

Instagram Guide for Galleries

2025



Introduction

Instagram has become an essential tool for galleries, helping them showcase artists, engage with collectors, and build their brand. With nearly half of collectors reporting that they prefer using social media to discover new artworks and exhibitions (according to Artsy's Art Market Trends 2025 report), having a strong presence on the platform is more important than ever.

But discovery is just the first step—turning engagement into sales requires a seamless path from interest to transaction. This toolkit outlines best practices for optimizing your gallery's Instagram strategy and ensuring that when collectors are ready to buy, they can easily find and purchase your works.

Growing your audience

Building a strong Instagram presence is about more than just gaining followers—it's about attracting the right audience and keeping them engaged. While follower count is often seen as a key metric, the real value lies in creating a community of engaged collectors, art enthusiasts, and industry professionals who interact with your content and explore your gallery's offerings.

Consistency and quality

The most effective way to grow your audience on Instagram is by consistently posting high-quality, relevant content. This means:

- **Showcasing your art:** Regularly post compelling images and videos of artworks, exhibitions, and behind-the-scenes moments.
- **Using Instagram's format variety:** Mix up your content with carousel posts, Reels, and Stories to keep your audience engaged and reach different segments of Instagram's algorithm
- **Storytelling and brand identity:** Craft a narrative that aligns with your gallery's vision and makes your content instantly recognizable.

Growth takes time

There's no shortcut to building an engaged following. Instead of focusing purely on numbers, prioritize content and interactions that attract the right audience—collectors, curators, and art lovers who are genuinely interested in your gallery's program. A smaller, engaged audience is far more valuable than a large but passive one.

By committing to consistent, high-quality content and meaningful engagement, your gallery can steadily grow its Instagram presence and turn followers into supporters of your artists and exhibitions.

Meet your audience where they are

Collectors turn to visual, interactive platforms like Instagram to discover artworks they'll ultimately purchase, and Artsy is where that discovery turns into sales.

“82% of young collectors have purchased art online” - [Collector Insights Report 2024](#). With the largest online marketplace for fine art, Artsy connects collectors with galleries worldwide, making it easier than ever to explore, inquire, and buy—all in one place.

Increase awareness of — and trust in — your gallery and artists

When carefully crafted and consistently maintained, a strong presence on social media can lead to a significant increase in brand awareness for your gallery. It is also a key way to build and retain a loyal customer base. Social media humanizes the perception of brands by fostering direct interaction with likes, direct messages, comments, shares, and videos. These interactions make customers feel more connected to brands, helping foster a longer-term loyalty than traditional forms of marketing, such as print ads.

