



SELLING FINE ART PHOTOGRAPHY

an educational guide by:



PHOTOSHELTER



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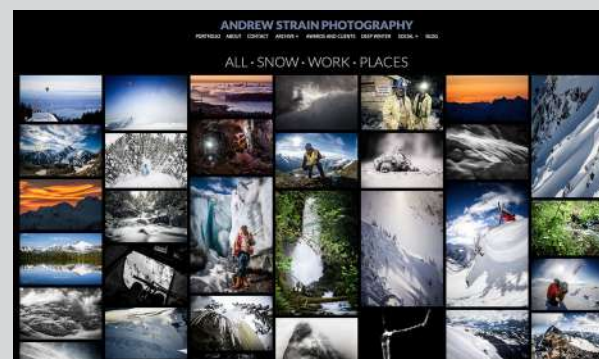
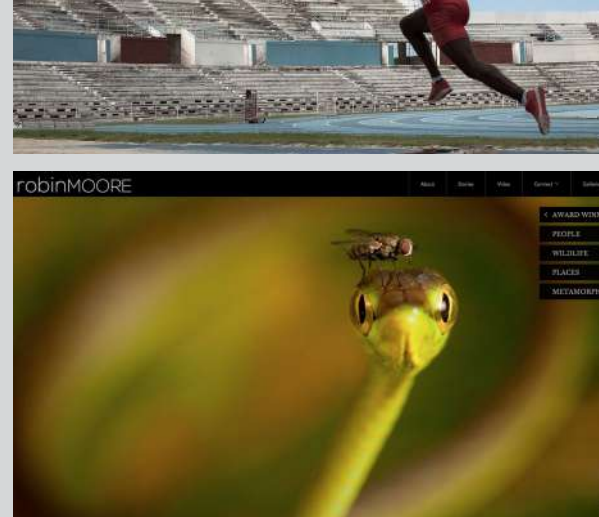
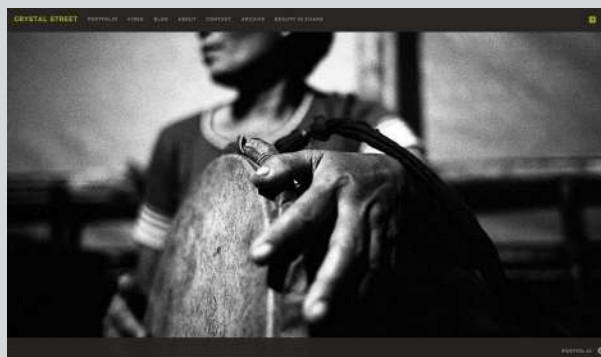
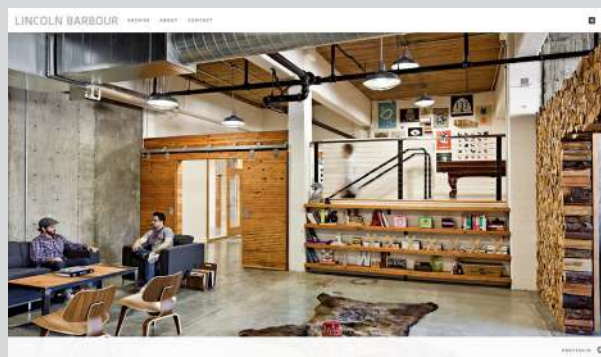
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A black and white photograph of a woman with dark, curly hair, wearing a dark, textured coat with a fur collar. She is standing outdoors, looking slightly to the left. The background is dark and moody.

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Portrait of Anne Hutchinson by Bear Kirkpatrick

PART I

What's Inside

So you've got a wonderful collection of art photography. (You know this because your friends and family tell you so.) "You should really sell your work," they say. Generally, the people who say this don't have the faintest idea what goes into selling fine art photography.

When we initially set out to research and compile this guide, we thought it would be another trusty "how to" companion by PhotoShelter to add to our library, perhaps the most comprehensive guide to selling photography as fine art. Yet we soon found that unlike many other photography businesses, finding the "recipe" to selling fine art proved elusive. There is no recipe, but there are common threads. For example, in every instance of success, we find photographers who have made smart decisions about the ways to build an audience and market their work.

This guide is nonetheless very educational reading for photographers looking to get started or tune-up their fine art sales. On the following pages you'll find inspiring profiles that are filled with unique approaches to building and sustaining a fine art photography business. We explore how photographers found their way into the fine art world and determined their work could sell, how they honed their marketing methods, their pricing and printing considerations, and more. We also spoke to a number of experts in selling fine art online and offline, who shared their tips for breaking through. The takeaways may inspire you to try out new methods for selling your own work.

To learn about some of the more technical aspects and considerations associated with selling prints, also check out our guide, [How to Sell Prints](#).

PART I

6 Tips to Get Non-Profit Galleries to Feature Your Work

By Hamidah Glasgow
Executive Director,
The Center for Fine Art Photography

🏠 www.c4fap.org
🐦 twitter.com/C4FAP
📘 www.facebook.com/C4FAP

In the world of fine art photography, one of the most powerful resources for getting your work seen is a nonprofit organization like the [Center for Fine Art Photography](http://www.c4fap.org). As with most non-profits, we provide exhibition opportunities for beginning, emerging and established artists. These opportunities provide avenues for making vital industry connections.



