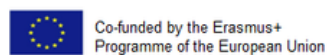


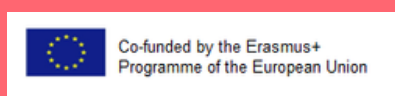


DALI 4 YOUTH

From Pixels to Profit: Steps to Monetizing Digital Art



This booklet has been prepared within the framework of the Erasmus+ project DALI 4 YOUTH (project no. 2021-1-FR02-KA220-YOU-000028532) implemented by Ici & Ailleurs from Reunion Island, France, in partnership with Volunteers Centre Skopje (Macedonia), ZINI Foundation (Latvia), Centre for Research and European Studies (Italy) and Open Europe (Spain). It provides a description of steps and ways to turning digital art into a source of income, as well as success stories of young people creating digital art in Macedonia.



This project has been funded with support from the European Commission. This publication [communication] reflects the views only of the author, and the Commission cannot be held responsible for any use which may be made of the information contained therein.

Table of Contents

| | |
|---|-----------|
| About the Project | 4 |
| Digital Art and Monetization | 5 |
| Steps to Becoming a Digital Artist | 7 |
| Ways to Monetize Digital Art | 10 |
| Success Stories of Young Digital Artists | 15 |

About the Project

4

DALI 4 YOUTH: DIGITAL ART FOR LEARNING, INCLUSION, CREATING EQUITY & EMBRACING DIVERSITY is a project that targets youth workers and young people, especially NEETs, to prepare them to face the needs of the youth sector by gaining more and improved digital skills, a higher level of creativity and more awareness of the situation NEETs are experiencing. As young people are strongly keen on digital technology, and art is a great means to express themselves and to connect with others, combining these two elements will manage to promote social inclusion.

The project aims at boosting youth workers' competences and knowledge of ICT tools to create inclusive environment in their daily practice. The main objective is to make the youth more capable of entering the labour market and taking an active role in society. The project will prioritize the development of digital skills through creativity and art, and rising awareness about the importance of social inclusion among young NEETs, often victims of stereotypes that lead to social exclusion.

Results of the project are an online Training KIT on Digital Art for youth workers, an educational game for young digital artists, and youth networks for visioning, modelling and planning of medium-term community actions in the field of digital art.

The results of the project are freely available on the project website dali4youth.eu.



Digital Art and Monetization



In an era where technology has seamlessly woven itself into the fabric of our daily lives, a remarkable transformation has taken place within the world of art. The once-traditional canvas and brush have given way to a new medium – the digital realm. Digital art, with its infinite possibilities, has not only revolutionized the way artists express themselves, but has also opened up unprecedented avenues for monetization. As creators harness the power of pixels to craft visually stunning masterpieces, the question arises: How can artists leverage their digital creations to not only share their passion but also cultivate a sustainable business?

Embarking on a journey that combines artistry with entrepreneurship, digital artists are discovering how to navigate this uncharted territory, adapting traditional principles of artistic integrity to the digital age. The allure of instant global reach, minimal production costs, and the ability to iterate and evolve one's work in real-time has led artists to explore new horizons of creativity.

The digital art sphere is not just about showcasing eye-catching visuals. It's about storytelling, connection and crafting an identity that resonates with audiences in an increasingly digitalized world.



Moreover, it's about debunking the misconception that the intangible nature of digital art diminishes its value, and instead, embracing the idea that this very intangibility is a part of its allure.

From seasoned digital artists seeking to refine their strategies to newcomers eager to dip their toes into the vast ocean of possibilities, the path to monetizing digital art requires a blend of creativity, sense of initiative and entrepreneurship, and adaptability. These pages share ideas and basic directions that one can take to navigate this evolving landscape and leave an indelible mark on both artistic and commercial aspects of living.



Steps to Becoming a Digital Artist



Working with digital art involves a combination of creative skills, technical proficiency, practice and dedication. Here are few steps take can help one become a digital artist:

1. Acquire the necessary tools: Invest in a computer or tablet with digital drawing capabilities. You'll need software such as Adobe Photoshop, Adobe Illustrator, Procreate, Corel Painter or other digital art applications to create your artwork.

2. Learn digital tools and techniques: Familiarize yourself with the digital art software you've chosen. Learn how to use layers, brushes, blending modes and other features. There are numerous online free tutorials, courses, and YouTube channels that can help you understand the software's capabilities and how to use them effectively.

