



Create Your Sustainable Art Career

The nine elements you won't want to ignore if you want a sustainable art career

For the Curatorial Collective at RMIT University

What is A Sustainable Art Career?

A Sustainable Art Career is one that provides you
with the ability to:

- make the work you are called to make,
- make a living,
- run your career in alignment with your vision and
- achieve your goals.

In the class we covered 9 elements to a sustainable art career.
Use this checklist to consider which ones you have in place, which
can be improved upon and which are missing.

Incremental progress is OK.
If you can take action on one thing, then you have done the
hardest thing, which is to start.

A hand is shown using a grey roller to smooth out a keyboard. The keyboard is white and the background is a blurred office setting.

SUMMARY

1. *Make your work a priority - even if you have little time.*
2. *Give your career outside the studio attention*
3. *Choose your audience*
4. *Define your vision as clearly as possible.*
5. *Stop doing things that don't support your vision and goals*
6. *Automate and streamline. (Tip: visit Business Resources on our website)*
7. *Keep your collateral updated*
8. *Show up 'professionally'*
9. *Build your community - they matter more than you might realise*

Without the work, there is no career. Only YOU can make your work.

Your work is your Key Commodity, a Key Component of all Marketing Collateral.

It's a source of income - it is the centre of everything and the motivation for what you do.

- *Devote regular and consistent time to making your work*
- *Be authentic. Make the work you are called to make, make it as well as you can and keep on continually growing and improving your work.*

1. The Work Itself

- Devote regular and consistent time to making your work. Consistent habits trump bursts of activity done very infrequently. (See James Clear Atomic Habits - great book!)
- Be authentic. Make the work you are called to make, make it as well as you can
- Keep on continually growing and improving your work. Your style always finds you so don't worry about that too much.

2. Work as hard at your career as you do at your art.

- Are you giving enough attention and care to all the non-art making aspects of your artist career?

e.g. follow-ups, keeping records, managing dealer relationships, writing proposals, gathering testimonials, managing your finances... and so on and so forth
- Have a routine. Bake the non-art making activities into your schedule so they don't get neglected. And if you need to adjust and tweak your routine, do it!

3. *Clarity on your Vision and Goals*

- Do you have a clear vision? Define your vision as clearly and as specifically as possible.
- Do you have goals?
- Do you focus on the things that support your goals and vision, say NO to things that don't?

4. *Knowing Your Market*

- Everybody who likes art ISN'T your market. Do you know who your audience are?
- Where do you want to be showing up with your art? Locations, venues types etc. Do you know?
- Be focused in directing your efforts to these places and these people.

5. Knowing Your Numbers

- Do you know what it costs you to have your career?
- Do you know how to price your work for your market, and to make a profit?
- Do you have financial targets?

6. Belief - Mindset is Key

- Do you believe that you are bound to succeed as an artist?
- Do you use language like "I can't..." "Nobody will buy my art?" "Artists can't make a living?" "They probably aren't really interested / were saying nice things to be polite?"

If so, you could be getting in your own way.

Use this prompter statement to get honest and explore your beliefs.

"I can't be successful because..."

See what comes up.

Then flip it to say why you CAN be successful.

We explore mindset and limiting beliefs in more detail in the programs.

7. Your Foundations

- Do you have up to date collateral - image files, CV, statement, Bio?
- Do you have systems and processes?
- Do you have a core 'team'(photographer, courier, framer etc) that you can consistently rely on?

8. Showing Up

- Are you consistently showing up for your audience? If not you are likely missing out on opportunities and sales.
- Develop a plan to show up for them - newsletters, one or two preferred social media platforms (and because you don't want to be a full-time marketer automate and outsource as much of this as possible).
- Don't forget to show up in your studio to make the work and in the outside world when and where you can too.

9. Your Community is Critical

One of the most important, and often overlooked keys to a sustainable art career is to have a supportive network. Reciprocity. Helping each other out, being there for others and others there for you. That counts.

- Do you have a peer network?
- Do you have a community who are supportive of your aspirations? Artists, Art workers, Dealers and other supporters
- If you are surrounded by naysayers, "trade up" to bring more positivity into your community.
- Find the support you need. That can be in the form of an art networking group, a community, a coach. Create a group - it just starts with one connection.

