

Feel free to distribute this book to anyone. It was written a long time ago and will not be updated so please be aware that things change often so some of the information might not be accurate. Unfortunately, **I am not able to offer further assistance beyond what is written in the tutorials.** I very much enjoy the process of sharing but I receive numerous emails regarding these subjects on an almost daily basis. I find that trying to explain these techniques and answer peoples specific questions about their projects is just not something I am able to do at this time. Hopefully, this tutorial will help you get started.

## Successfully selling your Art on eBay.



Although this is geared towards eBay much of this will apply to selling on Etsy or on your own online shop as well.

As you may or may not know yet eBay can be addicting. Whether it is finding treasures and getting swept away in a bidding frenzy for a must have item or selling your art to people all over the world. The other day I was at the Post Office just shaking my head in amazement looking down at the packages I was about to drop off. They were headed to Singapore, Australia, United Kingdom and Canada. Amazing to be able to reach people in all those countries and this was just one day of shipping.

I remember the sale that hooked me. I had a pair of plaid pants I had purchased on sale for \$11.00 from an online catalog. I figured it was going to cost me more to send them back then it would to just take a loss and put them on eBay. I put words like “punk, Ska pants” in the title and started them at a buck. The auction ended at \$76.00. Needless to say I was hooked and ready to list everything I owned.

I started selling my art on eBay a number of years ago. I had purchased a vending machine for one of my art shows so people could pick up cheap art if they did not want to buy something hanging on the wall. It all started from finding small trinkets to make that would fit into the capsules. Bottle cap and domino jewelry being a few things I came up with. After the show I had a few left over and put them on eBay. People snatched them right up so I kept on making them. Although I do shutter to think what those first ones looked like! Let’s just say I finally have the process perfected now.



The best part about eBay is that anyone can sell their art. All you have to do is sign up. It is not a juried art show or gallery. There are fees involved for listing auctions and having a store on eBay.



If you are thinking of selling on eBay, one of the first things to think about is picking a good User ID. If you have one you don't like or you change your mind over time you can always change it. You will have a little icon by your name for 30 days noting that you have recently changed your ID but there is really no adverse effect of changing it. However, once you come up with an ID you want you definitely want to stick with it.

It is best to come up with something memorable and easy to spell. People do start to recognize you by your username. Some people even search for your items that way. Be careful about picking a name that is too specific to an art form like *westernwildlife*. What if you want to do contemporary or folk art someday? Don't be afraid to mix your own name in. I think some people avoid this because it seems pretentious. Totally understandable but it also gives people a sense that they are dealing with a person and not a "business". You might want to think down the road a little bit when picking a name. Do you want to have your username be a future domain name? Is it available as a business name?

<http://www.sos.state.co.us/biz/BusinessEntityCriteriaExt.do>

Even if it is down the road you will slowly be building clientele. This will help them make the transition from buying from you on eBay to buying from you directly a lot easier.

For instance, I have an eBay store with intentions to open an online store on my website someday. Ebay is awesome but you can only do so much with customizing your store, not to mention the fees. However, it is a great place to build a business and customers. I have a link on my website for my upcoming online store. It is not open yet, however there is a link to my eBay store. Ebay gives you a credit on your final value fees when someone gets to your eBay store using a link from another site. When you include a link to your eBay Store on other Web sites, **you must include a referral code at the end of the URL**. The referral code tells eBay that a buyer came from your Web

site promotion outside of eBay. For example, if I was to include a link on my Web site to my eBay Store main page, the URL should look like this, with the referral code.

Without the referral code: <http://stores.ebay.com/tartx>

With the referral code: <http://stores.ebay.com/tartx?refid=store>

So because of this not only do I pay less fees to eBay, I can also tell that I have built up a business that my customers are ready and waiting to follow off eBay.

Ebay also lets you create multiple ID's. I recommend keeping on user id dedicated to your art. And having a separate one for buying stuff and selling non art items. You don't want to be selling an old radio, pair of shoes and your gorgeous piece of art at the same time.

Another good thing to keep in mind is to establish a feedback rating before you start selling. On eBay other members leave comments and ratings for people they have bought and sold to and vice versa. Your feedback is a valuable tool to establishing your reputation and commanding higher prices. Make a few quick and cheap purchases, pay promptly and build up a few positive feedbacks. Even just a feedback rating of 10 items is enough to make people feel more comfortable buying from you.