3. Study digital art styles: Explore different digital art styles to find what resonates with you. Look at the work of established digital artists and analyze their techniques. Experiment with various styles to find your own unique approach.



4. Practice regularly: Consistent practice is essential for improvement. Dedicate time each day to create digital art. Challenge yourself with new subjects, techniques and styles to expand your skill set.

5. Seek feedback: Share your work with peers, mentors or online communities to receive constructive feedback. Constructive criticism can help you identify areas for improvement and refine your skills.

6. Build an online presence: Create an online portfolio to showcase your digital art. Use platforms like DeviantArt, ArtStation, Behance, or your personal website to display your work. This is important for attracting potential clients or collaborators.

7. Engage in online communities: Participate in online forums, social media groups and art communities. Networking with fellow artists can lead to collaborations, learning opportunities, and exposure.

8. Take courses and workshops: Consider enrolling in digital art courses or workshops. These can provide structured learning experiences and help you learn from experienced professionals.

9. Experiment and innovate: Don't be afraid to experiment with new techniques, tools and styles. Innovation often comes from pushing boundaries and thinking outside the box.

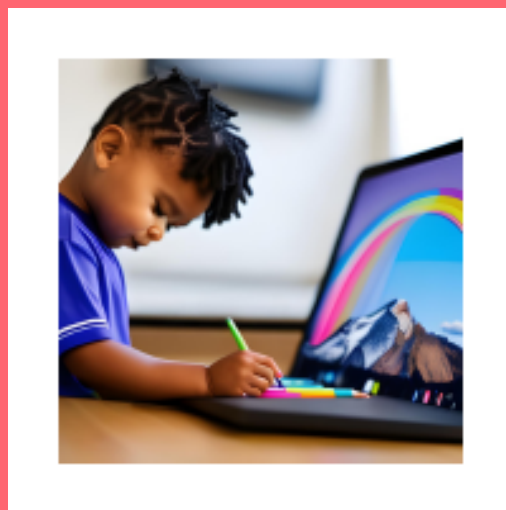


10. Create a diverse portfolio: Include a range of pieces in your portfolio that showcase your versatility. This can attract a wider range of clients and opportunities.

11. Freelance and collaborate: Start taking on freelance projects or collaborate with other artists, designers or businesses. Real-world projects can provide valuable experience and help you build a reputation in the industry.

12. Keep learning: The field of digital art is constantly evolving. Stay updated with new software features, trends and technological advancements. Continuous learning will keep your skills relevant.

Becoming a skilled digital artist takes time and dedication. Consistent practice, willingness to learn and passion for creativity are key factors on your journey to becoming a successful digital artist.



Ways to Monetize Digital Art

10

Unlike traditional art, which might require physical exhibitions or galleries, digital art can be shared online, reaching a global audience easily and instantaneously. This exposure can lead to a larger customer base and potential clients. Moreover, creating digital art often requires fewer physical materials compared to traditional art forms like painting or sculpture, which can result in lower production costs, allowing artists to retain a higher portion of their earnings. In addition to this, digital art can be easily reproduced and distributed, enabling artists to sell multiple copies of the same piece. This scalability can lead to higher income potential, especially when creating limited edition digital products.

Digital art can be easily customized to suit individual preferences. This makes it appealing for clients seeking unique pieces that resonate with their tastes or for businesses looking for specific visual elements to incorporate into their branding. And vice-versa: there are numerous online platforms designed to cater specifically to digital artists, providing them with marketplaces to showcase and sell their work. These platforms also handle payment processing, making it easier for artists to manage sales.

Finally, advancements in technology, such as artificial intelligence (AI), open up new avenues for digital artists to explore and create immersive experiences, further expanding their potential market and income streams.

Here are several possible ways to monetize digital art and turn it into a sustainable business:

Freelancing

Offer your digital art skills as a freelance artist and provide services such as graphic design, illustration, digital painting, logo design, book cover design and more.

Before you start freelancing, create a diverse portfolio that showcases your best work across different styles and genres. Potential clients will want to see the range of your skills and the quality of your art before hiring you.

Register on reputable freelance platforms such as Upwork, Freelancer, Fiverr, or specialized art platforms like ArtStation or Behance. These platforms connect freelancers with clients seeking digital art services. Apart from freelancing platforms, promote your work on social media, personal website or art-specific platforms. This can attract potential clients who appreciate your unique style.

