

Art World News

JULY 2026

THE INDEPENDENT NEWS SOURCE

THE 2026 HAMPTONS FINE ART FAIR HIGHLIGHTS

The 2026 Hamptons Fine Art Fair, held July 9 to 12, at The Southampton Fairgrounds in Southampton, NY, celebrated its 20th anniversary, as well as honoring America's 250th Anniversary, with various events throughout the show. Go to page 14.

TURNING CUSTOMER SENTIMENTS INTO CASH

Strategies for Success' Sheila McCumby says that if gallery and frameshop owners want to turn customer opinions into actual business capital, they have to know how to frame the narrative. To learn more, visit page 20.

EARNING ATTENTION IN AN ENDLESS SCROLL

Gallery Fuel's Katherine Hébert discusses how the biggest competitor might not be the gallery across town, but how prospective art buyers wake up every morning, start scrolling and immediately encounter a constant flow of information. Visit page 22.

TRENDS MOVE AWAY FROM MASS-PRODUCED

ADC Fine Art's Litsa Spanos says that the biggest art and interior design trends of 2026 seem to be moving away from sterile minimalism and more toward warmth, texture and meaningful, collectible pieces. Go to page 24 for more details.



Dean Street Fine Art Gallery is located in Tampa, FL.

NEW GALLERY OWNERS FIND THEIR NICHE, GROW SALES

New gallery owners are finding that getting collectors to match their excitement for the new business requires effective marketing, creating a mix of compelling artists and artwork to present, as well as a lot of one-on-one conversations. Small businesses in most markets do not become profitable for one to three years, but those in the art industry are oftentimes able to speed the process up if they create a destination buying experience for their clientele. There are many reasons a new business—such as a fine art gallery—may take longer to turn a profit, such as expenses for items like heavy equipment, a desirable location and inventory. These costs can extend net profitability from 18 months to three years, according to economists, and that can be frustrating. Inevitable startup costs—along with cash flow management—needs to be tracked, as well

continued on page 10



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QUOTE OF THE MONTH:

"What got me interested in the gallery business initially were the moments where I got to work directly with artists on projects, and how they would have questions about ways to sell their art."

Faron Manuel, page 12

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DEPARTMENTS

ARTISTS & PUBLISHERS
Page 8

**HAMPTONS FINE
ART FAIR**
Page 14

**INVENTORY
FOR SALE**
Page 19

**BUSINESS
MANAGEMENT**
Page 20

**SALES
STRATEGIES**
Page 22

**MARKETING
IDEAS**
Page 24

**WHAT'S HOT IN
OPEN EDITIONS**
Page 26

**OPEN EDITION
PRINTS**
Page 28

CLASSIFIEDS
Page 29

AD INDEX
Page 30

Shown is
"Peony Bloom"
by Crimson Collective
from Wild Apple.
Go to page 8.

New Gallery Owners Find Their Niche

New gallery owners are finding that getting collectors to match their excitement requires effective marketing, creating a mix of compelling artwork to present, as well as a lot of conversations.

Page 1

Hamptons Fine Art Fair Highlights

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Page 14

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Page 20

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Page 22

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Page 24

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 26



IN OUR OPINION

The Fuel For Aspirational Buying

Consumers are seemingly the bouncing ball in a game between technology and a tight economy. Each day the news cycle sends new signals that either uplifts or depresses the hearts and minds of art and framing buyers. One day the glass is half full while the next day it gets tipped over on to your keyboard.

Technology has taken the "art of buying" hostage. It whispers the cultural undertones that it is the option that is always cheaper, faster and offers more selection. And, on top of that, it's what all the cool kids do. For many, today's treasure is found while sitting on the couch instead claiming victory at the local mall. New consumer patterns have been set and won't likely change any time soon.

However, not every consumer good, along with it's

motivation and process, can fit squarely in the click of a mouse. Marketers of luxury goods, especially those of aspirational purchases know that their clients are creatures of brick-and-mortar. They treasure the physical experience of finding and buying as part of the magic that leads to ownership. This is a stern lesson for every art gallery and picture frameshop. Creating the customer experience is more than creating the environment for a sale. For some buyers the experience supersedes the sale!

When given a choice, people will favor a retailer that feeds their ego. "Feeling good" is too rare a commodity these days, so when a buying experience can do so, people will visit it again and again. Recently, one dealer shared with me an obituary of one of his best patrons that commented how special his gallery visits were to him. That's customer loyalty. More importantly, that's an art dealer who knows how to delight his clients.

John Haffey
Publisher



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ARTISTS & PUBLISHERS

Wild Apple Signs Crimson Collective

Wild Apple, Woodstock, VT, has signed Crimson Collective, an artist collaborative dedicated to the timeless craft of traditional oil painting. With 40 years of combined painting experience, the



"Tabletop I" by Crimson Collective.

collective shares a singular vision: to create art that transforms any house into a warm, soulful home—whether it is a gentle piece for a nursery wall, a vibrant focal point for a living room, a hushed scene for a bedroom or a welcoming touch for a kitchen corner. For more details, call (802) 457-3003 or visit the company's website located at: www.wildapple.com.

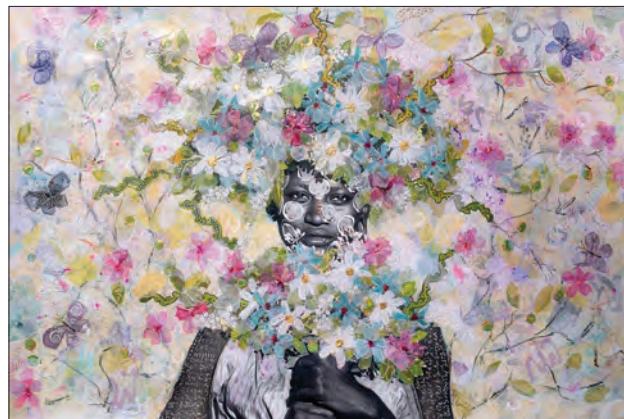
VINSONart Celebrates the World Cup



"Out on Penalties, 1998 World Cup, France" by Kosmo Vinyl.

VINSONart, Scottdale, GA, has seen an influx of spirited art collectors as soccer fans flood into Atlanta and into the gallery to see artist Raphael Bahindwa's new body of work, created specifically for the World Cup featuring bold canvases in black, white and gold. Also presented are rare original collages by Kosmo Vinyl, the legendary England-born, NYC-based cultural provocateur and former creative force behind The Clash. Vinyl's 1998 England piece features Monty Python imagery. For more details, phone (404) 939-2787 or go to: www.vinsonart.com.

