

Website Basics for Artists

SOUTHERN ARIZONA SCORE WORKSHOP
[HTTPS://SOUTHERNARIZONA.SCORE.ORG/](https://southernarizona.score.org/)



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IGNITE

Pima County Public Library

IGNITE Business and Nonprofit Services

Events: **library.pima.gov/events**

Information: **Call our Infoline @ (520) 791-4010**

E-Resources: **library.pima.gov/business**

GOT QUESTIONS?

- For general questions:
 - Unmute and ask your question
 - Put your question into the chat
 - Ask your question during Q&A
- For questions about your unique situation:
 - Email me your question
carol.booton@scorevolunteer.org
 - Sign up for a SCORE mentor
<https://www.score.org>
- You will receive a copy of this slide deck

ABOUT ME



- My name is Carol Booton
 - Volunteer SCORE mentor since 2019
 - Writer, editor, researcher, publisher, book designer, artist, illustrator, educator, and blogger
 - Former college instructor
 - Ph.D. in Business Administration (marketing and management)
 - Pronouns: she/her/hers
 - Instagram: carolbooton13

ABOUT YOU

- Who are you?
- What is your art business?
- Do you have an art website?

TOPICS

1. Website purpose
2. Business name
3. Domain name
4. Web platform
5. Webhost
6. Theme
7. Pages
8. Images
9. Home page
10. About page
11. FAQ page
12. Shop/product/portfolio page
13. Contact page
14. Subscribers
15. Brand building
16. Testimonials
17. Promotion
18. Analytics
19. Privacy
20. Security

FAQS I WILL TRY TO ANSWER

- [FAQ 1: DO I HAVE TO KNOW TECH?](#)
- [FAQ 2: DO I HAVE TO HAVE A WEBSITE?](#)
- [FAQ 3: WHAT CAN YOU EXPECT TO PAY FOR WEB HOSTING?](#)
- [FAQ 4: CAN I START FOR FREE?](#)
- [FAQ 5: DO I HAVE TO LIST MY PRICES?](#)
- [FAQ 6: DO I HAVE TO COLLECT SALES TAX?](#)
- [FAQ 7: DO I HAVE TO HAVE A BRAND?](#)
- [FAQ 8: DO I HAVE TO USE SOCIAL MEDIA?](#)