Sell Prints and Merchandise

Print your digital art on various products such as posters, canvas prints, clothes, phone cases, mugs. Promote your prints and merchandise through social media, your website, emails and collaborations with influencers or art-related blogs. Engaging content, behind-the-scenes glimpses, and limited-time offers can boost sales. You can use print-on-demand services like Printful or Redbubble to arrange production and shipping.

Create Digital Products

Develop and sell digital products like high-resolution image files that customers can download and print themselves, custom digital illustrations, templates (for planners, journals, stationery, etc.), icons, fonts, and more through platforms like Gumroad or Etsy.

Consider watermarking preview images or using secure methods to prevent unauthorized distribution of your digital products.

Online Art Marketplaces

Join online art marketplaces like Etsy, Society6 (for print-on-demand products), Shutterstock, Adobe Stock, iStock (stock image platforms), DevianArt, ArtStation Artsy, to showcase and sell your digital art directly to a global audience.

Commission Work

Accept commissions from clients who want custom digital art pieces. This could include portraits, illustrations, concept art.

You will again need to prepare a diverse and high-quality portfolio that showcases your best work across different styles and subjects. Potential clients will want to see examples that match their vision and requirements. Also, set up a professional website or online portfolio where potential clients can view your work and contact you for commissions. This establishes credibility and makes it easier for clients to find you.

Art Exhibitions and Galleries

Participate in virtual or physical art exhibitions and galleries to showcase and sell your digital artworks to collectors and enthusiasts. Examples of such exhibitions and galleries are The Wrong: New Digital Art Biennale (a unique and extensive online biennale that showcases digital art across various mediums and styles from around the world), The Museum of Digital Fine Arts (MoDFA) (an online museum dedicated to showcasing and preserving digital art), NewHive (an online platform that allows artists to create and share interactive digital artworks), Virtualize (an online platform that hosts virtual exhibitions for digital artists and provides a space for them to present their work to a global audience).

Art Licensing

License your digital art to companies, publishers and individuals for use in various products such as book covers, album artwork or advertising.

Familiarize yourself with different types of licenses, such as exclusive, non-exclusive, limited, or perpetual licenses. Each type determines how the licensee can use your artwork and for how long.

Design digital art that has commercial potential and can be adapted for various purposes, such as product packaging, book covers, advertising materials.

Collaborations and Partnerships

Collaborate with influencers or other artists for joint projects, merchandise or marketing campaigns. This can expand your reach and visibility.

Teaching and Tutorials

Create and sell online courses, video tutorials or eBooks that teach others your digital art techniques and skills. Platforms like Udemy, Skillshare and Teachable can help you host your courses.

Crowdfunding and Kickstarter

Launch crowdfunding campaigns on platforms like Kickstarter or Indiegogo to fund specific projects or the development of digital art collections.

Patreon and Subscription Models

Set up a Patreon page or subscription service where supporters pay a monthly fee to access exclusive digital art content, tutorials, behind-the-scenes content.

Again, building a successful digital art business takes time, dedication and consistent effort. Developing a strong online presence through social media, a professional website, and engaging with your audience can significantly contribute to your success as a digital artist and entrepreneur.

Success Stories



of Young
Digital Artists

Selina Niemi



Selina Niemi is a Finnish graphic designer who lives in Skopje, Macedonia. She ended up studying audiovisual communications in Finland, which showed her the first steps to graphic design. After volunteering at Volunteers Centre Skopje through the European Solidarity Corps, Selina re-discovered her passion for graphic design through a youth magazine VOICES, and started learning more on her own.

Selina does her work in multiple fields: logos, layouts, posters and web design. She does her work in Adobe Creative cloud, mostly Photoshop, Illustrator and InDesign. For her web designs, she is using the WordPress plugin Elementor. As the field is progressing fast, Figma is the next step for her to learn. For her, inspiration can be found anywhere. She spots ideas from outside. Whether it's a restaurant menu or a cool sticker somewhere. Also, checking out other designers and scrolling Pinterest gives her new inspiration to work.

What's cool for her in this field, is that you can create anything you imagine. Even with the software implementing AI tools, she's confident that the human touch in all visual design is still, and will be, very important. It's hard for her to find any cons from the field. It will take time to develop skills to her level and some patience to keep up with the constantly changing programs but as she says, it can be considered fun as well!

She's sharing her work on professional social media sites like LinkedIn. At the same time she's planning to promote her work more on her personal accounts. Her portfolio can be found at www.selinaniemi.com.

