Art World News

NOVEMBER 2026

THE INDEPENDENT NEWS SOURCE

FOCUS ON FRAMING: INDUSTRY NEWS

This month we focus on framing with various articles and news highlighting the custom framing industry, as well as New Framing Product releases with the latest collections, additions and innovations available to framers today. The full custom framing coverage begins on page 1.

HOW TO FUND HOLIDAY CASH FOR YOUR SHOP

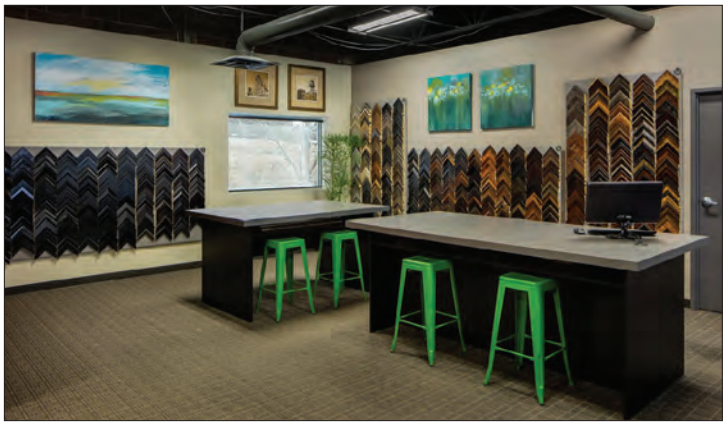
Strategies for Success' Sheila McCumby talks about how a little genuine appreciation for staff and their hard work and dedication goes a long way, which makes it all the more tragic how often business owners miss the mark. Page 26.

NORMAN ROCKWELL'S AMERICA AT AFA

American Fine Art recently held an opening showcasing legendary artist Norman Rockwell's contribution to the American story by featuring more than 150 of his most recognizable works for sale and display in their Scottsdale, AZ, gallery. Go to page 18 to learn more.

ARTIST TIMOTHY LOTTON CELEBRATES 10 YEARS

Artist Timothy Lotton of Tim Lotton Glassworks, St. John, IN, opened his own studio 10 years ago, and since then, has taken the legacy of his family's glass art techniques and iconic collections, and brought them to another level. Go to page 16.



Riveting Frame & Design is located in Littleton, CO.

CONSUMERS LOOK FOR QUALITY IN CUSTOM FRAMING

As we look to 2027, the custom framing industry, as well as fine art galleries, have much to learn from this year's consumer buying habits. Researchers have noted that 2026 was the dawn of a shopper with a mindset of value, longevity and uniqueness. Price is still a factor, but people are seeking out trusted retailers more often and buying from smaller businesses than in previous years. The age of information has finally caught up with people and created a dizzying array of options. Consumers are also buying for homes that are just for them as solo-living is on the rise. AI tools are becoming inevitably incorporated into many retailers' shopping experience, but many consumers find it off-putting. Brick-and-mortar stores are also being sought out more, rather than just spending endless hours scrolling for products and services.

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Click on advertisers' Web addresses throughout the issue.

QUOTE OF THE MONTH:
"People desire fast turnaround, high quality and more bang for their buck, but the availability of quality of materials is down, and good things take time when made by human hands."
Shannon Swartz, page 12

ELENA BOND

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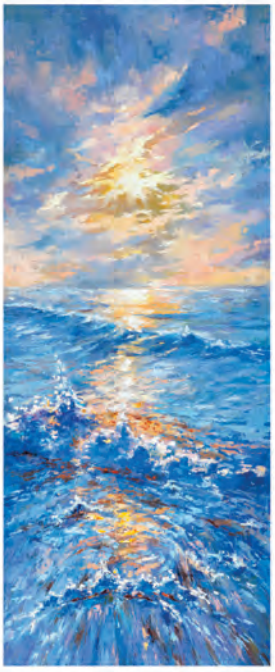







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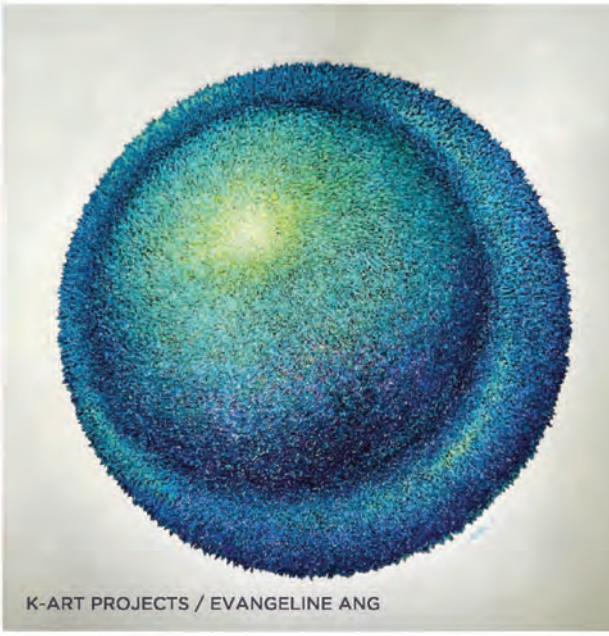

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Shown is "Haven" by Jocelyn Hobbie from Fredericks & Freiser. Go to page 14.

Consumers Look for Quality in Framing

As we look to 2027, the custom framing industry, as well as fine art galleries, have much to learn from this year's consumer buying habits, such as a search for more hands-on shopping experiences.

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Timothy Lotton Celebrates 10 Years

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Norman Rockwell's America at AFA

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New Framing Products

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

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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

Can A Day Make A Difference?

As dark becomes day, apparently there is light. For most of the last six months, art galleries and frameshops have stumbled between twilight and no light. One day there are reasonable sales to new and old customers then crickets. Nothing but the sound of their beating heart.

Now, in rather short order, the pitch has changed. For retailers everywhere, the glass now, at least, seems to be half full and the gallop toward the end of the year will be uplifting. Is it a flash or the start of a sustainable cycle? Across the country and across the strata of levels of art and framing, things are moving and sales are rising.