**Member Profile: tartx (1383 ★)**

<b>Feedback Score:</b>	<b>1383</b>	<b>Recent Ratings:</b>		
<b>Positive Feedback:</b>	<b>100%</b>			
Members who left a positive:	1383	Past Month	Past 6 Months	
Members who left a negative:	0			
All positive feedback received:	2443	positive	66	356
		neutral	0	0
		negative	0	0

[Learn about](#) what these numbers mean.

Bid Retractions (Past 6 months): 0

Some sellers wait to leave feedback until the buyer leaves them feedback. Some leave feedback right after payment is received. Both have their advantages. If you are dealing with someone who might have the slightest issue with something, they might leave you Neutral or Negative feedback if you have already left them feedback instead of contacting you to work out the problem. On Etsy this is still the case but on eBay sellers can not leave anything but positives for buyers anymore. I find it is easiest for me to just leave positive feedback in batches twice a month.

In the rare occasion that someone did not pay for their auction I send them a polite reminder and then wait about 7 days. If I don't get a response then I file a non-paying bidder claim with eBay. When a non-paying bidder claim is filed eBay sends out a final notice to the bidder. If they don't pay after a few days eBay gives them a non paying bidder "strike" - three strikes and you're out. At this time eBay will refund your listing fee since you now have to relist your auction. This has happened to me about 5 times and in these cases I just don't leave any feedback. Ebay does not remove feedback comments even if they are unjust. I personally do not want to get a retaliatory negative. There have been about eight buyers that I could have left negative feedback for and didn't. In almost all of those cases those users are not registered with eBay anymore, so I would have risked my rating for nothing. However, this is totally up to you. There is certainly something to be said for holding people accountable as well.

I figure most people are not deliberately dishonest. I have had a few checks bounce. You know some people just have trouble balancing their checkbooks. When this has happened I email them letting them know what happened and what fees my bank has charged me. In all three cases the person paid the amount they owed to start with plus bank fees and were just terribly embarrassed.

Seriously if you are being diplomatic and are providing a quality product that is packaged properly and shipped on time 99.9% of your transactions will go smoothly. Some people are just slow or have forgotten they won an auction.

I do recommend that you accept Paypal. You will get a lot more buyers interested in your auctions. Therefore your auctions will end higher. Buyers like the convenience, the ability to pay faster and therefore get their item faster plus it allows you to take more forms of payment such as credit cards.

Plus it makes getting paid for your auction a snap.



When you set your price for your auction on eBay you have a few choices.

- Regular Auction Style: You set the starting price. Buyers place bids and the person with the highest last bid wins.

- Buy it Now auctions: You set the price you want and the buyer can immediately purchase it for that price.
- Reserve Price auctions: You set a starting price AND the lowest price at which you are willing to sell your item. If it is not met you are not obligated to sell the item. However you will still be charged a listing fee.

Auction style is the most common and can be a great way to sell your art. People do have bidding wars and oftentimes something will sell for quite a bit more than you thought it would. Just be careful to have the starting bid be a price you are really willing to sell the item for.

Buy it Now auctions are great. People love the convenience, especially around the holidays. They are also perfect for items like greeting cards or prints of your work.

I don't recommend Reserve Price auctions. Since the reserve price is hidden it seems to confuse and add suspicion for the buyers. Plus, if your reserve price is met before the auction is over it might turn off some buyers. Some buyers will assume your item must not be worth much more than the reserve you put on it, otherwise you would have set a higher reserve.

Choosing what time of day to start your auction is important because that is also the same time it will end. The more bidders who will be home at the end of your auction the better. There is no perfect time but you want to stay away from the middle of the night. Remember there is a 3 hour time difference between the east and west coasts which is where most of your bidders will come from. Obviously if you are selling internationally it can get very hard to accommodate everyone.

I think Sunday is the best day to have your auctions end. Hardly anyone is working or at school. Most people are done with their weekend partying. Plus your item will be on eBay for the whole week and a whole weekend. A lot of people search for items that have been either just listed or ending soon. So having your item end on the weekend is great. It will show up in the search a lot sooner that way.

