

# WIN @ WORK & PLAY

*Winning Mindsets &  
Business Systems of  
Thriving Textile Artists*



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**A**re you having a hard time selling your creative pieces? Have you concluded you can't build a business out of this thing you love?

Stop beating yourself up!! You'll be surprised to know there are thriving textiles artists who have built businesses off of their creativity. In this ebook you're going to learn the business models they use. Here's what you can expect to learn.

- △ Discover 7 different income streams you can employ to finally transform your creativity from a hobby to an income generating business
- △ Increase your income stability by building a diversified business model based on multiple revenue streams
- △ Empower yourself with the power of choice - You should be able to choose whether or not you want to profit from your creative work based on knowledge not ignorance
- △ You can become an entrepreneur as well as pursue your passion
- △ Add more income streams (passive or active) to protect yourself and your family from financial ups and downs which come from the risks of relying on only one income source
- △ Become less cash strapped and free time to do what you love and devote yourself to your passions and talents

Ultimately, becoming financially stable is a matter of whether or not you will have the finances to aggressively pursue your creative passion. If you can't finance your passion, you can't continue to enjoy that passion. It's that simple.

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## INTRODUCTION

Hey, there. Clara Narthey here. I'm an artist, a writer and the author of The Clara Narthey Blog.



I find and interview thriving entrepreneurs from all over the world about their mindsets and the systems they use to grow their businesses, in order to help artists learn how to start or grow their own creative businesses.

I'm a textile artist just like you. I love to create with textiles. I help makers & artists supercharge their creativity and start or grow their creative businesses.

Is textile art your hobby or is it your career? Do you sometimes wonder if you can make money from creating textile art? Are you making some money but wish you knew how to earn more? Are you simply looking for ways to sell your artwork because you've practically run out of space in your attic, basement, studio or wherever it is you store your creative work?

I know where you're coming from. As a textile artist myself, I can totally relate to many of these concerns.

Something tells me you're one smart textile artist. You know there must be some way to make money from doing what you love. You're determined to find out what it is so you can live the life you want.

Well ... you're absolutely right! There are ways to make this work. And not only that, you've also picked up the right ebook. In this book, I'm going to answer your questions and show you several ways you can profit from your creative passion.

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## WHY THIS IS THE RIGHT BOOK FOR YOU

There is a ton of information on making money from your artwork available out there – some really great. But when it comes to specific information on textile art, it's almost non-existent.

Trust me, I've looked. Just like you, I wanted answers but it was hard to find specifics related to textile art. You know as well as I do that textile art is kind of different. So the broad brush strokes of information relating to how to make money from art in general, don't quite cut it for textile artists.

We need more and that's where this ebook comes in. I decided to do more than wonder about how the business of textile art works. I decided to ask questions, interview successful makers, and do my research. When I started getting answers, I couldn't keep it to myself. I wanted to share with others.

So I created this free book to share with as many textile artists as possible. To empower them to profit from their passion of making art from fabrics, threads, paints, textiles and all the other stuff we use to make what we make.

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## CREATIVE PASSION IS NOT ENOUGH

**Creativity occurs at the intersection of work and play.**

And this is what we're passionate about - creative work & play. The wow moment when our creative vision is realized in something we make with our own two hands. How do we win at creativity, though? How do we win at the intersection of play & work?

Let's talk "passion". A lot of us creatives like to focus on passion. But what I've discovered is passion is not enough. I've met people who are not only passionate about what they do but very skilled as well.

They start off excited about their skills, enjoying the creative process and sharing the fun with other people. But after a while, this creative thing they love so much and enjoy doing starts getting expensive.

Initially they adjust their lives and sacrifice some pleasures to pay for their expensive "hobby". But the more they get into learning new things and experimenting, the more money they need to finance their creativity.

Trying to master skills means repeating the same process several times. Maybe with different supplies or brands until you get it just right. When you're constantly creating to develop mastery, you need more supplies than the average creative. All of this costs money.

If you haven't figured out a way of financing these projects you'll get hit with these cold

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facts soon. Eventually you wake up one day and realize the status quo is not going to work for long. Something must give.

You've already sacrificed as much as you possibly can to your creative passion and there's absolutely no more to give. You've hidden supply purchases from your family and done all you can to make it work.

Finally, you realize that finding a way to finance your creative passion is not just a matter of building a business to make you money.