Dealers who have invested in shows and events have been handsomely rewarded. Rather than shying away from the expense, many dealers are amping up their commitment to host and sell at events. Several galleries posted their best sales for artists and work that they have featured for years. Clients arrived; gave themselves the permission to buy and went home happy.

Psychology is a tenuous thing. Smart retailers know how to read the mood and customize their sales effort to carry the day. Unfortunate retailers are those unable to read the room and convince themselves that attitudes have changed and that opportunity exists. For the time being, the sun seems to be rising and there is work to be done.

Attitude can become reality. When a prospect walks into the shop and carefully peruses the corner samples or art. Avoid the temptation to prejudge the opportunity by predicting a negative outcome. When people entered the business, they implicitly offered permission to be sold. Don't belittle the chance for the both of you to shine.

John Haffey
Publisher



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ARTISTS & PUBLISHERS

Zenith Gallery Celebrates Dolly

Zenith Gallery, Washington, DC, presents a group show featuring 35 artists called *The Inimitable Dolly Parton*. The collection of work depicts each artist's version of the late singer, actress, philanthropist and activist who passed away on August 25, 2026. Ten percent of all sales from this exhibition will be donated to Dolly Parton's Imagination Library, a book gifting program that mails free books to children from birth until they begin school in participating areas. For more details, call (202) 783-2963 or go to: www.zenithgallery.com.



"Dali 'Icon of Abundance'" by Diane Dompka.

Thomas Everhart's New Release

Limelight Agency, located in Chatsworth, CA, released a new limited edition image titled "Moonshadow" by Tom Everhart as an archival pigment printing and serigraphy on paper with hand-torn deckled edges. "After a long, bright day of painting in the Tahiti studio, the full moon is a massive influence on how we see and how great it is to be able to see through our living eyes," Everhart says. "Since there is no light anywhere except under our overwater studio, everything is completely dark. So when the moon becomes full, one is able to see small islands and even fish everywhere." For details, call (415) 786-6040, www.limelightagency.com.



"Moonshadow" by Thomas Everhart is an archival pigment printing and serigraphy on paper.

Matt Sesow Piece Sells at Auction



Sesow's piece from Felix Gonzalez-Torres' "Always to Return."

Washington, DC-based artist Matt Sesow recently auctioned his painting titled, "Large Fish with Escort" for American Visionary Art Museum (AVAM), Baltimore, MD, where he has 22 works in its permanent collection. Sesow created this piece with an acrylic paint mix on paper acquired from the National Portrait Gallery exhibition *Felix Gonzalez-Torres: Always to Return* in Washington D.C. The framed piece measures 18 by 12 inches. Sesow is also featured in the New Bedford Art Museum, where his work is prominently featured in a new visionary art exhibition. Phone (929) 324-6624 for more details or: www.sesow.com.

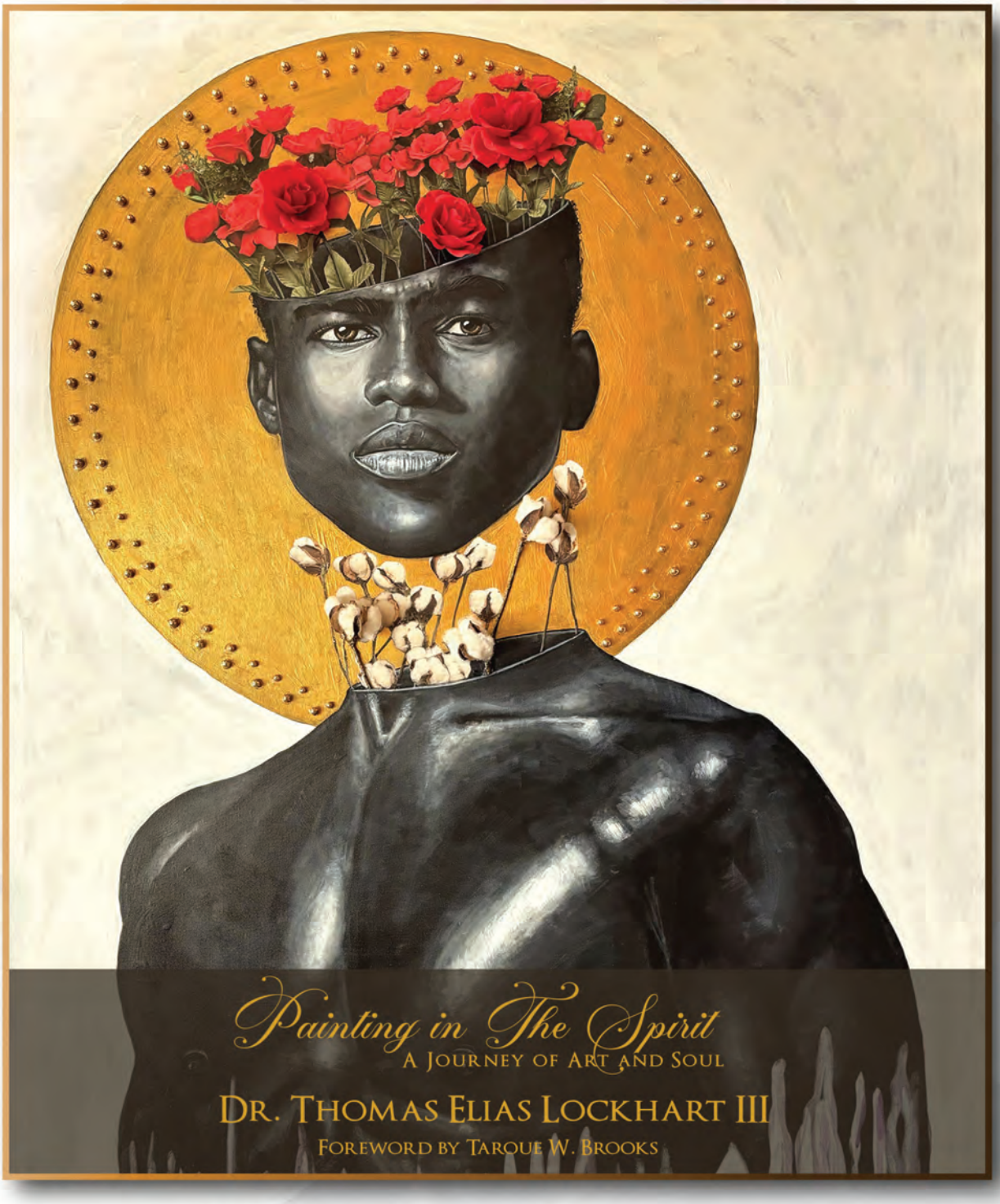
Marilyn Monroe's Centennial



This image of Marilyn Monroe is an archival digital pigment.