Building an Instagram presence

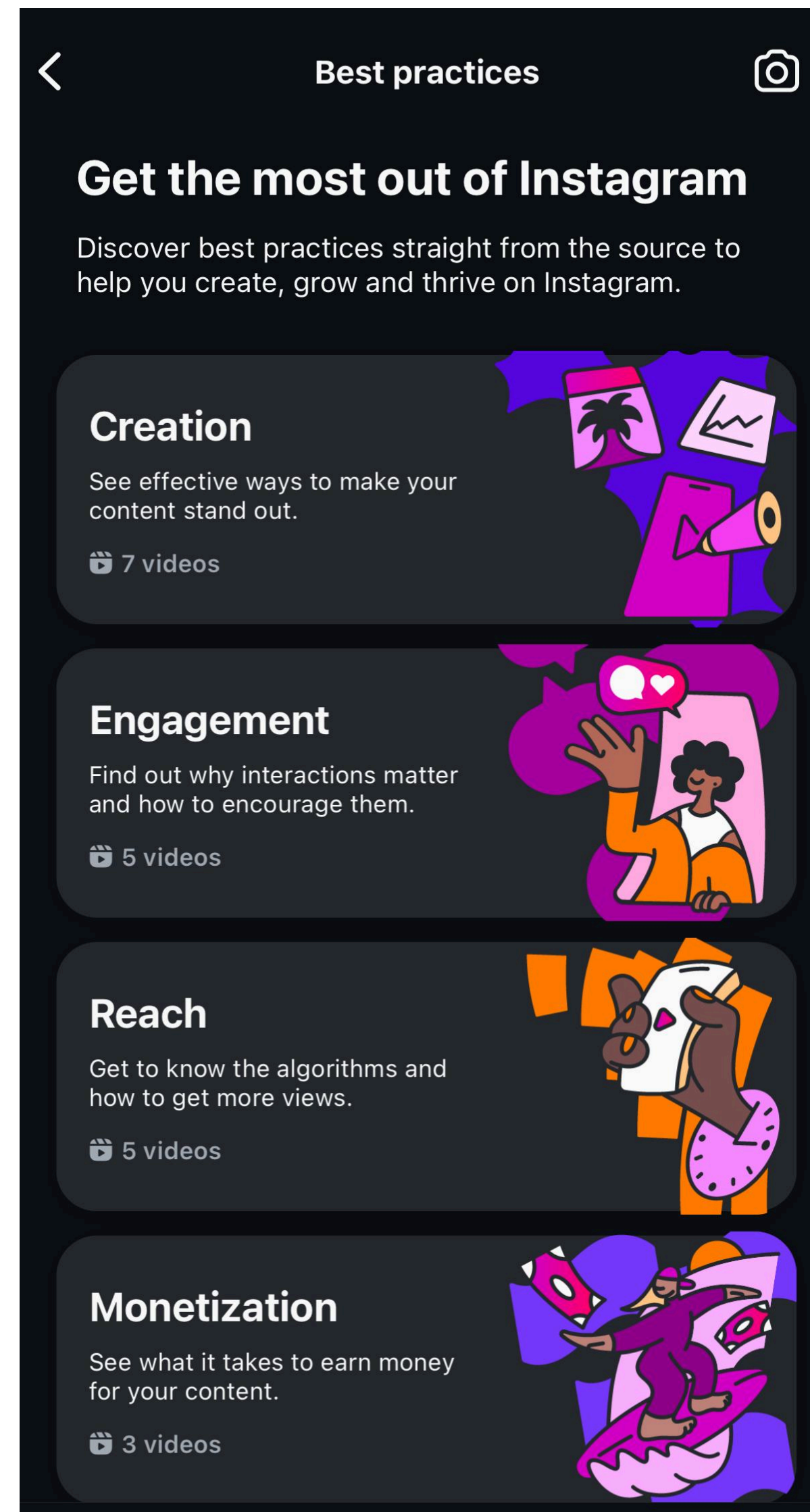
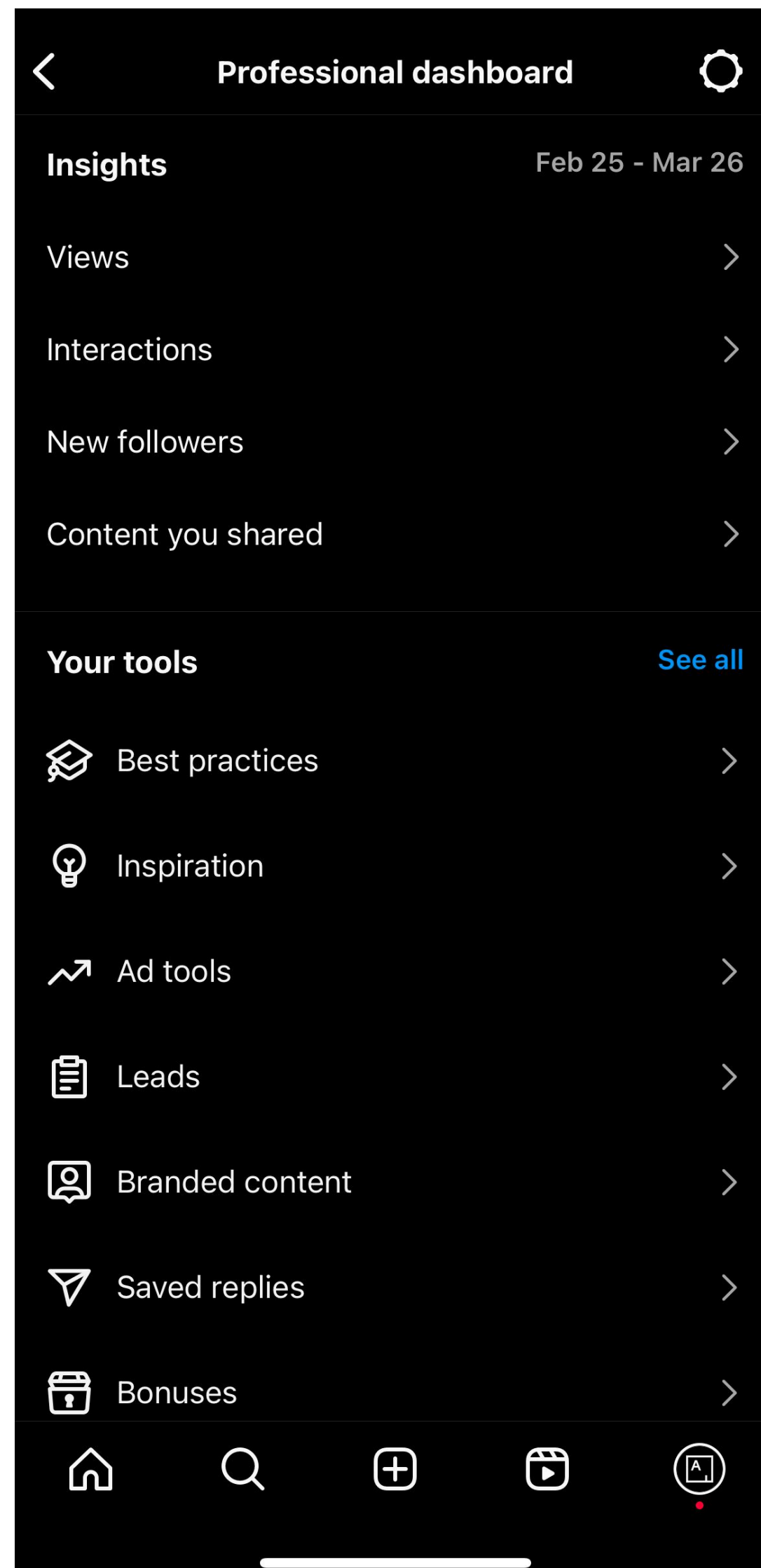


Cecilia Lamptey-Botchway, *Selfie*, 2023. © Artist Rights Society (ARS), New York.

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Building an Instagram presence

Building your Instagram presence can feel daunting, but we're here to make it easier. With the right approach, you can use Instagram efficiently to showcase your artists, engage collectors, and drive traffic to your Artsy page. While some galleries are experimenting with TikTok, if you're pressed for time, it's best to focus on the core channels that deliver the most value: Instagram, email, your website, and Artsy. These platforms work together to maximize visibility and sales, ensuring your efforts lead to real collector engagement. By prioritizing the right channels, you can build a strong digital strategy without spreading your resources too thin.



The first step to your gallery's Instagram success is setting up a business profile, which unlocks special commercialized features that are unavailable to standard accounts.

Instagram also introduced a new "Best Practices" tool with up to date guidelines on how to drive the best engagement in the app.

Keep reading to see how your gallery can take advantage of an Instagram business profile.



Make it easier for collectors to reach you.

Add your gallery's address and contact info to your profile.

Gain access to important analytics.

Understand how your content is performing, who your audience is, and what they're interested in. More specifically, you can:

- See your follower growth and demographics
- Understand your overall engagement analytics for your content (likes, reactions, comments, saves, and reach)

Direct collectors to key links and content.

