

Episode transcript

00:00:00:05 - 00:00:19:09 CAROLINE: *I found you guys because I just got done with my graduate degree and I was looking to start up an art storefront. And it was really important to me to not only find a company that could handle what I needed. With regards to the podcast, to keep the podcast going on the website without having to maintain a separate site.*

00:00:19:11 - 00:00:45:12 CAROLINE: But so I needed answers to those questions specifically. Not all artists have a podcast, but I had this element I needed to take care of, and I needed responsivity and you guys were on it. I mean, do you guys answer my questions within an hour of my email sent to you? And before I know what, I was on the phone with Kelly and then I had a discussion with you and we were just rolling.

00:00:45:12 - 00:00:49:15 CAROLINE: It was 90 miles an hour, and I thought, this is what I am talking about.

00:00:49:17 - 00:01:09:01 PATRICK: Yeah. It doesn't it doesn't go away either. Like, you know, once you're once you're inside, you know, like, honestly, one of the things that I'm the most proud of is we have these zoom sessions, like, sometimes two a day all week long. Right? Yeah. An okay zoom session. You might want to attend the zoom session, or you might not want to attend the zoom session, but I don't even know if you know this.

00:01:09:06 - 00:01:27:00 PATRICK: You can go into the zoom session, not even care about the content, and say, I need tech help. They move you into another zoom, which is the tech zoom, and there's a live agent to talk to, and they can take over your screen, look at your screen, or they'll just fix that thing. So the support like, look, you guys have enough jobs to do, okay.

00:01:27:06 - 00:01:36:10 PATRICK: Being being a web programmer, JavaScript like, no, you don't have time to do that. You got to create the art and market the art. That's it.

00:01:36:12 - 00:01:57:21 CAROLINE: Yeah, I agree with you. And during I, during the day, I'm doing media programing stuff and media specialist work and so I will continually check in on my business and see that your webinars stuff is coming in every day with the zoom calls. And I'm thinking, oh, I want to be on that. And it's actually more than I can do because I'm usually the one who's too busy for it.

00:01:57:21 - 00:02:07:00 CAROLINE: But it's there, it's always there, and I can go back and I'm sure and just replay everything. So I'm storing up all this content. It's really great.

00:02:07:02 - 00:02:20:02 PATRICK: Yeah. It's, the support is a huge piece of of the whole thing. Right. And, you know, our prices are more than everyone else is for a reason. Because there's an army of people to support you, which, you know, we've learned over time is what artisan photographers need.

00:02:20:04 - 00:02:34:09 CAROLINE: Yeah. And it and again it was it got me off of center. It was I'd been looking at other sites for a few years and I never pulled the trigger on it because I couldn't decipher is this going if I go down this path, am I going to have what I need? So for me, it was well worth it.

00:02:34:09 - 00:02:45:17 CAROLINE: And it was ultimately doable. It wasn't, so high price that I couldn't move forward. But I just needed to answer those questions. And that was the decision maker.

00:02:45:19 - 00:03:04:11 PATRICK: Yeah. And you know what? Like, you end up spending the money anyway. You spend it with your time because you don't take action. You don't take any forward steps. You contemplate things, you try to roll some solution on your own. You're searching forums. You're opening up tickets, you're pulling hair out of your head like all of that has a cost to it.

00:03:04:11 - 00:03:16:19 PATRICK: That's that's that's the same. And we didn't have it when we started and we learned that like, oh, this is what everybody needs, right. So it's that's, that's it's how we've kind of evolved to that stage.

00:03:16:21 - 00:03:37:22 CAROLINE: Yeah. And I think there's a certain element I mean now I'm generalizing. Artists come in all shapes, sizes and varieties. But I'm going to generalize and say that we as artists are fairly empathic and sensitive to what we need emotionally and intellectually. And I think that artists need to feel supported if they're going forward, because, as you said, we have enough to do.

00:03:37:23 - 00:04:06:01 CAROLINE: We've got our brain on this creative channel over here. We're aware that there's an administrative element to it, but some people are intimidated by this. For myself, it was bandwidth. It was I was paying for different third party integrations to my website to approximate what you end up offering, including the shopping cart and Shopify. And then my biggest concern became, am I doing the taxes right?

00:04:06:03 - 00:04:27:00 CAROLINE: I was worried about the feds and getting into trouble with the state taxes, and I don't want to be audited. And the whole thing became so stressful that I thought if only I could find a company that would handle the, the, the tax element of it, where I know it's being done correctly. And lo and behold, you provide a report.

00:04:27:02 - 00:04:42:16 CAROLINE: And so there's guidance as to what to pay and how it's all taken care of on the back end, where I don't have to not only worry about figuring out how to do it, but that it's done correctly. I'm not going to get myself into hot water when all I really want to do is paint.

00:04:42:18 - 00:04:51:02 PATRICK: Yeah. You know, and 99.999999% of all artists and photographers just want to create and not do anything else.

00:04:51:04 - 00:05:15:13 CAROLINE: And so and, and if we're working a day job, as I currently am and I and I love what I do and it supports my art in the commercial end, to be able to promote myself. But every decision that has to do with promoting this website for the purposes of promoting the art takes up time during the weekends and the precious evening time that I might have, where I could be at my easel, making my stuff.

