



# WHITE WALLS: AN ARTIST'S FIRST STEPS

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*With visual artist & gallerist Breann Ritchie*

# WHAT DOES SUCCESS AS AN ARTIST MEAN TO YOU? . . .

- *Are you looking to supplement your income with sales from your work?*
- *Are you interested in committing to your practice full time?*
- *What do you envision is your career trajectory?*
  - *Not-for-profit, Private, Public, online galleries, personal websites*
- *Does your work communicate a narrative/message to your audience that you feel is important to explore? Is the work a form of activism for you?*
- *Do your pieces function as a collection or stand-alone works?*
- *How are your pieces presented?*
  - *Wall-hanging, sculpture in the round, new media, temporary installation*
- *Documentation, Press and writing about your work*

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Art is never finished, only abandoned.

*-Da Vinci*

# CAREER TRAJECTORIES ...

## ➤ Three major sectors

- Not-for-profit/artist-run-centres
- Private/Commercial Galleries
- Public Galleries/Spaces

## ➤ Private/Commercial

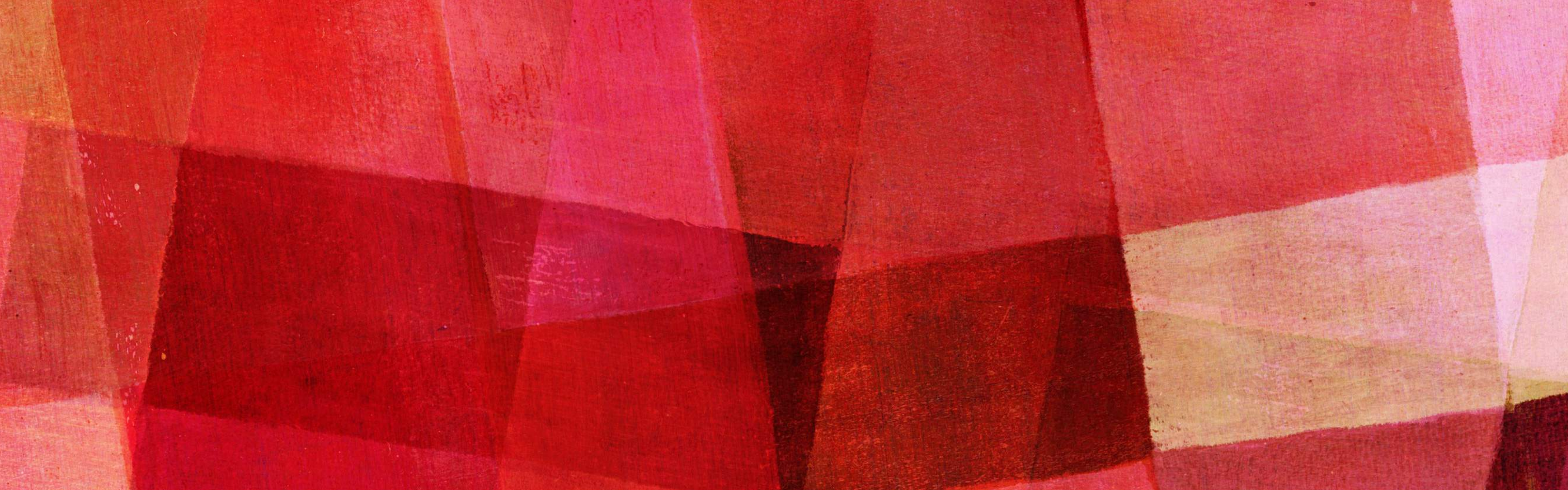
- Commission, contracts, collectors
- Sales and reach
- Working with art dealers
- Meeting demand for your work

## ➤ Not-for-profit

- Artists working with artists
- Reliant on grants for content/work creation and exhibition

## ➤ Public Galleries/Spaces

- Permanent installation
- Public sales, major permanent collections
- Contributing to historical narratives/in conversation with other artists/works, in conversation with public/community
- Educational attribute/ contribution to zeitgeist



# PREPPING YOUR BODY OF WORK

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# PREP, PREP, PREP...

