

A PRACTICAL GUIDE FOR PHOTOGRAPHERS  
AND DIGITAL ARTISTS

THE  
**VISIBLE**  
**ARTIST**

FROM BEHIND THE SCREEN  
TO BEING SEEN

A PRACTICAL  
GUIDE TO  
SHARING YOUR  
ART, GROWING  
AN AUDIENCE,  
AND GETTING  
YOUR WORK IN  
FRONT OF PEOPLE  
WHO WILL  
LOVE IT



PHOTOGRAPHYBB PRESS  
THE CREATIVE GROWTH SERIES





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## BEFORE WE BEGIN

### **Your Work Has Been Sitting There Long Enough**

If you are reading this, there is a good chance you have a hard drive, an external drive, a cloud folder, or possibly all three, filled with photographs and digital artwork that almost no one has ever seen. Some of it is good. Some of it is genuinely great. And most of it has never left your computer.

That is not a moral failing. It is just what happens when the creative part of your brain gets all the exercise and the sharing part gets none. Making art and sharing art are two completely different skills, and no one is born knowing how to do the second one. It has to be learned, which is exactly what this book is for.

This guide is written for photographers and digital artists who are serious about their craft but new to building an audience. Most of you came to photography and digital art later in life, after careers, after raising families, after decades of developing a perspective on the world that shows up in everything you create. That life experience is not a handicap in this space. It is an asset. But it does mean that the landscape of social media platforms, online marketplaces, and in-person events may feel foreign and a little overwhelming at first.

This guide will demystify all of it. Not with vague encouragement, but with specific, practical information. What size should your Instagram image be? What is the difference between a Facebook Page and a Facebook Group? Why does Pinterest work differently from every other platform? How do you write a caption that makes someone stop scrolling? What do you actually bring to a local hobby fair if you want people to remember you? Every one of those questions gets answered.

A few things to know before you start. First, you do not need to be on every platform in this book. In fact, you probably should not try. The goal of Chapter Ten is to help you choose the two or three approaches that suit your personality, your work, and your life. Second, this is not a quick path to fame. Building an audience takes time, and anyone who tells you otherwise is selling something. What it does take is consistency, a bit of strategy, and the willingness to show up regularly even when the early results feel underwhelming. Third, this guide will be honest with you about what works and what does not, including the parts that take longer than you might hope.

Your work deserves to be seen. Now let's start getting it out there.

# 01

## **Start Here: What Getting Seen Actually Means**

Before you post a single image anywhere, it is worth having an honest conversation with yourself about what you are actually trying to achieve. "Getting seen" means different things to different people, and getting clear on your version of it will save you a lot of wasted effort and frustration down the road.

For some people, getting seen means building a loyal following of a few hundred people who genuinely love their work, comment on posts, and occasionally buy a print or a card. For others, it means getting their photographs into the hands of stock buyers who will use them in magazines and websites. For others, it means walking into a car show or a hobby fair with a folder of prints and leaving with a stack of new business cards from people who asked how to find more of your work online. All of these are valid. All of them are achievable. None of them happen overnight, and none of them require you to become a social media influencer or spend your life glued to your phone.

### **The Difference Between an Audience and a Following**

A following is a number. An audience is a group of real people who are genuinely interested in your work. You can have ten thousand followers and almost no audience. You can have three hundred followers and a deeply engaged, enthusiastic audience. For most photographers and digital artists, the goal should be the second thing. A smaller group of people who actually care about your work will bring you more satisfaction, more referrals, more real-world connections, and more opportunities than a large number of disengaged accounts who double-tapped your image once and never came back.

How do you build a real audience rather than just accumulating numbers? You do it by being consistent, by being specific, and by being yourself. Consistency means showing up on a regular schedule so that people learn to expect you. Being specific means focusing on the subjects and styles that define your work rather than posting everything you have ever made. Being yourself means writing captions that sound like you, not like a marketing brochure.

## Why Most People Stop Too Soon

Here is the single most important thing to understand about building an audience online: the growth curve is not linear. It can sometimes be agonizingly slow, and then it accelerates. Most people who give up on social media quit during the slow phase, which means they never reach the part where their investment starts to compound.

The reality is that your first posts will probably be seen by very few people outside your immediate friends and family. Your first month on Pinterest may bring you next to no traffic. Your Etsy shop may sit quietly for several weeks before a stranger buys anything. This is completely normal, and it does not mean your work is not good. It means you are new, and the platforms have not yet had enough time to learn who your audience is and start connecting you with them.

### A REALISTIC TIMELINE

**Instagram:** Expect 3 to 6 months of consistent posting before you have a genuine sense of what is working and what is not. A year before the account feels established.

**Pinterest:** Pins can take 3 to 6 months to gain traction because Pinterest operates as a search engine, not a social feed. Content that does well on Pinterest can continue driving traffic for years, but it takes patience upfront.

**Etsy:** Most new shops see very little organic traffic in the first month or two. With good SEO and regular listing updates, meaningful visibility typically develops over 3 to 6 months.

**Stock Photography:** Earnings on stock sites are genuinely small at first. Think of it as a library you are building. The more you upload, the more it earns, but it is a long game measured in years rather than weeks.

**In-Person Events:** You may not make a sale at your first event. That is fine. The goal is to be seen, have conversations, and hand out something that helps people find you afterward. Sales often come later, and from people who met you weeks or months earlier.

