

Is There a Market

This module applies only to those of you who believe that you would like to market your work.

Let's believe that eventually after much practice you attain a standard of work from which you think you can earn money...

Here's my story some of which I may have hinted at in the earlier modules for many years I had been a free lance comic strip illustrator , this comic work began in the sixties when I submitted some drawings to a leading publisher of children's comics.

Submitting work and dealing with rejection is hard for the aspiring artist whether it is cartoons , comic strip or caricatures the principle is the same.

(A) Don't ever send it before you are ready.

I have worked in a studio for a few years and drawn lots of cartoons which I had seen published to my great delight nothing beats the joy of seeing your work in print for the very first time. I had the ambition to draw comics as many do from a very early age. I wrote stories and drew them in picture strips. Now the time had come to make a serious attempt to break into the fascinating world of comics. In my free time I drew a sample page to the very best of my ability then I held it in front of me and was pleased then I drew another and another all this took time and I knew none of it would ever be published. It was simply to convince the editor that I had the promise to be a comic strip illustrator.

(B) What has this to do with caricatures?

Well the procedure for submitting work to an editor is the same.

Present it attractively when it is ready...

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When I have presented the drawings in the most attractive way and sent them in a large stiff envelope with a covering letter to the editor of my choice.

Dear Mr Crabtree

I am enclosing three pages of picture strip stories which I hope you will look at carefully and consider if I am good enough artist for you to use in your comic, etc etc..

I also enclosed a return label stamped and addressed.

Yours Sincerely , etc

Then I waited and prayed..

The first time I was rejected which was a major blow to my pride and ambition.

The Editor thanks you for the work you submitted but regrets that at this present time he is unable to use your services...

A few kind words followed but they didn't ease the disappointment. At least the drawings were returned those were the days before photocopying so I had sent the original artwork..

(C) Learn to Deal with rejection..

You will probably have to deal with rejection every artist has experienced this kind of thing it's a blow to confidence but you have to deal with it.

Even now I have drawing's returned to me saying have another go or to change minor details. You begin to doubt your own ability even wonder if you are in the right business..

How you react to this negative response really separates you from the next fellow , the determined from the easily discouraged..

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(D) Persevere...

I tried again new drawings new letter same editor ..

This time Bingo I was invited to go into his office and talk to him taking my portfolio of my work to show him.

It is important to build up some kind of portfolio as you go along it's fairly easy now to photo copy the best examples of your work and display them attractively. You never know when you will need to show what you can do...

As a result of this visit to the Publishing House the editor promised to send me a script to illustrate.

Oh the Joy when the script fell through the letter box !

I was winning the Battle..

I know many Artists who have had to endure many years of continual rejection before making the break through. Its an occupational hazard and there's no easy way to deal with this.

This can destroy you or merely serve to increase your determination..

HOW DID I GET MY FIRST CARICATURE PUBLISHED ?

In much the same way by doing a few I was pleased with and submitting them to a publisher as I related to earlier..

I don't think I would have ventured into caricatures had it not been for the encouragement I had from my family and friends showing me the work of other caricaturist..

" You can do as well as this said my son one day showing me some caricatures he'd acquired"

I thought I probably could and did a few of his favourite soccer players for him..

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Not content he pushed me still further persuading me that these football caricatures deserved a wider audience.

I was already working picture strip for a football magazine so I had a ready made opportunity. The same magazine used one or two of my caricatures as space fillers and paid me for them.

They make a pleasant change from photographs remarked the Editor..

What if I tried to publish my own?

I drew a set of 25 footballers and had them printed postcard size and advertised them for sale to collectors.

This was a fairly expensive outlay not only in origination and printing but also in advertising. I worked out that I needed to sell a hundred sets to cover the cost and break even !

It was a gamble I had to take...

I've continued to draw caricatures of footballers and other sports men and entertainers and to my continual surprise people still buy them from me and magazines and books still commission me to do caricatures for them.

It's a hard road but enjoyable and rewarding.

Remember if you want to submit your work for publication.

- A : Don't send it before you are ready
- B : Present it attractively
- C : Learn to deal with rejection positively
- D : Persevere !

Do your homework. Look at lots of magazines and see which are the likeliest ones to be interested in your particular brand of caricatures.

