

Art World News

JANUARY 2026

THE INDEPENDENT NEWS SOURCE

PARK WEST GALLERY PRESENTS STICKMAN

This month, artist Trevor "Stickman" Stickel celebrated a successful solo fine art exhibition at Park West Gallery, New York, NY, as well as the U.S. premiere of *Stickman: Art for the Rebel Soul*, a Canadian short documentary about the artist. Go to page 14.

THE HIDDEN CHALLENGES OF RUNNING A GALLERY

Gallery Fuel's Katherine Hébert discusses how the traditional gallery model, especially as it's been defined over the last 15 to 20 years, is increasingly misaligned with sustainability, personal capacity and long-term resilience—and how to remedy it. Go to page 25.

THE NEXT GENERATION OF COLLECTORS

Industry insider Sheila McCumby asks, are you ready to stop being "Grandma's Framer" and start being the shop than courts the "Next Gen" customers who will ensure that you survive the next 30 years? Page 20.

SIX POWERFUL WAYS TO START 2026 STRONG

The start of a new year offers more than a clean calendar—it's an opportunity to reset your mindset, refine your strategy and realign your life with what truly matters. For business owners, especially those who have been in the game for years, 2026 isn't about doing more—it's about doing better. Page 24.



ABRA Gallery is located in Fort Lauderdale, FL.

INDUSTRY PREDICTS NEW YEAR BUSINESS STRATEGIES

Year after year, the art and framing industry faces unique challenges compared to other retailers, but as we roar into 2026, the obstacles become more universal. Economic setbacks, the cost of tariffs and their impact on inflation (reducing consumer purchasing power) and political unrest are all factors in how retailers buy, sell and make the most of consumer trends. At the end of the day, adapting to this rollercoaster is more important this year than ever. Many in the art and framing industry are finding that 2026 is all about knowing who your customer is, what matters to them and how to meet their needs in a way that keeps them feeling good about their purchase and experience. This is something that this industry has an upper hand in and because of this, many feel positive about the new year. "We expect both our industry

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QUOTE OF THE MONTH:
"There is a lot of art and even more noise. The challenge is getting people to slow down and actually connect with the work instead of just scrolling past it."

Kaveh Abrishami, page 16

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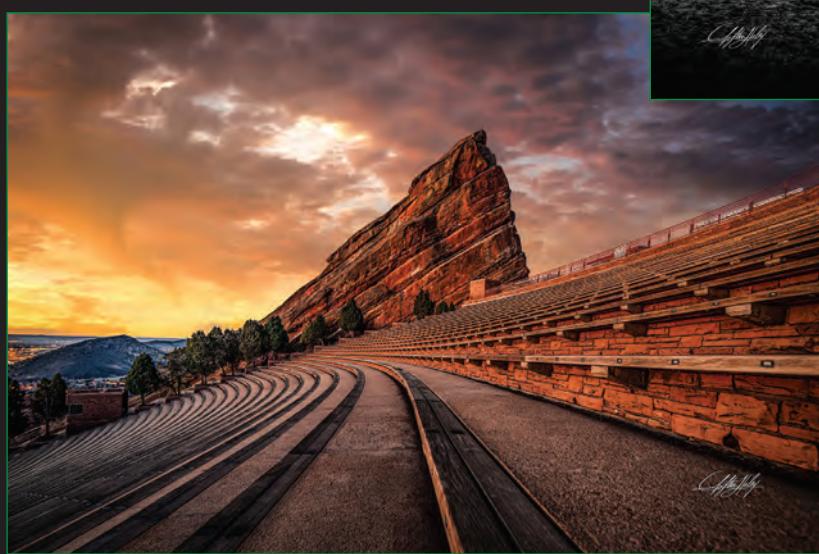
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Industry Predicts New Year Strategies

Many in the art and framing industry are finding that 2026 is about knowing who your customer is, what matters to them and how to meet their needs in a way that keeps them feeling good about their purchase.

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The Next Generation Of Collectors

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Six Powerful Ways To Start 2026 Strong

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The Challenges of Running a Gallery

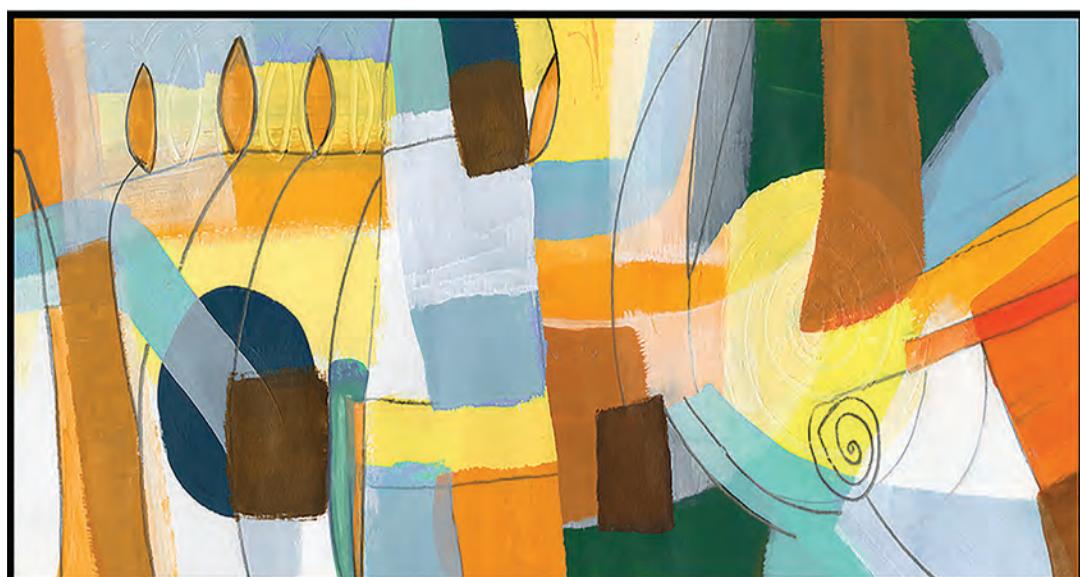
Katherine Hébert discusses how the traditional gallery model is increasingly misaligned with sustainability, personal capacity and long-term resilience, and the best ways to remedy it.

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

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IN OUR OPINION

Finding Diamonds in the Sand... Or Snow!

Folks are weary. Having somehow squeezed through holiday spending gauntlet, they've started the year battered by continued economic uncertainty and, in most areas, horrific weather. As the cold headwinds blow, consumers are largely walking about with their heads down.

So, while some galleries are able to "follow the money" to hospitable climates and pools of wealth, most art galleries and frameshops need to make things work on Main St. and focus on coddling, coaxing and catering to those within their midst who can happily spend money with them.

