

Seminar 9: Building Partnerships with Galleries

Transcript

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Hi, everybody. Hope you're doing well. My name is Viktoria, and I'm the founder of Victory Art, and I would love to welcome you to another session of our art seminars which are focused on helping new talented artists deal with different challenges on the art market. Today we have an extremely interesting and exciting topic which is going to help you with making sure that you will be able to represent yourself properly on the art market, and this will create strong partnerships with art galleries.

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This topic is an extremely personal, for example, for me as well because we at Victory Art are constantly putting up with different artists. It's kind of interesting for me to talk about and help you understand better how we are operating in Victory Art.

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So very briefly, we are Victory Art, and our goal is to break stereotypes and build new perspectives.

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First, I would love to ask you to please be mindful when others are speaking. If you have any questions, you can always put them in the comments and chat, and you can also email our gorgeous curator at curator@victoryart.eu to help you answer any questions. Have an amazing time, and I would love to as well say that these seminars are organised by Norway funds and supported by Norway funds. So please go and check their website and see what they can offer for you as an artist.

[01:44]

My name is Victoria Pikovska and I'm the founder and CEO of Victory Art. I used to be a photographer now I'm a full time CEO and I just I'm very passionate about helping artists from Central and Eastern Europe and showing the world how talented they are. My main goal is to change the way everything works in Eastern Europe in terms of the art market.

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So today we're going to talk about building partnerships with galleries. As I already mentioned, this is an extremely personal topic for the whole Victory Art team because we're working with hundreds of artists. Hundreds of artists come to us to share their portfolios as well as everything they're currently working on. I have to personally say that sometimes it's extremely successful and sometimes it's less successful. So, we are here right now to help you artists to really be your best version.

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Today, we're going to focus on storytelling on social media, what you should and shouldn't when approaching galleries, and how to find a gallery that suits you best as an artist. I would like to mention that these seminars are coming from our own experience of being on the art market for more than 10 years. So, this might work for a majority of artists. However, if you're having some specific style or a specific kind of art you're working on, it might be different.

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So, firstly, I would love to start with storytelling and with storytelling and social media.

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Storytelling is an extremely important part of your art journey because if you are not able to tell people what your art is about, why you're special, what your artworks are about, no one is going to buy it. You're one of the millions of artists on the art market, and if your artwork costs €1000 or €2000, your clients will always wonder what makes this artist special.

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It's different from others. However, what can I personally feel from this art piece. Is it a different or exciting art piece? You know, it's very much depends on the story behind why you created the artwork. Some of you might be passionate about sustainability. Actually, right now I'm wearing Victory Art merchandise and this artwork would use on this hoodie is inspired by sustainable art. So, this artist creates everything from scratch.

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She uses sustainable materials, and this is a very attractive story for people. They wonder why she started using sustainable materials. So, as an artist you have to differentiate yourself.

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So, think about what you want to tell people and why you're different, what's your story? Maybe you're coming from a third world country, or maybe you come from a tough social background, or maybe you are struggling and you can even share your struggles. In general, when you're on social media, the most important thing is to be authentic.

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If you want to know a little bit more about social media and promotion, I would strongly encourage you to actually check our seminar from last week on our website – victoryart.eu. My colleagues covered the topic about social media, and everything connected to this. So definitely check it out.

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We are going more into depth about this topic. Storytelling is about creating a connection between you and other people. As I already mentioned, it's a lot about being authentic. It's as well about you being different. It's about you finding this connection with your clients.

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I don't know how comfortable you are with sharing your personal experiences on social media, and I'm not saying that you have to necessarily share everything. But rather show the reason behind why you create. Allow your listeners/followers to really envision their story, help them to see our story. Those are all strong selling points for them. So social media is not only about necessarily selling and creating a marketing campaign, but it also allows you to really display your artworks. And this allows you to share with your audience what they cannot understand.

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So it often happens to me that artists come to me and they tell me "Oh Viki, I feel like my audience does not understand me". Well, this is not unique and is actually a very common thing. I need you as an artist to understand that you need to provide your clients with more information. A few months ago, we had a client who purchased an artwork he loved.

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After the purchase, he spoke to the artist, and he was like “I love the artwork. I love the artist. I don't like story behind the artwork because I found out that it was about female periods”. The client was a male so of course he did not connect to the artwork, and he did not know it because the artist did not communicate it to us. The artist did not communicate through our website. The artist did not communicate it on her social media. There was nothing being nice about it.