00:05:15:15 - 00:05:36:03 PATRICK: Very, very important. And, you know, it's it I always use, like the the restaurant analogy. And this is the problem with all artists photographers is you have to play all the roles you have to play. You're the maitre d and you're the hostess and you're the bartender and you're the waiter and you're the busboy, and you have to do all of that.

00:05:36:03 - 00:05:44:05 PATRICK: Right? And so you want to just find ways that you can take some of those jobs off your plate. And so you're just left with creating the art and then doing marketing.

00:05:44:09 - 00:06:05:11 CAROLINE: Exactly. And and PATRICK: , I want to the first question I actually have for you, I'm here. I'm gushing. But I mean, I'm so excited to be on a roll with this company. Thank you for your time. Artists, especially those who do not like to promote themselves, which is a lot of us where we want our art out there, but we're not really wanting to get up on stage ourselves.

00:06:05:13 - 00:06:22:21 CAROLINE: Yeah, like to think that having a website will it either will automatically bring on sales, or conversely, they think that with the proliferation of social media that perhaps having a website isn't necessary any longer. Yeah. So can you talk about the reality of selling art online?

00:06:22:23 - 00:06:37:07 PATRICK: Yeah, absolutely. I can and and there's layers to this one. Right. So let's just peel it back a couple at a time. One, you know, one of the biggest tragedies is I need a I just get a website. I can just get my art up on a website and, you know, just get it on a website. And then what happens?

00:06:37:08 - 00:06:58:03 PATRICK: You get it up on the website and no one is coming to the website. Right? Because you have to fix the marketing problem, which is the biggest problem, the single solitary biggest problem. I would also say that, you know, have a social media site versus have a website like you need to have commerce enabled and you need to be able to to make sales when you're asleep, make sales when you're on vacation.

00:06:58:03 - 00:07:18:05 PATRICK: Show the work off in a beautiful fashion. Ideally all the back end stuff that takes place i.e. you know, there's a lot of different ways to roll it. And when you don't have everything automated on the back end, i.e. an order comes in, you get paid, printer gets paid, order get shipped, box printed, shipped. You know, your logo goes on it and you don't have to lift a finger.

00:07:18:06 - 00:07:40:05 PATRICK: That's all time that you're getting back right? We're we're a great many artists and photographers are still handling that. That portion of it that goes back to the restaurant analogy again. Right. Like you can't be doing that. You can't be doing that. You have to maximize your time on the creation in the promotion. And and that's it. But I would say more broadly that the promotion is the single solitary biggest issue that all artists have.

00:07:40:09 - 00:07:52:09 PATRICK: All of it. I mean, you rightly nailed it. It is the number one problem. It is not going away. It'll be here 20 years from now. It'll be here ten years from now. And that's the really the biggest thing to solve.

00:07:52:11 - 00:07:58:18 CAROLINE: I agree with you. And so how can art storefronts make a difference in online sales?00:07:58:20 - 00:08:01:01 PATRICK: Yeah. You're saying from having a website in general.

00:08:01:03 - 00:08:12:12 CAROLINE: Yeah. From just I'm going to build it and they're going to show up and I can just post the website and go to my art and go take a nap or whatever I'm going to do, and the sales are just going to roll it.

00:08:12:14 - 00:08:33:19 PATRICK: Yes. Just from everywhere. All the time. We out. Right? Yeah. The website does a great job of taking care of all of that. But, you know, it goes to the secret sauce of what we do, the secret sauce of what we do. It's taken me years to learn this is just keeping our customers consistent, more than more than the website and the technology and even the support.

00:08:33:21 - 00:08:56:02 PATRICK: It's the emotional support. It's the encouragement. It's going through the struggles of growing an art business with a group of your peers. Because we have so many community related things. It's mild harassment and accountability. Sometimes. You know, why art? Why aren't these posts going out? How many times did you post on Instagram last week? In my experience, I and I called this the hotel California problem.

00:08:56:02 - 00:09:18:02 PATRICK: Okay, well document now and the notion is you can check out anytime you like, but you can never leave. And I've been running webinars essentially almost three, three a week, I would say, since Covid hit. Okay. So I've talked to hundreds of thousands of artists and photographers. Every stripe, every niche, every country, other countries, all, every set of circumstances.

00:09:18:04 - 00:09:35:12 PATRICK: And the same thing just keeps me up caring and reiterating the views on my shoulder tells me I need to create. That's that's how God or whoever you think made you like, I need to create. I need to get this out there. I need to get it in front of eyeballs and you know that. And you're ultimately you're looking for that level of satisfaction as an artist.

00:09:35:14 - 00:09:51:22 PATRICK: And you get motivated and you get inspired and you're like, I'm going to do some marketing, but no different than a New Year's resolution for a gym membership. What happens is, is the January you sign up and you're going four days a week and March rolls along and you're like, this is too hard. You're down to one day a week, and then somewhere you quit.

