



ART SY

The Gallery's Guide to Photography For Online Use

What's Covered

THE GALLERY'S GUIDE TO PHOTOGRAPHY FOR ONLINE USE	3
BE CONSISTENT	4
BRING THE PHOTOGRAPHS OF WORKS YOU POST ONLINE TO LIFE	5
UPLOAD EARLY AND OFTEN	8
LEARN HOW TO POST ENGAGING PHOTOS ON INSTAGRAM	9
PUT YOUR GALLERY PROGRAM WITHIN REACH OF A GLOBAL COLLECTOR BASE	11

The Gallery's Guide to Photography for Online Use

Collectors are increasingly coming online to buy and discover art. According to the 2018 Hiscox report, online sales are predicted to grow over the next 5 years, [doubling to a conservative estimate of \\$8.37 billion by 2023](#). However, across digital channels and on Artsy, one of the biggest barriers for collectors looking to purchase art online remains the inability to view three-dimensional artwork in person.

From developing visual consistency for your gallery's brand to crafting the perfect installation shot, read on to learn how curated gallery photography can make the difference when promoting your gallery's inventory online.

1. Be Consistent

From font to logo to packaging, consistent visual branding is paramount for any brand—especially an arts enterprise. In the same way that you may choose a color palette for your gallery space, take the time to develop a consistent visual language for your gallery photography that aligns with your gallery’s aesthetic.

For example, think about whether you want your photography to be warm or cool in tone or sharp or soft in texture. Consider the framing of the images of the inventory you upload. Will you photograph the works cropped, against a background, or both?

While many galleries present works in the simplest way possible—such as against a white background—there are infinite options when it comes to crafting a style for gallery photography. Whatever you choose to do, just make sure you’re consistent.



Installation view of MM_2 by Denise Treizman at PROTO Gallery on Artsy
Courtesy of PROTO Gallery

