Defining Your Own Version of Success In the Art World and Beyond

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Artist

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ARTIST/MOTHER PODCAST

Stay Home Gallery

THRIVE TOGETHER NETWORK
Wearing All the Hats (Without Losing Your Head)

→

PROFESSIONAL PRACTICES COURSE

Community based course for Artists

with Isadora Stowe

through Thrive Together Network
Success: Is it really all about money???

Making a living as an artist

“My daughter is now in college and someone there is teaching about my work. What can I say, I wanted a child and a career and I didn’t feel one took energy from the other.” -Kara Walker
2012:

85% of NYC artists had non-arts-related day jobs

15% of NYC artists made a living from their art

Source: Census Report, You, BFAMFAPHD analyzed 2012 U.S. Census data
2012:

Their median income was $25,000—Half of the median income of all New Yorkers.

Source: Census Report, You, BFAMFAPHD analyzed 2012 U.S. Census data

2018:

The median income for over 1,000 artists surveyed was $20,000–30,000/year, with half of respondents saying that 0–10% of their income comes from their art.
Over 60% of MFA students are women. But galleries only show 30% women artists.

46% of visual artists in the United States are women. But they earn 74¢ for every $1 earned by male artists.
“No artist, no matter how famous or successful, spends 100 percent of their time on their art, nor do they earn 100 percent of their income from their art alone over the course of their entire career...”

Alexis Clements “What are the Chances? Success in the Arts in the 21st Century”
WHAT DOES IT LOOK LIKE TO BE A FULL TIME ARTIST?

EXPECTATIONS

MAKE ART
SELL ART

REALITY

MAKING ART
EMAILS
SOCIAL MEDIA
PLANNING
WRITING
INVENTORY
CLEANING ORGANIZING
UPDATING WEBSITE
BOOKKEEPING DOCUMENTING WORK
SELF PROMOTION TRYING TO GET INSPIRED
PACKAGING SHIPPING RUNNING ERRANDS
RESEARCH APPLICATIONS
2020 INCOME STREAMS

- MURALS 41.42%
- LICENSING 17.64%
- PHYSICAL GOODS 15.19%
- ILLUSTRATION 10.01%
- PANELS/TALKS/JURIES 5.62%
- RESIDENCY 4.60%
- PUBLIC ART 2.76%
- WORKSHOPS 2.76%

Sandeep Johal
Vancouver, Canada

Partner pays for Insurance & Retirement
KATE STONE

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Studio Location: Bushwick, 10 min walk from home
Studio Time: varies little to lots
Income: freelance retoucher
Income from art: <5% - Working this way means she has the freedom to make whatever she wants without thinking about how it will look over someone’s couch.
Downside: has to have a day job.
Insurance: cheapest plan through Oscar (ACA)

Success: “Being able to sustain myself and continue making work. Making work that accomplishes what I want it to accomplish, which I think is an ongoing thing that’s changing all the time. Exhibiting and recognition are also parts of how I define success. I think I've had some success but there are still things I'm striving for.”
Income Streams 2021

- Teaching: 60.6%
- Insurance, Retirement
- Art Sales Direct: 10.1%
- Small Business: 8.1%
- Grants: 4%
- Writing: 2%
- Public Art: 10.1%
- Products: 3%
JULIE SCHENKELBERG

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Studio Location: free temp spaces: home, site-specific installation, or residency program, or barter space 10 min from home. Gives her freedom to take opportunities. Pays for art storage.

Studio Time: 5 hrs/day, most days she’s home

Income: grants, artist fees, lectures, other institutional support, few sales, tarot readings, carpentry, odd jobs

Income from art: 90%

Insurance: ACA

Success: “Being there for myself and true to my identity as an artist, which is making my practice about every minute of my life- living it as a continuous thing. And sticking to my vision till its recognized- and it is- through shows, awards and residencies. I am more conscious about community building after all the work I have done and I am adamant about sharing how to do it with any artists that have questions about my practice.”
There is no ONE WAY to be an artist. This is confusing, difficult and frustrating.

It is also the gift of being an artist. We just have to have the right tools to help us identify our unique version of success.

Do you generally find this to be more frustrating or beneficial and beautiful in your life?
Why Vision Casting—

Casting a vision is about coherency. A coherent life is one lived on purpose.

Serves a compass point and a reminder of why you started to do this work in the first place.

A touchstone for your evolution.
Defining your own version of success—

This allows for clarity to start focusing your energies.
"Why" defining your success—

DEFINING SUCCESS

What does success as an artist mean to me?

Think about what defines success to you, what defines failure, what a successful art career looks like, what kind of career you want.