CASE STUDIES



illustrator



painter



sculptor

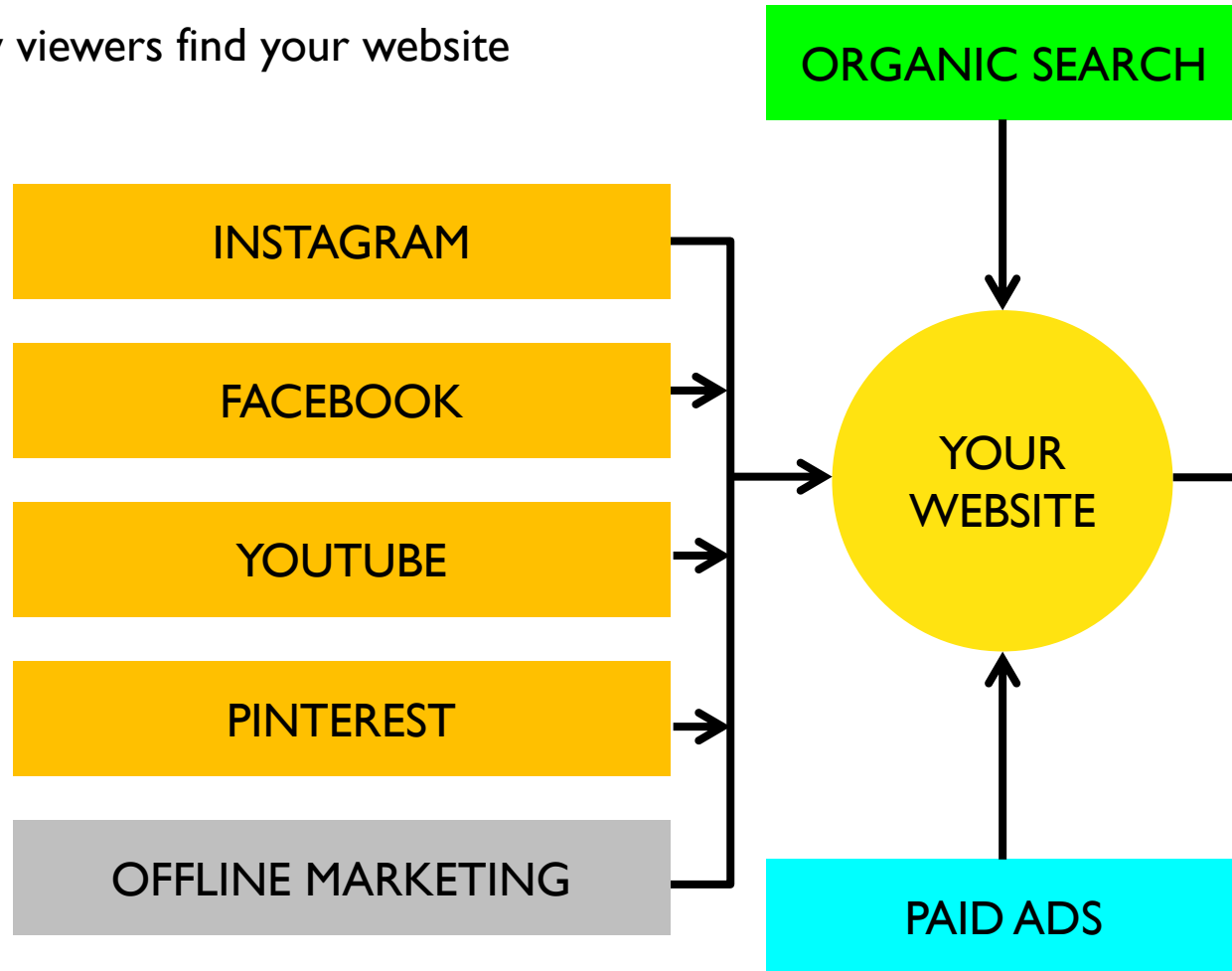
FAQ 1 DO I HAVE TO KNOW TECH?

- No, you don't have to have technical skills beyond using a mouse to click and point
- The “how-to's” of building websites are well covered in many free online sources
- The hardest part of web design is not the technical part, it's the content and branding
 - What are you selling?
 - For how much?
 - To whom? And how?

THE BIG PICTURE

- Your website is the “hub” of your business
- Your offline marketing efforts, social media, Google Search, and paid ads drive traffic to your website
- Where visitors can
 - Shop for products
 - Sign up for services
 - Subscribe to your email list
 - Read about your art

How viewers find your website



What viewers can do there



FAQ 2 DO I HAVE TO HAVE A WEBSITE?

- No, you can sell art without having a website
- Some artists prefer to drive social media traffic to
 - An Etsy store
 - An Amazon store
 - A Behance portfolio
 - Art platforms (e.g., Redbubble, Society 6, Threadless)
- Choosing to have a website depends on what you are selling, how, to whom, what you want to achieve, and how willing and able you are to do it
- NOT having a website, even a simple one, is a missed opportunity to tell your story your way

Q1 WHAT IS THE PURPOSE OF YOUR WEBSITE?

- To showcase your art
- To promote you, the artist
- To sell artworks
- To sell services (e.g., art classes)
- To generate commissions
- To collect subscribers
- To educate or inform
- To build community

Q2 WHAT WILL YOU NAME YOUR BUSINESS?

- Will you use your own name?
 - It's easier
 - You might not have to register your business with your state or city
 - People will search for you using your name
 - Most artists use their own names
- Will you make up a business name?
 - You might want more anonymity
 - A business name becomes a brand separate from you
 - You might imagine selling your business someday
 - However, people might forget the name of your business, so be sure to associate your own name with the business name so people can find you

Q3 WHAT DOMAIN NAME WILL YOU CHOOSE?