2. Bring the Photographs of Works You Post Online to Life

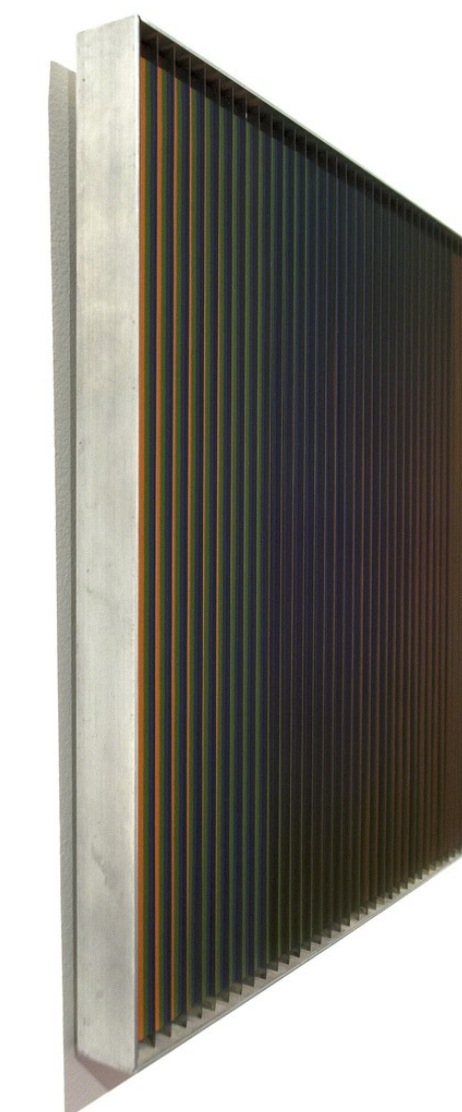
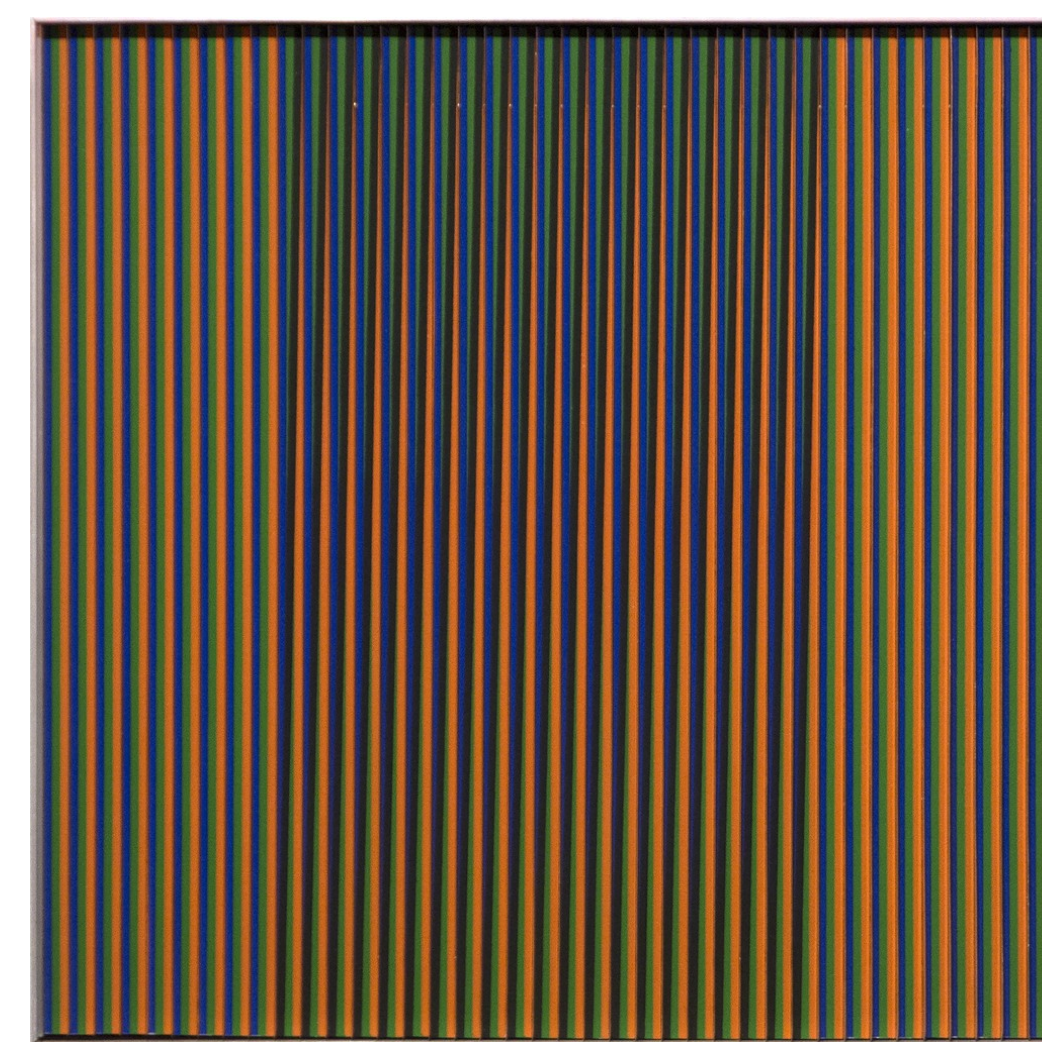
Whether you're uploading works to your gallery's website or to an online platform, having photographs that mimic the experience of viewing a work in person significantly improves a collector's browsing experience online. Here are a few tips and tricks to help you recreate the in-person viewing experience online.

SHOOT MULTIPLE, HIGH-RESOLUTION PHOTOGRAPHS

When looking for works online, collectors want as much information—textual and visual—as possible. Gallery partners on Artsy have found that when catching the attention of collectors on the platform, it's helpful to add multiple photographs of a single work to capture it in its entirety.

“Providing multiple, detailed, high-resolution images really improved our conversations with collectors,” Sarah Fischel, Gallery Manager at Heather James Fine Art shared in the [Heather James Success Story](#). “For clients who are buying digitally, a browsing experience that enables clients to feel like they're in the room with the piece can often be the thing that sways them towards an inquiry or a purchase.”

One way Heather James Fine Art constructs this experience digitally is by including everything from close-up details of a piece to photographs of the work in space, to the signature, to the back of a frame.



