

ART SY

Success Story: Mark Moore Fine Art

HOW MARK MOORE TRANSFORMED HIS BRICK-AND-MORTAR SPACE
INTO A THRIVING ONLINE GALLERY



Installation view of Zemer Peled, *Nomad*, at Mark Moore Gallery, Los Angeles, 2016.

Courtesy of Mark Moore Fine Art.

What's Covered

INTRODUCTION	3
ABOUT MARK MOORE FINE ART	4
THE CHALLENGE	5
STEPS FOR SUCCESS	6
WHAT'S NEXT FOR MARK MOORE FINE ART?	14

How Mark Moore Transformed His Brick-and-Mortar Space into a Thriving Online Gallery

Mark Moore opened the first iteration of his gallery in 1984 in a large, exposed-brick building in Long Beach, California. He exhibited both primary and secondary market works, and spent his days supporting himself and his artists' careers in the way he knew best—maintaining the space, curating exhibitions, and traveling to art fairs around the world.

But 18 months ago, feeling too preoccupied with excessive operational costs and responsibilities to dedicate enough time to his artists, Moore closed his most recent brick-and-mortar storefront in Culver City to open Mark Moore Fine Art—an evolution of Mark Moore Gallery that operates almost exclusively online.

Since closing his physical gallery space and going online, Moore has connected with collectors around the world, expanded his gallery's reach, and spent more time supporting his artists—all at a fraction of the financial and emotional costs of owning a brick-and-mortar.

How did Mark Moore transform his physical enterprise into a thriving online gallery, and what role did Artsy play along the way?



Exterior of Mark Moore Gallery.

About Mark Moore Fine Art

When Mark Moore’s gallery venture began, it was a traditional brick-and-mortar that sought to showcase emerging and mid-career artists. In order to do this successfully while sustaining the costs of a brick-and-mortar footprint, Moore had to build a program that, he explains, struck a “balance between the resale market and the primary market...using the profits to further the goals we had for the emerging and mid-career artists program.”

Throughout the years, Moore has overseen the enterprise through various iterations, including the launch of 5790projects, a curatorial partnership that supports unrepresented contemporary artists from the West Coast. At its height, the gallery had two locations and was putting on 20 exhibitions a year, selling works by artists ranging from Gerhard Richter to Mark Bennett to Yoram Wolberger.



Mark Moore Fine Art’s Mark Moore.

The Challenge

Beginning in 2008, Moore noticed that “the face-to-face dealings I had with clients were starting to decrease by 10% every year,” he remembers. Eight years later, he had an aha! moment.

Moore realized he needed to shift his strategy away from investing a lot of money in a “piece of real estate that was being un-utilized outside of one day per month for the opening show,” he says. “It occurred to me I might be just as effective in reaching my audience and clients if I set up a physical exhibition in a space for just one day, photographed it, and then made that my online exhibition.”

With that in mind, Moore redirected his focus from operating his brick-and-mortar presence to building out a robust digital strategy, seeking out the support and tools that would best position his gallery for online success.

Today, Mark Moore Fine Art exists primarily in the ether, dominating the digital sphere through its website, Artsy profile, and social media accounts—including an Instagram with nearly 7,000 followers.

Flexible and cost-efficient, this model may be the gallery’s most exciting to date. Below, Moore outlines the steps that led to his success.