The artists who succeed at this are not necessarily the most talented ones. They are the most consistent ones. They posted three times a week for a year even when nobody seemed to be watching. They kept uploading to stock sites even when the earnings felt laughably small. They showed up at the local market three times before they started to see familiar faces. And then, gradually, things started to move.

## **Starting With What You Already Have**

You do not need to create new work before you start sharing. You almost certainly have enough material on that hard drive right now to begin. Pick the ten to twenty images or pieces of digital art that you are proudest of. These will be your starting portfolio, the work you lead with as you set up your profiles and first listings. As you keep creating, you will keep adding. But there is no reason to wait. The hard drive is already full. It is time to start emptying it into the world.

# 02

## **Instagram: Your Visual Portfolio, Always Open**

Instagram is the natural home for photographers and digital artists. It is a platform built entirely around visual content, and with over two billion active users as of this writing, it represents one of the largest audiences for creative work anywhere on the internet. For artists sharing their work, it functions essentially as a public portfolio that anyone in the world can stumble across, follow, and share with others.

Today's Instagram is a meaningfully different platform from what it was a few years ago. It now prioritises video content (particularly Reels) in its algorithm, it functions increasingly as a search engine where people look up specific topics rather than just scrolling their feeds, and it rewards consistency and engagement far more than occasional posting of beautiful images. Understanding these realities will help you use it strategically rather than fighting against how it actually works.

### **Setting Up Your Profile the Right Way**

Your Instagram profile is the first thing a potential follower sees when they click on your name. It needs to do three things immediately: tell people who you are, show them what kind of work you make, and give them a reason to follow you. You have limited space to do this, so every word counts.

Your username should be as close to your name or your art brand name as possible. Do not overthink this. Your own name works perfectly well. Consistency across platforms matters, so if you are going to be "john\_landscape\_photography" on Instagram, try to use the same name on Pinterest and Facebook too, so people can find you easily when they go looking.

Your bio can be up to 150 characters. Use it to describe your work specifically, not vaguely. "Photographer and digital artist" tells people nothing interesting. "Digital art and landscape photography from the Canadian Rockies" tells them exactly who you are and whether your work is likely to interest them. Include relevant keywords here because Instagram now uses profile bios in its search indexing, meaning people

searching for "landscape photographer" may find your profile even if they have never heard of you.

Instagram allows one clickable link in your profile. Use it. Link it to wherever you most want people to go, whether that is your Etsy shop, a portfolio website, or even just your Facebook page if that is where you are most active.

## The Technical Specs That Matter

FORMAT	RECOMMENDED SIZE	NOTES
Feed post (default)	1080 x 1350 px (4:5)	Portrait orientation fills more screen space in the feed
Feed post (square)	1080 x 1080 px (1:1)	Works well for artwork that needs equal sides
Feed post (landscape)	1080 x 566 px (1.91:1)	Less ideal as it takes up less vertical space in the feed
Stories	1080 x 1920 px (9:16)	Full screen vertical. Keep key content away from edges
Reels	1080 x 1920 px (9:16)	Same as Stories. Best for process videos and time-lapses
Profile photo	320 x 320 px minimum	Circular. Keep subject centred

Instagram now displays all profile grid posts as taller 3:4 ratio thumbnails rather than the old square previews. This means if you post a square image, the grid preview will be cropped vertically with a centre focus. Keeping your main subject centred in your photos works well regardless of your chosen format.



## **Captions: Short Is Not Always Better**

Instagram captions can be up to 2,200 characters long, but only the first 125 characters appear before the "more" link. This means your opening line needs to earn the click. Lead with something that gives your audience a reason to read further: the story behind the shot, a question, an observation about the creative decision you made, or the place or moment that inspired the piece.

For artists, slightly longer captions tend to perform well because your followers are invested in you as a creative person, not just in the image itself. A photograph of a foggy mountain lake becomes far more interesting when you share that you drove four hours through the night to be standing on that shore at dawn, and that you almost turned around twice because of the weather. That is the kind of caption that gets saved and shared. Write like you are talking to a friend who loves your work, not like you are writing ad copy.

## **Hashtags: Less Is More**

The guidance on Instagram hashtags has shifted considerably in recent years. Using all 30 available hashtags used to be common practice. It is no longer recommended and can actually look spammy to both the algorithm and real viewers. Current best practice is to use between 5 and 15 well-chosen hashtags, mixing a small number of broad ones (like #landscapephotography) with more specific, niche ones (like #albertawilderness or #digitalartistover50).

The broad hashtags have millions of posts under them, which means your image will be buried within seconds. The niche ones have smaller but more targeted audiences where your image has a genuine chance of being discovered by people who are specifically looking for that kind of work. Use the Instagram search bar to explore what hashtags people in your subject area are actually using, and choose ones where your work genuinely belongs.

## **Links: The One Real Limitation**

This is worth being direct about: you cannot include a clickable link in an Instagram post caption. Links in captions are just text. They do not go anywhere. The only clickable link Instagram gives you is the one in your bio. This is why you will frequently see Instagram users write "link in bio" in their captions when they want to direct followers somewhere. It is a known workaround and it works fine. Just make sure your bio link is updated to wherever you are currently directing people.