Keep in mind having your auction close near payday. This is when people are most comfortable generally to spend money. The best months for auctions are November through January. This is when you want to put on those pieces you are really hoping will provoke some bidding wars. Some of the worst times are tax time, holidays and Summertime. Almost everyone feels the slow down in Summer. In the summer I still keep a few items on and do a few auctions, but I do a little less than usual. Summer is a

great time to put on a few items you are willing to get a lower bid amount for but still have something to generate interest in you.

I only list with buy it now fixed price listings at this time but you should look into each type of selling to decide what works for you.

When it comes to selling art, using the gallery is a must!! When a buyer is browsing eBay the gallery photo is next to the item title. It makes your auction stand out and makes people want to click and see more. If you are selling art a picture is really necessary!

In the sea of listings on eBay, I am not sure I would click on let alone even notice this guitar painting.



I think it is really important when writing your listings to use positive language. It is a real turn off to buyers when they feel they are getting lectured and they did not even do anything yet.

Rather than say "PAYMENT IS DUE WITHIN 10 DAYS\*\*\*\*\* PLAIN AND SIMPLE FACTS ~ ALL NON PAYING BIDDERS WILL BE REPORTED TO EBAY AND APPROPRIATE FEEDBACK WILL BE LEFT!!!!!!!!!!!!!!!!!!!!!!"

Instead say "Payment requested in ten days from the end of the auction, thank you."

Really all this kind of communication is going to do is turn off would-be buyers-- not keep deadbeat buyers away. It would be like going to King Soopers and having the clerk hold up your check and say "Is this going to clear? Because if it doesn't there will be charges and consequences!!"

I RECOMMEND YOU DON'T WRITE IN ALL CAPS! IT IS VERY HARD TO READ AND MAKES YOU FEEL LIKE YOU ARE BEING YELLED AT.

Also, I recommend that when you want to include your “terms of service” that they be at the very bottom of your description. Keep it accurate but short. You want the focus of your auction to be your art and the description of your art.

I am not the best speller so I always run a spell check on my descriptions. It does not much matter to me but I know it can be a real turnoff to a lot of people. Plus, if you misspell your item, no one will ever be able to find it in a search. (Although I must admit I have found some sweet bargains due to others misspelling an item and I stumbled across it).

## Some simple html tips

I think it helps to use some html to make the description in your listings stand out.

Here is some html to get you started.

`<b>bold</b>`

`<br>` a line break or space between paragraphs.

`<small>` makes text size one smaller `</small>`

`<big>` Makes text big! `</big>`

Use built-in colors for text like `aqua`, `black`, `blue`, `fuchsia`, `gray`, `green`, `lime`, `maroon`, `navy`, `olive`, `purple`, `red`, `teal`, `yellow` or (white).

Original `<font color=green>`one of a kind `</font>` piece.  
Looks like. . . Original `one of a kind` piece.

You can also save money and be able to put more pictures of your art in your listing if you use html to put images in your listings. You can use a place like [picturetrail.com](http://picturetrail.com), [photobucket.com](http://photobucket.com), etc. to store your photos.

*In the following the url is the address where your picture is on the web.*  
example: <http://www.tartx.com/pictureoone.jpg>

The html to put a single image in your listings. . 



To place two photos side by side.    
Looks like:



Image one



Image two

Here is what the html to insert four pictures looks like:

```
   
<br>  
 
```



*\* Remember, the "url" in the examples above represent an actual url address where your photos are stored,,,you must insert the entire address in this space.*

If you have more photos on your website or somewhere else on the web. That you want potential buyers to see, you can add a link to another webpage like this

```
<a href="url">this is the link</a>
```

Remember though when adding links in your auctions, eBay only allows links to pages that provide additional information about the item, additional photos and to your other eBay auctions. You can however put a link to your homepage on your "About me" page though and should!

*Speaking of "About me" pages. . .if you are an artist an "About me" page is a must. It is a little icon that looks like this **me** next to people's usernames. I think it makes people feel like they are buying from a person not a corporation. Feel free to include a photo, hobbies and information about your art. You might want to stay away from volatile subjects such as religion or politics. Unless of course that is what your art is about. I can tell that people go to mine a lot because I have a link to my blog from my About me page. My blog statistics show that someone comes from that link a few times a day.*

When you are writing your **titles** you are limited to 55 characters (including spaces) so use keywords that buyers will be using in their search. Use attention getting words to describe your art like; original, vintage, colors, the medium (i.e. watercolor), rare etc. Think like you are writing a headline for an ad. You can also check completed auctions to see what words seemed to grab the most attention. There are also some shorthand words that many people use to search as well as many groups that have formed to promote each others art that use shorthand as well.