Hamidah Glasgow

As we all know, this industry is based on networks and connections. Working with others to support and promote fine art photographers is fundamental to creating success for the artists whose work we have the honor to exhibit. While commercial galleries have to take into consideration the saleability of your work, the non-profit has a different business model and therefore, can show work that is not commercially successful, is controversial, or is exploratory in nature.

The Center has been noted by many as a launch pad for artists. In my tenure at the Center, I have seen many artists juried into an exhibition and shortly after, their career takes off from the exposure and connections that were made during the exhibition. It has also been my experience that some artists continue to submit to our juried exhibitions, and through that, their trajectory as artists is evident. Many artists have been invited for solo exhibitions at the Center for Fine Art Photography based on the relationships that are formed.

With that in mind, here are 6 tips for developing a successful relationship with non-profit galleries and organizations:

- 1. MAKE GREAT WORK.** There are so many people out there working and creating work, but none of them have your experience, vision, and/or voice. Make work that matters to you, that pushes you and the viewer to see the world in a new way. Make work that is in conversation with history, society, or with yourself. The Art in fine art Photography is the most important piece of it all. Be bold and true to yourself.
- 2. SUBMIT TO CALLS FOR ENTRY.** People enter juried exhibitions and competitions for many reasons. Some enter to try out a new body of work or to begin the process of getting their work “out there”. Entering a juried exhibition can also be a great way to get your work in front of a specific industry influencer. May that be a curator, publisher, gallerist, or famous artist. Most importantly however, you should be strategic in your approach. Make sure that the organization is well vetted and that you retain the rights to your images (always read the Terms and Conditions) and that the exposure and opportunities associated with the exhibition are significant. Opportunities can include things like gallery and online exhibitions, promotion through social media, and receptions or other networking events.
- 3. ATTEND NETWORKING EVENTS.** As mentioned before, creating connections with artists and “influencers” is one of the most important pieces of getting the work seen. Receptions, talks, workshops, gallery openings, and other events like

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these allow artists to professionals in the field and other creatives to make connections, form friendships and learn about the industry. But remember, when attending these events, don't try to push your own agenda and be a salesperson—folks often do not appreciate this approach. Instead, be genuine, interested, and ask good questions that can help you learn more about the person or organization he or she is affiliated with.

4. **INVESTIGATE SOLO EXHIBITION OPPORTUNITIES.** Solo exhibitions are offered to artists whose body of work is substantial and compelling. Usually this comes through a relationship with the artist or the artists work. Most non-profit galleries provide the opportunity to submit exhibition proposals. Before submitting, it's best to consult the website for each organization's particular requests, rules, and timelines. If there is no information regarding proposal submissions, contact the gallery and ask what their policy is regarding submissions. Another effective way to garner opportunities for solo exhibitions is through portfolio reviews.
5. **PARTICIPATE IN PORTFOLIO REVIEWS.** Portfolio reviews come in all sizes shapes and price ranges. If you're looking to participate in one, a great place to start is by contacting your local organization or finding out if there are reviews in your area. Attending portfolio reviews is a skill set of its own, so start slow, pace yourself, and hone your skills so you can effectively and comfortably talk about your work and your strengths as a photographer. Once you are ready for the larger reviews (for example, at [Photolucida](#), [PhotoNola](#), or [FotoFest](#)), you will thank yourself for the practice and procedural knowledge. You want people to see you at your best and to make the most of the time that you are investing in yourself and your career at the larger reviews.
6. **NETWORK, NETWORK, NETWORK.** This part speaks for itself. The key is to be yourself. Treat people like you want to be treated. Remember, it is all about relationships. Give more than you take. Be real, helpful, make great work, and know how to speak about it.

PART I

6 Tips to Get Your Work Featured Online

Featuring Jeffrey Teuton of 20x200

Jeffrey Teuton is the Director of the [Jen Bekman Gallery](#) in New York City and works closely with [20x200](#), an online venue offering limited edition prints from a wide-range of photographers. Founded by Jen Bekman, 20x200 brings together art collectors and artists, selling fine art pieces ranging from \$24 to upwards of \$10,000. 20x200 also digs for fine art photography by searching Tumblr, Facebook, art blogs, websites, portfolio reviews, gallery exhibitions, and beyond.

Jeffrey notes that online galleries are “a different beast” compared to offline exhibitions. While the site itself can attract countless customers ranging from high school students to museum curators to interior designers to first time collectors, there is still the challenge of skeptical onlookers who don’t trust a piece of work they can’t see in front of them.

But today, working directly with photographers and clients at 20x200, Jeffrey has a list of six key tips for photographers hoping to get their work featured online:

1. Get your name out there in your community. Curators and gallery owners often read local and obscure blogs to find undiscovered talent.
2. When you’re featured in a blog, be sure the post back-links to your website. The folks at 20x200 get frustrated when they come across a great photograph with no information about the photographer attached.
3. Make sure your photographs have strong composition, great technique, and “strike a cord.” Try to have only your best work out there. Making too much available can hide your best shots.

4. Be smart when choosing an online gallery to collaborate with. Many galleries like 20x200 have an exclusivity policy that prevents you from showing your same pieces in other venues. This means that the gallery you pick should have a strong marketing reach that can expose you to a large network of potential customers.
5. Find an online gallery that has a relationship with offline spaces. For example, 20x200, has a close relationship with the Jen Bekman Gallery and the two spaces often cross promote photographers.
6. Online galleries are receptive to emerging artists. 20x200 is not surprised when an undiscovered photographer comes on board and their work takes off—that’s why they make a point to search for fresh faces.