00:09:51:24 - 00:10:05:17 PATRICK: And then here's where the Hotel California problem comes in some period of time you check out, you stop doing your marketing. You're like, that's just not working. I'm going to go back to my art. I want to do something else. But then the muse comes back on your shoulder again, and then you're right back to where you started again.

00:10:05:22 - 00:10:25:23 PATRICK: And I continually see artists in their 20s, 30s, 40, 50, 60, 70, 80s and I even get people in their 90s. And it's the same thing. So I go back to the consistency. Like the ultimate secret sauce of what we do is all the motivation, encouragement and inspiration. You know, accountability. Like I said, mild harassment sometimes. I always like to joke about that.

00:10:25:23 - 00:10:44:02 PATRICK: I've got to keep you consistent, to keep you showing that and keep grinding and putting yourself out there and putting the art out there. If you just stay consistent, you'll win. It's almost not even a meritocracy on the art. It's more of a meritocracy. On the consistency of getting in front of enough eyeballs to get the sales, to get the appreciation, to get the feedback.

00:10:44:04 - 00:10:50:05 PATRICK: It's the secret sauce. You'll see we're going to have you marketing more than you ever have, killing.

00:10:50:07 - 00:11:13:08 CAROLINE: And that's the key. I really think it's true. And I've always said to, the artist that speak to me about the difficulty of getting their art out there, it it is deceptively easy not to create. It's a scary, scary thing where you can fall off of promoting your art. And if you're not careful and you get discouraged, you can.

00:11:13:08 - 00:11:30:07 CAROLINE: Weeks can go by and you realize you haven't been in your studio and it's like slow the bleeding to death. Before you know it, you're like, wait a minute, I'm not. I'm not creating anything. And it can be painless if you're not careful. And I think it should stay with that. Like you said, slight level of harassment.

00:11:30:09 - 00:11:31:08 PATRICK: Yeah.

00:11:31:10 - 00:11:47:21 CAROLINE: Just getting through grad school last year, they. It was all online. It was all online. It was in Florida. The school is in Florida that they have a brick and mortar. But I thought, how am I going to do this with school and with school and with work full time work.

00:11:47:23 - 00:11:48:16 PATRICK: 00:11:48:18 - 00:12:09:02 CAROLINE: And they said well we're going to harass you. And I thought well that's great. And then they're going to put the students together to encourage each other and by when we started in June, by late August we were all in group chats and we were doing FaceTime calls. And every day we were on FaceTime with each other because we were pushing each other uphill.

00:12:09:06 - 00:12:33:09 CAROLINE: And we didn't even respective irrespective of the assignment requirements, we found each other on calls throughout the day, whether it was zoom or text or whatever. We could do, and we got each other through that year, and I don't see how I could have done that remotely with that intensity of schoolwork. I was working almost as many hours at school as I was at work, so it was outrageous.

00:12:33:09 - 00:12:34:18 CAROLINE: But that was the difference.

00:12:34:20 - 00:12:49:12 PATRICK: Yeah. I mean, it's hard being a solopreneur, right? Yeah, on the art side. Like it's really hard to do all of that by yourself and on your own. Like you have to have some, some support. You know, if you're in a business at least there's other employees. When you're having a bad day, they're having a good day. They lift you up, right.

00:12:49:12 - 00:12:53:08 PATRICK: But if you're on your own, it's hard. It's a serious amount of grit.

00:12:53:10 - 00:13:04:13 CAROLINE: Absolutely. So how technologically challenging would you say it is for artists to use your websites, given all of the integration and how this is put together?

00:13:04:15 - 00:13:24:12 PATRICK: I would say they're all about the same at the end of the day. Right? And by and large, again, a generalization, the majority of artists, and ironically enough, this is sort

of true. If the refers to it, you would think it'd be different because they're in Lightroom and having to use Photoshop and all that stuff. But not the most technologically advanced visual sort of the how it goes.

00:13:24:14 - 00:13:45:20 PATRICK: So with any cmss content management system, software or whatever you want to call it, there is a little bit of a learning curve and that's just how it's going to be. I think what sets ours apart and makes artists different is our software set up to do one thing and one thing only, to sell art and photography, to sell wall art and, you know, merchandise, some other items.

00:13:45:20 - 00:14:05:07 PATRICK: But the point is, it's not configured to say, you know, sell swim fins and ladies handbags and golf clubs and a million other things. So all the features are just narrow, focused to art, right? And the nuances of art, the various different sizes. And how do you display it and what is the order management look like. And, you know, all of those types of things.

00:14:05:07 - 00:14:25:15 PATRICK: And so I think that gives us an edge in terms of the others. But I think any any software product right now, there's always a little bit of a learning curve. There just is. And, you know, no one should sugarcoat that. You have to learn a little bit how to do it. The good news is, is that when you get stuck, do you have something to get you unstuck, right?

00:14:25:17 - 00:14:36:18 PATRICK: Do you not have to search a forum or open a ticket and hope you get an email, you know, 48 hours later or you know, hey, someone. Right. So I think that's how we solve for it all is when.

