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### **Artist Legal Team**

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Artists – visual, digital, musical, etc. - need to have a team of trusted individuals around them to assist in protecting and leveraging their talent in the marketplace and creative industries. This article helps answer some basic questions about the team - Who are these team members? What should you look for in team members? How do they keep your legal rights protected? How do you find them?

#### ***Art Manager vs. Art Representative***

How many people do you need to change the light bulb of your artistic journey to success? Depends on the services you need from them. An art manager is expected to handle an artist's marketing, public relations, business affairs, calendar scheduling, etc. In other words, your manager works with you to strategically create a path to success – he manages you, your talent, and your goals. An art representative just sells your art – could be through an online or printed catalogue or in a physical location, such as an established art gallery or other art venue. Also keep in mind that you will probably not be the only artist whose art the representative is trying to sell.

#### ***Art Attorney vs. Art Advocate***

An art attorney focuses on the legal aspects of your creative career – questions relating to the protection of your art through copyright and trademark registration and contracts, as well as distribution of your art through licensing, exhibit agreements, etc. The attorney can also help you with enforcement of your rights in your art through mediation, litigation, etc. An art advocate is a proponent for the cause of art – he/she protects your right to create art freely and without restrictions – for example, they are instrumental in the fight to ensure artistic freedom of expression free of censorship. They also support art education in schools which in turn helps support artists as educators, another income option for art professionals. Whereas the art attorney is defending your rights in court and with legal measures, the art advocate is defending the rights of all artists in the court of public opinion, but they use the political system and media to do so. Sometimes art attorneys and art advocates combine forces, as with what is occurring with the Visual Artists Rights Act (VARA) – to prevent destruction to original art via modification, or even in some cases, renovation.

#### ***What makes a good team member?***

You will come across quite a few individuals wearing one or more of the above hats. How do you know which one is best? The first thing is to look at their credentials – educational background and training (is it in the arts, in arts management, business or something from left field like entomology). Next look at their experience – what art genres have they been involved with before; who have they represented; were the artists they worked with successful or not; etc. After learning what they know, next is to find out who they know – their contacts

and their networks – what circles do they move in – is there potential for your art in those circles? Do they have an “in” to get you where you want to go? Then verify – credentials are a funny thing. Check the references. Make sure to meet them in person if they are to represent you – you need to get a feeling if they are a good match for you – this will give you an opportunity to see if they understand your art, your philosophy, your way of creating (this is important so no unrealistic expectations are set that defy your logistical and creative capacity). As you go through the process of interviewing them, ask them about what ideas they have to offer you the services you need – such as marketing ideas or legal strategies.

### ***What to beware of?***

The team you build is not set in stone - keep in mind that you, as the artist, have the right to change members of the team if they are not doing what they are supposed to do, or are not responding to your art business needs. Some attributes of a bad team member would be someone who does not return your calls or emails within a reasonable amount of time or never; does not have YOUR art information in their sales “kits” or portfolios; gets your art work confused with other artists they are dealing with; does not know the local art venues and/or periodicals; does not know the art industry – including the language; etc.

### ***Where do you find them?***

You can find team members in the telephone book, online, through contacts, reading an article of an interview with one, through an online social network group, at an art exhibit or festival, just about anywhere. Finding them is not that complicated – making sure they are the right one for you and your art path is. So take your time, do your homework, and keep creating your art.

### ***Resources***

- Americans for the Arts Action Center  
<http://www.artsusa.org/>
- Advocacy.com: Arts & Entertainment News  
<http://www.advocate.com/ArtsandEntertainment/>
- Art Business.com Articles  
<http://www.artbusiness.com>
- Arts Journal  
<http://www.artsjournal.com/>
- Art Representative Sites  
<http://www.artpromote.com/rep.shtml> (has some links)  
<http://www.magnetreps.com/>  
[http://www.suite101.com/blog/maryrayme/visual\\_artist\\_representatives](http://www.suite101.com/blog/maryrayme/visual_artist_representatives)