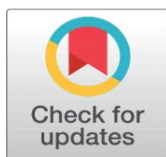


USE OF SOCIAL MEDIA IN ARTS MARKETING: A LITERATURE REVIEW

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ABSTRACT

Social media has revolutionised the marketing landscape and the art industry is not untouched. The present study explores the utilization of social media for marketing within the art sector, synthesizing various research findings to provide a comprehensive understanding of its impact and effectiveness. By examining diverse studies, the review emphasizes the role of social media platforms as effective tools for promoting art, engaging audiences, and building brands. It covers key themes such as the strategies employed by artists and galleries, the role of visual and interactive content, and the metrics used to gauge success. Additionally, it addresses challenges such as requirement of human and financial resources, dynamic algorithms and social media fatigue. The review further highlights gaps in the existing literature and recommends areas for future research, including the influence of emerging platforms and evolving user behaviours. This synthesis aims to offer valuable insights for art marketers, curators, and scholars seeking to leverage social media effectively in the dynamic landscape of art marketing.

Keywords: Arts Marketing, Social Media Marketing, Arts Management, Literature Review

1. INTRODUCTION

In the digital age, social media has revolutionized the marketing landscape across various industries, including the arts. Artists, galleries, and performing arts venues increasingly leverage platforms like Instagram, Twitter, and YouTube to engage with audiences, promote exhibitions, and build brand identities. This shift highlights a fundamental transformation in how contemporary art is marketed and consumed. Social media offers unprecedented opportunities for expanding reach and fostering direct connections with diverse audiences. However, it also presents challenges such as maintaining engagement amidst content oversaturation and navigating evolving algorithms.

This research explores the impact of social media on the public perception and success of contemporary art exhibitions. By examining various social media strategies and their effectiveness, this study aims to elucidate how digital platforms

influence audience engagement and exhibition outcomes. Through a combination of case studies, surveys, and data analysis, this investigation will provide insights into the dynamic interplay between social media marketing and the arts. Understanding these dynamics is crucial for artists and institutions seeking to optimize their digital presence and enhance their reach in an increasingly competitive environment.

A review of the existing research on social media marketing in the arts involved examining how social media platforms are utilized to promote art and engage audiences. The paper is divided into four sections. First section analyses the social media strategies used in arts marketing. The second section reviews literature on how audiences are impacted by these strategies. The third section discusses the limitations of social media. The paper ends with a discussion on emerging trends which lack robust research.

2. SOCIAL MEDIA STRATEGIES IN ARTS MARKETING

1) Platform Utilization

Social media has become a pivotal tool in the marketing strategies of arts institutions and individual artists. Each platform offers unique functionalities and audience engagement opportunities. Instagram, with its emphasis on visual content, is particularly effective for showcasing artworks and creating a visually appealing narrative. This platform allows artists and institutions to leverage high-quality images and short videos to engage users. Instagram Stories and Reels provide additional avenues for real-time updates and behind-the-scenes content, enhancing user engagement and fostering a deeper connection with the audience (Visone, 2015)

Twitter, on the other hand, excels in providing real-time updates and engaging in conversations. Its fast-paced nature makes it suitable for announcements, live updates, and direct interactions with followers. The platform's character limit promotes succinct and powerful communication, which can be particularly useful for engaging in discussions about current trends and events in the arts (Kaplan & Haenlein, 2010)

Facebook remains a cornerstone for event promotion and community building. Its robust event management tools allow users to create, share, and promote art exhibitions and performances. Facebook Pages also serve as a hub for artist and institution profiles, where they can post updates, engage with fans, and build a community around their work. The platform's extensive reach and targeting options enable precise audience segmentation, making it effective for targeted marketing efforts (Bright et al., 2015)

TikTok, a newer player in the social media landscape, has rapidly gained popularity for its short-form video content. The platform's algorithm promotes viral content, providing a unique opportunity for art-related content to reach a broad audience. Artists and institutions can use TikTok to create engaging and creative content that captures trends and resonates with younger demographics. This platform's emphasis on creativity and trends offers a fresh way for the arts to engage with new audiences (Gerlieb, 2021)

2) Content Types

Effective social media marketing in the arts often involves a diverse range of content types. Behind-the-scenes posts offer audiences a glimpse into the creative process, adding a personal touch and fostering a deeper connection with the work. Artist interviews, whether in text, video, or audio format, provide insights into the

artist's vision and inspiration, enhancing audience understanding and appreciation (Jyrämä & Äyväri, 2010)