00:14:36:20 - 00:14:58:18 CAROLINE: I agree with you. And I notice that because a lot of artists and again, it depends on the artist, but are a lot of artists don't want to deal with the tech, they just want to do the hands on in the art realm. Yet if you get them talking about their art, they could talk to you for hours and not even see the time go by.

00:14:58:20 - 00:15:23:04 CAROLINE: So I think that the fact that all of the elements of constructing and maintaining and promoting your art website are covered from the perspective of an artist, and talking to an artist from an art perspective pulls in at least that much element of interest, where the the customer is becoming interested because they're seeing it through the lens of directly.

00:15:23:04 - 00:15:28:19 CAROLINE: This is how it's going to help you with your art. Not just any art, but your art.

00:15:28:21 - 00:15:30:06 PATRICK: Yeah.

00:15:30:08 - 00:15:36:16 CAROLINE: Now, is there anyone that you would not recommend have an art storefront website?

00:15:36:18 - 00:16:02:21 PATRICK: Yeah, I think if if you're just wanting to test the waters and you don't really want to have that business, then stick with the social media site, right. But if you're like, I'm going to do this, I'm going to build a business. I have a dream to either have some side income or, you

know, have some healthy side income or potentially replace a job or have the business that's up and running and humming for me when I retire or any of those things in between.

00:16:02:23 - 00:16:29:00 PATRICK: And you're willing to make a commitment, not like, and there's a reason that we don't have free trials, because what we found, what we found is like, ultimately where you aim your wallet is where you aim your heart. Right. And it's it's, you know, I use the gym membership. It's sort of like if you have a gym membership that's like \$6 a month, if you don't go for the entire month, you don't care, right?

00:16:29:02 - 00:16:46:11 PATRICK: But how much money did you just that do you think that you're not going to work this thing hard, right. And like be completely committed to it? You are, because where you aim your wallet is where you in your heart. And so you're going to have that motivation. So I think. If it's not serious and you don't really need a business, there's other alternatives.

00:16:46:11 - 00:16:52:21 PATRICK: If you want to take it seriously and you're in it for the long haul, then I think we're a great solution.

00:16:52:23 - 00:17:23:00 CAROLINE: I agree with that. And, I can definitely see that whole skin in the game analogy, because I've seen that with students too. I've given away, my online courses, to certain people who are in, say, my physical class and I'll say, you know, do you want to try the masterclass? And without having that investment on their end, that reminds them maybe it hurts a little bit, but even if it's affordable, it reminds them that they have an investment in there on some level.

00:17:23:02 - 00:17:24:07 PATRICK: Yeah.00:17:24:08 - 00:17:38:00 CAROLINE: So would you recommend artists wait until they have a collection of cohesive work together, or just jump in where they're at if they're serious enough to begin with? An Art storefronts website.

00:17:38:02 - 00:18:08:08 PATRICK: I here's what I would say. And I don't want anyone to take this cynically, so I don't care if they sign up with our storefronts or not. Do not wait. Get going. You know, if you just have one piece, okay, one piece is enough, right? Because what what everyone does is they they're like, all just get started and when and then you insert when I get a business license, when I know what my niche is, when I have ten pieces, when, when I get my logo done or this or that.

00:18:08:08 - 00:18:29:23 PATRICK: And what ends up happening is the days turn into weeks, turn into months, turn into years. How is that art business coming? Right? You've got to get started right away, because there's nothing ultimately more important than the feedback you're going to get from showing that art off and ideally making a transaction. So whether you sign up with us or sign up with someone else, you do not wait right?

00:18:30:00 - 00:18:43:21 PATRICK: The guy that, started LinkedIn has this amazing quote, and his name is Reed Hoffman, and he is his line is if you're not embarrassed by your first version, you've launched too late.

00:18:43:23 - 00:18:44:20 CAROLINE: Amen.

00:18:44:22 - 00:18:45:24 PATRICK: So good.

00:18:46:01 - 00:19:21:03 CAROLINE: I completely agree with that. And and I confess that I put off calling and looking into this for a while because of that. And I had a bunch of paintings, but they were commission based. So they were they were figurative or portrait, but they weren't one body of work. And I finally thought, well, now I'm directed. And I found that having that peace of having the security, of knowing that the website I was creating was correct for the back end of selling the work, and all I had to do was worry about creating.

00:19:21:05 - 00:19:43:03 CAROLINE: I was surprised that it gave me an incredible freedom because I thought, now my job is to go to my studio and make something, and it's been incredible. I come home from my job during the week, even in the evenings, I spend all weekend painting, and I'll spend 4 or 5 hours in the evening painting because that has become thanks to art store fronts.

00:19:43:03 - 00:19:53:17 CAROLINE: That's now my job where I am. I'm free to paint, and I need to create my work so that I can then have that work to post. Because now I have somewhere to put it that's going to move the needle.

00:19:53:19 - 00:20:18:12 PATRICK: Yeah, 100%. And really don't take it cynically. It's like you have to you just have to get going. You have to get going. You know, it's it. I, I go back to the restaurant analogy. I like two sets of analogies. It's either like restaurant food related or fishing, and I'm sure I'll get a fishing one in. But you, I've always wanted to own a restaurant, and I've always wanted to own a restaurant.