### **REALISTIC POSTING FREQUENCY FOR INSTAGRAM**

Most experts currently recommend 3 to 5 feed posts per week for sustainable growth. Daily posting is not necessary and can lead to burnout if it pushes you to share work you are not proud of. More important than frequency is consistency: posting twice a week every single week will serve you better than posting seven times one week and then disappearing for three weeks. The Instagram algorithm rewards accounts that show up on a predictable rhythm. If you stop posting for an extended period, your reach genuinely drops and takes time to rebuild. That is not a scare tactic. It is just how the platform works.

# 03

## **Facebook: Your Audience Is Already There**

A lot of people in the creative world have written Facebook off as old and irrelevant. This is a mistake, particularly for artists whose primary audience skews toward people over 40. Facebook remains the dominant social media platform for that demographic by a significant margin, with over 3 billion monthly active users worldwide as of this writing. If your goal is to be seen by people who have the life experience, disposable income, and appreciation for craftsmanship to genuinely value your work, there is a very good chance many of them are on Facebook every single day.

The other significant advantage Facebook has over Instagram is simple: you can include real clickable links in your posts. When you want people to visit your Etsy shop, your portfolio website, or a blog post about your creative process, you can post that link directly and people can click it. That changes everything about how you can use the platform to drive traffic to the rest of your online presence.

### **Facebook Page vs. Your Personal Profile**

You have two main options for sharing your art on Facebook. You can share it directly from your personal profile, or you can create a separate Facebook Page dedicated to your art. Both approaches have merit, and many artists use both.

Sharing from your personal profile is simpler and more immediate. Your existing friends and contacts will see your work, which can be a meaningful starting audience. The downside is that your personal profile also contains everything else in your life, and not everyone on your friends list is necessarily interested in seeing your art. You also cannot build a standalone following that is separate from your personal social network.

A Facebook Page is a separate presence specifically for your art. People can follow your Page without being your personal friend. Pages have access to analytics tools that tell you who is viewing your posts, when they are most active, and which content performs best. Pages also allow you to eventually run paid promotions if you choose to, though that is well beyond the scope of this guide. For artists who are serious about

building an audience over time, creating a dedicated Page is the right move. You can link it to your personal profile so your existing friends know it exists, and then grow it independently from there.

## **What to Post on Facebook**

Facebook audiences respond well to content that invites conversation. Unlike Instagram, where the image tends to carry most of the weight, Facebook posts often perform best when the text is doing meaningful work too. Share the story behind a piece. Post a before-and-after of a photograph that went through significant editing. Ask your audience a question: "I have been trying to decide whether to print this one in colour or black and white. What do you think?" People love to give opinions, and a question that invites real engagement can turn a quiet post into an active conversation.

Photo posts on Facebook consistently outperform text-only posts. Research shows that posts with photos receive substantially higher engagement than text-based posts. You do not need to post something elaborate every time. A simple photograph with a genuine, human caption will do more for your Facebook presence than a carefully constructed graphic with motivational text over it.

### **REALISTIC POSTING FREQUENCY FOR FACEBOOK**

For a Facebook Page dedicated to your art, posting 3 to 5 times per week is a reasonable target. What matters more than frequency is that you post at a pace you can maintain consistently. One or two thoughtful posts per week, every week, beats five posts one week and silence for the next three. Facebook's algorithm, like Instagram's, penalizes inconsistency and rewards regular activity. It is also worth noting that Facebook posts have a longer visible lifespan than Instagram posts. A post can continue to receive likes and comments two or three days after it goes up, so you do not need to post as relentlessly as some other platforms seem to demand.



## Facebook Groups: Often Overlooked, Genuinely Valuable

Beyond your own Page, Facebook Groups represent one of the most underused opportunities for artists to build connections and get their work seen. There are Facebook Groups dedicated to virtually every photographic niche: landscape photography, wildlife photography, automotive photography, digital art, photo manipulation, local art communities, and many more. Joining these groups and participating genuinely, sharing your work when community rules allow it, commenting thoughtfully on others' posts, and helping when you can is one of the most organic and effective ways to build a following of people who share your specific interests.

The key word is "genuinely." Groups can tell when someone has joined purely to drop links to their shop and leave. The members who build real connections are the ones who contribute to the community over time.

## Technical Specs for Facebook

FORMAT	RECOMMENDED SIZE	NOTES
Shared photo post	1200 x 630 px	Landscape format displays cleanly in the feed
Square post	1080 x 1080 px	Works well for artwork, centred compositions
Page cover photo	851 x 315 px	Wide banner at the top of your Page
Profile photo	170 x 170 px minimum	Shows as a circle. Upload higher resolution for best quality

# 04

## **Pinterest: The One That Keeps Working While You Sleep**

Pinterest is unlike every other platform in this book, and understanding that difference is the key to using it well. Pinterest is not a social network. It is a visual search engine. People do not go to Pinterest to scroll a feed of updates from people they follow. They go to Pinterest to search for ideas, inspiration, and things they want to buy or make. They type in a search term, they see a grid of images, and they save the ones that interest them to collections called boards.

This distinction matters enormously for artists. On Instagram and Facebook, a post you share today will reach most of its audience within the first 24 to 48 hours, and then it effectively disappears from view. On Pinterest, a pin you upload today can be discovered by a new person six months from now, or two years from now, because it lives in search results for as long as it is relevant and well-optimised. The average lifespan of a Pinterest pin is well over four months. Some pins continue driving traffic for years. That is a completely different value proposition from any other platform in this guide.

### **How to Set Up Your Pinterest Profile for Artists**

Start by creating a business account rather than a personal one. Business accounts are free and give you access to analytics that show you which of your pins are being saved most, where your traffic is coming from, and what your audience is interested in. This information is genuinely useful as you develop your pinning strategy.

