanes, inflation, political strife, cheating scandals, employment levels, tariffs, shutdowns, global tensions and whatever else you would like to heap on the pile, there are plenty of reasons to be spooked. No matter which way one looks, they are either fleeing or facing a problem. So, it becomes as no great surprise that consumers seemingly have hunkered down on the economic sidelines. With the usual early autumn strong run-up in gallery and frameshop sales not evident, dealers and framers are wondering what the playbook should be for rekindling sales.

In selective instances, pricing may be the obstacle to better times. Sometimes a detailed audit of what is being sold is the first step toward building momentum and may require adjustment. However, one of the longstanding and proven strategies is to rely

heavily on brands. The brand of a gallery or frameshop in the marketplace serves as a key ingredient. Stressing the business' legacy in the community is the first tactic and leverages you above all competitors.

Secondly, brand strength associated with the artists and products makes the brand of the business into a tangible good that can be purchased. Many artists do a fine job growing their brand through creating work that is leveraged by books, public relations and savvy commissions.

Comfort and confidence are the two foremost qualities needed to forecast a healthy buying public—OK, money helps, too. Strong branding messages are the most direct pathway toward jump starting momentum in an uncertain economy. They often neutralize concerns of price and quality and create the environment that yields good sales and happy customers.

John Haffey
Publisher



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Art World News (Volume XXX, Number 10) ISSN 1525 1772 is published 12 times a year by Wellspring Communications, Inc.: P.O. Box 129, Rowayton, CT 06853.
Phone (203) 854-8566 • Fax (203) 900-0225; To order additional copies or back issues e-mail: jwhaffey@aol.com or fax to (203) 900-0225. Please indicate which month and year you are requesting. Single copy price is \$10.00.

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ARTISTS & PUBLISHERS

Fazzino Gallery's Grand Re-Opening

Fazzino Gallery, Santa Barbara, CA, recently held its grand re-opening after having moved from the 500 block to the 1100 block on State Street to a new, larger gallery. The original location opened its doors 29 years ago. Festivities for the grand re-opening included a ribbon cutting ceremony, exhibit of new work and an opportunity to meet artist Charles Fazzino. For further information, call (805) 730-9109 or visit: www.fazzino.com.



Shown is artist Charles Fazzino.

Arcadia Debuts Hamberlin Work

Arcadia Contemporary, New York, NY, presents the debut gallery exhibition of works by acclaimed artist and innovator, Brian Haberlin titled, *Interludes*. Featuring 37 new paintings showcasing his mastery of classical mediums, including oil and watercolor. Internationally recognized for his pioneering visions in graphic novels and digital media, Haberlin now turns his focus toward the depth and intimacy of painting. In *Interludes* he captures moments that exist between the personal, the imagined and the universal. The exhibition blends the narrative energy of his storytelling legacy with a more nuanced and contemplative choice of imagery. For more details, telephone (646) 861-3942 or visit the website at: www.arcadiacontemporary.com.



Brian Haberlin's "Brunette Rapunzel" is a watercolor on panel.

MHS Artist Hautman Wins Contest



Hautman's painting of three buffleheads wins first place at the 2025 Federal Duck Stamp Contest.

MHS Licensing & Consulting artist Jim Hautman took first place in the most recent Federal Duck Stamp Contest, for his seventh win and bringing the collective Hautman Brothers victories to a total of 16 times. In what is known as the "Olympics of Wildlife Art," Hautman's winning acrylic painting of three buffleheads will be featured on the 2026-2027 Federal Duck Stamp, the cornerstone of one of the world's most successful conservation programs. Phone MHS Licensing & Consulting, Minneapolis, MN, at (952) 544-1377 or visit: www.mhslicensing.com.

New Knight Images at Bentley Art

Bentley Art Publishing, located in Elk Grove, CA, has added new Pop art images by Australian artist Vanessa Knight to their online catalogue. Knight's work features bold color, layered emotion and surreal storytelling while blending real-world animals, landscapes and symbolic elements. All of the new images are available for printing via POD Exchange and can be viewed at the Bentley Art Publishing website. For more details, call (925) 997-7145 or visit: www.bentleyartpublishing.com.



"American Gothic Pop Art VI" by Australian artist Vanessa Knight.

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Jack Rutberg's Collection Presented

Jack Rutberg Fine Arts, Pasadena, CA, presents an exhibition titled, *Sculptors: From Degas to Ruscha!*, with artwork from gallery owner Jack Rutberg's personal collection. The show features more than 50 works spanning some 125 years—some acquired 53

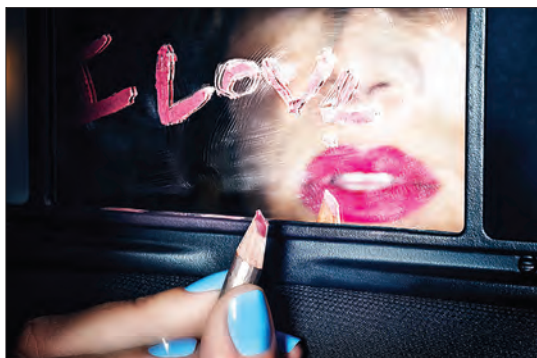


Shown is gallery owner Jack Rutberg.

years ago. "Artists nearly a century apart, are presented in close proximity, and yet the connections were profound," Mr. Rutberg says. "Perhaps more profound for me was my stepping back and viewing these works—never intended to be exhibited together—now presented as though I was seeing an old episode of 'This is Your Life.' While totally without intent, the 53 works in the exhibition correlate to the same number of years of my art career." Call (323) 938-5222 or go to: www.jackrutbergfinearts.com.

Hilton Showcases David Drebin Art

Chicago-based Hilton Contemporary's presentation of *Cinematic Dreams* is the gallery's first major showcase of artist David Drebin's work. The exhibition will highlight both his most celebrated images and rarely



"Love Traveller" by David Drebin.

seen archival works, giving collectors and art lovers the chance to experience Drebin's evocative vision in person. *Cinematic Dreams* is a landmark exhibition of photographs, diamond dust and neon artworks by the artist who will be on hand to meet with attendees of the opening reception. An afternoon tea with the artist will also take place for collectors. For further information, call (312) 852-8200 or go to the gallery's website located at: www.hiltoncontemporary.com.

Sorrel Sky Introduces Obrzut's Work



New bronze sculptures by Kim Seyesnem Obrzut.

Sorrel Sky Gallery, with four current locations (Durango, CO; Santa Fe, NM; SoHo, NY, and East Hampton, NY) has announced the representation of Kim Seyesnem Obrzut, one of the first Hopi women to work in bronze and a trailblazer who transformed tradition into timeless art. With over 43 years of experience casting bronze, Obrzut has established herself as a powerful voice in contemporary Native American art, creating works that honor ancient Hopi values while expressing universal themes of spirituality, balance and the sacred feminine. For more details, call (505) 501-6555 or go to: www.sorrelsky.com.

Zombie Debuts at Morrison Gallery

Morrison Gallery, Kent, CT, recently held the opening reception for the first ever gallery exhibition of artist, singer, songwriter, record producer, filmmaker and actor Rob Zombie's paintings with a show titled, *What Lurks on Channel X?*. Featuring more than 10 large-scale paintings on canvas—with limited edition



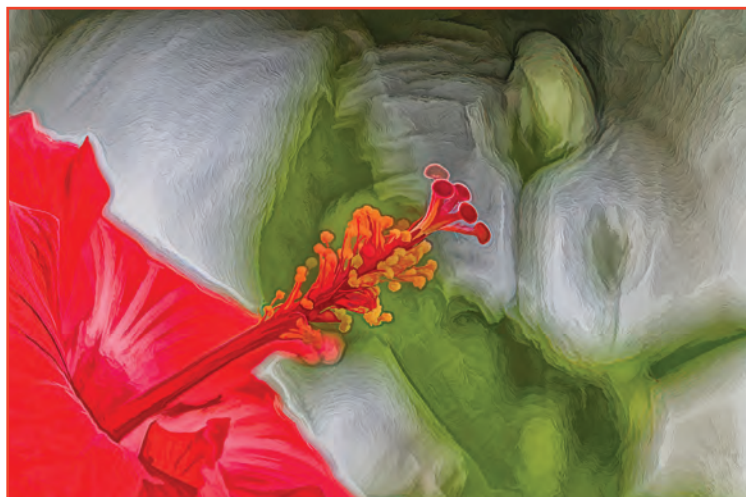
"Welcome The Rolling Stones" by artist and musician Rob Zombie.

signed and numbered prints also available—Zombie's work is a colorful collision of Pop culture iconography spanning over a decade's worth of work. Subjects include a multitude of famous sinister faces from Bela Lugosi to Charles Manson, juxtaposed with innocent representations of *Archie Comics*' favorites Betty and Veronica or classic comedians like Laurel and Hardy or Jerry Lewis. Phone (860) 927-4501 or go to: www.morrisongallery.com.