00:20:18:15 - 00:20:43:17 PATRICK: Okay. And we take radically different approaches. Me okay, I overthink everything. So I start working on a business plan, and then I take the business plan down to the bank, and I get a loan and I find a spot, and I get the spot all dialed in, and I design the menus and get the graphic designer and get the logo and the signage and the silverware and the menus and the pay check out.

00:20:43:17 - 00:21:08:11 PATRICK: Everything's dialed in, the bartender, everything. I open my doors, people come in, they try it once and then they don't come back again because my food wasn't good enough. The particular line of the food that I had okay was not good. You, on the other hand, you literally went to Costco, got a rolling cart, pushed it right into an office building with your tacos and put up a stand and said, CAROLINE's tacos.

00:21:08:13 - 00:21:27:00 PATRICK: And you know what? Your food wasn't good either. But you know what? You did? Don't worry. I cooked more than just tacos. Then you took the cart back. The next weekend, you showed up at the same office building with your burgers, and this time everyone is like the lines around the door. Then you go and start the restaurant and you know, and you figured all of that out in a much shorter period of time than I did.

00:21:27:00 - 00:21:49:01 PATRICK: Right? So you, you ultimately what you're creating now, what you're passionate about might not sell. It's not a death knell. That's what happens in this business. You have to have a product. The market wants it. It might not be what you love to create, to create right.

That creatively inspires you, but you're not going to know what resonates and what works until you get in front of eyeballs.

00:21:49:03 - 00:21:51:02 PATRICK: So you can't wait. You got to go.

00:21:51:04 - 00:22:05:10 CAROLINE: So that speaks to my next question, which is, do you have input on how artists should be thinking in terms of determining what's likely to sell with regard to medium subject matter?

00:22:05:12 - 00:22:29:10 PATRICK: I've learned that you can't get courses in this business. You cannot pick courses like you'll see CAROLINE, there, like there are people on this platform that I look at and I'm like, how did you even create that with the paintbrush? It is so good. It's unbelievable. Okay. And there are people. I'm not doing any names. Okay. I studied minored photography in college that I feel like takes snapshots.

00:22:29:10 - 00:22:52:00 PATRICK: I don't even understand composer. And they have huge healthy businesses. There's no rhyme or reason to it. And that and what that lessons taught me over the years is that art sales are 5050. Everyone thinks art sales are just a meritocracy. On the quality of the art. They're not. They're a meritocracy on the quality of the art and the character of the artists.

00:22:52:02 - 00:23:13:22 PATRICK: Who is CAROLINE? What does she do? What her earn interests? What is her day job? Is she a cat lady? Is she a dog person? She doesn't like pets, you know. Does she drink? Is she a teetotaler? Do you paddle kayaks? We get bonded to the artist based on shared mutual whatever it is in that deepens the relationship and ultimately drives the sales of the art.

00:23:13:24 - 00:23:32:04 PATRICK: And so there are some things that you can do. Okay. But but thinking that you're going to like, just pick a thing that's selling and that's going to work out, I find usually doesn't work. You just do you. And it's literally a game of archery, especially early on. It all comes down to is how many arrows you fired.

00:23:32:10 - 00:23:54:07 PATRICK: That's it. You're going to miss the target. Sometimes it's going to fly over the target into the neighbor's yard. Sometimes it'll barely be on the target, and you won't know until you just start doing it. That being said, everybody just creates what they love and what inspires them, and then they take the product to market. What nobody does is completely in the equation.

00:23:54:09 - 00:24:19:05 PATRICK: What all artisan photographers do, they create what they love and they're like, let me go see if there's an audience. Okay, well, how would we invert that equation? Start with an audience and then go and create work for them. Find a group that is insanely passionate about something. Right. You know, there's Facebook groups on it. There's community meetings, there's a TV show based on it, there's clubs, whatever it is, and go, these people are diehard.

00:24:19:05 - 00:24:27:13 PATRICK: I'm going to go create something for them. That is a very smart way to approach it. But that's also, you know, so counter intuitive. Most people don't write well.

00:24:27:13 - 00:24:53:04 CAROLINE: I think that if you marry those two things together and you don't abandon what you love because I always tell my listeners, if you completely depart from what you love to create, because you think that you need to go and create something that salable, but it doesn't resonate with you, you're going to be stuck. So if you take something you love and then you go ahead into the marketing piece and say, where do those people exist?

00:24:53:04 - 00:25:03:16 CAROLINE: I love Pre-Raphaelite work, okay, where are people looking at that? And then you go for it and you can connect those two dots, your golden, you're golden.

00:25:03:18 - 00:25:20:15 PATRICK: And in, in no one's saying that you have to like, you know, sell out. Right. Like in the, in the old band terminology, like you got a record deal, you sold out, you're still going to do you right and you're still going to do it. Your style, your spin. But some of the greatest discoveries ever in all of art had been like, whoa, this is what the people are really resonating on.

00:25:20:18 - 00:25:37:00 PATRICK: And a lot of times it's not what you think it's going to be. Right? So I find more often it's it's not about not doing you or not doing what you love, but it's about doing something that has demand and your style that you love doing. I mean, I think that's the the middle of the road way to answer.