Cristina Mittermeier Work in Chicago

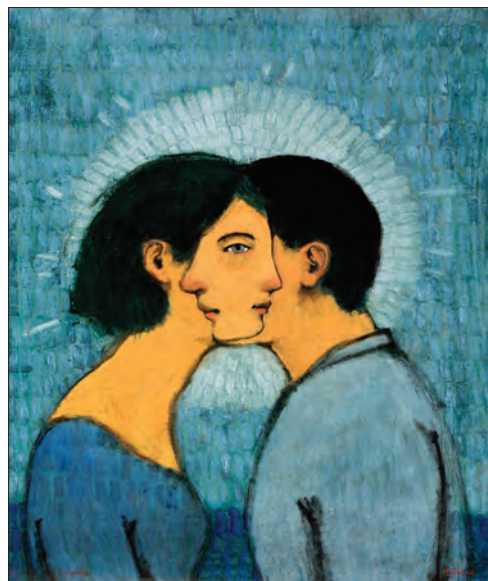


"Muñeca con Flores" by Cristina Mittermeier.

Hilton Contemporary's River North Gallery in Chicago debuts Cristina Mittermeier's *Marks of Memory*, an exhibition featuring a new body of mixed media collages alongside a selection of limited-edition photographs. Internationally recognized for her powerful photography and unwavering commitment to environmental advocacy, Mittermeier has spent decades documenting the relationship between humanity and the planet's most vulnerable ecosystems. For further information, call (312) 852-8200 or visit: www.hiltoncontemporary.com.

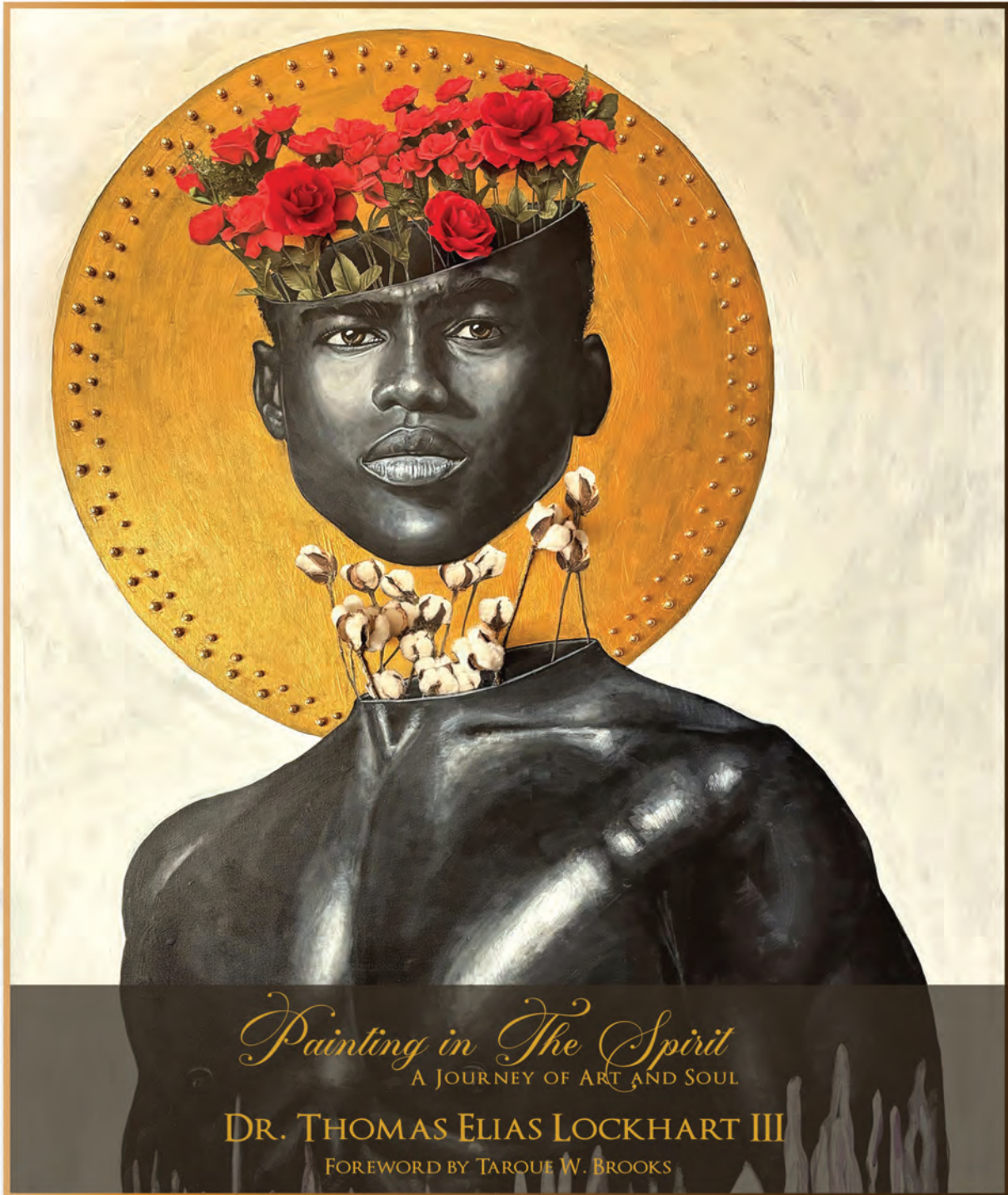
Meyer Gallery Presents Exclusive Event

Meyer Gallery, Park City, UT, is holding a special event for collectors to help celebrate new work by Utah artist Brian Kershisnik. *Breakfast with Brian* is an exclusive and intimate gathering offering a first look at six new large paintings, a new sculpture and a live artist talk with Q&A at the end. Call (435) 649-8160 for further information, or go to the website at: www.meyergallery.com.



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SOUTHFIELD, MI—Park West Gallery has announced a new charitable initiative supporting Operation Homefront, the nationally recognized non-profit dedicated to building strong, stable and secure military and veteran families. As part of a special campaign commemorating America's 250th Anniversary, Park West Gallery will donate \$250 to Operation Homefront for every sale of Park West artist Tim Yanke's patriotic masterpiece, "Yanke Doodle II," shown. The initiative transforms every artwork purchase into a meaningful act of gratitude, allowing collectors to celebrate American freedom while directly supporting the families who sacrifice to protect it. "At Park West Gallery, we believe art has the power to inspire, connect people and create positive change," says John Block, chief operating officer. "This partnership with Operation Homefront allows our collectors to own a remarkable work of American art while making a tangible difference in the lives of military families who have sacrificed so much for our country. Every 'Yanke Doodle II' sold becomes an expression of gratitude." To learn more about Operation Homefront and its mission to support America's military and veteran families, visit: www.operationhomefront.org. For further information on Park West Gallery's artwork, phone (800) 521-9654 or go to the website at: www.parkwestgallery.com.

