

The *Distribution* Audit.

Who carries the work. How it travels. Where the bottlenecks are. An infrastructure inventory for galleries, labels, artist-led spaces — anyone moving work at scale.

A WORKSHEET BY MORIAH ALISE · DEAR GLORY · MAY 2026 · [READ THE ARTICLE](#) →

The art world has a *distribution* problem.

The work is fine. The artists are fine. The buyers are fine. What we have never built is the infrastructure that lets work move at the speed and scale culture is actually moving at. Distribution is the gap. The audit below is how you find out where yours is leaking.

How to use this. This audit is built for anyone responsible for moving work from a studio to a placement — gallerists, label founders, artist-led space operators, working artists handling their own distribution. Run it on your current operation. The empty boxes are the work.

SECTION I · THE AUDIT

Six areas. *What's actually carrying the work.*

For each: name the real channels, the real partners, the real velocity. If a node is empty, write empty.

01 CATALOG

What you actually have to distribute. The inventory clarity that almost nobody operating in the art world maintains in real time.

- I have a current inventory list with locations, status, and pricing for every active work
- Every work has a complete documentation file (high-res images, condition, dimensions, materials)
- I can find the catalog of any artist I represent in under 30 seconds
- Discontinued, sold, or on-loan works are clearly distinguished from available ones
- The catalog is shareable in a clean format with a collector or advisor on demand

→ What is missing or uncertain here — and what's the first move to fix it?

02 CHANNELS

The existing routes the work currently moves through. Most operators only know about three of theirs; the others are accidental.

- I can name *all* the channels work has moved through in the last 12 months (sales, fairs, loans, gifts, donations)
- I have at least one digital channel (newsletter, platform, marketplace) that's actually working
- I have a physical channel (fair, art week, viewing room) that's actually working
- I know which channel produces my highest-value sales and which produces the most volume
- I'm not over-indexed on a single channel for more than 50% of revenue

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03 CARRIERS

The people who carry the work into rooms you can't enter yourself. Advisors, critics, peer gallerists, registrars. Infrastructure is human.

- I can name three advisors who would speak about my artists without prompting
- I know at least two writers who follow my program closely
- I have peer-gallerist relationships in at least two other cities
- I can identify which collectors actively recommend the gallery to other collectors
- I have a registrar or someone equivalent who can carry the operational weight when I'm in conversation

→ What is missing or uncertain here — and what's the first move to fix it?

04 VELOCITY

How fast work actually moves from completion to placement. Velocity is the metric most galleries refuse to look at.

- I know the *average time* a work stays in inventory before placement
- I have a target velocity per artist (e.g., 80% placed within 9 months of arrival)
- I'm not holding any artist's work for more than 18 months without a placement plan
- I can identify which artists move fast and which move slow — and why
- I have a defensible reason why each slow-moving work hasn't placed yet

→ What is missing or uncertain here — and what's the first move to fix it?

05 BOTTLENECKS

Where the system consistently stalls. Almost every gallery has the same three. You name yours.

- I know where the bottleneck is between studio and gallery (production, shipping, condition)
- I know where the bottleneck is between gallery and collector (intro, pricing, follow-up)
- I know where the bottleneck is between sale and delivery (logistics, invoicing, installation)
- I have one bottleneck I'm actively working on this quarter
- I have a person responsible for unsticking that bottleneck, not just naming it

→ What is missing or uncertain here — and what's the first move to fix it?

06 SCALE

What would have to be true to double current distribution capacity without breaking the program.

- I know what would break first if volume doubled (staff, space, systems, my time)
- I have a documented process for at least three repeating operations (intake, invoicing, follow-up)
- I could onboard a new staffer in under two weeks with existing documentation
- I have a clear sense of the next hire I would make if revenue grew 50%
- I'm not the only person in the building who knows how the work moves

→ What is missing or uncertain here — and what's the first move to fix it?

Where is the *distribution leak*?

Look across the six areas. Find the one that's costing you the most movement right now — the one where, if you fixed it, the rest of the system would compound faster.

What *infrastructure* actually looks like.

Def Jam wasn't just a record label. It was a distribution system. Pressing plants, retail relationships, radio infrastructure, press cycles, tour logistics. Everything that let the art reach the audience at the speed culture was moving. **The art world has not built its Def Jam equivalent.** Identify your weakest distribution link.

YOUR MOST EXPOSED DISTRIBUTION AREA

The *one node* you're building infrastructure into over the next thirty days —

Three *infrastructure moves*. Thirty days.

Distribution is built one process at a time. Three concrete operational changes — documented, owned, dated.

An infrastructure move is something that makes the system stronger after you've stopped paying attention to it. A documented process, a new partner relationship, a system that runs without your daily involvement. Write three.

1

INFRASTRUCTURE MOVE ONE

BY WHEN _____

2

INFRASTRUCTURE MOVE TWO

BY WHEN _____

3

INFRASTRUCTURE MOVE THREE

BY WHEN _____

CLOSE

Distribution is the *thesis*.

The artists are not the problem. The work is not the problem. The buyers are not the problem. The problem is the infrastructure between them. Build it. Come back to this in thirty days. See what moved.

Moriah Alise

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