- A domain name is the internet address of your website
- EXAMPLE: `https:// www . businessname . extension`
- Extensions: .com, .biz, .art, .net, and many more
- The (assumed) default is .com
- Register your domain name(s) with a registrar
 - Google, Bluehost, GoDaddy, Domain.com, etc.
- You cannot “buy” a domain; you can rent up to ten years at a time
- TIP: Even if you don’t plan to have a website, consider registering your business domain name so nobody else can
- TIP: Expect to pay \$15 - \$20 per year for a domain name. Shop around for deals but be careful of giving your personal information to an untrustworthy site

CASE STUDIES

To generate commissions



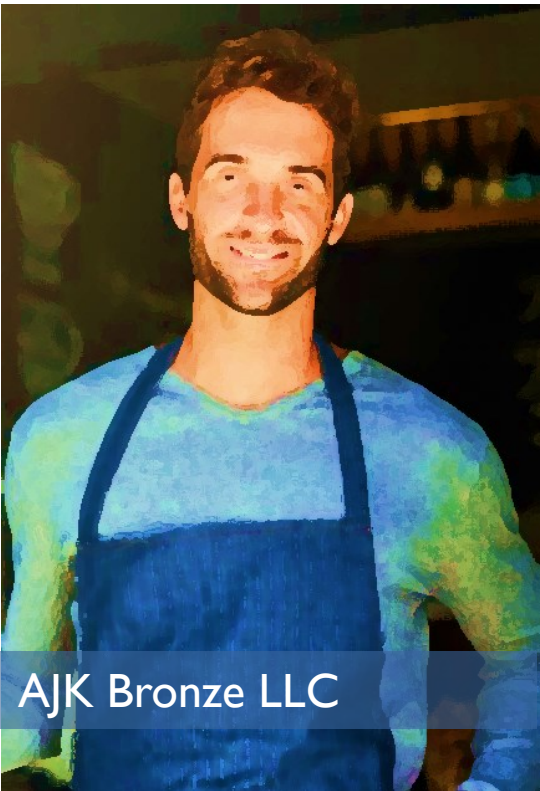
bestillustration.com

To sell art and products



cindachen.com

To showcase the art



ajkbronzecasters.com

Q4 WHAT WEB PLATFORM WILL FULFILL YOUR PURPOSE?

- Web platforms can be just hosts or they can be webhost + website builder
- According to online reviews:
 - Best hosts/builders for selling products: Shopify, Square (both can integrate with other webhost platforms or stand alone)
 - Best hosts/builders for portfolios: Wix, Weebly, Squarespace
 - Best for blogging: WordPress (.org not .com)
- TIP: Read reviews before choosing

BUT WAIT! WordPress or not WordPress?

- WordPress is the traditional path for bloggers, but not the only path
- WordPress comes in two flavors
 - Wordpress.COM
 - Wordpress.ORG
- WordPress.com can be free (or not), but features tend to be limited, and the free version will often contain third-party ads
- WordPress.org requires a separate webhost, which is not free, but you get total control of theme and content with no interference from WordPress

HOW MUCH DO YOU WANT TO SPEND?



- Free (e.g., Blogger, Behance)
- Free website host/builder (e.g., Weebly, Wix)
- Third-party hosting (industry-specific)
- WordPress (dot com, free with ads)
- WordPress (dot org, hosted)
- Webhost/website builder (e.g., Wix, GoDaddy, Squarespace)
- Webhost/website builder with shopping cart (e.g., Shopify, WooCommerce, Square)
- Managed by outside person or firm

Q5 FOR A HOSTED WEBSITE, HOW WILL YOUR WEBSITE BE HOSTED?

- The webhost is the company that owns and operates the servers that host your website
- Some domain name registrars are also webhosts and website builders
 - HOSTS: Bluehost, HostGator, Siteground, etc.
 - HOST/BUILDERS: GoDaddy, Wix, Squarespace, etc.
- Price can start at a few dollars per month and rise fast depending on features
- TIP: Shop around for deals

FAQ 3 WHAT CAN I EXPECT TO PAY FOR WEB HOSTING?