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Photography by Alan Goldberg

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Alan Goldberg has exhibited at
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Berlin, Zug, Basel, Athens, Venice,
Granada and Dubai and has been
published in *Vogue*, *Millennium* (15th
Edition), *Contemporary Art Magazine*
and *Artist Closeup* #25 magazines.



Minds Eye Photos • Photography by Alan Goldberg • Boca Raton, FL

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CINCINNATI—ADC Fine Art has a two-month pop-up gallery at Kenwood Towne Centre, a shopping mall northeast of Cincinnati. "We're super excited about the pop-up in the luxury brand section of the mall," says Litsa Spanos, ADC's President. "The space is 4,500 square feet and we will be showing a variety of paintings and sculpture there. The leasing agent called us about a newly vacant space and asked if we wanted to use it for the holidays. They have a retailer going in that space in January, but they wanted to support a local business before then. Needless to say, I was thrilled and had enough art to fill for two large galleries and said, 'YES!'" Located in the luxury wing next to Gucci, Lululemon and Tory Burch, the new space will showcase an ever-changing collection of artwork. With 50,000 to 60,000 shoppers daily, the gallery will be buzzing with lots of prospective clients. Events will include live art demonstrations and receptions. Shown is Gavin Benjamin's "Night Fever," a mixed media collage measuring 16 by 20 inches. For further information, call (513) 723-1222 or go to the ADC Fine Art website located at: www.adcfineart.com.

HOLIDAY SEASON BRINGS UNCERTAINTY

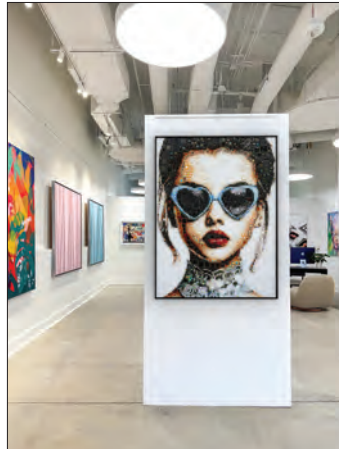
continued from page 1

be fewer, the niche audience targeted allows for a more personal approach to marketing, helping consumers feel more confident in their gift-giving options. The key is to find ways of reaching those buyers in the most effective ways. Retailers across most industries are looking to make the most of the surge in sales that may or may not happen for 2025.

Even those retailers who rely on extra hiring during these months are holding off. Challenger, Gray & Christmas, a job placement firm, says in a recent report that seasonal retail hiring is expected to fall to its lowest level since 2009, adding 500,000 fewer workers this holiday season in the U.S. These trends in retail business strategies reflect a lack of confidence and fear felt by most in the weakened economy created by inflation and global trade disputes. This year marks the smallest seasonal hiring gain in 16 years, according to the report. But, for gallery and frameshop owners, making the most out their niche in the market by attracting personalized, more high-end and unique sales, is key to making the most out the leaner than usual season.

At Carousel Fine Art, with locations in Atlanta, Chicago, Miami, New Buffalo, MI; and Palm Beach, FL, founders Laura and

Philippe Horowicz are ready to make the most out the season by creating personalized experiences for collectors in order to facilitate a connection with art that speaks to them.



Shown is the Atlanta, GA, location of Carousel Fine Art.

"We anticipate a very strong 2025 holiday season, both for the art market and the luxury sector as a



Etherton Gallery is located in Tuscon, AZ.

whole," Mr. Horowicz says. "Collectors are returning to physical experiences and seeking pieces that hold long-term emotional and aesthetic value. Art has become one of the most personal luxury purchases you can make, and we're seeing buyers prioritize connection over consumption. With two new gallery

openings this Q4, Carousel Fine Art is well positioned to capture that energy."

Knowing who, and where, your audience is can be key to keeping healthy sales coming into the gallery. "We're entering the season with major momentum. On November 1st, we open our second Atlanta location at Lenox Square, followed by our West Palm Beach gallery grand opening on November 13th. Both will serve as anchors for high-traffic luxury destinations, allowing us to meet collectors where they already shop and socialize. Each event is carefully curated to merge art, music and hospitality, the Carousel way."

Keeping collectors active in the gallery means keeping them up-to-date on all that is new, Mr. Horowicz says. "The challenge today isn't interest, it's attention. In a world saturated with digital content, the key is offering something tangible, an experience that lingers."

At Carousel Fine Art, this means lots of events. There are grand openings in Lenox Square in Atlanta's luxury wing and in West Palm Beach at the new NORA District, a Beau Simmons exhibit in collaboration with the Miami Beach Polo World Cup, as well as a solo exhibit for Simmons at their Buckhead Village gal-

continued on page 14

S. Guccione

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FRAMERICA RE-RELEASES PROFILE NOW NAMED ARCHIE, COMPANY NEWS



YAPHANK, NY—FramERICA has re-released one of its most popular profiles, now named “Archie.” The half-round curve measures 1- by 1-inch with a 5/8-inch rabbet. “This profile dates back to the days of Mica,” says Josh Eichner, vice president. “We started getting requests for profiles and finishes that evoke nostalgia for consumers and our BW79 kept coming up. It’s been an instant success all over again.”

In related company news, Dakota Haraden has been promoted to department head for imaging and print, overseeing a talented team of designers and operators. “Dakota’s strong leadership and precise communication skills make him the ideal can-



didate,” says Jay Van Vechten, executive vice president. “He excels in every task he is given and continues to exceed expectations.”

For more information, call (800) 372-6422 or visit: www.framerica.com.

HOLIDAY SHOPPING *continued from page 12*

lery and a Jason Peterson solo exhibit at the Chicago gallery.

“This holiday season marks the start of a national presence built on local relationships and is about refinement and reinforcement. We’re not entering new markets, we’re deepening our footprint in two regions where Carousel already has strong collector communities: Atlanta and Palm Beach. The opening of our Lenox Square and West Palm Beach galleries allows us to serve those clients with elevated spaces, enhanced experiences and larger-scale exhibitions. The focus this season is on quality, consistency and continuing to raise the standard for what a luxury art gallery experience can be.”

With a target audience of both new and established collectors, typically aged 30 to 70, Mr. Horowicz says that creating a space for those that value creativity, craftsmanship and culture is a driving force. “Many are professionals, entrepreneurs or design-driven individuals who see art not only as décor, but as identity. Our mission is to make fine art approachable without losing the luxury experience,” he says. “Our biggest compe-

tion isn’t another gallery, it’s distraction.

“In a world where most consumers are pulled in countless directions, our goal is to reintroduce them to the feeling of connection that art can bring. When someone walks into a Carousel gallery, they’re not just shopping, they’re feeling something. That emotional impact is what



Shown is the Fairfield, CT, Elisa Contemporary Arts, one of two tri-state area locations.

sets us apart and keeps us ahead.”

“Our marketing this season blends digital storytelling with real-world experiences. We’re leveraging social media, partner-



Robert Lange Studios is located in Charleston, S.C.

ships like the Miami Beach Polo Cup and PR features while driving personal outreach through our collector network.”