Madelyn Jordon Fine Art, White Plains, NY, in celebration of Marilyn Monroe's 100th birthday, is offering their collectors exclusive 15% preferred pricing on Lawrence Schiller's iconic photographs of the Hollywood legend, along with a complimentary copy of his photobook, *Marilyn & Me*. The offer runs alongside the exhibit, *Marilyn Monroe Centennial: Photographs by Lawrence Schiller*, opening November 20 at The New York Historical. For more information, call (914) 723-8738 or visit: www.madelynjordonfineart.com.

A New Coffee Table Book



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A & P

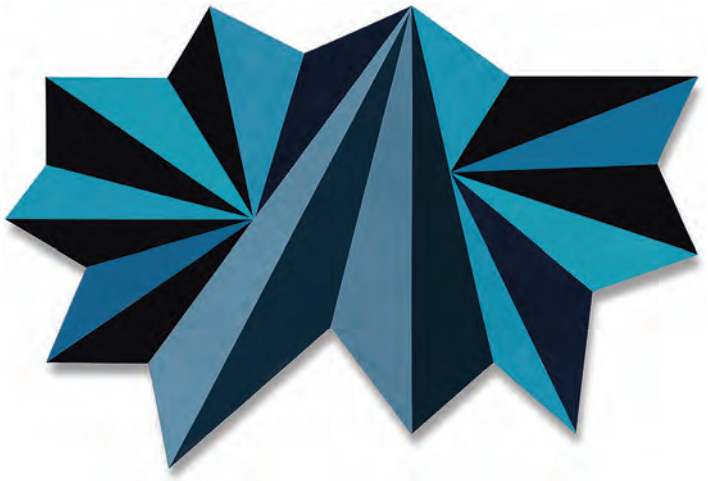
Shaw Gallery Celebrates 40 Years



Rogério Peixoto's "Echoes of Time" is an oil on canvas.

Shaw Gallery in Naples, FL, celebrates 40 years in business with an exclusive showcase featuring five of the gallery's artists and more than 60 new pieces of work on display. With the work of Andre Kohn, Leonard Mizerek, Rogério Peixoto, Rick Eggert and Paul Nagy, the exhibition showcases an array of the gallery's extensive collection of contemporary and modern art. For further information, telephone (239) 261-7828 or go to the website at: www.shawgallery.com.

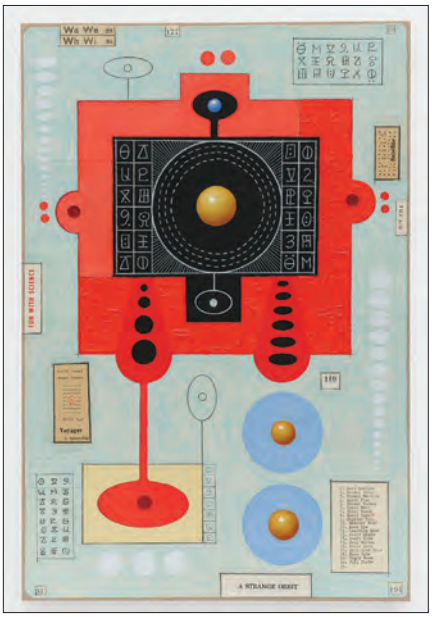
Studio EL Adds 25 New Hersh Images



"Roundabout 26" by Howard Hersh Art.

Studio EL, Emeryville, CA, releases 25 new works by painter Howard Hersh, featuring a series of intriguing studies in the contrast of light and shadow. Strong linear compositions are softened with gradual transitions of colors fading into the depth of shadows or shining against bright highlights. Hersh's characteristic use of gradient creates the illusion of movement and cavernous space within his works, making them an exciting addition to modern workspaces. For more details, call (800) 228-0928 or visit: www.studioel.com.

Gallery Wendi Norris' Fine Tuner Show



"A Strange Orbit" by Karla Knight.

Gallery Wendi Norris, San Francisco, CA, presents *Fine Tuner*, the first solo exhibition on the West Coast of Karla Knight. The exhibit brings together Knight's newest tapestries—large works on reclaimed cotton sacks—alongside recent paintings, collages and works on paper, as well as pages from her *Spaceship Notebooks*. Nearly all the works are being shown publicly for the first time. For further information, phone (415) 346-7812 or go to the gallery's website located at: www.gallerywendinorris.com.

Shepard Fairey Wins Visionary Award



Shepard Fairey's "Incarnation" is a stencil, silkscreen and collage on paper.

Turner Carroll Gallery, located in Santa Fe, NM, is set to exhibit major Shepard Fairey artworks, curated by the artist himself, in the VIP areas and in three distinct exhibition spaces during Miami Art Week, held December 1 to 6, 2026. The gallery also announces that Fairey has earned the Perry J. Cohen Foundation and Art Miami's 2026 Lifetime Visionary Award corresponding with the exhibition at Art Miami. For further information, telephone the gallery at (505) 986-9800 or go to their website located at: www.turnercarrollgallery.com.

