THE VOID ACADEMY

Next Level Newsletters for Artists

Worksheets

TABLE OF CONTENTS

INTRODUCTION

Thank you for taking our *Next Level Newsletter for Artists* course! We are so excited that you are working on this very important social aspect of your creative practice. We hope that you found the course helpful and are so looking forward to seeing you use online tools to grow your connection with your audience.

In this packet you will find worksheets we have made to go along with the information in the course. These worksheets are meant to help you complete some of the practical elements of setting up a newsletter. They build upon and remind you of what you learned in the lessons in the course while simultaneously helping you to create some of the core elements of having an active mailing list.

Feel free to print them out and use them as guides or simply open them on your computer and work from your screen.

Warmly,

Karina, Siena, and Noah

The Void Academy

CHOOSING A MAILING LIST PLATFORM

When it comes to mailing list platforms, there are many options floating around but I'm going to make it simple and recommend only two: Tinyletter and Mailchimp. These are the two that have been most effective and easiest to use for the greatest number of artists that we work with. To decide which platform you should sign up for, **check which of the following applies to you and your practice:**

☐ Do you want to have a degree of customizability with the design of your email?

☐ Do you plan to include various forms of media in your mailers (i.e., videos)?

☐ Do you want to be able to learn information about those on your mailing list, such as where they are from and how often they click links in your mailers?

☐ Are you *not* in a rush to get the newsletter live today due to an impending tour or deadline?

☐ Would you like to have the ability to set up an incentive for people to sign up for your mailer that sends out automatically to those on your list, such as a digital booklet or audio file?

Results:

- If you checked any of the above answers, I recommend that you use Mailchimp as your platform. Mailchimp is the best platform for artists who want greater customizability and more advanced tools.

- If this checklist overwhelms you or if you selected none of the above, I recommend you get started with Tinyletter. Tinyletter is the easiest way to get a newsletter up and running in just a few minutes. It's great if you want to dive in right away, and you can always export your list and move to Mailchimp in the future if you decide you'd like to use a more advanced platform.

- Whichever you choose, don't forget to check out the tutorials I made about both platforms in the tutorials section of this course!

EFFECTIVE NEWSLETTER QUALITIES CHECKLIST

The most effective newsletters have a number of factors in common. I discussed the following qualities in the course: regularity, consistency, variety, authenticity, clarity, and the 'X' factor. Use the following checklist to regularly check in with yourself and ensure you are hitting the mark in each of these areas.

Regularity

☐ Create a regular schedule for you mailer and stick to it as well as possible

An effective newsletter is sent regularly. Now, "regularly" doesn't have to mean that you're sending it daily or even weekly, but having a predetermined schedule for your newsletter that you stick to as well as possible enables those signed up to build a sense of trust because they know that you are committed to consistent communicating with them and keeping them in the loop.

Consistency

☐ Create a consistent visual voice by selecting 1-2 fonts and 1-2 colors that you return to throughout your newsletters

☐ Select thematic elements that repeat in your mailers

In addition to regularity, effective mailers tend to have consistent visuals, voice, and even themes. If you have fonts and colors that you use for your website, you may want to repeat them in your newsletter for the sake of consistency. Again, this gives those signed up the ability to recognize your voice as an artist and get excited about each mailer because they have a general sense of what kind of thing to expect from you.

Variety

☐ Brainstorm a variety of content for your mailer

Great artist mailers include a variety of types of content, and sometimes something fun or unexpected goes a long way at making those signed up feel special!

Authenticity

☐ Check in with yourself to see if your newsletters feel authentic to your artistic voice and in line with your work as an artist

☐ Ensure that documentation of your work in your newsletters feels clear, accurate, and detailed

Authenticity whatever your putting out there in your artist mailer rings true to you and your work. It enables those who are signed up to get a sense of your true artistic voice and gives clear representations of the kind of art you make.

Clarity

☐ Be straightforward with information about your practice

☐ Ask directly for what you need

☐ Answer important questions related to your work

Clarity is another crucial factor when it comes to artist newsletters. When I talk about clarity, I mean being straightforward with information about your practice. Don't be afraid to get honest and direct about where you're at and what you need as an artist. Make sure if you are asking them to support you in a specific way (like come to a show, share a song, or purchase a work) that you give them all the details they need to make an informed decision about whether or not they are able to do the thing. What is it? Who is involved? How did it come to be? When it is occurring? Why is it important to you? Why should it be important to them? How much does it cost?

The 'X' Factor

☐ Check to ensure that you are having enjoying yourself with your newsletters

☐ Be sure to take the lid of and experiment with different types of content and interactions with those on your mailing list!

Effective mailers also have something I call "The X Factor." For the most part, this just means that your community can tell when you really care about connecting with them versus just phoning it in. If you're not enjoying yourself, it shows! So make sure you are having fun and creating opportunities for people who love your work to really experience your work in a new or different way. If there's an aspect of the mailers that feels like a drag, can it be replaced with something else? Basically, have some fun and get creative.

CREATING YOUR MAILING LIST STRATEGY

Before you begin sending out a regular newsletter, it's good practice to create a strategy that includes what you're sending out and when you're sending it out. There is no one-size-fits all newsletter strategy because every artist's practice is different. This worksheet will help you sort out what works best for you. And remember: when you create a strategy, you're not writing it in stone. If some element of your strategy isn't working for you for whatever reason, you can always make adjustments.

