

SPECIAL SECTION: USING SOCIAL NETWORKING TO MARKET YOUR WORK

For each issue of the Newsletter, we choose a theme and ask our membership to send in their information about that theme. Feel free to suggest themes and send in any and all information that you can. We are hoping to have this be an informative "must read" section of your Newsletter. Got ideas for future themes? Send them to JanetBuskirk@gmail.com. The February Newsletter's theme will be "Cone 6 Glazes."

We originally asked OPA members for information about Social Networking, but several of you submitted commentary about other aspects of marketing yourself on the internet. It all seemed useful, so here it all is. Thanks, everyone!

Facebook, Flickr, Twitter & Etsy, submitted by Cynthia Spencer: Social Media is a great way to make connection with people from all walks of life. Do it if you feel comfortable typing away on the computer, can do simple photo manipulation (or don't mind learning it) and if you are *not* phobic about other people knowing things about you. I don't recommend you do it just to try and sell your work to people, only posting news about your sales. People will avoid you like we all avoid hard-core sales people.

The emphasis should be on the *social* aspect of it all. For example: in the regular small business world, folks join social networks such as the Chamber of Commerce, Downtown Association, Animal Orgs (Elks, Moose, Lions), Service Clubs (Kiwanis, Rotary) and/or other trade groups such as the Oregon Potters Assn. You do this to share info, network and learn professional skills and graces with like-minded people. Social media is really just doing the same thing without having to go to meetings and wear nametags. You can engage in being social in your jammies any time of day or night!

I enjoy sharing funny stuff, work and life ups and downs, as well as notices/show announcements from the art world. I don't use an app that links all Facebook and Twitter posts as I try to keep business and personal posts separate. I do censor myself from being too off-color as I do use SM as a way to share about my business as well as myself.

When you first open a Facebook or Twitter account, take some time to read other people's posts and get the hang of what is appropriate to share. It took me some time to find my own voice on the computer and to make and keep connections with people, but once I did it has been great. You need to know how to upload photos because SM is a visual media and posts with photos will be given much more attention than just a text post. If you can link posts back to your website and/or blog, all the better to increasing traffic there.

It's too hard to keep up everywhere so I just do Facebook, Twitter, and a Flickr photo account. I blog for Corvallis Fall Festival and about my pottery work and have a catalog-like website. NOTE: You should have a separate Facebook Fan Page for your business, separate from your Facebook Profile Page, because business pages run as profile pages can just disappear at the whim of Facebook (since it is against their rules.)

The other big SM site I have is an Etsy shop that is now one year old and sold enough in this last year to feel like the time and effort is worth it. I probably spend about 2 hours a week updating and sharing on Etsy and more time than I care to admit to on Facebook.

Make the best use of your Social Networking, submitted by Becky Clark: The best advice I can give for those who are new to social networking is this: socialize as often as you can.

Obviously, you don't need to be in everyone's ear every day, but how about this: Have you done a firing? Tweet about your brilliant red and blue combo!

Did one of your facebook friends have an art opening? Write on their wall that you had a great time!

What about your blog? People who love your work (and know nothing about pottery) would love to see what it looks like to unload a kiln, or love to hear that funny anecdote between studio mates.

When people know what you are doing, and feel like they are getting to know you, they will be excited to hear more about what is going on in your world, and will be thrilled to get your updates.

So just pretend, when you are about to make that next tweet, like you are giving a status update to your best friend, who wants to know all about what you are doing, and how good of a time you are having.

Facebook and other Online Tips, submitted by Dulcie Linsoe-Johansen: Hi Janet- I am not so adept with the social networking; however I do have a facebook account and although I don't look at it often, it is handy to post a "message" announcing my biannual studio sales. In a somewhat related situation, people seem to find me via the website, googleing, etc. from the stickers I put on all my work for wholesale orders. This has lead to more business as offshoots from the wholesale accounts.

Facebook, submitted by Ken Pincus: For years, I stayed away from Facebook, looking at it as just another way to spend my time in front of a blasted computer screen. But gradually I began to suspect that Facebook could be

a useful way to get the word out to others about my pottery. In late August, my daughter helped me sign up onto Facebook, which means that we created my profile, and a page under that called Pincus Pottery Studio where we made photo albums to upload pottery pictures. Generally I post only about pottery doings and events, but can't resist to occasionally comment on other people's postings. Facebook is turning out to be enjoyable in short helpings and potentially helpful as a marketing tool. And as I continue, my circle of "friends" gradually grows and with it grows my reach as I post.