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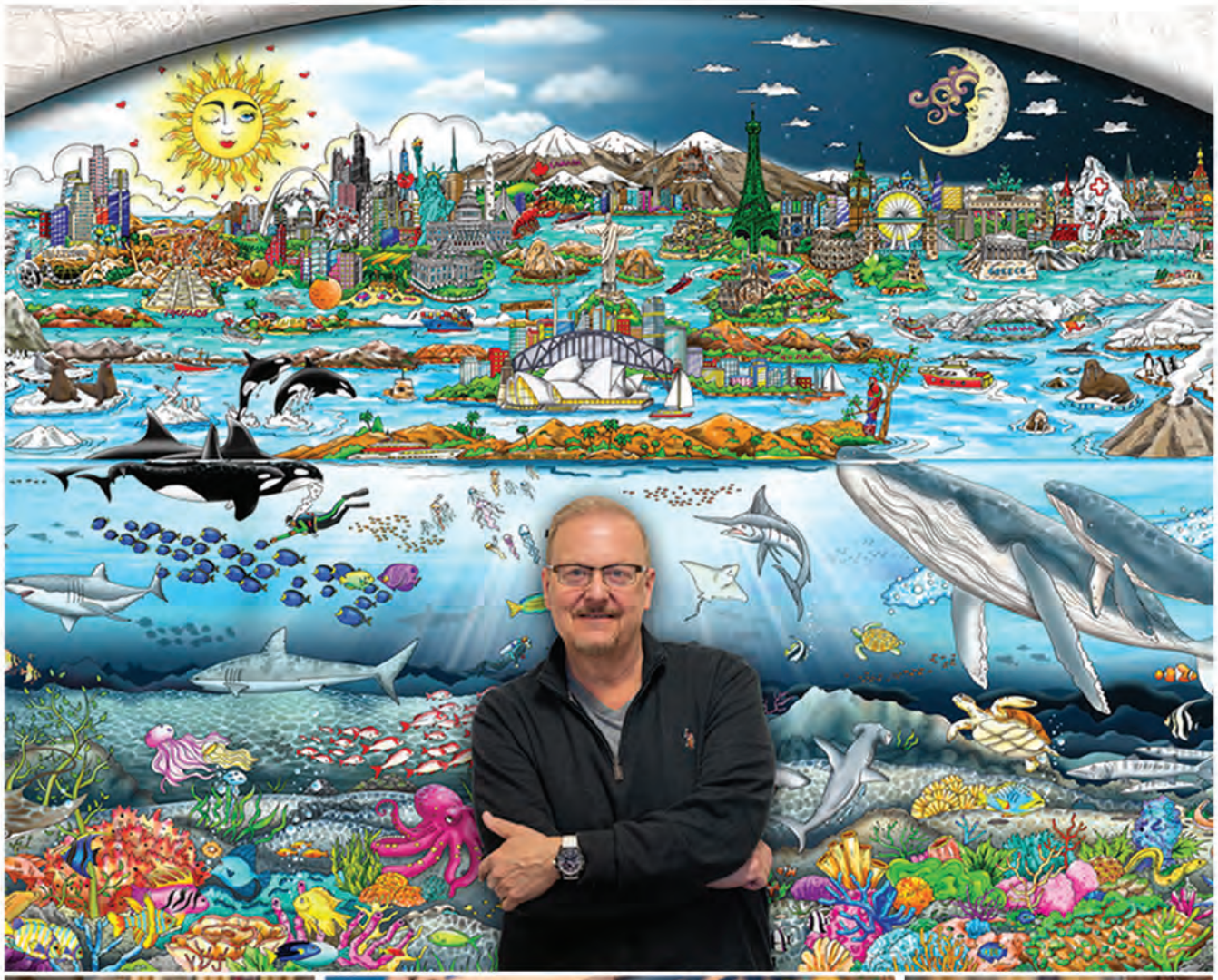







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SPECTRUM MIAMI AND RED DOT MIAMI ANNOUNCE SCHEDULE

MIAMI—**Spectrum Miami** and **Red Dot Miami**, two of the longest running contemporary and fine art fairs during Miami Art Week, announce this year's five-day schedule of interactive programming, taking place December 2 to 6, 2026. Returning to Wynwood Arts District at Mana Wynwood Convention Center at 2217 NW 5th Ave. and NW 22nd St., the "Two Fairs Under One Roof," offer more than 150,000 square feet of exhibition space, with an estimated 30,000 attendees flocking to see the artwork of more than 1,000 artists showcased by over 150+ exhibitors. Avid art enthusiasts and industry leaders will also return to enjoy [SOLO], highlighting established and independent emerging artists. Spectrum Miami, now in its 16th year, is where contemporary meets extraordinary, featuring the works of more than 120 exhibiting galleries and artists, located adjacent to its sister fair, Red Dot Miami. Spectrum Miami's special programs and site-specific exhibitions that showcase the thriving art landscape of the city by exhibitors from the Florida region, the U.S. and around the globe. Within Spectrum Miami, [SOLO] offers established and emerging independent artists the opportunity to showcase their work on an international stage. For details, call (216) 225-0962 or: www.redwoodartgroup.com.

CONSUMERS LOOK FOR QUALITY FRAMING

continued from page 1

This is good news for custom framing shops. Even during this holiday shopping season, online businesses are seeing a change in sales. According to the National Retail Federation, online holiday shopping informational intent for 2026 fell to 53%, which is its lowest in 11 years. People want to see and feel an item's quality, know that returns will be easy and are able to stick to their budgets. It has been a year of quality over quantity for consumers and this holiday shows signs of being the same.

With this hands-on shopping experience, consumers also want to feel confident that their money is being well-spent on items that have proven to be durable and have longevity. There is a move away from fast-fashion for retailers and that has also moved into other industries, when it comes to consumer buying habits. Sustainability in products when it comes to materials and labor practices are still important to consumers. Peer-reviews and word-of-mouth go a long way as well.

Shannon Swartz handles design and marketing at Riveting Frame & Design, located in Littleton, CO, and says that this year's consumer has been more thoughtful in their buying habits, as well as their search for quality custom framing.

"2026 has been an interesting and positive year for us. Our retail clientele expanded while our commercial clientele remained consistent," she says. "People desire fast turnaround, high quality and more bang for their buck, but the availability of quality of materials is down, and good things take time when made by human hands."

Offering one-of-a-kind custom framing options has allowed the Riveting designers plenty of opportunity to include the client in on the process. "Our business continues to grow and with that, our talented team can expand on creativity. We focus on conservation picture framing and best practices with all artwork that enters our sphere and because of that, we've built a strong and positive reputation within our community.



Riveting Frame & Design is located in Littleton, CO.