Instagram now allows all users to add links in Stories using the Link sticker, making it easier to direct followers to your gallery's content. Many top-performing galleries on Artsy use Instagram to promote their Artsy shows, fair booths, and individual artworks, leveraging these new features to drive engagement. Additionally, Instagram now supports multiple links in your bio, letting you showcase different pages — such as your website, Artsy page, exhibition details, or an email sign-up — without relying on a third-party tool. However, services like Linktree, Later's Link in Bio, or solo.to still offer more customization and analytics for managing external links effectively.

How to create great content for your gallery's Instagram



Richard Bosman, *Cellphone* 8, 2021. © Artist Rights Society (ARS), New York.

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Step 1:

What is your brand?

- Are you a dealer, advisor, gallerist, or marketing professional?
- What makes your brand unique?
- Why would someone follow or engage with your gallery instead of your competitors?
- What resources can you provide to your followers?
- Do you have any access, expertise, or skills in areas they are (or could be) interested in?

What brand story do you want to tell — and to whom?

- What are you most passionate about? Could it be your artists, art history, aesthetics, the environment, or storytelling?
- When a new client walks into your physical space, how do you engage with them in person? How would you recreate that experience through social media?
- Who is your target audience? What do you know about them, and what assumptions can you make about them?

What is your brand's aesthetic?

- Consider color palettes, graphic styles, and typefaces. Do you prefer bright pops of color, soft hues, or monochromatic colors?
- You'll likely be sharing images of your artists' works on social media, so your gallery's brand will reflect their aesthetics.
- Are there other brands' profiles you refer to when describing your aesthetic?
- Look at your favorite brands, and study how they approach copy and design. What do you like most about what they do? Can you emulate them?

Who are your tastemakers?

- Do any of your artists have a large following? Are there members of your staff with strong independent social media presences that align with your brand?
- If so, involve them in your creative process. Ensure they're the strongest advocates for your gallery on your feed, as well as their personal feeds

Step 2: Create a Content Strategy

Now that you've identified your gallery's niche and formed an authentic brand persona, it's time to create a content strategy. This will help you engage and grow your audience, while also keeping you motivated and interested in making content. Share posts that you feel will engage your followers — and repeat what works. For example, if your audience consistently reacts positively to studio visits with your artists on Instagram Live, prioritize doing those regularly.

New: Collaborative posts

Collab posts are a powerful way to boost engagement, as Instagram prioritizes content from individuals over businesses — often limiting organic reach for brands to encourage paid promotion. By partnering with artists, collectors, or art advisors, galleries can navigate this algorithmic bias and expand their reach, increasing the likelihood of their content being seen by a broader audience.

Cross-promote your programming

As you know, curating and launching a show, viewing room, or fair booth takes time. Make sure everyone in your audience — regardless of how they follow your gallery — stays informed by sharing updates across all your channels (e.g., social media, email, and website).

For strong performance, structure your content for easy engagement. Leading with a clear headline and subheadline allows your audience to quickly assess the post, decide whether to engage immediately, or explore further. Try this approach for your next exhibition opening announcement and see how it impacts your reach and interaction.

Don't forget to include direct links for browsing the show, viewing room, or fair booth. Tag your artists and curators, and encourage them to repost to maximize visibility.

Broadcast Channels and Threads

Instagram continues to prioritize accounts that adopt its latest features, including Threads and Broadcast Channels.