In an era of tariff pricing, shrinkflation and inflation consumers have become much more sensitive to price. First, as a driver of the value equation and secondly, as the amount of money buying art or

framing represents to each person as it flies out of their wallet. So, the clarity of pricing is an important part of the sale. People need to know the fairness of the price from the onset. If questions and doubts linger in the mind of a prospect, the sale most likely won't happen.

However, once the pricing hurdle is cleared, the part that our industry is so very good with—the ability to allow people to seek and become delighted with the uniqueness and creativity behind everything we sell—emerges. In most scenarios, not being responsive or empathetic to pricing concerns, the prospect's motivation will never get off the ground. So, it becomes a delicate dance of knowing how people think before you can make them feel. Overall, the amount of effort needed isn't any greater, it's just that the new choreography takes a little time to learn.

John Haffey
Publisher



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ARTISTS & PUBLISHERS

New Glass from Kasper Contemporary

Kasper Contemporary, located in East Quogue, NY, presents "Bubble Fish," limited edition glass sculpture by Dylan Martinez. Part of the artist's ongoing *Water Bag* series, the new work presents a striking visual paradox: fish appear suspended in water, yet the vessel contains no liquid at all. Each fish is formed entirely of air, precisely trapped between layers of glass, producing a hyper-realistic illusion that blurs the line between solid and fluid. For further information, call (646) 267-1374 or visit the gallery's website located at: www.kaspercontemporary.com.



"Bubble Fish Trio" by artist Dylan Martinez are hollow and solid hot sculpted hand-blown glass.

Lanfranco Work Featured in Event

Artist Katerina Lanfranco, Brooklyn, NY, recently participated in The Woodstock Byrdcliffe Guild's 26th Annual 5 by 7 Show, one of Woodstock's premier events, showcasing artists from the Hudson Valley and beyond, and held at Kleinert James Gallery. The show features artists from the Hudson Valley and beyond who create art of various styles and media, exhibited anonymously, and sold for \$150 each. The artist's name is revealed after the work is sold. Lanfranco is known for her dynamic paintings, drawings, mixed media works and sculpture. For more details, go to the artist's website located at: www.katerinalanfranco.com.



"Linger" is an oil on canvas.

Studio EL Signs Two New Artists



"West Marin" by painter Leslie Allen.

Studio EL, Emeryville, CA, has signed two new artists, painter Leslie Allen and mixed media artist Roya Adjory. With a suite of 26 new works, Allen composes scenes that range from endearing and familiar pastoral landscapes to the sweeping drama of the California coast. Adjory's debut collection with Studio EL features 27 cheerful transitional floral images as seen on page 5. Telephone (800) 228-0928 or visit: www.studioel.com.

Kertész and Escher Exhibit in NYC

Bruce Silverstein Gallery, New York, NY, presents *Between Order and Chaos: André Kertész and M.C. Escher*, an exhibition that brings together two influential artists who each uniquely and independently redefined how visual reality is perceived. Shown will be a focused selection of original art prints by Escher alongside vintage photographs by Kertész spanning his eight-decade career. For more information, phone (212) 691-5509 or go to: www.brucesilverstein.com.



"Pont Des Arts, Paris" by André Kertész is a gelatin silver print measuring 16 by 20 inches.

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NEWARK, NJ—**Mana Contemporary** join forces with Monira Foundation in a fundraising event called *Reflections: Portraits That Define Community, A Fundraiser for The Sharing Place and Monira Foundation*, an exhibition celebrating the people, connections and care that shape our shared lives. The gallery is inviting artists to participate with each receiving an 8- by 10-inch panel to create a portrait reflecting what community means to them: friend, neighbor, memory or self. Together, these works will form a collective installation at Mana Contemporary, on view April 10th to 24th, with a fundraising event on April 24, 2026. Sign up is between now and February 27, 2026. Finished works are due back to Mana Contemporary by March 31, 2026. All media are welcome, and every submitted piece will be included. Proceeds will be split equally between The Sharing Place (a local food bank), supporting food access in Hudson County, and the Monira Foundation's artist programs. The work will help sustain both artists and families, reinforcing a vision of generosity, equity and creative community. Shown is "Dry Spell" by Mana artist Kristian Battell. For more details, visit the gallery at: www.manaccontemporary.com.

INDUSTRY PREDICTS NEW YEAR STRATEGIES

continued from page 1

and the overall economy to improve in 2026," says Josh Eichner, vice president of Framerica. "Lower interest rates and less uncertainty will help all sectors. One of the challenges facing our industry is the lack of innovation and inspiration necessary for designers, specifiers and consumers to act.

"As one of the only domestic picture frame moulding manufacturer's in the country, we understand that new and exciting finishes and textures are critical, and that our emerging technology can reinvent the way people perceive framed art. New collections will be unveiled soon."

With all of the research done by analysts and economists to try to predict what 2026 will bring, one thing remains constant, consumers will continue to spend, just less and more carefully. The struggling job market, healthcare costs and increasing day-to-day living expenses are greatly reducing discretionary spending, according to Moody's Ratings noting that real personal consumption expenditure growth to slow to 1.5% this year. This is down from the 2.5% to 3% annual growth tracked from 2023 to 2024. With this, Forrester Research

Inc. forecasts that specialty retailers, like the art and framing industry, will likely be hit the hardest and that those retailers will have to fight harder for consumer dollars. The winners will be those that differentiate themselves by offering value and service.



Framerica is located in Yaphank, NY.

Fawn Floyd-Baltzer, marketing and design manager of Wizard International says that understanding retailers' concerns is important. "It's hard to predict, but we expect sales to be flat, or modestly up, from last year. Many customers are



Neuberg & Neuberg Importers is located in Los Angeles.

still dealing with supplier price increases, inventory and supply chain issues, and a cautious economic outlook as inflation keeps overhead high," she says.

Inevitable industry trends also play a role for business-to-business sales. This is where the strength

of the industry must step up. "A major challenge is the demographic shift as long-time framers begin to retire. We're seeing more shops change hands to new owners, often younger and new to the trade. Some of our customers are finding success in passing their business to a family member or key employee, but many lack a successor and ultimately close for good. There's a continuity gap with fewer people entering the industry to replace those who are exiting."

To keep those in the industry excited about what there is to offer, Wizard will continue to champion technology adoption in 2026. "Our Computerized Mat Cutters and FrameShop design software, paired with POS systems and marketing tools, help framers work more efficiently and run smarter, more profitable operations. We also encourage customers to invest in their brand and online presence so they can function like a modern retail business and reach new audiences."