Online Galleries to check out:

- › [20x200](#)
- › [Artsy](#)
- › [Fine Art America](#)
- › [ArtNet](#)

PART I

3 Insights from a Fine Art Printer

*Featuring Mark Lukes, President of Fine
Print Imaging*

Mark Lukes is the President and Founder of [Fine Print Imaging](#), a fine art printing company located in Fort Collins, Colorado. Fine Print Imaging has been in business for over 35 years and is today considered one of the top printers for fine art photographers across the country.

Fine Print Imaging primarily attracts photographers from three major groups:

- » Photographers preparing for art festivals.
- » Photographers working closely with galleries and specialized gift shops.
- » Conservation photographers.

The last group—conservation photographers—reflects Fine Print Imaging’s dedication to protect and preserve a sustainable environment. With their strong commitment, the organization gives back to conservation groups and conservation photographers by providing printing services and financial support.

As an industry veteran, Mark works closely with fine art photographers and travels the country to host seminars and workshops on selling fine art, art which he defines as “exceptionally executed.” With years of experience, Mark offers photographers three valuable insights on the fine art industry today:

1. Regional pieces sell. People from Colorado will appreciate and buy photographs of mountaintops. North Carolinians will be drawn to an ocean view or a lighthouse. Scenes that depict a specific area will always resonate with those living there.
2. There are still many galleries that may not appreciate photography as “fine art.” Therefore, to get their work seen, photographers need to seek out galleries that showcase less expensive art ranging from (for example) \$800 - \$1200.
3. A piece’s specific finishing and matting affects the work’s marketability. Over the past ten years, there has been a direct sale increase in fine art prints made on canvases. A photograph on a canvas still carries a sense of novelty and will attract customers.

PROFILE

Jimmy Williams: Building a Reputation by Starting Local



🏠 JimmyWilliamsFineArt.com
🏠 JimmyWilliamsPhotography.com
f facebook.com/JimmyWilliamsPhotography
🐦 twitter.com/JWilliamsPhoto

North Carolina-based Jimmy Williams is a photographer of over 35 years and owner of JW Productions. Jimmy works closely with commercial clients in the hospitality, healthcare and travel industries, but in the past decade has expanded his collections to include fine art photography. Among a long list of accolades, Jimmy has been honored by the International Photography Awards and the International Spider Awards for his fine art work.

Looking back, Jimmy recalls rediscovering his love for fine art photography. “For almost 30 years, my finest photographs were hidden in the studio, buried in folders, forgotten by a busy schedule,” Jimmy said. “But about 10 years ago, I opened the file cabinet and dusted off the film. I liked what I saw and I decided it was time to invest some time in me and my personal fine art photography explorations.”

Jimmy’s exploration into fine art photography began slowly, as he reached out to expand his network. Partnering with a gallery in his hometown, Jimmy continued to strengthen his relationships within the local art community. Building a reputation and producing well-received fine art pieces, today Jimmy’s work is featured and available to buy in online and offline through galleries in Texas and New Mexico, as well as through his own fine art website: www.JimmyWilliamsFineArt.com.

Jimmy’s acclaimed fine art photographs include his “Music Makers” series, an ongoing collection which pays tribute to Southern musical traditions, as well as “Tuscany,” a series which showcases the region’s breath-

taking landscapes. Stylistically, Jimmy strives to capture a timeless quality in each of his fine art photographs. And when done right, “this timelessness often manifests itself through the subject matter and the overall emotional story that unfolds in the photograph.”

When showcasing his work in galleries and exhibitions, Jimmy’s personal preference is to print his photographs on archival museum-quality watercolor paper. “For the majority of our fine art prints we use Hahnemuhle Museum Etching paper. The paper has a good weight and substantial feel to it.” And although his team used to outsource all mounting and framing, they now do everything in-house because it became more cost effective and efficient. Jimmy’s limited edition prints are also produced in-house in his studio so he can oversee every step.

Welcoming sales, Jimmy said that determining the quantity and price of these limited collection prints took a great deal of time and research on his end because there is no clear standard to mirror. Ultimately his decision was based on the combination of three factors: his art, its worth in today’s marketplace, and its perceived future value.



Through his personal online gallery, Jimmy's fine art collections are released in a series of 25 limited edition prints ranging in price from \$600 - \$1500 and in size from 16"x20" to 30"x40", with framing options available.

Jimmy's fine art work is primarily sold through gallery representatives, traveling exhibits, and as a result of interest generated by the press and the larger art community. For online sales alone, Jimmy says sales are often low. "Right now, online selling is not our strongest channel for sales but it is invaluable as a research tool for our customers. Our buyers will often peruse our online gallery and then contact us to talk about the work and complete sales."

Jimmy often promotes his work through gallery mailers, show exhibit mailers, and general art interest mailers. And with JW Production's own growing list of contacts, Jimmy and his team also send emails to a very targeted list of potential buyers. "But hands down, the best marketing tool has proven to be third party – the press," Jimmy says. "I've been very fortunate to have been featured in a number of articles and cover stories that have by far generated the most interest."