Location is also important at Etherton Gallery in

Tucson, AZ, according to gallery director and owner Terry Etherton, in business for 45 years. “We expect to see a lot of visitors in the gallery during the holidays,” he says. “Winter is our season in Tucson. There are a lot of winter visitors who live in Tucson during the winter.”

For the 2025 holiday season, Mr. Etherton says that his concerns have been steady throughout the year—to make enough sales to keep the business thriving. “We will continue to do an email blast to our 15,000-strong mailing list, as well as promote an opening reception on December 6 for a new show. We will target both

new and existing collectors. We have a very active website and are with Artsy and Artnet. With this marketing plan, we have been able to acquire a wide audience and are always adding new names to our mailing list. Because we have been in business for 45 years we are well-known in Tucson. Therefore, we do not worry about competition as we offer something that no one else can offer. We do know that art sales happen online more and more but we opened in the summer of 1981,”

he says. “Since that time, we have become one of the most established galleries in Arizona. Our reach is well beyond Tucson and we continue to add content

continued on page 16

INVENTORY FOR SALE



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HOLIDAY SHOPPING
continued from page 14

to our website to make sure all of our collectors are up-to-date on everything that we have to offer."

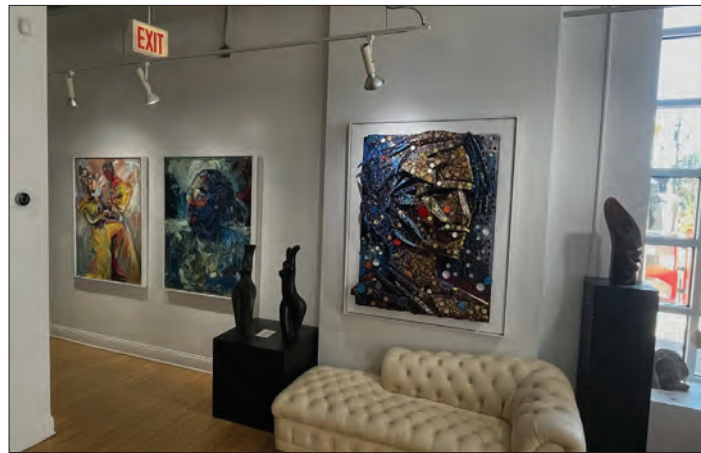
At Elisa Contemporary Art, located in Fairfield, CT, and Riverdale, NY, owner Lisa Cooper says this holiday shopping season will not be without challenges, but that like all industries, adjustments will help to keep sales coming in.

"I do think that people will be spending less this year. I found at a recent Fall art fair that buyers were purchasing work at a lower price point than in the past," she says. "One way to combat that has been to offer and promote smaller artworks, as well as limited edition silk-screen which are priced lower than original (one-of-a-kind artworks). Having had recent success with this, we will focus on some limited editions, as well as work from emerging artists. Our target audience this holiday season is both current and new collectors, as well as prospective buyers that find us online, through ecommerce sites such as 1stdibs and Cohart.

"Another dilemma to seasonal buying is that artwork is not always bought as a holiday gift since it is such a personal selection," she says. "If someone has seen a piece, that they love and shares it with someone then it makes the perfect gift."

Robert Lange, co-owner

with Megan Lange of Robert Lange Studios, Charleston, S.C., says that they have faith in their niche of clients this holiday season. "We think 2025 will be a year where people continue to seek out meaningful, handmade objects and things that feel personal and lasting in a world that's increasingly digital and mass-produced. There's a growing awareness that a painting is one of the few truly handmade creations still being produced today. We expect to see more people gravitate toward original artwork as gifts,



Gallery Guichard is located in Chicago's Bronzeville community.

valuing the story being told, the craftsmanship and the connection behind each piece."

To open the door to new sales, Mr. Lange says that keeping collectors excited about art that is within reach, is a great way to start relationships that last for years to come. "We're preparing for the 2025 holiday season by curating a show that embodies that very spirit with our Small Works Show titled *Mini-Fair*, which opens in early December. The exhibition will feature dozens of pieces under 10 inches,

each created by artists we represent. It's designed to make original art more accessible—not just to collect, but to give. We want people to experience what it feels like to gift something made by hand and something that will last generations." *MiniFair* will open during the December Art Walk and run throughout the holiday season.

"Our biggest concern is the continued pull toward disposable, impersonal shopping, fast trends and mass-produced goods that fill carts but not hearts," he

says. "It's always a challenge to remind people that art is not just decoration, but a piece of human creativity. We see that as part of our mission, to keep that conversation alive. We'll also be hosting special events where visitors can meet the artists and learn about their processes and inspirations, reminding everyone that every brushstroke is made by hand, not by machine."

To combat the predicted sluggish holiday shopping season, Mr. Lange says that they will remind buyers that personalized gifts hold

more weight. "This year, our focus is more personal. Rather than centering on large-scale exhibitions, we're emphasizing intimate, one-of-a-kind works that invite connection. We want to shift the idea of art as something you only collect, but to something you can give—a small painting that carries meaning, not just beauty. We're focusing on both our existing collectors and a new audience of those who may not yet think of themselves as 'art buyers.'"

Marketing for Robert Lange Studios will center on storytelling, through email-newsletters, social media and press features. "We'll highlight the human side of art: the hours, the emotion and the individuality behind each piece. We're also emphasizing the idea of 'gifting handmade'—a concept that stands in beautiful contrast to the mass-market offerings that dominate the season."

Mr. Lange identifies that when it comes to competing for holiday gift-giving dollars, its on a much larger scale than in previous years. "Our biggest competition isn't another gallery, it's convenience. Big box retailers and the endless scroll of online shopping can make art feel optional. But art, we believe, is essential. It brings warmth, meaning, and human touch into homes in a way that no manufactured object can. More than anything, we're hopeful. Every year we see more people discover that

continued on page 18



"Contemporary Vision" 36"x48"
layers of pigmented epoxy on panel



"Butterfly Garden" 40"x70" oil on Belgian linen

Represented by:
Westport River Gallery, Westport, CT
Beacon Fine Art, Red Bank, NJ

John Fatse

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Through a fusion of
mediums and techniques,
my art seeks to challenge
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provoke thought,
prompting a contemplative
journey into the depths
of individual perception.



"Extasea" 39"x39"
mica and pigmented epoxy on panel



"Woke up in a Dream" 36"x36"
mica and pigmented epoxy on panel

HOLIDAY SHOPPING continued from page 16

owning (or gifting) a painting isn't about prestige, it's about connection. Our ethos has always been rooted in that: supporting artists, celebrating craftsmanship and creating a space where art remains what it has always been—a deeply human act."

At Gallery Guichard, Chicago, co-owners Frances Guichard, Andre Guichard and Stephen Mitchell know that weathering economic storms are part of doing business today as they celebrate 20 years in business. "We are predicting an average business holiday season," Ms. Guichard says.

"We understand that the economy is not as good as it was last year, so we are increasing our marketing and hosting of private art and conversation dinners. We are also focusing on our product line of Shona Sculptures from Zimbabwe and our art of the African diaspora from around the world. Our goal is to enlighten our collectors' and art lovers' interests with new, fresh inventory. We have monumental sculptures, life-size sculptures and pedestal-sized sculptures that can be placed inside or outside of any home, small business or corporation. These are stone sculptures from the mountains of Zimbabwe with themes that speak to everyone; they are abstract, as well as culturally significant pieces."

That doesn't mean that they are not going forth

with caution. "The economy is a concern this year," she says. "We are not expecting less revenue, but we are doing everything we can to inform our customers of the opportunities to get fine art that is rare and beautiful to enhance their lives. To do this, we are preparing for our *Artini* art, cocktails and music concert series that brings people together for an experience that is welcoming and inviting. Featuring the fine artist exhibition of Laken Akintola, music by DJ Malik Shabazz who will be collaborating

sonal experiential sales processes with small groups so we can spend more one-on-one time with clients," Ms. Guichard says.

