



Branding, Message & Voice

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Hi, this is Lezley Davidson with TheArtistAsEntrepreneur.com, and welcome to Art Biz 101. This is the introduction, and this is repeated in front of all the different sections of Art Biz 101 because they're sold separately as well as bundled together. If you've heard this before, feel free to skip ahead because you're not missing anything new. It's the same thing, unless you want to hear the same thing again, then absolutely you can do that too.

Art Biz 101 is good for someone who's already got some sort of a website presence. Even a Facebook page or a Tumblr or a Blogspot or even a WordPress.com, some sort of blog or website presence is good enough to start with. I definitely recommend that you have a paid hosting domain name-owned type of website set up. It's highly recommended. You want to be in control of the tools of your business.

But if all you've got right now is a Tumblr, that's okay. Let's work with that. Just there's going to be no website building in this course, and I'm coming from a WordPress.org knowledge understanding, knowledge base, so that's where I'm going to be giving a lot of specifics or how to's, but they all apply to other website models as well. There's going to be no actual website building happening here, but everything that you'll learn you'll be able to apply to your own website presence.

Have you ever heard of Joseph Campbell? He's a huge influence on me, on what I think about art and artists and why I make classes like this and why I want to help artists create really successful art businesses. Joseph Campbell believed that artists were like the shamans of the modern world. They bring the truth to the masses. Joseph Campbell believed that artists were necessary and vital and integral to human evolution and human change. I believe that art is vital. I believe that art is necessary. I believe we need the artist perspective and vision for humanity's evolution itself.

We need your vision. We need your thoughts and your perspective, and we need to see the connections that artists make in the world. We need to have the ideas that are beyond form expressed to us in form. It's vital. We need the quiet voices. We need the larger perspective. We need the bigger picture. That's what artists do. They paint the bigger picture for us. They show us where we're going. They show us where we've been. They give us the truth and the knowledge of what's really happening.

I believe art and artists are sacred. I believe that what artists create is vital



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for our evolution. I have a passion to support art and artists in bringing their voice and their art and their views and their meaning to fruition through business. My passion is to help artists be able to have a sustainable business to continue to create, to continue to bring their messages into the world, to continue to help us become better people, help us to understand and grow and evolve.

The messages that artists have are important and vital. They need to be heard, and they need to be shared. It's easier to do that when you've got the tools at hand to share your work, to expose yourself. To expose yourself, yeah! Well, I guess expose your artwork, and you can expose yourself if you want. But it's easier to do that if you know how to do it, if you've got the foundations of business set up.

A lot of artists work in obscurity. They work without being known, without being seen. They work in quiet. They work in silence. They work in the basement. Your keeping your talents underneath a rock and hidden in the ground don't help anyone. A lot of artists need help to get their art into the world and to create the business aspect of it, to create the business model. That's where I come in.

My own business coach calls me an "art biz midwife" because I have been an artist my whole life. I understand how it feels to be an artist, and I understand what's involved in being an artist. At the same time, I have a lot of business sense. I have a lot of experience in the business world working with art and artists, and I understand how they work together. I understand what's required from an artist to become successful in business, but I also understand how artists think.

My business is significantly airy-fairy woo-woo and grounded. I understand both very well, and I work in both very well. I do believe in an artistic mindset and a belief in the sacred, and the divine, and the spiritual, and the magic, and the karma, and the coincidence, and the synchronicity, and the magic. Basically, it's magic. I get that. I can speak to that level. Then I also will encourage you to ground that into your daily activities and to bring that magic into how you build your business. You can have both. You don't have to give up your creative dreams and your light heart and your beautiful message when you create your business. You can make that part of your business. It's actually integral. It's best for you if you bring your soulful heart into your business plan and into your business model, and I'm going to show you how.

We can help you birth your creative vision into a viable successful art business. We're going to help you get the meaning and the message and the



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true authenticity of the art that you create and ground it into your art business and into all your marketing materials. We're going to do both sides. We're going to work both sides. Your business is a holistic entity. It's a whole organism. You cannot be an artist and not have that creativity and that artistry and that thought process that happens when you're creating that is intuitive and moves through you. You can't separate that out of your business. That is fundamentally part of your business, and it's what's going to create your business success. I'm just going to help you get it grounded, and I'm going to help you focus that into what needs to be done for you to actually get your work out there and start getting clients and start getting sales.

I want to talk about devotion. This is a part of our business that I find isn't talked about a lot, or isn't talked about in depth anyway. I want to give it some space here to walk around because it's pretty significant. In order to be successful in art and have art be the source of your income, you have to be 100% devoted to it. I don't mean you can't have another job. A lot of us have to have another job while we're building it. To be honest, I've seen the people, the artists in my life that I know who have found success, business success, financial success through their art in their early 30's, which is quite early, those who have found that have the great advantage of living at home. They live at home, and they were basically taken care of. They had all their survival needs taken care of so that they could concentrate all their efforts on building their art career.