Ms. Floyd-Baltzer says that meeting the needs of Wizard's clients is their main goal for the year. "We'll keep adding value through product and service enhancements, improv-

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Minds Eye Photos

Photography by Alan Goldberg

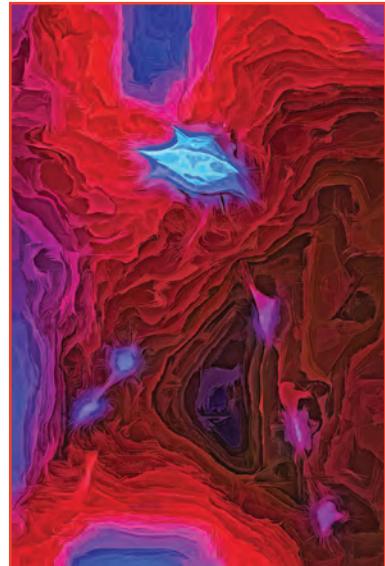


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“My work is somewhere between photography and art as I tap into the fabric of one’s soul.”



Alan Goldberg has exhibited at Miami Art Week, Artexpo New York, Art San Diego, Paris Art Expo, Palma, 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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WILD APPLE ADDS TO WEBSITE PORTFOLIO FEATURE



WOODSTOCK, VT—**Wild Apple** adds a new addition to its Portfolio feature on its website located at: www.wildapple.com. Retailers can now send hi-res files faster. Send a portfolio directly to the team to quickly confirm availability, allowing a project to move forward. The Portfolio feature is a workspace for saving, sharing and curating art. Save artwork as you browse, organize images by project or product line and share collections with your team. Everything stays in one place so nothing gets lost and projects keep moving. The process is easy. Download a PDF to review, present or share internally. Then, download low-res watermarked JPEGs for mockups, line reviews or planning. Wild Apple's website features many video and written tutorials on how to use the feature. Also included on the website is the *Lookbook* where the company discusses trends and how they can be presented across formats, finishes and product categories. Shown is a recent trend of moody florals, folklore-inspired scenes and nocturne art. For more information, telephone (800) 756-8359 or go to the company's website at: www.wildapple.com.

NEW YEAR PREDICTIONS *continued from page 10*

ing the user experience and advancing our hardware and software based on customer feedback. We'll also track consumer trends and shifts in buying behavior to help framers adapt. With Wizard's products, shops can generate demand, showcase their creative capabilities and increase profitability.

Another way to excite the new generation of custom framers means attending trade shows, such as Framing Expo 2026 in February, and building a community. "We're excited to welcome new and returning framers to our booth at Framing Expo 2026 in Orlando this February. We're proud to support this event, engage with our loyal customers and meet new Wizard users. We look forward to offering live demonstrations, free education and training and plenty of opportunities to connect with the art and custom picture framing community."

Larry Neuberg, President and CEO of Neuberg & Neuberg Importers Group Inc., parent company of Framing Fabrics and Easy Leaf Products, says that while optimism is being felt, learning lessons along the way is key. "Let's start with 2025, our overall business was up, and this was due to rising prices because of tariffs and that demand was steady throughout the year.

Regarding 2026, I don't really expect sales to be up again this year as things remain steady, but I remain optimistic," he says.

"My concern is with the smaller businesses. I can't remember a time when simple everyday costs, like water, power, packaging materials and other basic items needed to run a business have had an impact as they do today. These costs are hard to pass along and can have an adverse effect on any establishment," he says.



Pictured is the CMC Model Z1 from Wizard International.

"This is also compounded by higher wages; it is cheaper to hold onto your best people and reward them than to find those who are willing to work for less and retrain. The lesson I have learned here is take care of your people and they will take care of your business. All of this impacts the bottom line."

One of the biggest challenges in 2026 for Mr. Neuberg is how to approach marketing in the ever-changing world. "Given what I know and see, in order to 'get the word out' about your business, products and services, you can't just rely on some of the old fashion

practices, like local ads, phone calls, email and faxes. The next big push has to come from your social media presence," he says. "We are a little late to the party, but in the fourth quarter of 2025 I made the commitment to engage a professional team to rebrand my company so that it was more compatible with the internet.

"In addition, we have moved in the direction of Instagram and Facebook with that same team preparing our postings and I could not be happier. This was indeed one of our biggest challenges, but it was a change that needed to be done to remain relevant in the industry. The next step is to carry this through to our website."

Neuberg & Neuberg Importers Group, Inc. has been in business since 1962, and in that time, many economic ups and downs have occurred. "The one thing that I have learned is that trying to predict what a new year has in store can be an overwhelming task with some setbacks, but if you remain positive and put one foot in front of the other, the rewards will come."

From a retailer's perspective, navigating the waters ahead will take more than a crystal ball. At the Fort Lauderdale, FL-based ABRA Gallery, founder and gallery director Kaveh Abrishami, says that people still love to have art in their

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S. Guccione

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CUSTOM FRAMER CHRIS PASCHKE LAUNCHES 'THE PRINCIPLES OF FRAMING DESIGN' BOOK

TEHACHAPI CA—Custom framer **Chris A. Paschke, CPF GCF** has published her new book, *The Principles of Framing Design* with Designs Ink Publishing and which examines traditional design 101 art concepts and reconfigures them to fit within the structure of picture framing. The 172-page book redefines the aspects of line, color, texture and others into the elements that make up frame design including mats, moulding and layout.

Chapters include in-depth discussions, diagrams and photos explaining the use of the elements of line, color, texture, shape, intensity, space and rhythm; as well as the factors of proportion, balance and emphasis all working together to form a unified design. Broken into 17 chapters and four sections, the book also covers the five stages of the design process that are all building blocks and mortar of design fundamentals.

Other subjects covered are designing for framing competitions, design materials and techniques, gallery walls, selling and the concept of being a full service concierge framer.

The book retails for \$39.95, is written in essay format, includes color photos, line art, diagrams, tips, glossary, contents, appendix, as well as a complete and extensive index and bibliography.

For further information, phone (662) 821-2188 or go to the publisher's website located at: www.designsinkart.com/book.shtml.

PARK WEST GALLERY PRESENTS STICKMAN

This month, artist Trevor "Stickman" Stickel celebrated a successful solo fine art exhibition at Park West Gallery, New York, NY, as well as the U.S. premiere of *Stickman: Art for the Rebel Soul*, a Canadian short documentary about the artist.

Known as a worldwide rock and roll artist and touring visual artist whose works are highly collected by rock icons, celebrities and music lovers around the globe, the Park West Gallery exhibition

titled, *Pop Culture Unbound: Stickman's Pop-Realism World* featured a collection of energetic depictions of iconic and thematic rock and roll art, suffused with romanticism, opulence and grit. Artwork available during the event were mixed media and oil on canvas originals, as well as limited edition giclées on canvas. The artist appeared at the closing reception and met with collectors.