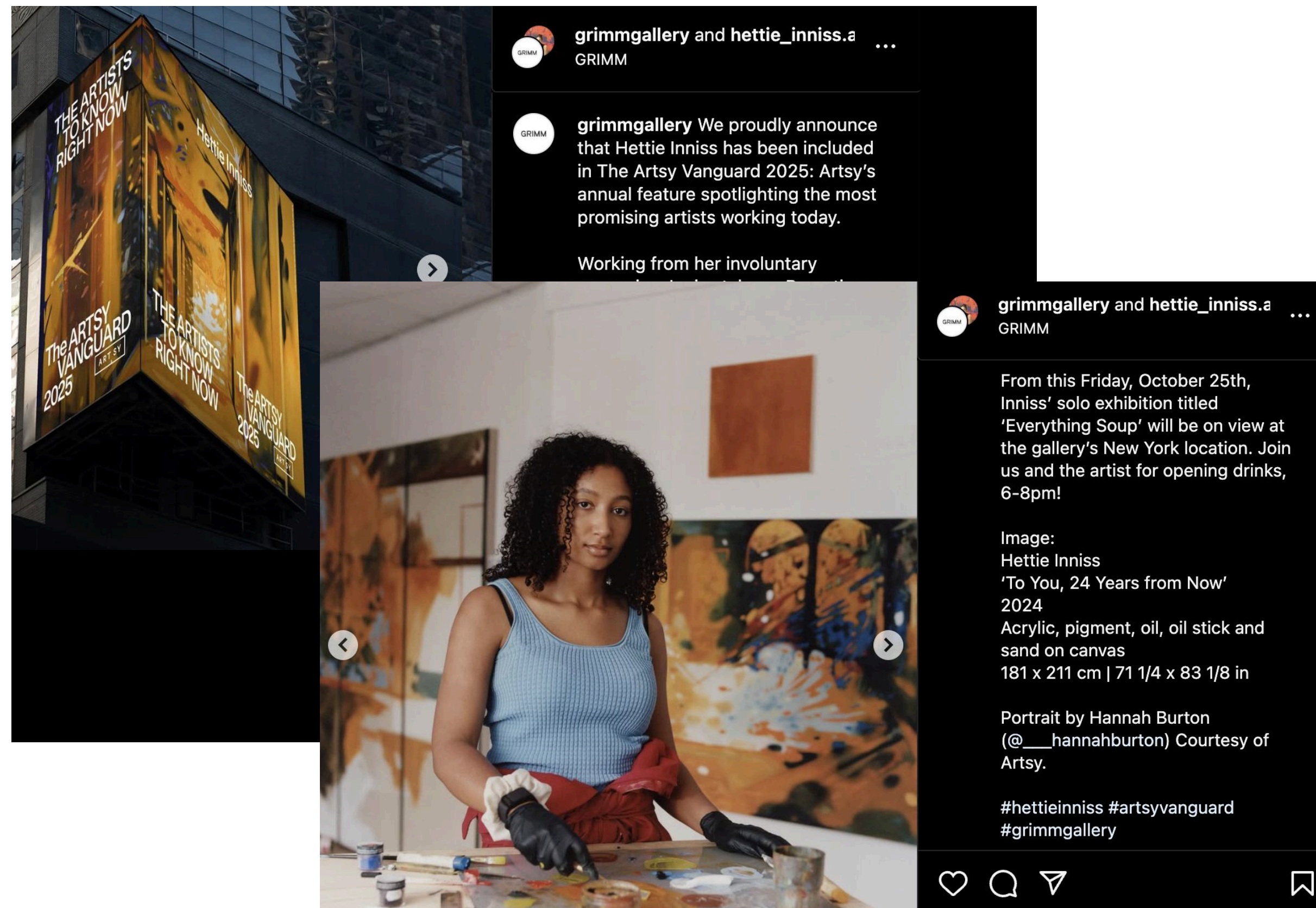
Broadcast Channels

A direct way to engage with your most loyal followers, providing real-time updates on openings, exhibitions, and exclusive content. This one-to-many messaging feature allows you to send updates directly to your followers' inboxes. A Broadcast Channel works like a private news feed where you can post text updates, images, voice notes, and even polls. For galleries, this is an ideal tool for sharing exhibition announcements, behind-the-scenes previews, collector insights, and artist features. Unlike regular posts, channel updates land directly in followers' DMs, making them highly visible. Use this feature to keep your audience engaged between shows and drive foot traffic to openings.

Threads

Instagram's text-based conversation app lets you engage in real-time discussions with artists, collectors, and the art community. Think of it as a digital salon—where you can share new artist information, comment on industry trends, and foster deeper dialogue beyond visuals. Posts can include text, images, and short videos, making it a versatile tool for storytelling. As a gallery, use Threads to share curator notes, start discussions about artworks, or even provide live commentary during art fairs. The more active and engaging your Threads presence, the more visibility your Instagram account gains.

Partner Spotlight: Grimm Gallery



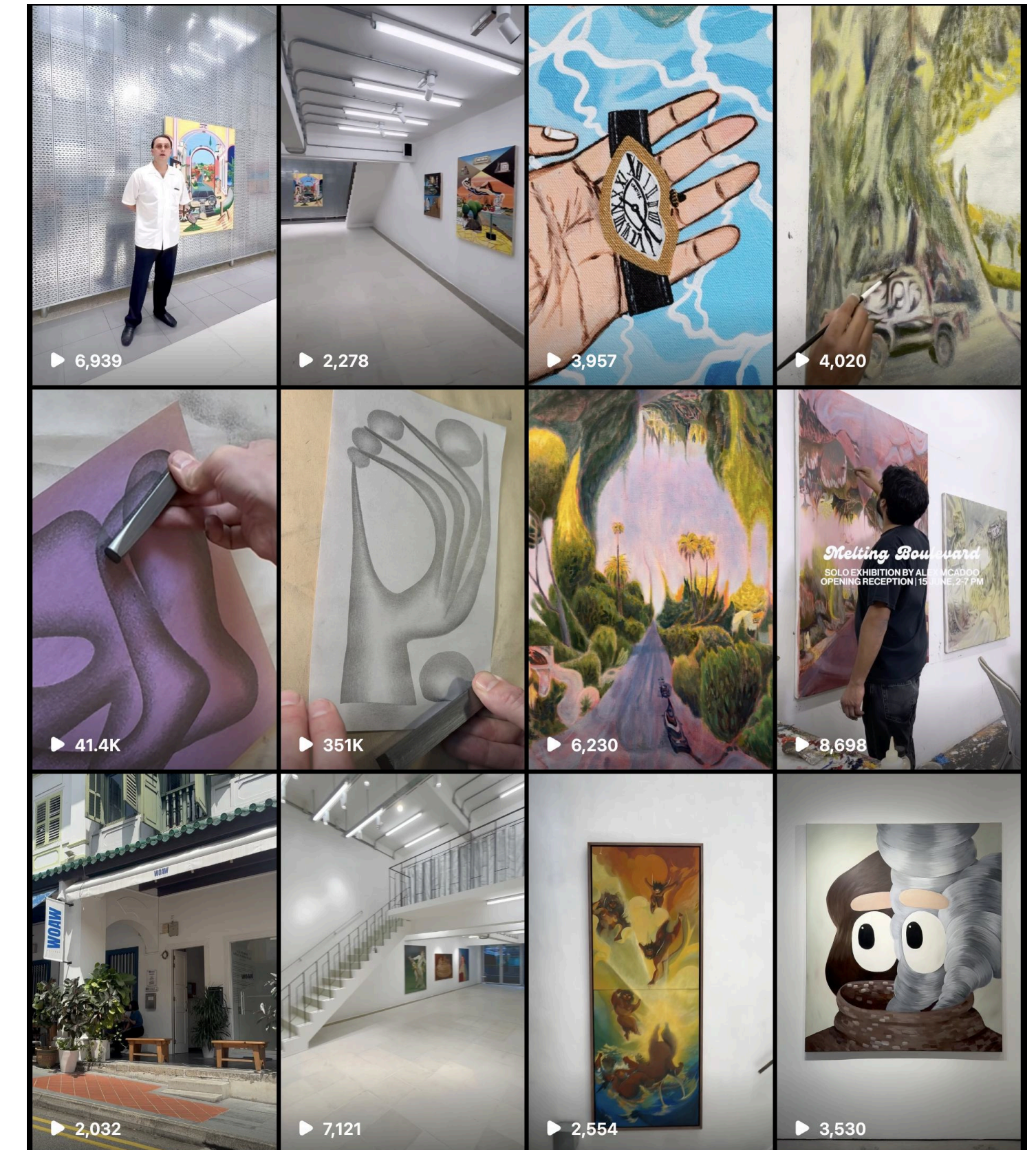
Grimm regularly shares news of its artists, such as The Artsy Vanguard 2025 artist Hettie Inniss, through Instagram, using strong captions and high-quality images to capture attention. When promoting Hettie’s solo exhibition, the gallery paired striking high-quality imagery with a compelling caption that highlighted her artistic practice and exhibition details. They also leveraged Instagram’s collaboration feature, adding Hettie as a “collaborator” to expand their reach and engage both their followers and hers. This strategic approach not only drove awareness but also directed interested collectors to explore her works on Artsy.