"The challenge we encountered this year leans to material quality. Unfortunately, the moulding we receive needs to replaced or modified due to damage, or shoddy finishes and warping. This brings us some opportunities in figuring out solutions since our clients ask for quick turnarounds, and these delays don't lend to being a fast turnaround. Sometimes our vendors pushback on what counts as issues, but usually we can find a resolution."

Ms. Swartz says that their clientele are often repeat sales or those that have heard from friends and family about their work. "We have a decent blend of demographics. We are located in a south suburb of Denver and we cater to artists and galleries in addition to our general retail, interior design and commercial clientele. Our average retail customers tend to bring in multiple items to frame. We do individual consultations with our clients and they tend to maximize their visit," she says. "Also, we have a large facility which allows us to take on high-volume projects so our average commercial client will request several hundred items in one order."

When it comes to trends for 2026, she says that they have seen a vast array of styles. "Our artists and galleries tend to lean more modern/ transitionary/ contemporary while our art consultants and interior designers lend more to traditional with a timeless aesthetic."

Items being framed also vary from original artwork to found objects to collectible

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FREDERICK & FREISER CELEBRATES 30 YEARS



NEW YORK, NY—**Fredericks & Freiser** celebrate 30 years in business and were featured in an article on *The Unibrow*, an internationally focused print biannual, digital news source and audio platform dedicated to contemporary and historic arts and culture. Founded in 1996 by Jessica Fredericks and Andrew Freiser, Fredericks & Freiser is among one of the first to establish a presence in the Chelsea arts district. Its ground-floor space on West 24th Street, designed by architect Andrew Ong, reflects a longstanding commitment to clarity, rigor and the presentation of ambitious work. Since its founding, the gallery has maintained a program devoted to artists whose practices demonstrate originality, formal intelligence and an independent artistic language.

The gallery's multi-decade engagement with historically significant positions has contributed to critical reassessments that continue to shape understandings of postwar and contemporary art. Shown is "Gardencraft" by Jocelyn Hobbie, an oil on canvas. For further information, telephone the gallery at (212) 633-6555 or go to: www.fredericksfreisergallery.com.

CUSTOM FRAMING

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lines of art. "It could be items that they've just acquired to things they've had for years and are finally getting around to framing. Also, our design firms work with large quantities of prints for multifamily spaces and clinics."

Marketing also varies. "While word-of-mouth has been very beneficial for us, we updated our website and expanded it for more client interaction," she says. "We initiated a form system so that our clients can communicate through those channels. They can make consultation appointments, join our mailing list, request specialized quotes and submit wholesale applications, at any time whenever it works for them. In this industry, every year is unique. We do have some exciting rollouts scheduled for this coming year and we are looking forward to 2027."

At Ward & Ward Custom Picture Framing, Inc. in Kansas City, MO, President Timothy D. Ward says that buying habits of today's consumer are beneficial to a business like his. "This year has been a Renaissance for our 72-year-old establishment. Our strengths start with the mainstay of our offerings: high quality custom picture framing. Diversity also compliments our framing, we broker fine art, we execute partial restorations on frames and fine art and we offer accurate art historical knowledge regarding the proper use of framing," he says. "But perhaps our best business strength is our staff: all are artists, or have fine arts-related backgrounds. Mr. Ryan Haney became our manager at the beginning of 2026 and with his guidance, revenue has increased. Collectively, we've tried to keep our struggles to a minimum."

The longevity of the business has also played a role in the increase of customer traffic this year. "We try to cater to the discerning client who has a penchant for high quality. Additionally, because of our long history, we are seeing second and third generations who learned about finer things from their folks," Mr. Ward says. "Our best advertising is our finished product. When one sees something that has been framed at Ward & Ward, it is often asked: where did you get that framed? We serve all demographics and have noticed more interest created in our business through electronic media."



Ward & Ward Custom Picture Framing, Kansas City, MO.

Style trends are not something that Mr. Ward's clientele are seeking when entering his business. They want something unique and of quality. "By offering 'timeless' styles, we are able to avoid anything that may give the appearance of being a 'fad.' Sometimes our work is akin to poetry. The correct combination of mats, fabric, woods, gold or silver, is like the perfect word within a poem; it just sounds ('looks') right. Not only are these things offered, they are done so with all current museum standards. We are advocates for showing the client the best possible combination for the piece they've brought in.

"Our clients expect us to be creative and quality-conscious, and we are," he says. "We stick closely to our company mission statement: to provide high quality custom picture framing and related fine art services that meet, or exceed, our client's expectations."

Mr. Ward is looking forward to what the new year brings. "Right after the pandemic, our exhibitions stopped, but the company survived. Now, we have reinstituted a regular exhibition schedule and it has truly helped the business. We are optimistic that 2027 will be another growth-oriented year for Ward & Ward, Inc."

Washington Crossing, PA-based Canal Frame-Crafts Gallery's owner Debbie Crow says that 2026 was unpredictable and had a lot of ups and downs. "Sales are up slightly this year, but volume is down. I

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BYRDCLIFFE CELEBRATES 27 YEARS WITH SHOW

WOODSTOCK, NY—**Byrdcliffe** announces the return of its premier annual winter event, *The 5 by 7 Show*. Celebrating its 27th Anniversary, this high-energy fundraising exhibition brings together hundreds of miniature artworks donated by regional, national and international artists to support Byrdcliffe's historic arts colony and year-round cultural programming. The defining feature of *The 5 by 7 Show* is its format of absolute anonymity. Every artwork measures 5 inches by 7 inches and is exhibited without the artist's name visible. The exhibition runs from December 4 through December 21, 2026 at the Kleinert/James Gallery, Woodstock, NY. Call (845) 679-2079, www.woodstockguild.org.

TIMOTHY LOTTON CELEBRATES 10 YEARS

Artist Timothy Lotton of Tim Lotton Glassworks, St. John, IN, opened his own studio 10 years ago, and since then, has taken the legacy of his family's glass art techniques and iconic collections, and brought them to another level. As a third generation glassblower, Timothy creates a diverse line of work—from the study of organic flowing free-form sculptures to structured layered floral pieces. Some of his newest work, features large mixed media sculptures and metal layered with hand-blown glass.