00:25:37:02 - 00:25:55:15 CAROLINE: Yeah, definitely. Now, how consistent should artists be in the work they post in that? For instance, would you recommend that they keep work segregated on the site by medium or by subject? Or does your site allow for filters where they can have both?

00:25:55:17 - 00:26:19:14 PATRICK: Yeah. Great question. And there's not there's not an easy way to answer this in the sense that there is some rigid playbook that works for everybody. I have been so blown away over these past ten years of how people do things differently, and it totally works and works really, really well for them. There are certain rules, marketing rules that apply to give you one.

00:26:19:14 - 00:26:42:16 PATRICK: For instance, right when you hit the home page, it should be a grid of images, okay? It should be a grid of images. What most artists do is some sort of goofy slideshow, right? Or one image and in a bunch of different text. And the reason for that is no different than stores having really beautiful window displays, right?

00:26:42:22 - 00:27:08:21 PATRICK: And having a bunch of different stuff in the window displays. Your job as I'm walking by your storefront is just to get me to stop. Right? And so we've determined, based on analytics and data and everything else, that you should have a grid of images, whether you organize it by bestsellers, landscapes, portraiture, commissions, doesn't matter, as long as give your viewer enough visually interesting things that they can scan and go, ooh, I like that, and go in, right.

00:27:08:23 - 00:27:18:13 PATRICK: So there's there are rules that apply, but there's not one way that you have to do it, or one level of organization that's going to like fundamentally change the game.

00:27:18:15 - 00:27:36:00 CAROLINE: Okay. That's encouraging. I think it's encouraging. Yeah. So with from a marketing perspective, with the advent of story branding, you know, marketing is abuzz with

ideas about using storytelling in your art. Can you touch on how storytelling can be leveraged on an artist website?

00:27:36:02 - 00:28:00:11 PATRICK: Yeah. That's so insanely critical. I mean, the. Especially with the proliferation of social media and the fact that everyone has a camera with them 24 hours a day, right now, there are just so many images all over social media that that you're you're just drowning. It's it's like being a grain of sand at the beach. Like how much sand is there, right?

00:28:00:11 - 00:28:23:04 PATRICK: It doesn't get into people's attention because it's just everywhere. So the story is one of those things that utterly, totally and completely sets the work apart. And at a macro, you want to try to encourage it as much as you can. Everything from the inspiration story to the my process story. Right? And then it works. It works equally well for artists and photographers.

00:28:23:04 - 00:28:45:05 PATRICK: And, you know, I learned this lesson so profoundly because we have a landscape. But it's not a landscape. It's like a nature photographer. Okay. And a huge nature photographer. Like, oh, he's got over a million followers on Instagram. He's done, he's done a Planet Earth and the BBC and this and that. And the images are insane. He's one.

00:28:45:06 - 00:29:07:02 PATRICK: He's once the target for the year or whatever. They're images of birds. And it's like, if you're not interested in the birds, you're over it. And you just and you just go right by it, right? Well, he got sent out to shoot. And I can put a link to this if you guys want to see it. But his name's Tim Lehmann, and he got hired to shoot this place in the desert called the Annenberg, center.

00:29:07:02 - 00:29:24:14 PATRICK: It's like some ritzy thing in the desert. I go out to the desert all the time. I live in California, and they hired him to shoot the birds on on this golf course. And so the gig is, he goes out and he shoots all this stuff, goes back, processes it, and then comes back again to give the gala speech.

00:29:24:14 - 00:29:45:09 PATRICK: You know, everyone's dressed up to the nines and he, you know, on the TV, the whole thing, and he's telling the story about how he's getting up at five and he's having to hide on the golf course so he doesn't scare the birds. And the sprinklers are going over his head, and he sees this one bird. And he's also he's an unfair advantage, but he's an ornithologist.

00:29:45:09 - 00:30:01:23 PATRICK: He's got like his PhD from that camera. Where. But anyway, and so he knows, like, all the nesting habits. Right. And like it probably went out to feed and it usually likes to feed right around sunset. And it's going to be back at this time. And all of a sudden I'm like, oh my God, now I'm interested in bird photos, right?

00:30:01:23 - 00:30:23:11 PATRICK: And it was the story. It was the story that did it. So rather than worrying about where you insert it, insert it everywhere that you can right now, there's practical ways to do it on the website with a YouTube video where you explain it, you know there's going to be a video right next to the product itself that where you can explain it, but you should also be explaining it in social media posts.

00:30:23:17 - 00:30:44:05 PATRICK: You should be talking about it all the time. You should be talking about it on podcasts like the story is what we really connect to. You know what is really going to get your buyer on the hook, and it's going to hear that, and it's like it, it literally elevates. It's like the blade of grass, right? Or like the nail that sticks out gets hammered, like the story elevate you about everyone else who's not doing it.

00:30:44:07 - 00:30:57:10 PATRICK: And you're the one that gets seen and then they get connected to it. So insanely powerful, insanely important. Hard to do. Most don't do it. And if you do it, you already differentiated yourself so significantly. So huge advocate for.