"This exhibition embodies everything that we love about Stickman's work —energy, attitude and authenticity," says John Block, gallery COO. "Hosting his exhibition at Park West Gallery in SoHo creates an experience that goes beyond the walls of the

gallery and celebrates art, music and community."

The mission behind Stickman's work is to create an artistic tribute to the music



Pictured is Trevor "Stickman" Stickel.

and musicians that have had a tremendous impact on him. "I can probably speak for a lot of artists when I say, as a young artist I would stare at a blank can-

vas and allow myself to dream that someday it would end up in a solo exhibition in New York," he says.

Centered around Alberta-native, Stickman, and his continuous pursuit of both precision and rebellion, the film is an Official Selection of the 2025 Central Alberta Film Festival 2025, the 2025 Alberta Indie-Film Throwdown, the 2025 Edmonton Short Film Festival 2025, the 2025 Calgary Underground Film Festival and was nominated for Best Cinematography at the Alberta Film & Television Awards.

Stickman: Art for the Rebel Soul leverages the intersection of both film and fine art: aspiring to bring together a diverse group of film and art-lovers alike to celebrate the power of independent artists of all stripes. Because, as Stickman says: "Rock and roll encompasses way more than music."



Park West Gallery, New York, NY, was the setting of "Pop Culture Unbound: Stickman's Pop-Realism World" featuring originals and limited editions.

vas and allow myself to dream that someday it would end up in a solo exhibition in New York," he says.

The documentary, *Stickman: Art for the Rebel Soul*

For details on the documentary, go to: www.danceswithfilms.com/stickman-art-for-the-rebel-soul/. For further information on the artist's work, telephone Park West Gallery's SoHo location at (917) 287-4351 or: www.parkwestgallery.com/newyork/.

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NEW YEAR PREDICTIONS continued from page 12

lives but will be looking for more confidence in their purchase of it.

"I expect a challenging year overall. Given today's political climate, uncertainty will weigh on decision making. People with money will still have money, but many may choose to hold it rather than spend, simply because they are unsure what lies ahead," he says. "As a result, sales will likely be selective. Fewer impulse buys, more focus on established artists with emotional depth and a proven track record."

ABRA (Art By Renowned Artist) Gallery was founded in Los Angeles in 2002, and expanded to Florida in 2015. The industry has changed much in that time. "One notable difference is attention. There is a lot of art and even more noise. The challenge is getting people to slow down and actually connect with the work instead of just scrolling past it. We have been able to get past that by staying relationship driven," he says.

"At ABRA Gallery, we focus on thoughtful placements and long-term collectors. Working with artists like Hessam Abrishami reinforces that consistency and emotional depth matter more than chasing trends."

Plans for 2026 include staying the course with their values, while adapting to what the economy throws at them. "We will

continue refining what we already do well—fewer distractions, stronger collector relationships and steady support of our artists as they evolve. Art only matters if it makes you feel something. If it does not evoke an emotion, it is just furniture," Mr. Abrishami says.

"The work people choose to live with has to move them on a personal level, not just match a space or a price point. Galleries that understand this

expand her business over the years. "I expect sales for 2026 to be up. I'm always optimistic, and I have good reason to be. We're seeing strong collector engagement across all four of our locations, and our Santa Fe location had its best year ever," she says. "The appetite for authentic, museum-quality Western and Native American art continues to grow. People are seeking meaningful connections through art, and that's exactly what we offer."

and authenticity, and our artists embody both. We're also seeing younger collectors enter the market who appreciate the intersection of traditional artistry and contemporary vision."

The biggest industry challenge, from Ms. Campbell's perspective, is the sheer amount of options and cutting through the chatter. "The art world is more accessible than ever, which is wonderful, but it also means collectors are inundated with options. The challenge is helping people understand the difference between art as decoration and art as investment, both financially and emotionally. We also need to continue educating collectors about the cultural importance of supporting Native American artists directly and ensuring their voices and stories remain central to this work."



ABRA Gallery is located in Fort Lauderdale, FL.

and protect that emotional exchange will continue to matter."

Creating that connection between collector and artwork is also important to Shanan Campbell, owner of Sorrel Sky Gallery. With locations in Durango, CO; Santa Fe, NM; New York, NY, and Easthampton, NY, the gallery features a collection of contemporary, traditional western and Native American art, as well as being the exclusive representative for photographer David Yarrow in their New York locations.

Building relationships has helped Ms. Campbell

Today's educated art collector has high expectations in the artwork, as well as the gallery. "The art market is evolving, and collectors are becoming more discerning. They want pieces with soul, story and cultural significance. We represent artists who deliver exactly that, whether it's the breathtaking detail in a Peggy Immel or Jeremy Salazar painting, the bold brushstrokes of Faye Crowe's impasto oil painting, the raw power of David Yarrow's wildlife photography or the three-generation legacy of craftsmanship in Nighthorse jewelry. The market rewards excellence

For 2026, Sorrel Sky will continue to relationship-build while reaching new collectors with compelling stories. "We will be doing what we've always done: build relationships, tell compelling stories and never compromise on quality," she says. "Our team creates content that goes deeper than surface-level promotion. We want collectors to understand the artist's vision, process and their place in the larger narrative of American art. We're expanding our digital presence while maintaining the intimate, personal experience our galleries are known for, and we're continuing to invest in exhibi-

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NEW YEAR PREDICTIONS continued from page 16

tions and events that bring people face-to-face with extraordinary work. There's simply no substitute for standing in front of a piece that takes your breath away.

"Our continued growth, connection and honoring legacy are our main 2026 plans. We are also deepening our partnerships with artists across every medium we represent, from the luminous oils of Kim Seyesnem Obrzut to the architectural photography of Nick Veasey, from the expressive bronzes of Alan Walsh to the intricate beadwork and metalsmithing in our Native American collections. Nighthorse jewelry will always hold a special place in my heart, especially now

as we honor my father's remarkable legacy. His vision, creativity and commitment to excellence con-

son, Luke Longfellow. But we represent dozens of extraordinary artists, and each one deserves our full

our locations and continuing to bridge the gap between Western art traditions and contemporary collecting."

The love of the art is always at the forefront for Ms. Campbell. "This industry is built on passion, and passion doesn't recognize obstacles. It finds solutions. We're incredibly grateful for our collectors, our artists and our team. Twenty-five years in, I'm more excited about what's possible than I was on day one. The art we represent matters. The stories matter. The cultural preservation matters. And when you lead with that kind of purpose, success follows."

