Making Art Your Business
“ABI provided me with invaluable tips and insights into how to develop and market my brand most effectively. It has saved me countless dollars and precious time, not to mention the emotional cost of making mistakes.”
—Lisa Cottone, Jeweler

“The Arts Business Institute opened up a whole new world for me and let me know that artists could be successful. It changed my thinking and I was able to quit my job and become a full-time artist. Thank you!”
—JJ Jacobs, Painter

ABOUT THE ARTS BUSINESS INSTITUTE

According to Forbes magazine, 60% of all college graduates can’t find work in their chosen career field. If that’s true for most college graduates, imagine how much harder it is to become a success in the visual arts. If they find a job, how well does it pay? Many artists quickly realize that self-employment is the best path for a sustainable career. But did school prepare them to launch a small business? No.

Most artists never learn the art of business. Many graduate from top universities with great skills but rarely receive the education that would help them transition from school to work. Even fewer learn how to launch a successful studio business.

The mission of the Arts Business Institute is to help artists and creative producers and craftspeople build business skills, learn about new niche markets, and sell to top retailers and galleries nationwide where their products sell at higher prices.

The result is a growing small business, a living wage to support a family, new jobs, and often a new creative business for Main Street.

Since 1994, the Arts Business Institute has helped thousands of artists find their path to success. Our team of successful small business owner-presenters and arts marketing and business experts provides every detail to help artists create their individual path to success.

Beyond our workshops and lectures, we offer extended services to help each and every graduate find their own path to success.

Our unique “Access to Market” program provides a real trade show experience for our graduates. We assist with pre-show planning, marketing, pricing and onsite sales training for entrepreneurs who need an affordable group exhibit opportunity to test the waters of wholesaling and production growth. Without this important experience, few producers expand beyond local sales.

www.ArtsBusinessInstitute.org
**THE PROGRAM**

A typical ABI 2-day weekend workshop covers topics such as: pricing formulas, gallery negotiations, product development and line expansion, art marketing, alternative markets, trade shows, booth design, selling skills, profitable studio business models, sales terms and trends.

In addition to our workshop lectures and showcase experience, attending artists can receive a personal critique from one of our experts. The second day of the workshop provides artists with an opportunity to exhibit samples to our experts and/or prospective gallery buyers.

While most workshops are just short experiences, the Arts Business Institute provides ongoing resources and educational tips and updates, e-courses, mentoring and personalized step-by-step assistance in overcoming obstacles to growth.

**Bring the Arts Business Institute to Your Town or School**

Call us for information about planning a workshop, Access to Market Program, or other services for your arts community. We provide the marketing and promotional support to help you create a successful event in your own area. In fact, in some towns our workshops actually help to raise funds and bring new members into local arts organizations. Workshops require only a minimum of 40 participants.

Call us today! 410.262.2872

Instructor Bruce Baker teaches Wholesale 101 at the Winter 2013 ABI Workshop.

“*The ABI workshop may be the best money I have spent for my business. I learned valuable lessons about marketing, display, trade shows, selling to galleries and copyright law. I also learned how to make individual sales and capture repeat orders. I would recommend it to any artist.”*

—Jessica Boehman, Children’s Book Illustrator

Instructor Ruth Benzie teaches Copyright Law at the Winter 2013 ABI Workshop.

“The skills I have learned by taking the ABI workshop have become invaluable to me, as I now use these tools with every show I do.”

—Bronwen Heilman, Jeweler

Instructor Robert Paine teaches Booth Design at the Winter 2013 ABI Workshop.
SAMPLE WORKSHOP CURRICULUM

Introduction: No More Starving Artists!
How do you succeed without selling out? Is it even possible to earn a living making art? Why is your arts career important to your city and state? What is your impact on the national economy? Living without a regular paycheck: what should an artist expect to earn? How do you design a path that pays well enough to support your family? We will review business models that work.

Building & Branding a Body of Work
We’ll explore how you can discover or strengthen your visual voice, brand your style and target the customers you want to reach. Learn how to raise your prices, establish consistency and build perceived value. Communicate with confidence using branding tools to share your lifestyle, create cheerleading customers and make your artwork and designs more appealing to new prospects. Create a fan base loyal to your brand. Followed by Q&A session.

Selling Strategies that Work:
Local vs National Marketing
Artists that sell nationally vs locally double their earnings, or even more. We debunk the myths of wholesaling. Learn how to avoid consignment and build profitable partnerships with gallery owners and retailers. Topics include trade shows, using sales reps, approaching retailers directly, prospecting, follow-up and closing techniques. Learn to sell one-of-a-kind work at wholesale. Understanding the corporate art market, chain stores, licensing agents, art publishers and more. Followed by Q&A session.

Pricing for Profit
Pricing is one of the most misunderstood areas for artists, and can make or break a business. This presentation breaks it down and makes it easy. It’s not a big secret. No smoke or mirrors here. You don’t need a degree in accounting. Any 8-year-old can do it. We’ll show you a few different methods for pricing your work. Discover a simple formula that gathers together everything from labor and materials to cost of sale and profit.