Ex. Cond. (excellent condition)  
ILLUS (Illustration)  
Ooak (One of a kind)

There are tons more groups that you can align with to help bring people to your auctions. <http://groups.ebay.com>

There are some great listing tools to help you out as well. One of my favorites is:

Turbo Lister ([http://pages.ebay.com/turbo\\_lister/](http://pages.ebay.com/turbo_lister/)).

It is a free listing tool to help you create your listings and upload items to eBay auctions. It is great if you sell more than a couple of items a week. If you list an item directly on eBay website you will find that it can take an awful lot of time to list items directly from the site. As your listing is broken up into about five parts (shipping, pictures, description, etc.). Each of those parts is on a different page and if you have a slow connection this can take a lot of time. With the Turbo Lister you can get your listings ready offline and then upload them in bulk. It also is a great way to keep an inventory or templates for future similar auctions. Plus if you are listing your art from Turbo Lister it gives you the option to really get your auction looking and sounding perfect before you upload it to eBay.

When you are writing your **description** you really want to make it as thorough as possible.

Some things to think about putting in your description:  
What the medium is; when you made the piece; the dimensions; any special items used in the piece. Adding some personal information can be really good as well; An interesting story about the piece, if it is based on a person or myth a little bit about that person or myth; what you like about the piece yourself and who you think it would appeal to.

Use some of the html mentioned earlier to break up some of the paragraphs and add some special touches to your auction.

## Photos

Good photos are a must for art but you really don't need a huge set up! If your art is flat and small enough try scanning it. Often times you can get great results from a scanner.

You can pick up a cheap digital camera pretty much anywhere now. Try to make sure your photos are not too dark. Shoot your photo outside or near a window with slightly diffused natural light.

A diffused light is really the key to getting a good photo of your art. A light tent is a great way to create an even, soft lighting on your art piece. You can buy a light tent on eBay. You can get a small tent approx 16" square for \$20, medium sizes 36" square will run about \$50 and large tent 60" square (5 feet) are about \$100. Many if not most of these light tents are fully collapsible to save on space. If you are making a lot of art and taking a lot of pictures it really pays off. The better your pictures are the more people are able to see your art and the details you put into your art.

You can also make a simple light tent or box out of anything white and translucent. A milk jug, facial tissues, a bed sheet, etc.

### Lets make a simple light tent out of a cardboard box:

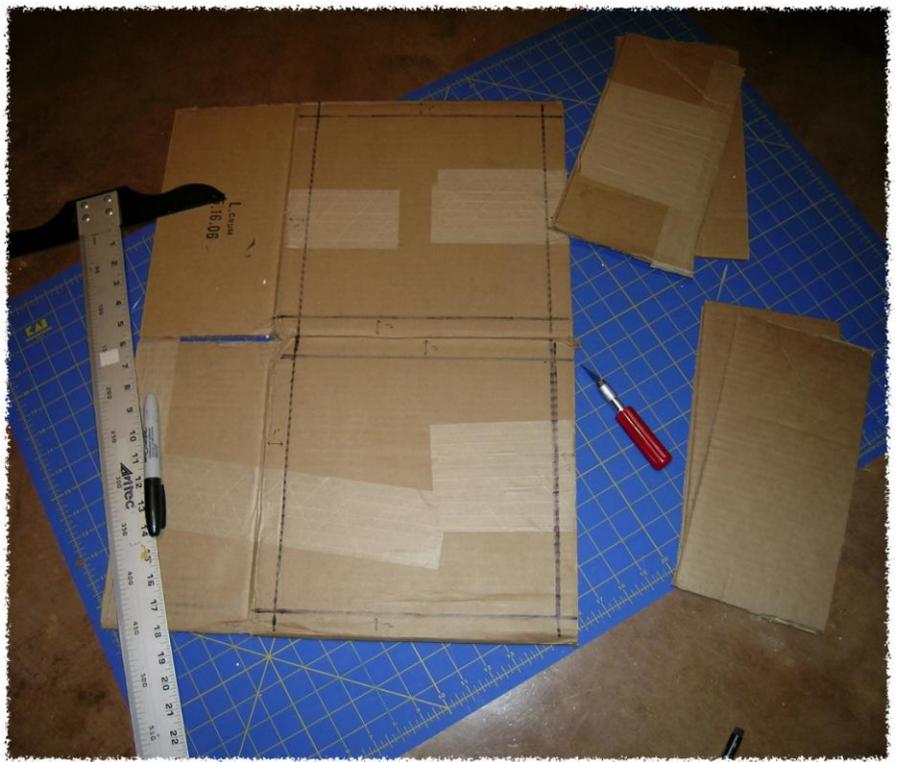
Find a box with the rough dimensions of about 15" x 15" x 15". This is a good standard size though you might want to go bigger depending on your art.

