

11 Lessons for Emerging Artists from someone who also reads lists like this



I help out younger artists – high schoolers and emerging artists alike – in a variety of mentorship roles. Here are some of the common lessons or rants you’ll hear from me.

- 1. Start projects with a one paragraph description** that forms the basis of a grant application and press release. Learn to articulate with tangible language what a project includes.
- 2. Send out press releases regularly** to local news organizations to create a breadcrumb trail of projects and mini-accomplishments.
- 3. Climb the ladder.** Know the ladder. Love the ladder. This means understanding where you are in your career. It means not asking why you haven’t been selected for a solo art show at a major museum as a 20-year old.
- 4. Tell everyone about everything.** We want to hear about your successes and celebrate you.
- 5. Collaborate as a strategy to build audiences.** Your work will be better with the help of others. You also have friends that your other collaborators don’t, and vice-versa.
- 6. You are amazing.** Stop comparing yourself. If you have to hold down a full-time or part-time job to support yourself, that doesn’t make you less of an artist.



7. Email is free. Reach out to strangers and friends to ask for what you need. Make sure to be polite and persistent, but not pestering or presumptive.

8. Don't wait for permission. Self-produce shows, especially early on, to get your work out there. Opportunities lead to other opportunities. I like analyzing "opportunity trees" that show you what projects led to what opportunities, but you only know in hindsight.

9. Celebrate small wins. It is a long ride if you are lucky. A marathon. Survive until you're 35.

10. Remember how privileged you are as an artist. To be able to find time to make work puts you in a lucky category of human existence.

11. Don't take any advice from other artists. Your journey is unique and your circumstances are your own. Know that recycled advice can be helpful, but will never be perfectly tailored to your life.