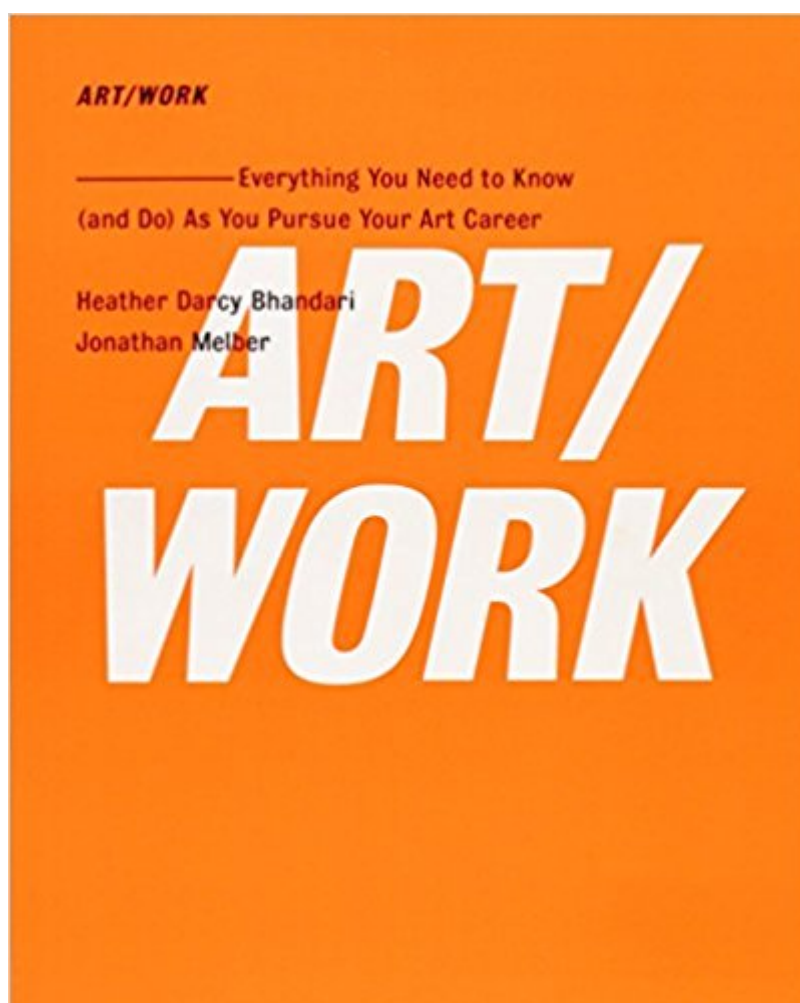


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# ART/WORK: Everything You Need To Know (and Do) As You Pursue Your Art Career



## Synopsis

**Find Out What They Didn't Teach You in Art School** The most comprehensive guide of its kind, *Art/Work* gives artists of every level the tools they need to make it in an art world so competitive one dealer likens it to "The Sopranos, except nobody gets killed." Whether you're an art school grad looking for a gallery, a mid-career artist managing a busy studio, or someone just thinking about becoming a professional artist, this indispensable resource will help you build your career and protect yourself along the way. Unlike other creative professionals, visual artists don't have agents or managers. You have to do it all yourself, at least until you find gallery representation -- and even then, there are important business and legal issues you need to understand to stay in control of your career and ensure you're being treated fairly. Heather Darcy Bhandari, a gallery director, and Jonathan Melber, an arts lawyer, walk you through these issues so that you can essentially act as your own manager and agent. They show you, for example, how to tackle business basics such as tracking inventory and preparing invoices; how to take legal precautions like registering a copyright and drafting consignment forms; how to use promotional tools like websites and business cards; and how to approach career decisions such as choosing the right venue to show your work. In addition to drawing on their own experiences, Bhandari and Melber interviewed nearly one hundred curators, dealers, and other arts professionals, in cities across the country, about what they expect from and look for in artists. The authors also talked to a host of artists about their careers and the lessons they've learned navigating the art world. The book is full of their entertaining anecdotes and candid advice. No matter what kind of artist you are -- or want to be -- this book will help you. *Art/Work* covers everything you need to know to succeed, saving you from having to learn it all the hard way -- and letting you spend more time making art.

