

# Seminar 4: How to stay consistent and build your brand

Transcript

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Hi everybody, hope you're doing well. My name is Viktoria Pikovska and I'm the founder of Victory Art and today we're having another session of our amazing seminars which are here in order to help you artists progress further in your careers. I would love to mention that we're doing these seminars in collaboration with the Norway Fund, and you can go to our website, at [victoryart.eu](http://victoryart.eu) and you can check the whole page about seminars and get to know what the whole program for the upcoming weeks and you can find there, all the transcriptions and links to videos which you can use to check the previous sessions so you can access them whenever you need to.

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So today we're going to have an amazing discussion about consistency and staying in line with your brand. This is something what we personally at Victory Art love to see in artists however, sometimes we very much struggle to see it in artists. That's why this is one of the key topics for this seminar. One more time, very briefly about Victory Art, we're a team of art lovers who are here to break stereotypes about Eastern Europe and help build new perceptions. I would love to welcome you back, please be mindful of others who are speaking, at the same time keep your microphone off until we have questions and answers, Q&A. If you have any questions do not hesitate to put it directly in the chat or ask in the end. If you need something from our team or you have questions about seminars, you can always reach out to us at [curator@victoryart.eu](mailto:curator@victoryart.eu). So as I mentioned before, today we're going to talk about how to stay consistent and build your brand. We will discuss as well, how to create a consistent style, how to maintain consistency, and why consistency is actually important for you as an artist.

[02:27]

Consistency is actually a thing that helps you with your audience, it helps them really understand you. I would love to give an example of a chain franchise, which is worldwide, and everyone knows it, McDonalds. McDonalds is known for their yellow logo, which is connected to a red colour. This contrast is literally known for McDonalds, every single time you hear red and yellow you think of McDonalds. So this is an amazing example of branding and this is something you want to achieve as an artist. You want to achieve that when someone looks at your paintings, they will know exactly like let's say 'Josef' who is working on abstract art because they can see the signature.

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It is not about painting the same art over and over again, but it's about having a specific unique thing you regularly use which people can understand you and use to define and recognise your work. It can mean that maybe you're painting with the same message, or water colours, the vibe, presentation; it can be many different things what we're going to talk about. Nonetheless, there has to be a certain repeating element. So, if you don't have a brand and you're not consistent then your fan base or people who like your art cannot define you, your style, your art. This can lead to a very scary place for you such as confusion for the potential art buyers. We already discussed before that you as an artist should have a vision for yourself and for your career. It is important as well to have it for collectors, because if people will not understand your art, if they don't see a certain unique element which you're regularly using, then they don't feel like they should buy you, because they feel like you didn't develop yourself yet, you don't know who you are as an artist. They don't understand you because you don't understand yourself yet.

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So, when you think of your art, always ask yourself 'Why am I unique?' what connects all my art pieces, what should I focus on more?'. In general, it can be your brand can know what you want to say to people. It can be art pieces about, for example, mental illnesses. We have an artist who paints about mental illnesses. We have an artist who uses 24 Carat Gold. Another who uses only sustainable materials, we have an artist who has similarities with African pieces. We have an artist created their own style and own technique. So it's important that you know your message. What's the thing you want to tell people? What is in you? This will give you a much more professional tone In front of art lovers and collectors, and they will be interested to actually talk to you.

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About your audience. It is also important to understand and target them properly. For example, if you're an artist it does not mean you have to be liked by everyone because you will never be liked by everyone and not everybody will be your target audience or the one you want to connect with. However, it's crucial to really think about who you want to work with. Is it art collectors? Is it established or emerging collectors? Is it galleries or museums?

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Do research about your audience and create one audience and orient around them because in order to be successful you have to find your niche. You have to. Otherwise, you will never be able to communicate with people properly. At the same time your actions should align with your brand. This can be about different things, such as posting on social media, your vision, your slogan. In general, it's about representation of yourself.

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An extreme example is if you're using materials that are sustainable or environmentally friendly and you try to brand yourself as such. It is then very important to never post content connected to companies who produce gas for cars. This might be a little extreme, but I want you to understand what it really means. If me as an artists want to show that I support the environment and support nature, then I'm not going to support at the same time someone who is harming mother nature. These are the actions that have to align with your brand. If you're doing things opposite your public beliefs people will not understand or support you. Please think about these things because they are the important things which many artists don't understand, but it's an important thing the public will pay attention to. We can have a look as well on big companies.

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Take Banksy as another example. Majority of you will know who Banksy is. He is a perfect example of a consistent artist. He has a certain style and technique. He is unique in the way he creates his art pieces in the sense that he changes what he does, where he does it, and how he does it. This is his branding. People know never to expect the same thing from him and don't know where he will appear next. He is inconsistently consistent, and this is what people know him for and this became his consistency. This is very interesting to think about because you can be very consistent in your inconsistency and this can be your brand. So, it doesn't necessarily matter what you choose rather the form your present your brand through.