It could be the difference between continuing in your passion or having to scale it back (keeping it as an occasional hobby) or worse case - giving up on it entirely.

In the following pages, I present to you 7 specific business models I've identified that thriving textile artists use to build their businesses to ensure continuity of their creative passions.

Give yourself the power of choice. Know what's possible and what others are doing. And make the choices which best serve your needs.

Let's dive in:

## HOBBY MODE vs CAREER MODE

Bob Baker- a creative entrepreneur, author and musician, explains in one of his podcasts that with respect to money, there are basically four stages of our creative journeys.

### The Four Reasons Why You Create

1

Self-Accomplishment: At the initial stage of our creative journey, we create so we can accomplish specific goals. For example, I set a goal for myself to use my sewing machine just like a pencil to create artwork. When I completed this one year creative challenge I felt accomplished.

2

Self-Recognition: The next level for which we create is to be recognized for our skills. We want people to see how creative we are. For example when your work starts getting accepted into juried shows or by family, you enjoy that recognition.

3

For Benefit: In this stage, unlike the previous two levels, we create because we're interested in providing value for others. The primary goal will always be to create for ourselves but there comes a point when we create to make an impact or to leave a legacy.

4

For Money: At this stage, in addition to the first three reasons: self-accomplishment, self-recognition and to make an impact, we create to make a career out of our creative skills and to make a living.

The first two levels are about ourselves (hobby mode) and levels 3 and 4 involve letting your work be about others (career mode).

Obviously, each of us will find ourselves at a different stage in our relationship with money versus our creative skills.

There's no rule that you need to progress through all four stages. You can decide to stay at level one and never progress any further and that'll be perfectly fine. Some people love to gift their work rather than sell them. Gifting is another way of showing your work. Showing your work helps you hone your creative skills and reap other benefits.

However, if you decide to make that leap into the final two stages, you'll want to learn more about how to accomplish that.

If that's you, then follow along with me through the rest of this book. (If you don't plan on selling your work I still recommend reading the book just to satisfy your curiosity)

## LIMITING MINDSETS TO MAKING MONEY FROM YOUR TEXTILE ART

### *Making Money from Your Creative Work is Not a Sellout*

Before we start, let's discuss the obstacles that exist to making money from your creations. First off, let's talk about mindsets.

Is it wrong to want to make money from your textile artwork? Should you have to choose between cash and creativity or can you have both? In general, many artists find it difficult to even talk about how to make money from their artwork and textile artists are no different.

One artist likened talking about making money from your artwork to "bathroom talk" or "intimate talk". It's not something artists like to talk a lot about. Yet artists are struggling to afford simple lives.

Actually, I'm convinced that talking about money is hard for us because our inability to make a decent living from our artwork is embarrassing to us. Which of us likes to talk about their failures? When you think about it that way it makes sense. Doesn't it?

However, if you can't talk about your struggles and failures with monetizing your creative work, how do we get other people's perspectives which may be just what we need to make a headway in starting or growing our creative businesses?

An artist friend once told me about her plans to make a career out of her creativity. To that, I was very supportive and encouraging. Later, she came back to thank me for believing in her.

This is what I told her. From my observation, those who are successful building a creative career have a specific mindset. And I can see you've got that mindset.

And I absolutely believe that. The biggest obstacle to success in creative business is a failure mindset. Period!! If you think you can, you can. And if you think you can't, well you can't.

## THE GUILT OF TRADING CREATIVITY FOR CASH

### *Creativity & Cash can Coexist Comfortably*

Many textile artists talk about how much they enjoy what they do more than whether they earn money from their activities or not. However, in their “intimate talks”, they’ll admit (or maybe let it slip) that they wish their creativity would be able to pay for the supplies at least, if not for the other bills.

Why the need for guilt when you want to profit from your skills? We all have gifts and talents and passions. Most people make a living on their analytical skills, administrative skills, ability to serve and protect others or whatever it is they are passionate about. So why shouldn’t creative makers, textile artists and art quilters be able to do likewise?

Some argue that pursuing profit saps time away from your creativity and eventually it will negatively affect your creativity. On the flip side, the argument can also be made that when money becomes important to you, you’ll work your hardest to make your creative work top-notch. Because your livelihood depends on it. It’s that concept of constraints fueling creativity.