Getting to Know the Twitter-verse, submitted by Sarah Chenowith Davis: For those of you who've heard a bit about Twitter, but aren't quite sure whether or not you really "want to go there," I'd like to give you my take on this fast-paced form of social networking. I'll preface this with a little of my background: I sort of grew up with computers. My mom had a DOS beast up until I was in college. I wrote papers on it and played Tetris, Where in the World is Carmen San Diego?, and Oregon Trail. Once in college, I began using computers more (still used old fashioned books to research papers), but didn't own my own computer until two years ago. I also had a desk job for a few years and took some digital design classes. So, I'm kind of savvy, but not as hip to the technology as today's 20-somethings.

I joined Twitter after my husband received some nation-wide exposure on Twitter, when some heavy-hitters in his industry re-tweeted a blog post of his. "Re-tweet" is when someone who follows you on Twitter re-posts your tweet (in this case my husband's tweet was a link to his blog post), and a tweet is anything you can say in 140 characters or less. The re-tweeter's followers then see the tweet/link and maybe read the post. The "heavy hitters" (my terminology) can have thousands (tens of thousands!) of followers, including other important people and organizations in the field. As a grad student soon to be seeking a job, this was super valuable exposure. For me, this would be like Jack Troy telling all his admirers and colleagues "hey, check out this gal from Oregon, she's doing some great work." As a potter with career aspirations, I recognized Twitter as a potential gold mine. After I created my Twitter account (which simply required creating a username and password; you can also upload a picture or avatar and add optional profile information), I surfed around looking for interesting people and organizations to follow. When you log into Twitter, you'll see the timeline, where tweets made by those you follow line up in real-time. Since a tweet is limited to 140 characters, you can scroll through quickly, scanning for topics and news which pique your interest. The best way to find great people to follow is to start with a person or organization that you admire or respect. Among the first organizations I sought out were the Oregon College of Art and Craft and the Museum of Contemporary Craft (simply do a search under "Who to Follow"). Even before I decided to follow them, I looked at who they follow. In other words, who is OCAC keeping tabs on? Also, what kind of things has MoCC been tweeting? If it looks like something I'd be interested in, I click the +Follow button. Now, all of their tweets will appear in my timeline. If you start following someone, and it turns out they don't tweet the kind of info you expected (or they're just down-right annoying), simply unfollow them. Twitter is much more impersonal and can be much more business-like than, say, Facebook.

I have discovered some fabulous galleries and fascinating organizations this way (wow, does the Crimson Laurel Gallery have amazing on-line shows!). I learned about more show opportunities in one month on Twitter than I had in the previous two years of Google searches (got into a show in Carbondale after seeing the call for entries on Twitter). Not only can Twitter connect you to endless professional opportunities, but you can find people and organizations which focus on exactly what interests you. Under "Who to Follow," Twitter offers suggestions based on who you're already following, and you can browse interests (music, sports, health, travel, etc), or find friends if you let Twitter go through your email account. Also, as you gain followers, you have an (semi) attentive audience for your own thoughts and news. Keep in mind, anyone can see your Tweets, unless you adjust your settings*; they don't have to be a follower. So it's probably not a good idea to complain about your boss, but it's an excellent idea to advertise your upcoming opening reception or your kid's fundraiser event. (*there's an option to "Protect my Tweets" in the settings menu, which will only let people you approve follow your Tweets)

Twitter itself has the potential to provide you with the kind of information you seek, without too much nonsense (although there's plenty of nonsense available, too), in a fast-paced format. It also has the opportunity to facilitate the formation of relationships across tremendous distance, whether those are personal or professional. I think it's vital, for example, that the OPA become a regular presence on Twitter. We can become a source of information for other clay artists all over the world, as well as use Twitter to advertise The Big Show every spring.

Who to follow on Twitter, some Suggestions from Sarah Chenowith Davis: These are non-local people and organizations you might not yet know about. These are the Twitter names and formal names of folks to check out on Twitter:

@CarterPottery: Ben Carter, potter and director of Pottery Workshop Shanghai; excellent blog

@AmericanCraft: American Craft celebrates the age-old human impulse to make things by hand, in order to

communicate, learn, heal and connect.

@theclaystudio: American Craft celebrates the age-old human impulse to make things by hand, in order to communicate, learn, heal and connect.

@KristenKieffer: One of my favorite potters, who has an excellent website, blog, and online store. Studio potter, workshop presenter & ceramics instructor. Also, perennial gardener, image/quote collector, novice painter, plus NPR & movie addict.

@akardesign: AKAR gallery; FABULOUS gallery featuring excellent clay work, located in Iowa City.