His grandfather, Charles Lotton (1935-2021) began learning the art of glass blowing in 1970, and then went on to open Lotton Art Glass. "The first piece I ever made was when I was nine years old," Timothy says. "It was 1998 in Lansing, IL, of course at that age, I got a little help, but that's where it all began. From then on I was taught from my grandfather Charles, my uncle David, my Uncle John and my father Daniel. In 2005, at age 16, I started on my own professionally. I was making small floral vessels, paperweights and sculptures."



"Perseverance" is a mixed media standing 5' 7" tall.

Today, each hand-blown glass sculpture is one-of-a-kind and crafted, layer-by-layer in 2,100-degree heat. As part of the tradition, every vibrant hue blended into the artwork is unique to the Lotton family. "I've always tried to use the base that I was taught from my family and then build upon it. While I still do a good deal of floral design, I really enjoy large, freeform sculptural pieces. Part of my new Free Form Lava series involves a metallic, silver heavy glass that gets draped over the sculpture. I also started doing mixed media bronze and glass sculptures that are around 5' to 6' tall. While they are quite the production to get an end product from, they are some of the most satisfying pieces to finish. This is very important for me no matter what I'm making. I always need some sort of a challenge and a new goal which undoubtedly glass always provides."



Part of the Free Form Lava Collection, this hand-blown glass features amethyst purple with silver aurene lava.

Influences can come from many different place for Timothy. "One has always been nature—whether it is a plant or other kind of flora, from bleeding hearts in my grandmother's garden to a texture on a tree, to a meandering creek cutting through bedrock. There has never been a shortage of divine influence for my art in the quiet peacefulness that one can experience in nature."

Changes in the business that he has noticed are that collectors have a desire for more large statement pieces. "I've also noticed the collectors in the galleries that I'm in enjoy our annual or bi-annual shows and the relationship of knowing the artist behind work," he says. "I used to never think my presence had that much of an effect , but after years of successful shows and appearances, it's an honor to know that it does."

While his work may be referred to as part of the Lotton Art Glass family, Tim Lotton Glassworks is its own entity. But his work has set itself apart and created a group of loyal collectors. "I moved out of my grandfather and father's studio in the end of 2015 and built my personal studio in 2016. I have worked in a private studio of my own since. The longer a collector has been familiar with the family, the better they are at dissecting which family member had made a piece of art." For details, call (219) 444–8550 or visit: www.timlottonglassworks.com.

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Norman Rockwell's America

The Stories that Made the Everyday Extraordinary

A boy pauses at the edge of a decision. A family gathers around a meal. A Scout stands a little taller, trying to live up to the promise of his uniform. In Norman Rockwell's hands, these are not small moments. They are the opening scenes of the American story.

That story came vividly into view in Scottsdale with American Fine Art's November 6 opening, showcasing more than 150 Rockwell works for sale and on display, according to the gallery. The scale of the presentation is striking: a chance to encounter Rockwell not as a handful of familiar magazine covers, but as a prolific storyteller whose images have followed generations of Americans from the newsstand into their homes—and, increasingly, into museums.

Rockwell knew how to make a picture feel like a whole world. His paintings invite you to linger: What happened just before this moment? What is the person in the corner thinking? What will happen when the scene ends? A raised eyebrow, a half-hidden smile, a scuffed shoe or a carefully folded flag can turn a seemingly simple image into a story with humor, tenderness, and tension.

That ability to make viewers feel instantly at home in a painting is one reason Rockwell became so beloved. He painted people who looked like the people around us—parents, children, workers, neighbors, young dreamers—and treated their ordinary lives as worthy of attention. His art didn't


Norman Rockwell






NORMAN ROCKWELL



ask viewers to stand at a distance and decode it. It welcomed them in. Then, once they were there, it gave them something to think about.

The affection his work inspires is only part of the story. Rockwell's best paintings are carefully constructed pictures, built with the discipline of a director staging a scene and the precision of an artist choosing every gesture. The humor is rarely accidental. The tenderness is earned. Beneath the easy readability is a remarkable command of composition, expression, and timing.

That combination—popular appeal and serious artistic craft—also lies at the heart of George Lucas's Lucas Museum of Narrative Art. The museum's central idea is ambitious: images made to tell stories belong in the history of art, not on its margins. Rockwell shares that expansive stage with artists working across illustration, painting, comics, and film.

It's a bold proposition—and a necessary one. For decades, narrative illustrators were often treated as lesser artists because their images reached mass audiences and served



a purpose: to tell a story, move a reader, or illuminate an idea. The essay "Why George Lucas Had to Spend a Billion Dollars on a Museum" makes the case that the Lucas Museum answers that cultural blind spot by giving narrative art the scale, attention, and architectural presence long reserved for more traditional museum subjects.

The point is not that Rockwell should replace Picasso or Matisse. It is that art history is richer when it makes room for artists who speak directly to millions—and for the visual stories that shape how people see themselves and their country. A Rockwell painting can be immediately accessible and still reward close looking. It can make you smile, then leave you with a question.

Few works demonstrate that more powerfully than The Problem We All Live With, Rockwell's painting of Ruby Bridges walking to an integrated school in New Orleans, accompanied by federal marshals. The image takes the everyday language of Rockwell's storytelling—a child, a journey, a moment frozen in time—and turns it toward







Lucas Museum of Narrative Art



the violence and injustice of segregation. Its power comes partly from what it withholds: Bridges' face is not shown, while the hostile words and marks on the wall make the surrounding danger impossible to miss.

The painting is often confused with the Lucas Museum's Rockwell acquisitions, but it was not acquired by the museum. The Lucas Museum did acquire Shuffleton's Barbershop and Saying Grace. The frequently repeated figure of more than $50 million sale. The Ruby Bridges painting was bought for an undisclosed figure.

Rockwell's Boy Scouts of America works reveal another dimension of his storytelling: his belief in service, responsibility, and the formation of character. The Scout uniform in these paintings is more than costume. It becomes a symbol of aspiration—a young person trying to become dependable, generous, and brave.

That legacy has also entered the market.

