

ARTISTMARK Leads the Digital Pop Art Revolution

By Audra Lambert | Artrepreneur September 20, 2018



You're admiring a lush blend of patterns and colors, gazing at vaguely recognizable figures wrapped in a blaze of vibrant hues. Abstract compositions emerge through fantastic geometric layers. You've discovered the unique digital pop art practice of ARTISTMARK, whose critically acclaimed PHOTOFORM digital mixed media practice exclusively utilizes the Apple iPad. On the heels of major museum retrospectives of artists such as David Hockney celebrating art made using iPad technology, ARTISTMARK hits a high note creating artwork that leads the next generation style of digital mixed media by transforming images into a unique multi filtered form of intelligent iPad art. We sat down to chat with ARTISTMARK about creating on a digital canvas and bringing Pop Art into a newly updated format.

About the author

Audra Lambert is an independent curator and art critic based in New York, NY. The founder of Antecedent Projects (2014), a sustainable urban curatorial consultancy investigating site-specific heritage, and is Editor-in-Chief, ANTE. Mag. Lambert manages ART360 by Orangenius, an immersive, 3-D art viewing experience, and serves as Managing Editor, Artrepreneur.

Artrepreneur: You work on your iPad to produce artworks using a pioneering process to produce PHOTOFORM. Other renowned artists such as David Hockney have recently begun working to create digitally-produced artwork on the iPad, what do you think is so compelling about using this device to create? What about using this process enables you to better produce your artwork?

ARTISTMARK: I love your question. You refer to the iPad as a device - I see it as a brilliant, magical canvas. What makes the iPad so compelling is how it spans a fascinating convergence between imagination, art, and technology. Creating with the iPad is an pure, fresh, originative process that transcends into a limitless and costless universal canvas - accessible to anyone with a natural curiosity and craving to create. My wife said it best, over time as applications (the brushes of technological change) are replaced, the artwork created today will no longer be able to be composed in its current form. To the contrary, when a person draws or paints on paper or other medium, it is just that and will always be that way. The makes the allure of experimenting with art on the iPad so enticing - and so unlike any other artistic endeavor in the world.

When I create with my iPad I dance without a care in the world. It is an intimate, frictionless, and prolific creative experience. When I first attempted to embrace composing art on my iPad, I thought my creations would be disrupted and negatively impacted as a result of not having the physical sensations of feeling the brush, hearing the sound of my strokes on the canvas, or seeing textures illuminated by the gallery lights. I was pleasantly surprised that this was not the case and celebrated the profound positive impact it had on my artwork and my audience.

My iPad also provides 100% flexibility to create artwork anytime, anywhere. I take it with me everywhere in NYC and when I travel. This allows me to create at any instant of inspiration. I never experienced anything like this carrying pencils and paper. At this point, I would find it extremely difficult to create artwork in any other way.



ARTISTMARK, "EPF 998"

Artrepreneur: You developed your artistic career as a second reincarnation after an established life in software, what advice can you offer other artists looking to make a fresh start as an artist in transition from other careers and walks of life? What's something you wish you had known when you began?

ARTISTMARK: I think each of us have creative genes in our DNA. At the end of the day, it is ultimately up to us to determine if we want or are prepared for the experience. My advice to any artist in transition from other careers or walks of life is summed up in two words: just create.

Any life transition is intimidating and scary to start. It certainly was for me. I remember how much courage it took for me to post my first piece of PHOTOFORM on Facebook. Once I dove into that pool, I was able to build my social network to thousands of followers and was invited to my first group show. After that, I started winning awards and selling my PHOTOFORM. I was contacted by Apple who invited me for a solo showcase at Apple Store here in NYC (that was a thrill) which lead to my work streaming today on Loupeart, the top Lifestyle app on Apple TV around the world. And now here I am talking to you!

Each of us are who we - but we are also who we chose to be. Fresh starts don't necessarily start in the beginning. When I created ARTISTMARK, I told most of my friends that this was my healthy midlife crisis. That certainly took the edge off - made the entire experience much more fun by creating a safety net and inspired many of my friends to have the confidence to start an adventure of their own.

My only wish is that I started sooner. The turning point for me was when my Dad passed away. I needed something positive to deal with his passing and the iPad was my shrine. Since then, I have received so many kind words from people all over the world. Comments, letters, emails, not only praising my work but appreciating my contribution to digital art scene that inspire others to join the digital art movement.



ARTISTMARK, "EPF 300"

Artrepreneur: What about Pop art drew you to create PHOTOFORM? Can you point to which Pop artists influence you and why?

ARTISTMARK: Discovering Pop art as a teenager changed my life. I remember visiting MoMA in NYC with friends who would look at various pieces and say to me “How is that art? That looks too easy to create. I can do that, etc.” I felt very different about the experience. When I saw the art, I felt the connection. I understood how it was art and realized that in some capacity, I was going to be an artist.