NEW GALLERIES SEEK OUT THEIR NICHE

continued from page 1

as customer acquisition and maintenance which can be controlled using point-of-sale (POS) and inventory control software and apps.

At One Contemporary Gallery in Atlanta, GA, in business since 2025, director and curator Faron Manuel, says that presenting the community with a unified voice of what the business has to offer, is important. "The greatest lessons I've learned since opening is that every gallery needs to have a position and philosophy for what's exhibited," he says.

"This has really been helpful in building trust in the community and among collectors and artists. Becoming a reliable source for quality works, and access, is really important here in Atlanta."

Mr. Manuel adds that starting from scratch means that he has had to be firm in how he reaches collectors to show them that One Contemporary Gallery is a destination worth visiting.

"A notable challenge has been improving visitor traffic during regular business hours, as this venture has largely been establishing an art presence in a part of downtown Atlanta where there previously was none," he says. "Whereas we have great turnout in the hundreds for openings and

events, we may see fewer than a dozen guests on an average non-event weekend. To face this challenge, the obvious thing was to offer more events but even that requires finding the right rhythm to not overtax your audience, or yourself."

Setting oneself apart from other retailers in the area also needs to be taken into account. "I've done well at giving a platform to emerging voices in the region. This has provided local



One Contemporary Gallery is located in Atlanta.

collectors access to new artists they may not have known without the exhibitions we've hosted.

"Also as a gallery, I'm not afraid to put forth an art experience for the community without a market focus. For example, our summer photography exhibition, *Through Our Eyes with Sheila Pree Bright* received sponsorship from Leica Camera, and Emory University's Michael C. Carlos Museum—allowing us to present an art experience to the community with no works listed for sale in the show."

The gallery was also able to take advantage of the in-

flux of tourists to the area during the recent FIFA soccer games. "For the summer photography event, we hosted over 500 new guests during FIFA World Cup in Atlanta, allowing us to grow our gallery subscriptions substantially," Mr. Manuel says. "All because we took a risk of defying common gallery practice to present a museum-quality experience to the public."

Choosing artists for the gallery has been an ongoing process. "I've found that there are a lot of really good artists eager to find compatible representation more than anything. Of course artists want their work to sell, but it's helpful to have an eye for understanding the work and the current station in the artist's journey. It is important, as a gallery, to provide professional support in various ways, if needed."

Mr. Manuel says that direct email and texts to subscribers have been the best way to reach collectors. "As galleries, I don't think we should ignore the value of the communities we've built in the folks that return to support us time and time again. For new audiences, social media is important, but that does not mean traditional media sources, like radio and print, have stopped working. Use all of it!"

What attracted him to the

continued on page 12



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NEW GALLERY ISSUES *continued from page 10*

gallery business was his extensive background. "I formerly worked as a grant manager in the curatorial department of the High Museum of Art, and as director of the BAIA Foundation. I've also served as a Board Member and Resource Specialist for the Aspen Institute's Artist-Endowed Foundations Initiative, wherein I developed grant making strategies for art organizations," he says.

"What got me interested in the gallery business initially were the moments where I got to work directly with artists on projects, and how they would have questions about ways to sell their art. This intrigued me. This has been a catalyst for One Contemporary Gallery to be a curator-led space, that emphasizes the importance of contemporary narratives and artists' intent."

At Dean Street Gallery in Tampa, FL, gallery manager Sharon Meidan, says that since the gallery opened its doors in October of 2024, owner Deana Buckley—who has worked in the art business for over a decade—has been crafting a portfolio of artists and work that speaks to the collectors in the community and beyond.

"As with any small new business, it has been a learning curve, for both the

gallery and the staff," Ms. Meidan says.

"Although I have a degree in art history from Tel Aviv University, the day-to-day running of a gallery and speaking with potential col-



Studio 80 is located in Overland Park, KS.

lectors is something that can't be simply taught, so getting to experience that alongside Deana and gain from her expertise has been incredible. We are slowly learning the Tampa market,



Dean Street Gallery is located in Tampa, FL.

what our collectors are looking for and how we can encourage them to collect what they feel connected to and inspired by. We have hosted exhibitions, took part in private member clubs' programming and have done whatever we can to support

the Tampa art scene as a whole."

This is no small feat when it comes to getting the word out about the gallery and what it has to offer. Tampa is the third-most populous city in Florida with some 419,635 people, and with the metro area of Tampa-St. Petersburg-Clearwater accounting for some 3.4 million residents.

"Being a newer gallery, the main struggle has been getting our name out there and letting collectors know where we are and what we have to offer," she says. "In our first year, we held many exhibition openings, events, took part in programming, advertised in local magazines and heavily posted on social media. That helped a lot so that in this second year we are able to focus on creating even more quality programming, as well as venture into exhibiting at art fairs.

"I believe our commitment to the artists, telling their stories and supporting them as individuals—which is at the forefront of our mission—is what has helped to set us apart. When we speak with clients, we always strive to make them aware that when they buy art from an artist who is living, they are allowing them to create more and fulfill their artistic mission. We try to make the gallery world less intimidating and more inviting for people, whether you are

continued on page 16



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HAMPTONS FINE ART FAIR



At the Dean Street Fine Art Gallery, Tampa, FL, booth, gallery manager Sharon Meidan is pictured with artwork featured during the fair from Mr. Brainwash, Debbie Taylor-Kerman, D.N.Z, Bassmi Ibrahim, Luis Kaiulani, Jeff Lange and Angela Johal.



Memento gallery owner Madison Daily, right, is shown with art consultant Ethan Martin at the Atlanta-based contemporary gallery's booth featuring new work by artists Simon Cooper, Virginia Deaver, Paula Cortazar and Gabriel Tendai Choto.



Curator and artist Marc Violette is shown at his New Brunswick, Canada-based MaVéa Gallery booth, in front of his new work from the HERE NOW Collection, as well as work by artists Kael Soren and Liora Veil.



At the Oksana Tanasiv Gallery, Norwalk, CT, booth are, artist and owner Oksana Tanasiv, right, and her daughter Karolina Tanasiv, where the artist's LED series created with unique crystal and bead mosaics into abstract geometry patterns are shown.



At the Artblend Gallery, Plainville, CT, booth, are, from left, artists Léni Paquet-Morante, Ani Vassileva, Michael Joseph, Jason S. Tosta, Scot J. Wittman and Andrew Vukosav all on-hand to meet with collectors during the fair.



Abstract Expressionist artist White Deer is pictured at the booth of Perseus Gallery, New York, NY, where "The Only Way Out Is Through," a heavy body acrylic on cotton canvas work, as well other new pieces, were presented.