Represented by two galleries in addition to his own, Jimmy enjoys these partnerships because just like photography, running a gallery is a labor of love. "My advice for photographers is that when looking for a gallery to work with, make sure that the owner and curator is invested in your work for the long run, and they have a genuine interest in what you're doing. They should also demonstrate a financial investment in marketing and advertising your work."

Today, Jimmy believes that the challenges of selling and showcasing fine art photography is due to the country's economic downturn and has shaken the fine art market as a whole. "But you overcome these challenges by standing firm by the worth of your limited edition prints and try to find creative ways to bring in supplemental income via alternative channels like publishing or creative image licensing," Jimmy said.

When asked to define fine art photography—a definition often left up to personal interpretation—Jimmy believes that a piece of fine art photography must have a synergy composed of unique artistic vision, technical skill and subject matter. "When these three criteria come together, an emotional connection and message is clearly conveyed to an audience and that audience responds in kind. Fine art is a two-way conversation, and I believe my photos do just that."

TAKEAWAYS:

- › To get your work noticed, start local. Connect with galleries and curators in your own community.
- › Do your research before you price your pieces and compare your work to artists of a similar caliber.
- › Don't be discouraged if your online sales are down. Your website is a key marketing tool that when done right, can attract attention from offline galleries.
- › When looking for a gallery to work with, make sure the owner is invested in your work and will provide financial backing for marketing and advertising.
- › Diligently collect contacts and send thoughtful emails to potential buyers in your own network. Word of a mouth will always be your most powerful marketing tool.



credit: Jimmy Williams

PROFILE

Greg Marinovich: Sharing the Stories Behind Your Images



🏠 GregMarinovich.PhotoShelter.com

🐦 twitter.com/GregMarinovich

🏠 GregMarinovich.com/Blog

For over 25 years, Greg has traveled the world as both a photojournalist on assignment and freelance photographer capturing events that, when brought to life in print, shock us in their reality. Some of his most famous photographs are those shot during South Africa's transition to democracy in the early '90s. Greg later co-authored a book with Joao Silva, *The Bang Bang Club*, detailing his experiences photographing and living in the terror of that time.

Greg has received the kind of recognition that many photographers work for their whole lives. But when talking about photography as fine art, he always returns to the same notion: passion. "If you can continue to shoot the work that is close to your heart, and if you can dovetail that to a paying client, then that's brilliant," he says. Greg is very familiar with doing photo assignments for the world's top publications, but learned early in life that what's most important, in his words, is to simply "shoot what you like."

The question is, what does Greg Marinovich *like*? Being a former conflict photographer, he's drawn to a certain type of shot. Still, Greg's understanding of fine art photography goes deeper than what subject or setting is actually caught on film. First, it's whether "the value of the work stands out over time" and second, "knowing what it's like to get the print just right. Seeking, visualizing and seeing it through until you print it."

Despite being an award-winning photographer, Greg still pays attention to marketing his work. He writes a powerful [blog](#) that's all at once opinionated, shocking

and inspirational. When you post a photo series of sickly, malnourished children in Somalia, people want to know the story—not the circulated story that they've seen on the news, but your story on what happened—something that Greg has been able to accomplish. By relating your experiences, people feel drawn to your work. And that in itself is enough to draw visitors.

Regardless, he remains committed to the notion of fine art photography as "something developed in the darkroom." Then it comes as no surprise that Greg continues to make prints from his negatives taken in the time before digitization, and still shoots film for his personal work. It's his historic black and white prints that he sells to national museums and in galleries.

Given the historic nature of his images, Greg often works with galleries that specialize in vintage prints, and museums that want visuals of some of the world's most memorable and important events. He finds that desirable fine art has a "collectability" element, which explains why he's asked again and again to reprint old negatives. He'll still take the occasional editorial assign-

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ment, but editors almost always want color photos and he needs to continue taking black and white for his “own personal well-being.”

Recently, he produced a limited edition of a beautifully boxed set of color images from the 1990s. The edition is limited to just five, containing 41 images, many of them previously unseen, with narrative texts accompanying each photograph. This was done in collaboration with Strauss & Co, an esteemed fine art auctioneering company.

To support fine art sales, Greg says that’s it’s all about having a presence in the right environment. While he believes that generally the “right environment” is galleries, the fine art auctioneers have proved even better, with the benefit having someone else present you and your work to clients who trust them. He also finds that it’s “easier to speak well of someone else’s work rather than speaking about your own. You need to convince—it’s a selling job.” Thus Greg’s best piece of advice is to find someone who has great contacts, because that’s what will help get you connected with the right people. The hardest part about working with galleries, in Greg’s opinion, is finding gallerists who are “totally on it,” and committed to you and the task at hand.

At the end of the day, he advises photographers to find gallerists that you really like, because when times get tough or there’s a disagreement, it’s important that you actually like and respect that person in order to work well together. And while Greg recognizes that there are many other marketing techniques out there besides working with galleries, he finds that they are the best approach for him.

TAKEAWAYS:

- › A blog with good content attracts an audience—it helps drive traffic to your website where you can promote your work.
- › Use your blog as a chance to tell the background story of your photographs.
- › If you have a hard time speaking about and selling your own work, then try working with a gallerist.
- › Be sure to form a good personal relationship with your gallerist so you’re able to get through the good times and the bad.



credit: Greg Marinovich

PROFILE

Brooke Shaden: Why Passion is the Secret to 244K Facebook Followers



🏠 brookeshaden.com/gallery
🐦 twitter.com/brookeshaden
📌 facebook.com/brookeshadenphotography

At only 26 years old, Brooke Shaden is a fine art photographer with a distinct approach to her self-portrait photography. When asked about her unique style, which is heavy with symbolism, Brooke says, “My style explores the beauty found in all darkness. It is whimsical and surreal and often centers around fairy tales. I work in nature and use feminine forms in my work. Most of all, I create stories and aim to create a world in my images that is unique and makes us think.”