Steps for Success

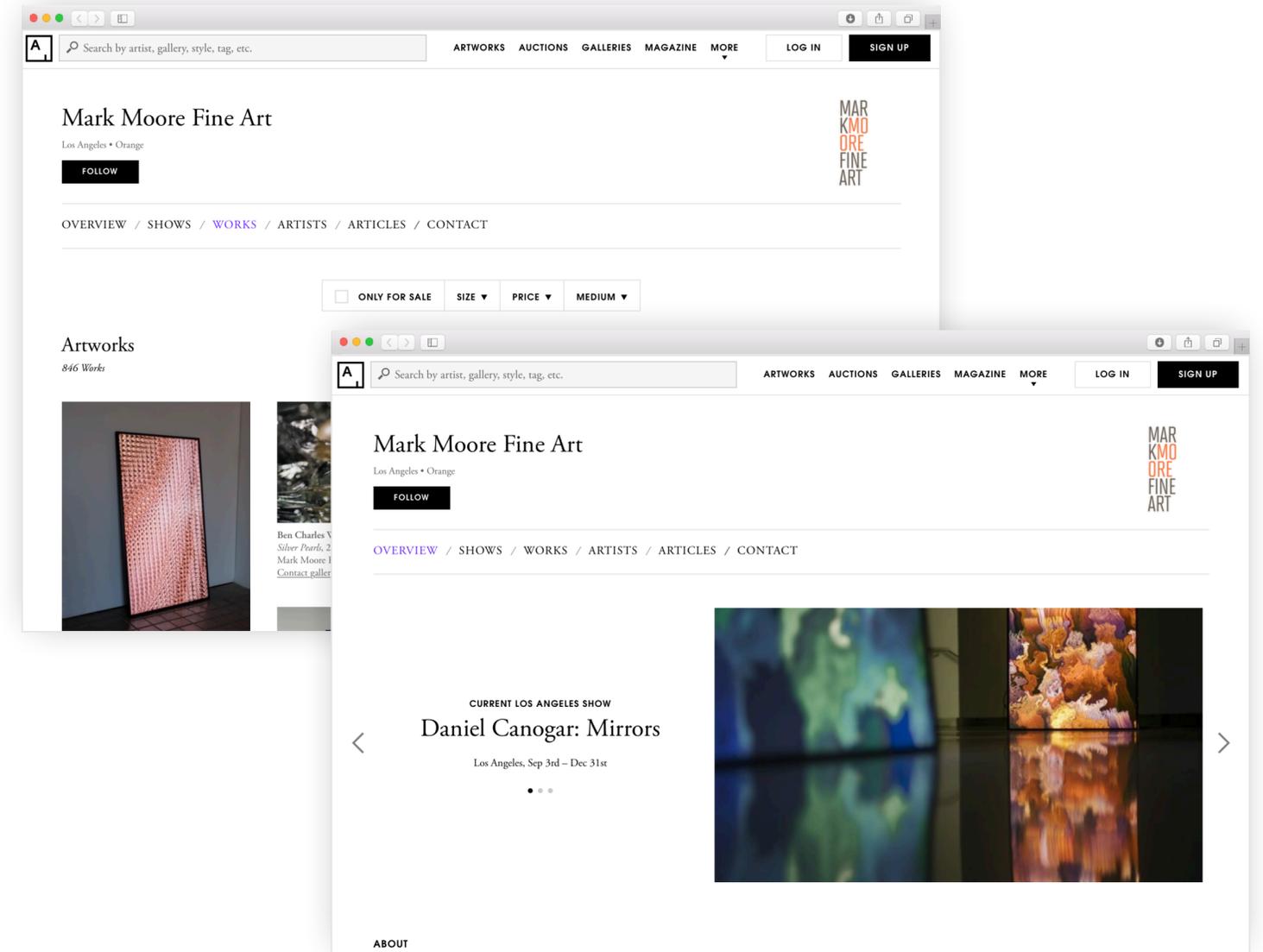
1. BE A PIONEER

An early adopter, Moore has constantly sought ways to optimize his gallery, whether that means increasing the efficiency of the business or optimizing visibility for the artists it represents.

“We were among the first galleries in 1984 to start using desktop computers in the gallery,” Moore remembers, “and one of the first in Southern California to start using digital images to present work to clients, instead of transparencies and slides.”

Among many things, Moore believes in the value of change, as challenging and intimidating as it may be to confront head-on.

“Nothing ever stays the same,” he notes. “In 1984, every artist I showed wanted a full-page ad in Artforum. For the last 10 years, every artist has wanted to make sure that they are posted on Instagram instead. Trying to utilize every available, affordable tool out there [in order] to make us a more efficient and effective gallery keeps us competitive, and has always been part of our program.”