"Additionally, we have extended our monthly networking event *Artini* through the fall to allow our followers to have a consistent outlet during these stressful times. We realize our space is also about mental wellness so we have created the perfect outlet for multigenerational and multicultural groups to gather and enjoy themselves through cul-

we are expecting that people will continue to spend their dollars on things that make them feel good and help to make their homes places of peace and tranquility which also equates to mental well-being. More people are enjoying and spending time in their homes. Living with original art is wellness and it brings good vibes and comfort.

"The holiday season is another opportunity to reach new clients and focus on the business details," she says. "It is a time to collaborate with others and build relationships. We are optimistic that art touches the soul and will continue to uplift each collector making their next art purchase from Gallery Guichard not only a good investment, but an opportunity to benefit from the wellness it provides."

Eddy Bowles, owner of The Corner Custom Framing, located in Denver says that it is hard not to fear the 2025 holiday season as a retailer, but that making the most of it is essential. "I predict that with tariffs and increasing costs of materials combined with economic insecurity that it might be a slower for custom framing orders. We are already experiencing trepidation in our customers with the rising costs of everything."

Making the most of the opportunities in your area is a great way to motivate sales. "Here in Denver we have a thriving concert scene which means we frame a lot of concert pos-



The Corner Custom Framing is located in Denver, CO.

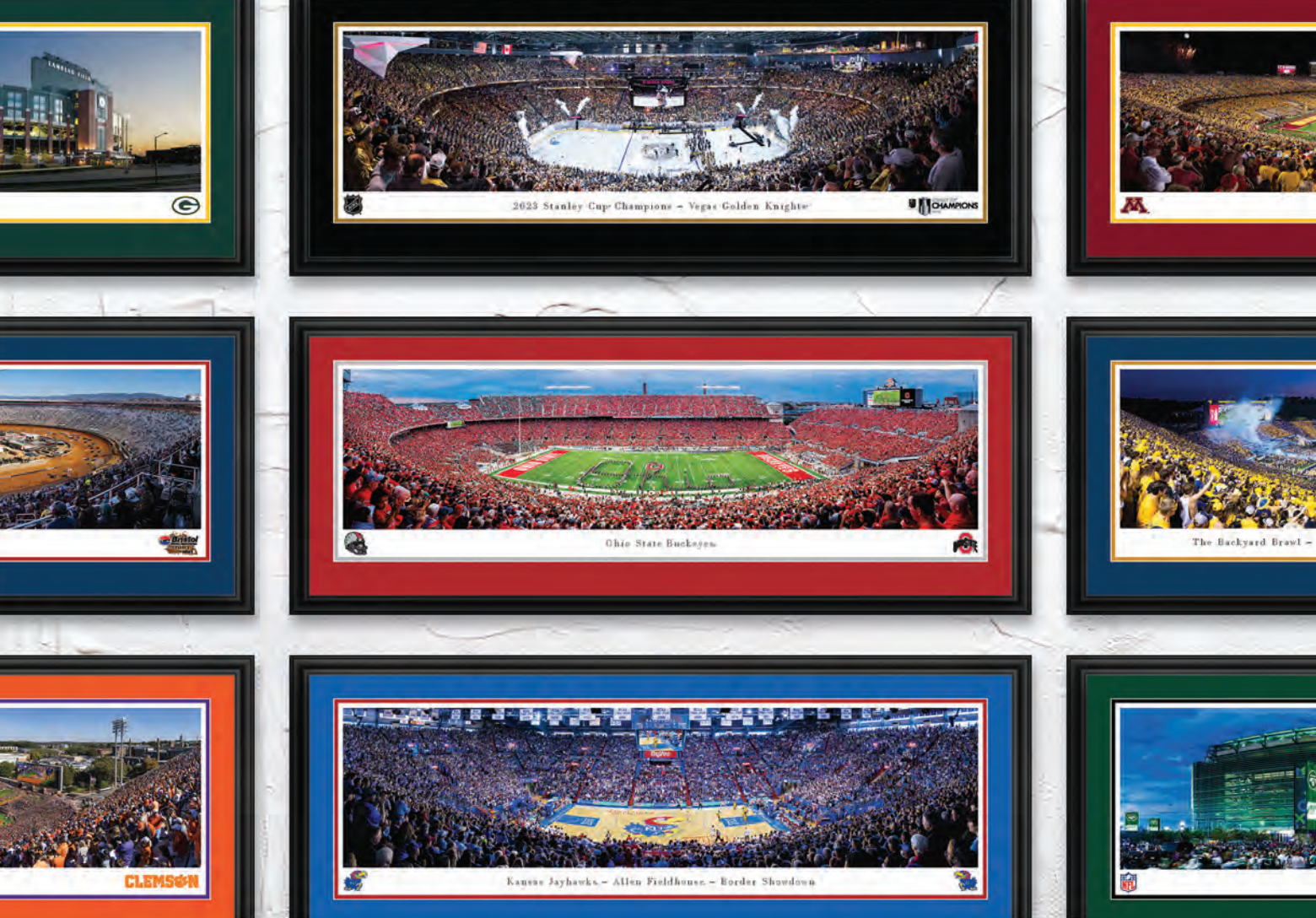
with a guest instrumentalists TBD performing in concert, DJ Rick at Nite in the back gallery, spoken word by Kweisi the Poet and Hip Hop, music duo, Out Past Midnight. This brings people in to enjoy fine art and exposes others to the art that they wouldn't ordinarily experience and brings awareness of the gallery. It is a great way for us to market our other fine artists as well."

Creating an experience around the act of buying art helps to build relationships as well. "We are getting back to more per-

ture. We are trying to reach more people through increased target marketing, and are focusing on new clients who will potentially become buying customers and finding our key customers by informing them of our newest inventory."

When it comes to competition, Ms. Guichard says that it's not actually other retailers. "Travel and holiday activities are usually our biggest competitor. People often spend their budgets on travel and holiday activities during the cold months. With the uncertainty in the economy

continued on page 20



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HOLIDAY SHOPPING
continued from page 18

ters. We have chosen to make lots of 18- by 24-inch frames (standard concert poster size) from excess materials to make it faster and easy to frame posters as gift options," he says. "We do that with several standard sizes. It makes it easier to rush framing projects. We can easily cut mats to fit into the standard sizes to still feel like a fully custom order. We also stock up on some basics that allow us to rush orders. We offer a couple basic moulding options that we have tested over time for reliability, consistency and ease that we keep in stock for cost effective options that are easy to chop and join quickly. If we know something is a

gift and needs to turn-around quickly, we try to design with that in mind by using stock materials and mouldings that we can get locally."

Mr. Bowles knows that gift-giving is a great opportunity for a person to buy something that they may have been put off deeming it non-essential or because of cost. "Custom framing is more of a luxury than a need so it is worrying to see people not as willing to spend on a luxury item. The cost of custom framing is usually a shock to people so in times of economic uncertainty, it is concerning as framers work to make ends meet and be profitable. But we know that what we offer is a personalized product that elevates a person's artwork

and/or items. Because of this, we tend to not worry about Big Box retailers. We have accepted that we are not going to be the cheapest option for framing. People can immediately tell that we are different from a Big Box the second they walk in the door. It is a very different experience than a Big Box or online company. The smell, the sounds and the look/vibe of the space makes a big impact.

"I think people really enjoy the process if they are guided through it thoughtfully. The overall experience that we provide is much more personal and thoughtful," he says. "I am someone who believes that there is a place for all types of frameshops —from budget framing to

online frame options. It's our customer service and overall experience that keep people coming back."

The location of Mr. Bowles' shop allows for many foot traffic sales opportunities. "We are on a very busy corner so we make sure to decorate nicely, inside and out, to help draw people in. From the design table to the pick up area, we try to make it a high-end experience. We take time with the customer to include them in the design details, offer dog treats to customers with dogs, have seats at the design counters and build personal relationships with customers."