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However, he kept the artwork. He liked it. He was satisfied, but this was something he did not enjoy. So I want you to really understand that this is an important thing. You can either sell your artwork to someone who will really appreciate it, or you risk losing the sale due to lack of communication.

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It happens very often with our clients that they need a lot of information. Our clients interact with me at least 30 times before purchasing an artwork, and this process can take up to 2 years. This is very important information that many artists don't seem to understand.

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So think about this because this can change a lot in your presentation and can help you gain a lot of clients. Storytelling is about emotions, so it should not be robotic. No, it's about emotion. It's about action. It's about bringing value to those people and help them to understand more widely who you are, what your art is about.

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Make it engaging. I would really suggest utilizing your social media, it is the most powerful and effective tool you have to bring people closer to you. It helps your clients understand you and your art. You can bring them into your studio and show them how you work. You don't have to show them all your tricks, but show them something.

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Bring them closer and connect them to your process of creation. These are very strong tips. There are different social media platforms, but that was already discussed last week. If you missed it, please go to our website to seminars section and you can check it there. However, Facebook has different layers so you can either use stories, Facebook and Instagram Stories are now connected. The same Facebook Instagram posts are connected.

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However, Facebook is also starting podcasts, and Marketplace. That's kind of similar to Instagram as well, however, people on Facebook are more open to reading. They're more open to longer content, so you can even post your blog there. When people go to Instagram, they're just looking for visual stimulation.

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So think about your way of storytelling. Is it through photographs, videos, blog? How exactly do you want to do it? Based on that, choose the right channel to go through. Instagram, as I already mentioned, is more visual. Think about your feed and think about what you want to present. Is it only your artworks or artworks on the wall – as you can see here.

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Or maybe you want to share a video of you painting or in the studio? You know, there are so many things, so really think about it. Twitter is all about shorter content and giving your opinion. You can take it as an extremely blog format. To be honest, I think Twitter can be interesting for people who want to engage in the content, which is you talking about art.

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So, let's take Elon Musk – who is very active on Twitter. Elon Musk is one of the richest men in the world. He was looking for artists for his new Tesla factory, which opened in Berlin like twelve years ago. So, if you're if you're active on Twitter, you can get these kinds opportunities. He literally had a call to action for artists on his Twitter. For YouTube, the algorithm is there a little bit tougher, but this might be already too technical.

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So I'm trying to just keep it very simple for you if you want to do longer videos. If you want to do like vlogging or teach other artists how to use specific techniques that can be place for you, but really just define it because this requires a lot of investment, not only financial, but mainly time. So really, think about what's the best for you. On YouTube you can very easily get demonetized.

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With YouTube, it's pretty tough to grow nowadays. So really think what's the best social media for you. So, this is as well a little bit repeating what we already discussed in the previous seminars, but it's a key thing so we're going to mention it again – you have to know your audience. Who is your audience, what do they want to see, what value you can bring them? Very, very key thing. Based off this information you can clearly develop a way to tell your story.

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Think about what would you really want to present about your art? Look at yourself and your social media from a business perspective and examine your long-term goals. Write as a writer. This might be challenging for some of you, however, try to sit down and basically create a unique and engaging story. Even if you're not able to do it, you can hire someone on Viber for like €10 to create an engaging story for you. Based on that, you can reuse that and adjust it from time to time.

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However, bring value to people who are watching you. So just make your story meaningful and try to leverage the social media as much as possible. I'm not saying that you have to be non-stop on social media, but you can use many scheduling tools to help you. You can use analytics in order to see who is actually watching you, and if the people who are watching are not your target group then you should change something.

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In general, if you are struggling with something as an artist, Victory Art will be offering from January 1st onwards consultancy services which are sponsored by Norway funds. We would love to see you there. You can already start signing up, just email our curator at curator@victoryart.eu to book your consultancy space. We have limited space, so if you are really interested in this please do it as soon as possible otherwise we cannot guarantee anything.

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Last thing I'm going to mention about social media is to leverage the archetypes of social media storytelling. OK, so give people spoilers, something original, and something that represents you and so

they can connect to you. At the same time, I recommend you keep it still simple because if people see complicated language, then they feel like they cannot engage with the person properly. So just try to keep it simple. Now we're getting to the most important part of today's presentation, and it's about partnerships and how to get into galleries.