## Book Information

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## Customer Reviews

"This book is a godsend...it should be required reading in fine arts curricula." -- Santa Fe New Mexican  
"I'll bet this powerful little paperback finds a permanent home on the list of best business books for artists.... The contract, invoice and inventory templates alone are worth the cover price." -- The Artist's Magazine  
"Together [the authors] make for a powerful combo, offering both extensive knowledge of the gallery system and the ins and outs of art law, for some well-founded tips on how to succeed in the art world...it's the perfect gift for anyone working in a creative field." -- CoolHunting.com  
"This book is filled with the kind of nuts-and-bolts business advice every artist needs to read." -- ArtBistro.com  
"Bhandari and Melber, both Brown University graduates, have drawn on their own experiences and interviews with 100 curators, dealers, and other arts professionals to offer advice on everything from preparing artwork for shipping to coping with rejection." -- Boston Globe  
"Emerging curators, along with established curators who work with living artists, would do well to read it, as would art dealers and workers at nonprofit spaces or organizations.... One unique aspect of the book is the quotes in the margin -- from high-profile artists and well-known professionals who've been around the block. Shamim Momin from the Whitney Museum and Peter Eleey of the Walker Art Center talk about how they meet new artists and visit their studios, and Seattle gallerist James Harris underscores the importance artists' websites have when he looks for new work to show." -- College Art Association News  
"...even those who have no interest in the art world may find Art/Work of use. Their instructions on how to pack objects for example, are so thorough, only the most dexterously challenged will find difficulty executing them. What's more, should this book reach the majority of working artists today, the quality of gallery staff life would improve by a level of magnitude..." -- Paddy Johnson for The L Magazine

Heather Darcy Bhandari is the Director of Exhibitions at Smack Mellon, a nonprofit exhibition and studio space program in Brooklyn, New York. Its mission is to nurture and support emerging, under-recognized mid-career, and women artists in the creation and exhibition of new work. She is also an independent curator, adjunct lecturer at Brown University, and a consultant to several for-profit and nonprofit arts institutions. Heather lectures and participates in portfolio reviews and panel discussions across the country. She is on the board of directors of visual arts at Art Omi

(an artist residency in Ghent, New York) and the advisory boards of artcity (an online, art-related publishing platform) and Trestle Gallery in Brooklyn. She was on the board of NURTUREart for nearly a decade. For the last fifteen years, she was a director of Mixed Greens gallery where she curated over one hundred exhibitions while managing a roster of nearly two-dozen emerging to mid-career artists. Heather received a BA from Brown University and an MFA from Pennsylvania State University. Her career began at contemporary galleries Sonnabend and Lehmann Maupin, both in New York City. Jonathan Melber began his career as an arts-and-entertainment lawyer in New York, representing artists, galleries, collectors and a host of creative individuals and companies. He eventually left his legal practice to join the art e-commerce startup 20x200 as head of business development, later moving to LA to run content acquisition business affairs at Hulu. Today, Jonathan handles monetization strategy and digital licensing for Turner Entertainment networks. Jonathan graduated from Brown University with a degree in philosophy and received his JD from New York University School of Law, where he was an editor of the Law Review.