Brooke began her career in fine art photography back in December 2008 after graduating from Temple University in Pennsylvania. “At that time, I found myself disenchanted with the filmmaking process,” Brooke said. “It took so long to create a single film that I already had 100 more ideas. So I picked up my still camera when I graduated college and haven't looked back!”

Brooke began selling photography a few years later in February 2010. She found success starting locally where she lived in Los Angeles. “Sales really began to pick up after I did my due diligence to contact all types of galleries in my area at the time,” she says. “I built up my CV that first year and tried to get as many shows as I could, which finally lead to a few different galleries taking a chance on representing me.”

When asked what her biggest challenge was when starting out as a fine art photographer, she said it was her lack of knowledge. “I would go into meetings and not understand the questions being asked—basic things like how my prints are created or editioned or sized. It's important to have a good hold on this part of the busi-

ness before diving in because the knowledge can work to your advantage.”

Today, Brooke has a number of reputable sponsors who help spread awareness about her work including Adobe, White House Custom Colour and Think Tank Photo. To establish these relationships, Brooke said that many of the connections formed through her involvement speaking at smaller events where they had a presence. “I spoke from the heart about my work and these companies liked what I had to say,” she says.

With regards to getting sponsors on board, Brooke adds, “Sometimes I pitch companies cold asking if they would like to be one of my sponsors. I always keep in mind that the worst thing anyone can say is no.” She believes any sponsor she works with reflects directly on her business, so she makes sure not to take on a relationship unless she feels strongly about the people behind the product.

To increase awareness about her fine art photography today, Brooke takes to social media—specifically Facebook—to connect with fans and share her work

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and upcoming events. To date, she has a whopping 244,000 followers on her Facebook page, Brooke Shaden Photography.

When asked how she built such a large Facebook following, Brooke says it all comes down to passion. “I have a philosophy that if I put what I do out there with passion, someone else will feel that passion, too,” she says. “Even on Facebook, you need to be sincere and put your best foot forward. Understand your unique voice, because everyone has one, and present it. Whether you have one follower or one million, the best thing to do is to train yourself to be grateful for each individual supporter and never let your ego interfere.”

So what’s next for Brooke? For one, she’s hoping to start a photography school in Kolkata, India for survivors of human trafficking, and is using the crowdfunding platform Indiegogo to fundraise money and support. Check out her campaign here. She’s also working more with her new blog, Promoting Passion to create weekly videos.

What’s Brooke’s biggest advice to fine art photographers hoping to reach more potential clients and increase their sales? “Understand what makes you unique, what story you have to tell, and then refine your skills to try and communicate that message in the clearest way possible. The moment you understand who you are, others will start to follow and support you. Find your confidence and present it to others humbly. Everyone wants to work with good people.”



credit: Brooke Shaden

PROFILE

James Bourret: Marketing Tactics To Get Noticed



🏠 JamesBourret.PhotoShelter.com
f facebook.com/Mountain.Image.Gallery

To many, James Bourret is the go-to photographer for shots of Sun Valley, Idaho's exquisite landscape. James developed a passion for photography early on in life: he became deeply involved in photography in high school, and stayed with it throughout college, but later found it difficult to continue working without access to a darkroom. Flash forward to the digital era, and James was able to pick up his passion once again with computers. In December 2010, James opened his own gallery in Sun Valley's neighboring town of Ketchum, Idaho.

"I didn't have professional training, but I had the creative drive," he says. "As an architect, I had been involved in the visual arts throughout my career and I began exhibiting photography at local venues, with moderate success. My confidence was boosted further after a portfolio was published in LENSWORK Magazine. Finally I decided that I needed a venue to display my own work."

For those not familiar with Sun Valley, this popular ski and outdoor resort has been called home by many famous celebrities such as Tom Hanks and Arnold Schwarzenegger. Ketchum is the adjacent town and sees many of the tourists who come to visit Sun Valley year round, making it great location for the gallery that showcases a wide array of James's Idaho and mountain landscape photos, as well as fine art portfolios.

Along with his well-received landscape work, James dedicates a fair amount of time to fine art photography. For James, fine art photography constitutes "work purely driven by my own desire to create something expres-

sive." One look at his Motion, Edge Condition or floral series, and the creative element is undeniable. Due to market demand, James has sold more landscape photos than his personal fine art photos—though that hasn't stopped him from displaying personal projects such as "Motion" in his gallery. "When someone steps into the gallery, it's usually pretty clear what they're interested in," he says of his gallery's visitors. "Only a few people pay any attention to the fine art photography. A small landscape print might sell for \$175 to a tourist, but the sale of a \$1000 or \$2000 print from the limited edition 'Motion' series is far more less frequent."

So being the boss of your own gallery is all fun and games, right? Not always. James will be the first to tell you that it takes a lot of energy to run a gallery: "In addition to having to wear all the hats, it's difficult psychologically. I don't know if I'm going to have two weeks of no sales, or a huge day. A big day sets high expectations for the days to follow." He adds that being responsible for the gallery has also tied him to one physical location,



making it nearly impossible to pursue other projects and go out and shoot as he would like to, especially during prime tourist seasons.

