

Three Things Artists Need to Succeed

Mindset, Skillset and Toolset

a simple way to see what
might be getting in the way
of the art career you want,
and what to do about it

Amanda van Gils



Mindset, Skillset, Toolset Model

There comes a point where effort stops explaining the results you are getting.

You might be making strong work. Showing up consistently. Applying what you have learned over time. You may have exhibited, built a website, improved your pricing, or worked on visibility.

And still, something feels harder than it should.

This is not a failure of effort.

It is often not one missing piece either.

It is the way the parts of your practice are working together, or not.

When that is unclear, it is easy to put effort into the wrong place.

This guide offers a simple way to look at your art career differently, so you can see what might be getting in the way and choose your next step with more clarity.



Amanda

A More Useful Way to Look at It

When progress feels slow, the natural question is:

“What should I do next?”

A more useful question is:

What might be influencing what is happening right now?

This is the lens that underpins my work with artists:

Mindset. Skillset. Toolset.

This is not a formula.

It is a way of understanding what might be affecting your progress.

Because **the same outward problem can come from completely different causes.**

This is often why things feel harder than they should. When the underlying cause is not diagnosed, even a good strategy can feel ineffective.



Mindset

How you think, interpret, and respond

Mindset is not about being positive.

It is about what happens in moments of uncertainty.

It shows up in small, everyday decisions:

- not applying because you assume the outcome
- not following up because you interpret silence as rejection
- delaying decisions until you feel certain
- staying hidden while telling yourself you need a better plan

Mindset shapes action.

A useful question to consider:

When there is uncertainty, what story am I telling myself, and what action does that lead to?



SkillSet

What you know, and how you apply it

Skillset is not just art-making.

It includes how you:

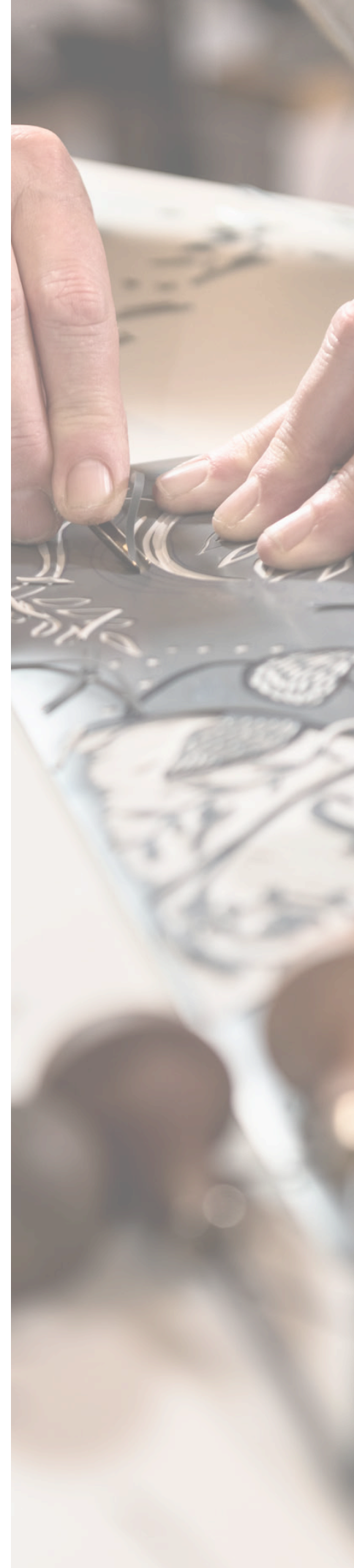
- communicate your work
- price your work
- approach opportunities
- build relationships
- translate ideas into decisions

Many artists are not lacking knowledge.

What is often missing is clarity in how to apply that knowledge within their own practice.

A useful question to consider:

What do I already know, but am not yet using clearly in my own context?





Toolset

What supports your work and your consistency

Toolset is the structure around your practice.

