

Artist Website
By James Patino
”Business Consultant for the Creative Soul”

Everyone has a website these days, and I highly recommend you build one for your art business. Your website is your **online business card** and it should reflect the love and energy you have for your art and your art business. I recommend you have one professionally built and make sure the person doing it has experience with artist websites.

First step

Reserve your website name or “URL.” (For example: www.sinclairstratton.com) Even if you don’t plan to build your site for some time, reserve a name anyway! This is to make sure that someone else doesn’t take your name or company name, and then you’re no longer able to use it. It only takes a few minutes to search for available website names and to reserve one. It’s usually less than \$20 per year to reserve a website name.

Website Hosting

There are numerous website hosting services available online. We used the one that was recommended to us by our web developer and you may end up doing the same. Web hosting service is relatively inexpensive (less than \$20 per month).

Website basics:

Website can vary from 2 or 3 pages, to 50+ pages. A good rule of thumb for the cost of building a website is approximately \$100 per page.

If possible, ensure that your website includes the following:

Contact Info – make sure you have several ways for people to contact you. Your website hosting service will usually come with several email inboxes. Utilize these email addresses for your business. Emails are more professional when they include your website address.
For example: pablo@pablocicasso.com
Try to get away from web based email addresses like yahoo or hotmail, if possible.

A 1-800 number is very inexpensive and worth the investment. People are funny with money. While they might spend hundreds or thousands on a piece of art, they still may not like to make long distance calls to ask you a question about your art, or your prices, etc. Don’t give them an excuse not to call you.

Full Time Artist Consulting

Side note: Make sure you have a nice, professional greeting recorded on your answering machine or answering service. Many times, it's the first contact a potential client may have with you or your art business and you don't want it to sound like their calling some bachelor pad, or something like that.

Gallery – make sure your art is properly showcased. I recommend that you work closely with your web builder to select background colors that will enhance the way your style of work is displayed on a computer monitor. Ensure your images are clear and if possible, have a professional web scan made for every item you wish to post on your site. Provide the title, medium, and size of each art piece on display. I also recommend you state whether the original piece is available for sale, or whether limited additions are available, etc. This is your online art show 24/7!! Make it look good!

Artist Bio – always include some type of bio. It doesn't need to be your life story, but certainly include some background information, education (if applicable), and some of your personal thoughts or experiences. You may want to include an "artist statement" or "mission statement" which includes your or feelings about your art or art business. Many art sales are enhanced by information about the artist themselves. If you have difficulty writing about yourself, have someone else write it. Many bios are written in the 3rd person, while artist statements are in the 1st person.

Resume – it's a good idea to let the reader know what you've been up to. You can list (in chronological order) any art shows you've entered and other places where you've displayed your art. Also include any professional organizations or clubs that you may belong to.

Media Exposure - list any media exposure you've received. You can copy the article directly onto your website, or you can create a link to it, if it's available online. Depending on the type of media, you may want to put it right on your homepage. Celebrate the fact that your art is being celebrated! As your list of media exposure grows, you may want to add a separate media page to list it all.

Prices – there are many different thoughts about this, but for the most part, I do not recommend including the prices of originals on your website. Most likely, your prices will change and I would not want to be tied to a price that I posted on my website, several month ago.

When you move into prints or other items, you will want to include those prices and I recommend you set up an online payment system (i.e. Paypal) in order to facilitate taking online orders.

For commissions, you may want to list your commission prices, or your commission range. For example: Commissions start at \$1500

Upcoming Events – include a section on your website that lists any upcoming art shows or art events that you are scheduled to participate in. When available, be sure to include the exact time, location (include a map if necessary), parking accommodations, entrance fees, etc. You may even list a general description of what you're planning to display and if the event is a benefit for something. Let your clients know what, where, how, and why. Adding pertinent information makes it easier for your clients and will result in more people showing up.

Search Engines – work with your web builder to ensure that your website is listed on different search engines, when a search for your name is initiated.

Navigation – design your website so it's easy to navigate. Make your menus user friendly and you want customers to be able to go anywhere in just a few clicks of the mouse.

Copyright Statement – include a copyright statement to protect your images from being utilized by someone else, for profit.

This list is a good starting point for building your website. There are hundreds of website examples online, that you can use as a guide for your site. In today's high speed, computer environment, having a good website creates one of your strongest marketing tools. If you're just starting out, build what you can now and upgrade later.

What's the bottom line?

Build a website! Get the best website you can afford and keep it up to date. It will represent you on the internet, 24/7.