As advice to people only starting in digital art, she wants to tell everyone to bring your wildest ideas alive and let your imagination run wild! You don't need to be a very skilled or experienced artist to start. Anyone can learn the technique and nowadays the tools have developed to the point that you don't need to be a skilled artist or know how to draw by hands.



Matej Jordanovski

Matej Jordanovski is a young concept artist passionate about science-fiction and fantasy art, which is his main field. Matej is mainly creating with Blender 3D and Photoshop, but also with Illustrator to create vectors, and effects with other software for videos.

He finds his sources in his favorite movies and cartoons and gets inspired by his surroundings. His work is a combination of dystopia and apocalyptic world and new technology, robots, and nature.

In art, but also in other fields, it can be difficult to make your thoughts and imagination concrete. Matej always feels this feeling of success when he is finishing a project and that he was able to realize what he had in mind. But, otherwise, he can be confronted by the blank page, and to resolve that he prefers to take some distance to come up with new and fresh ideas.

The future of digital art scared Matej, with the apparition and the greater use of AI which, as he says, “makes it easier to get to the end goal, but get rid of the journey.”

He advises us to stay motivated - the beginning can be overwhelming, but results are always following, and the most important for him it's to stay in this mindset to appreciate learning, because you never know enough.

You can find out more about Matej and his work on Instagram (<https://www.instagram.com/m.jordanovski/>), Reddit, and also on the online community Art Station.



Hristijan (TheDuxteh2)

Hristijan, hailing from Bitola, a sizable town in Macedonia, introduces himself as a digital artist with a specialization in character illustration, often referred to as splash arts and concept art.

His artistic journey began at a young age. Initially, he started using a free software called Krita, which, while excellent, had some performance limitations due to infrequent updates and a departure from industry standards. After a few years with Krita, he made the leap to the industry standard software, Photoshop, which presented a learning curve, but ultimately proved to be the most beneficial tool for his work.

Hristijan's inspiration comes from his own environment - the vibrant flowers along his path, breathtaking sunsets, and, most significantly, the characters encountered in video games. Riot Games and their talented artists, including individuals like Chen Bo, Changwei Pan and Jeremy Anninos, serve as primary sources of inspiration.

Regarding the digital art medium, Hristijan acknowledges the benefits and drawbacks. One notable advantage is the cost savings: artists are spared the expenses of traditional art supplies like brushes and paints which can be quite costly. A downside he faces is the misconception among some non-artists who believe that the computer does all the work when using a tablet, diminishing the artist's creative effort.

For sharing his creations, Hristijan primarily utilizes platforms like Art Station, where you can find his profile: [theduxteh2.artstation.com/projects](https://www.artstation.com/projects/theDuxteh2).

His advice to fellow artists is simple yet profound: "Draw every day, never give up and never stop trying to find the artistic path that appeals to you the most."



Andrej Pavlov

Andrej Pavlov is an illustrator and graphic designer. His art can be put into graphical minimal stories of everyday life following a peculiar, almost comic book style, where the message and humorous visual is something that he wants to bleed through, to have a sort of trigger in the watcher where they can continue expanding and make their own story around it.

He has always been fascinated by light design and how shadows can make something seem different, almost making up a whole new story or visual around one object. His inspiration comes from the ups and downs of life, from love from friends, family and everything that he holds dear.

As for the main tools he uses for creating digital art, as he says, “It usually starts on paper, napkins or some kind of doodle! It continues in Adobe Illustrator where I do most of the art, the rendering and texturing continues in Photoshop, and in later cases, where I do little animation, that magic happens in Adobe After effects.”

His later work follows little stories of one white silhouette of a man and his adventures through Andrej’s illustration. A black page where, he hopes, everyone can find themselves and feel something.

Andrej has no doubts that the digital art world is expanding, with all the new stuff that AI can do. “It is wild, it is and should be a tool to expand our ideas not, change us. But I am not very concerned with AI to be honest, it will never be able to express one's heart or emotions as a soul can.”

As advice for people who want to start with digital art, he says: “Keep it weird, be bold and don’t be afraid to tell your stories, whatever they are, they're a part of you, let them shine. That is where originality comes from, don't be afraid to make mistakes; they are the key. Fly your kite high.”



VOLUNTEERS CENTRE SKOPJE

- www.vcs.org.mk
- vcs_contact@yahoo.com
- +389 75 243 726