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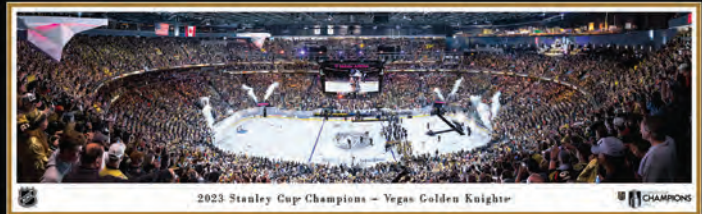
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NEW GALLERY ISSUES
continued from page 12

a casual visitor or a collector."

Building strong artist-gallery relationships is also vital. "With any artist, emerging, established or even estates that we work with, we always try to understand them and their vision better. We focus on what sets them apart. There are an endless number of talented artists, but we try to choose ones that are not only talented but have accolades or a story which elevates and separates them. The feedback we receive always encourages me in knowing our clients feel that difference as well."

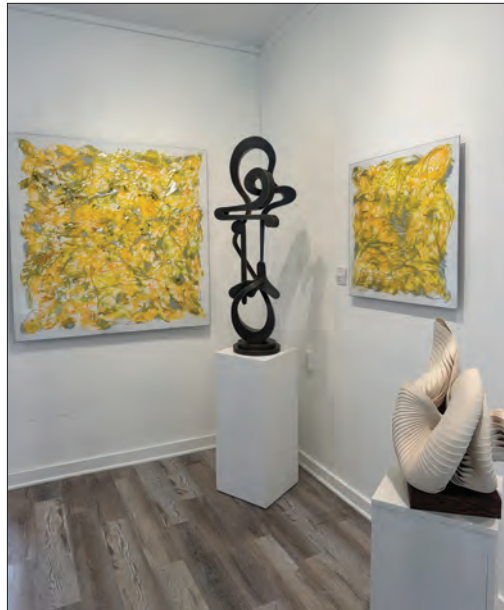
When it comes to marketing, Ms. Meidan says that consistent social media posts are a great way to engage and attract collectors. "In today's marketing age, social media is everything. People want to see what you have to offer easily and quickly on their phone. Interestingly, posts which receive the highest engagement are usually ones that feature one of our gallery staff. We believe this is because collectors, or even casual visitors, look to connect with the people behind the gallery. It provides a sense of human connection and makes the art world seem a bit more reachable and down-to-earth.

"We do try to keep the art at the forefront, but also maintain a connection with our audience by posting the gallery's 'familiar faces' consistently. We work hard to make the gallery a place to not only view exceptional

artists' work, but also to learn, experience and be inspired."

Mark Freeman, owner of Studio 80 in Overland Park, KS, first opened his doors in November 2025 and since then has found a community eager to do more than just admire and acquire art. "A couple of things I have learned since opening my studio/gallery is that people are as interested, or more interested, in learning about me, my history, process and inspirations, as much as they are in the paintings themselves," he says.

Studio 80 currently sells Mr. Freeman's artwork, but he plans to grow it over time to feature more artists' work. Art has always been



C Fine Art Gallery is in Shelter Island, NY.

his passion, but until now, has taken a backseat. "I have been in sales and marketing my whole professional life," he says. "I



DelPuma Fine Art is located in Clermont, FL.

"Also, I have found that letting people have time to absorb and feel the work on a personal level without having to fill in the space with talking, allows them to create more of a connection to a piece."

always knew I would paint and had a long history of appreciating art throughout my travels. I have always been creative but never had a plan to be an artist until 2017. After selling my first painting three months later,

I knew I was hooked."

Newly opened C Fine Art Gallery, located in Shelter Island, NY, an upscale area that sits between the North and South Forks of Long Island, has kept busy since it opened its doors at the beginning of this month. Owner Cheryl Sokolow, says that taking advantage of the summer influx of people means keeping them engaged with events.

"Our first month has been productive as we have been holding many events, programming and exhibitions to increase community engagement. It has been a challenge to get people's attention with so much going on in the nearby Hamptons this summer. However, planning events, programming and curating with a consistent messaging with our roster of accomplished artists goes a long way," she says.

"I am a sculpture specialist representing dimensional work which is a unique specialty. Even the wall pieces involve some sort dimension. I also present a program of internationally established and recognized artists. I've had the wonderful opportunity to present some new artists. I've spent most of my career dealing privately and placing sculpture outdoors while curating large-scale exhibitions. The gallery itself has presented works of different material that could not be shown outside, such paper, fabric and wood."

When it comes to marketing, she says that keeping

continued on page 18

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direct communication going with clients is important. "Also, receiving a good deal of press from the various media outlets has been great for us."

A love of art was fostered at an early age for Ms. Sokolow. "My mother was Isobel Folb Sokolow, an internationally recognized sculptor, and I studied art at a young age. Later, I studied art history and went on to receive a masters degree in art history. I've always worked in the art business, and held a position with *Artnet* for 15 years as their director of business development before transitioning into my business full-time."

Clermont, FL-based DelPuma Fine Art founder Tammy Kollinger-Morales, expanded her business to include the gallery on December 1, 2025. "My primary business background is in marketing," she says. "My husband, Ryan, and I own DelPuma Consulting Group, an AI integration and digital marketing company, so I have spent many years helping businesses tell their story, promote their services and connect with the right audience."

"For several years, one of my clients was a Miami-based art gallery. Over time, I began helping the gallery at various art fairs, which gave me a deeper appreciation for the art business and the relationships behind it," Ms. Kollinger-Morales says. "After the gallery owner passed away last summer, one of the artists asked me why not start my

own gallery? That question stayed with me, and by December, I launched DelPuma Fine Art and onboarded many of the artists I had already worked with and believed in."

Taking on this new venture has been exciting for her and her husband as they navigate new waters. "It has been a whirlwind ever since. Starting a gallery has been a lot of hard work, and there is still so much I am learning, but it has also been incredi-

"Some lead to sales right away, while others are more about visibility, credibility and relationship-building. I have learned how important it is to collect leads and continue those conversations after the fair, because sometimes the real value comes weeks or months later. For me, these fairs are about building trust. The more people see DelPuma Fine Art participating in respected fairs and consistently representing strong artists, the more credibility the gallery

come that by being more intentional before, during and after each fair. I pay attention to the audience, how the artwork is presented, how leads are captured and how I follow up afterward. Each fair teaches me something, even when the results are not immediate, and I am learning to look at the bigger picture."