Sorrel Sky has locations in New Mexico, Colorado and New York.

tinue to inspire everything we do, and I'm proud to carry that forward alongside my mother and my

attention and advocacy. We're planning significant exhibitions, expanding our collector base in all of

Koleen Kaffan is Editor in Chief of Art World News.



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MODERN CUSTOM FRAMING

THE NEXT GENERATION OF COLLECTORS

By Sheila McCumby

Never thought I'd say this but, one time toxic slime showed me the future of framing. When a friend opened a comic book shop around the corner and asked me to frame some "fan art," I initially thought she meant four-dollar comic books and Cheeto-dusted covers. I quickly learned that "comic art" is actually a world of high-level, high-value creativity. I decided to have some fun with it, using my CMC to decorate mats with Bat-Signals, logos and special cuts. I lit brightly colored frames up with LED lights and even formulated luminescent silicone "slime" to leak out of a *Toxic Avenger* frame. I had to do some creative engineering and out-of-the-box thinking; I loved every minute of it. This is the fun part of framing! The pieces sold out instantly, and soon, collectors were driving 100-mile round trips to my shop for every new "drop." Comic art became a lucrative little niche market for us.

The real epiphany, however, came when a comic collector told me why they bypassed every other shop in the metro area: "The other places had a 'grandma's house' vibe, and the framers acted like my art was beneath them." His statement made me sad, and I cried a little...all the way to the bank.

If my competitors want to turn up their noses at "nerd art" while their unpaid overhead bills pile up, that's their business. I'll happily take "comic book art money;" not just because these collectors are some of the nicest people I've dealt with, but because I realize that as

Evolve or Perish

For decades, the custom framing industry has depended on a reliable, traditional demographic: the established homeowner, the corporate office manager and the serious fine art collector. These clients under-

homebuyers and aesthetic consumers in the market. But there is a disconnect; to younger consumers, the local frameshop feels like a mysterious, high-priced "black box" where prices are hidden and the process is intimidating.



their tastes mature and their art gets more expensive, I've already secured my spot as their framer for life.

The question is: Are you ready to stop being "Grandma's Framer" and start being the shop than courts the "Next Gen" customers who will ensure that you survive the next 30 years?

stand the "ritual" of the frameshop. They walk in, spend an hour at the design counter and understand that the four-figure price tag reflects a lifetime of preservation.

However, a tectonic shift is occurring. The "Next Gen" collector, primarily Millennials and Gen Z, now represents the largest group of

In my consultancy practice, I often hear framers complain that younger people "just buy cheap ready-mades online." But the data suggests otherwise. This generation values authenticity, sustainability and "the story" behind their objects more than any generation before them. They aren't avoiding us because they don't value quality; they are avoiding us because our business model hasn't evolved to meet their shopping habits.

If we want to thrive over the next decade, we have to stop waiting for them to "age into" our old way of doing business. We have to meet them where they are.

1. The Transparency Gap: Demystifying the Price

The single greatest barrier for the younger consumer is price anxiety. Growing up in the era of e-commerce, they are used to knowing the price of a product before they fall in love with it. When

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"HEROES OF FLIGHT" - They never get old ...just more desirable!

"GIVE'M THE WHOLE NINE YARDS" - Acrylic Surface Mount or Canvas Wrap / 26"X 72"



"LONE ASCENDER" - Canvas Wrap with Double Stack Float Frame / 24"X 72"



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CUSTOM FRAMING continued from page 20

they see a wall of 2,000 unpriced moulding samples, they don't see "limitless choice," they see a potential budget catastrophe.

The Strategy: Introduce "Starting At" or "All-In' Tiered Pricing.

You don't need to price every scrap of wood in the shop, but you should have a curated selection of "Essential Packages." For example, a "Canvas Float Package" or a "Standard Print Package" (including a choice of three frames, a single mat and UV glass) for a flat rate based on common sizes. By putting these prices on your website or a chalkboard in your window, you lower the barrier to entry. You aren't "cheapening" your brand; you are providing a psychological safety net that allows them to walk through the door.

2. Curation Over Collection

We often pride ourselves on having "the largest selection in the state." To a Next Gen collector, this is a nightmare. They are overwhelmed by choices in every other aspect of their lives, and they look to experts to curate for them.

The Strategy: The "Edit."

Create a dedicated section of your design table labeled "The Designer's Current Favorites." This should feature 12 to 20 mouldings that reflect current interior trends. By narrowing the field, you position yourself as a tastemaker rather than just a service provider. Remember, they aren't looking for

any frame; they are looking for the right frame.

3. Sell the "Why," Not Just the "What"

Traditional framing sales talk often leans heavily on technical specs: "This is acid-free rag," or "This is 99% UV protective." While important, these terms often fall flat with younger consumers who haven't been educated on why their "limited edition" concert poster is going to fade in five years.



The Strategy: Focus on Sustainability and Legacy.

Next Gen collectors are deeply concerned with the environment and the "buy it once" philosophy. Frame your pitch around sustainability. Explain that a custom frame is a "forever" product that prevents art from ending up in a landfill. Use terms like "Archival Preservation" but link them to "Future Heirloom" status. You aren't just selling a frame; you are selling the insurance policy for their memories.

4. The Digital On-Ramp: The "Phygital" Experience

You do not need a million-dollar e-commerce site to compete with online custom framers. There are POS and vendor-sponsored visualization tools that can easily be embedded in your current website. You need a digital presence that feels as professional as your physical shop. If a 30-year-old potential client searches for "framing near me" and finds a website that looks like it

text it to the shop for a ballpark estimate. I know we all loathe giving prices without seeing the art in person, but...this gives you a chance to make a contact, ask about their budget and educate regarding options. It's a low-friction option and starts the relationship immediately.

5. Product Shifts: From Formal to Funky

Next gen customers often have a less-traditional aesthetic. While they might not be framing a \$5,000 scenic oil painting; they may want to preserve a \$200 vintage scarf, a collection of enamel pins, toys, basketball shoes or a high-end sports jersey.

The Strategy: Productize the "Oddball" Items.

Create "Specialty Shadowbox" displays in your showroom that show off these non-traditional collectibles. If they see a beautifully framed vintage Nintendo controller on your wall, they suddenly realize that anything can be art. This expands your market from "people who buy art" to "people who frame stuff they love."

6. The Aesthetic Pivot: Minimalism and Natural Tones

For years, the industry was dominated by ornate golds, heavy linens, and "maximalist" styling. Today's younger aesthetic leans toward "Scandi-Modern," "Japandi" or "Industrial."

The Strategy: Review Your Samples.

Do you have enough natural wood tones? Do you have a good selection of float frame options? If your wall is 80% ornate gold leaf,

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CUSTOM FRAMING
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you are signaling to a younger audience that you are not the shop for them. Update your samples to include more minimalist “thin-profile” woods and mid-century modern examples. This minimal/mid-century look is incredibly popular but requires the skill of a professional framer to execute correctly; play to that strength.