Your profile name and bio should include keywords that describe your work, because Pinterest indexes them for search. If you are a landscape photographer specialising in long-exposure work, say that. If you create digital art combining photography and painting techniques, describe that specifically. Think about what words someone would type into Pinterest if they were looking for work like yours, and make sure those words appear in your profile.

Boards are the folders where you save pins. Each board should have a specific, descriptive name that functions as a search-friendly label. "My Art" is a weak board name that Pinterest cannot do anything useful with. "Long Exposure Waterfall Photography" or "Digital Art Landscapes Pacific Northwest" are board names that tell Pinterest exactly what is inside, which helps it show your board to people searching for those terms. Aim to create between 5 and 10 boards around the core themes of your work. Write a keyword-rich description for each board as well, because Pinterest indexes those too.

## **Creating Pins That Get Found and Saved**

The ideal Pinterest image is vertical. This is not a stylistic preference; it is a function of how the Pinterest feed is laid out. Vertical images take up more screen space and therefore attract more attention. The standard recommended ratio is 2:3, which at a practical resolution means 1000 x 1500 pixels. This is the format that consistently outperforms square and horizontal images on Pinterest, with studies showing vertical pins generating 28 to 32 percent more saves than square alternatives.

Every pin has a title and a description, and both of these are critical for search visibility. Write your pin title to match what someone would actually type into Pinterest's search bar. Then write a 2 to 3 sentence description that naturally includes additional related keywords. Do not stuff the description with keywords in a way that reads awkwardly. Pinterest's algorithm has become sophisticated enough to detect and penalise that kind of manipulation. Write naturally, but thoughtfully, with an awareness of the words your potential audience uses when searching.

Crucially, every pin can include a link. Link your pins to wherever you want people to go when they click: your Etsy shop, your website, your Instagram profile, or a specific product page. This is one of Pinterest's most powerful features for artists. Every pin is a potential doorway that leads a stranger from Pinterest directly into your world.

## **How Often to Pin**

The current consensus for sustainable Pinterest growth is 1 to 3 new, fresh pins per day. This sounds like a lot until you realise that you do not need to create brand new images every day. You can create multiple pin designs from the same photograph or artwork by varying the layout, the text overlay, or the colour scheme. The key word here is "fresh": Pinterest values new images being uploaded directly, not the same

image pinned repeatedly to different boards, which is an outdated tactic that can now actually flag your account as spam.

Tools like Tailwind allow you to schedule your pins in advance so you can batch the work once a week or once a month and then let it run automatically. This is one of the most practical time-saving strategies available to artists on Pinterest.

### **PINTEREST'S SECRET ADVANTAGE FOR ARTISTS**

Pinterest currently has over 619 million monthly active users, and 85% of weekly users say they have made a purchase based on something they saw on the platform. This is a platform where people are actively in a purchasing mindset, looking for things that inspire them, including art prints, photography prints, and digital downloads. That is a fundamentally different browsing intention than Instagram, where most people are scrolling passively for entertainment. On Pinterest, discovery often leads directly to action. This is why having your Etsy shop and stock portfolios linked from your pins is a particularly powerful combination.



# 05

## **Etsy: Put Your Art in Front of Millions of Buyers**

As of the end of 2025, Etsy has approximately 86.5 million active buyers on its marketplace. These are people who have created accounts, have payment methods on file, and are actively searching for things to buy. For artists, this represents an audience of a scale that is genuinely difficult to build anywhere else, and you can tap into it simply by creating a shop and listing your work.

It is worth being clear about how I am thinking about Etsy in this guide. Yes, Etsy is a marketplace where you can sell art prints, printable downloads, and photography products. But for the purposes of getting your work seen, the selling is almost secondary. When someone in Ohio searches Etsy for "mountain photography print" and your photograph appears in those results, that is your art being seen by a person who is specifically interested in exactly that kind of work. Whether they buy or not, you have been discovered. Over time, the people who discover you and save your listings, favourite your shop, or click through to your social media profiles become part of your growing audience.

### **Setting Up Your Shop to Get Found**

Your shop name, tagline, and About section all contribute to Etsy's ability to match your shop with relevant searches. Your tagline can be up to 55 characters. Use it to describe what you sell and who it is for as clearly as possible. Your About section is one of the most underutilized parts of an Etsy shop. Tell your story. Share how you came to photography or digital art, what drives your work, where you are based, and what your creative process looks like. Etsy's algorithm actually factors in a complete About section when determining shop quality scores, which in turn influence your search rankings.

## **The Title and Tags: How Buyers Find Your Listings**

Etsy has updated its guidance on listing titles, and the current approach is worth understanding clearly. The old practice of cramming as many keywords as possible into your title (for example, "Mountain Photography Print Photo Wall Art Landscape Nature Colorado Mountains Print Large") is now actively discouraged. Etsy's algorithm has evolved to understand context and intent rather than just matching individual words, and keyword-stuffed titles were found to reduce buyer confidence and hurt conversion rates.

The current guidance is to write a clear, descriptive title that leads with the most important keywords and reads naturally. For example: "Rocky Mountain Landscape Photography Print, Long Exposure Waterfall, Fine Art Print for Home or Office." It is still keyword-rich, but it reads like a real product description rather than a search engine manipulation attempt.