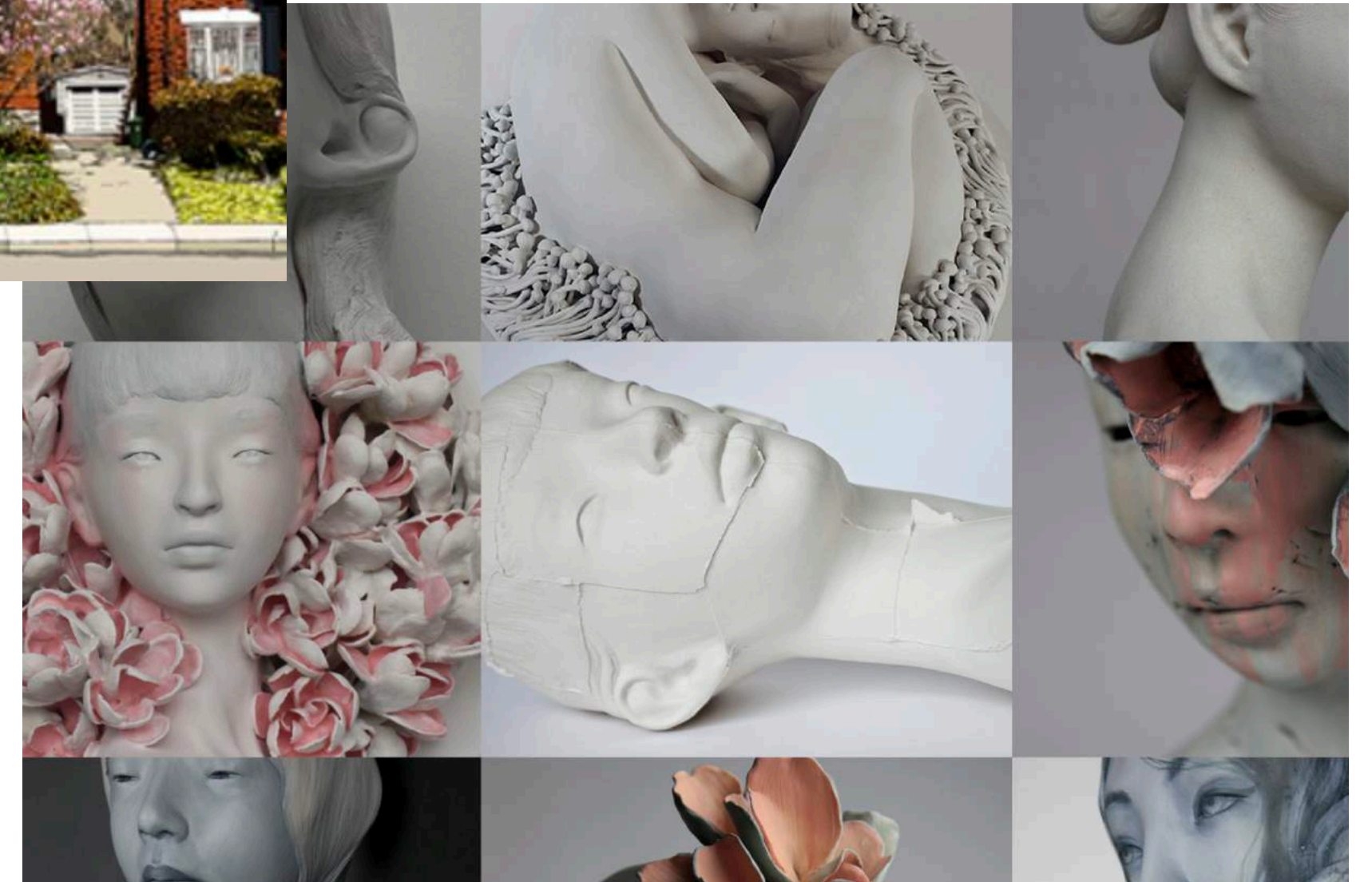
- Is the work cohesive? Do the pieces function as a collection?
- Is there an underlying theme/message/media?
- Do you have commitment to your style or message?
- Is the work wired/stored in a professional way to prevent damage?
- Documentation of the work (images, video etc.)
- Artist Statement, Bio, CV
  
- Invitations to gallerists for studio visits
- Submitting to gallery rosters/calls/ shows/ events

# GUIDING QUESTIONS FOR CREATING A COHESIVE SERIES/BODY OF WORK

- Can you describe the work in one to two sentences?
- What most excites you about creating these pieces/new series?
- What is resonating with viewers of the work?
- What is new? What has surprised you? What discoveries have you made?
- What ideas have sparked you to create? Where is the inspiration stemming from?
- What perspectives have I forgotten to explore?
- Why are you creating this work? To sell, to exhibit or for personal growth/exploration?