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Another thing is the interaction you have with the people you work with it doesn't matter whether it's companies, big brands, galleries, museums, followers, etc. it should all be consistent. So, if your opinions, or the way you write or interact with people is not consistent people will not know if they can rely on you as an artist. For example, in our case we had to sadly cancel an exhibition with an artist because they were SO inconsistent, so we just gave up on the collaboration entirely. We saw the artists'

potential, but we could not rely on them or communicate consistently with them. We felt their presence on social media was all over the place and inconsistent. So, we ended the collaboration because we felt it wasn't going anywhere. So, you as an artist have the responsibility to maintain the interaction with the people you work with and with your own fans.

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If you do not show people the effort you put into things and that you value them, if you're inconsistent with this, people will not be interested in working with you.

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In terms of branding, maybe right now everything I'm saying to you may seem overwhelming and you might think you have to stick to one thing right now and you can't do anything else. This is not what I mean. You can adjust your brand a little bit. I'm not saying that you should go overboard, but, every single brand is developing. Even when you think about big brands like Nike or Apple, the development of their brand was pretty inconsistent in the beginning. Only now they are more and more consistent.

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I saw an amazing post on LinkedIn on the development of the Nike and Apple logo. They both went through massive developments of their brands. However, they stood consistent with one element. Let's take Apple, it's very well known for having the apple fruit as a logo and they always had this but once it was purple, another time a rainbow, another time it was blue, now it's a very simple grey with no shadow. So, they developed their brand, but were consistent in having that specific logo. So you as an artist can keep developing yourself, however there should be one element that keeps you consistent.

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As I mentioned before, some of our artists work with one colour, technique, or 24-CARAT gold. Some have a specific crazy vibe they use in their artworks which just works very well for them. So if we think about branding in general, it means to stay consistent with your branding guideline. I know I'm using this word 'consistency' too often today but it's literally about this, staying consistent with your language.

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For example, when we're thinking about branding guidelines for whatever brand, even adidas, it usually includes logo, font, main colours and specific examples of how you should use these things. You only have to do it this specific way. If you don't do it that way then you're not consistent with your brand. Even Victory Art at this point has 30-40 pages on our branding guideline. It is a pretty big document which tells everyone in our team how exactly they have to communicate properly with people we work with.

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Even if you feel like this could be beneficial for you as an artist, do it. If you feel like incorporating emoji's, it's fine just be consistent and own it. The best way you can build your brand is to create as much Art as possible whether it's painting, drawing, photography, music, and keep producing it. I'm not saying that you have to publish everything. Many things you can keep for yourself and people don't necessarily have to see it all. Just try to think about it and find the best thing that fits you because the thing you perceive as the thing that fits you today might not fit you in half a year. So, what you can do is start creating smaller paintings. If you're an artist, you can literally start doing small 4 x 4 inches art pieces. We have artists who do this because they want to paint every day, but they don't have time to paint massive artworks. Just go for it.

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You can wake up one hour earlier everyday and just really enjoy the silence before everybody else wakes up and life gets crazy and you have to go to work, or your children wake up. You can just challenge yourself, give yourself that extra hour and work on what you really love.

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When we're thinking about the other side, it's great to experiment. However, it's even better to really think about what you want to do as an artist and already start developing what you perceive as that great thing. If you feel like you really want to paint flowers, then you don't have to keep exploring paintings of animals or figurative paintings. You can directly focus on flowers if that's what you really feel is your passion, you don't have to keep trying everything in the beginning. It's much better to spend and invest hours in what you really want. I heard this nice quote saying that "you become a professional once you spend 10,000 hours doing it". So think about it as an artist.

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From my personal experience when I was a photographer, or now when I'm the CEO of a company I can say it's true. For me it's 10,000 hours for everything. Before it was 10,000 hours for perfecting my photography, I struggled a lot with my branding as well and I wish I had the knowledge I have now. Nowadays, being a CEO and running a team, branding a company, doing business development, it also requires 10,000 to become a professional at it. So, don't get discouraged.

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Even when you sometimes feel as though you're running out of inspiration, the best thing you can do is to relax or talk to other artists, or go have fun with your friends, or find inspiration in nature. There are many things you can do.

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As well, think about your art style. So, should it be crazy or funky, how should it make viewers feel when they look at your art? Should it inspire people or make them feel happy or sad? What do you want to tell people through your art? Majority of people don't know that. They just create for the sake of creating and this is definitely not bad, it's quite great. However, at some point when you really want to level up your art and make it much better, you have to ask yourself "Why do I want people to see my paintings?"

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Why should people look at them, what do I want to explain with it because nowadays contemporary art, majority of people do not understand it. Contemporary art is not very exciting for some people and for some rather annoying. This is because there are so many levels to it and people cannot understand just the physical form of art because there are many more perspectives to it. So, is this something you want to do or something more simple and aesthetically pleasing?