Another sale of American Art happened on November 13, 2026, featuring Rockwell and Scouting-related lots. Public realized prices for the Rockwells were very strong and sold for between $100,000.00 and $2,000,000.00

The market's fascination with Rockwell is easy to understand: his paintings are recognizable,





emotionally direct, and rich with the aura of American history. But prices are only one measure of his cultural reach. His deeper achievement is that he made the lives of ordinary people feel consequential. He gave the everyday man—and woman, child, family, worker, and neighbor—a place at the center of the picture.

That is the spark connecting the Scottsdale exhibition where the Rockwell collection is for sale and the Lucas Museum where the world can come and see some of the fineist paintings Norman Rockwell every created . One brings a remarkable body of Rockwell's work into view for collectors and visitors; the other places narrative art within a major museum devoted to the power of visual storytelling. Both invite us to look again at images we may think we already know.

Rockwell remains, in the most affectionate sense, one of the most American of artists: a storyteller who could make a familiar scene feel like a mirror, a memory, or a promise. His paintings are welcoming, but they are not merely comfortable. At their best, they ask us to recognize ourselvesand to consider what kind of people we want to be.

American Fine Art, Inc.

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Warhol.me
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CUSTOM FRAMING
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believe it is more a reflection of cost increases. My average customer is a homeowner, higher income or retired, older (maybe over 55), 60/40 female. Most are repeats, but I have seen some new clients sent by another shop that has closed. In my area, we see very few younger single people or couples looking for custom framing. And, many of my customers buy hyperlocal art by local artists so framing has been for originals and prints. Their desired framing styles tend to lean more traditional," Ms. Crow says. "Our customers come in because of our reputation for quality, the artists that we carry and trust in our custom frame designing."

When it comes to marketing, she says that getting the word out means using various mediums. "I advertise in regional magazines geared to higher income people, Facebook posts, postcard mailings for art shows, Constant Contact direct emails for shows and we have a local shop that closed recently that has a message on their website driving customers to us."



Canal Frame-Crafts Gallery is located in Washington Crossing, PA.

As many consumers are weary from the consistent high prices and economic uncertainty over the last couple of years, Ms. Crow has seen more price-conscious shopping. "With costs continuing to rise, people are being more cautious with spending. Between distrust in the economy and our aging clientele, I expect sales could possibly decline in 2027," she says. "I noticed that sales in framing and art dropped off around the time of the recent election. It is very slow for this time of year and our recent art show has produced less sales so far. People are coming in, but very cautious to spend. They are much more concerned about pricing and costs, even the more affluent customers and ones who weren't concerned in the past. When they do spend, however, they don't skimp on quality."

Koleen Kaffan is Editor in Chief of Art World News.



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HOW TO FUND HOLIDAY CASH FOR YOUR SHOP

By Sheila McCumby

A little genuine appreciation goes a long way, which makes it all the more tragic how often business owners miss the mark. Before I became a consultant, I worked for a company that got swallowed by a corporate giant. I went from having one boss to six. Prior to the buyout, my wonderful coworkers and I pulled off a massive annual event that brought in substantial revenue, grinding for months on top of our regular duties to make it a success. The event had already been planned and paid for when the business transfer occurred, and being that this event generated over one third of our annual income, the new owners went along with it. In previous years, our original owner always rewarded our extra hustle with a healthy cash bonus.

After our first event under the new regime, I got a text from one of my six bosses informing me that a "special gift" was on its way to my mailbox. Dollar signs danced in my head: maybe this year I can afford a Caribbean cruise? Or six months of car insurance? It's a toss-up. When the package from my corporate overlords finally arrived, I ripped it open to reveal a dollar-store plastic water bottle stamped with the corporate logo. My face fell like a kid who got socks and underwear for Christmas. In pure denial, I twisted off the lid, half-expecting my big bonus check to be tucked inside. Nothing came out but a puff of factory air and the phantom wah-wah-waaaah of a game-show trombone. You lose! To add insult to injury, my supervisor called the next morning fishing for praise about the "amazing" gift he had personally picked out. He was clearly deflated by my lack of enthusiasm. "Best gift ever. Thanks Chad." I replied through gritted teeth. "Clearly you spared no expense." No gift at all would have been better than this insulting gesture.



I resigned soon after and signed on with a company that actually understood how to compensate my hard work. To be clear, I didn't just quit because of the isolated crummy water bottle incident, I'm not that petty. However, that lame gesture was indicative of the poor, tone deaf management prevalent in this corporation's culture. Sadly, in my consulting practice, I've observed that same corporate

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FRAME MANAGEMENT
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lack of awareness is alive and well in small businesses too.

Every December, the same ritual plays out across retail and framing shops: owners spend hundreds of dollars on logoed mugs, stale cookie tins and lukewarm pepperoni pizza, then wonder why shop morale feels flat by January, and why none of their employees want to stick around long term.

Our staff are skilled artisans and detail-obsessed consultants who spend their days managing tight holiday deadlines, calming anxious customers and cutting mats to the sixteenth of an inch. When the holiday rush hits its peak, your team doesn't need another piece of company swag to clutter their breakroom. They need cash.

With inflation squeezing household budgets and gift lists growing longer, cold hard cash is the single most respectful way to say thank you. Fortunately, you don't have to raid your personal savings or blow up your Q4 profit margins to make it happen. You just need to build the bonus directly into your pricing.

The $10-Per-Frame Holiday Bonus Fund

If you run a steady framing operation, a small, temporary pricing adjustment during your busiest season can generate a substantial bonus pool without causing sticker shock at the design counter.

Here is how the math works: Add an extra $10 to every custom frame order starting right now through December. In custom framing, where the average ticket easily runs between $250 to $600 plus, an extra $10 per order is virtually invisible to the client. You could add a line-item-label it as a "Holiday Surcharge" or simply bake it into your fitting, design or materials pricing.



If your shop processes 150 orders between now and Christmas, that quiet $10 bump puts $1,500 directly into a dedicated bonus envelope.

In a busy three-person shop, that's a $500 cash bonus for each employee, enough to cover a major holiday bill, buy gifts for their kids or take genuine financial stress off their shoulders. Distribute it in crisp bills inside a handwritten card a week before Christmas so they can actually use it for the holidays.