Views of Carlos Cruz-Diez's, *Physichromie DDC 1*, 1981 on Artsy
Courtesy of Heather James Fine Art

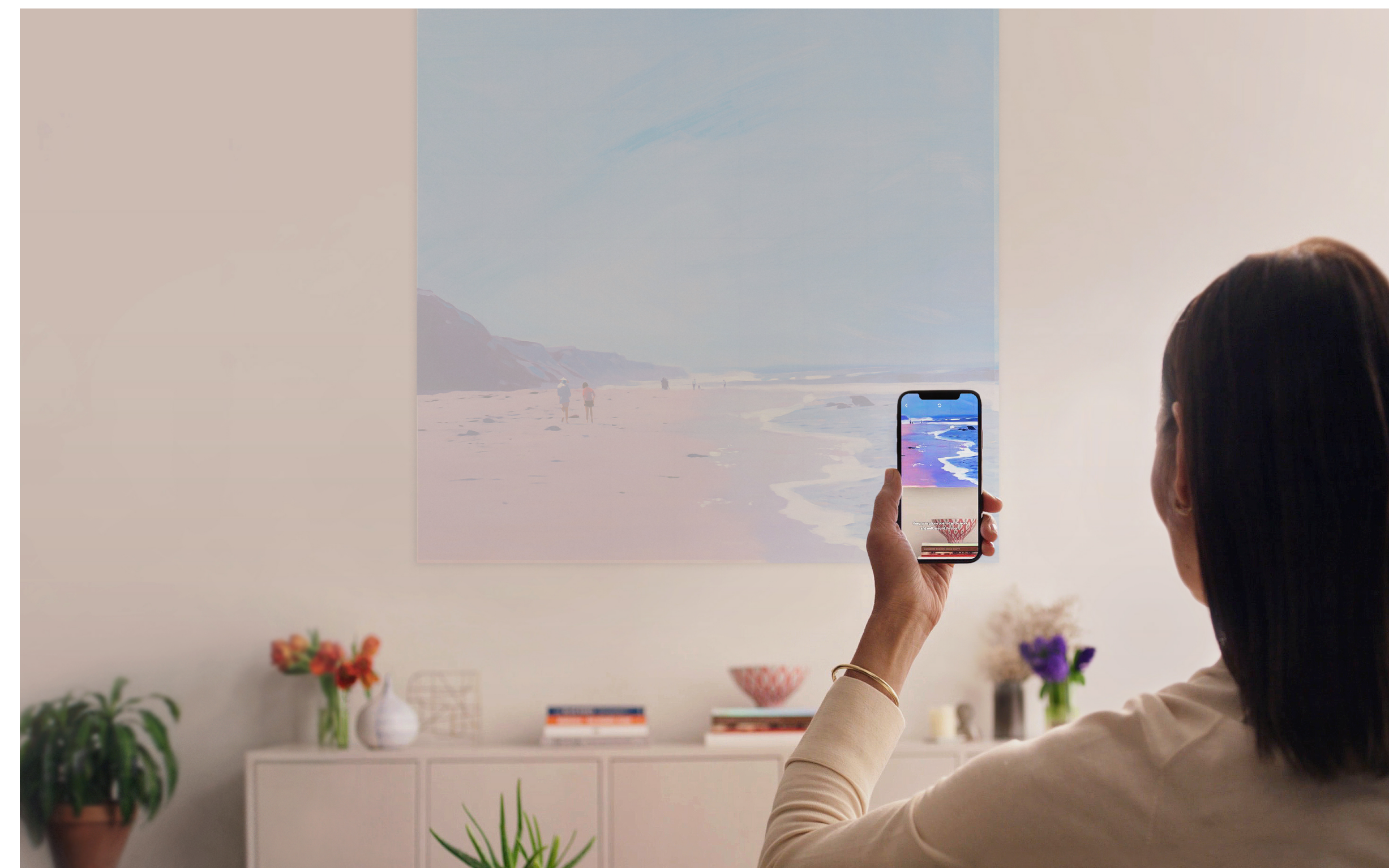
2. Bring the Photographs of Works You Post Online to Life

In [PROTO Gallery's Success Story](#), Nick De Pirro shares a similar process to Fischel's. "Making super bright, crisp photos of the modern and abstract art we sell is our mojo—we take good photos, that's a big part of what works on Artsy," De Pirro explains. "You can't have bad photos if a collector is looking at your artist's work on a computer or a phone."

On Artsy, galleries can upload multiple photographs to represent a work, making it easy for collectors to swipe through multiple views of one piece. Artsy recommends uploading artwork images that are at least 1,000 x 1,000 pixels in size.