If you did not have that great advantage, you will have to balance a job with your art career. I understand, and that's okay, it will take you a little bit longer. You'll have to be more devoted. You'll have to balance more. But there is a level of devotion required to have a successful art career that isn't required in other endeavors. It's probably required in creative pursuits. Music, theater, dance, voice, all of those require a devotion to your craft that isn't required in other areas. Don't pursue an art career thinking it's going to be like becoming an accountant where you could just go to work and put your hours in and then have your other time to be abundantly doing other things. It's not like that.

You won't really be able to do other things. You probably won't be able to have grand hobbies. Art is your hobby. Art is your life. Art is your devotion. I know this sounds like maybe I'm going over the top, but I'm really not. I'm just letting you know fully and fundamentally what's required to commit to this. It is everything. It is all of your time working towards creating, going deeper inside you to find the meaning and the purpose and the resonance about what you're creating. It's improving your skills, your expertise, your execution. It's improving



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your composition, your use of color, your technique.

This is a lifelong dedication that you have to commit to in order to do this. There's the commitment to the actual art making, and then there's the commitment to the marketing your business. There's the commitment to creating the art, and then there's also the commitment to creating your business, which is focusing also on the marketing and the exposure and the promotion and the organization of the events. All of these is required. There's no time for anything else.

I'm not saying that you can't have a family or a life. I'm not trying to be negative. I'm just trying to say that if you want to do art as a sometime thing where you do it a few hours a week, that's not enough. To create an art business is an immersion into creating art as a livelihood. It is everything that you do. I don't know any artists that really have hobbies. They don't. There is no time. Because if you want to have a family and you want to have a relationship, that's your hobby. Your life is your art, and your relationship is your hobby. I'm sorry. That's so terrible. But you know what's funny is I know so many art widows and widowers who are married or in relationships with illustrators and artists who feel like they take a second seat to their artistic spouses. Their spouses are in the studio working all the time, work hours, office hours, night time, weekends.

Most of my friends have to schedule time with their art spouses and book it ahead of time because this is their business. Artists create and earn their livelihood based on being in the studio. Being in the studio means productivity. It means creating. The quicker you can create, the higher your profit is. I'm not trying to judge this. I'm just trying to give you a fairly accurate version of what's involved in having an art business and how it's an all-encompassing all-the-time type of job.

It's not really a job. For most people, it is a devotion. It's a dedication, and it's a joy. Don't get me wrong. They are overjoyed at being able to survive and live from their art, but they did commit. They knew what was required, and they committed to it. It's the sacrifice of an art career. She is a jealous lover, and if you're willing to commit all your time to her, she will reward you with success generally.

I had no intentions of having an art career. I waffled for my whole life. I've been an artist all my life but never really known whether I was going to commit to it or not. When I was in high school, I asked my art teacher, "Should I go into art or into academics?" She recommended academics, so I did. I have an English degree



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from Queens. I was going to be a lawyer, but third year, I was so depressed and so unhappy for not making any art for three years that I went back to it, and I knew that I couldn't be away from art. I needed to have art in my life in some form, and I started making art again. I started working towards a business or a career in art.

I was in Web comics. I made comics for four years. I had a Web comic called Peeling Onions. I made 800-plus strips. I made comics everyday for four years. I self-published three books. I went to countless conventions all through North America, Canada, and the United States. In my last year, I looked and decided I was going to really go for it. I booked a convention every month for the year. I was going to conventions all the time, and I was building my audience. It was growing. It was growing slowly and organically, and it was growing.

But after that year, I had to rethink it. I had a new relationship. I didn't like traveling. That's a problem right there. I understood what was required to be successful in this career, and I wasn't willing to do it. I wasn't willing to put in the time or the effort that would be required for me to be successful in comics. It's possible. It's totally possible. I knew what was required, and I knew what had to be done, and I wasn't willing to do it because I'm too interested in other things. I am not devoted enough to art or comics to be successful at it. That's just straight up truth.

I have an English degree. I love writing. I have a passion and a flare for writing. I love it. I love presenting, I love speaking in public. I love audio and video. I love doing demos. I love teaching about art, teaching about supplies and about techniques. I love too many things to be successful in art as an artist. Isn't that funny? In order to be successful in comics, I would have had to give up everything else I was interested in. Everything would have had to focus on comics and be funneled into comics. It would be all about comics all the time for the rest of my life, and I didn't want it. I didn't want it that bad. I really didn't.