Live streams are another powerful tool for engagement. They allow for real-time interaction between artists and audiences, making events more accessible and inclusive. Live streaming can include virtual tours of exhibitions, live Q&A sessions with artists, or even live performances. This interactive format not only broadens reach but also creates a sense of immediacy and connection (Walmsley, 2016)

User-generated content, such as fan art, reviews, and social media posts by attendees, plays a crucial role in modern arts marketing. This content often provides social proof and authentic endorsements, enhancing the credibility and appeal of the exhibition or performance. Encouraging audiences to share their experiences and creations can amplify reach and foster a sense of community around the artwork (Kaplan & Haenlein, 2010)

3) Engagement Tactics

To maximize engagement, arts organizations and artists employ various tactics. Hashtags are a fundamental tool for increasing visibility and engagement. They allow users to discover content related to specific themes or events and encourage participation in broader conversations. Creating unique, memorable hashtags can help build a brand identity and track the reach and impact of campaigns (Furini et al., 2017)

Interactive posts, such as polls, quizzes, and contests, drive engagement by inviting audience participation. These interactive elements not only engage users but also provide valuable insights into audience preferences and behaviors. For example, a poll about favorite artworks or a contest for the best fan art can stimulate interaction and generate buzz around an exhibition (Garibaldi, 2015)

Collaborations with influencers, particularly those with a strong presence in the arts community, can significantly enhance visibility. Influencers can help amplify messages, reach new audiences, and provide credibility through their endorsements. By partnering with influencers who resonate with the target audience, arts organizations can leverage their reach and influence to attract attention and drive engagement (Levin, 2020; Padilla-Meléndez & Del Águila-Obra, 2013)

4) User-Generated Content

Research indicates that user-generated content, such as fan-created art pieces or reviews, can significantly enhance the authenticity of marketing efforts and foster deeper connections with audiences. By inspiring audiences to create their own content related to the artwork and share it on social media, institutions can amplify their reach and cultivate a strong sense of community among followers. This type of content often acts as social proof, providing credible endorsements and influencing the perceptions of potential visitors or patrons. User-generated content not only increases engagement but also helps build trust and loyalty, as it reflects genuine experiences and enthusiasm from the audience, thereby reinforcing the credibility of the art and its promoters (Kaplan & Haenlein, 2010).

5) The Role of Influencers

Several studies underscore the significant impact of influencers in the art world. Influencers with a substantial following within the arts community can dramatically boost the visibility of art-related events and attract new audiences. Collaborations with these influencers can amplify promotional messages, enhance the credibility of the art, and drive higher engagement levels. For instance, partnerships with renowned art critics or influential social media personalities can

create substantial buzz, generate increased interest, and effectively draw attention to exhibitions, performances, and other artistic endeavours, ultimately broadening their reach and appeal. Moreover, influencers can provide authentic endorsements and personal recommendations, which resonate more deeply with their followers. This type of endorsement often leads to higher conversion rates and stronger connections between the art and its audience. (Jin et al., 2019)

3. IMPACT ON AUDIENCE ENGAGEMENT

1) Increased Reach

Social media has fundamentally transformed the promotion and experience of art exhibitions and performances by significantly broadening the audience reach. It enables artists and institutions to connect with a global audience, extending their visibility far beyond local or regional constraints. This expanded reach is especially beneficial for emerging artists and smaller galleries, which might otherwise struggle to attract attention and gain visibility. Through social media platforms, these entities can overcome geographical barriers, engaging with a diverse and international audience who may not have the opportunity to experience their work in person. Additionally, social media allows for real-time interaction and feedback, further enhancing the connection between artists and their global audience. (Walmsley, 2016)

2) Community Building

Social media plays a crucial role in fostering the development of communities centered around specific artists or art forms. By actively engaging with audiences through comments, shares, and live interactions, artists and institutions can cultivate a loyal and enthusiastic following. These online communities often extend beyond the digital realm, with fans forging real-life connections and relationships through events, exhibitions, and meet-ups (Castro, 2012). This sense of community not only enhances the personal connection between the audience and the artwork but also supports sustained engagement and advocacy for the artist. The dynamic interaction facilitated by social media encourages ongoing dialogue, collaboration, and support, reinforcing the artist's presence and influence both online and offline. (Beauregard et al., 2020)

3) Audience Insights

Social media platforms offer earnest data on audience preferences and behaviors. Analytics tools offer insights into who is engaging with content, what types of content are most effective, and how audiences are interacting with posts. This data is crucial for tailoring marketing strategies and content to better meet audience interests and preferences. By analyzing engagement metrics and audience feedback, arts organizations can refine their approaches and enhance their overall marketing efforts (Gagliano & Frosch, 2020).