How to be sorry  
but not sorry enough  
not to do it again





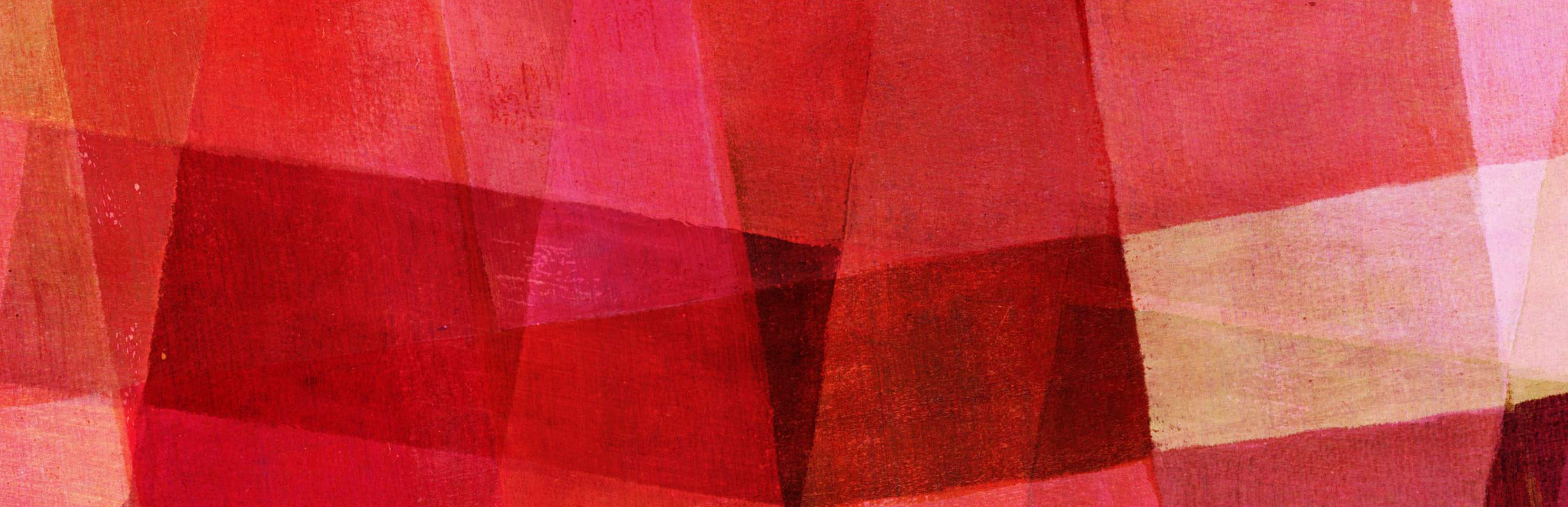
## ***What contributes to a "Body of Work"?***

- Cohesion can be foundational or loosely related. It can be found in media, meaning, or mark-making.
- The pieces and their narratives may take on a life of their own. The message is in the eye of the beholder. This is important for the way your work resonates and gains interest/viewership and ultimately a more widely broadcast message.
- Do you have a commitment to style? Are you branding your content? The viewer wants to recognize you and share in the conversation you're having.
- What is your chosen media? Where does your practice have roots? Are you still experimenting?
- What promotional outlet best highlights your work?

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Art is not what you see but what you make  
others see...

*-Degas*



# **CALLS FOR SUBMISSION**

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# SUBMIT, SUBMIT, SUBMIT . . .

- Calls tend to be very specific so make sure you adhere to the guidelines
- Artist Statement, Bio, CV
- High quality images/video - represent the work appropriately/accurately
- Submitting to Juried Shows - weighted for excellence
- Submitting to Member Shows - gallery membership and community
- Submitting to Vendor Events - is this the appropriate venue for your work?
- Submitting to Gallery Programming (Public, NFP), mission statements and language, grants and resonance/relevance
- Include press on your CV
- If at first you don't succeed try, try again

## IMPORTANT TO NOTE...

- Some commercial galleries only have specific times when they are accepting applications for their artist roster
- Do not email a gallery with a submission until you have thoroughly investigated their website and have an understanding on how they operate in the "art market".
- You have to discover whether the gallery is a good fit for you and your work
- What do they offer you? What is their commission rate? Do they have an established collector base? What is included in their artist "package" (ie. solo/group show biannually, monthly/bimonthly/quarterly promotion, website traffic, standards of professionalism)?
- How well attended are their openings? How frequent? Have you been? What press is available? What about their community/viewership?
- What is expected of you as the artist? (ie. contracts)
- Yearly review and connecting/collaborating with your gallerist

An abstract painting featuring a complex composition of overlapping, semi-transparent rectangular and triangular shapes in various shades of red, orange, and pink. The brushstrokes are visible, giving the image a textured, layered appearance.

