

6 Market your work all the time. Think of and try different ways of marketing your art work. For many artists this is difficult to do. It is time to think of yourself as running a business, a marketing business. So don a new cap, and get creative in a different way! You are now in the business of marketing art, your art. If your budget is limited, be creative. I have found that once I changed the way I thought, and decided to tackle my fears, I started to see it as a creative adventure. Keep marketing even if you feel you are too busy and galleries are taking your work. You have to keep reminding people that you are out there, the quiet days will come. Read books on marketing, especially ones geared towards small businesses with small budgets. One cannot often quantify the effects of your marketing immediately, years later someone may remember or now afford your work, drag up an old article or advert and contact you.

7 Have a website, and better still one you can change yourself. You need to update it with every good work you do or exhibition you participate in. There are loads of options out there. Blogs are also a good way to bring traffic to your site. Content, not pictures increases your SEO. A website is a great marketing tool, but it must be updated regularly otherwise it loses its validity. It is also a great 'portable' portfolio and so much easier to manage compared to a physical book with one or two dog-eared photos of each work, and can serve many more purposes.

8 Send out newsletters. This keeps any interested people informed of new work and exhibitions. You can be creative with this too. Make sure you link to your website with every newsletter, so that people can have another browse when they get your latest news. I have had galleries contact me wanting specific work because of my constant updates. So gather email addresses from anyone interested. One thing though, don't bother people too much, they like the news occasionally, but I suggest you don't overdo it, you could be unsubscribed in a flash.

9 Print a brochure, something with images you can leave with people. It should look professional have some info on you and your work. They are a great 'leave behind' or easy 'pick me up' from different places for people who are interested, but can't buy now. Business cards are handy too. Sometimes people just want a small reminder, or if you are out and about socially it is easy to whip out a card if someone should want to know what you do. These two tools will make you look more professional.

10 Don't give up. There may be many moments when one feels like one is getting nowhere. So much time, effort and money has been put into your dream, but progress is slow. It is not easy making a living as an artist; you must have nerves of steel and a lot of determination to override fears and obstacles. But if there is nothing else you want to do, don't give up. Keep trying new avenues. If you must get a day job to keep things ticking over, then so be it, create during your weekends and evenings, keep building your portfolio, visit galleries and keep pecking at the marketing. Good luck!



Sarah Richards
ARTIST/SCULPTOR
Bronze Commissions Painting

www.sarahrichards.co.za email: sarah@sarahrichards.co.za cell: 083 707 0126

10 TOP TIPS

from a professional artist

These 10 tips for artists wanting to sell their work are gathered from my experience gained over the past few years as I have put more effort into selling my work.

By: Sarah Richards

1

Make sure your work is of a professional standard. Presentation is everything. A scruffy drawing in a portfolio bag is not going to impress anyone. Get at least one picture framed, so the professional effect comes across from the beginning. Sculptures should be mounted on bases, and dust free. It is also important to be of a selling standard. This is hard to judge on one's own. Gallery owners if kind will often point this out. If this happens, don't give up. Keep working at it. Sometimes it could be a simple thing such as presentation which will help lift the standard, or you may need to keep working at your skills. Rome wasn't built in a day; it can take years to develop your unique skills to a sellable standard.

2

Know where you fit into the market. There is no wrong type of art, though you will never please everyone. So try to work out where you fit in, and who your clients would be. If you are confident in what you do, you will find galleries and buyers that like your work, so long as it is of a professional standard. Only approach galleries that keep work similar to your own, this will limit your rejection experiences. It is my experience a serious gallery owner is a type of artist in their own way; their gallery reflects their taste and the clients they hope to attract. It is therefore as important to choose the gallery you want to exhibit in, as it is to be accepted by the gallery.

3

Make an appointment before visiting a gallery. Gallery owners can be less than friendly if you just arrive at their door unannounced. They feel put on the spot, or you could just catch them on a bad day. Also, the owner may not be there the day you arrive, only the shop assistant. It takes a lot of courage and will-power to gear oneself up to take work to a gallery, don't waste the energy, you may be put off for life after your first rude refusal.

4

Keep in contact with your galleries. Call every so often to see what people say about your work. Also keep it fresh, bring new work regularly. This will make regular visitors to the gallery feel that your work is moving and not stagnant. It also means you have to keep making work. It is important to have a good relationship with your gallery owner. The more they know and like you the easier it is for them to sell your work. People are buying a small aspect of you, and they like stories and something personal to take away with the work they bought.

5

Be prolific. The more work you have the better. This shows the gallery that you are serious about production and can cope with a demand or pressures of participating in exhibitions if required. A successful artist is reliable, gallery owners and buyers want to know they can trust you to be a good future investment and not a 'fly-by-night going to give it up soon chancer'.