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Who Is Your Customer?
Discover your target customer, and those specialty niche markets you never imagined. Create a profile of your ideal customer. Understand what your customers value, and why they should buy from you. Who is your retail customer? Who is your wholesale customer? Once you know the answers, you can focus your efforts on marketing and making the sale. Followed by Q&A session.

Trends, Fads and Adding Value
Learn how cultural trends affect design, and what artists need to know. Learn to build value into each piece through construction techniques, function, presentation and marketing materials. Broaden your prospective customer base when you learn how to appeal to both right- versus left-brain buyers, as well as right- versus left-brain consumers, elite versus educated customers, tribes and cause groupies, plus boomers versus millennial buyers. Followed by Q&A session.

Create an Effective Art Website
Taking a close look at an artist’s website, you’ll learn why your “About” page shouldn’t be all about you and how to use images on your site effectively. Discover good website navigation and marketing messages to make it easy for your customer to say “yes.” Get tips on blogging, social media, Google analytics, ranking for keywords, strategic alliances with web partners. Drive more web traffic to your site. Followed by Q&A session.

Booth Design and Display
What makes an effective booth display? How do you design your booth space to create the look you want and the message you want to convey? Design a booth that fits in your travel luggage. Learn the best tips on branding, photography, visual merchandising, signage and other techniques in your booth to make the most of your show experience. Followed by Q&A session.

Creative Marketing for Artists
Does your marketing budget consist of the loose change you found in your bottom drawer? We show you how to market effectively on a shoestring. Details and specific examples of creative and unusual ways artists can get the message to their target audience. Learn the best ways to get publicity and reach the press through television, radio, print and social media. This lecture covers both traditional and new strategies for creating a marketing plan and calendar. Followed by Q&A session.
Building Gallery Relationships
A basic tenet of wholesaling is to build strong partnerships with your galleries. Learn what buyers want, how to grow a sustainable wholesale business, terms, turns, exclusivity, the rules of consignment, popular price points and retail markup. Tips on selling in all markets and price points, from production work to museum acquisition deals. How to create a path to local stores and national exhibitions like Art Basel Miami Beach or SOFA Chicago. Followed by Q&A session.

Showcase Your Work
Showcase a sampling of your best work to our experts, galleries and stores. Retailers, gallery owners and ABI’s invited experts will write personalized critiques on pricing, line consistency, materials selection, proportions and target market approaches. This opportunity provides workshop attendants with personalized feedback, tips and suggestions critical to each artist’s success.

Closing Lecture
What happens tomorrow? Learn how to create your action plan and follow-through. Why your future is important to your neighborhood, your town, your state and the nation.

Post-Workshop Services
The Arts Business Institute doesn’t end when the weekend is over. We provide ongoing education, feedback and an access-to-mentor network to keep our alumni on track.

ABI workshops like the one shown above cover a wide range of topics in a congenial setting; selected ABI alumni are invited to exhibit at the Buyers Market (top).

www.ArtsBusinessInstitute.org
While many artists will find their best customers outside traditional art marketing venues, many more will get their first taste of success through our “Access to Market” program. For many artists, this is their first professional selling experience beyond local fairs and festivals. The opportunity to show and sell their works to fine craft retailers, jewelry store owners and art gallery dealers in resort towns and creative communities throughout the United States is a learning experience in itself and often brings immediate success after the ABI workshop and follow-up coaching by the Arts Business Institute faculty and staff.

Selected ABI workshop graduates continue to be mentored until their work and their business skills are ready for national exposure. These artists will be invited to participate in group or guild exhibits at the Buyers Market, a national wholesale trade show for fine handmade objects, jewelry and production artwork.

Held annually since 1982, the Buyers Market is the premier wholesale show created exclusively for Made-in-America merchandise.

Store and gallery owners from all 50 states, the District of Columbia, six Canadian provinces and Puerto Rico attend the show each year. All exhibiting artists are pre-qualified and mentored by show management, guaranteeing retailers and artists a professional marketplace opportunity for business success and growth.

Each year, select artist guilds or university alumni groups are invited to exhibit at the Buyers Market. This opportunity provides emerging artists—both guild members and students—with a valuable hands-on learning experience.

Past participants include the Pennsylvania Society of Goldsmiths, Tamarack “The Best of West Virginia,” Massachusetts Style, Ohio Designer Craftsmen, the State of North Dakota, Maine Craftsmen, the Council for Indigenous Arts and Culture and the International Society of Glass Beadmakers.

The Buyers Market attracts a national audience of retailers seeking limited-edition and one-of-a-kind American-made designs. Unlike gift shows, where independent artists must compete directly with manufacturers and large corporations, the Buyers Market provides a niche in the retail sector where artists’ designs are protected and celebrated.