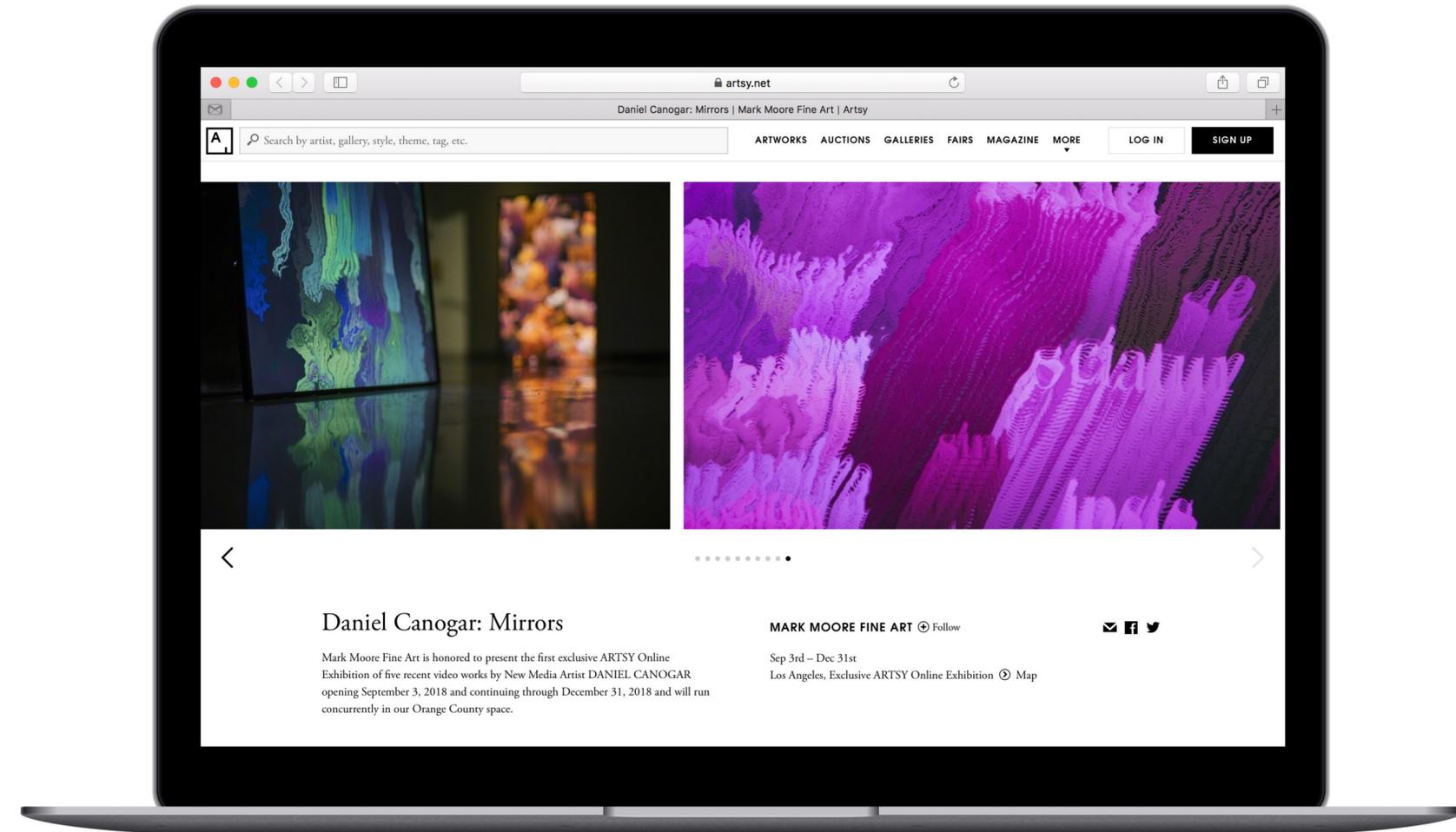
Steps for Success

For Moore, Artsy represents the latest phase in a series of evolutions pushing the art market (and his business) forward.

As he explains, “We joined Artsy to connect with new collectors, discover more efficient ways to get more eyes on our works, and bring more visibility to our artists.”

With more than 3 million followers across social channels and an average distance of over 3,000 miles between buyer and seller, Artsy has become the largest global marketplace for art, taking a leading role in supporting galleries as they expand their digital strategies and modernize their businesses.