But there are some clear advantages: since opening his gallery, James has watched his sales increase from roughly \$300 in the first month to upwards of \$7,000 per month. And while about half his sales used to come from online purchases, almost all of today's sales are from the gallery.

James's initial marketing efforts had focused largely on the local market. He posts information about his gallery in local blogs and other online venues, and swaps photos for full color advertising in local design and real estate magazines. James also has photography displayed in several of the town's restaurants and the visitor center, which he says has brought a good amount of people to the gallery. The recent upturn in the real estate market has brought in many new second-home owners to the area, who are often looking for several pieces at one time, and have made it possible to exhibit and sell much larger pieces.

Of course, getting people to the gallery is only half the battle. Often times, it's obvious that they're there just to look, not to buy. It is also true, especially for larger purchases, that people need to return several times before making a purchase. Potential buyers often need to measure a wall or consider color schemes before making the purchase of a print, so patience and helpfulness are key. James asks every visitor to take his brochure and sign the gallery's guest book.

James also understands the importance of online marketing, and so he is constantly evolving his to-do list of tactics that could help bring his website more exposure. Interestingly, one of the places he's seen the most web traffic from is StumbleUpon.com. James submits links to new images and galleries that are then potentially added to the photography section so that other users who indicate their interest in photography will "stumble upon" his work. Design and art bloggers have also generated significant web traffic for the site.

Another item on James's marketing list is to stay active on [Facebook](#), posting images and links to his website's most recent images. He almost always includes some comment about the shot or a question for his readers, so he often gets comments and "likes" on his posts. Following up on the comments is important, so readers feel they are in touch.

In his efforts to exhibit and sell his fine art work, James is in contact with several art consultants, whose job it is to find work for private and corporate collectors, and for public spaces, high profile restaurants, office lobbies, etc. Another rewarding method James has found is to work with interior designers who act as art consultants to their clients. Periodically, James also contacts galleries, seeking new opportunities to exhibit outside his local area.

TAKEAWAYS:

- › Tourist guidebooks and magazines, local news and even local restaurants and hotels can be very strong promotional platforms for your photos especially when starting out.
- › You can post links to your photos on StumbleUpon, which can help drive traffic to your website. Also stay active on your Facebook business page to keep people up-to-date with your work.
- › Keep a guest book at your gallery and ask people to include their email addresses. Then you have the option of sending them newsletters with information about new work and other gallery events.



credit: James Bourret

PROFILE

Peter Carroll: Striving for the Best Quality Print



🏠 PeterCarrollPhoto.com

In October 2010, Peter Carroll witnessed a unique event at one of Australia's most prized natural wonders: Uluru, a sacred rock formation in central Desert Country. It was one of those rare times of torrential rainfall, causing short-lived streams to run down the red rock and create dramatic color changes—all of which were captured on film by Peter. He sent one of the images to an Australian newspaper, and soon after the image was being showcased by major magazines and radio stations in both Australia and overseas.

Before the Uluru photo, Peter was introduced to photography in the late 1980s by the owner of International Park Tours, where he worked as an eco-adventure tour guide. It was a natural progression to want to capture the landscapes he spent so much time exploring. A camera was everpresent, but never seen as a way to earn a living. On returning to Australia in 2005, he felt his photography was at a level to take it on seriously, and began to sell prints and cards at local art outlets and markets. Then, there was Uluru: "It began my career at least a year earlier than I would have looked [to start it] otherwise. I'm not complaining—it was the biggest kick in the pants and necessary in some ways."

Everything since then has been a massive learning curve for Peter. He talks about not really knowing how to sell his work, and after the Uluru images were taken on by several major publications, he got what he calls a "hard message" from a photographer friend: "He told me what I was doing wrong—that I was basically giving [the images] away, and I wasn't doing photography any favors."

Since then, Peter has been on a journey to learn more about the business side of photography. "I never wanted to be in business—it never interested me. But this journey has blossomed into learning about business and I've found out that it's fascinating," he says. "I'm not kidding that PhotoShelter has probably been the most important factor in learning about what can be done [for your photography]. It's a lot easier to learn when there's an active crew behind the product and feeding you information." One of Peter's takeaways has been to utilize [Google Analytics](#) to monitor his website's traffic and see where his visitors come from. When Uluru first came out, he saw massive spikes in his traffic, but as Peter says, "when the hoopla finishes, it drops right back down. I've really learned that it's important just to get traffic to the site, because as the traffic numbers drop, so do the requests for your images."

With that in mind, Peter has been looking at other sales avenues to sell not only more editions of the Uluru images, but his other landscape photography as well. He



sees a market for his work in hotels and resorts, which would want to exhibit the surrounding landscape as art in their guests' rooms. With the increased exposure, he hopes to drive more traffic to his site where potential customers could buy prints.

But before anything sells, Peter must be totally satisfied with the quality of the print. "It's important to produce the best quality work that you possibly can, so that you can stand 100% behind that work and people can know how much you've gone through to get the print to that point," he says. In fact, Peter came to realize that quality printing can make or break your fine art photography. "Beautiful paper," he says, "changed my whole idea of presentation. Part of fine art is making the best quality print from the file, and there is a lot of work that takes place." Today, Peter works with Master Printer Warren Macris of Giclee, Australia who's helped him nail down the best printing process for his images.