Something else....

"Start where you are, use what you have, do what you can."
- Arthur Ashe

To have a sustainable art career you need to recognise all the things you already have in place, whatever gaps or improvements you may want or need to make.

You got where you are today with what you have done so far, so congratulate yourself.

Where you go next, is up to you.

Incremental upgrades are a great way to build your sustainable art career.



TRANSITION

You don't have to have all nine things in place all at once.

If you only do a few things, these are the first things I encourage you to start with:

- 1) Develop a ROUTINE that suits you. Give yourself some deadlines. The only structure you have is the structure that YOU create.
- 2) Give yourself regular TIME for your art career - both creating the art and all the non-creating parts too. No matter if you have a full-time job, carer responsibilities, a part-time job, there is always some time that you can commit. However much that is, use it.
- 3) Set some GOALS - they will help you make the transition away from a more structured environment
- 4) Know that you don't have to wait for someone to give you an opportunity. CREATE your own.

And you don't have to say yes to opportunities that aren't right - there are always more opportunities.

Have Questions? Get in Touch



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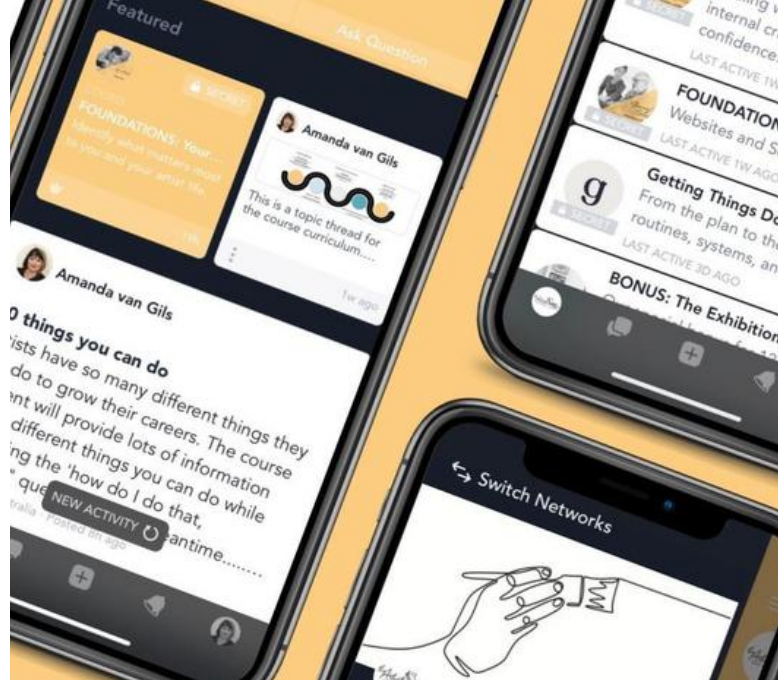


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About Amanda

Amanda van Gils is a professional artist who has been exhibiting since completing her Graduate Diploma at The Victoria College of The Arts (VCA) in Melbourne, Australia in 2000

Since then, Amanda has exhibited in over 100 exhibitions, in a wide range of venues, including as a finalist in numerous art prizes.

With a career as a consultant, executive and coach, running parallel to her own art career Amanda has learnt a thing or two about business. Amanda has spent decades acquiring knowledge and testing strategies for artists and integrates Mindset, Skillset and Toolset into her coaching program (you can find out more about this model [here](#)).

Most of all Amanda loves bringing more ease, abundance and creativity into the world and loves supporting artists.

In 2008 Amanda established an 'artists supporting artists' online forum (TLF). From that membership, Amanda curated two large scale exhibitions - 38 artists and 55 artists respectively. From 2015 to 2021 Amanda ran the online art gallery ART500

In 2020 Amanda launched The Artists Business Lounge to support visual artists to further their careers through business skills, strategy, information, focus and mindset.

Find out more about The Artists Business Lounge at www.theartistsbusinesslounge.com

Find out more about Amanda and her art at www.amandavangils.com