#### Materials:

- Duck Tape or Masking tape (You can find white duck tape at Michael's)
- X-Acto knife
- Ruler, Yardstick or T-Square
- White paint and an old brush
- Semi transparent white material such as white muslin or bed sheets

1. Lay the box flat on a surface that is safe to cut on. Using a ruler mark a 1" to 1-1/2" border to all of four sides of the box -

Essentially you want to cut a hole in all sides of the box. Leaving a border around each side.



2. Remove the top pieces of the box. So that it looks like the first picture.

Cutting on the lines you made cut out the four panels of the box using an x-acto knife. Cut out and remove the part of the box inside your lines.



3. Open up the box and close down the bottom. Tape down the exterior and interior seams of the bottom of your box.



5. Then take some acrylic paint and paint the cardboard on the inside white. You can also use spray adhesive to apply white pieces of paper to cover any non -white surface.

6. Take the semi transparent white material you have chosen and cut four squares slightly larger than the squares you cut out of the sides of the box.

7. Going one side at a time - pick one side that is cut out to be the front of your light box and leave that uncovered. (The side of the box that still has the flaps and that you taped up will be the bottom of your box that you will be sitting your art on when you take your photos). Then cover the two sides, the top and the back with the material, taping it to the outside of the box with duck tape or masking tape.



This part is optional.  
If you want to you can create a seamless background behind your piece of art. This will give the illusion of your art almost floating in a white space----not a box. You can take a piece of cardstock and cut it to fit in the box. Cut it using the depth of the box + the height of the box as a rough measurement.



Insert the cardstock in the box so that the edge of it is placed against the front of the box and allowed to curve towards and up the back. Feel free to use other colors or more decorative papers. Or even a nice fabric.

For your lighting I think that nothing beats slightly diffused natural sunlight. But you can also use a desk lamp or a clamp style fixture with a 100 watt bulb from a hardware store.

If you really don't want to make anything you can drape a white sheet over a table and shine some lights on each side of the sheet.

Try taking several pictures and viewing them on your computer. Sometimes things look different on the monitor then through a camera lens. Make sure you get some pictures that are close enough to see the details.

You definitely need to show enough pictures. Ebay gives you one free picture with each listing. If you want more than that you can pay eBay for each additional picture or you can use the html we went over earlier to add more pictures to your listings for free!

If you don't have a photo editing program a great free one is Irfan. It is great for resizing and cropping photos. <http://www.irfanview.com/>

Now that you have listed your item and taken gorgeous pictures I am sure it is going to sell!

Here are a few tips and things to remember

- Since you are selling your art and people really like to connect with the artist, I suggest including a handwritten thank you card, a small thank you item or an ATC with your package.
- After they have paid for the item always email them and let them know you received their payment and that their package is on the way.

I usually put buttons and magnets with my items. People just love them and it keeps them coming back. Everyone loves a little extra something. It doesn't need to be expensive or extravagant at all, just something simple but heartfelt to let your customer know that you appreciate their business. Repeat business and word of mouth from customers is a big driving force behind any expansion of your art business. I have received the most touching emails from people who get my packages. It has just been an amazing experience.

## Shipping

One thing I feel is very important is don't overcharge for shipping and handling. Definitely feel free to add a reasonable handling charge, especially if you are having to put together packing for big pieces of art. You don't want to skimp on packaging, but shipping & handling should not be looked at as a profit center. Some people start their auction low but charge an exorbitant amount for shipping. People are catching on to this and it makes buyers really mad. Besides the fact that eBay does prohibit this as well and they can and will end your auction.

I definitely recommend either charging a flat shipping and handling charge or using the shipping calculator. When you list your item either directly on eBay or through Turbo Lister they have a Shipping calculator as an option. It is free and it takes the weight and predetermined handling charge and figures it for the buyer when they enter their zip code.