Beyond the Cash: Making The Season Merry and Bright

Cash is king, and it should always be the centerpiece of your holiday appreciation. Once the bonus pool is secured, you can pair that financial generosity with thoughtful perks that respect your team's time and energy during the December crunch:

• Give the gift of time. Retail and framing hours are grueling in December. Close the shop early on Christmas Eve, and gift everyone a paid "sanity day" off in January once the holiday dust settles.

• Cover the hidden holiday errands. Offer a two-hour paid afternoon block in mid-December so staff can go to the post office, shop for their families or pick up relatives from the airport without burning their PTO.

• Pizza is nice and all, but... Skip the mandatory after-hours holiday party. Most exhausted employees just want to go home to their families. Instead, bring in high-end lunches (think local favorites, not cheap sheet pizza) on your busiest Saturdays and keep the breakroom stocked with top-shelf coffee, soda and snacks.

• Write a specific, personal note. When you hand over that cash bonus, include a note that calls out a specific win from their year, a difficult shadowbox they engineered, a tough client they turned into a regular or how they kept the backroom running smoothly during a rush. Be sincere.

Your framers and designers are the backbone of your business. By building a $10 buffer into your holiday orders, you let your busiest season fund the appreciation your team actually deserves. Put down the catalog of logo-printed tumblers, get to the bank for some crisp hundreds and make this holiday season genuinely bright for the people who keep your doors open.

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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INCORPORATING 2027'S FRAMING TRENDS

By Litsa Spanos

As we look ahead to 2027, framing is becoming an increasingly important part of the interior design conversation. No longer simply a finishing touch, the frame is an extension of the artwork itself, influencing how a piece is experienced and how it connects with its surroundings.

I've always believed that the right frame can completely transform a work of art. Whether you're an artist, collector or interior designer, here are six framing trends I anticipate will shape the year ahead.

1. Warmer Rich, Natural Wood Tones

As interiors move toward warmer, more inviting environments, natural wood frames are taking center stage. Walnut, burlwood, white oak and rich espresso finishes bring warmth and organic character to artwork. Expect to see more visible wood grain, dimensional profiles and handcrafted finishes.

I especially love pairing a contemporary abstract painting with a rich wood frame to create an unexpected balance between both modern and traditional design.

2. The Return of Ornamental Framing

Minimalism is making room for more personality in the art and framing. Ornate gold frames, European-inspired mouldings, carved details and antique finishes are finding their way into contemporary spaces.



Recently, one of my favorite design approaches is the pairing of modern artwork with traditional custom framing. That juxtaposition creates visual tension and adds a level of sophistication while giving a space a more curated, collected-over-time feel.

3. Color Matters

Why limit ourselves to black, white and gold? In 2027, I anticipate more experimentation with colored frames, from sophisticated burgundy and olive green to cobalt blue and chocolate brown. High-gloss lacquered finishes will also offer a playful yet polished aesthetic. Pulling an unexpected color from the artwork into the frame can enhance the composition and draw attention to subtle details.

4. Texture, Added Dimension

Framing is becoming a more tactile experience. Ribbed mouldings, linen-wrapped finishes, hammered metals and sculptural profiles introduce another layer of artistry. Combining different materials or stacking multiple mouldings can create a truly custom presentation. These details are particularly effective when working with mixed-media pieces, textured paintings or artwork that calls for a more architectural presence.

5. Creative Matting & Floating Presentations

Mats are becoming design elements in their own right. Oversized and asymmetrical matting, fabric-covered mats and unexpected color combinations can give smaller works a commanding presence.

Floating presentations will also remain popular, particularly for original works on canvas and handmade paper, where revealing the edges allows collectors to appreciate the artist's process and craftsmanship.

6. Preservation with Purpose

As collectors become more intentional about their purchases, quality and long-

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FRAMING FOR 2027
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evity matter more than ever. Responsibly sourced materials, thoughtfully restored vintage frames, archival matting and UV-filtering glazing are investments worth making.

Beautiful framing should not only enhance artwork today but also help protect its integrity for generations to come.

Beyond the Trends

While I love exploring new materials, colors and framing techniques, my greatest advice is to always let the artwork lead when it comes to approaching a custom framing project. Consider its composition, scale, textures and emotional impact before selecting a custom frame, matboard, glass, etc.



The most successful framing choices transcend trends. They elevate the artwork, complement the environment and reflect the personality of the collector. In 2027, I encourage you to think outside the frame, experiment with unexpected combinations and embrace the creative possibilities that custom framing offers. After all, framing is an art form in itself.

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 a 13,000 square foot gallery and custom frameshop location in Cincinnati, OH's west end. For further information, visit the gallery's website located at: www.adcfineart.com.



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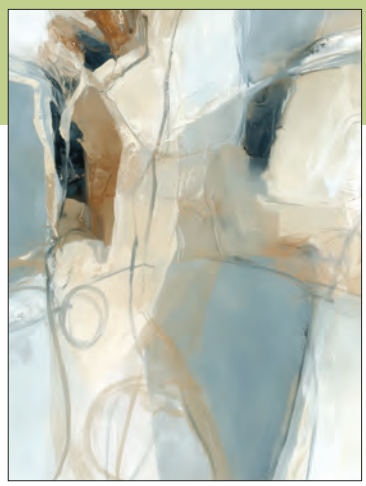

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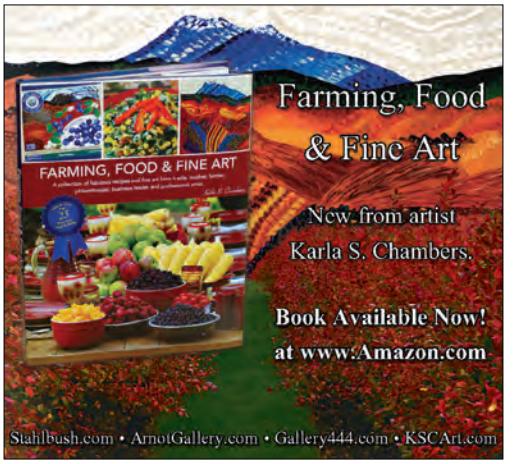



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