00:30:57:12 - 00:31:18:06 CAROLINE: I'm glad to hear that. And that's a big one of mine that I'm it can get pretty addicting because if you think about how people create their art and how much it means to them, and that's what keeps them going most, I'm going to say most fine artists have that connection where there's something driving them and there's probably something behind each piece.

00:31:18:08 - 00:31:20:22 CAROLINE: And so I did to yeah.

00:31:20:24 - 00:31:30:23 PATRICK: I get the idea. In the shower, it struck me like lightning. I went out, I scout like, however you did it. I mean, all of them have stories, right? Oh, yeah.

00:31:31:00 - 00:31:56:19 CAROLINE: And I've, you know, I've had people say they can be really, people can get really worked up about, well, the art should speak for itself. And, and I know that people will also put their own spin on it. I had one guy standing next to me in a show where he was looking at a portrait of me self-portrait, because I didn't have the money for models at the time I was in college, and it was a pretty solid self portrait, and he looked right at it, and then he looked right at me and he said, let me tell you what this painting is about.

00:31:57:00 - 00:32:11:16 CAROLINE: That's my mother. And I'm like, okay, so but it's still it's still good to have that. I think that option. And so when I do that, I'll say, spoiler alert. If you don't want to know, don't watch this video.

00:32:11:18 - 00:32:16:19 PATRICK: Yes, yes. And if they and also if they already have a story, don't offer another one.

00:32:16:23 - 00:32:17:11 CAROLINE: Right.

00:32:17:13 - 00:32:20:02 PATRICK: Before another one because they're probably going to buy at that point.

00:32:20:04 - 00:32:39:07 CAROLINE: Yep. Yeah. So let's talk about promoting on social for just a minute. A lot of artists are on Instagram and many are on multiple platforms. Yeah. Which platforms and how many social media platforms? Do you have a recommendation on making these decisions for promoting one's art?

00:32:39:09 - 00:33:09:06 PATRICK: Yeah. How to respond. So, you know, when we buy something on Amazon, not buy something on Amazon, but you know, when we're going to contemplate buying something, we usually whether we buy it on Amazon or not, we'll go on and read the reviews. Instagram has become the review site for artists. So if I'm out and about and I you're your works hanging in a restaurant and I see it and I see the blackbird, or someone tells me they saw you, or better still, I'm at a cocktail party and I go to somebody's house and your works hanging on the wall.

00:33:09:08 - 00:33:38:08 PATRICK: How I'm going to go find out information about you thirst is on Instagram and instantaneously no different than the Amazon reviews. You have to pass the credit check and the credit check is is there a clean avatar? Is there a good profile description? Are there a decent amount of posts? Are there a decent amount of followers it in in the world that we live in, it's become the signal, you know, and the it's interesting because there's two major reports that come out a year.

00:33:38:10 - 00:34:07:09 PATRICK: One is by this insurance agency out of London called the Hiscox Group, and they call it the Art Market Report. People can look at these and download them. And then another one is put out by Art Basel. And some financial firm, Kane Weber, UBS, UBS global I think anyway, beside the one they interview all the art buyers at the very, very high end of the market, meaning, you know, the the stuff that sold at Sotheby's, you know, hundreds of thousands of dollars pieces to several million.

00:34:07:11 - 00:34:30:17 PATRICK: And I've watched because they survey the readers Instagram growing prominence, even to those folks, every single solitary year. Like even even the high end of the market is they're the low end of the market. Is there? The middle end of the market is there. So Instagram is absolutely the most important thing. That being said, Facebook is still really important because Facebook skews significantly older, where Instagram skews significantly younger.

00:34:30:24 - 00:34:56:04 PATRICK: And when you look at who buys art, it's people that have money, right? And the older folks on Facebook have money. So Facebook is very important. I would say that those two are the most important currently. But in marketing, nothing is more powerful than omnichannel marketing. Right. And how many channels you can market in, in an omni fashion comes down to how many you have, right?

00:34:56:10 - 00:35:22:15 PATRICK: So you can add X or Twitter to that list, because it's really been growing in prominence since Elon bought it. And if you get past all the, the, this politics, that of politics nonsense, you have to just go where the attention are you? The attention is right. So that that platform's kind of growing prominence right now. But I would say Facebook and Instagram with the the two primary, I don't see anyone that's on Pinterest that gets a ton of action out of it.

00:35:22:16 - 00:35:37:16 PATRICK: I hear some good things here and there about LinkedIn, but by and large, you know, because we have the data on everything, we don't see a ton of commerce going down with LinkedIn in the footprint. So I would really say you focus on the two and you're and you're going to be in a good spot.

00:35:37:18 - 00:36:15:04 CAROLINE: And then I know we're talking about demographics of people who tend to buy. Yeah. But I just listen this morning to a webinar on the benefits of advertising or having a, excuse me, having a social media presence on TikTok. And even if your demographic is, say, in the 30s and 40s and it had some really interesting material. But do you see right now the benefits when you're looking to not just speak artist to artist, but to attract the buyer, which is a different avatar than you're you're addressing a different avatar than another artist.

00:36:15:04 - 00:36:16:11 PATRICK: I would I would say.

