

Becoming a Digital Artist; Your First Steps on the Route to Market

If you intend to self-publish, then there are two key questions that need to be addressed. In what format should you publish your artwork? What level of exclusivity do you place on your artwork? It is not possible to even go to market without knowing what you are going to sell. The art, in a way, takes care of itself whether as the result of artist-led inspiration or driven by commissions and competitive themes. Originals and Reproductions Can you make a living from selling only originals? As an unknown artist this could prove difficult and experience shows that it can be hard to earn even the minimum wage in this way until a measure of recognition is achieved. If not originals, then what are the other options? Reproductions can now be achieved to very high standards, often using archival inks and construction that should in theory last without fading for up to 100 years. The product may be a mounted and framed print on textured artist's paper. A framed canvas is almost indistinguishable at first glance from an original. A modern box canvas is ready to hang with the image wrapped around the side. Alternately, you may choose from a range of newer product options such as printing on clear acrylic or sandwiched between glass plates. Happily, most images will be better suited to one format or the other, and the artist can decide on the best format for each image. A word of caution, particularly in the realms of pure digital art: it is possible to create images containing colours that cannot be accurately reproduced by the print process. A helpful reprographic studio may be willing to devote time to testing different profiles, but ultimately you may need to compromise and adjust colours to accommodate the capabilities of the selected printer. This simple fact means that you should not promote a digital image without having a reasonable level of certainty that it can in fact be printed. The process can be a long one, involving many test print cycles. It is very important that you choose a printer that understands the nuances of your artwork and the best way to achieve the results you require. This may not necessarily be your local printer. So you have achieved a high quality reproduction of your artwork in your chosen format. The next decision relates to the level of exclusivity you will offer. At the simplest level you have the choice of selling limited edition or open edition reproductions of your work. There are, of course, pros and cons with each of these decisions. With limited editions, even an emerging artist can achieve a respectable price for their artwork, because part of the value to the client will be the exclusivity of the edition. The value is increased as the edition size decreases, and with the presence of the artist's signature on each reproduction. There will still be downward pressure on price for an unknown artist, but it should be possible to establish a viable price point. By offering limited editions you may need to pre-specify the sizes offered. Open editions can in some ways be more attractive, as it is possible to offer these at more affordable prices and even to be flexible over the size or arrangement of the printed product. The downside is that this puts you in direct competition with cut-price volume outlets that are able to sell at prices below the reproduction cost to you as an artist. In summary, if you intend to self-publish then you must consider carefully precisely what product you wish to market and ensure that you have a robust production process in place.

About the Author

MCW Contemporary Art supplies limited edition Giclee fine art prints and canvases for hotel, restaurant, office & high end domestic interiors. Artworks can be tailored for specific colour schemes. See the full collection of contemporary and abstract art at <http://www.mcwcontemporaryart.com>

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