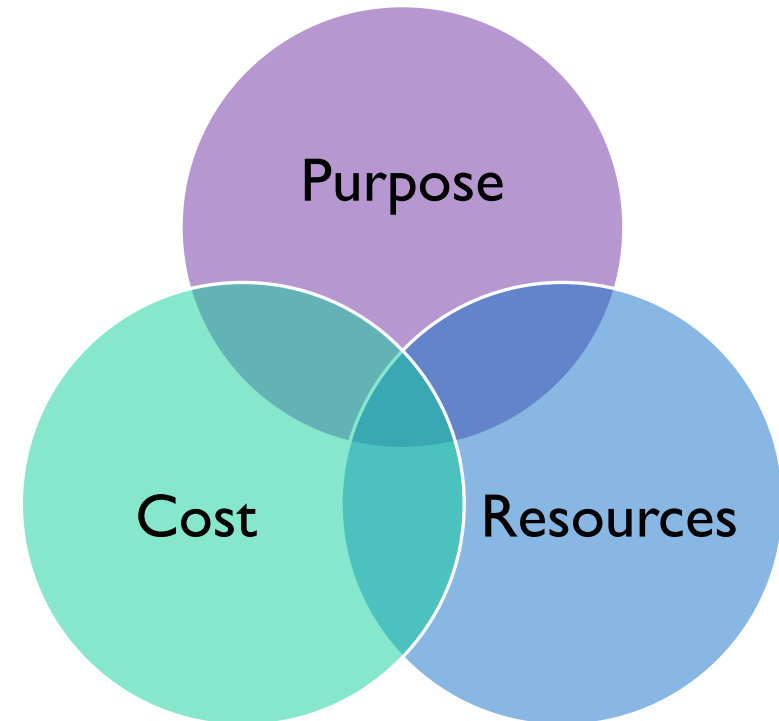
- Wix \$0 – 23.00 per month
 - Weebly \$0 – 26.00 per month
 - Bluehost \$8.99 – 16.99 per month
 - Hostgator \$10.95 – 16.95 per month
 - Squarespace \$12.00 – 40.00 per month
 - Shopify \$29.00 – 299.00 per month
-
- Monthly prices are often billed annually
 - TIP: Shop for deals

FAQ 4 CAN I START FOR FREE?

- Yes, you can launch a website for free
- Some platforms create a subdomain
 - For example, your Wix domain would be `username.wixsite.com`
 - To find examples of artists using free sites, search using “`artist site:wixsite.com`” or “`artist site:weebly.com`”
 - Downside: Frequent upgrade requests, fewer features
- You can launch a website using a free blog
 - A Blogger domain would be `username.blogspot.com`
 - To find examples of artists using free Blogger sites, search using “`artist site:blogspot.com`”
 - WordPress.com is free but may have forced advertising

HOW DO YOU CHOOSE?

- What is the purpose of your website?
- What will it cost to fulfill your purpose?
- Do you have the resources?
 - Time
 - Equipment
 - Money
 - Knowledge
 - Willingness



Q6 WHAT THEME WILL YOU CHOOSE?

- The theme, sometimes called a template, is the overall look, feel, and style of your website
 - Color scheme
 - Font scheme
 - Layout
 - Style elements
- The theme represents your brand
- The theme directly affects visitors' experience
- TIP: Use consistent themes across all your platforms

Q7 HOW MANY PAGES DO YOU NEED?

■ Top-level pages

- HOME
- SHOP
- ABOUT
- FAQ
- CONTACT

■ Your pages will depend on what you are selling

■ Possible subpages

- Product pages
- Pricing
- Commissions
- Blog
- Privacy policy
- Shipping info
- Membership pages

Q8 HOW MANY IMAGES DO YOU NEED?