Step 3: Experiment with Video

Managing an Instagram presence has its challenges. There's only so much time in the day, and the steady stream of product updates means you're constantly needing to learn new features. In recent years, Instagram has added a slew of new tools to help businesses, including Instagram Shopping, Shopping in Reels, and Insights for Reels and Lives.

According to Adam Mosseri, the head of Instagram, the platform "is no longer just a square photo-sharing app." Rather, the company is now focusing heavily on its on-platform video, shopping, and creator products. Its algorithm is already making changes to reflect these new priorities, showing users in-feed video recommendations of topics they're not following.

You can maximize engagement by developing more video content for your Instagram channels. While video can take more time to execute, it also gives you the ability to share complex, in-depth stories that can't be conveyed in a single image. It's also one of the most effective ways to create experiential marketing for your followers, as it gives them something to engage with and remember.



Courtesy of Woaw, Artsy Partner. They drive strong engagement with a wide range of video content that follows best practices.

Instagram Reels

What are Instagram Reels?

Short-form videos up to 3 minutes (180 seconds) long.

Where are they?

Discoverable on Stories, home feeds, the Explore page, and your profile's Reels tab.

What could galleries use them for?

Behind-the-scenes footage of an artist creating a work; a walk-through of your current show; an artist or curator discussing a show; snippets from

Instagram Story Videos

What are Instagram Story videos?

Short, casual, promotional, and entertaining videos with a variety of editing options including normal video, boomerang, superzoom, rewind, and hands-free.

Where are they?

The Stories feed and by clicking on your profile image.

What could galleries use them for?

Promotional and teaser content, as well as engaging, interactive elements like audience polls or Q&A. They are valuable when used authentically—favoring spontaneous, unfiltered content over heavily designed templates. This can include installation imagery, video snippets, and behind-the-scenes moments for engagement. Keep in mind that using link stickers may reduce reach, as Instagram deprioritizes content that directs users off-platform. Prioritizing in-app engagement can help sustain visibility and interaction.

Instagram Video Feed Posts

What are Instagram video posts?

Short-form videos up to one minute, that are uploaded within a carousel post of other photographs or videos. Beginning in 2023, Instagram changed its product so that all videos are posted as Reels. You can get around this by nestling a video within a carousel post.

Where are they?

Discoverable through your profile page, home feed, and the Explore page.

What could galleries use them for?

Behind-the-scenes footage of an artist creating a work; an artist or curator discussing a show; “howto” clips; video press; and snippets from panel discussions.

Best practices for video on Instagram



As a part of Black-Owned Galleries Now on Artsy, our month-long global showcase of selected Artsy gallery partners and the Black artists they champion, we collaborated with Hannah Troare gallery. This type of organic content showing behind the scenes of an exhibition drive great engagement.

Grab your audience's attention with an eye-catching cover image.

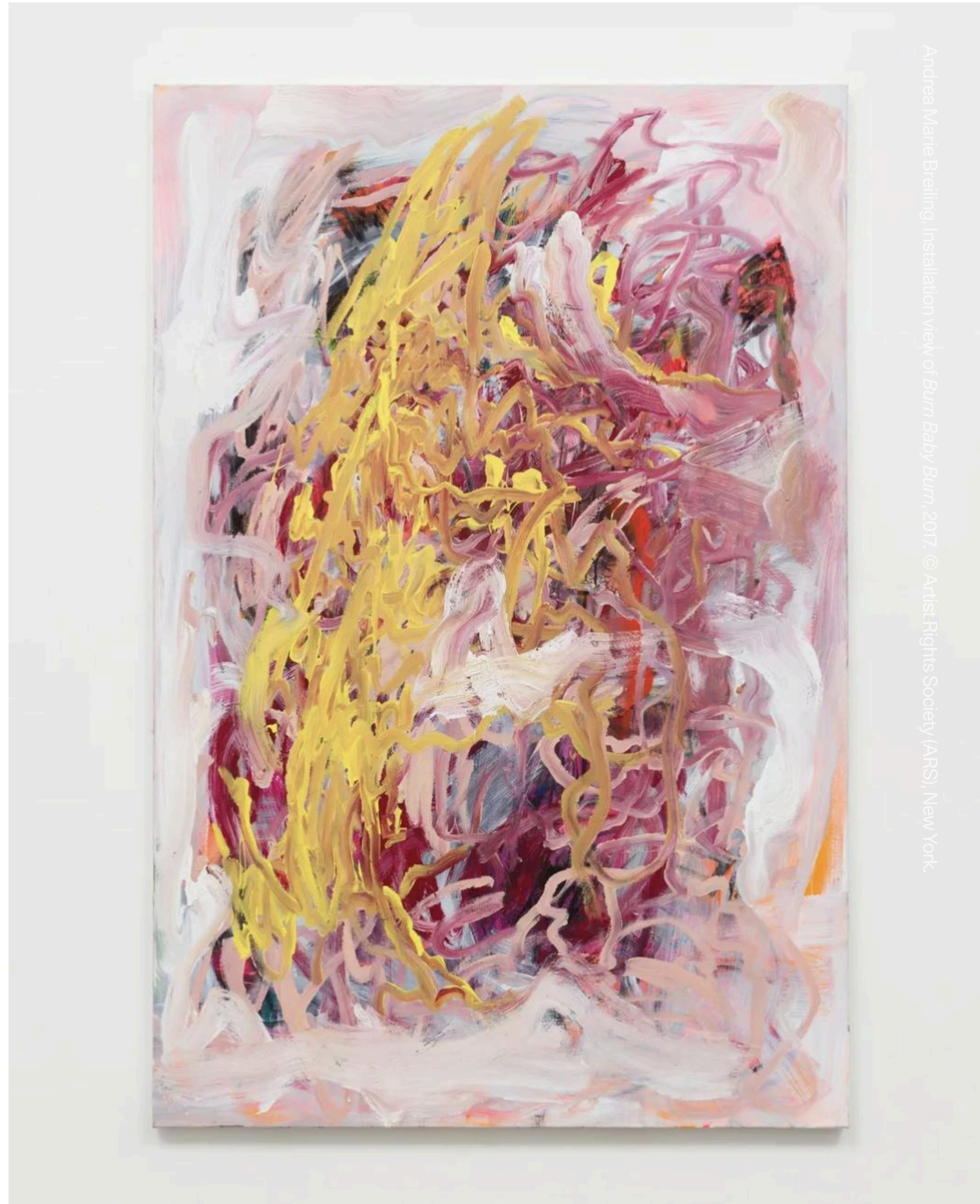
Select a photo that captures the overall message of your video and will make scrolling Instagram users want to stop and look at your content. Also, do your best to hook your audience quickly with the video—the first three seconds are key to grabbing attention.