Your 13 available tags are where you do the additional keyword work. Use all 13 of them, and use multi-word phrases rather than single words because buyers search in phrases. "black and white mountain photography" is more useful as a tag than "mountain" or "photography" in isolation. Do not repeat keywords that are already in your title. Your title and tags should complement each other, covering different search terms rather than duplicating them.

## **Your Listing Photos Are Your Most Important Sales Tool**

On Etsy, buyers cannot touch your product before purchasing. Your listing photos are doing all the work of conveying quality, scale, and context. For art prints and photography, this means showing the work in context as well as on its own. A photograph displayed in a beautiful, simply furnished room helps buyers visualize it in their own space. Include a close-up that shows the detail and quality of the print. Include a size reference. The more clearly and attractively you present your work, the more confidently buyers will click the purchase button.

### **ETSY IS A LONG GAME, NOT A QUICK WIN**

New Etsy shops receive a temporary visibility boost from the algorithm when they first open, and you may get a small surge of views in your first week or two. After that, organic discovery depends almost entirely on the quality of your SEO, the appeal of your listing photos, and the growing volume of your catalogue. Most established Etsy sellers report that meaningful organic traffic built up over 3 to 6 months of consistent listing activity. Adding new listings regularly signals to Etsy that your shop is active, which is factored into search rankings. Even if you only have a small number of original pieces, you can list them in different sizes, different formats, and different framing options to build out your catalogue gradually.

# 06

## **Stock Photo Sites: Your Library, Always Open for Business**

Stock photography sites are often discussed primarily as income sources, and income is certainly possible. But from the perspective of getting your work seen, stock sites offer something distinct from everything else in this guide: they put your photographs in front of buyers, designers, marketers, and content creators around the world who are actively searching for the kind of images you make. When your photo is licensed by a magazine, a website, or a brand, it gets used in front of that publication's entire audience. That is exposure that is genuinely difficult to manufacture any other way.

It is worth being honest about the earning reality here so your expectations are calibrated. Stock photography today is a crowded market, and per-download earnings on most platforms are modest. Platforms like Shutterstock pay contributors a very small amount per download, and building meaningful income requires either a very large portfolio or a handful of extremely in-demand images. That said, for the purposes of simply being seen and having your work used in the world, stock platforms are a legitimate and genuinely effective channel.

### **Which Platforms Are Worth Your Time**

**Adobe Stock** deserves special mention for photographers and digital artists who already work in Photoshop and Lightroom. The upload process integrates directly with your existing Adobe workflow, and your work appears inside Photoshop's own asset panel, meaning designers searching for images while actively working in Photoshop can find your portfolio without even leaving the application. Adobe pays a 33 percent royalty on each sale, which is significantly better than many competing platforms. Their acceptance standards are reasonably high, but if your work is technically solid, approval is achievable.



**Shutterstock** is the largest stock photography marketplace in the world, with hundreds of millions of images and a massive global customer base. As a contributor, it offers the broadest possible exposure simply because of the sheer volume of buyers searching the platform every day. The trade-off is that earnings are modest and the volume of competing images in popular categories is enormous. Shutterstock works best for photographers who can upload consistently and build a large catalogue over time. A single strong image in a less-crowded niche can earn steadily for years, but it rewards volume and patience over quick returns. Think of it as the widest net you can cast.

**Alamy** is worth considering for photographers who make more niche, editorial, or distinctly local work. Alamy accepts a wider range of subjects than purely commercial stock sites, and has a reputation among contributors for paying better per download than the largest platforms. It is particularly well regarded for travel photography, local subjects, and regional or cultural imagery.

**Pond5** is a strong choice if you also shoot video or time-lapses, as it is particularly well regarded for motion content in addition to still photography.

## **What Gets Licensed Most Often**

The images that generate the most downloads on stock sites are generally those with clear commercial applicability. This means images that businesses, bloggers, and marketers can actually use in their materials. Authentic-feeling lifestyle scenes, strong conceptual images that illustrate a common idea or emotion, clean nature and landscape shots with space for text overlays, and images that reflect diversity and contemporary life tend to perform well. Highly staged, artificial-looking "stock photo" imagery has fallen out of favour. Authentic, well-composed photography with genuine emotional resonance or clear visual utility is what the market wants.

For digital artists specifically, there is growing demand for unique textured backgrounds, abstract compositions, and distinctive graphic elements that designers can incorporate into their work. If your digital art includes these kinds of assets, stock platforms are worth exploring as a distribution channel.

## **Keywording: Work That Determines Whether Anyone Finds You**

On stock platforms, your image is only ever as discoverable as your keywords allow. Spend as much time on your titles, descriptions, and keyword tags as you spend on choosing which images to upload.

Think about what problem a buyer is trying to solve when they search for an image like yours. What project are they working on? What emotion are they trying to convey? What subject, location, or concept does your image represent? Use specific descriptive terms, not vague ones. "Misty mountain lake at sunrise with reflection, Alberta Canada" will outperform "beautiful nature photo" every single time.

# 07

## **In-Person: The Value of a Real Conversation**

Every platform in this guide has one thing in common: it puts a screen between you and your audience. In-person events remove that screen entirely. When someone walks past a table at a car show and stops to look at your automotive photography prints, when a fellow hobbyist at a model train fair picks up your print of a steam locomotive and holds it up to the light, when a grandparent at a school sports day sees you photographing the field and asks if you do portrait work, something happens that no algorithm can replicate. A real human connection forms. And those connections have a way of turning into followers, buyers, and enthusiastic word-of-mouth advocates in ways that digital interactions rarely match.