Koleen Kaffan is Editor in Chief of Art World News.



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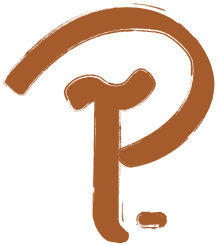
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FRAMING THE FUTURE

MODERN TECH EMPOWERS SMALL BUSINESSES

By Sheila McCumby

Let's be honest. When you opened your gallery or custom framing shop, you likely envisioned contemplative hours surrounded by beautiful art, meaningful discussions with grateful, erudite customers and crafting perfectly splined corners. What you probably didn't envision was wrestling with spreadsheets at 2 AM, playing phone tag with clients or realizing you accidentally ordered enough acid-free foam core to build a small fort. Ah, the glamour of small business ownership!

I attended two national business expos and conferences last month. The urgent message from top business leaders (who are much smarter and richer than I am) is clear: embrace technology. We're at a unique historical turning point, much like 25 years ago when websites and email first became essential. I remember how time-consuming things were in 1993, handwriting orders and faxing everything. (Stop laughing millennials, fax machines were high tech!) Your craftsmanship is timeless, but your business operations shouldn't be stuck in the past. Stubbornly resisting modern technology, insisting on handwritten charts or homemade spreadsheets is a recipe for fading into a techno-phobic memory. Recent tech advances have lev-

eled the playing field, but it's up to us "little guys" to grab the tools and run with them. (Just remember to keep the pointy end far away from you.)

My intention in this article isn't about shaming anyone who hasn't embraced all the

enjoy that fancy cup of coffee on your desk before it gets cold.

Hub of Operations: Point-of-Sale Systems

A modern point-of-sale (POS) system is no longer just a cash register; it's the brain, heart and designated

POS system, Virtual Framer, notes, "The biggest, immediate return on investment (ROI) when implementing a POS system is the elimination of pricing errors. When calculating retail charges manually, framers are forced to over-simplify their pricing. This prevents them from benefiting from comprehensive, consistent, higher-profit formulas, including sliding markups, shipping charges and labor. Archaic manual pricing methods lead to a loss of valuable time and potential revenue. Accurate, consistent and comprehensive pricing is only possible with a POS system. To maintain profitability, every shop should adopt one."

- **Inventory Management:** Say goodbye to guesswork and inaccurate financial reports. This saves countless hours and helps you catch mistakes before they happen.

- **Sales Tracking & Reporting:** Detailed reports mean you stop guessing and start making informed, data-driven decisions. It's like having a full-time business analyst at your fingertips.

- **Customer Relationship Management (CRM):** Store client contacts info, purchase history, material preferences, and even notes about their adorable dog. This allows for truly personalized service ("Welcome back, Mr. Davies!")



new-fangled gadgets or turning your studio into a sterile tech hub. I do want you to educate yourself and consider adopting valuable tools: specifically, AI, POS systems, CMCs, scheduling apps and virtual assistants that can efficiently streamline your day and increase profits. The goal? More time for art, more time for clients and, perhaps, enough time to

driver of your entire operation. As a consultant, I've seen clients boost their gross sales by 15% or more simply by implementing a POS system and eliminating pricing errors.

A robust POS system provides:

- **Accurate, consistent pricing:** As Khaled Feki, Ffounder and CEO of the

continued on page 24

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FRAMING THE FUTURE *continued from page 22*

How's that lovely landscape we framed for your study last year?") the key to building loyalty.

In short, a POS system removes administrative drudgery and gives you a clear, honest picture of your business' health, at the touch of a button.

Computerized Mat Cutters (CMCs) Don't Call in Sick

I've cut thousands of mats by hand and have the scars and carpal tunnel to prove it. Acquiring a Computerized Mat Cutter (CMC) is life changing. This technology is the ultimate, tireless apprentice, particularly when tackling complex designs and multi-opening mats.

The benefits are immediate:

- **Precision and Profit:** CMCs virtually eliminate measurement errors and material waste, boosting profitability instantly.
- **Rapid, Advanced Design:** Design time is cut to minutes. CMCs come with extensive cutting catalogs and with path-tracing allow you to easily create and save intricate, customer-specific features. This significantly elevates your high-margin design offerings.
- **Consistency and Training:** Training new staff on a CMC is far faster than teaching hand-cutting proficiency. This ensures consistent, high-quality results regardless of who is operating the machine.

The CMC perfectly embodies how modern tech empowers traditional craft. It

enhances your artistic offerings while eliminating the pain points of waste, time, and inconsistency.

The Brains Behind the Beauty: Artificial Intelligence (AI)

Don't worry, we're not talking about Skynet hijacking your framing decisions. The AI for small businesses is more like that incredibly organized, adorably nerdy assistant who anticipates your needs. While AI might not be picking out your next gallery exhibition (yet), it can



certainly make the process of running your shop easier.

AI's practical benefits for your business include:

- **Inventory Forecasting:** Predicting demand to optimize stock levels.
- **Marketing Ideas and Social Media Posts:** Generating content to keep your online presence fresh and engaging.
- **Chatbots and FAQs:** Providing instant answers on your website landing page,

freeing up your time.

AI is a silent genius, helping your business look more polished and professional with minimal effort.

Finding more time: Scheduling Apps and Virtual Assistants

Managing appointments, consultations, pick-ups, and installations can quickly devolve into chaos. Your two secret weapons for reclaiming your time are scheduling apps and Virtual Assistants (VAs). These are low cost

tions anytime, even after hours.

- **Automated Reminders:** Say goodbye to no-shows with automated text or email reminders.
- **Calendar Sync and Resource Management:** Seamlessly integrate with your existing calendar and manage studio space or equipment availability.

The Remote Relief of Virtual Assistants (VAs)

A VA is a real person offering professional administrative, technical or creative assistance remotely. They are the magical elves of your business operations: tasks on your "to-do" list mysteriously get accomplished.

A VA can handle:

- **Customer Service & Communications:** Managing your general inbox, responding to social media inquiries and handling essential client follow-ups.
- **Marketing Support:** Scheduling social media posts, assisting with blog posts and updating your online gallery inventory, all tasks that feel like low-priority distractions when you're focusing on custom work.
- **Administrative Tasks:** Invoicing, generating reports with your new POS system, coordinating with installers and even light bookkeeping.

The biggest benefit of using VA is delegation. It allows the owner, who is often the most skilled framer and creative visionary to focus on the craft and high-value client consultations. You are buying back the most precious commodity: time to be creative.

options that are worth every penny.

Stopping the Phone Tag Madness with Scheduling Apps

Scheduling apps take the management of your most valuable asset, your time, out of your frantic hands and place it into the calm, cool logic of a digital interface.

Benefits include:

- **24/7 Online Booking:** Clients can book consulta-

continued on page 26



Passages II, 60 by 48 inches



Water's Edge, 60 by 48 inches

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Black Rock Beach, 72 by 48 inches



Morning Walk, 48 by 60 inches

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FRAMING THE FUTURE
continued from page 24

**It's Time To Embrace
The Future**

The world of art and framing, with its emphasis on precision, quality materials and personal touch, is deeply rooted in tradition. But tradition shouldn't equate to inefficiency. By embracing the practical applications of AI, utilizing a POS system for intelligent operations, using a CMC to reduce time and material waste, deploying a scheduling app to manage your time and engaging a Virtual Assistant to handle administrative noise, small businesses can achieve a level of professionalism and scalability previously only enjoyed by much larger chains.

The future of art and fram-

ing isn't just about beautiful creations; it's also about in-

see it as an extension of your own two hands, a tool to help



telligent, thoughtful operations. Don't fear technology;

you create, connect and, most importantly, thrive with-

out losing your mind in the process. Start small, research the tools that solve your biggest pain points, and remember: the best frame for success is one built on efficiency.