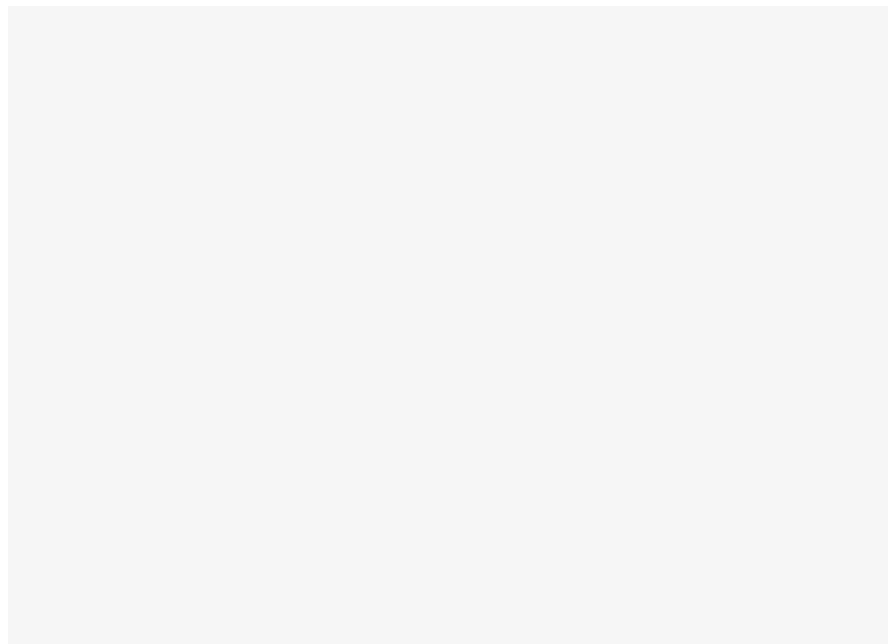
It includes:

- habits and routines
- simple systems
- templates and processes
- ways of organising your work and opportunities

Without this structure, everything relies on memory and effort.

A useful question to consider:

Where is a lack of structure making this harder than it needs to be?



Where Things Might Be Getting in the Way

When something is not working, it is rarely random.

You may recognise one of these patterns:

You know what to do, but you are not doing it
You are doing the work, but it is not landing
You are trying to manage everything without
enough structure

The difficulty is not just the issue itself, but
how it is being understood.

Small shifts in understanding often change
what the next useful action looks like.

When you begin to see what might be
influencing the situation, your next step
becomes clearer.

And clarity reduces overwhelm.



Choose Your Next Useful Step

Use this page to move from insight into action.

You are not trying to fix everything.

You are trying to understand what needs attention first.

1. What is not working right now?

Be specific. Name the actual point of friction.

For example:

“I am not following up.”

“My website does not clearly support sales.”

“I keep learning, but I am not applying.”

2. What is actually happening?

Look at the facts, not the story around them.

What have you done?

What have you avoided?

What is unclear?

Where does the pattern keep repeating?

3. What might be influencing this?

Mindset → is interpretation, hesitation, or fear affecting action?

Skillset → is more clarity, knowledge, or application needed?

Toolset → is a lack of structure making follow-through harder?

The aim is not to label the problem perfectly.

It is to see it more clearly.

4. What is one useful step you can take next?

Choose one action that connects to what you have just noticed.

Not ten. Not a complete overhaul. One useful step.

Write your next step here.

Clarity only becomes useful when it changes what you do.



Closing + Next Steps

You have now looked at your art career through mindset, skillset and toolset. The next step is not to keep analysing. Change doesn't come just from having more information

It is about knowing what information matters when, and acting on it.

A sustainable art career is not built through fragmented effort. Instead, it is built through a more connected, cohesive way of working, where your thinking, your actions, and your structures support each other.

When mindset, skillset and toolset begin to align:

decisions become clearer
effort becomes more focused
progress becomes more consistent

Clarity reduces noise.

And when the noise reduces, decisions become easier to make.

READY TO TAKE THIS FURTHER?

The three areas you have just worked through, mindset, skillset and toolset, form the foundation of the **Success System Program**.