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Those are crucial things for your audience to really understand your work, and connect with you and feel like they really enjoy your art. An amazing thing is to work on a series or collection of art pieces at the same time. It's not about wanting to create a collection of water, flowers, or portrait, it's more about focusing on what you're doing.

[23:22]

Last week Tuesday, I had the chance to participate in an art seminar which took place in Rotterdam. I went there because it was focused on Art, Media, and Technology and the interaction of Art in the 21st

century. There was an artist who talked about his Art and I was very much astonished by him because his consistency and branding was about making people feel up to a certain point anger towards him. He created a series of beautiful paintings and wrote that people could only buy one work if you buy 3 other paintings, or if you're going to donate it, or purchase if you buy another 5 by a specific time.

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His way of talking to people made them feel kind of angry and cheated on almost. He even made a guide for random people to come to his studio and paint artworks for him and then he claimed ownership of their works. This is something that is not acceptable for majority of artists, but it just works so well for him and to be honest I've never seen an artist that would perceive his art like that.

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He was creating collection of artworks which he worked on for a year. His style was not having style and always making people feel kind of angry. I personally found it astonishing. So, think about what your unique style is. Maybe you're from a very unique country in the world and people don't understand your culture. This can be your advantage. You don't have to come from western Europe to become a successful artist, no. You can use your apparent disadvantage as an advantage.

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If you're still trying to look for your art, maybe your way of doing Art is to not have a style but always make people feel a specific way. Maybe you're fascinated by fire, you could make sculptures of fires or music remixes with fire or you could even paint or take pictures of fires, even drawings. That can be your topic/brand, to explore fire in a thousand different ways. So, it's not necessarily about what you're doing but how you're doing it.

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Creating consistency should be connected to something you feel passionate about because no matter what you choose, you will have to work very hard on it for a long period. It doesn't happen in a short amount of time, even for famous and successful artists. So, no matter what you choose, make sure you're passionate about it because unless you feel passionate for what you work on then you will not be able to put your heart into it and literally sell it to people.

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So, a collection is usually 10-20 paintings, sometimes artists do even more, doing 20 paintings is a pretty demanding process so make sure that you're able to enjoy it. That's the number one thing you should do in your art career, to work on something you love because when you love it your audience will really feel it, like they can trust you and that you're your authentic self. So if you try new things, don't be afraid to improve yourself and experiment, it's fine. In any case, you can always come back to your artwork and try to make it better according to your new improved style because you as an artist will always be developing and maybe that can be one of your topics. You can revisit your previous works and try make them even better than they were before. It's great to give yourself parameters and hold yourself accountable. For example, if you want to do 20 pieces in one year be accountable for that and really own it.

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We already discussed the consistent evolving, but at the same time it's good to also slow down and look at your progress and think about what you've achieved and make sure you're not going the complete opposite direction you intended. This is something you can do once a month, or once every 2 months. Sit down in your studio, in front of your pictures and art and think about what you're aiming for. Sometimes it can be very complicated to do it by yourself because of course you're an artist and you're

very much influenced by your emotions. So maybe you can ask a friend to help you but please choose something.

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You can create stunning pieces but if you don't know or understand your journey or destination, that can cause you a lot of trouble. Knowing what you want can save you a lot of time, hassle and disappointment. So make a decision and choose whether it is your unique style, technique, representation of your art. Maybe you want to be an artist who creates something then burns it down, that could be your thing. Maybe you want to take a picture of your work and put it on blockchain put an NFT and sell it there. But really, make a decision and commit to it. This is basically about staying consistent. If you sometimes feel like cheating on your style and exploring something else, go for it, do it. That does not necessarily mean, however, that this has to be presented to your fans or partners or collectors or galleries.

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I can already tell you though, that people usually don't like it. It's a big topic on the Art market, and I personally tell our artists to go and explore but usually galleries don't like it.

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Guys, I believe this was a very interesting topic and next week we're going to be talking about 'How to build a kickass portfolio'. I see that many artists struggle with this and are not really able to present themselves in a good way. So, this is something you need to think about. Now, there is time to have a Q & A, so if you have any questions please do not hesitate to speak up or write it in the chat, I can answer you.

[32:45]

In the meantime, I want to tell you not to forget to sign up for our free consultancy session which will be starting next year. We will be offering free sessions to artists interested in developing themselves even more. This is as well connected to our partnership with Norway Funds. If you need more information or would love to sign up, please contact our team at [curator@victoryart.eu](mailto:curator@victoryart.eu). If there are no other questions, I would love to thank you so much for joining us today I personally enjoyed it. Please let us know what you thought of today's seminar. You can contact us at [curator@victoryart.eu](mailto:curator@victoryart.eu), at the same time you will be able to find transcriptions of this seminar video and presentation on our website in a few days. Next week, we will be talking about portfolio so don't forget to join us. Well, thank you so much, and I would love to wish you a great day, bye.