When it comes to working with artists, finding the right fit is more than just appreciating one's body of work. "One of the biggest things I have learned is to be very thoughtful and selective, especially when working with artists from abroad," she says. "When an artist is not local, I may not be able to see the work in-person until it arrives, and as we all know, photos and videos do not always capture the full depth, texture, color or presence of a piece. Because of that, I pay close attention to the quality of the work, how it is presented, the artist's consistency and whether I feel the work fits the direction of the gallery. It is not only about whether a piece is beautiful.

"I have my own little phrase for it: the work has to 'give me the feels.' It sounds a little funny, but it is true. There is a certain reaction I look for—that gut feeling when you see an artist's work and know there is something special there. It has to move me in some way, because if I am going to represent an artist, I need to believe in the work and feel excited to share it with collectors."

Koleen Kaffan is Editor in Chief of Art World News.

I feel fortunate to be building something that combines my marketing background, my relationships with artists and my love for helping people discover artwork that feels meaningful to them.
—Tammy Kollinger-Morales

bly satisfying. I feel fortunate to be building something that combines my marketing background, my relationships with artists and my love for helping people discover artwork that feels meaningful to them."

Art fairs have proven to be a great way to expand the gallery's customer base. "Fairs have been one of my main ways of introducing the gallery, the artists and the artwork to new collectors, so I have come to view them as both a sales opportunity and a marketing investment."

"One of the biggest lessons I have learned is that every fair will not be immediately profitable," she says.

builds over time."

But exhibiting at art fairs does not come cheap. Along with the booth space and charges that go along with that; travel, expenses and shipping have to be factored in.

"One of the biggest struggles has been learning how to navigate the financial side of art fairs. They can be expensive, and even when a fair looks promising, there is never a guarantee that the return will happen during the event itself. That can be challenging as a newer gallery still building its name, collector base and momentum," Ms. Kollinger-Morales says. "I have over-

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TURNING CUSTOMER SENTIMENTS INTO CASH

By Sheila McCumby

You aren't just a framer. You are a high-stakes emotional therapist expertly wielding an ATG gun. Nobody walks into your shop with artwork they are indifferent about. Whether it is their grandfather's pristine WWII medals, a "creative" abstract watercolor their child painted in preschool, or a signed sports jersey that cost more than my first car, these pieces carry immense sentimental weight. They are tangible fragments of a life story, destined to be cherished for generations. Because your clients are trusting you with their most vulnerable memories, the emotional stakes are incredibly high, which means your reputation, your craftsmanship, and how you handle those clients must be seamless.

Since framing is an intensely visual, expensive and deeply emotional purchase, your online reputation is incredibly fragile. One errant piece of lint under the glass can trigger a meltdown of epic proportions. But here is the secret smart business owners have learned: mastering your Google Business profile isn't just an afterthought or tedious marketing chore to do between cutting matboards. It is

a critical, multi-purpose shield. It is your best tool for managing difficult clients, your ultimate engine for generating local foot traffic and believe it or not, your secret weapon for convincing a bank to lend you money.

If you want to turn customer opinions into actual business capital, you have to

show them the finished product that warms my heart. Their eyes light up, their jaw drops, happy tears fill their eyes and for a brief moment, they forget how much money they just spent. They are swimming in pure, unadulterated dopamine. This is your golden opportunity. Do not let them leave the store before you ask for the review.

this shadowbox turned out! We had so much fun doing it. Since we're a local independent shop, word-of-mouth is pretty much our entire lifeblood. If you love the craftsmanship, would you mind scanning this code and leaving us a quick review? And hey, if you can snap a photo of it once it's hanging on your wall, that helps other art lovers find our workshop too. It would mean the world to us."

Why push for the photo? Because Google's review algorithm loves user-generated images. A text review that says, "They were very nice and did good work." is fine. A review that includes a photo of a perfectly framed oil painting hanging in

the reviewer's home is local SEO gold. That snapshot tells Google, and everyone searching for a framer in your community that you are an active, high-end workshop doing real, beautiful work.

2. The 1-Star Review: How to Handle the Entitled Jerks

We've all seen it: a customer brings in a \$5 Temu poster, demands a custom closed-corner frame with mus-

continued on page 21



know how to frame the narrative.

1. Capitalize on the "Reveal Moment"

It's awkward asking for reviews, but custom framing has a built-in psychological advantage that standard retail shops would kill for: "The Reveal."

My favorite part of being a framer is when a customer comes to pick up their piece. There is that exact, magical "ta da" second when you

Nobody likes feeling like a desperate time-share salesperson, but in this case, let your design do the talking. Casually direct their attention to a gorgeously framed QR code that links directly to your Google review page, conveniently located right on the pickup counter where they are standing.

As they are admiring their newly preserved artwork, lean into that positive energy with a conversational script:

"I am so thrilled with how

BUSINESS MANAGEMENT *continued from page 20*

eum glass by tomorrow morning and then throws a tantrum over their sticker shock. They storm out like an angry toddler and immediately slap you with a scorching 1-star review claiming they were “scammed.”

When that notification pops up, bypass the blind rage and panic. Step away from the keyboard, take a breath and remember two fundamental truths about online reviews:

- The “Perfect Score” Trap: Consumers are naturally cynical. If a workshop has 300 reviews and a flawless 5.0 score, people assume you pay a click farm or hold your clients hostage until they write a nice review. The sweet spot for maximum consumer trust is actually between 4.2 and 4.7 stars. A random, unhinged 1-star review proves you run a real business in the real world where people occasionally disagree. It makes you look authentic.

- You Are Responding for the Next 500 Customers: Your reply is never meant to win a debate with a jerk; it is a performance piece for the next 500 rational people looking to trust you with their art.

When you reply, set an icy-professional boundary. Never apologize for things you didn't do and never get defensive. Instead, kill them with terrifyingly polite craftsmanship standards:

“Hi [Name, aka: Jerky Mc-

Jerkface], We pride ourselves on master-level archival framing and use museum-grade preservation materials designed to protect artwork for decades. This tier of conservation is reflected in our up-front pricing. We would be happy to meet with you again and show you other framing options that will accommodate your limited budget.”

Boom. Just like that, the disgruntled reviewer looks like an unreasonable cheapskate, while you look like a prestigious, confidence-inducing artisan. You just turned a digital smear into a highly effective advertisement.



3. The Hidden Superpower: Making Banks Fall in Love with You

Let's talk about some benefits that almost nobody thinks about: financing and eventually selling your shop. Framing is a shockingly capital-intensive business. If you want to scale up, you need serious machinery; computerized mat and material cutters, miter saws, under-pinner, pneumatic tools, etc. don't come cheap.

When you walk into a bank or apply online for an equipment loan or a business line of

credit, you might think the underwriter is only looking at your tax returns and your personal credit score. Welcome to the modern era. Today, commercial lenders utilize sophisticated data-scraping algorithms to evaluate the risk of your business.