7. Community as Marketing

The Next Gen collector values utilizing “local” over “global.” They want to support small businesses, but they need to feel like your business is part of their community.

The Strategy: Host “Art

Nights” or “Framing 101” Workshops.

Invite a local illustrator to show their work in your shop for a night. Offer

**The Bottom Line:
Evolution is Mandatory**

The custom framing industry is not dying, but it is changing. Just like their par-

ing our “maker” status on digital platforms, we can bridge the gap. We don’t need to change the quality of our work; we just need to change how we tell the story.

The Next Gen collector values utilizing “local” over “global.”

They want to support small businesses, but they need to feel like your business is part of their community.

a 10% discount for anyone who buys a print and frames it that evening. By becoming a hub for local creativity, you move from being a “vendor” to being a “partner” in the local art scene.

ents, the “next gen” consumer has the desire for a beautiful home; but they communicate and shop differently. By increasing our price transparency, curating our offerings to match modern aesthetics and leverag-

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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RETAIL STRATEGIES

SIX POWERFUL WAYS TO START 2026 STRONG

By Litsa Spanos

The start of a new year offers more than a clean calendar—it's an opportunity to reset your mindset, refine your strategy and realign your life with what truly matters. For business owners, especially those who have been in the game for years, 2026 isn't about doing more—it's about doing better. Here are six intentional moves you can make to begin the year with clarity, momentum, and balance.

1. Revisit Your Vision—Then Sharpen It

Before diving into goals, return to your why. Why did you start your business in the first place, and how has that purpose evolved? Take time to articulate a clear 3-year vision for both your company and your life. Revenue targets matter—but so do freedom, creativity, health, and joy. When your professional goals support your personal life (not compete with it), decisions become easier and more aligned.

2. Know Your Numbers (and What They Mean)

Strong businesses are built on clarity. Review your 2025 financials with fresh eyes: revenue, profit margins, expenses, cash flow, and discretionary earnings. More importantly, interpret the story behind the numbers. What worked? What

drained energy without adequate return? Understanding where your money and time actually go allows you to optimize, price more confidently, and plan growth with intention in 2026.

3. Simplify and Systematize

Complexity is the silent killer of momentum. Identify areas where your business feels heavy—manual processes, unclear roles, outdated systems—and simplify them. Invest in automation, documentation, and delegation. Systems create freedom. The less your business depends on you for every decision, the more space you gain to think strategically, creatively, and personally.

4. Elevate Your Brand Presence

In 2026, visibility and trust are currency. Take a critical look at how your brand shows up—online, in person, and through your messaging. Is it aligned with the level you're operating at now, not where you started? Whether it's refining your website, storytelling on social media, or strengthening client experience, an elevated brand attracts better clients, stronger partner-

ships, and greater confidence.

5. Invest in Your Energy, Not Just Productivity

Burnout doesn't come from working hard—it comes from working misaligned. Make your health and energy non-negotiable

Success isn't just measured by profit—it's measured by fulfillment. Intentionally plan personal experiences into your year: travel, family time, learning and joy. When your calendar reflects what you value most, your business becomes a vehicle for life—not the other way around.

2026 doesn't need hustle—it needs alignment. By combining strategic focus with personal intention, you create a year that is not only successful on paper, but deeply satisfying in real life.



this year. Prioritize sleep, movement, mental clarity, and moments of inspiration. Schedule white space. Creativity and leadership require renewal. A well-rested, grounded business owner makes better decisions and shows up with presence rather than pressure.

6. Design a Life You Don't Want to Escape

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. Visit: www.adcfineart.com.

THE HIDDEN CHALLENGES OF RUNNING A GALLERY

by Katherine Hébert

Over the past few years, a growing list of respected, influential galleries has quietly (or sometimes very publicly) closed their doors. These weren't poorly run spaces, trend-chasers or passion projects that fizzled out after a few seasons. Many were admired internationally, represented important artists and helped shape contemporary discourse. This was the topic of a recent article on Ocula.com called "What Makes a Successful Gallery... And Why They Close." You run a small- to mid-sized gallery, and these closures likely made you pause, or maybe they confirmed fears you've been carrying quietly for years. Because if they couldn't make it work, what does that mean for you?

The answer isn't that the gallery business is doomed. But it does mean that the traditional gallery model, especially as it's been defined over the last 15 to 20 years, is increasingly misaligned with sustainability, personal capacity and long-term resilience. What follows is not a postmortem, nor a warning meant to discourage you. It's an opportunity to look honestly at what these closures reveal and how you can use those lessons to build a gallery business that is financially viable, emotionally sustainable and aligned with why you opened a

gallery in the first place.

The Real Reasons (And Why They Matter to You)

When you look closely at the closures mentioned in the Ocula article of BLUM, Project Native Informant, Venus Over Manhattan,

tuations or a bad year. They closed because they were exhausted. Can you relate? Tim Blum described a deep ennui with the art world. Adam Lindemann openly rejected the rituals and humiliations of the commercial gallery circuit. Olivier Babin spoke candidly about waiting

placeable resource. Your energy, curiosity, and conviction are core assets. When those are depleted, even a respected program can't survive indefinitely.

2. Expansion Became a Requirement—Not a Strategy

Many of these galleries expanded geographically: multiple cities, multiple leases, multiple teams. Often the reasoning made sense at the time. Expansion promised visibility, access to collectors, eligibility for fairs and perceived legitimacy.

But expansion also multiplied overhead, logistics, staffing complexity, shipping costs, storage needs and risk. Revenue did not always scale at the same pace. Most of you reading this, expansion is not on your radar, but if it is keep this critical lesson in mind. Growth that is driven by external expectations, rather than internal capacity and financial logic, can quietly destabilize an otherwise healthy business. Expansion is not inherently bad. But when it becomes the price of staying relevant, rather than a deliberate business decision, it stops serving you.

3. Artist Development Remains Economically Lopsided



CLEARING and Hot Wheels, a few themes emerge again and again. Not as isolated incidents, but as structural pressures baked into the gallery ecosystem. Let's look at the patterns.

1. Burnout Was the Catalyst, Not the Afterthought

Several gallery founders were explicit: they didn't just close because of sales fluc-

year after year for the numbers to finally turn a corner. This matters because burnout isn't a personal failing; it's a business signal. If the success of your gallery depends on your constant overextension, emotional labor and personal sacrifice, your gallery's business model itself is fragile.