"For me, the physical print is everything. It must be museum grade archival quality, and Macris has the experience and passion to print your vision without compromise." Peter prints most of his work on Canson rag Photographique 310gms, but he also looks to experiment with other high end art papers, depending on the image or series.

For Peter, fine art is also about the time that he spends in the environment and what he goes through to get the shot. "It's all about waiting for the right time and light, traveling to the right destination and learning about the subtleties of how the weather affects the scape and how you want to capture it." His method is not to take hundreds of shots, but a handful that really capture the feelings that he had while viewing the landscape. "With fine art landscapes," he says, "I've realized that you really have to have the 'hero photo' and then have a series of 10 or 12 images that capture and sum up the experience."

Another piece of advice that Peter has for photographers in general is to refrain from posting your images to Facebook and Twitter right away. "You want to show them off and you've got so much emotion flying through you, but it's important not to give away too much. Sit on them until they're ready." Another piece of advice from Peter, specifically when reaching out to galleries, is to find out how each gallerist wants to be approached by photographers, since everyone has different preferences. Peter has found success in bringing physical books of high-quality prints to the gallery so that people can look through his work, which he says has gone over well with the gallerists that he's visited.

Peter knows the value of self-promotion, but he'll be the first to tell you that he still considers himself a family man and father first, and a professional photographer second.

Most recently, Peter has been traveling extensively, spending almost all of 2013 in Southern and East Africa and was named one of [National Geographic Travelers of the Year 2013](#). He's also now in the process of producing a specific series out of all his images from this past year.

TAKEAWAYS:

- › Maintain and build your website traffic. When traffic drops, so do requests for your images.
- › Research galleries before you contact them. Each one has different preferences for how they want you to submit your work.
- › If you're selling your work as fine art, then treat it like fine art; work with the best printer and highest quality printing materials possible.
- › Refrain from posting your work to Facebook and Twitter right after a shoot. Sit on the images and wait until they're ready for an audience.

PROFILE

Matt Suess: Connecting With Potential Buyers



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I want to bring my years of experience living on this planet and try to portray that in my photographs,” says Matt Suess, a fine art photographer who travels around the American Southwest in his RV attending juried art festivals. While he’s always been a full-time professional photographer, Matt made the big move in 2006 from photojournalism to fine art photography and never looked back. He now attends an estimated 30 festivals every year, where he displays and sells his work to both newcomer enthusiasts and high-end collectors who have followed his work for years.

First and foremost, Matt emphasizes a deep connection to the people who buy his work. “Fine art photography is something that goes beyond just what the camera captures. I’d like to think that when people look through my photos, they can really tell who I am because I put a lot of me into them.” Though traditionally known for his landscape photography, Matt has since broken into an entirely new space using HDR techniques. Today, Matt can be found taking multiple exposures of the same image (typically antiques like a rusty pickup truck fondly referred to as “Old Betsy”) and digitally blending them to create a finished print. This approach has allowed him to capture all the different light, detail and shadow experiences in one print. Says Matt: “The camera is really just the beginning point of me getting to a fine art print.”

Since the majority of his time is spent at festivals, his sales cycle differs from that of many typical gallery-focused photographers. He finds that connecting with the buyer

has become the most important point in making a sale. “My customers are those that respond to my work and respond to me as an individual,” he says. “You [as an artist] are really connecting on a completely different level, where if they don’t like you, they’re not going to buy.”

Once potential buyers make that initial connection with Matt, he invites them visit his website and view more of his work, especially if they’re not ready to buy right then and there. Matt has a very comprehensive site that plays a key role in his marketing efforts; plus, he’s an avid blogger who’s been online since 1999. He constantly adds fresh content, which has been integral in increasing visitors to his site, and getting search engines to read and rank it on a consistent basis. He adds that he also pays close attention to his site’s reports from Google Analytics to see where traffic is coming from and where he can improve.

Still, at the end of the day, it's all about the personal connection for Matt. "People who don't buy from me [at festivals] will go to my website and learn more about who I am before they're ready to spend money on my work." Given that Matt's prices are in the mid-to-upper range, he finds that he doesn't make many online sales with people who haven't seen his work in person. "They can see pretty pictures online, but there's no guarantee about how it will look in print. I've always preferred doing it in person because I'm going to be the best seller of my work—I'm going to be able to explain it the best."

To keep potential buyers in the loop, Matt keeps a growing list of email addresses, and sends monthly e-newsletters with updates on his work and information about the workshops that he has started offering to amateur photographers. He also maintains a presence on Twitter and Facebook, posting links to his e-newsletters and a place to subscribe to them by email.

Another marketing tactic that has been effective for Matt is Google+. Matt uses Google+ to connect with other photographers and spread the word about his workshops. He's actually found many photographers who are also art collectors and end up buying his work.

Asked what challenges he's faced as a fine art photographer, Matt brings up the uncertainty that many photographers face when deciding how to price their work. "When I started selling my work, I had no idea how to price them," he remembers. His advice? "I recommend really evaluating your own work and seeing where it fits in with similar photographers. It's better to start low and then raise your price." Matt also reminds photographers to think about the volume that they're selling their work in: high volume, low price or low volume, high price?