I personally factor my shipping into my prices and offer free shipping. I know a lot of people love free shipping and are more willing to bid auctions higher since they know the final cost.

### Finding packing supplies.

If you ship Priority mail then the post office gives you free boxes and tape. They also have flat rate boxes and envelopes. They will even deliver them to your door for free. You can order boxes online or by phone.

Other places to look for boxes:

Furniture stores, book stores, auto parts shops, health food stores, etc.

I actually buy a lot of my supplies on eBay. My bubble envelopes are 50% less on eBay than anywhere in town. Some people have gotten free supplies from [www.freecycle.org](http://www.freecycle.org) they have a Yahoo group for Fort Collins and many other towns where people can post things they are wanting to give away.

If you are shipping heavy artwork remember to check prices at FedEx and UPS. They are considerably lower priced than the postal service. For example shipping a five pound item from coast to coast costs almost five dollars less with FedEx ground than with priority mail. Insurance is also included in the shipping costs with FedEx and UPS so check that because even if the rates are higher it sometimes equals out.

I can not overestimate being nice to your postal people. I know it can be a hectic place and certainly some of them are just not friendly. But if they are on your side they can really help your business run smoothly. I give my ladies free buttons and cards. They love it and they look out for me.

### Miscellaneous

Both eBay and Paypal are notorious for having people use their names fraudulently to try to coax you into giving them information under false pretenses. You really have to be careful of spam. Only check messages you know are really from eBay! I have gotten very official looking emails from eBay and Paypal that have been fake. If you don't know for sure if it is real or fake then go to eBay summary page ("My eBay" page on the left hand side under "my messages" and check your messages there. Never enter your password from an email.

My biggest piece of advice and perhaps the hardest one to take is

patience. Really patience, patience, patience. It takes awhile to get your foot in the door but if you start small and slowly build up your presence on eBay you are opening yourself up to a true global marketplace.

I started my prices low – very low and have gradually built them up over time. This worked great for me, giving me time to improve upon and perfect each medium, raising the price as interest grew and I mastered each item more and more. It can be very hard to see your art not sell or sell for a price way lower than you feel it is worth. I recommend listing only a few items at a time and perhaps even smaller items that were not as time consuming to make when you are first starting. As you build up your reputation you can always start adding more. I really only list a few of the items in my line on eBay. Because of the exposure and success I have found on eBay I have people contact me daily for commissions. I hardly ever list any of my larger pieces on eBay. I just don't have to. People contact me.

It can also be helpful to occasionally list an item for charity. Not only do I just like to support some of these causes but it does bring in buyers that you might not get otherwise. Most of the time when someone buys an item of mine that is listed for charity they buy something else from me that is not. It can be hard to come up with \$50.00 to donate to a good cause. For me it is easier to make something and donate it.

You can find more information here: <http://givingworks.ebay.com/>

## Etsy

A lot of artists are finding great success on Etsy which is another online marketplace where you can open a store and sell your art. It differs from eBay in that they only allow you to sell handmade items. Etsy also does not have auctions. Everything is just "Buy it now". The fees for Etsy are way less than eBay as well. It is free to open a store on Etsy. You pay a listing fee of 20 cents for each listing and a flat 3.5% fee on the final sales price. Etsy is very supportive of the artists that sell there. They feature items on the front page and have interviews and all sorts of fun stuff. <http://www.etsy.com/> I really encourage you to check them out. You may decide this is the place you want to start developing your art business.

Whatever way you decide to go about it there is plenty of room for all of us out there on the web. I have met so many wonderful people from having my stuff out there in the cyber world. Ebay and Etsy are wonderful places to

expose yourself and your art to countless buyers. Over time, with patience and dedication I have found my art business growing in ways I never expected. People have come for my smaller pieces and have discovered my other art without me really promoting it and providing me with countless commissions I otherwise would have never had. Over time, I have built up an excellent feedback rating and have been approached by many galleries, boutiques and stores. If galleries and boutiques see that you have built up a strong following and a loyal “fanbase” they are much more willing to contact you. I hope this information has been of help in getting you started on your way to a successful online art experience. Best of Luck and have fun!



Thank you,  
Tiffini Elektra X

[www.tartx.com](http://www.tartx.com)