All the other interests that I have are fulfilled through this business because I love marketing. I love the psychology of marketing. I've been working in 13 years informally helping artists with their marketing and their art businesses. I've been working for 13 years with artists in the art biz about art supplies and art techniques and about art business, and I love it. I love being challenged on a variety of different levels, and I really love the business. I understand what's required, and I understand what you need to be able to do, and I can help you do it through the business side.



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It's what I love about this business that I've created for myself, is that I get to do all the things that I love doing that interest me, and I help you along the way, and I build my business while I do it. Win! Check, check, check. I'm never going to have a career as an artist because my career is as a business educator for artists, and that fits more wholly and fully with my desires than ever wanting to be a full-time artist.

Devotion is required, and I've devoted my efforts to business education for artists. Devotion is required for you as well. In order to do this work well, you have to devote yourself to it. Devotion is interesting. The meaning of "devotion" means "setting aside something for the sacred." That's what I believe that you're doing as an artist. What you're doing, what you're creating is a sacred act. This is sacred work that you're doing. I don't mean precious. I don't mean elitist or precious or above. There's no judgment, value judgment of it being better than. It's sacred work because this is truth-telling. This is truth-speaking. This is connecting core messages to one another. This is sacred work, your art is. Devote yourself to your sacred work.

There's three major areas to your art biz. There's your branding, your message, your voice. That's the core personality and vibe and tone and identity of your art business. That's your branding. Number two is your push outward. That's your promotion, what you send out into the world. It's your events, your social media promotion, your shows, and your retail sales.

You can also include your mailers, your e-mailers, but I've included that in another aspect, which is the pull-in. There's the push-out and the exposing, the push-out and the promotion. Then there's the pull-in, which is your nurturing of your audience, and you're pulling them into your mailing list and then getting them on to your website to follow your art and to buy your products online and to get them on your mailing list, get them in your opt-in, and get them on to your landing page.

These are arbitrary separations that I made because honestly, all of these things bleed into one another. There's lots of overlap and gray areas, and they kind of loop in and out of one another. There's nothing really separate in business. Every part of it feeds another part of it. I've just arbitrarily separated them because that's how it fits in my head. I'd really recommend though to start with the branding first.

If you've got the bundle, which is the Art Biz 101 bundle that has all the



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sections together, start with the branding first because that is the core foundation and the source of your business. It's the reason why you're doing it. It's the shining gold nugget of truth that it is your business. It's your shiny joy. It's so important to connect with that and understand what that is because that will filter through and provide a framework for the rest of your business. It will provide a framework and a filter for all your marketing materials and all of your promotions. Having your branding and your message clear will create a really clear, strong, unified presence of your business online and in the world, which creates trust. That's what you want to create, is to create trust.

Any kind of dissidence or a lack of certainty about what your brand is and what you stand for and what your message is in the world, any lack of certainty of that is going to create distrust. People need to be able to know that they can go to you and get that whatever it is that they want from you, and they want it. Trust me. We'll get into this. You'll see what I'm talking about. People want what you have. They want it desperately.

We're going to get into this a lot more fully later, but I want you to ask yourself some questions right now. What is your business actually? What kinds of things do you want to do in your biz? What mediums do you want to work with? What subject matter do you want to paint? Keep in mind none of these is carved in stone. I'm not saying for you to decide what you're going to do for the rest of your life, I'm just saying decide right now what your business is going to be now. This will evolve over time. You're an evolving creature. You're an evolving human being. You're an evolving soul in the physical plane. This is all going to evolve, but you need to ask these questions now.

What kind of business do you want? What do you want to be doing? What kind of mediums do you want to work with? What kind of subject matter do you want to create? What kind of venues do you want to show at? What kind of associated products would you like to create? Do you want to include teaching? What type of skills would you like to work with? What would you like to share? What kinds of people do you want to work with? What kinds of people do you want to sell to? What kinds of personalities and incomes and venues and places do you want to surround yourself with? What kind of people are at those places? Who do you want to be around? Who do you want to surround yourself with? What kind of things do you absolutely not want to do in your biz? What do you want to avoid with a 10-foot pole and never have to do?

Actually, yeah, ask yourself. Find out what those are. What kinds of people



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do you want to avoid at all costs? What is absolutely not who you want to deal with at all? Ask yourself these questions. We'll get into it nitty-gritty later on through all the sections that we go through together. Ask yourself these questions because they are going to lead you down a path of joy in your art biz. Okay?

That's the end of the introduction. You can carry on and listen to whatever module this is, and I can't wait. I'm so super stoked about this. You guys are awesome. Okay, thanks. I'll see you guys soon.