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THRIVE LIKE AN ARTIST

7 GREAT ART CAREER LESSONS
LEARNED FROM 1000
INTERVIEWS WITH ARTISTS AND
ART-BUSINESSES WORLDWIDE

« Experience is a master teacher,
even when it's not our own. »

— Gina Greenlee —

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FOREWORD

The global art-market, the most unequal and unregulated market in the world, is out of control. Most artists are not able to make a full-time living from art, and many of them are unhappy because of it.

Therefore the multibillion-dollar personal-development industry eagerly jumped in fifteen years ago, trying to sell modern business-marketing concepts to the artist community.

And it is probably not working for you!

It may never work because it all stems from the simple assumption that the art-world is just like any other marketplace, and that art is just another product, a *commodity* even.

Sadly, art treated as commodity — according basic economic principles of supply and demand — quickly becomes worthless, because in volume there is too much of it, and it is not a primary need like food and shelter.

The only way to maintain value in such an environment is by market manipulation by art-elites who have the power to artificially create and control: news, trends, scarcity, supply and demand, and thus, value out of thin air.

This power is fiercely defended and as long as the world believes that art is a commodity, they will maintain this monopoly.

Due to this commodity thinking and gate keeping monopoly, the artist community remains in dire straits and prevents talent from reaching its full potential.

This is an evil consequence of the economy driven society we live in. It is a grave distortion of the art-market and life itself, a delusional fiction, and it has to stop!

« **Enough is enough.** »

The opinion on what art is or what is not differs for everyone. But artistic creation is, without any doubt, providing new meaning to what already exists, hence: it is life itself. You, dear artist friend who we hold so dear, are therefore a supplier of life.

This book is here to help you.

A handwritten signature in black ink, reading "Ann & Lisa". The signature is written in a cursive, flowing style. The "Ann" is on the left, followed by an ampersand "&", and "Lisa" is on the right. The lines are connected and fluid.

INTRODUCTION

It is hard being talented, isn't it?

Blend in passion and an entrepreneurial spirit, and things can get even more complicated.

But you have NO choice, because you are an artist. You have to create! You are dreaming of making a living doing what you love most: Art.

That's the goal and the perspective.

Don't let that thought cause anxiety, let it calm you instead.

You don't have to do something else. Having no real alternatives can be a kind of freedom.

The universe pulls you towards only one thing... help it create. Nothing else really matters.

Either you do what most people do: hesitate because of the fear of failure, lock your talents, and keep that drive inside. Or you can act on your talent and let your dream become reality.

THE SELF-HELP PROBLEM

The self-development industry is a multibillion-dollar industry and thriving. For artists there is an endless amount of content available: blogs, books, videos, workshops, seminars, and online courses and so on, also known as 'self-help' content, or 'quick-fix' content when it is of particular low quality. Maybe you already have ploughed your way through much of it, and – despite some good tips here and there – probably nothing really helped you. Well, there is a reason for that.

There are patterns in all these self-help publications, characteristics that most content has in common.

1. Practically all of it is from self-proclaimed experts and gurus, art-advisers, bloggers, coaches and consultants. They are professional advice-givers; it is their business.
The nature of the art-world and the dynamics of the art-market, are far too complex and elusive for any individual.
2. If you believe that the art-world is just another marketplace and art is just another product, than, in order to succeed, you have to become an *artist-entrepreneur*. Take control and develop business skills like contracting, marketing and sales.
This seems to make sense, however, it is against the very nature of most artists and

therefore unrealistic. Above all, this opinion is rather narrow-minded.

3. They offer one-size-fits-all answers, inspired by modern systematically marketing thinking. Standardized methodologies don't apply to artists because in their very nature, they are way too divers. That's why for example no 'guru' can give you a short and clear answer on how to price your art. Advice for a sculpture or installation artist is of little value to a painter or ballet dancer.
4. *How-to* content became amazingly popular on the Internet but the relevance of each piece, often has a very short lifespan. Especially compared to the act of creating art itself. For example, until 2016, studying a 'how-to sell art with a professional Facebook page', was a good investment. With Facebook's latest algorithm changes however, this turned into a waste of time. Organic growth and reach were choked, and so in a blink of an eye, years of fan-page building efforts went up in smoke. What if you would have invested all that time instead, in perfecting your art techniques?
5. Most of the available content is based on 'how-to' and 'what-to-do', and it promises you success when you believe that you are in full control of your life and yourself. That you have capabilities, confidence and strengths, to keep on adding and improving endless lists of skills.

Let's be realistic, even if you would have these qualifications, where on earth are you ever going to find the time to do all this? Nobody can develop that many skills to excellence, that's just selling dreams and a smoke-curtain.

The worst of it is that, the promise of self-development damages the nature of most artists. It tries to transform them into something they are not intrinsic, hence draining their energy and creativity.

THE SOLUTION

Crowd-wisdom

The different opinion in this book is that our advice is not based on our own opinion but on interviews with over a thousand artists and art-businesses worldwide. Unquestionably the most comprehensive art career research ever performed.

Since 2007, we have been collecting conversational data and managed interview campaigns in four different languages in over 90 countries. We created a crowd-wisdom database to which we applied systematic analysis. Our specific goal was to find patterns in all the data. Patterns showing what works and what does not work for artists who aim to make a living from their work.

During the years, whenever we found new patterns, we made notes and expanded on it. We collected more in-depth interviews and did further research to gain deeper insights. And then the magic started!

The result

This book is highly goal orientated in it is own way. You can read it within just a couple of hours, or think about it for years. It is meant to be a short read. Wisdom and powerful advice don't require lengthy books. We want you to save time, because you would better spend it on creating art. We did the research and the hard work on your behalf.

We believe that in this day and age, collaboration is the key to success, whatever the goals may be. The art-world in the context of globalization and digitalization has become too complex to understand and explore it all alone.

Enjoy the book, read it with passion... and prosper!

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**If people make it possible to live from a
desert,
it is possible to live from the art.**

— Edmon Khalil —
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