- How many images depends on your purpose
- Optimize the images so they load quickly
- Take good quality photos of your art but upload low resolution photos (max 72 dpi)
- Apply a watermark to all your images
- Add ALT text for viewer accessibility
- Show your art in situ (on a wall, in a home, in an office, on the side of a building, etc.)
- Name your artworks (not “Untitled”)
- Be aware of copyright laws if you use others’ images
- TIP: Keep track of your work in a spreadsheet (*Title*, date, media, size, price, photo, buyer)
- TIP: Google SEO refers to text, not images

CASE STUDY



Wix

- I work by commission so I need a portfolio site.
- I need a contact form for clients to reach me.
- I need a FAQ page so they can read about how we would work together.
- I need an About page so they can see that I'm real, credible, and trustworthy.
- I don't need a blog. I chose Wix because it's easy to use.

CASE STUDY



Cinda Chen

Bluehost + WordPress

- I sell original paintings as well as prints and curated home décor such as wallpaper.
- My art is all about stories so I wanted a website platform that would let me focus on blogging.
- The shopping pages link to external sites where buyers can order print-on-demand products, and the printer handles everything (even sales tax) and ships directly to the buyer.

CASE STUDY



Squarespace

- I need a portfolio site to showcase my bronze sculptures.
- I am open to commissions but mainly I'm focused on getting grants for public art installations.
- I need to show images of installations I've done and clearly show the public benefit of my art.
- I need to show images, text, and video explaining how bronze casting works.

Q9 WHAT GOES ON YOUR HOME PAGE?

- Do you need to explain who you are, what you make, who it is for?
- Identify yourself
- If yours is a portfolio site, showcase the art
- Make it clear who your website is for using a combination of words and images
- Visitors take very little time to decide if they are in the right place, so make it easy for them to understand what you are selling

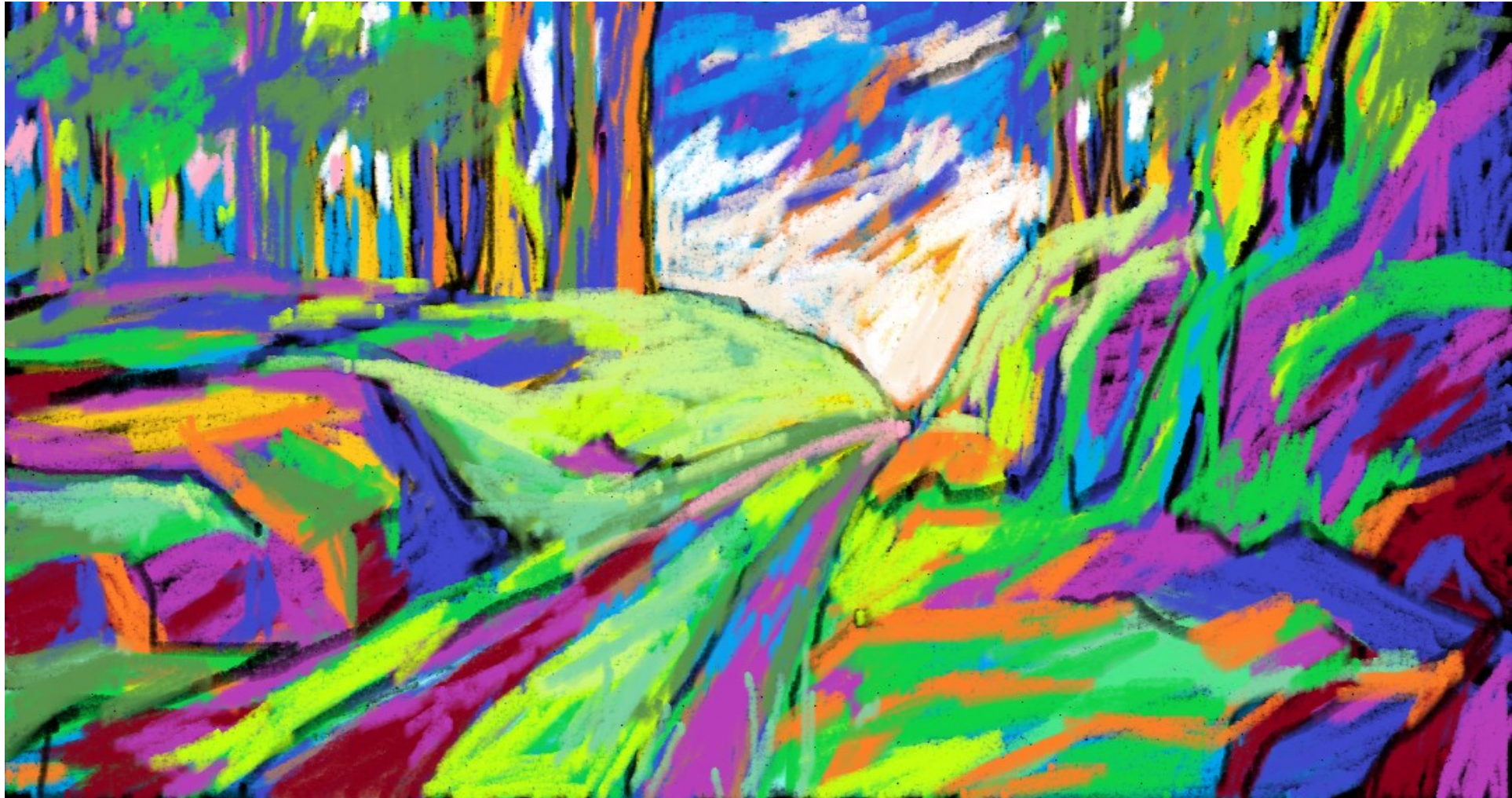
illustrator of
whimsical
engaging
cartoons and
characters