In his personal experience with limited versus one-of-a-kind editions, Matt has tried to think more about the uniqueness of the event that his images capture. "Sometimes you have to look at the rarity and just decide that it's one of a kind." And then somewhere between the emotional connection viewers make with Matt's prints and the intimate contact they make with him, there will be a sale.

TAKEAWAYS:

- › If you want your fine art photography to appeal to people's emotions, then they often need to see it in a physical space before they're ready to buy it.
- › Consistently add fresh content to your website, whether in the form of blog posts or new images, so that search engines realize that it's not a static website. This can help it rank high in search engine results.
- › Google+ is a great way to connect with other photographers and showcase your work online to a new audience.
- › Give out flyers at gallery shows and art festivals with a link to your website so that people can revisit your work and see additional images online.



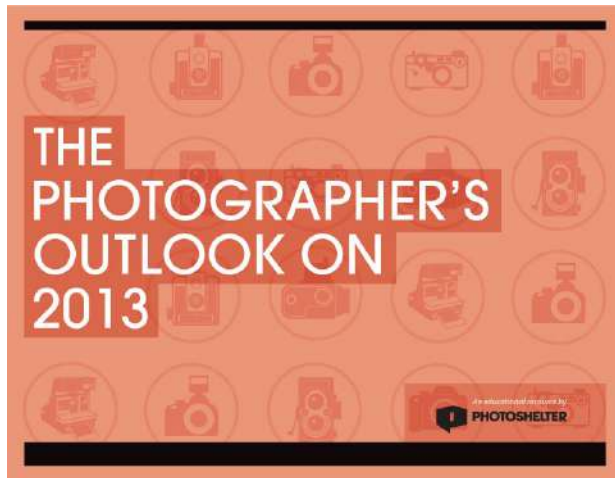
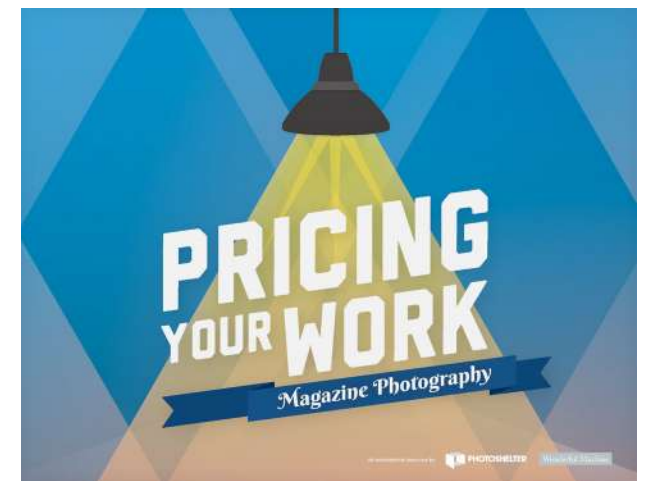
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PART III

Conclusion

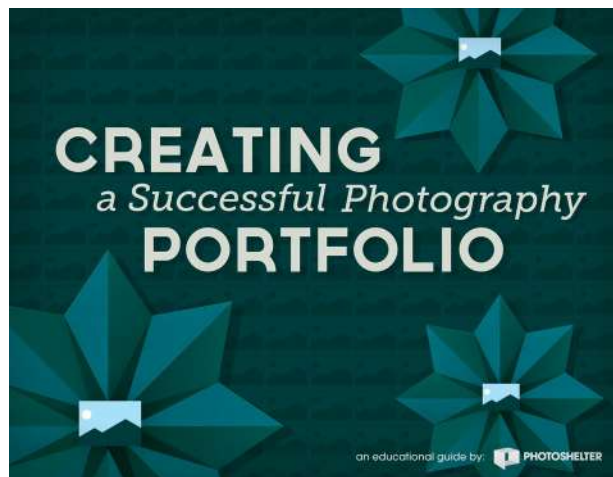
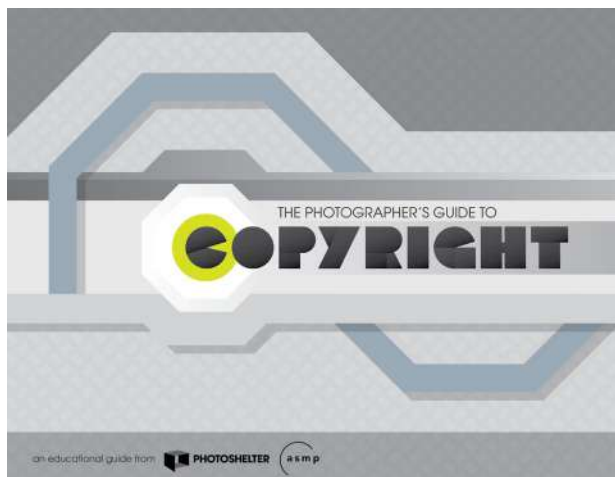
There may not be one straight formula for selling fine art photography, but as we've learned from the photographers and industry pros in this guide, there are certainly common threads to help you increase awareness about your work and make more sales. Consider, for example, building your reputation as a fine art photographer in your local community first or using your blog as a platform to tell the stories behind your images to help grow your readership. Also consider investing time to maintain and build your web traffic, and use a tool like Google Analytics to track your site's performance. After all, when visits to your site drops, so do requests for your images. The list of ideas goes on.

Now that you've got some inspiration, it's time to get to work!



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