This chapter is particularly relevant for the audience of this guide. The events where you naturally spend your time, the car shows, the hobby fairs, the sports sidelines, the local markets, the community exhibitions, are full of people who share your interests and who are already predisposed to appreciate your work. You do not need to travel to a major art fair to get your work in front of an appreciative audience. You may already be going to exactly the right places.

### **What to Bring**

You do not need a professional exhibition booth to make an impact at a local event. What you need is a small, curated selection of printed work and something that helps people find you afterward. Here is a practical starting kit:

- A small portfolio of 10 to 15 prints in a quality presentation folder or clear sleeves. These should be your best work, not everything you have ever made.
- A few printed or mounted samples that people can hold and look at properly. There is a significant difference between seeing a photograph on a phone screen and holding a quality print. Let people experience the difference.
- Business cards or postcard-sized cards with a clear image of your work on one side and your contact information on the other, including your website, Etsy shop

address, and any social media handles. Make these easy to remember and easy to type.

- A card or small sign with a QR code that links directly to your Instagram, Etsy shop, or portfolio. Many people will be happy to scan a QR code on their phone rather than type a URL. Free QR code generators are available online and the code can be printed on your cards.

## **How to Have the Conversation**

The biggest mistake artists make at in-person events is standing behind their table waiting to be approached. Get out in front of your work. Introduce yourself as the artist. Ask what brought the person to the event. You do not need to be a salesperson. Just be yourself, someone who loves their craft and is happy to talk about it.

People who stop to look at your work are interested. That is already a step most people never take. A simple, genuine conversation about the image, where it was taken, what the light was like, what decisions you made during editing, is far more likely to turn a browser into a follower or a buyer than a sales pitch ever will. The most effective marketing artists do at events is being real about their passion for the work.

Not every conversation will lead anywhere immediately. That is completely fine. The person who takes your card and follows your Instagram three weeks later was still a success. The couple who comes back to buy a print at the next event you both attend was worth every minute of the first conversation. In-person events are about planting seeds, not harvesting crops.

## **Choosing the Right Events**

The most effective events for getting your work seen are those where the audience already has a connection to your subject matter. If you photograph cars, car shows are obvious. But also consider: automotive clubs, vintage vehicle rallies, racing events, and local cruise nights. If you make landscape art, consider local hiking and outdoor recreation groups, nature clubs, and environmental fundraisers. If you specialize in sports photography, local sports leagues and community athletics events are full of parents who would love a great image of their child in action. Match your work to the audience, and the conversation becomes much easier.



## **THE SLOW SHOW IS STILL WORTH ATTENDING**

You may attend an event where almost no one stops at your table and you make no sales. This happens, and it does not mean the event was a failure. Dozens of people still walked past and saw your work. A few picked up your card. One or two may have photographed your display to look at later. The booth fee, whatever it was, is almost certainly less than any advertising campaign would cost for that level of local visibility. Experienced artists at shows say consistently: many of their best sales came from people who met them at an event months earlier and reached out later. Show up. Be visible. Let people know you exist.

# 08

## **Telling the Story Behind Your Art**

There is a question that every artist gets asked, whether in person at an event or in the comments section of a post: "What's the story behind this one?" It is the most natural question in the world, and it is also the most powerful marketing tool you have. Because when you answer it honestly and specifically, something shifts. The image stops being just an image and becomes a window into a moment, a decision, a person's way of seeing the world. That is when people go from casual viewers to genuine followers.

Most artists struggle with this not because they do not have stories to tell, but because they underestimate the value of their own perspective. They assume that the story of how they came to make a particular piece is too ordinary to be interesting. It never is. The story of why you drove back to the same location four times before the light was finally right is fascinating to someone who has never thought about what goes into a photograph. The story of how you almost deleted an image that turned out to be one of your best is exactly the kind of honest, human content that makes people stop scrolling and actually read.

### **What to Share and What to Hold Back**

You do not need to share everything. You do not need to be emotionally raw or intensely personal to connect with an audience. The sweet spot for most artists is sharing the creative and technical process honestly, with occasional glimpses into the personal context when it feels natural. Where were you when you made this? What were you trying to capture? What went right and what surprised you? What would you do differently? What do you want people to feel when they look at it?

These are not difficult questions to answer. But many artists never ask them out loud because they do not realize that other people genuinely want to know. Your audience wants to feel a connection to the person behind the work, not just the work itself. The caption that starts with "I took this on a Tuesday morning in November when I had

nowhere to be and no particular plan" will almost always outperform the one that says "Golden hour landscape, available as a print."

### **The Process Post: One of the Most Engaging Things You Can Share**

One of the most consistently engaging types of content for visual artists is the process post. This is simply sharing the journey from raw material to finished piece. A before-and-after comparison showing a RAW file and the edited result. A short video of your Photoshop workspace as you work through an edit. A series of three or four images showing a piece at different stages of completion. A behind-the-scenes photograph from the location where you shot a final image.

Process content works for a simple reason: it is inherently educational and fascinating even to people who have no intention of doing what you do. Watching a skilled person work is compelling regardless of the medium. And for the photographers and artists in your audience who do similar work, seeing your process is both inspiring and instructive in a way they will actively thank you for.

