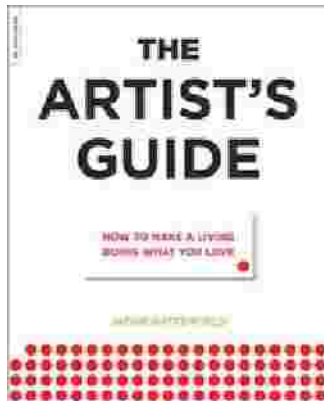


Woodblock Dreams

An artist exploring moku hanga, traditional Japanese woodblock printing

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[Making a Living As an Artist](#)



I'm still thinking hard about my career and wrestling with where to go from here. The freelance illustration has been slow, gallery sales are slow, and the mood among my colleagues in both arenas is fairly gloomy. What I know from past slow periods is that now is the time to focus on marketing, to experiment with new work, to redesign web sites and reach out to past clients as well as potential new ones. All of which can be difficult to do when one is nervous or scared or gloomy.

But boy did I just get a lift! Last week a copy of the newly released book [The Artist's Guide: How to Make a Living Doing What You Love](#) arrived in my mailbox just as I was leaving for my four-day vacation, and I've been devouring it. Author Jackie Battenfield is a [successful artist herself](#), has owned and run a gallery, and teaches business development courses and workshops specifically for artists.

First, a word of warning. Do not purchase this book if you're fond of making excuses for why you aren't a successful artist, because once you read it you will have no excuses left. Battenfield covers *everything* from examining your own hopes and fears to writing an artist statement to finding a place to show to securing funds. With real life examples and interviews scattered throughout, this book is 345 pages of pure career-coaching gold. The tone is positive and upbeat, yet realistic. Battenfield is very clear that being successful in the arts is a difficult task that takes a tremendous amount of work and perseverance, yet she shows clearly both **that** it is possible and **how** it is possible.

I still have two more chapters to read, but already I feel invigorated and inspired. I've made a list of short-term and long-term goals, have ordered some self-promo cards, have revamped my web site, and have had a good conversation with my gallery. What I also know is that this book is one I will turn to again and again, as the huge amount of information could easily take years to fully implement as my career evolves.

Readers of this blog may also want to check out Battenfield's [lovely large-scale woodblock prints!](#)

Labels: [art](#), [art business](#), [books](#)



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I'm a longtime illustrator who started making Japanese style woodblock prints (moku hanga) in 2005.