Sheila McCumby, owner of Strategies for Success, a small business consulting firm, connects with audiences worldwide as a popular speaker, writer, mentor and teacher. Her podcast, 'The Framing Chronicles' focuses on challenges faced by independent companies in the art and framing industry. With decades of experience as a picture framer and shop owner (since the early 90s), she's dedicated to helping small businesses boost profits and streamline operations. For more details, visit: www.mystrategies4success.com.

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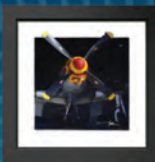
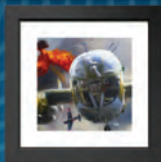
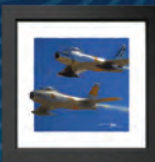
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SVETA ESSER CELEBRATES 30-YEAR CAREER

Artist Sveta Esser celebrates 30 years as a professional artist next year—a career that has amassed a collector base from worldwide, exhibited her work at various galleries and museums, having been featured in dozens and dozens of high-end art fairs around the world and has invented, and perfected, a new style of painting called Pixel Art.

This unique application of oil and acrylic using a palette

knife to create a pixelated look on canvas has helped to develop a collector base hungry for her original and limited edition work, represented by Smart Publishing and Blue Gallery in Coral Springs and Delray Beach, FL. Her landscape work is not created using the Pixel art technique, but features bold contemporary colors and beautiful curves.

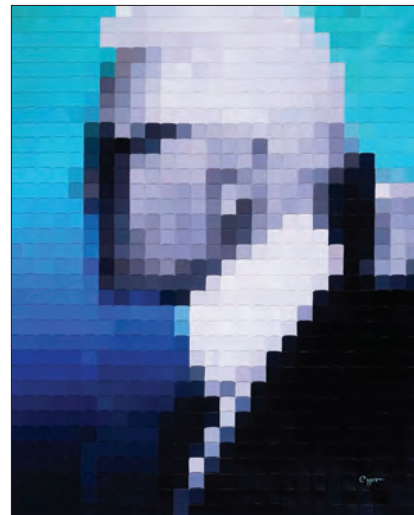
Born in Ukraine in 1975, Esser studied art from an early age and, encouraged by her parents, she studied art at the Yekaterinburg College of Art in the Russian Urals. While attending college, where she earned her first art degree, she met and later married fellow artist Alex Pauker. After graduating, the couple began a new life in Is-

rael where they lived for many years in an artists' village in Haifa. Today they live in Berlin, Germany, with their two children.

Esser enrolled in a student exchange program and earned her second art degree. During her studies she also gained experience working as an illustrator and a creative consultant at a publishing house.

She also began experimenting with new styles of painting. Using her signature palette knife, she began to create an image in a series of equal sized squares—starting at the top of the canvas and each a different color. From the naked eye it appears as an abstract image but in a photo or through a camera lens, the image comes to life. Her collections include bold oil and acrylic on canvas landscapes and Pop icon faces and imagery using her pixelism technique of Frida Kahlo, James Dean, Audrey Hepburn, Marilyn Monroe, Albert Einstein, Charlie Chap-

lin, Karl Lagerfeld and more. Esser's process begins with the idea and then, she says,



Sveta Esser's "Karl Profile Aqua" is an acrylic on canvas, 56 by 70 inches.

she gets lost in its substance. "It doesn't matter what's going on around me.



"LOVE America" by Esser is an acrylic on canvas measuring 50 by 50 inches.

I'm so immersed in my work that I don't hear anything else—I'm in my own world."

Sharing a studio with her husband, Esser and Pauker critique each other's work, bringing objectivity into play and taking their paintings to a new level.

As she became a professional artist in 1996 while living in Israel, it wasn't until 2000 that she began having her work featured in galleries and well-established, exclusive and sought-after art fairs worldwide. That year, she exhibited in Art Expo New York, ABC in Atlanta, GA; Art Expo San Francisco and Art 21 in Las Vegas, NV.

These fairs helped to introduce her work to a broader audience, opening the door for more gallery representation and her growing collector base. Since then, she has been featured in countless art publications and blogs, fine art fair catalogues and has exhibited in dozens and dozens of fairs. Recent notable exhibits include Art Wynwood 2024 in Miami, SCOPE Miami Beach 2021, Art Palm Beach 2019, as well as Context Art Miami for various years.

For further information on Sveta Esser's artwork, telephone Smart Publishing at (954) 282-6945 or visit the company's website at: www.smart-publishing.com.

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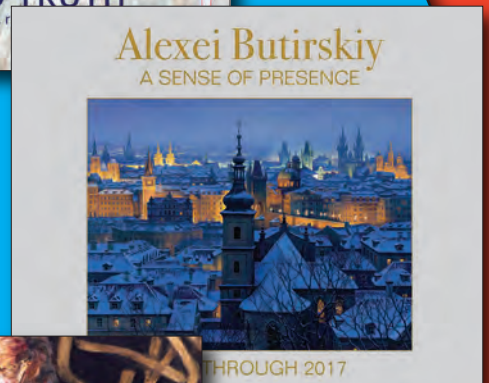
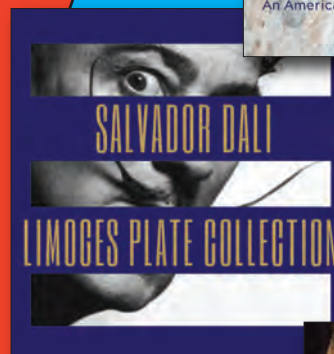
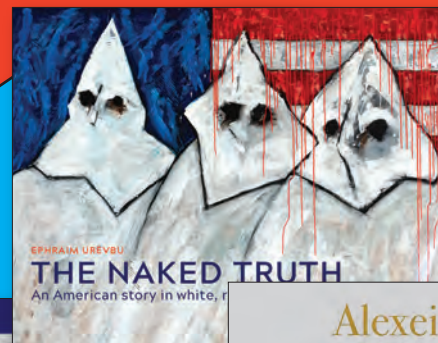
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TURN FESTIVE CHEER INTO YEAR-END SUCCESS

By Litsa Spanos

The holidays are more than just twinkle lights and peppermint mochas—they're also the single most emotionally charged and commercially powerful time of year. For those of us in the creative industries, it's a season brimming with opportunity. But unlike mass-produced retail, selling art or design requires something deeper: connection, storytelling and strategy.

After 30 years in the business, I've seen that when handled thoughtfully, the final months of the year can be both profitable and fulfilling. Whether you're showcasing your work, curating for others, or helping clients refresh their spaces, these strategies will help you turn seasonal excitement into lasting relationships (and sales).

1. Tap Into the Emotion of the Season

People don't just buy art during the holidays—they feel it. A 2024 Deloitte study revealed that 71% of consumers prioritize gifts that create emotional connection over luxury or price. That's good news for us, because art is emotion made visible.

When speaking with clients, lead with feeling. Instead of focusing on materials or dimensions, ask: What emotion do you want

this piece to bring into your space—or to the person receiving it? Whether it's serenity, joy, or nostalgia, tying art to emotion transforms interest into purchase.



Pro Tip: Practice “emotional selling.” Share the story behind a piece or the inspiration behind a collec-



tion. During the holidays, connection sells better than any promotion ever could.

2. Make Art Gifting Simple (and Special)

Gifting art can feel intimidating. People worry: Will they like it? Does it fit their style? Simplify it. Offer beautifully packaged gift certificates or Art Gifting Consultations where clients can send photos of a room and get guided recommendations.

Some galleries even offer Art Subscription Boxes—small works or prints delivered quarterly. Designers might collaborate with artists on custom client gifts like tabletop sculptures or one-of-a-kind ornaments.

gifting should be.

3. Refreshing Spaces for the Season

Beyond gifts, the holidays are when people crave change. According to a 2023 Houzz survey, 67% of homeowners say they're inspired to refresh their interiors between Thanksgiving and New Year's.

That's your moment. Position art as the finishing touch to their seasonal update. Offer “holiday refresh” consultations focused on rotating collections or reimagining displays.