As a gallery owner or director, you are not a re-

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One of the most painful and familiar patterns across these closures is artist attrition. We have seen this problem for decades now. Smaller galleries invest deeply in emerging artists—time, resources, relationships, early career risk—only to lose them once larger galleries step in.

This is not a moral failure on either side. Artists deserve opportunities to grow. But from a business perspective, the current system often asks small galleries to function as unpaid R&D departments for larger institutions.

If your financial model depends on long-term artist relationships that the market actively incentivizes others to disrupt, you are operating at a structural disadvantage. The lesson here is not to stop supporting emerging artists. It's to stop assuming that loyalty alone will protect your business.

4. Art Fairs Are No Longer a Reliable Growth Engine

Art fairs were once positioned as accelerators to sales, and they can still be. They offer ways to find new art collectors, validate your gallery's program and introduce new artists on your roster. Today, however, they are increasingly expensive, politically fraught and unpredictable.

Several gallery owners referenced barely breaking even or worse after participating in major fairs. Yet opting out entirely can feel like professional exile.

This tension matters because fairs often dictate gallery behavior far beyond the booth itself: production schedules, artist output, staffing needs and cash flow planning. If a core pillar of your business model routinely delivers stress, risk and marginal returns, it's worth questioning whether it deserves that central role.

What These Closures Reveal About the Gallery Model

Taken together, these stories reveal something

The Market Favors Scale—But Not Everyone Can Scale

Mega-galleries benefit from economies of scale, diversified revenue streams and deep capital reserves. Smaller galleries often try to emulate their visibility without access to the same infrastructure. The lesson here is not to think smaller in ambition—but to think smarter in design. A focused, well-defined gallery with clear boundaries can outperform a stretched one chasing validation.

Here's how to translate these lessons into action.

Redefine Success on Your Own Terms

You are allowed to design a gallery that supports your life—not consumes it. What would success look like if it included:

- Predictable cash flow
- Manageable workload
- Time to think strategically
- Space to enjoy relationships with artists and collectors

Audit Where You're Overextended

Take a hard look at where your gallery is stretched thin. Is it:

- Too many artists for your team size?
- Too many fairs or exhibitions for your resources (time, energy, budget)?
- Too much physical space for your sales volume?

Overextension rarely announces itself loudly. It shows up as chronic stress, reactive decision-making and the feeling that you're always behind. That's not fun or healthy. Pulling back strategically is not failure—it's leadership.

Rethink How You Capture Value

If you're investing heavily in artist development, ask yourself:

- How are you compensated for that risk?
- Are there pricing, education or secondary-market strategies you're overlooking?
- Are you building collector relationships that extend beyond individual artists?

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BUSINESS DEVELOPMENT
continued from page 26

Sustainability requires that value flows both ways.

Evolve Your Gallery Model with Systems That Reduce Stress

Burnout often takes root in businesses that rely too heavily on individual effort and constant overextension. To combat this, start by documenting your processes to create clarity and consistency. Clearly define roles and responsibilities within your team to reduce confusion and streamline operations. Simplify your offerings to focus on what truly matters to you, and invest in systems or tools that make daily operations more efficient and manageable. At the same time, give yourself permission to evolve your gallery model. You do not

owe anyone adherence to a structure that no longer serves you or your artists well. Whether that means fewer exhibitions, more private sales, consulting services, pop-ups instead of permanent space, or deeper digital engagement, your gallery can adapt to better align with your goals and capacity. While this may require temporarily slowing down this year, the long-term benefits of reduced stress, smoother internal workflows, and more sustainable gallery management will be well worth it.

The challenges facing galleries today are undeniable, but they also present an opportunity to rethink what success looks like in this evolving landscape. By learning from the closures of respected galleries, you can build a business that priori-

tizes sustainability, aligns with your personal and professional values and supports your long-term goals.

As a small or mid-sized gallery owner or director, you are not powerless in this moment. You are, however, being asked to think differently from the generation before you. The most important question is no longer "How do I grow?" It's "What kind of gallery is actually worth sustaining?" If you can answer that honestly and design your business around that answer, you're already ahead. Remember, you don't have to follow a one-size-fits-all model. Success doesn't have to mean constant growth, relentless expansion, or chasing prestige at the expense of stability. It can mean creating a gallery that thrives within its means,

fosters meaningful relationships, and allows you to enjoy the work you set out to do. Take the time to reflect, reassess, and redesign your approach. The future of your gallery doesn't have to be dictated by outdated norms—it can be shaped by your vision, your capacity, and your definition of what's worth sustaining.

*Columnist and industry expert Katherine Hébert specializes in art gallery business sales and marketing strategies, and is 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 in small- to mid-sized markets grow and improve their businesses. For more details, visit: www.galleryfuel.com.*

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2025 MIAMI ART WEEK



In his fourth year of doing the Spectrum Miami Art Show, Minds Eye Photos artist Alan Goldberg presented some of his newest limited edition photo art collection work such as "Flamingo," "Ponce Inlet Lighthouse Stairway" and "Red Sunset Art," shown.



Texas-based artist Angela Fabbri brought her colorful signature backwards messaging and rosebud pattern mixed media work to the show, including "Now or Never," a UV-reactive acrylic on wood panel with resin measuring 50 by 50 inches.



Autumn Hunter, an abstract realism artist based in Raleigh, NC, featured many of her mixed media on canvas works including, left to right, "Sweet Dreams" and "Far, Far Away (Zelda)," both on canvas that is 1.8 inches deep.



Chad Arcinie of The Chadwick Concepts is pictured with his Terrascapes series of layered texture modular acrylic on canvas paintings in earthen reds, pale sandstone, dusty sage and weathered mauves, each measuring 24 by 24 inches.



Charlotte Fonne, a 2025 Spotlight Artist Award winner for Best New Exhibitor, presented her multi-layered photographic work inspired by her travels and love for art history. Here, she pictured with "Basilica Di San Marco," part of The Broken series.



The Spectrum Miami Art Fair, now in its 15th year, featured five days of more than 1,000 artists' work, showcased by over 280 exhibitors from around the world. Along with Red Dot Miami, the fair was held December 3 to 7 during Miami Art Week.



Portrait artist and muralist Rhea Rose of Phoenix Art Studio presented her *Visions in Black* work from the *Obscure Tenacity Collection* featuring figurative images in acrylic on canvas and acrylic on canvas mounted to wood panel.



Israeli-based contemporary artist Taryn Treisman is pictured with her piece, "Golden Glow," a mixed media made of gold aluminum painted with airbrush, acrylic and resin, part of her glow-in-the-dark Pop Flowers collection.



At the Farrant Fine Art booth are, from left, artist Briton Farrand and Claire Farrand displaying his work created on brick paneling with oil and latex drippings, oil on gallery-wrapped canvas and oil painting with latex drippings.