Additionally, Artsy's new [augmented reality \(AR\) feature](#) enables collectors to "hang" works on their wall through the iOS app, bringing users the most authentic digital viewing experience on the market. With the AR feature, collectors browsing on Artsy can virtually place any of the 800,000+ images on Artsy in their own home, ranging from works held in the worlds most established museums to those in emerging art galleries. Ultimately, features like AR enable collectors to experience art online in a more realistic form, and the better the images the better the experience.

Pro-Tip: If you have one, use a digital camera like a point-and-shoot or a DSLR to photograph your inventory. Otherwise, the most recent versions of iPhones and Androids have quality cameras that, with a bit of processing, will work (more on this later).



Augmented reality feature on Artsy for iPhone

2. Bring the Photographs of Works You Post Online to Life

INCLUDE INSTALLATION SHOTS AND IMAGES OF YOUR GALLERY'S SPACE

One of the principal benefits of showing your inventory online is that it enables you to reach collectors who otherwise wouldn't be able to find or visit your gallery. For example, on Artsy the average transaction distance between buyer and seller is 3,000 miles (4,828 km). Therefore, in addition to uploading photographs of your works in your inventory to your online presence be sure to also feature installation shots and photographs of your gallery space (including interior and exterior shots) to construct a picture of visiting the gallery in person for collectors who are looking at your gallery online.

For instance, MO-Industries, a pop-up gallery that operates primarily out of Berlin and Singapore, uploaded an array of photographs to Artsy for its exhibition, [GIRLS](#) in Hong Kong. Vibrant, diverse, and full of energy, the photographs, which ranged from installation shots to pictures of opening night, provided collectors with a sense of scale, a taste of the curatorial experience, and insight into the type of people who visited the exhibition. This tactic can be especially effective in giving a collector who is far away and may not have the chance to visit the show a richer, and more comprehensive understanding of the work they're considering for purchase.



View of Luo Yang's 罗洋 *GIRLS*, 2016, Hong Kong on Artsy
Courtesy of MO-Industries