In my interview with fabric painter Mickey Lawler, she explains that she needed to make enough money to pay her daughter’s college tuition and that become her initial business goal. And look how she turned out - celebrity fabric designer- and unmistakably creative!!!.

Imagine the feeling of not being overly-worried by finances when you’re in your creative space doing your thing.

*“As a creative, your head space is your workspace. If it’s taken up by worries of any kind, it’s hard to settle to the task in hand, and harder still to get into the creative zone where you do your best work.” ~ Mark McGuinness, Motivation for Creative People.*

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## YOU DESERVE TO PROFIT FROM YOUR TALENTS

### *Your Creative Work is Valuable*

**“**If you don't value your time, neither will others. Stop giving away your time and talents--start charging for it.” - Kim Garst (Founder and CEO of Boom! Social)

It's hard for us creatives to put a value on our time because we truly enjoy what we do and the ultimate reason we create is because we love to create and not because we can make money out of what we do.

Yet, we work hard on our craft. Although it feels a lot like play, it's work too. And we absolutely deserve to be paid for what we do. As hard as we find the concept of being paid for our passion, we earn that money when we work. People who work other jobs are paid for their time, hard work and the use of their talents. So, why shouldn't you?

You save and you give up a lot of stuff so you can buy fabrics, paints, supplies, dyes and all the things you use to make art. You sacrifice your leisure time to create. Of course, you deserve to profit from your talents!!! It's a no-brainer.

## BENEFITS OF MULTIPLE REVENUE STREAMS

- A** When you have multiple streams of income, they'll will either be Passive Income or Active Income Streams. That means for the passive income streams, you'll have to do the work upfront and later reap your earnings without doing much more work. Examples will be earning royalties on books and licensing.
- B** You have the ability to try many of these and choose exactly what works for you and drop what doesn't work for you. Some of them may not be lucrative – involve more work than generate income or do not align with your talents and passions. But the important thing is that you're no longer beholden to only one way of thriving as an artist or a creative person. You've got multiple options.
- C** Multiple streams tend to support each other and expand your business dealings. For example, building authority expands your ability to sell more products.

## IT'S A NUMBERS GAME

Multiple streams of income are better than one. It's like the olden days when people used wells as their source of potable water. They dug more than one well at a time because they knew that multiple streams (as in wells) would keep them protected in case one or two wells dried up during a drought season.

Similarly, for the textile artist, one stream of income is unlikely to provide the year-round financial stability you need for the peace of mind to continue creating awesome art to share with the world.

Moreover, some wells (streams of income) will be easier to dig and profit from rather than others. So having a good mix of streams will serve your best interests.

## KNOWLEDGE IS POWER

I know you're a smart textile artist. You wouldn't be reading this e book if you weren't. Arming yourself with what is possible in the textile art business, gives you the power of choice.

And you certainly deserve to have that. You deserve to be able to choose whether or not you want to explore the possible streams of income available to textile artists, art quilters, and creative makers.

However, without the knowledge of what others are doing, that choice is taken away from you.

Now you know the limiting and winning mindsets which affect our businesses. Nothing sums up our mindsets issues better than this statement.

*"The ONLY thing that separates a going concern from a business that has ended, is that the entrepreneur has given up. It is not a financial state, it is a state of mind ~ Melanie Brummer*

Having dealt with mindsets, let's now move on to discover revenue streams for making money in the textile art business

### What are your options?

## MONETIZE YOUR CREATIVE PASSION WITH MULTIPLE INCOME STREAMS

### 1. SELLING ORIGINAL ARTWORK

Selling your work is the most obvious option available to us. But when you decide to monetize your creative passion you'll quickly notice that even here, there are several options available.

Some places we can sell our work include:

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- △ Open Studios, Trade and Craft or Quilt Fairs, & Art Exhibitions
- △ Art Gallery Representation
- △ Working with Art Consultants and Interior Decorators
- △ Personal Website
- △ Art Marketing Sites like Artful Home, Amazon Fine Art, Fine Art America
- △ Craft and Handmade Sites like Etsy, Art Fire and Zibbet

## 2. LICENSING & PRINTS

Just like using art gallery representation to sell original work, using art licensing to monetize your creative passion is a topic that requires a lot of knowledge to navigate its intricacies.

However, simply put, art licensing is about our intellectual property as artists. It involves giving someone permission to use your copyright to reproduce, distribute or otherwise use your creation under limited conditions.