Artists: Create limited-edition works with metallics or smaller formats—pieces that complement festive décor but remain timeless.

Designers: Encourage clients to decorate with art, not clutter. A new piece brings sophistication without adding to the chaos of tinsel and bows.

4. Harness the Power of Social Proof and Storytelling

Social media is one of the strongest tools for holiday selling, but success depends on authenticity. Research from Sprout Social shows that “real moments” posts—artists painting, galleries hanging new works,

continued on page 32



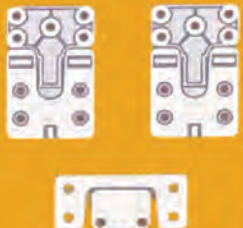
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RETAIL STRATEGIES

continued from page 30

designers styling rooms—generate over double the engagement of polished ads.

Encourage clients to share their art purchases with a hashtag or testimonial. Real people celebrating real art builds trust and inspiration.

Pro Tip: Try a “12 Days of Art” campaign in December. Feature a new piece or artist each day leading up to your event or shipping deadline. Include QR codes or direct links to purchase—it’s equal parts storytelling and sales strategy.

5. Use Events to Build Urgency and Community

Art is about experience—and during the holidays, people crave memorable ones. Go beyond the traditional gallery opening and host “Sip & Shop” nights, holiday artist markets, or VIP preview brunches.

Collaborate with local wineries, florists, or boutiques to cross-promote and attract new audiences. Studies show that co-hosted events see up to 40% higher attendance than solo ones.

Create exclusivity by offering early-access hours or limited-edition previews for collectors and design clients. When people know something is one-of-a-kind, they’re far more likely to act fast.

6. Don’t Neglect Corporate Gifting

Businesses are eager to give meaningful gifts beyond

the usual branded mugs or gift baskets—and art fits perfectly. Reach out to corporate clients and real estate professionals with a curated Corporate Gifting Catalog featuring locally made art, framed prints, or small sculptures.

Offer price tiers (\$100–\$1,000), custom packaging, and local delivery options. Art not only reflects sophistication but also supports the creative community—something companies increasingly value.



7. Offer Flexible, Stress-Free Options

By mid-December, buyers are juggling chaos. The easier you make their lives, the more likely they are to buy. Offer complimentary gift wrapping, free delivery, and ready-to-hang installation services.

Even better, introduce a “New Year Delivery” option: buyers can purchase now and schedule delivery for January once the decorations come down. According to the National Retail Federation, 82% of shoppers are more likely to purchase when offered con-

venience-based add-ons.

8. Follow Up with Heart

The sale doesn’t end when the art leaves your hands—it’s just the beginning of the relationship. Follow up with handwritten thank-you cards or a personal note from the artist. Email professional photos of the piece installed or share styling tips for complementary works.

In January, send a warm message asking: “How are

you enjoying your new piece?” That small gesture often leads to referrals, repeat business, or commissions.

9. Keep Post-Holiday Momentum Going

While others slow down in January, stay visible. Launch a “New Year, New Space” campaign or host a post-holiday open house to showcase fresh work. Send newsletters featuring client installations or upcoming spring collections.

A study by the Association of Art Museum Directors found that collectors

who purchase during the holidays are 43% more likely to buy again within six months—so keep nurturing those new connections.

The Takeaway

The holidays aren’t just about selling—they’re about connecting. When you sell art, you’re helping people express emotion, celebrate relationships, and elevate the spaces they live in. Whether you’re helping someone find the perfect gift, refresh their home, or mark a meaningful milestone, remember that you’re not just selling artwork—you’re enriching lives.

So, this season, lead with heart. Celebrate creativity. And remember—while the holidays may come and go, the joy that art brings lasts far beyond the season.

Litsa Spanos is the President of ADC Fine Art in Cincinnati, Ohio, and the founder of Art Design Consultants Inc., SmartSell Membership, author “Secrets of the Art World” and founder of ACA, Art Comes Alive—one of the nation’s premier art recognition and sales programs connecting artists with private and corporate collectors. 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. ADC Fine Art has two locations: a 13,000 square foot gallery and custom frameshop in Cincinnati, OH’s west end and a gallery and custom frameshop in the heart of Ft. Thomas, KY. For more details, visit the ADC website: www.adcfineart.com.

Lovely Afternoon at Battersea Park



Westport River Gallery, Westport, CT, presents "Lovely Afternoon at Battersea Park" by British artist Stephen Hawkins, an oil on panel measuring 16 by 12 inches. The retail price is \$875. For more information, call (203) 226-6934 or visit the gallery's website located at: www.westportrivergallery.com.

Relentless Sea



Greenwich Workshop, located in Seymour, CT, introduces "Relentless Sea" by Don Demers as a giclée on canvas in an edition of 50, measuring 36 by 24 inches. The retail price is \$750. For more details, call (800) 243-4246 or visit: www.greenwichworkshop.com.

Will of the Wind 1



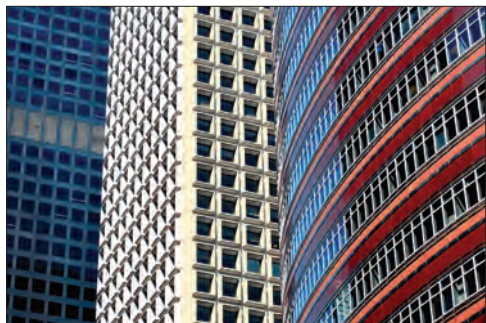
Studio EL, Emeryville, CA, debuts "Will of the Wind 1" by Janelle Baglien, available in two sizes: 36 by 18 inches and 48 by 24 inches on various mediums including fine art paper, canvas, acrylic (clear), glossy laminate acrylic, brushed aluminum, white aluminum and birch. For further information, phone (800) 228-0928 or visit: www.studioel.com.

Respawn

Limelight Agency, Chatsworth, CA, debuts "Respawn" by Gabe Leonard as a hand-embellished giclée on canvas in an edition of seven, with studio proofs also available. The image size is 30 by 48 inches. For further information, go to the Limelight Agency website located at: www.limelightagency.com.



WHAT'S HOT IN OPEN EDITIONS



Glass Houses 25

Studio EL, Emeryville, CA, presents Peter Neumann's "Glass Houses 25," available as a giclée on paper and canvas, as well as clear acrylic, brushed aluminum, Baltic birchwood, glossy laminate on acrylic in various sizes. Price available upon request. Phone

(800) 228-0928 for more information, or go to: www.studioel.com.

Damask in Gold I

"Damask in Gold I" by Ellie Roberts is available as POD, retailing from \$42 to \$384. Phone C Brand Studios, located in San Diego, at (858) 554-0102 or go to: www.cbrandstudios.com.



Blue Boats IV

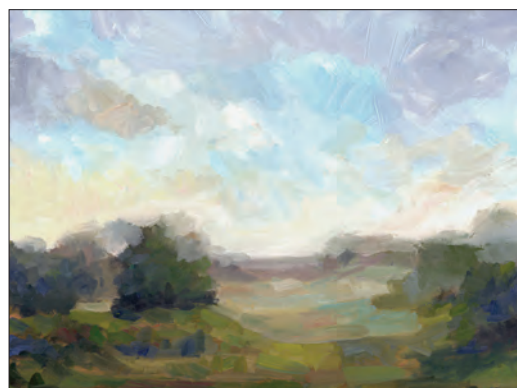
"Blue Boats IV" by Marta Wiley measures 45 by 18 inches and retails for \$50 on



standard paper. Available on multiple substrates and multiple sizes. Call Image Conscious, San Francisco, at (800) 532-2333 for more information, or visit the website located at: www.imageconscious.com.

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Fine Day



"Fine Day" by Dena Ann Adams is a large format custom giclée on matte paper measuring 36 by 24 inches (\$102). Telephone A.D. Lines, located in Monroe, CT, at (800) 836-0994 or visit: www.ad-lines.com.