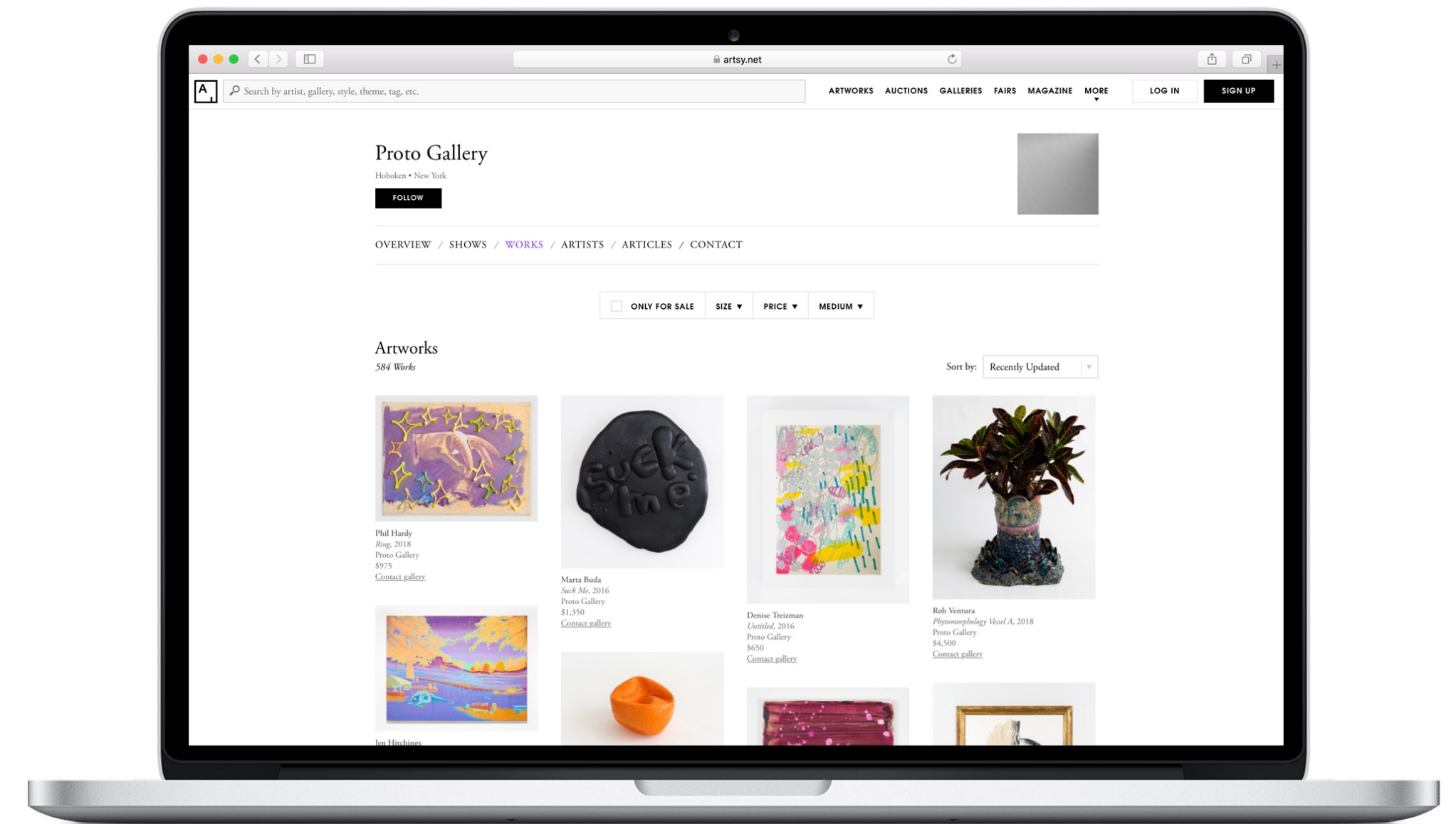
3. Upload Early and Often

Photographing works in your gallery's inventory can be an exhausting and time consuming process, especially if you have a small team. However, it's important to keep your online presence as up to date as whatever is happening in your gallery.

For De Pirro, photographing and uploading works to his website and Artsy is part of his team's day to day. "We photograph whatever we can before it's even hung and get install shots as soon as possible," says De Pirro.

Routines like this ensure that a collector has the opportunity to see and inquire on everything your gallery has to offer, increasing the options they can make an offer on.

Pro-Tip: De Pirro uses a rig and a good light to, as he describes, "shoot a controlled image with a seamless background because it's the best image of the artwork you can get for online." If you have a digital camera, think about investing in a rig to simplify the process.



PROTO Gallery's Artsy profile

4. Learn How to Post Engaging Photos on Instagram

Over the past 2-3 years, Instagram has superseded every other social media platform as the best channel to market and sell art. In fact, in 2017 [62% of galleries reported Instagram was the most effective platform for promoting shows and 82% of collectors under 35 claimed they use artists to keep up with artists they follow](#). When crafting visual content for Instagram, one of the most fundamental things is to create images that catch the eye and feel special to social media.

Below are new tips as well as key takeaways from our [2017 Social Media Toolkit](#) that will help you optimize your gallery photography for Instagram.

INCLUDE A PERSON IN YOUR PHOTOS

Featuring people in the art space gives the artwork a sense of scale and setting. Visually, it also gives viewers something to relate to by enabling them to imagine themselves with the work.

KEEP YOUR LINES (LOOKING) STRAIGHT

Illusion is everything when it comes to making photographs that have straight lines. Turn on the grid feature in your phone's camera. For example, if you're taking a photograph of a painting, keep the edges of the painting parallel to the lines in the grid on your phone—it's easier to take a photo with straight lines than to try to straighten them later.*

*iPhone: Settings > Camera > Grid. Android: Settings > Camera > 3x3 Grid.

SHOOT FULL FRAME

Shooting full frame means that the display on your phone of the picture you're taking is as large as possible. Instagram allows you to post images up to 4:5 in aspect ratio and Instagram Stories are 9:16 in aspect ratio, so shoot vertically and full frame to create images that can be used effectively wherever you decide to post them.

PROCESS BEFORE POSTING

Set yourself up for success (and minimize the need for processing) by keeping lines straight, finding the best light, and adjusting the brightness and focus before you snap your photo. Then, use any combination of our favorite apps—[Snapseed](#), [Priime](#), and [VSCO](#)—to edit and filter your photos. Take advantage of these apps—they take just a few minutes to use and can make your photographs look sharper and more professional.