Add subtitles or closed captions.

According to Instagram, 60% of Stories are watched with the sound on — which means that 40% are experienced without sound. Most social platforms prevent videos from autoplaying with audio, so if a user scrolls through their feed, they will only hear a video's sound if they tap the frame.

Therefore, your videos can't rely too much on audio. Create subtitles (or use auto-generated closed captions) so that your audience can enjoy your video with or without sound. Plus, this will make your content more accessible for people who are hard of hearing.

Step 4: Take great photographs



High-quality photos are the foundation of any strong Instagram presence, so photography is a skill worth working on. Start with our recommendations for taking better Instagram photos. There are many image types that work well on Instagram – the most important thing to remember is to use a mix of angles and shot styles to keep your content fresh and dynamic. When shooting your exhibitions, our social media team suggests

- Wide angle images of the installation, allowing the viewer to get a sense of what it feels like to be in the room
- Centered shots of your artworks installed on a wall (or floor, plinths for three-dimensional works)
- Cropped shots of your artworks, at a range of depths, to capture all of the delighting details
- Angled shots, to show off any framing or special corners of works when relevant
- Shots featuring a human somewhere in the frame, to help viewers understand the scale of the artworks

Step 5: Schedule your posts



When dealing with social media algorithms, consistency is key. The Instagram algorithm shows users the content they're most likely to find engaging at the best time of day for them. This mechanism rewards accounts that consistently share high-quality content—which is all the more reason to schedule your content and pay close attention to what your followers respond to most.

Generally, weekdays from 3–6 p.m. and Monday mornings tend to perform well, but be sure to check Instagram Insights tied to your Instagram business account for your audience's peak activity times—and keep their time zones in mind. Posting just before these peak hours can help your content gain early engagement, improving its overall visibility.

While there is no minimum or maximum amount of content to share that guarantees success, it is important to ensure you consistently post content that receives good engagement.

That said, don't overthink it. The days of a perfectly aesthetic Instagram feed are over, as users lean into authentic content that looks like it was made by real humans.

Artsy's social media team uses Later to pre-schedule Instagram posts and dig into analytics.

How to improve engagement



Kristen Deirup, View, 2024. © Artist Rights Society (ARS), New York.

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Engagement

You take a picture and upload it to Instagram. An hour goes by, three likes. Two hours go by, five likes. We've all been there — you think a post is going to be your best yet, and it gets almost no engagement. What is happening?

Your posts aren't getting likes because they are not being seen by all of your followers. When you upload a post to Instagram, it gets surfaced to a sampling of your following that engages with your content regularly. The engagement (e.g., comments and likes) from that sample determines whether it will continue to get served to your audience or beyond (e.g., on the Explore page or as "Suggested Content" in your feed), ultimately determining the total possible engagement. In other words, if users don't immediately engage with your post, the post will not be surfaced to a wider audience.

Try our tips to improve your post engagement.

Captions

Keep them concise yet engaging — shorter captions (under 30 words) tend to perform better, but storytelling can be effective if it's authentic and adds value. Use a conversational, personal tone and include relevant keywords for discoverability. Asking questions or using calls to action (e.g., "Swipe to see more" or "What do you think?") can encourage interaction.

Get to know your audience

Think of engagement on social media as a reciprocal relationship. Your followers take the time to engage with your content — and it's important for you to engage and get to know them as well. Set aside 30 minutes a week to respond to comments, explore and engage with your followers' content, look at your top performing and lowest performing posts, and see what times your audience is online with Instagram Analytics. Also, regularly engage your audience directly by giving them the opportunity to ask you questions — and answer your questions (e.g., with Story polls).

Use Instagram account tags, hashtags, and geotags

Tags are powerful search tools that can increase your account's discoverability. Instagram users can follow hashtags, view account tags, and search geotags and hashtags, making them valuable for reaching new audiences. To maximize reach, use a mix of broad but relevant hashtags (e.g., #ContemporaryArt) and niche-specific ones (e.g., #WatercolorPortraits). Avoid oversaturated tags like #art alone, and instead, target mid-size, art-focused hashtags — aiming for 10–15 per post. Additionally, geotagging events and gallery locations can help attract collectors and local audiences.