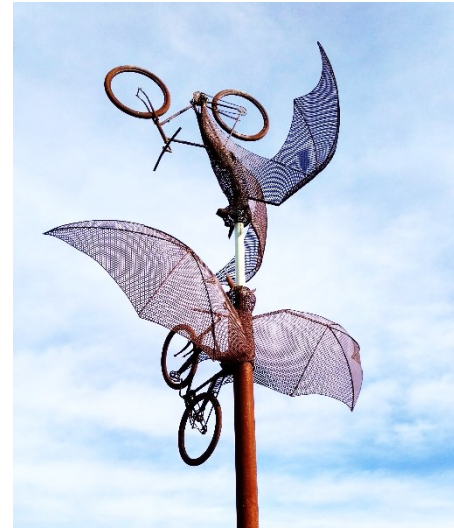
From “When Pig’s Fly” by Author Sid Simos



CINDA CHEN | ARTIST



[HOME](#) [ABOUT](#) [SHOP](#) [BLOG](#) [CONTACT](#)



Public art installation, Rillito River Loop Bike Path, 2021, Tucson, Arizona

Credit Stephen Fairfield, artist, Batty Biker, Tucson, AZ

Q10 WHAT GOES ON YOUR ABOUT PAGE?

- Include at least one photo of you
- Describe your artmaking process
- Consider adding a process video
- Think about your target audience when you write your artist's statement
- Include a list of your collectors (with permission)
- Add your art CV (list your shows)

JB

J. Best Illustration

ABOUT



J. Best Illustration LLC

If you are a children's book author and need art for your next project, you have come to the right place. I've been illustrating children's books since 2002. See [samples](#) of my work.

Q11 DO YOU NEED A FAQ PAGE?

- If you take commissions, add a FAQ or HOW IT WORKS page to describe how you work
 - Images of projects you've done
 - Timelines and deposits required
 - Expectations you have of the client
 - Testimonials of happy clients with photos
 - Instructions on how to book a project

Q12 DO YOU NEED A SHOPPING CART?