One of the primary things these algorithms look at? Your Google Business profile. To a lender, a ghost town of a Google profile with three reviews from four years ago screams “risky brick-and-mortar storefront on the verge of eviction.” Conversely, a profile overflowing with consistent, recent, 5-star reviews

signals a vibrant, high-traffic retail operation with predictable cash flow and excellent customer retention. It is “social underwriting.” It proves to the bank that your revenue isn't a fluke; people actually love your service and keep coming back to spend money. This “blue sky” value and stellar reputation in your community is very attractive to potential buyers.

A healthy stream of reviews locks your shop into the coveted “Local Pack,” the top three map results that pop up when someone types

“custom picture framing near me” into their phone. Holding one of those top three spots is like owning prime real estate on Main Street, except it's digital and completely free. Lenders know that if you control that local map traffic, you have a highly resilient, automated stream of inbound customers. That gives them the warm, fuzzy confidence they need to approve your equipment financing, knowing you will easily be able to make your monthly payments.

By treating your digital profile with the exact same precision, patience, and care that you bring to a cherished piece of art, you build an ironclad boundary around your business. You will easily weed out the entitled jerks, turn casual art collectors into fierce brand advocates, and secure the financial backing you need to scale your workshop into a local empire. Now, go frame that QR code!

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.

SALES STRATEGIES

EARNING ATTENTION IN AN ENDLESS SCROLL

by Katherine Hébert

Are you aware you have a new competitor? One of your biggest competitors might not be the gallery across town. Nope. It's every screen in your collector's pocket. Your prospective art buyers wake up every morning and immediately encounter social media, streaming entertainment, podcasts, newsletters, shopping apps, travel inspiration and a constant flow of information. We all do. Against that kind of attention suck, a beautifully designed exhibition announcement may never receive a second glance.

The challenge facing your gallery today is not simply visibility. Its relevance. So, how do you fight that? This article is about understanding how attention works and how your gallery can build meaningful relationships with people who don't yet think of themselves as art collectors. Frankly, that is where the next generation of buyers will come from.

Your Gallery is Competing for Attention, Not Just Art Sales

The younger affluent audience often spends discretionary income on experiences before objects. We

have known this for some time now. When the challenge is getting people into the gallery, the question you need to ask yourself is How do we create an experience worth interrupting their day for? Trust is the scarcest

tor's pocket: beautifully produced travel reels, restaurant openings, boutique wellness retreats, private clubs, tastemakers' Substacks and an endless stream of culture-as-content. In that environment, at-

people belong, not just a place they visit.

This is why the younger affluent audience's preference for experiences over objects matters so much. It doesn't mean they don't value material things; it means they lead with identity, story, and social context. They'll spend on a dinner not because it's "food," but because it signals taste, gives them a night to remember, and connects them to people they want to be around. The purchase is justified by the experience.

Art is uniquely capable of delivering those same emotional outcomes: identity, meaning, discovery, connection. But galleries often market it as inventory or as solely the artist's narrative. When art is introduced as a cultural experience first, and an object second, it becomes easier for non-collectors to say yes. Yes to coming in, yes to staying longer, yes to asking questions, and eventually yes to buying.

So the strategic pivot for you might be to stop treating the exhibition or the art on the walls as the only "product" and start treating the gallery as a cultural host. A host doesn't just display;

continued on page 23



currency; for your gallery to grow with a new generation of buyers, it needs to become a reliable guide to what's worth paying attention to.

You're competing against the entire experience economy that lives in your collec-

tion isn't won by announcing an exhibition and hoping people rearrange their schedules.

Attention is earned by becoming relevant often enough, and meaningfully enough, that your gallery starts to feel like a place

SALES STRATEGIES

continued from page 22

they create low-stakes entry points, such as short guided walkthroughs and intimate conversations, rituals people can return to, so a new audience can build familiarity over time.

For example:

- First Thursday: 30-minute Art + Wine Guided Walkthrough (same time every month)
- Sunday Salon: one artwork, one story (20 minutes + mingling)
- In the gallery cards about how to look at this work (3 prompts on a printed card)
- “Collector home tour” presentation in the gallery. slides only (a designer shares a project; you share art placement ideas)
- Gallery Listening Lunch Hour: Member of the month chooses the playlist + one artwork they love” (community spotlight)

These and similar experiences are worth considering because it train people to come back even when they’re not “buying” art. Repetition builds habit; habit builds trust; trust builds sales. I do recommend you keep it time-boxed and the same format every time.

The goal is to build a relationship with someone who doesn’t yet call themselves an art collector, but already has the curiosity, taste, and discretionary income to become one. That relationship is built the same way it’s built in every other experi-

ence category.

- Repeated positive touchpoints
- A sense of inclusion
- Feeling that this place understands them.

Over time, these prospective buyers stop saying “we should go to that opening” and start saying “let’s go there, something interesting is always happening”. Your experiences become part of their

The goal is to build a relationship with someone who doesn’t yet call themselves an art collector, but already has the curiosity, taste, and discretionary income to become one.

lifestyle. That’s when attention turns into loyalty and sales.

Stop Marketing To the Art World Only

If you want to attract first-time and next-generation buyers, you can’t rely on language that only “art people” understand. I see a lot of gallery communications that assume the reader already knows the codes: contemporary art references, exhibition language, collecting etiquette and why a particular artist matters. But when your messaging starts after that learning curve, you might unintentionally exclude the

exact people you’re trying to bring closer. And we don’t want that to happen.

Many galleries are excellent at speaking to collectors and surprisingly poor at speaking to future collectors. You want to be good at both.

Future collectors may already have cultural curiosity and disposable income, but they’re often motivated by the same things that guide other high-end purchases: creating a beautiful home, expressing personal identity,

pursuing creativity and living a life that feels meaningful. They care about entrepreneurship, travel, design, sustainability, family, legacy and community because those are the areas where they’re building a life they’re proud of.

Art intersects with all of these interests, but the gallery has to build the bridge. A practical way to refresh your exhibition marketing is to ask yourself a few simple questions:

- Why would someone who has never purchased art care about this show?
- What emotional need does the work address—comfort, wonder, play, sta-

tus, belonging, reflection?

- What broader conversation does it connect to, and what life experience does it echo?

Play a New Role To Make Art Part Of Everyday Life

If your goal is to reach future collectors, growth may come from becoming visible inside the broader cultural ecosystems your audience already participates in. In other words, make art feel less like a niche destination and more like a natural part of the life they’re building.

This is where collaboration can become an advantage. The point isn’t to partner with random brands for novelty. It’s to identify adjacent industries in your region that serve the same educated, affluent audience and create genuine, repeatable points of connection.