@CeramicThought Jaimianne; provides a treasure trove of show and gallery info, & calls for entry

@CLGPottery: Crimson Laurel Gallery, NC; posts beautiful on-line shows of contemporary ceramic art

@ClayArtWebGuide: seems to know of every show happening all over the world and how to apply; blog compiles everything nicely clayartwebguide.com

@18HandsGallery: 18 Hands Gallery, Houston, TX. Excellent ceramic shows

Using Blogs, submitted by Kim Murton: The most effective internet tool I have is my blogspot blog. It acts like a website and is really easy to use. I post a photo of work as I unload my kiln and say where it's going to gallery wise. I also occasionally post work in progress photos. My customers check the blog to see where and what I am selling which also helps my galleries. You can link a flickr photo sharing site to your blog which is nice also, as well as linking your galleries. The one important thing is to take reasonably nice photos and to post fairly regularly. At least every two weeks-preferably more. You can track how many people are looking at your site easily too.

Social Networking Overview, submitted by Janet Buskirk: Many of our peers now use social networking as one of their major marketing tools. I have spoken to potters who sent out Tweets from art festivals and saw a tremendous increase in business. My studio sale gets a decent portion of business from creating a Facebook event and sending it off to lots of friends. What does it take to be a good social media marketer? Some research and a moderate, or maybe a large, amount of time on your computer. A lot of the computer work can be very low tech, but you should spend time looking at other people's facebook pages, blogs, tweets, etc, in order to decide what type of "web presence" you want to create for yourself. Below are some tips, some of them are from articles that are listed at the end of each section.

A note about content: Before you start, do the research. Visit other people's facebook pages, read their tweets, look at their blogs. Eavesdrop on "conversations." Think up a lot of interesting content before you invite people to view anything. Keep your posts professional, but also make them fun. Remember, this is a very public media, but people like to use it as a way to peek at your private thoughts. Let them do that, but keep it don't go overboard. And don't forget to link all of your sites and post them on your other sites.

Facebook: If you're not on Facebook yet, this is a modern-world must. People use it like we used to use the phone book. Go to www.facebook.com and create a profile, then a page. Get moving. Once you're on facebook, join like-minded groups and write comments. "Like" people and events. Reconnect with old school chums. Send birthday greetings. Promote other people, so that they will promote you. All of these things make your presence known. Once you are a Facebook user, create a fan page. Remember, Facebook is not really supposed to be used by businesses, but Janet Buskirk (a Facebook user) can be a fan of Janet Buskirk Ceramics. Facebook has a lot of useful apps, look for them by clicking "applications" on the bottom left of your profile screen. (*Professional Artist* July/Aug 2011 by Renee Phillips, *CraftsReport* Sept 2009 by Petra Jones)

LinkedIn: Soemwhat like facebook, but considered more serious and professional. Use it in a similar fashion.

Blogs: Blogs are "web logs," which are sort of a mini website that is very easy to update. Many people who use them update them quite often, sometimes daily. Some people use blogs instead of a website. Some blogging providers are www.WordPress.com, www.Blogger.com, www.LiveJournal.com, www.BlogDrive.com, www.TypePad.com. Some of these are free, some cost a bit. Most have templates that you can use. To help search engines find your blog, choose a name that makes sense (your name or something descriptive about your work, like JanetBuskirkCeramics.blogspot.com). Then choose a title for the blog (that may be similar to the name, like "Janet Buskirk's Ceramics"). Then choose an appropriate description ("Put beautiful, colorful ceramics on your table"). You can host a blog yourself, but the usual blog providers automatically include your content in their search engines. Always give each blog posting a title, that title is a link that can be found by search engines. WordPress has template at www.wp4fb.com that is compatible with facebook (*Craftsreport* Sept 2008 by Petra Jones, *Art Calendar* Sept 2008 by Janet A Cook)

Twitter: Simple to join, Twitter is used as a "real time" social site. You let people know what you are doing right now, and, if they are interested, they tweet 400 friends to tell them. Don't forget to put a "#" in front of your subject so that people can find your tweet through Twitter searches. You can upload photos through

www.Twitpic.com Place a "retweet" button on your website or blog to encourage people to talk about you on Twitter. (*Art Calendar* Oct 2009 by Renee Phillips, *CraftsReport* Nov 2009 by Petra Jones)

Using YouTube: Putting a podcast on YouTube and mentioning it on your blog, Facebook page, etc, can be a great way to let people know about you. Most basic digital video recorders have simple ways to upload videos to the internet. Don't forget to include keywords that will help people search for your podcast. Keywords should be included in the title, description and keyword field when you upload videos to YouTube. Digital editing software often comes free with digital video cameras, or try Windows Movie Maker which is included with Windows. To upload videos, log on to www.YouTube.com and open an account, then follow the instructions (*Art Calendar*, Sept 2008, by Diana Moses Botkin).