There are various examples of that for the textile art, quilt and sewing industry. Most places will create prints of your original work onto different substrates for sale.

Examples of such print-on-demand companies are:

- △ RedBubble
- △ CafePress
- △ Pixels
- △ Zazzle
- △ Red Dog Enterprises
- △ Pixalili
- △ Society 6
- △ Printful
- △ VIDA Design (find a detailed explanation on how to launch a wearable art collection with VIDA and learn more about my own VIDA shop)

Alternatively, you could have some of these places make prints for you, purchase them at wholesale prices to sell to customers yourself.

## 3. BUILDING AUTHORITY

One option to monetize your creative passion that isn't explored enough by creative types is building authority.

Doing this involves writing, publishing & selling books. It also involves doing speaking gigs and presentations for groups of people.

And a more recent option in this category is creating an Online platform by authoring a successful blog, creating a well-listened-to podcast or having a large social media following.

This option requires a lot of investment in time and may be the reason why it's not explored more often.

## 4. TEACHING WORKSHOPS

Teaching workshops is a good option for textile and quilt artists and all creative types. It's not only an option for you to monetize your creative passion, but also a source of energy, especially in person-to-person workshops. Teaching includes:

- △ In-Person Group Workshops
- △ One-on-One Coaching Sessions
- △ Teaching Online Courses

## 5. PATTERNS & KITS

Another viable option to monetize your creative passion is to make it easy for others to create similar things to what you create.

Doing this involves documenting your process step-by-step and then creating a blue-print or pattern so that someone else can recreate what you do.

You can take this further by providing the supplies someone will need in order to use your pattern. When you provide the documentation in addition to the supplies needed for customers to create your designs, then you're providing *kits for sale*.

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## 6. COMMISSIONS:

Accepting commissions as a way to monetize your creative passion involves accepting custom orders to make things for other people for a premium fee.

Typically, your orders for commissions will come from individuals, public and state organizations and from corporations.

## 7. DESIGNING FABRICS:

Finally, because of the Internet and advancements in digital printing technology, the ability to design your own fabrics has become within the reach of many makers and creators. Now, not only are you able to design fabrics for your own textile work but you can also sell your designed fabrics if you choose.



### **Do-it Yourself**

Here are Online sites which make it possible for the you to design fabrics without the need to go through the big-name fabric companies. In some cases, you can also sell your designs with these companies.

- △ SpoonFlower
- △ Fabric On Demand
- △ Modern Yardage
- △ Vision It
- △ DPI
- △ My Fabric Designs
- △ Pixalili

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## **Selling Through Textile Companies**

The second option in this category is going through the big name fabric companies. You can choose to become a textile designer or surface pattern designer as they're usually called.

As a surface pattern designer, you create artwork, color ways and repeats for commercial fabric printing to be used in fashion, home décor, quilting, crafting and more.

There are two pathways here. You can either get a job as part of a textile company's in-house design team or go independent and sell your designs to different textile companies.

Going as an independent business owner means you've got to create design portfolios and submit to textile companies for them to commercially print your designs, represent you and sell on your behalf.

This brings you back to the area of licensing and copyright agreements as previously discussed under income stream #2 - "Licensing & Prints".

I've noticed that textile artists who are surface designers - fabric painters and hand dyers- seem to do well with licensing their designs to textile companies.

Two examples of textile artists who have successfully done this are Mickey Lawler who licensed some of her designs to Free Spirit Fabrics and Caryl Fallert Bryer Gentry who has a large collection of textile designs with Bernatex.

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## CONCLUSION

So now here you have it. Seven different ways to monetize your creative passion as a textile artist. I know finding time to do the research is hard so I did that for you. Because I'm really passionate about helping as many makers and creators become successful at doing this thing that they love. But you still need to take action to make it work for you.

### **TAKE ACTION:**

Take action on the information in this book, investigate for yourself, and decide which of the options above you want to use to sculpt your own textile art career.

Take a careful look at the careers of some of the successful artists you admire. You'll notice that their businesses are made up of at least two of these income sources.

Read my textile business interviews with successful textile entrepreneurs (textile art business owners). Learn how they're using the various income streams I've shown you here in this book to start and grow their own businesses.

Then craft the creative life you want and rightfully deserve.

You already know how to win at play, now it's time for you to win at work too. I can't wait to see and hear about your success.

Wishing you the very best.

xoxo  
Clara.



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