00:36:16:13 - 00:36:18:01 CAROLINE: And Snapchat as well.

00:36:18:03 - 00:36:42:00 PATRICK: Yeah. Tik Tok is is at the end of the day, it's I told you I would get my fishing analogy. At the end of the day, we have to be contrarian as marketers, about where the fish are. Okay? And so, you know, you and I are you and I are both fishermen. We both wake up 5 a.m., 4 a.m., and we drive down to the dock, and we get into our boats and we steam out to where the fish are right.

00:36:42:05 - 00:37:00:19 PATRICK: So you have to be fishing where the fish are. Tik Tok has a massive amount of attention. It just does. Now it's held up in some regulatory things right now about divesting and everything else in Congress. That makes me a little scared about it. It's kind of a charged thing, but it has a ton of attention, right?

00:37:00:21 - 00:37:22:17 PATRICK: So do the do the demographics skew significantly lower on TikTok? Yes, absolutely. But is there a ton of attention there? Yes, it is. And am I okay with my customers marketing on TikTok and maybe getting the attention of buyers that aren't going to buy today, but are going to buy in five years or six years when they move out of their parents house, when they get done with college.

00:37:22:17 - 00:37:49:15 PATRICK: Absolutely. I am, absolutely I am, and it also, you know, it depends on what your demo is too, right? Like, you know, if if you're you're attracting the attention of younger buyers, then that's very important. I interviewed a gal that's on the platform recently. You got to watch this interview. It's actually really good. And she's a junior at Florida State, and she's doing extremely well in the volume of stuff that she sells.

00:37:49:17 - 00:38:10:14 PATRICK: And her demographic are tweens. So like young girl, she like a lot of pink. But I like pastel stuff. And what's weird about that is they're not the ones with the credit cards. Right? But she's getting their attention on tick Tock. She's getting their attention on Instagram. Somehow the parents are seeing it in. The parents are buying. Right.

00:38:10:14 - 00:38:30:07 PATRICK: So for her, it's like extremely important. But you have to take you have to take it all into into into context. And I would say, you know, take care of Instagram first. Secondly, I would get on the Facebook again because, you know, all it takes is one person to buy a couple of originals and it's like, okay, that was way worth it, right?

00:38:30:11 - 00:38:46:18 PATRICK: That was way worth it. What I was doing. And then and then you can explore TikTok. And I think TikTok is a great, you know, third place platform, perhaps even more so than, formerly Twitter. Now it's just based on the platform is more set up and geared for commerce.

00:38:46:20 - 00:38:47:22 CAROLINE: Thank you.

00:38:47:24 - 00:38:48:16 PATRICK: Yeah.

00:38:48:18 - 00:39:19:12 CAROLINE: So, thank you so much for your time today. And I really appreciate that you've come on and shared this wealth of information. It's a lot to digest, especially if you're an artist who's been on the fence about a website or felt really intimidated by the idea of taking it on. So as we wrap up, I would love for you to just close out the show with your recommendation on the listeners who are hearing this and thinking, okay, maybe it's time to move forward.

00:39:19:14 - 00:39:26:16 CAROLINE: Where should they start? Maybe can you give them a few baby steps to get their toe in the water and start moving in the right direction?

00:39:26:18 - 00:39:48:00 PATRICK: Yeah, baby. Step number one get your art in front of strangers and see whether or not you can sell it. Just do it. So just to clarify, that means art sales to people, not name mom, dad, brother, sister, family friend because they'll do anything to you. They'll love you and support you. Right? There are really intelligent ways that you can do this on the IT cheap.

00:39:48:03 - 00:40:18:03 PATRICK: Okay. Depending on where you live. Like I love the I'm having a garage sale and I will have some things from my garage that I'm selling, but my art will be all over the yard, right? Great way to have some conversations with strangers and see whether or not the art will sell. You know, once you're once you're ready to get going on a website, though, we have a wealth of information we give a podcast, you can always come check us out and, you have show notes, so we can we can throw a link in the show notes and they can check us out for the podcast that we have is a is a

00:40:18:03 - 00:40:25:02 PATRICK: it's all about marketing and how to grow an art business. And so also a great resource. And your podcast too, CAROLINE. Right.

00:40:25:04 - 00:40:52:24 CAROLINE: That's right, that's right. And I will be putting all the show notes and all the links that we're discussing in the show notes for this episode, which happens to be episode 100. So thank you for tracing. Yes, it is my centennial episode and it's all about art storefronts, love. So thank you. Thank you for your time and I will be in touch with you when, this is ready to go and.

00:40:53:01 - 00:40:53:23 CAROLINE: Well, yes.

00:40:54:00 - 00:40:59:03 PATRICK: 100 is amazing. Thank you. You're not a quitter. That's that's a lot of episodes.

00:40:59:05 - 00:41:11:23 CAROLINE: No, I'm not a quitter. And I learned a lot last year about how little sleep I need and and how much I can actually accomplish. So this is the next step, and I'm really happy to be taking it with ArtStorefronts.

00:41:12:00 - 00:41:14:18 PATRICK: Amazing. Can't wait to see what you do.