Hashtags

What they are: A string of characters placed after a pound sign; for example, #TheArtsyVanguard or #ChrisOfili. Hashtags are followable and searchable, making it easy for users to navigate to your profile and content, even if they would never have come across your gallery or artists otherwise.

How to use them: Place relevant and specific hashtags to your content at the end of your posts (or in a comment) and use them purposefully and sparingly. Ideally, you want to find a hashtag that has posts, but not too many, to ensure you won't get lost. For example, #art has 829 million posts, which means your post will probably get lost. Meanwhile, #caribbeanoilpainting has almost no posts, suggesting there aren't too many followers for it— but #caribbeanart would be a much better hashtag since it has over 1,000 posts.

Geotags

What they are: Searchable location tags that associate your content with all content tagged with that location.

How to use them: Add your location to a photo, story, or video on Instagram. Geotags can be helpful to have for your gallery, and for events such as art fairs, because they enable users to view all content tied to that particular location or event, making them more likely to discover your feed.

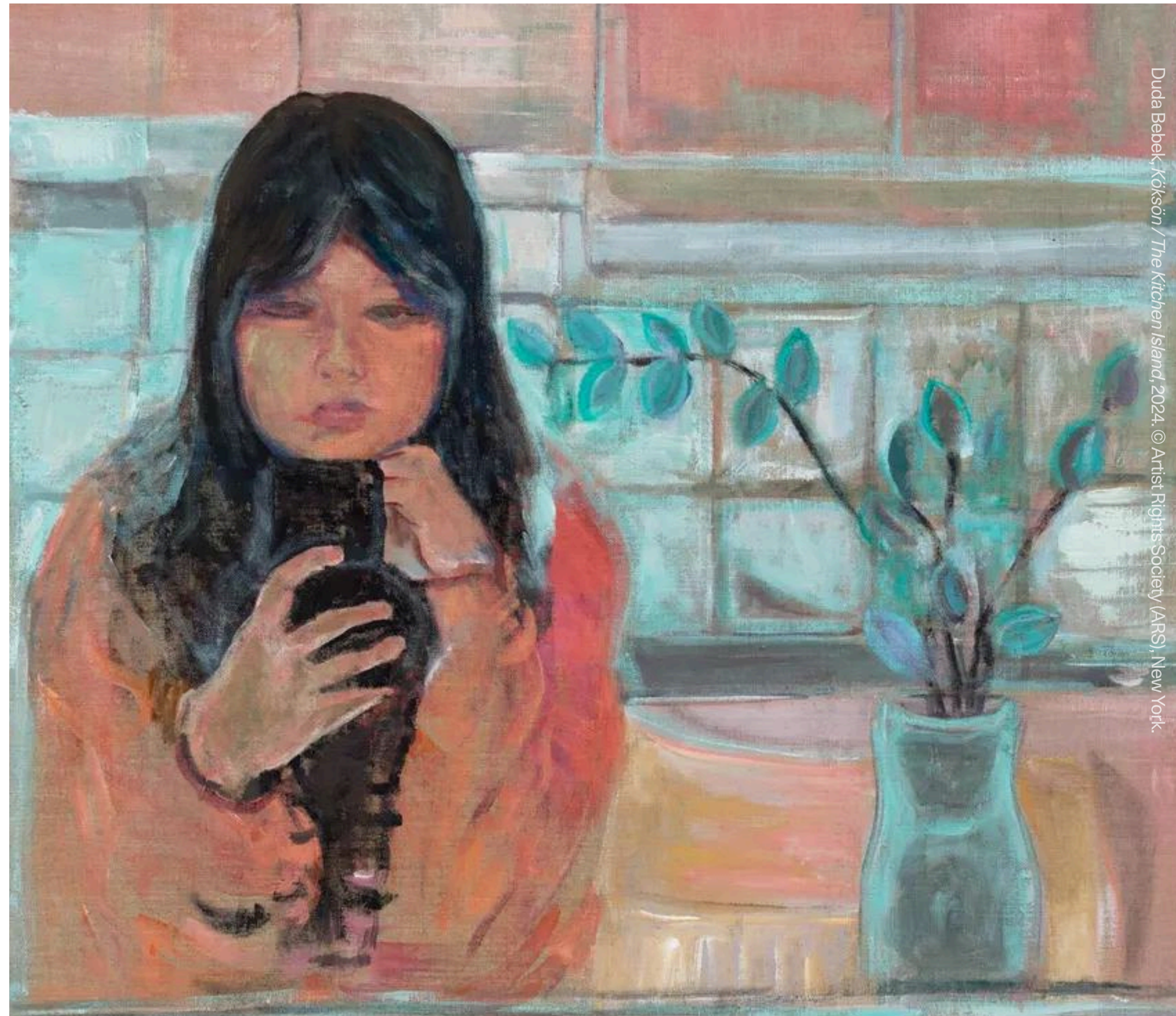
Account Tags

What they are: Tags to connect someone else's account with your content, such as a post or a video. Account tags are discoverable on both your profile and the tagged person's profile, making it easy for users who browse tagged photos to navigate to your profile and content, even if they would never have come across your gallery or artists otherwise.

How to use them: Tag your artists with social media followings when you make a post about them and ask them to repost and tag your gallery in content they share that pertains to you. Also tag companies and brands when you repost their content or share relevant content that pertains to them— oftentimes, Artsy gallery partners tag us in their posts.

Pro tip: Blind tagging is a powerful way to tag relevant accounts in your Instagram Stories— invisibly. You can blind tag up to 10 accounts per Story slide, which allows the tagged accounts to repost your Story, but doesn't clog your Story with handles typed out in text. To blind tag, type @accountname as you usually would, and use your finger to drag the name to the edge of the screen until it disappears.