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This is a forever struggle for many artists, and that's how to get into a gallery as an emerging artist who doesn't have experiences, any awards, or maybe school. It's pretty tough. I'm going to be honest. You just cannot show up in a gallery unannounced, uninvited and think that they will just look at your portfolio at the same time. Don't send out random emails to different galleries in hopes they're going to help you.

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Please don't do that. At Victory Art we very often receive portfolios from African, Asian, and American artists. We don't even respond to those emails because it's obvious that those people did not check our websites because if they did, they would see that we only focus on Eastern European artists. So for us that's a big no. The best thing you can do for yourself is to research about the gallery you want to work with.

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Is it a good match? How do they work? Does it match your level of experience? You know, galleries usually work for themselves. So, some person might not like your style and some people will love your style. So, I would definitely suggest you to be humble. To think about whether you match the vision of a gallery. So please really do proper research because if you see the gallery strongly focuses on realism and you're an abstract artist, why would you even approach them?

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Because it does not match their portfolio. They will not be interested. And you might hear another no, and you will feel discouraged. Don't do that. Develop a partnership with the galleries. So what I would suggest for you is to go to a gallery, start talking to curators, managers and really try to find out a lot about that gallery. Sign up to newsletters, spend time on their social media, websites, they will notice the effort you put into knowing them.

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I would also suggest you really understand their policies and how they work. Some galleries are open about this, others aren't. For the ones who are, use that information for your research so you can understand how a contract might look with this gallery. Some say no, but you can always ask.

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Prepare a proper and current portfolio because they will not look through a 30-page portfolio showcasing all your years of work and experience. Do your research and prepare a proper and specific portfolio catering to every gallery you apply to. Writing a cover letter is also very helpful, there you can express why you want to work with them and share your story. I personally like when artists share their pricing. What I don't like is when people over price. A few times we've had artists price themselves insanely high because they took part in art fairs which doesn't necessarily mean you're successful. If you are an artist with a high price range and you submit to a gallery without a proven track record it becomes quite complicated and can close opportunities for you.

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So, firstly portfolio, and if you're able to find Terms and Conditions before do that, and definitely give a lot of information. If you struggle to find out about the Terms and Conditions don't hesitate to reach

out to the galleries and ask. Really explore why you want to work with the gallery and why they should work with you because many artists think they're special and think that's enough, but there are many people fighting for the same thing who do the same thing so really understand and explore your own brand.

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If you're concerned about the gallery commission taking something from you, don't be. In general, owning a gallery is a very expensive endeavour, art fairs are even more expensive. So, think about the commission as a cost for them representing, marketing and helping you. Selling art is not a simple thing to do, it can take half a year to 2 years for a client to purchase 1 artwork. So, through their connections the gallery can help you launch and build your career.

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I would also suggest you choose people you actually want to work with. Sadly, we had to part ways with many artists in the past few months because they did not value or truly understand the amount of work that goes on behind the scenes. So, if you do not understand the business behind it, it might be complicated for you to empathize with people from galleries. But, once you understand the complexity behind it, you work better with gallery owners, curators, etc.

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So, try to help those people promote you better. Be ready to talk about your work, share your photos and videos. We at Victory Art, prefer artists who send us professional pictures and videos because our clients want to see that. If artists send us low or bad quality images, we cannot use them. So, make sure to share professional images and videos so the gallery can properly represent you.

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Another thing that can help get into a gallery is for you to have your own audience before you reach the gallery. It happens often when creating partnerships with different companies that people ask about the follower count of artists. They really want evidence that people actually like you and your art.

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Well, if you have any questions please do not hesitate to ask right now or write in the chat. Next week we will continue talking about partnerships. We will talk about how to gain business clients and how to expose your work to larger audiences. We will also discuss the correct way to approach Art galleries for collections because that's a different thing.

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So, if you have any questions this is the perfect time to ask. If you don't or you would like to talk in person with our team you can always sign up for the consultancy sessions which will start next year. So, contact our curator at curator@victoryart.eu. So, if we don't have any questions, thank you so much for joining us and thank you to Norway Grants who support these seminars. I'm excited to see you again next week, have a great day.