

Can Artists Market Their Art without Losing Their Souls?

Have you ever heard the term ‘starving artist’? Why do so many artists who create high quality art have great difficulty earning a living? This workshop addresses and provides solutions for the foundational issues every artist faces. Artists can learn to be more than creators; they must also think like entrepreneurs. They must grasp the importance of networking in the worlds of both art and business. They can utilize simple financial systems in order to maintain accountability and attain tangible profits. They can learn how to think outwardly and better understand their customers, developing their art accordingly. They can learn to effectively plan and promote exhibitions. *They can learn how to market their art without losing their souls.* And finally, they will work through the profound questions - Does God care if their art sells? Why is it critical for Christian artists to trust God in the creation and sale of art?

Külli Hansen is the coordinator of the Artists Network of the Estonian Evangelical Alliance. She has studied the arts and entrepreneurship; and has been active on these frontiers for more than 25 years. She started as an art curator and gallery-owner in Tartu, Estonia; and followed her career as a cultural coordinator of the city of Tartu, and as a business coach for creative start-ups in a regional business incubator. She is now active in business consultancy working mostly with creative industries, companies and start-ups. She currently works at Estonian Business School as a lecturer of business planning, business models, student enterprises and management of creative processes. In 2015, she initiated an annual international Christian Artists Festival “ImagiNATIONS“ in Tartu, Estonia and is responsible for curating art exhibitions at Tartu Salem Church. The topic she will present at ELF connects business and the arts will feature discussions about the value of art.

I. What is needed for artists to learn to think like entrepreneurs?

When talking about arts, art sales and promotion of artworks, one could easily talk about basic entrepreneurship theories, marketing and business management. In general selling artworks is not much different from selling other types of luxury goods. You need a brand, you need to know your customer and his/her needs, problems and life style preference, and you need to know how to approach you customer. You need to be innovative and attractive in your marketing and know how to convert your first-time customers into return customers who are ready to buy more. There are thousands of books and theories written about these topics and it is easy to find valuable information on the internet.

- A. Brand
- B. Customers
- C. Value
 - 1. Art as investment
 - 2. Edition size
 - 3. Sponsors and Fundraising
- D. Services
- E. Continuous work

II. What are the main challenges for artists in communicating and marketing their artworks?

Creative people seem to lose all their creativity when they need to market or promote themselves. Even the simplest activities of self-promotion or self-introduction can be intolerably difficult for them. Finally, the communication chasm between artists and entrepreneurs or simply people who have money to buy art is insuperable. The languages they speak are just too different.

- A. Vision, mission, values and goals
- B. Innovative approach to marketing
- C. Communication and language – does my art always speak for itself?

III. How to adjust to the trends and challenges of today's world?

Among the many trends that affect artists and that should be taken into account are the changes of art-forms and emergence of new relationships between arts and other spheres of life. In Europe more and more projects have been done with the aim of emphasizing the value of arts and using the potential of artists for developing, strengthening, transforming and adding value to other fields of life. There are some truly inspirational examples of artistic intervention or arts for social change projects that can be taken as examples.

- A. Artistic interventions
- B. Art for social change
- C. Creative cities, creative communities
- D. Shared economy

IV. Does God care if art sells?

Inspirational examples

- A. MAKOTO FUJIMURA
- B. Aapo Pukk and other artists from Estonia

Suggested Readings:

<http://www.artbusiness.com/sales.html>

<http://www.iwillteachyoutoberich.com/blog/artists-are-terrible-at-money/>

<http://archives.relevantmagazine.com/god/worship/features/22942-why-art-should-matter-to-christians>

<http://www.makotofujimura.com/writings/how-to-see-my-painting/>

Books

Matt Tommey, *Unlocking the Heart of the Artist: A Practical Guide to Fulfilling Your Creative Call as an Artist in the Kingdom*, The Worship Studio, 2010

Steve Turner, *Imagine: A Vision for Christians in the Arts*, Inter Varsity Press