“We joined Artsy to connect with new collectors, discover more efficient ways to get more eyes on our works, and bring more visibility to our artists.”



View of Daniel Canogar, Mirrors, at Mark Moore Fine Art, ARTSY Online Exhibition, 2018. Courtesy of Mark Moore Fine Art.

Steps for Success

2. RECOGNIZE THE TIPPING POINT

Being attuned to larger market trends and how they influence the art world has benefitted Mark Moore Fine Art as it has adapted and evolved over the years. And though closing his brick-and-mortar space felt like a big decision at the time, it was a risk Moore felt was worth taking.

“The art world has never been one to be first at following trends in commerce,” he remarks. “Art world professionals tend to resist change because—for the most part—they’re traditionalists when it comes to business models and practices. We’re at a tipping point right now. Why should the laws of gravity not apply to the art world and apply to every other business model in the universe? This wasn’t really a situation where I had an idea that I was going to do more business online—the market dictated that we do it. It was just a matter of listening to our clients and responding to them.”

When making decisions about the direction of Mark Moore Fine Art, for Moore, it was less about adhering to the norm and more about doing what he felt would best serve his clients.



Dirk Staschke, *Soliloquy #4*, 2017.

Artwork placed in museum collection via Artsy.

Steps for Success

3. WORK SMARTER, NOT HARDER

Always looking for a way to run his gallery operations more effectively so he can spend more time on his artists, Moore recognized Artsy as a platform that would be able to do the heavy lifting for many parts of the business.

“Artsy came about through that search for ways of working smarter, rather than harder,” Moore says. “No matter how many hats all of my staff wore, I would seem to always be 5% upside down at the end of each month. By comparison, my overhead now, through being primarily an Artsy gallery partner, has been cut by 99%, and I’m in the black!”

“Think about art fairs,” he continues. Before the internet, “fairs were a function of the art world that came about by trying to bring dealers, artists, curators, collectors—everyone—together at once so they could more efficiently view what was going on in the art world. I was spending about \$50,000 per fair or more. By the end of it, I had paid [about] \$1,000 per new prospect and \$10,000 per new client. That’s crazy!”

Artsy, Moore found, is a tool that delivers better results without the high costs per client.

“I can get the same amount of response in seven days on Artsy for a minute fraction of that investment, without the pain and suffering financially and emotionally,” he says. “This is how things evolve. This is why people use word processors now instead of typewriters; the internet instead of encyclopedias. It’s an evolution of technology, and that technology is now being used to benefit the greater part of the art community and the art world.”

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Steps for Success

4. USE THE TOOLS AT YOUR DISPOSAL

From inventory management systems to a dedicated global support team, Artsy offers everything a gallery needs to succeed in today's online art market. Upon joining, Moore signed up for a Premium plan and made a concentrated effort to learn everything he could about the online art market and the tools Artsy provides for galleries.

“I'm 61 years old, I'm not a child of the internet, and I'm not technologically savvy,” Moore says, “but I went all-in on the Artsy platform and said: ‘Look, I want to be your poster boy. I want to know everything you've seen anybody do that you think is effective and useful, so I can drive people to my site to look at my work.’ [My Artsy liaison] Laurel was very helpful in guiding me towards posting on Artsy Writer, updating my inventory, curating online exhibitions, promoting them through social media, and then cross-promoting all of that through email campaigns, which drive people to the show and inventory that I have on Artsy.”

Gallery partners on Artsy can upload an unlimited number of works to their Artsy profiles, and can also curate [Online Exclusive shows](#), which are featured on Artsy's Shows page and offer collectors from around the world the unique opportunity to experience a group of curated works online.

Additionally, Preferred and Premium gallery partners like Mark Moore Fine Art receive monthly analytic reports, which contain valuable statistics—like geographic breakdowns of your traffic on Artsy and the number of views of each artwork you upload to the platform. These numbers can help direct your digital marketing strategy by helping you decide which works to promote via social media or email, and which to produce content around.