Some key words: Tags or Tagging is a way to categorize blog entries using key words (tags), for instance you could tag your entry as "glaze" or "ceramics." (*Craftsreport* Sept 2008 by Petra Jones)

Search Engine Ranking: Do you want to increase your ranking for your website and/or blog? Use consistent titles and keywords for your blog, then submit your info to search engines. A few are: www.sphere.com; www.technorati.com; www.bloguniverse.com/art-blogs. Also submit your info to major search engines, look for "add a URL" on their home pages or go to <http://www.google.com/addurl>, <http://help.yahoo.com/help/us/dir/suggest/suggest-01.html> (*Art Calendar* Sept 2008 by Janet A Cook)

Mass Emails: If you send out your own mass emails, you may become known as a spammer. A few companies offer to do this for you. Typically they charge a nominal amount (\$10) for sending less than 1000 emails. Constant Contact has been used by a number of artists I know. Some others are VerticalResponse, Benchmark, YourMailingListProvider. (*CraftsReport* Jan 2012)

Some basic resources:

http://webtrends.about.com/od/socialnetworking/a/socialnetwork_b.htm: Articles about Social Networking

www.MarketinSherpa.com: A research firm that tracks web marketing

www.SearchEngineGuide.com: Aimed at small businesses, to help them optimize for search engines and learn the language that's used on the web (*Niche* summer 2008)

<http://buzzmedia.com.my/blog/an-introduction-to-facebook-for-marketers-in-plain-english>: basic facebook for marketers (*CraftsReport* Sept 2009 by Petra Jones)

Useful Resources for Learning About Online Marketing & Mass Emailing, submitted by Susannah Lints: I recently have been pretty active in getting more of an on line and social marketing presence. I wanted to make you aware of a wonderful group right here in Portland that is a resource for learning all about the world of social media marketing. That group is called I Heart Art Portland. They are all about Advocacy, Education and Support for Portland's Vibrant Community of Makers. Their website (www.heartartpdx.com) is full of resources from past workshops and a schedule of events to see what workshops or networking events might support your business. One example was the mixer match a couple of months ago where they had speed dating for wholesale makers and local buyers. I recommend these folks. They have an active Portland Etsy team too in case you are tackling that enterprise. The main thing I like is that they are young and have a fresh outlook of social media and the events are always a lot of fun. Check it out!

Another resource I've discovered is called Mail Chimp. There are others like Constant Contact or Sparklit to name a few. These services allow you to send professional looking newsletters and studio sale announcements, manage your mailing list, and are mostly free for smaller lists. You can add a link to your website or facebook page too. Did you know that just sending out a studio sale or show announcement without an unsubscribe link is considered spam? I certainly didn't. It is considered bad form to just send out e-mails without peoples permission. The Mail Chimp and others allows you to have people unsubscribe, allows you to add people who sign up for your mailing list at shows, and keeps your contacts fresh.

Now you might be saying its all fine and good for Ms Lints to be doing all this stuff, but I don't do computers! I had the same issue. You need to get help inexpensively. I hired my son and then his talented girlfriend to help with this. They were able to set it up fast and it didn't cost very much at all. If you don't have smart kids at home, contact a local community college or the Climb Center for small business. Its part of the Portland community College system, and they have people who are trying to launch marketing businesses and will take on small jobs, www.pcc.edu/climb/

Email Marketing, submitted by Jeanne Henry: I don't "twitter" or use facebook much *but* I have an active email list and most important, I also send out to several lists through organizations to which I belong. It is links to inside these groups that makes for a more personal connection.

Other online tips, submitted by Natalie Warrens: So while I am just starting to tap in to the social networking for marketing (not on facebook yet or have website updated) I have invested in an iPhone. I have the Square for credit card sales (pay as you go, 2.75% with no monthly fees). The access to the internet to make credit card transactions on my phone is cheaper than leasing my old credit card machine.

I highly recommend a smart phone with the free Square app to do business. Access to email and texts at your fingertips improves business with immediate communications. For example, during our sale I received an email from a client interested in a hummingbird platter so I took a photo with my phone and sent it to her immediately without missing her request by waiting to go to upstairs to my monitor to check emails.

My phone will also be useful in sending tweets or facebook updates to keep potential clients in the loop.

Using the Internet to Sell Your Work, submitted by Becky Clark: If you want to have a way for people to buy your work online, but you aren't convinced that Etsy is for you, I recommend using the following to set up an online store. They have basic options that are free or low-cost, and you can upgrade depending on how much you use them.

www.goodsie.com

www.bigcartel.com

www.shopify.com

They all have examples of shops so you can get an idea of what yours will look like. You can design your shop yourself and manage all of the product you put on, so you don't have to pay a web designer or give a commission to anyone. If you want, you can even make it your own website name, for example, I could make it www.beckypots.com. What ever you like! Check them out.