Circled Floral II

"Circled Floral II" by Dan Meneely measures 24 by 36 inches and retails for \$30. For more information, call Sun-Dance Graphics, located in Orlando, FL, at (800) 617-5532, or go to the company's website at: www.sdgraphics.com.

Autumn in Nature XX



"Autumn in Nature XX" by Lisa Audit measures 36 by 24 inches and retails for \$35. Call Roaring Brook Art in Elmsford, NY, for further information at (888) 779-9055, or go to the company's website located at: www.roaringbrookart.com.



Beachcomber

"Beachcomber" by Trevor Copenhaver is available in various sizes and substrates in Third & Wall's Print-On-Demand program. For details, call Third & Wall Art Group, Seattle, at (877) 326-3925 or visit: www.thirdandwall.com.

Christmas Deer in the Forest

"Christmas Deer in the Forest" by Nicole DeCamp measures 12 by 16 inches and retails for \$15. Phone Penny Lane Fine Art & Licensing, located in New Carlisle, Ohio, at (800) 273-5263, or go to the website at: www.pennylanefineart.com.



Tasty Tins

"Tasty Tins" by Veronique Charron measures from 6 by 8 inches to 57 by 76 inches and retails from \$21 to \$440. Phone Wild Apple, Woodstock, VT, at (800) 756-8359 or go to: www.wildapple.com.

Florida State Seminoles Storm the Field

"Florida State Seminoles Storm the Field" by James Blakeway measures 40 by 13 1/2 inches and retails for \$35. For details, call Blakeway Worldwide Panoramas Inc. in Minneapolis, MN, at (800) 334-7266, or go to: www.panoramas.com.



HERE ARE THE
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October Moon II



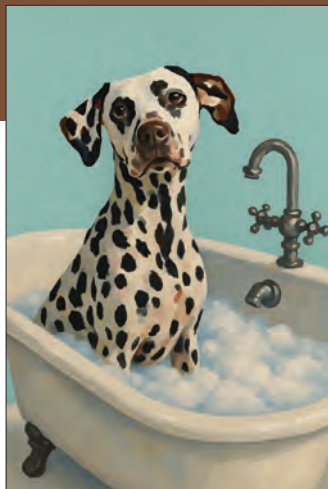
"October Moon II" by Michael Willett is available as POD. Telephone World Art Group, located in Richmond, VA, for further information at (804) 213-0600 or go to the company's website located at: www.theworldartgroup.com.

Dawn's Embrace



"Dawn's Embrace" by Mike Calascibetta measures 36 by 24 inches and retails for \$35. For further information, telephone Galaxy of Graphics, located in Fair Lawn, NJ, at (201) 806-2100 or go to the company's website at: www.galaxyofgraphics.com.

OPEN EDITION PRINTS



SunDance Graphics

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www.sdgraphics.com
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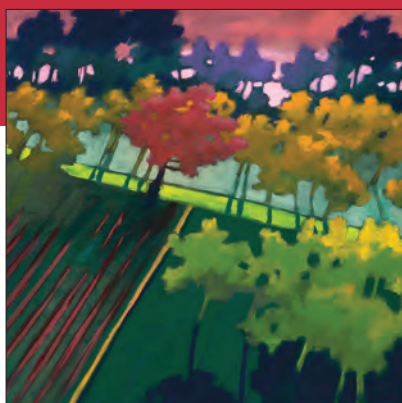
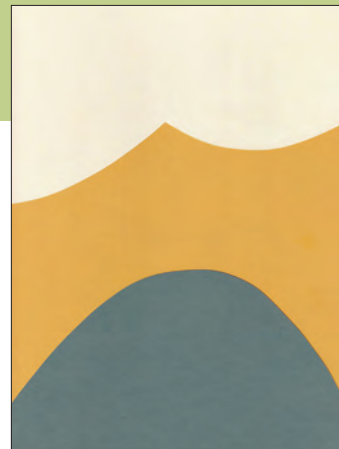
Image Conscious

"Between No. 1"
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800.532.2333

www.imageconscious.com



Studio EL

"Long Shadows 2"
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Available as POD in
multiple sizes.

800.228.0928

www.studioel.com

Image Conscious

"Palm Trees"
by Dani Heyward
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canvas, cotton rag paper, acrylic,
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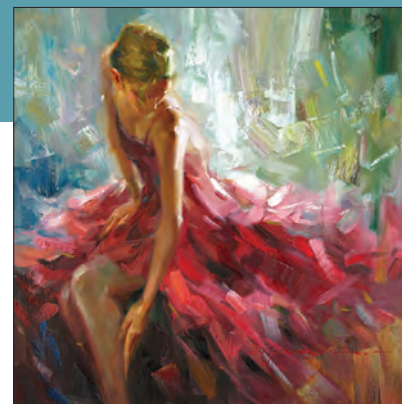
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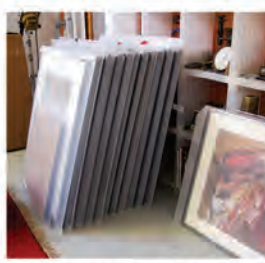
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Art World News, (ISSN 1525 1772) Volume XXX, Number 10, is published 12 times a year by Wellspring Communications, Inc., P.O. Box 129, Rowayton, CT 06853. (Phone 203.854.8566) (Fax 203.900.0225). Single copy price \$10.
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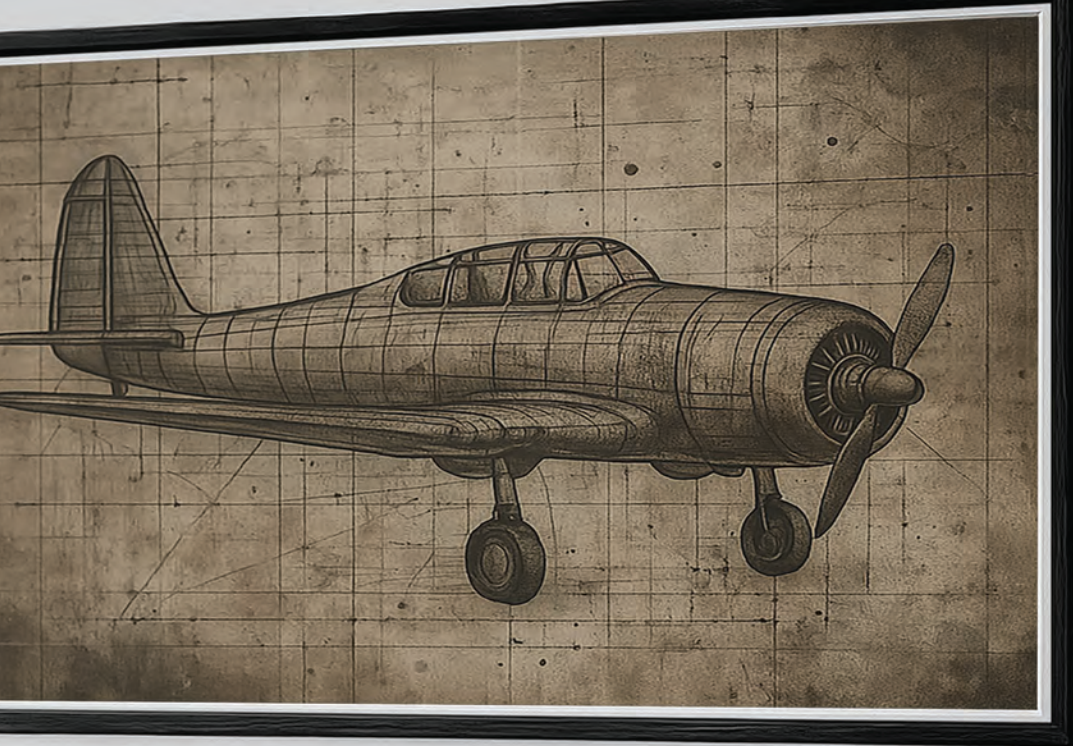
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