On YouTube, process videos can run longer and show the complete journey in real time. On Instagram, a 30 to 60 second Reel showing a time-lapse of an edit can rack up significantly more views than a static post. On Facebook, a short video or a photo carousel walking through the stages of a piece tends to generate far more comments than a single finished image. The platforms are different, but the underlying human interest in watching creative work happen is consistent across all of them.

### **Writing Captions When You Are Not a Writer**

Here is the most practical advice I can give you: write like you talk. Do not try to write like an art critic or a marketing professional. Just answer the question "what would I say about this if a friend asked me?" and type that. Read it back once. If it sounds like you, it is done. If it sounds like something you would not say out loud, rewrite it until it does.

Punctuation matters less than authenticity. Grammar matters less than voice. The caption that is genuinely, personally yours will connect with people far more reliably than the polished one that sounds like it could have been written by anyone.

# 09

## **Consistency Without Burning Out**

Consistency is the word that comes up in virtually every serious discussion of building an audience online. Post consistently. Pin consistently. List new products consistently. Show up consistently. It is true, and the data behind it is real: platforms reward regular activity and penalize extended gaps. But there is an important nuance that often gets left out of this conversation, which is that consistency at the cost of your enjoyment of your creative work is not sustainable and is ultimately counterproductive.

The goal is not to post every day. The goal is to post on a schedule you can genuinely maintain over months and years without it becoming a source of stress or resentment. For some people that is every day. For many, it is three times a week. For others, once a week is what they can do without sacrificing the time they actually want to spend creating. All of these are valid, as long as the chosen frequency is maintained with reasonable consistency.

### **What Actually Happens When You Go Quiet**

It is worth telling the uncomfortable truth about this because understanding it helps you make better decisions. When you go quiet on Instagram for more than a week or two, your reach drops. Not catastrophically, and not permanently, but meaningfully. Instagram's algorithm interprets inactivity as a signal that you are not an active creator, and it reduces how often your content appears in your followers' feeds and in new-user recommendations. Coming back after a long absence requires a period of rebuilding that can take several weeks of regular consistent posting before your reach returns to where it was.

On Pinterest the impact is less immediate because your existing pins continue to surface in search results regardless of whether you are actively posting. But over time, inactive Pinterest accounts do see declining distributions as the algorithm prioritizes fresh content from active contributors. Stock sites are the most forgiving: your library earns regardless of whether you have uploaded anything recently, though fresh uploads do give your existing portfolio a small visibility boost.

Facebook falls somewhere in the middle. Page posts have a naturally longer shelf life than Instagram posts, and the impact of a one or two week gap is less severe. But extended inactivity (several months) will significantly reduce your organic reach and require meaningful effort to rebuild.

### **Batching: The Strategy That Makes Consistency Achievable**

Batching is the practice of creating multiple pieces of content in a single dedicated session rather than trying to create and post each piece individually at the moment it needs to go up. It is one of the most effective ways to maintain posting consistency without the daily mental overhead of deciding what to share and then finding the time to share it.

Here is what batching looks like in practice for an artist. Once a week, or once every two weeks, you sit down and select five to eight images from your library that you want to share. You write captions for all of them. You resize the images to the correct dimensions for each platform. You schedule them using a free or low-cost tool like Meta Business Suite (for Facebook and Instagram) or Tailwind (for Pinterest). Then you walk away and those posts go out automatically on the schedule you have set, at whatever frequency you have decided upon.

The creative work is already done. The content is already made. The only effort required is the one focused session to select, write, and schedule. Most artists find that this approach removes the daily friction of posting almost entirely and makes it far easier to maintain a consistent presence without it feeling like a second job.

## A Realistic Weekly Content Routine

Here is a simple example of what a sustainable routine might look like for an artist posting on Instagram, Facebook, and Pinterest:

DAY	TASK	TIME REQUIRED
Sunday (or any quiet day)	Select 3 images for the week. Write captions. Schedule to Instagram and Facebook using Meta Business Suite.	30 to 45 minutes
Same session	Create 5 to 7 pin designs from existing artwork. Write pin titles and descriptions. Schedule using Tailwind or pin manually.	20 to 30 minutes
Throughout the week	Reply to comments when you notice them. No set time needed	5 to 10 minutes as it comes
Monthly	Add 2 to 3 new Etsy listings. Check analytics to see what is performing well.	1 to 2 hours

Total dedicated time: roughly one hour per week for active posting on three platforms. That is achievable for most people, and it is far more than the zero hours most talented artists are currently spending sharing their work.

### PROTECTING YOUR CREATIVE ENERGY

The single biggest risk in building an audience online is letting the marketing work crowd out the creative work that made the audience worth building in the first place. You are a photographer or a digital artist first. If keeping up with your posting schedule starts to feel like it is pulling time and energy away from actually making work, that is a clear signal to simplify your approach. Cut a platform. Post less frequently. Take a considered break and tell your audience you are doing it. Real audiences are forgiving of human beings who occasionally need to step away. What they will not forgive is a feed full of content created primarily for the algorithm rather than for them.



# 10

## **Your Personal Get Seen Plan**

This is the most important chapter in the book because it is where everything becomes specific to you. Every other chapter has been about possibilities. This one is about choices. The photographers and digital artists who successfully build audiences are not the ones who try every platform simultaneously. They are the ones who choose deliberately, commit fully, and stay the course long enough for the effort to compound into real results.

There is no single correct answer to the question of which platforms you should focus on. The right answer depends on where your audience is, what kind of content you most enjoy creating, and what you can realistically sustain given the rest of your life. Here is a framework for making that decision.