Steps for Success

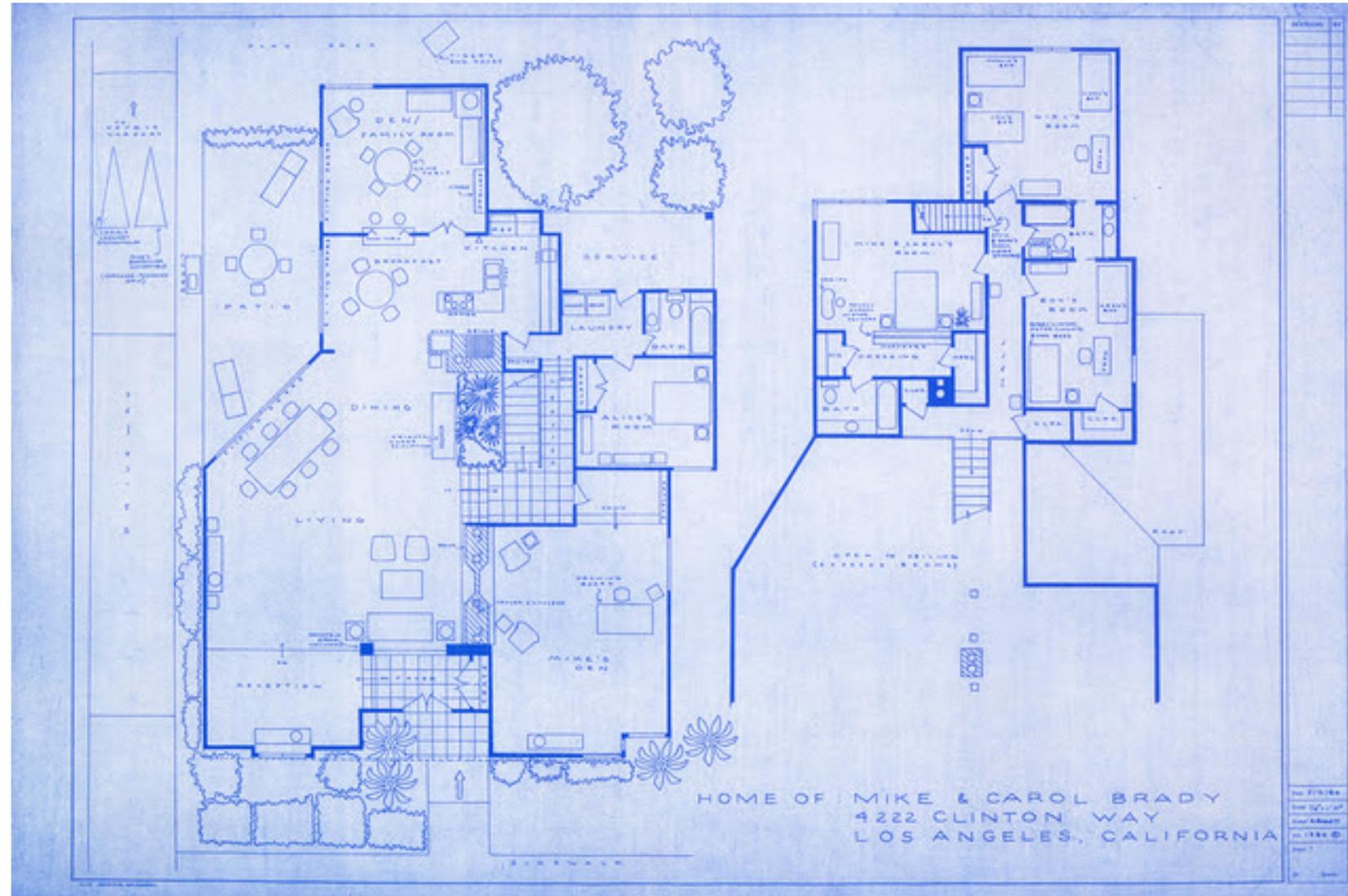
5. BUILD A NETWORK OF EXCEPTIONAL COLLECTORS

Mark Moore has been genuinely impressed with the quality collectors he's connected with through Artsy.