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A few more observations.

Caricatures should be entertaining and informing they say a few strokes of a pen says what a hundred words can not say.

They brighten up an otherwise dull and boring page of text as on this page , they attract attention whether it's a book , magazine , newspapers or internet page.

You may be quite happy with your amateur status just enjoying caricaturing as a hobby.

But if not THE WRITERS AND ARTIST YEAR BOOK is an essential read if you want to take this idea of selling your work seriously.

In it you will find lists and contact details and email addresses for hundreds of publications and market places.

As it's name suggests the book is published every year as the market place is continually changing with new publications supplementing the old enduring ones.

You may be blown away by the sheer number of publishing houses and magazines but choose carefully the few that will be interested in your work.

Many Buyers of cartoons and caricatures look for freelancers on the internet. So build or get one built for you a website that shows off your best work .

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Fee's

It's nice to be paid for your work.

But deciding how much to charge for a caricature is the part of his or her work that the artist really hates.

If I do a one off caricature of a friend how much do I charge?

It's never enough because it has probably taken hours to do and you don't want to lose a friend.

If I sit down and caricature a footballer like Rio Ferdinand and add him to my catalogue it may take four hours to complete that drawing going through all the afore mentioned procedure.

That's about £50 in origination cost's even allowing for a quite meagre hourly rate of pay!

So I have to reckon I am going to sell quite a few prints and cards just to break even.

It wouldn't be unreasonable to ask my friend upwards of £40 for a one of caricature there is a artist in Germany called Sebastian Kruger that charges \$10,000 for a caricature. You will know if you are under charging because you will always have 6 month work to catch up on.

Some magazine will have a set rate of pay which you either accept or don't submit.

Other times if the work is commissioned I am asked

"How much will this drawing cost?"

So I have to take into account a number of factors.

How long will it take?

Will I need to look for photos this can take sometime or will they provide them for me?

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Is he going to accept the first one I do or might he ask me to do it again?

Does the editor want to see roughs?

This is important is it for advertising unlikely but possible and if so is it local or for a national advertising campaign, for which he was paid a lot more money than if it had been simply local.

The same with a national newspaper or magazine they would be expected to pay considerably more for a cartoon or caricature than a local one.

An eight hour day for the free lance artist doesn't mean that you will spend that length of time at your drawing board. There's all kinds of administration work to do telephone calls , sorting , managing and invoicing , then all the material you need to buy there goes a couple of hours at least. You'll be lucky to spend more than five hours actually drawing.

Take all this into account when working out your hourly rate of pay !

As a general rule though there are exceptions never produce any commercial work for FREE. Even if the client promises to offer you more paid work in the future don't be tempted.

An electrician wouldn't come and do some domestic work for you on that understanding so why should you.

Many Artist frustrated by their lack of success will give their work away simply to see it in print.

My Advice is DON'T.

If you undervalue your work so will your client take pride in your work. Caricatures are not trivia though they may be memorabilia they bring a smile everyday to thousands in the national press.

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COPYRIGHT

Once you have created your caricature the copyright on that piece of work belongs entirely to you.

No one may copy it or use your pen , pencil or brush leaves the paper having completed your final stroke.

You can sell that copyright.

Or you can sell limited rights that is when a client buys the right to use your work only in the manner and for the amount of time agreed by you.

I've seen my work occasionally used in places for which I haven't given permission. I always kick up a fuss because this is what I do to pay the bills.

Make every effort to retrieve your original artwork if you have sent it for scanning and publication it's your property. The client has only borrowed it for purpose of reproducing the picture so ask for it back.

If you don't he will presume you don't care and that it has no value!

You should have a portfolio you may need to exhibit your best caricatures to a potential buyer. You can have a electronic portfolio a website but it's also a good idea to have a real leather one which can be carried to any prospective client. Don't include too much its better to have a dozen examples of your very best work than dozens of mediocre pieces.

The final module is only to help those of you who are considering trying to market your caricatures. More than likely you will be quite content with your amateur status enjoying caricature simply as a hobby and not considering giving up the day job.

Either way I wish you many happy hours of caricaturing and many happy subject , all the best BOB BOND