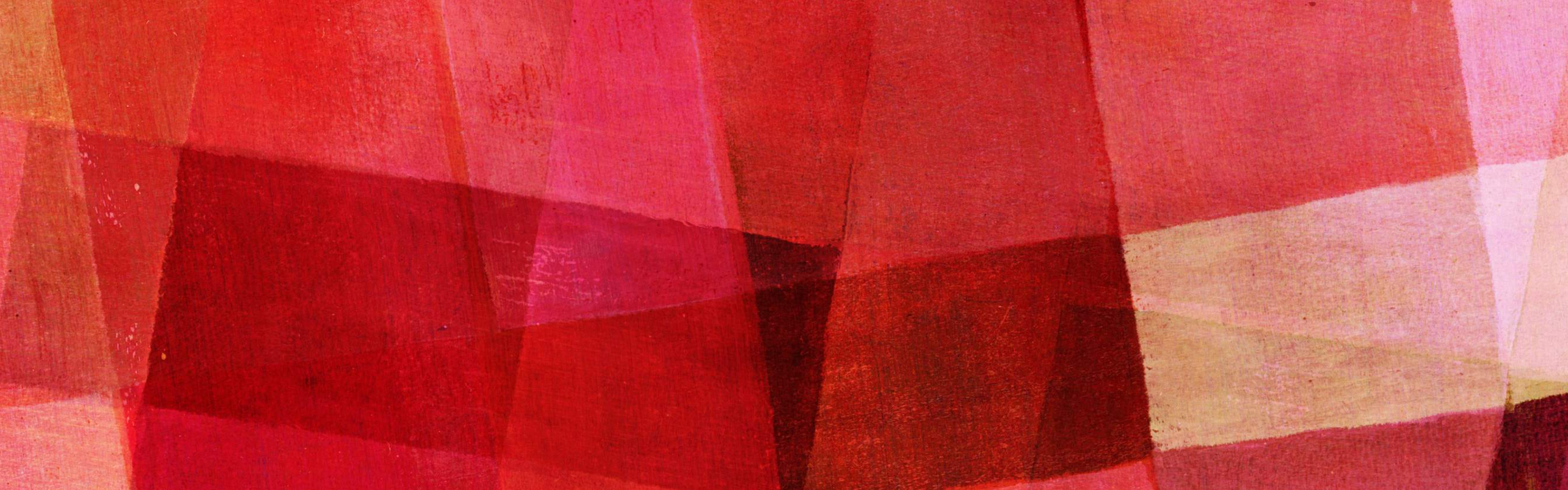
*COMMERCIAL  
GALLERIES*

An abstract painting with a dark, moody palette of blues and greens. It features large, overlapping, circular and organic shapes that create a sense of depth and movement. The brushwork is expressive and textured.

*PUBLIC SPACES*

An abstract painting with a vibrant palette of greens and yellows. It consists of large, overlapping, organic shapes that resemble foliage or natural forms. The brushstrokes are thick and textured, creating a sense of depth and movement.

*ARTIST-RUN CENTRES/  
CHARITABLE ORGS*



# PROMO AND PRESS

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# PROMO, PRESS AND PERSONALITY...

- Social media presence and branding
  - Exposure to a wider audience, paid-for promo, sell direct
- Online gallery platforms
  - Educated collector traffic
  - Fees/commission/shipping/prints
- Personal websites - professional standards
- Events
  - Attending, contributing work, volunteering
- Memberships/community
- Collaborations
- Gallery press
- Documenting events
- Are you top of mind?
- Are you connecting with your audience?
- How are you talking about your work?



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There are no rules. That is how art is born, how breakthroughs happen. Go against the rules or ignore the rules. That is what invention is about.

*-Helen Frankenthaler*

# TIPS FOR SHARING

- Make sure the images you take of your work are high definition, 300 dpi and at least 1200x1500 (the larger the better - you can always edit them to make them smaller if needed)
- Make sure the lighting correctly represents the work's colours, textures and presence
- If you are planning to sell your work establish a price list for the pieces based on what your peers/ contemporaries are selling their work for. You can consider time spent, price by series or work with a square inch formula.
- Take videos! Video is the fastest growing medium on social media. It is important to get your work out there. Create videos that work in tandem with your pieces and reveal something precious to the viewer/collector. They want to join the journey and share in the secret.
- Stay organized! You can plan your posts out and schedule them in advance and cross-post to maintain a brand (HOOTSUITE). Keep all images in a folder that is easily accessed. Make sure your accounts and website are up-to-date. Label the images with the name of the pieces and the size for quick reference.



# WORKING WITH WHITE WALLS

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*Career trajectories and gallery representation*

# GALLERY REPRESENTATION...

- ▶ Working with art dealers
- ▶ Sales and what to expect
- ▶ Contracts/obligations
- ▶ Reach and established collector contacts
- ▶ Work on consignment/work purchased
- ▶ Commission
- ▶ Wholesale/artist agencies
- ▶ Managing how your work is represented
- ▶ Working with third parties (ie. interior designers, art consultants)
- ▶ Stay connected, studio visits/ feedback

**WHAT DOES SUCCESS AS AN ARTIST LOOK LIKE TO YOU?**

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**Q&A**