Choosing the "When?"

Basically, when it comes down to selecting the "when" part of the strategy, I'll simplify it to a few options: I recommend sending out a mailer either weekly, bi-weekly, or monthly. Use the questions below to find a starting point that feels most comfortable for you.

1. **What makes sense given the flow of your practice?**

How often do you tend to have updates about things going on in your practice?

What is the natural flow of new developments in your art practice? (i.e. Are you a performer who has a new show every month? Are you a writer who tends to have a new work online or schedule a reading every two weeks or so? Are you a painter who's committed to creating a small painting every day?)

2. **What makes sense given what you know about your community?**

Are there any indicators that help you to know how often your community may like to be updated?

Are you regularly asked by people what's new with your practice? If so, may be a sign that they want more regular information from you.

3. What feels fun for you?

How much time per week do you have reasonably to put towards this mailer?

What feels like a an amount of time between mailers that is not overly stressful for you but also challenges you to stay connected to your community?

Choosing the "What?"

First, let's look at some types of things that artists can put in mailers. Check any and all that appeal to you:

- ☐ Updates on live events and cool developments (interviews, reviews, etc.)
- ☐ Personal vignettes
- ☐ Behind the scenes process images and video
- ☐ Inspirations (playlists / moodboards / works of other artists)
- ☐ Documentation from live events
- ☐ Unpublished or unseen work.

In addition to focusing on the above as a starting point, there are a few further questions you may want to consider when deciding what to put in your newsletter:

1.   What makes sense given the flow of your practice?

What do you create naturally, both during the front-facing aspect of your art practice (what people ultimately see) and behind the scenes?

Out of these things, what would be simple for you to document and share with your newsletter?

2. What makes sense for your community?

Is there anything that people who like your work have responded to particularly well in the past?

3. What feels fun for you?

Of the examples above, which excited you the most?

Is there anything you've seen other artists do in your mailers that lit up your brain and got you inspired to create?

CREATING YOUR OUR WELCOME EMAIL

Welcoming your community to your mailing list is a great way to build trust with them and give them an idea of what to expect. Here is a sample of an automatic email that you could send out via Mailchimp:

Hello!

Welcome and thanks for signing up for my mailer, where you'll now be receiving monthly updates on upcoming work and behind the scenes process photos. *[Here is where you remind them of the 'what' and 'when' of your mailer.]*

To give you an idea of what this means, here's a photo of me in my studio, working on a recent work, entitled "Pizza Sweatpants. *[Include some type of image of you or your work here.]*
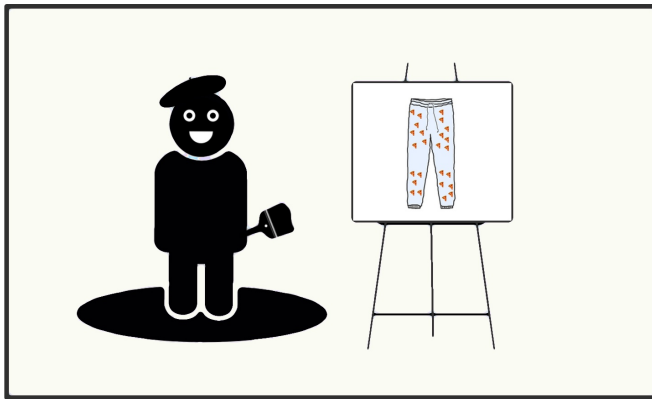
ME, PAINTING "PIZZA SWEATPANTS" (2017)

You can also click here to download a behind-the-scenes video of me working in my studio last week. *[Here is where you put your mailing list incentive, as seen in the tutorial.]*

Before I go, I'd love to hear from you.

Feel free to respond directly to this email with how you found out about my work. *[It's always nice to ask a question and encourage direct response to your emails to get your community engaged.]*

I look forward to being in touch!

[Your Name]

CREATING STRONG CALLS TO ACTION

The term "call to action" refers to how and where you encourage people to sign up for your newsletter or take some other form of action once they have signed up. Ensure you are taking the following steps to create strong calls to action both outside of and within your mailers.

Calls to sign up for your mailer:

☐ All of your calls to action to sign up to your mailing list include the "what" (what is in it?), the "when" (how often is it sent out?), and the "why" (an incentive to sign up)?

☐ Place a call to action for you mailing list in a prominent place on your website

☐ Place a call to action in a permanent place on your social media sites

☐ Post regular reminders about the fact that you have an ongoing newsletter

☐ If someone expresses interest in your work in person, let know that you send out a regular mailer and it's a great way to stay up-to-date on your practice

☐ If you have an artist business card, place a newsletter call-to-action on it

☐ If you are doing a live event, keep an old-school mailer sign-up sheet if it's possible given the space you're in

Calls to action within your mailer:

☐ Whenever you're asking people to do something, give them enough information and incentive to do so you want to make it as easy and exciting as possible for them to take action

☐ Place calls to action in a clear and prominent place within your newsletter

☐ Make the text of a call to action within your mailer bold and bright, to ensure it is not overlooked

☐ If you use Mailchimp, insert a colorful button to make your call to action stand out further

☐ With any call to action in a mailer, answer the following: What? When? Where? Why? How much? Why should I do it?