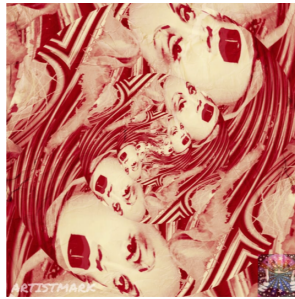
My biggest inspiration has always been Andy Warhol. His work has had a tremendous impact on the world and on me personally. His iconic imagery is extraordinarily timeless, relevant, and beautiful. His quotes remain relevant today, including “Pop art is for everyone” and “Art is anything you can get away with.” To this day, I walk around NYC, look at familiar sidewalk objects, fading signs, and other mixtures of day to day life in the city and ask myself “is this art?” A few years ago, it hit me. Everything Andy did was truly experimental. His eye and creative process were unique for his time and laid the foundation for the now established POP art scene. Digital Art would not have existed in its current form today without Andy Warhol. As my technological canvas will likely always be in its infancy, iPad art will always be an experimentation. PHOTOFORM just stuck and is my homage to him. I firmly believe that the next Andy Warhol will be a digital artist.

The word experimental is a broad brush and has allowed me to proudly incorporate many other artist influences in my work. What I admire most about my influences is that each artist approached their own unique style with sensitive touch that was not only instantly recognizable, but became fastened in my mind.

Tadanori Yokoo's vivid avant-garde graphic designs, David LaChapelle's hyper pop photographic couture, Pablo Picasso's structured abstract yet recognizable portraits, Salvador Dali's classic surrealism, Gustav Klimt's, sequential designs and textures, Jean-Michael Basquiat's punk collages, Joan Miro's experimentation of geometric shapes, colors, and abstract forms, and Egon Schiele, raw and erotic depictions of the female form are all found sprinkled in my pieces.

Artrepreneur: I’m curious as to how you title your artworks, can you explain the “EPF” trend in your art titles, how that began and the purpose behind it?

ARTISTMARK: My art titles are intentionally prescriptive. EPF is the prefix for my PHOTOFORM artworks. The generic numbers demand the mind's eye to initially start with a blank canvas. The essence from the titles is that the artwork is digital - built on numeric bits and bytes. It reminds me what I experience when looking at a sterile barcode. You understand that it is a generic representation of something - but you don't know what it is until you scan or in the case of my art, commit (even for a brief moment) to see it blossom into something special.



ARTISTMARK, "EPF 884"

Artrepreneur: You describe your process as “multi-filtered”, can you explain a bit about how you create your individual compositions?

ARTISTMARK: The term multi-filtered is directly bound to my characterization of PHOTOFORM as intelligent iPad art. Anyone can draw on their iPad but just as the greatest chefs master the art of properly balancing time, temperature, and ingredients, intelligent iPad art requires a similar dedication, compassion and appreciation for creating unique combinations of colors, shapes, textures, and designs that make the art dance. My “recipes” typically require at least a dozen different applications to come to life. It is a painstaking process - blending and mixing until all reaches a spiritual balance. The most difficult part of my multi-filtered approach is knowing when to let go and stop. It is an intangible power that overcomes me, and at that point I know the artwork is done.

Artrepreneur: What goals do you have as an artist innovating the field? Where do you hope your artistic career takes you as you move forward with PHOTOFORM?

ARTISTMARK: My primary goal as an artist innovating in this field is to constantly assess and challenge myself - to experiment with technology, stay outside the bubble, and remain on the bleeding edge of the digital art scene. Someday I hope to be recognized as one of the brave, avant-garde, pioneers of the digital art movement.

Like most artists, I have a healthy ego and tend to reveal a lot of myself in my work. As you can imagine, choosing to be unconventional at times causes me to lick my wounds for it. But I enjoy taking risks and getting out of my comfort zone. In terms of where I hope my artistic career takes me as I move forward with PHOTOFORM, a quote from Jenny Perry says it best. - “I am in competition with no one. I run my own race. I have no desire to play the game of being better than anyone. I just aim to improve to be better than I was before. That’s me and I’m free.”

I recently gave another interview where my teenage daughter shared some inspiring words of wisdom. She said “it is not just about the art, it is about the artist.” People don’t necessary admire or purchase a Pollock because they like the art, they do it because it was made by Pollock.” This has had a profound effect on me, my brand, and what I want to say with my work. My goal is for the world to appreciate the art as much as the artist.

What about your artistic practice, have you had the opportunity to work with digital media? Is that your primary means of creating artwork? Does it supplement your painting or mixed media work? Drop us a comment and let us know what you think of digital art as the new frontier for art-making!