Painter Raquel Moreno blends the past and present by reimagining classical portraiture through a contemporary lens—layering historical figures, symbolic objects and playful surreal elements to create scenes that feel both familiar and fantastical.

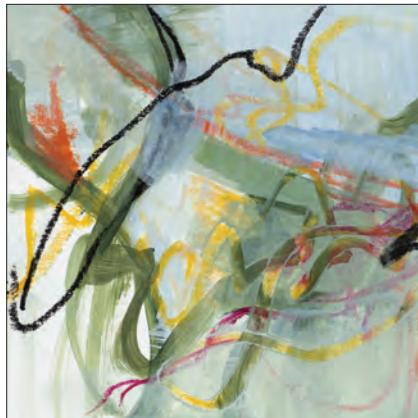


Over at the Red Dot Miami Fair, End To End Gallery owner Jeremiah Heller presented pieces from artists such as Keith Haring and Kenny Scharf, as well as a dedicated solo exhibition for artist Tony Pharo's mixed media work.



The 2025 Spectrum Miami Art Fair also featured an extensive series of daily activities for attendees, that included the Spotlight Program, Art Labs, Meet the Artists and Live Demonstrations and The Discoveries Collection.

WHAT'S HOT IN OPEN EDITIONS



City Life

"City Life" by Lanie Loreth measures 24 by 24 inches and retails for \$25. For more information, call SunDance Graphics, located in Orlando, FL, at (800) 617-5532, or go to the website at: www.sdgraphics.com.

Farmhouse Blue Harmony II

"Farmhouse Blue Harmony II" by Mollie B. measures 12 by 16 inches and retails for \$15. Phone Penny Lane Fine Art & Licensing, New Carlisle, Ohio, at (800) 273-5263 or visit the company's website located at: www.pennylanefineart.com.



Arid Sun

"Arid Sun" by K. Nari measures 20 by 20 inches. The image is also available as POD in various sizes. For further information, telephone Third & Wall Art Group, located in Seattle, at (877) 326-3925 or visit the company's website at: www.thirdandwall.com.

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Serene Summer Morning



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

Obsidian Tide



"Obsidian Tide" by Maggie Sackman measures from 9 by 6 inches to 84 by 56 inches and retails from \$27 to \$475. For further information, telephone Wild Apple in Woodstock, VT, at (800) 756-8359 or go to: www.wildapple.com.



Forest Dream 03

"Forest Dream 03" by Lisa Audit measures 22 by 28 inches and retails for \$25. Call Roaring Brook Art in Elmsford, NY, for further information at (888) 779-9055, or go to the website: www.roaringbrookart.com.

Fire To Ice 1

"Fire To Ice 1" by Alonza Saunders is a large format custom giclée on matte paper measuring 24 by 36 inches (\$102). Call A.D. Lines in Monroe, CT, at (800) 836-0994 or visit: www.ad-lines.com.



Copilots II

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

2026 Rose Bowl Champions, Indiana Hoosiers

"2026 Rose Bowl Champions, Indiana Hoosiers" by James Blakeway measures 40 by 13 1/2 inches and retails for \$39.95. For details, call Blakeway Worldwide Panoramas Inc. in Minneapolis, MN, at (800) 334-7266, or go to: www.panoramas.com.

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"Sunlit Pond I" by Madeline Clark is available as POD, retailing from \$36 to \$356. For more details, phone C Brand Studios, located in San Diego, at (858) 554-0102 or go to the website at: www.cbrandstudios.com.

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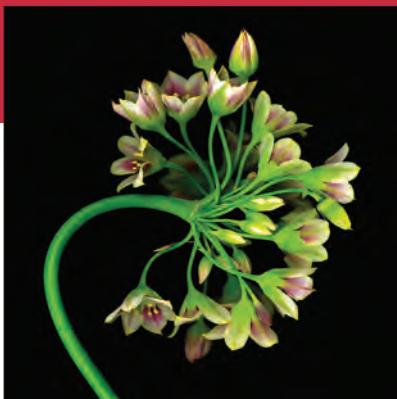
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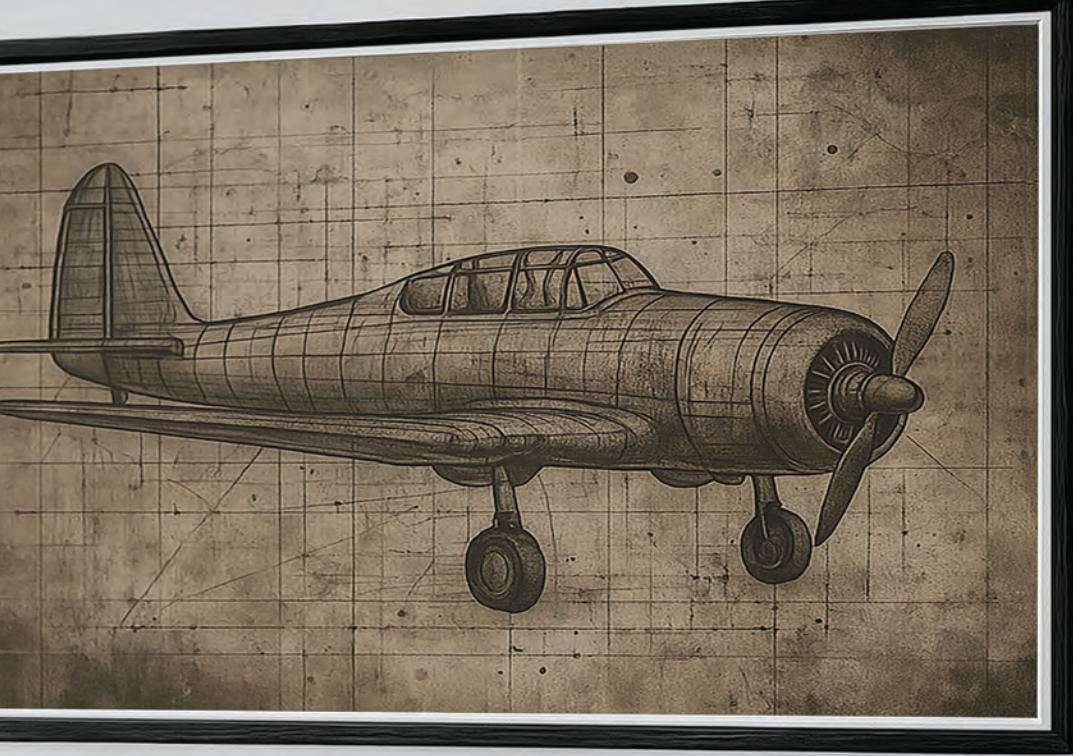
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