Write down as many details you can imagine.
"Success is making the art".

"Continuing to make work and show it".

"The option to change, the ability to grow as an artist and to see work over a long period of time, to maintain and continue the practice".

"Showing, teaching and contributing to a greater conversation."

"Having the time and resources to make the work, and having an audience to view it, no matter how big or small."

"Doing what you love everyday"
Helpful Questions:

1. Why am I an artist?
2. What motivates me?
3. What direction do I want to expand my work?
4. Where do I want to expand my network?
5. What do I want my work to do in the world?
6. What kind of 'art life' do I imagine for myself?
Begin to identify what success looks like for you + what it does NOT look like for you.

Your understanding of this identity will grow over time.
We can't care about it all.

Some things I highly value:
- exhibiting my work
- have the freedom and flexibility to create what I want
- feeling supported and connected to a large network of artists
- conversations with artists

Some things I don't value as much:
- selling prints of my work
- art fairs or booth style selling of my work
- feeling understood by non-art supporters
Create Your Artist Declaration

Get clear on your motivations
Artist Declaration

is a short declarative sentence or two for YOU to use as a compass or navigator to help guide your career.

It can be foundational for making decisions and moving forward in your practice.

*It is not necessary to share with the world- this is for you.*
Artist Declaration

Questions to help you build it:

1. What is important to you?
2. Where do you want to go?
3. What does "the best" look like for you?
4. How do you want to act and how do you want people to describe you?
5. What is the legacy you want to leave?
Artist Declaration

"I am an artist who's major themes encompass transmutation and liberation through a variety of multi-media and installations.

As an artist and arts educator my goal is to inspire, empower and help people find value in art and within their own lives as creative contributors."

-Isadora Stowe
Artist Declaration

"I am a mixed media artist exploring overlapping narratives in maternal, legacy, care, and female identity.

I build community for non-binary and female identifying artists and artist mothers, facilitating authentic opportunities for reclaiming space and thriving in the art world."

-Kaylan Buteyn
ART IS THE LONG GAME
TIPS & Suggestions:

For helping you build and create the life you want as an artist
Occupy Space. Unapologetically.

Still of Alexandria Ocasio-Cortez, Knock down the house on Netflix about four female candidates trying to win seats in the USA Congressional elections of 2018.
1. Occupy Space. Unapologetically.

“A woman must have money and a room of her own if she is to write fiction.” - Virginia Woolf, A Room of One's Own

In a linear commodified world, everyone will want to know why you chose this life. Why you need studio time. Come up with an answer (s) for ourselves and for others-. Especially if your family of origin, social networks etc. don’t understand what art/artists do.
How do you want to take up space?
2. Truly Consider Your Time.

As physicist Albert-László Barabási once wrote, “Time is our most valuable non-renewable resource, and if we want to treat it with respect, we need to set priorities.”
Truly Consider Your Time.

20 years of in person parent time. 19 First years until move out. The remaining are about 10-15 days per year until you are 60.

'Depressing Math' can help you live a more fulfilled life. -Tim Urban, "How to get back the time covid stole."
Truly Consider Your Time.

One box for every week of a 90-year life. It often feels like we have countless weeks ahead of us. But actually, it’s just a few thousand.

Parts of life we think of as countless are in fact quite countable.
Truly Consider Your Time.

-you're born
 your life path
  your life, today

\[ \text{black} = \text{LIFE PATHS CLOSED TO YOU} \]
\[ \text{green} = \text{LIFE PATHS OPEN TO YOU} \]
2. Truly Consider Your Time.

How do you spend your time as an artist & human? What do you want to spend more time doing?

“How we spend our days is of course, how we spend our lives” - Annie Dillard

"The time we have left with family and friends is not a law of nature like the weeks we have left to live. It's a function of priorities and decisions" - Tim Urban
3. Continually Connect with Yourself

**Artist Dates:**
The Artist Date is a once-weekly, festive, solo expedition to explore something that interests you. The Artist Date need not be overtly “artistic”—think mischief more than mastery. Artist Dates fire up the imagination.
Continually Connect with Yourself

Personal Dates:
Connect with yourself to check in, quiet the noise, and stop going through the motions.

Continually re-consider your artists declaration, life values, and how what you've said you care about is lining up with how you are spending your time.
4. Celebrate Your Accomplishments

Enjoy the journey and be present with yourself
Increases gratitude and confidence
Radiates positive flow
What is 1 thing you've recently completed or accomplished?

How did you or will you celebrate?
Thank you!

Lets connect!

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Artist/Mother Podcast
Thriving Artists Podcast