“The people that find their way onto Artsy, who look at the art I have posted, continue to amaze me,” Moore remarks. “My average Artsy collector would seem to be a person in their forties or fifties who is fairly well-monied. Some are younger, of course, but let's say thirties, forties, and fifties, people who are well-educated, monied, go to museums regularly, and are aware of art.”

“The people that find their way onto Artsy, who look at the art I have posted, continue to amaze me.”

With more than 1 million users on Artsy from over 190 countries, and an average distance of more than 3,000 miles between buyer and seller, some of Moore's favorite stories of meeting collectors through Artsy are the most unexpected ones.



Mark Bennett, *Home of Mike & Carol Brady (The Brady Bunch)*, 2017.
Artwork placed in private collection via Artsy.

Steps for Success

“I just had a collector contact me recently about two Mark Bennett lithographs,” he recalls. “She had bought the book on this body of work, and she and her husband had determined he was one of the artists they swore they would get one day. She wrote me via Artsy a week before Father’s Day. I was able to locate the piece she most coveted, sell it to her, and ship it to her in time for Father’s Day. I still have never met her, [but] we talk on the phone, and we exchange emails and texts. She and her husband were thrilled. They love the piece. This was all done starting with Artsy, utilizing Artsy Folio to show them which works were available easily and quickly, and then consummating the sale.”

Another story Moore shares exemplifies the ways in which Artsy can facilitate long-lasting connections with collectors who will support a gallery for years to come.

“I had someone write me, who was a British expatriate living in Vietnam, because they saw a photo of one of my offerings on Artsy,” he remembers. “I’d never met them before, but I got to know them a lot better as a result [of Artsy], and the idea that I could reach a British banker in Vietnam through a Robert Mapplethorpe photo [I was selling on Artsy] astounded me. He acquired the piece that day.”

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Steps for Success

6. MAKE CHOICES THAT SERVE YOUR ARTISTS—AND YOURSELF

Lastly, one unexpected benefit from Artsy has been its effect on Moore's own quality of life, as well as his relationships with his artists.

"One of the main things Artsy has done is get me out of the gallery space," Moore says. "It's allowed me the freedom to be able to get myself out of the gallery and see more art and artists' studios again—get out in the real world."

"If I have a better quality of life, I can then invest the time I had spent previously on other, less productive ventures into my artists," he continues. "I think that all of us are starting to reevaluate what's truly important and how business should be done, and I think it's a healthy thing. It's a painful process, but it's a healthy one."

"I spent four hours a day commuting to and from my gallery space for 30 years," Moore reflects. "I sat at a desk for 8–10 hours a day for 35 years because that's the way business was done, and now I'm talking to you today under my veranda by my pool in Southern California! How do you place a value on that?"



Yoram Wolberger, *Toy Soldier #4 (Offhand Position)*, 2015.
Artwork placed in private collection via Artsy.