Instagram and Artsy



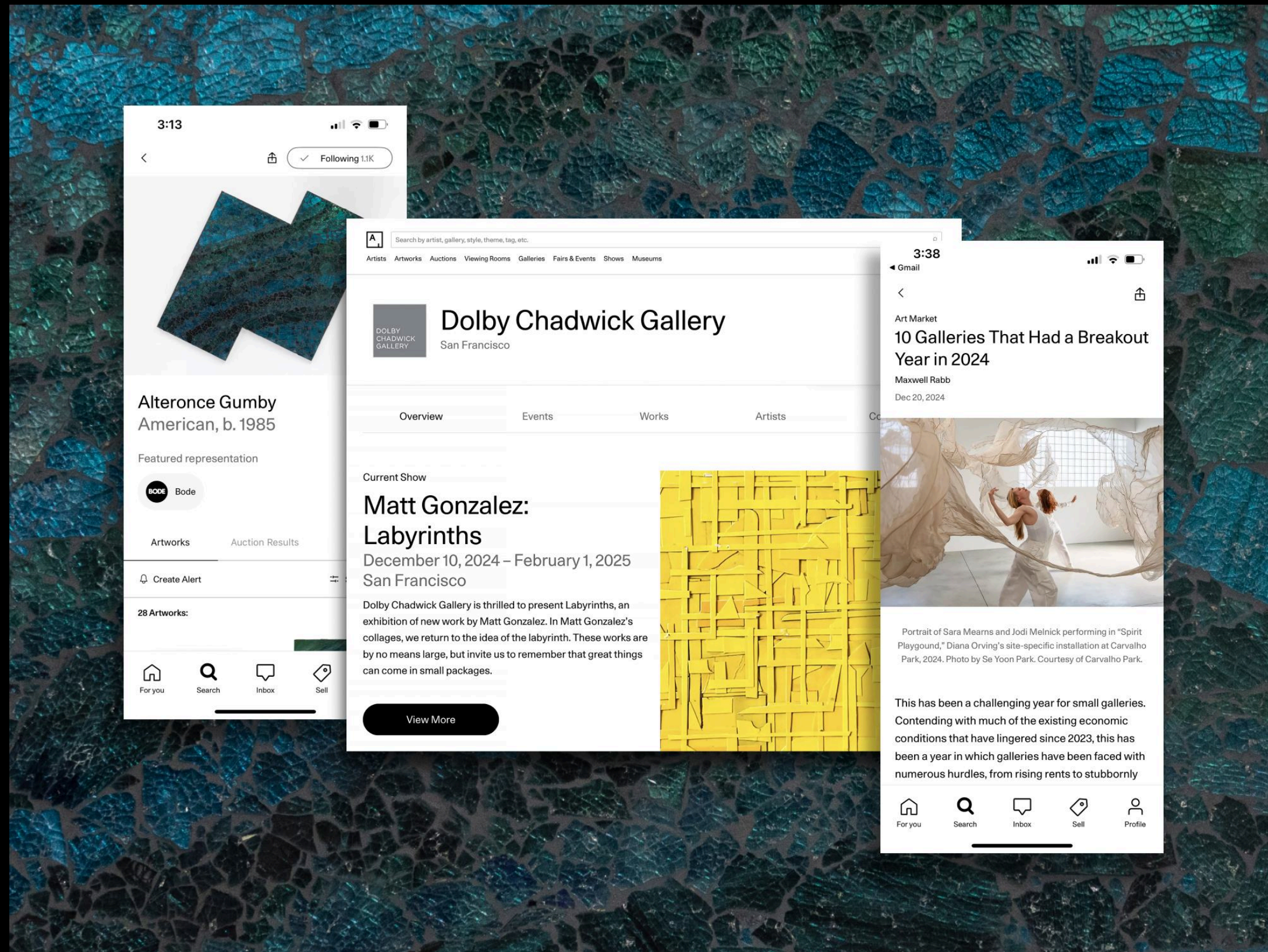
A powerful duo for growth

Instagram is a valuable tool for visibility, but it works best as part of a broader strategy that includes Artsy. While social media helps you build awareness and engage with followers, Artsy turns that attention into sales by connecting you directly with high-intent collectors.

- From discovery to conversion: Use Instagram to showcase your artists and exhibitions, then drive collectors to your Artsy page, where they can inquire and purchase.
- A trusted marketplace: Artsy attracts serious buyers actively looking for works to collect – offering a direct path to sales beyond Instagram’s likes and comments.
- Optimizing resources: Instead of choosing between Instagram and Artsy, leverage both. Instagram expands reach, while Artsy provides the infrastructure to turn engagement into revenue.

For galleries focused on efficiency and impact, integrating Artsy with Instagram isn’t an either/or decision – it’s a smart, strategic way to maximize impact across channels.

Conclusion



Social media is an essential tool for galleries to build their brand and showcase their program. But as consumer engagement shifts and platform algorithms evolve, content creators — galleries included — have less control over how and when they reach their audience.

While Instagram and other platforms remain powerful for discovery and engagement, they shouldn't be your only means of staying connected with collectors. A multichannel strategy is key.

On Artsy, your followers — both collectors and industry professionals — receive automatic updates when you add new works, launch shows, or highlight key artists. Unlike social media, where visibility is dictated by ever-changing algorithms, Artsy ensures your updates reach the right audience without the uncertainty of platform changes.

Unlike Instagram, where your content reaches a broad and less predictable audience, Artsy connects you directly with a network of confirmed art collectors and enthusiasts — people actively looking to discover, follow, and purchase artwork.

By balancing a strong presence on social media with direct engagement channels like Artsy, your website, and email, you can build lasting relationships that aren't at the mercy of shifting algorithms.

For more information on Artsy's gallery partnerships, [click here](#).

Thank you



Kristen Deirup, View, 2024. © Artist Rights Society (ARS), New York.

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