4) Art Contextualisation

Digital engagement plays a crucial role in enriching the experience of art by aiding in its contextualization and building anticipation among audiences, while also attracting new viewers. By interacting digitally, audiences can better understand and process artistic content, leading to more profound cognitive, emotional, and kinaesthetic responses during an event. Additionally, digital platforms promote a more thoughtful, relational, and inclusive approach to engaging with art. They also support and foster thorough, contemplative critiques of artistic works. (Walmsley, 2016)

4. CHALLENGES AND LIMITATIONS

1) Resource Intensive

Despite its advantages, social media marketing demands a substantial investment of time, effort and resources. Creating gripping high-quality content, maintaining an active presence, and engaging with audiences demand considerable effort. Smaller institutions and independent artists may find it challenging to allocate the necessary resources to achieve a consistent and effective social media presence. This resource intensity can limit the ability of smaller entities to compete with larger organizations that have dedicated marketing teams (Marchand et al., 2021)

2) Algorithm Dynamics

Algorithms on social media platforms are dynamic in nature and get regularly updated, which in turn significantly impacts the visibility and engagement of posts related to art and exhibitions. These algorithm changes can alter how content is prioritized in users' feeds, making it challenging for arts organizations to predict and manage the reach of their posts. As a result, adapting to these shifts requires continuous adjustments to marketing strategies and content creation. For those heavily reliant on social media for promotion and audience engagement, this unpredictability presents a substantial challenge. It necessitates staying informed about algorithm updates, experimenting with different approaches, and constantly optimizing content to maintain and enhance visibility. This dynamic environment demands flexibility and resilience, as organizations strive to steer the constantly evolving landscape of social media marketing. (Nolan & Dane, 2018).

3) Oversaturation

The immense volume of content on social media platforms often leads to oversaturation, where the sheer quantity of posts can make it difficult for individual updates to stand out. As countless pieces of content vie for users' attention, arts-related posts may struggle to capture and maintain audience interest amid the noise. This oversaturation can dilute the impact of promotional efforts and hinder the effectiveness of marketing campaigns. To navigate this challenge, arts organizations must prioritize continuous innovation in their content strategies. Creating visually compelling, unique, and pertinent content that resonates with their target audience is essential. Leveraging storytelling, high-quality visuals, and interactive elements can help cut through the clutter, engage viewers more effectively, and ensure that their messages reach and resonate with their intended audience. (Bright et al., 2015)

5. EMERGING TRENDS AND SCOPE FOR FUTURE RESEARCH

1) Virtual Exhibitions

The COVID-19 pandemic accelerated the adoption of virtual exhibitions, showcasing the potential of social media in providing digital art experiences. Virtual exhibitions leveraged social media for live streaming, audience interaction, and post-event promotion. These digital events offered a new way to experience art and engage with audiences, even during times when physical attendance was restricted. The success of virtual exhibitions highlights the versatility of social media in adapting to changing circumstances and reaching audiences in innovative ways (Widjono, 2020)

2) Augmented Reality (AR) and Virtual Reality (VR)

Augmented Reality (AR) and Virtual Reality (VR) technologies are fundamentally transforming how art is experienced and marketed, offering groundbreaking opportunities for innovation. AR applications allow users to overlay digital elements onto their physical surroundings, enabling them to visualize art pieces in their own space before making a purchase. This technology enhances the decision-making process by providing a more personal and contextual view of the artwork (Margolis, 2014).

Conversely, VR creates fully immersive environments where users can embark on virtual gallery tours or interact with art installations in a simulated space. This immersive experience not only makes art accessible to a global audience but also provides a unique way to explore and engage with artworks beyond physical limitations (Lin et al., 2020).

Both AR and VR technologies contribute to deeper engagement and expanded reach, allowing artists and institutions to showcase their work in novel and interactive ways. By integrating these technologies, the art world can break down traditional barriers, offering richer, more accessible experiences for audiences worldwide.

6. ANALYTICS TOOLS

Advances in social media analytics tools have significantly enhanced the ability to track and optimize marketing performance. Tools such as Google Analytics, Sprout Social, and Hootsuite Insights offer wide-ranging metrics on engagement, reach, and audience demographics. These insights enable art marketers to refine their strategies by identifying which types of content resonate most with their audience and understanding detailed audience behaviour patterns. By analysing data trends and user interactions, marketers can make informed, data-driven decisions that improve the effectiveness of their social media campaigns. Leveraging these advanced analytics tools allows for more precise targeting, better content optimization, and overall enhanced campaign performance, leading to more successful engagement and promotional outcomes (Sapountzi & Psannis, 2018).

CONFLICT OF INTERESTS

None.

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