The focus of this book is not the doing of art but the business of art. If an artist considers his or her output as more than a hobby then the business of art becomes critical. For most artists this means getting work placed in a commercial gallery, something that is not always taught in school. The content of this book, written from the perspective of a gallery owner, is therefore advice worth taking. The tips are pragmatic and based on experience. My only complaint is the design and layout of the book. This is not an aesthetic issue but one of readability. The layout seems to be based on the notion that contemporary readers have a short attention span and are always ready to jump to something new. It also seems to assume that the reader is young with perfect eyesight. Page layout is of two types. Most pages have the narrative text in a column toward the binding with a more narrow outer column made up of quotes from those in the gallery business. This use of the sidebar is a good way to add specific bits of information related to the general narrative. However, for me, this results in a visually cramped page. In addition, the condensed sans serif font is 9 points in the narrative column while the sidebar text is in 7.5 points. This last is just too small for me to read. The information is of real interest so I guess I will get a new prescription for my glasses. The second page design, scattered throughout, places one quote on the page using a large 17 point font. These quotes are no more informative than those in the sidebars. They also have very narrow page margins so that text rolls into the binding gutter. Minor quibbles? Not if the page design makes it difficult to read the book. Plus, a book about the pragmatics of art should be both artful and

functional in its own design.

The authors did a great job in providing insights and guidelines for the visual artist who wants to approach the business side of things. After conferring with a handful of MFA friends, they've said that some of these things are not significantly covered in grad school. I fully agree with several other reviewers about the graphics / layout of the entire book. The design choice (unnecessary bold type for the main text, huge margins with narrow sidebars and tiny font)... this all becomes a visual strain. Overall, this book is worthwhile. Hopefully, the authors will do an updated version at some point, and alter their design choices to make this a visually-smoother read. Beyond the usefulness of this book, part of what makes one successful in the art business world goes way beyond the practicalities --- part of it is your personality, your contacts, your willingness to jump through hoops (no matter how you feel), lucky timing, hard work, and your ability to schmooze. Most of the artists I know get their exhibits and from community endeavors, outreach, and just plain old hard work.

This book is a useful resource because of its simplicity. It's easy to flip back and forth to find templates for things like consignment agreements and the like. I would agree with another reviewer, however, that the book is biased having been written by young gallerists working in New York for only the past decade or so. It offers a picture of the way galleries on the East Coast function at the moment. This is evident in the many quotes along the margins by few artists but more often gallery owners. I found some of these comments to reveal a disparaging - even snotty - tone about working with artists, despite the fact that artists are the people who create the work keeping them in business. It is helpful to know that these attitudes exist because you may have to face them in your career. Look for other more encouraging resources in addition to this book. I recently picked up "How to Survive and Prosper as an Artist: Selling Yourself Without Selling Out." In tone, this is a much more empowering book and it has a great many more resources contained within its pages and appendices. The author, Carol Michels has been working with artists throughout the country (not just in the distorted East Coast art scene) since the 1970s. The book has been through several editions and has clearly been updated and expanded to reflect the changes to the art world. In that sense, a greater depth and breadth of experience is brought to bear on the topic. How to Survive and Prosper as an Artist: Selling Yourself Without Selling Your Soul

If you're buying this for a class, drop the class and just buy this book instead! I recommend this book to EVERY person that wants to make a career out of their art. It's thorough and full of fantastic

and helpful information. The quotes in the side are often good food for thought as well.

This book is helpful but also seems like all of this info online now. Great purchase for art school students

I was lucky to be a student of Heather's back in 2012, and we used this excellent book in her class. I went back to my parents' house during a work holiday earlier this year and randomly found it (I don't work in a field even remotely related to art). After skimming through it I was struck how its lessons are highly practical for many other fields, self-employed or not. However, if your interests lie in beginning a career in the visual arts, collecting, or sales, this book is an absolute must-have.

This is a book that I highly recommend if you are just starting out in the art world. I used this book along with "The Artist's Guide to Grant Writing..." which if you buy this book buy them both because they lend support to each other. Good luck.

Really useful guide to the art/gallery world. I come from more of a performing arts background so this book has helped me understand things with more perspective. Also just good for getting yourself organized/presentable and teaching you how to run your artistic practice. It's provided me with some needed guidance in what can often be an overwhelming and seemingly disorganized field.

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