### **Choosing Your Two or Three Platforms**

Start by answering these questions honestly:

- Where are the people most likely to appreciate your specific kind of work already spending their time online?
- Which platform in this guide felt most interesting or natural to you as you read about it?
- Do you prefer a platform where images do most of the work, or one where captions and community conversation matter more?
- Are you comfortable with video content (Reels, process videos) or do you prefer to share only finished still images?
- How much time per week can you realistically dedicate to sharing your work?

For most photographers and digital artists starting from scratch, a practical and manageable starting combination is Instagram for visual portfolio building and community discovery, Pinterest for long-term search-driven visibility, and Etsy if you

have work that could be sold as prints or digital downloads. That combination covers both the social and the search-engine sides of online discovery, and all three can be maintained with about an hour of dedicated work per week using the batching approach described in Chapter Nine.

If in-person events resonate with you strongly, add one local event per month or per season to your plan. Even a single well-chosen event can produce more genuine connections than weeks of online activity.

## **Connecting Your Platforms to Each Other**

One of the most effective things you can do as you build your online presence is make sure all your platforms point to each other. Your Instagram bio should link to your Etsy shop or website. Your Etsy shop's About section should mention where people can follow you on social media. Your Pinterest pins should link back to your Instagram profile or Etsy listings. Your Facebook Page should link to your Instagram profile.

This interconnection means that no matter where a person first discovers your work, they can find the rest of you. A buyer who finds you on Pinterest can follow you on Instagram. A follower who discovers you on Instagram can find your Etsy shop. An event attendee who scans your QR code can find everything in one place. You are building a web rather than a series of disconnected islands.

## **Your Starting Action List**

1. Choose your two or three platforms. Write them down. These are the only ones you are focusing on for the next 90 days.
2. Set up your profiles on each chosen platform this week. Use the same profile photo, the same name format, and a consistent short description of your work across all of them.
3. Select ten to twenty of your best existing images to use as your initial posting material. You do not need to create anything new to get started.
4. Write one caption for each of those images before you start posting. Store them in a simple document. This is the beginning of your content library.

5. Schedule your first week of posts using Meta Business Suite or another free scheduling tool. See how it feels to have content ready to go in advance rather than thinking about it day by day.
6. Identify one local event in the next two months where your work would be a natural fit. Note the date. Start thinking about what you would bring and how you would present it.
7. Set a calendar reminder for 90 days from today to review what is working. Look at which posts got the most engagement, which Pinterest pins are being saved, and which Etsy listings are getting the most views. Let the data inform what you do more of going forward.

### **THE ONE THING TO REMEMBER ABOVE EVERYTHING ELSE**

The work comes first. The sharing is in service of the work, not the other way around. If the process of getting your art out into the world ever starts to feel like it is changing what you make, diminishing your enjoyment of making it, or pushing you toward creating things you do not care about in order to chase an algorithm, step back and recalibrate. Your creative instincts are your most valuable asset. Protect them. An audience built around your genuine vision, shared on your own terms, will always outlast and outperform one built by contorting yourself to fit what a platform seems to want this week.

## FINAL WORDS

# The Hard Drive Does Not Have to Be the End of the Story

Your work already exists. It is already made. The photographs are already taken, the edits are already done, the digital art is already rendered. The only thing standing between that work and the audience it deserves is the willingness to put it out there, consistently and without waiting until everything feels perfect.

There is no perfect moment to start. There is no perfect number of followers to wait until you have before you feel like the effort is worth it. There is no platform that will simply hand you an audience without you showing up for it. But there is a very real and very achievable path from "I make things that almost no one sees" to "I have an audience of people who genuinely look forward to what I share next." It is just a path that has to be walked, one post at a time, one conversation at a time, one pin at a time.

## A Simple Summary to Return To

**Instagram:** your visual portfolio, open to the world 24 hours a day. Post 3 to 5 times per week, write genuine captions, use 5 to 15 specific hashtags, and include a clickable link in your bio.

**Facebook:** the platform your audience is probably already on. Create a dedicated Page, write posts that invite conversation, include real clickable links, and engage with Groups in your subject area.

**Pinterest:** the visual search engine that keeps working long after you post. Use vertical 1000 x 1500 pixel images, write keyword-rich pin titles and descriptions, link every pin to somewhere useful, and post 1 to 3 fresh pins per day.

**Etsy:** your shop is a front door that over 86 million active buyers can knock on. Use clear, natural-language titles, fill all 13 tags with multi-word phrases, complete your About section, and show your work in context in your listing photos.

**Stock sites:** upload your best technically strong images to Adobe Stock or Alamy, keyword them thoroughly, and treat it as a library you are building over time rather than an income source to rely on immediately.

**In-person events:** bring a curated portfolio, your best prints, and a card with a QR code. Introduce yourself as the artist. Have real conversations. Plant the seeds and then follow up.

And through all of it: tell the story behind the work. Show the process. Write like yourself. Post on a schedule you can maintain. Protect the creative energy that makes your work worth sharing in the first place.

### **One More Thing**

The artists and photographers who build the most meaningful audiences are almost never the ones chasing the algorithm. They are the ones whose deep, genuine love for their craft is visible in everything they share. That love is already present in your work. Getting seen just means finding the ways to let more people witness it.

Start this week. Start with what you already have. The hard drive has held onto your work long enough. Go out there, be bold, and be seen!

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