



# Newsletter

## Leading, Finding and Following Art Licensing Trends

Trends can come out of art, but often art comes out of trends. Art is influenced by a host of other things happening in the marketplace, or in society. And in our fast paced world, it's frequently difficult to see where things begin and end.

If you want to create art that is ahead of the curve, meaning two years out from what's on the retail shelves now, then you will have to make concerted efforts to dig into the "what's happening" of society.

A good example is the now blatantly obvious green trend and ecology movement. We saw lots of political, social and cultural things happening before we began to hear about manufacturers wanting art that reflected those trends. Then the directives came from the manufactures for more art that is: fresh, natural, botanical,

environmental, outdoorsy, ecological, native and, oh yes, eco-friendly.

You want to watch for changes in key demographics and for emerging niche groups and sub-cultures that are not having their needs met through relative styles and art. Then you have an opportunity to interpret these transformational events through your art and designs.

Tattoo art is a great example of a sub-culture that has turned into a mea-industry in just a few short years. This style of art is no longer just seen peeking out from underneath clothing, but now adorns everything from stationery to surfboards and has launched entirely new companies in the process.

*Continued on page 2*

## Ask J'net Q&A

**Q. Once signed with an agent, what's a reasonable length of time to expect a contract?**

A. Agents need time to work you into their sales cycle, which may include direct mail, trade shows and, of course, phone calls. For starters, it depends on whether or not you provided art and a web site that the agent can use to sell with. If so, the agent may head out the door selling very quickly. In most cases, I have always had to work for three to six months to get the artists collections, materials and web sites in tip-top shape before the sales process can begin.

Either way, you should have your first sale within the first year, or I'll say 6-9 months including development time.

**Volume 1, Issue 8**

November 17, 2009

### In this issue

Article: *Leading, Finding and Following Art Licensing Trends*

Ask J'net Q&A

### Contact Us

All Art Licensing

206.533.1490

[info@allartlicensing.com](mailto:info@allartlicensing.com)



*Continued on page 3*

## Leading, Finding and Following Art Licensing Trends

Or you can watch for the first hints of up-and-coming trends by observing the streets of any big city such as New York, London, Milan or Paris. Observing what the younger generation is wearing and what small independent shops are selling is reflective of the trend forefront. I would love to explore those city streets myself, but another very efficient way of doing this is reading international fashion and style magazines (both digital and printed).

And if you want to spend some time exploring your local area in person, look to the smaller independent store, boutique shops and high-end retailers for inspiration. You won't see a trend on the horizon, but you'll find what's 'in-trend' or trending.

Remember that the mass market retailers are definitely followers and not trend setters. They invariably copy what the luxury market is bringing to the table (plate, etc.) and it will take at least 2 years for them to introduce the latest trends to the mainstream through their stores.

The way that trends move through our cultures and the world has changed dramatically as we have become a global economy. We used to see trends move exclusively from the high-end boutiques, what is called the "upstairs" marketplace, to the mass market, or "downstairs" marketplace, and only after retailers copied the trends and reproduced them at a lower cost for the greater population.

Today the Internet provides opportunities for people everywhere to view and purchase unique and high-end products, which used to be introduced exclusively to the wealthiest part of society. Thus the Internet with its direct-to-consumer influence is playing a tremendous role in how trends are flowing to the populace and how quickly they are moving throughout society. It provides direct circuits to all types of communities around the globe and is the fastest trend influencer our world has ever seen.

I know...you were hoping I was going to say that clover will be in next year, or traditional Christmas is back, or navy is the next black, or geese will replace roosters as the next big thing. But it doesn't really work that way. I think the best creativity comes when you juxtapose your own interests and inclinations against something happening out in the world. It's where they collide that you create something totally new. Think of the 'fusion' cooking that has taken hold throughout the culinary world; totally new recipes and delights, such as a Cuban-Asiatic cuisine have been created. Look inside and outside yourself and see what fusions are happening in your life that may be of interest to a much broader audience.

I've talked a bit about leading, finding and following trends, which can influence the creation of your art for art licensing. It is totally up to you to choose where you want to fit in the bigger picture. If you want to do some trend finding, for

example, I noticed that Pantone just released their [top 10 colors for Spring 2010](#).

And if you decide you really want to be on the cutting edge of emerging trends, I'd recommend exploring some of the amazing trend reporting services popping up on the Internet. These sites are gathering and synthesizing global trends at a phenomenal rate and are a tremendous asset. I've included links to my favorites on the [Resources](#) section of the All Art Licensing web site, under Trend Sites & Information.

Again, keep in mind these trend reports don't recap what is going to be selling in art licensing in 2012. However, they provide plenty of fodder for new art pieces and collections in their many free reports and newsletters. I recommend reading Trend Watching's report called, '[Top 5 Trend Watching Tips](#)' to learn how to watch for trends and how to create new concepts from trends.

Then check out the various trend reports and read them with an open mind and soul. As I've mentioned, it is when you fuse new trends with your own perspective and creativity that terrific new collections and profitable products based on your findings will emerge.

And in conclusion, I just wanted to share my personal take on trends today. And it actually translates well into art styles and creating a new look for old-favorites:

*Continued on next page*

## Leading, Finding and Following Art Licensing Trends

“Everything is more—more extreme, more diverse, more niches and more personalized and customized.”

I was going to stop there, because literally you can take 20 topics and translate them into new designs by cross-breeding them with those insights.

But I'll leave you with a final thought you might not have expected. Just when you had decided that your trend research was limited to those classy out-of-the-way boutiques, I propose there are two (and maybe more) great reasons to shop dollar-type stores.

One, dollar stores are doing more licensing deals with artists than I ever expected. While the royalties are smaller, they have great volume to offer these days. And I've been impressed with artists' ability to separate their art and not necessarily align their style with these retailers, thus getting the income without gaining a reputation.

Secondly, when you see products move from upstairs retailers to downstairs mass market outlets, and similarly from mass stores to dollar stores, that translates into both the beginning of a new life for the “style” and one step closer to

its demise. This is important information for trend-watchers, such as you.

Oh and yes, of course, I just thought of the third and best reason. I think they have better product than they used to in years past, and great deals that are fun just about any day of the year. I hope that's just not me that thinks so.



## Ask J'net Q&A

**Q. I hired an attorney and applied for a trademark for the name of one of the lines I design. The process is both costly and expensive. I have another line I would like to trademark as well, but right now the expense is keeping me from doing it. Should I just use the name with a "TM" anyway, assuming I will apply down the road? Is it even necessary to use trademarks?**

A. Trademarks are expensive, especially since to be thorough you must apply for them in all the product categories in which they will be used, and eventually in all the countries they will be used. And each category and country is a new fee. I just last week did a Trademark class with arts attorney, Elizabeth Russell, where she recommended that you go ahead and use the “TM” anyway, but if you are serious about protection you need a lawyer to help you file for your trademarks, since the process is quite complicated. On the positive side, she says that if you are organized and come in having done your homework, the process should take approximately an hour. If you want to contact Beth directly, you will find her link on our [Resources](#) section. Or you can still get the Trademarks class and our Copyrights class via download by [clicking here](#).

**Q. When does someone know their portfolio is ready to launch?**

A. Your portfolio is ready to launch when you have enough collections that a manufacturer and/or agent will take you seriously. This is probably at least ten if not 20-30 collections. Manufacturers really want to know you will be around tomorrow, and the size of your portfolio is a good indicator.