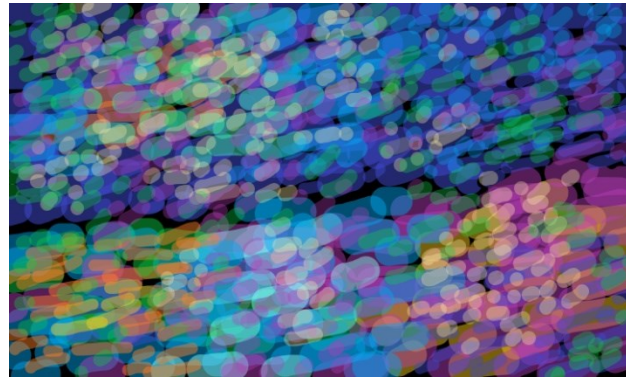
- Will your site handle sales transactions or send buyers to a third-party site (e.g. Etsy, Amazon)?
- Name your shop's subpages for buyers' convenience, not yours; visitors might not differentiate between "paintings" and "illustrations"
- Tell the story of each artwork or category of artwork
- Make it easy for buyers to purchase art
- Do you need to collect sales tax? Some shopping carts calculate but do not remit

CINDA CHEN | ARTIST

HOME ABOUT **SHOP** BLOG CONTACT



Original paintings evoke a serene mood suitable for a modern home or office



Midnight River

30 in. x 40 in.

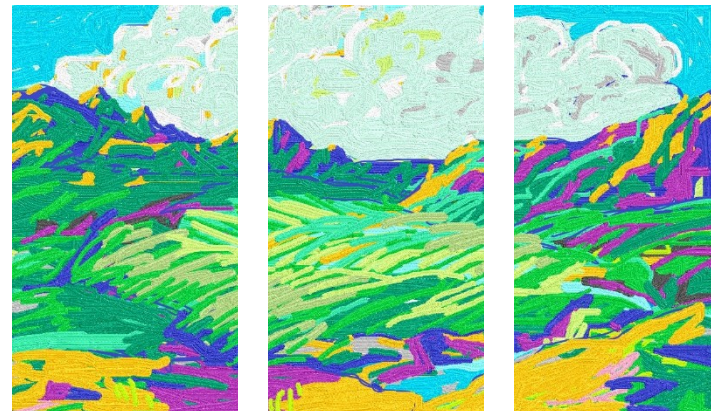
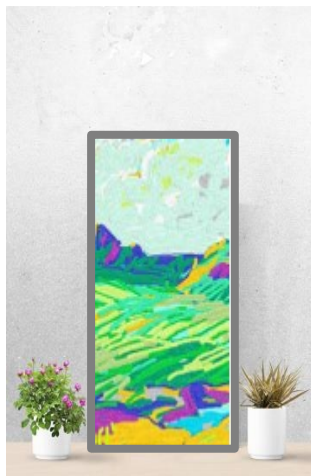
Oil and mixed media on canvasboard

Unframed \$450

Framed \$600

[Shipping estimate](#)

BUY NOW



Nevada Desert Triptych

3 panels 30 in. x 15 in. each

Oil on stretched canvas

Available unframed only

3 panel triptych \$550

[Shipping estimate](#)

BUY NOW

FAQ 5 DO I HAVE TO LIST MY PRICES?

- No, you don't have to list your prices
- However, many prospective buyers will not contact you if you don't, unless they are referred to you by a trusted referral source
- Some artists charge a flat rate per hour or a flat fee per project, and every project is different
 - Emphasize the value you create rather than the price you charge
 - On a HOW IT WORKS page, walk prospects through the process of requesting a proposal for their project
- If your website is primarily a portfolio, no need to list prices

FAQ 6 DO I HAVE TO COLLECT SALES TAX?

- You might be required to collect sales tax from buyers and remit the funds to the taxing entities
- Probably, if
 - You live in a state or city that has a sales tax
 - You are selling at an event in a state or city that has a sales tax
 - You are selling tangible or digital goods to buyers in a state that has a sales tax and you sell over a certain quantity or revenue amount (varies by city/state)
- Not if you sell through a marketplace facilitator, such as Etsy, Amazon, or some (but not all) print-on-demand sites (e.g., Society6, Redbubble)

Q13 HOW WILL BUYERS GET IN TOUCH WITH YOU?