Interior designers and architects can help audiences imagine art in real spaces and real lives. Luxury real estate introduces art during moments of aspiration and transition, when people are actively making identity-defining decisions. Hospitality partners such as hotels, restaurants and resorts offer built-in foot traffic and a context where discovery already feels natural. Fashion shares the same language of taste and self-expression, and wellness and lifestyle brands align with the emotional outcomes art can provide: calm, meaning, and atmosphere.

Universities and profess-

continued on page 25

TRENDS MOVE AWAY FROM MASS-PRODUCED

By Litsa Spanos

The biggest art and interior design trends of 2026 are moving away from sterile minimalism and toward warmth, texture and meaningful, collectible pieces. Art collectors and designers are looking for artwork that feels handcrafted, emotional and deeply personal rather than mass-produced.

Here are the strongest trends seen in today's art buying market:

Rich texture

Thick impasto paint, plaster, layered resin, textiles, sculptural surfaces, and dimensional mixed media are dominating luxury interiors. Art is becoming something you almost want to touch.

Oversized statement pieces

One dramatic artwork often replaces an entire gallery wall, creating a focal point in the room. It can also help to bring other elements of the room together.

Organic inspiration

Florals, botanicals, landscapes, coral forms, and natural movement continue to be highly sought after, especially when interpreted in an abstract way.

Warm, earthy palettes

Clay, terracotta, sand, olive, sage, chocolate brown, muted gold and soft blush are replacing cool grays.

Meaningful, unique works

Collectors increasingly want art with a story, personal symbolism and hand-

joyful color combined with luxury presentation.

If you are an artist or a retailer, to make your collec-



crafted details instead of generic decorative prints.

Soft luxury

Elegant materials, subtle

tion even more aligned with 2026, consider:

- Having larger statement pieces, such as 48–72 inches.



metallics, curved forms and refined color combinations create a sophisticated, calming atmosphere. Original artwork can also provide

- Introducing more sculptural relief and layered textures.

- Using warm neutrals with jewel-tone accents.

- Offering commissioned works that incorporate clients' personal keepsakes, making each artwork uniquely theirs.

- Presenting your work in minimalist luxury interiors where the artwork becomes the focal point.

These directions would position your work at the intersection of contemporary fine art, luxury interiors and personalized collecting—the areas seeing the strongest momentum in 2026.

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 the website to learn more located at: www.adcfineart.com.

ional organizations can also be powerful, because they gather intellectually curious people who may become collectors over time especially when the gallery can be seen as an educator and guide, not a seller. Ultimately, the strategy is simple: Ask yourself where do your future collectors already spend their time in your market and how can you meet them there with something valuable?

Many of these industries would welcome an art partner because you enhance their client experience as well, with regularly refreshed art and narrative in their spaces.

Your Gallery Is a Guide, Not Just a Seller

This is where your educational content becomes a great sales and marketing tool. Many exhibitions are presented with language that feels inaccessible, even to people who genuinely like what they're seeing. The gallery's role is not merely to display artwork. It is to create a better understanding of what the artist is doing and how that enhances a collector's life.

Four Stories Your Gallery Should Tell

1. Why This Artist Matters

- What makes their perspective unique?
- What are wrestling with?

- Why should a non-art expert care?

2. Why This Work Exists

- What inspired it?
- What problem, memory, question or experience gave birth to it?

3. What Experienced Art World People Notice

- This is a brilliant angle. Create content such as:
- Five details experienced collectors notice immedi-

4. The Story Behind the Exhibition

This may be the most overlooked opportunity I see over and over again. Many exhibition themes are abstract, philosophical, or highly conceptual. If that is the case with one of your shows, try to translate those ideas into more human language.

- For example, instead of:
"An exploration of liminal spatial relationships and fragmented memory."
Try: "This exhibition asks

questions.

- Are we creating experiences people want to attend?
- Are we speaking to future collectors or only existing ones?
- Are we showing up where our audience already spends time?
- Are we making art easier to enter without making it simplistic?
- Are we consistently creating curiosity?

Because in the coming decade, the galleries that thrive won't necessarily be those with the largest marketing budgets or even the most Instagram followers. They'll be the ones who become indispensable sources of discovery, connection, and meaning. Gallery Fuel helps galleries build the systems, content, and collector relationships that turn attention into long-term growth. We are all guilty of endless scrolling on occasion; the goal isn't simply to be seen. It's to become memorable.

Columnist and industry expert Katherine Hébert helps art galleries improve sales, marketing and operations. She is the founder of Gallery Fuel, a business advisory practice and bespoke gallery operating system that helps small to mid-sized galleries connect strategy to day-to-day execution, create clearer systems and modernize how they run their business. Learn more at the Gallery Fuel website, located at: www.galleryfuel.com.

The gallery's role is not merely to display artwork. It is to create a better understanding of what the artist is doing and how that enhances a collector's life.

ately.

- How do collectors evaluate a body of work?
- Why does consistency matter?
- How does scale affect impact?
- What makes a work memorable over time?

This helps beginners feel included rather than uninformed. These five things would make excellent long-form content that can be repurposed in many ways as you talk about your artists on various marketing channels and sales follow-up assets.

a question many of us recognize: What happens when the places we once knew begin to change, and how do those memories continue to shape us?"

The second version invites participation and just feels more accessible to a future collector. We can all relate to that in our own lives.

Attention is rarely won with a single post or art opening. It is earned through repeated, valuable interactions. As you think about how your gallery is positioned and how you might compete better with screens for the attention your artists deserve, think about these

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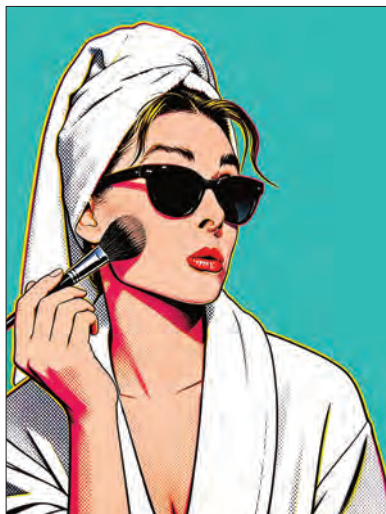


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"Glam Bath Girl I" by CAD Designs measures 22 by 28 inches and retails for \$25. For more details, call Galaxy of Graphics, located in Fair Lawn, NJ, at (201) 806-2100, or visit the website at: www.galaxyofgraphics.com.



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"Pink Poppies Up Close" by Denise Souza Finney measures 24 by 24 inches. For more information, call 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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American Farm

"American Farm" by artist Elizabeth Medley measures 12 by 24 inches and retails for \$20. For further information, telephone Sun Dance Graphics, located in Orlando, FL, at (800) 617-5532, or go to the website at: www.sdgraphics.com.