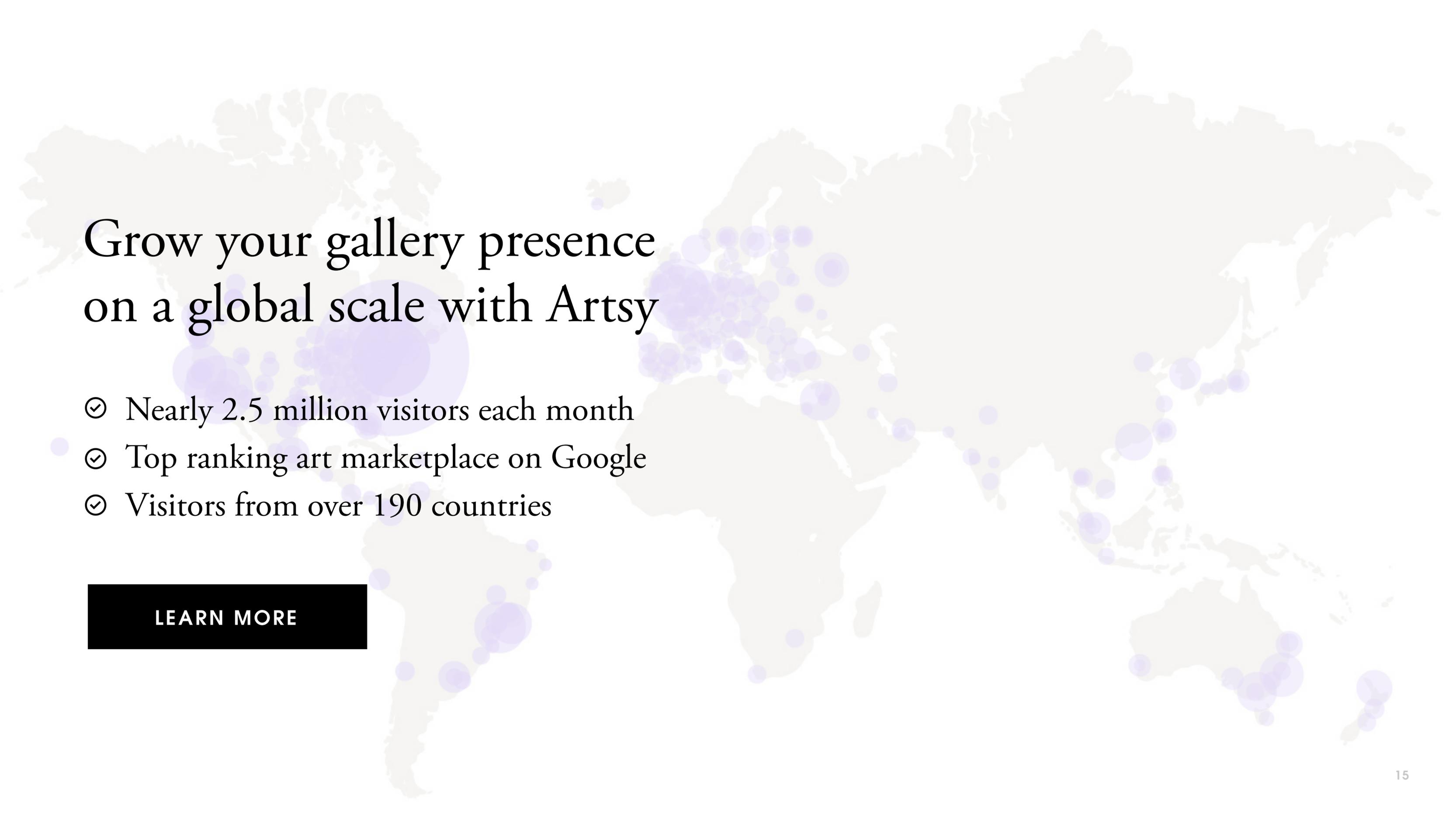
What's next for Mark Moore Fine Art?

CREATING A MARKET FOR MILLENNIALS

According to the 2018 “Insights on Wealth and Worth—Art Collectors” survey by U.S. Trust, millennials are now the fastest-growing segment of art collectors. In this new iteration of his gallery, Mark Moore is hoping to connect with the 78% of millennials who purchased art online in the past year.

Moore explains his plan for the future of Mark Moore Fine Art: “I am trying to do more publishing so I can bring original works of art to a broader market. We’ll be launching a new portion of my program that is dedicated to sculpture editions and print editions at prices that are much lower than the traditional art model for the print market currently.”

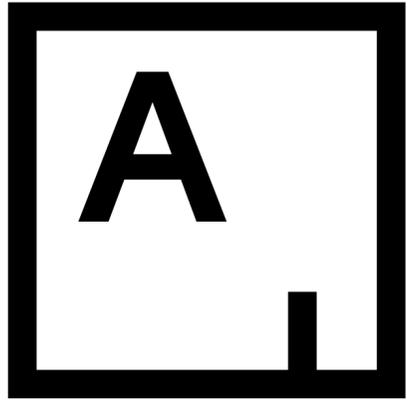
“Since I first started as a gallerist, I’ve kind of had the motto of: ‘Do for your clients what nobody else will do,’” Moore shares. “That’s where the niche is for middle-sized and smaller galleries—we can give personal service and attention to our collectors and nurture them, and hopefully, that accounts for something down the line as millennials become more immersed in the art market.”



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