- Do you want your phone number and email visible on your website?
- Consider using a contact form to collect buyer information (and to keep your contact info private)
- Make sure it works (sends you an email)
- If you have a retail location or studio or sell locally
 - Make sure the address is clear
 - Claim your business on Google Business
 - Locate your business on Google Maps

Q14 HOW WILL YOU COLLECT SUBSCRIBERS?

- Email is the most effective way to market your art
- Use a third-party email provider with double opt-in (e.g., Mailchimp, Constant Contact, Emma)
- Place a subscription invitation in a sidebar or footer or popup visible on most or all pages
- If you use a popup form, add a delay so it's not the first thing visitors see
- Offer a reason or incentive for visitors to subscribe
- “Clean” your email list regularly

I'm coming to your town! Connect with me for the latest on shows in your area and to see new prints hot off the press.

I will treat your info with loving kindness. Read my privacy policy [here](#).

I am not a robot*

CONNECT!

Q15 HOW DO YOU BUILD YOUR ART BRAND?

- Choose a unique product, process, subject, style—something that differentiates you (your niche)
- Use your business name, logo, colors, and fonts consistently across all your platforms
- Tell the story of your art and your art-making process using text, images, and video
- Decide what your brand stands for using a few keywords— fun, colorful, lively, peaceful, etc.—and use those keywords on your website and in your marketing
- Show the art in context and in use

FAQ 7 DO I HAVE TO HAVE A BRAND?

- No, you don't have to have a brand
- However, you can't sell "all things" to "all people"
 - "I make doll clothing, jewelry, and hand-painted furniture, plus, I write poetry and screenplays, and I want to start an online art gallery for artists"
- You will probably need more than one website if you have several distinct businesses with no overlapping target audiences
- It is hard to create an effective website unless you know what you are selling and to whom

Q16

DO YOU NEED TESTIMONIALS?

- Testimonials are written or video statements from satisfied buyers
- Testimonials are “social proof” that you are trustworthy
- We’ve learned not to trust testimonials even though we want to
- Ask your buyers to leave reviews on Google and Yelp, especially if you take commissions or teach

Q17 HOW WILL YOU PROMOTE YOUR WEBSITE?

- Link your social media platforms to your website and vice versa and post frequently
- Apply SEO techniques if Google search is important
 - Claim your Google Business listing
- Run paid ads on social media and Google
- Refresh your website regularly (e.g., with a blog)
- Provide content of value to other websites (e.g., bloggers) and ask them to link to your website
- Be a guest on a blog or podcast
- Use traditional (offline) marketing methods
 - Art shows
 - Direct mail/direct sales

FAQ 8 DO I HAVE TO USE SOCIAL MEDIA?

- No, you don't have to use social media
- However, if your ideal target audience is on social media, you are missing a chance to reach them
- They won't know your website exists if you don't reach out
- Wherever your target audiences are, that is where you want to be

Q18

HOW WILL YOU MEASURE PERFORMANCE?

- Install Google Analytics or some other analytics program on your website to measure
 - Page views
 - Unique visitors
 - Top pages viewed
 - Bounce rate
 - Ecommerce data (sales)
- Keep track of key performance indicators over time

Q19 WHAT PRIVACY POLICY DO YOU NEED?

- Laws protect the privacy of your website visitors
- You must inform them about the use of cookies and other tracking devices
- If you collect user data, you have to say what you collect and why
- Write a privacy policy and/or use a popup notice
- When you collect subscriber emails, use a third-party email application that offers double opt-in

Q20 WHAT SECURITY MEASURES DO YOU NEED?

- Get an SSL/TLS security certificate for your website from your webhost so the domain name starts with https://
- Some webhosts provide these certificates for free
- Find out what measures your webhost and/or web platform uses to keep out viruses
- If you use WordPress.org, install a security plug-in, keep themes and plug-ins updated, and delete inactive plug-ins
- Add your name, the year, and the copyright symbol in the footer of your website (e.g., © 2023 Your Name)

WHERE WILL YOU FIND ANSWERS TO YOUR QUESTIONS?

- Books, blogs, videos, forums, podcasts
- SCORE resources and mentors
- Other artists
- Potential clients and art buyers
- Your business goals

Q&A

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