EXPERIMENT WITH BURSTS

One trick is to use the Burst feature on your phone. Burst is helpful for getting multiple shots, but it's also a great tool to get an intentionally blurred image of a person moving through a gallery space. This gives the image a sense of movement and an extra something that might get viewers to stop and take a closer look at your post.

SOURCE NATIVE CONTENT FROM YOUR FOLLOWERS

If you notice that your followers—whether they be skilled photographers or veteran influencers—are posting high quality images of your gallery or your inventory, take advantage of the work they've done for you and regram their content.

Example Photo for Instagram

FILTER

Filters and processing apps are easy-to-use tools that give your photos the boost they need to catch your audience's eye.

PRO TIP: To make the most of your photo, always fully process it before you crop. Make your adjustments and add your filter to the largest version of your photo and then crop it 4:5 or square for your post and 9:16 for your story. In 2018, Instagram is rolling out a new feature that allows you to upload photos and videos of any size to your story

ADD A FIGURE

A person in the image both gives the work dimension and keeps the shot from looking too sterile.

PRO TIP: Experiment with posing figures in your photos. You might be able to capture a visitor as we did, but also consider using your team to “play visitor” and help stage your shot.



STRAIGHT EDGES

Make sure the lines in your photographs appear straight, especially if your photographs include rectangular artworks.

PRO TIP: Use the grid feature on your smartphone to achieve straight lines. If you have an iPhone, go into Settings, Camera, and turn the ‘Grid’ on so that the switch is green. Alternatively, if you have an Android, go into Settings, Camera, and select the ‘3x3 Grid.’

Installation view of The Estate of General Idea: Ziggurat at Mitchell-Innes & Nash, NY, 2018. © The Estate of General Idea; Courtesy of The Estate of General Idea and Mitchell-Innes & Nash, NY

5. Put Your Gallery Program Within Reach of a Global Collector Base

Over the last year, traffic on Artsy has grown by more than 30%. Bringing your gallery's inventory online can provide your business with legitimacy and visibility in an art market that is becoming increasingly digital, year-over-year. Taking the time to brand and streamline your gallery photography will not only make your online presence appear more professional, but it ensures a better viewing experience for collectors, increasing the likelihood that they will inquire upon or purchase a work.

With over 2 million unique visitors to Artsy across mobile and web a month, investing time, energy, and resources into creating quality gallery photography can help you grab collectors' attention—even if they're 3,000 miles away.

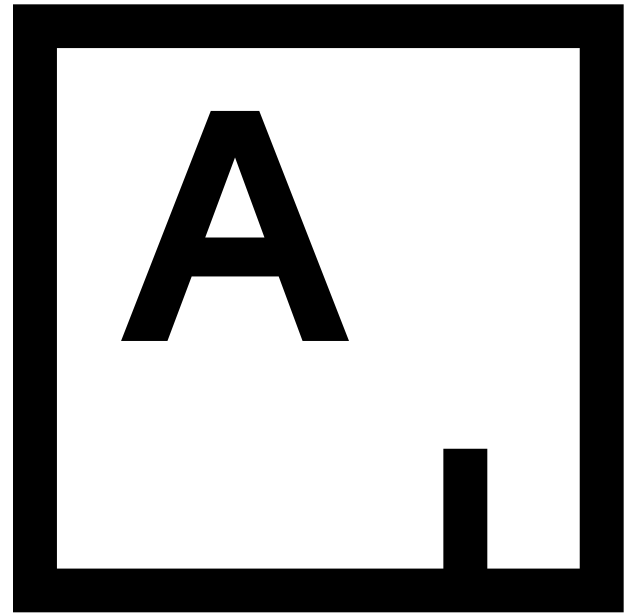
Learn how Artsy makes it easy to upload, store, and manage gallery photography.

A world map with a light gray background. Overlaid on the map are numerous purple circles of varying diameters, representing gallery presence in different countries. The largest circles are concentrated in North America and Europe, with smaller circles scattered across South America, Africa, Asia, and Australia.

Grow your gallery presence on a global scale with *Artsy*

- ☑ Nearly 2.5 million visitors each month
- ☑ Top ranking art marketplace on Google
- ☑ Visitors from over 160 countries

[LEARN MORE](#)



Join Artsy

[Artsy for Galleries](#)

[Artsy for Institutions](#)

[Artsy for Auctions](#)

Follow Us @Artsy

[Instagram](#)

[Facebook](#)

[Twitter](#)