This is where the thinking in this guide becomes applied, supported, and consistent.

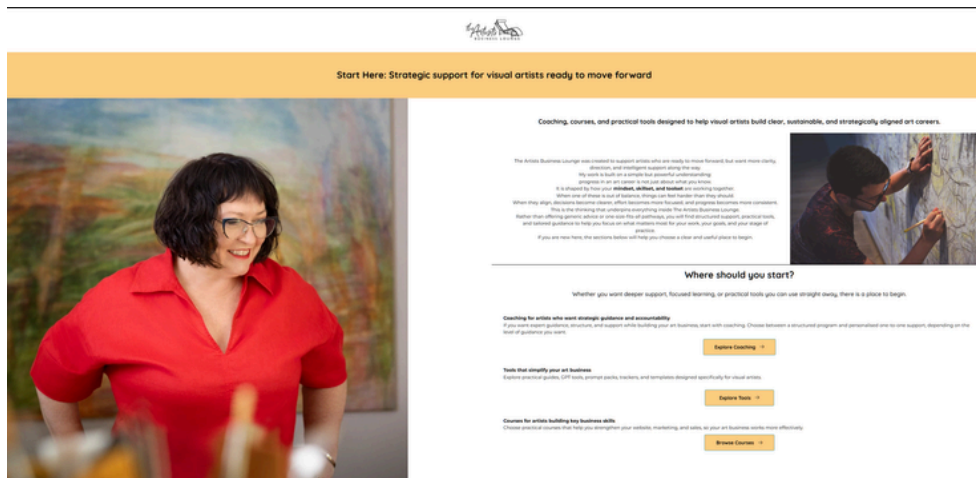


Inside the program, you are not left to figure out what to do next. You receive a tailored approach based on your work, your goals, and where you are right now, supported by ongoing coaching, practical resources, and a structured pathway forward.

This is designed for artists who want more than information. It is for those ready to build a more consistent, sustainable practice with the right focus, support, and momentum.

[LEARN MORE HERE](#)

NOT SURE WHERE TO START NEXT?



Each of the three areas in this guide can be developed further, and you do not need to do everything at once.

The **Start Here Hub** brings together a selection of tools, guides, and systems so you can act on what you have just noticed.

Professional Tools for Running Your Art Business
Practical guides, templates, GPTs, and systems designed to help artists save time, reduce admin, and respond to opportunities with more clarity and confidence.

Focused Courses for Artists
Short, focused courses designed to strengthen key parts of your art business, from websites and marketing to visibility and sales.

Art Business Coaching for Visual Artists
Choose the level of support that best fits your goals and the way you prefer to work.

Whether you need:

- stronger structure and organisation
- clearer writing for your website or exhibitions
- support with visibility, marketing, or sales
- help building more consistent habits and systems

you can choose your next step with more clarity.

[EXPLORE THE START HERE HUB](#)

MEET AMANDA

Amanda van Gils is a professional artist who has exhibited extensively since completing her Graduate Diploma at The Victorian College of the Arts (VCA) in Melbourne, Australia, in 2000.

Over her career, she has also curated major group exhibitions, including NetWork at the Art Gallery of Ballarat, Exchange, and Table21, and for six years directed the online gallery ART500.

How Amanda Can Help

Alongside her practice, Amanda has spent more than 16 years supporting artists through forums, exhibitions, and online platforms. She is an experienced coach and consultant in strategy, mindset, and leadership, helping artists grow their confidence and businesses without losing sight of their creative path.

In 2020 she launched The Artists Business Lounge, which has since supported many artists to expand their careers and income. The Lounge has been recognised nationally with multiple awards, including Visual Artists Career Coaching Service of the Year in the Australian Enterprise Awards and Influential Businesswoman of the Year for three consecutive years (2023–2025).

Let's Stay Connected

At The Artists Business Lounge, Amanda provides tools, courses, and coaching designed specifically for visual artists. Visit the website to explore resources that help you build a sustainable and visible career.



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"Art is not what
you see, but what
you make others
see."

— EDGAR DEGAS