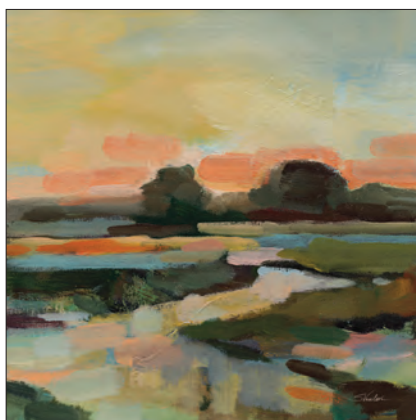


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"Woodland" by Suzanne Nicoll measures 36 by 36 inches and retails for \$76. Available on multiple substrates and multiple sizes. Call Image Conscious, San Francisco, for more details at (800) 532-2333, or visit: www.imageconscious.com.

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"Westlake View" by Silvia Vassileva measures from 6 by 6 inches to 56 by 56 inches and retails from \$25 to \$520. For further information, telephone Wild Apple in Woodstock, VT, at (800) 756-8359 or visit the website at: www.wildapple.com.

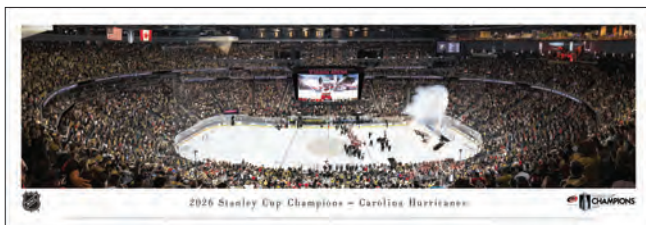


Resonate in Gold III

"Resonate in Gold III" by Ellie Roberts is available as POD retailing from \$36 to \$435. For further information, telephone C Brand Studios, located in San Diego, at (858) 554-0102 or: www.cbrandstudios.com.

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"2026 Stanley Cup Champions, Carolina Hurricanes" by Auguste Bernick measures 40 by 13 1/2 inches and retails for \$44.95. For more details, call Blakeway Worldwide Panoramas Inc. in Minneapolis, MN, at (800) 334-7266, or go to: www.panoramas.com.



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"Willowherb" by Eva Watts is available as POD. Retail prices vary depending on size and substrate, but start as low as \$100. For details, call PI Creative Art, Toronto, at (800) 363-2787, or go to: www.picreativeart.com.

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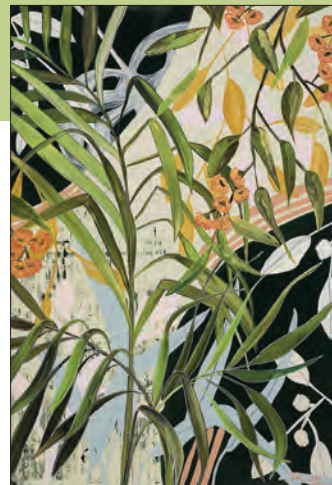
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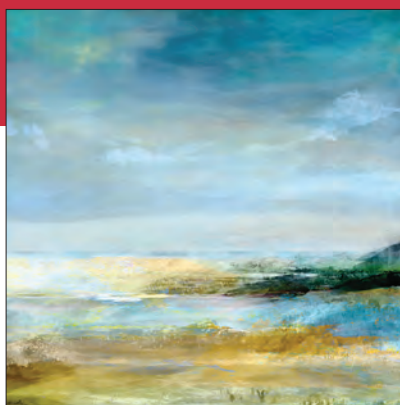
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Bittan Fine Art Inc.		11	Pure Art Printer		13
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Framerica		1, 32	Sagebrush Fine Art		28
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www.imageconscious.com	800.532.2333		www.sundancegraphics.com	800.617.5532	
Lockhart Gallery		9	Westport River Gallery		4
www.lockhartgallery.com	720.219.3460		www.westportrivergallery.com	203.226.6934	
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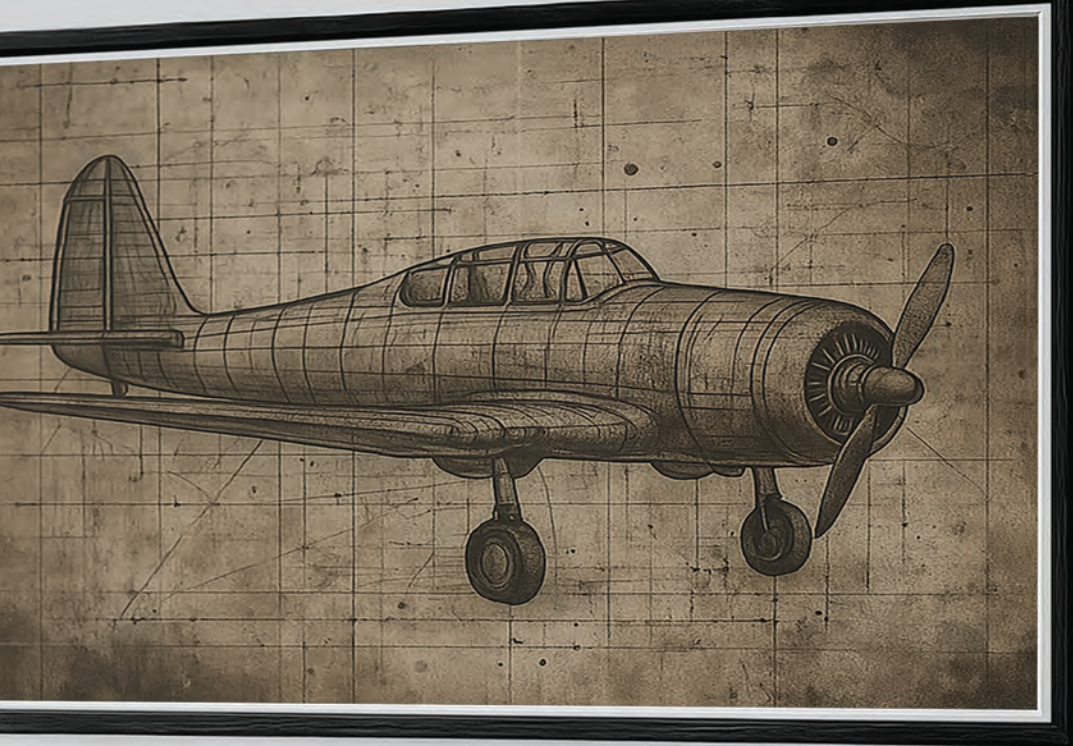
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