Intro:

I'm Lev (saintmalev or saintmalevdraws on most things) and I am by no means the first and foremost authority on how social media works – but I have done a lot of research to see how I can build my own pages up. So everything in this document is what works for me and all the notes that I've taken from watching a bunch of videos and reading a lot of articles. Do whatever you'd like with this information and I hope it all helps! Listed below are all my socials if you wanna take a look at any posts as examples or check out my work! If you have specific questions you can contact me on insta or tumblr and I'll do my best to answer!

My socials:

Bluesky: https://bsky.app/profile/saintmalev.bsky.social
Art channel: https://youtube.com/@saintmalevdraws
Fandom and games essay channel:
https://youtube.com/@thegamesaint
Instagram:
https://www.instagram.com/saintmalev
TikTok:
https://www.tiktok.com/@saintmalevdraws
Tumblr:
https://saintlethanavir.tumblr.com/
Patreon:
https://patreon.com/levandjackcreate
Etsy:
https://etsy.co.uk/shop/TheLilShopOfHusbands

General Best Tips and Tricks:

This information can be applied to all of the main social media sites (Twitter/x, Bluesky, Tumblr, Instagram, Youtube, Tiktok, etc)

- **Be consistent:**
  - The best way to gain an audience that genuinely cares about your work is to be consistent and regular with your posts. In my experience you need to be posting at least once a week, but whatever works for you is good as well! **My personal example for instagram is:** Post 1 reel Monday through Friday with a trending audio at the same or relatively the same time, post normal art carousels 3x a week but I'm going to be doing this personally every day to see if it helps!

- **Use your analytics:**
  - This will help you figure out approximately when you should be posting, what days are the best for posting, and what people like per post! Analytics should be available to look at through your settings on ANY social media platform.
- **Consider your audience and niche:**
  - What do you like? What kind of people do you want following you? Do you want people who like digital art coming to your account? Baldur's Gate? You get the picture. **Personally my audience is:** Artists, Digital Artists, Baldur's Gate 3 fandom, D&D fandom, Dragon Age fandom, and in general people who like fantasy art within those sections. These are the people I want to attract to my account and also it happens to be my niche as well! It's what I draw. **Another example could be, Loish, her audience is:** Digital Artists who want to make their art better, so she posts tutorials, lessons, and her own personal work because people are also there for her art style as well.
- **Use Tags/Hashtags Intelligently:**
  - Some tags (especially on Instagram) are blocked because they're too generic and have a lot of spam in them. These are incredibly general tags like 'art' and 'artist'. It's better to be more specific but still general, so 'digitalart' or 'traditionalart' or 'fineart' etc are better tags to use and hit a specific and better audience while still being broad enough. Using fandom tags is a great idea, and in general use tags that apply to your **niche** and the piece you're posting. Don't use tags willy nilly like 'footpics' or something when your piece has nothing to do with feet. The only place that tags don't apply to is Twitter/X but I'll get into specific social media in another section.
- **You will not go viral overnight:**
  - Please remember that while it's a good idea to build a following to market your art, don't be disheartened if you don't grow as fast as you want. People will find your art and love it in their own time, your creations are great no matter how many likes you get. Make what you want to make and continue getting better at your craft, and people will come.
- **Choose 3 main platforms:**
  - I've broken this rule already lol but it's better to use about three platforms instead of spreading yourself too thin. Personally I use Bluesky, Instagram, TikTok, and Youtube. All of them have their own trends and take up a lot of time – I would suggest Bluesky and Instagram, maybe Tumblr, as starter social media.
- **Post about your life:**
  - It's a lot, I know, but posting about your life and things you're interested in will vastly help. It makes you relatable, especially if you talk about the fandoms or things within your niche – and people love to hear about ocs. Just be careful that you balance it all and be a person you would be proud to be – not anyone else.
- **Engage with your audience and others (especially within your niche):**
  - On all media platforms it's much easier to gain a following that's positive and more engaging if you engage with your audience – as much as that may be parasocial sometimes. Just be careful and balance that! You also need to be engaging with other artists and your peers/colleagues in your niche and in the

art community. If you want people to look at your art you also have to look at the art and support others. Even if it's just a like and a reblog! This helps foster your audience but also helps the social media site recognize that you're not a bot and therefore should (not always of course) reward you with reach.

Art Specific Tips:

This is information about how to get people interested in your art! Especially if you make a lot of original character content.

- **Make Fanart:**
  - I mean, this is self explanatory I think. If you make fanart of things you like, especially larger pieces of media (BG3, DA, D&D etc) every once in a while it will boost your following! Just don't rely too heavily on this if you mostly want to make oc content, unless you're able to put those ocs in the media.
- **Drawing memes and trends:**
  - Memes are the way to the soul. Redraw funny screenshots and memes you can find on pinterest. Look for meme trends, it's quite easy! This can be applied to every social media, even video sharing sites like TikTok and Youtube. Do research on what is trending within the art community and draw what you can! This can be everything from animatics to drawing a miku from your home state.
- **Consistent style and aesthetic:**
  - This is a lot harder than it looks, but take a glance at your favourite creators and artists. They will probably have a specific aesthetic and style that they do things in, especially on places like instagram and places with thumbnails where you can see everything in a grid. Having this in place makes things more consistent and easier for people to feel safe in following you. **Personally** my aesthetic is saturated colours, my personal art style, and having a zoom on the face as the first picture. For others it may be that they draw pink cats all the time so suddenly when they draw a blue snake people are taken off guard and may not like it. It seems out of place. Not that you can't differ from time to time but remember to be consistent most of the time!

Marketing and Selling your art:

This is where I'll share all my notes on how to market your art and potentially sell it. Most of this I haven't tried aside from just posting about commissions and my patreon, so take it with a grain of salt. A lot of this information comes from bigger creators and artists on youtube.

- **FOMO:**
  - Fear of missing out. People hate this and want to see things so they can engage with others!! We're social creatures! You can drive this by using language like 'exclusive' and 'loyal'. Make them realize that they have to sub

to your patreon if they want things and then they can make a decision if they want to.

- **Consistency, AGAIN:**
  - So sorry to do this again. Use the same font, colour palette, icon, header, mascot. It makes you more recognizable – again a harder thing but a lot of people are recognized by their ocs or their header and icon. This doesn't have to be permanent but make sure you change everything over everywhere when you do.
- **Platforms:**
  - My husband and I have an etsy store, which really works for us, but a lot of people prefer using their own website to sell their works. Now this is for people who are able to drive a lot of traffic to their own site, so if you're starting out, places like etsy might be a better idea because they have their own SEO system. ***If you have specific questions about etsy please contact me on insta or tumblr and I can field the questions to my husband who runs our store!***
- **Advertising:**
  - Whatever you do, on most places, do NOT post links directly in the post you're advertising with – post it in the replies or in the source etc. You can somewhat get away with this on tumblr but there is reason to believe that links make it so posts don't pop up in tags. For twitter it's very common to post a link in the replies, and Bluesky doesn't penalize but it's better to just post the link in replies anyhow unless you have a sizable following already. Same goes for Youtube, they don't push out posts with links in them. Instagram won't promote things that have 20% of text in the images you post either – this rule doesn't apply to reels though.
  - Try to keep things clear, concise, and consistent.
- **Patreon, Kofi, etc:**
  - I've had a patreon for almost 6 years and I only make around 200 GBP per month. As a small creator I think a kofi is a better idea where you can sell adopts and digital things in your shop, but a patreon will ONLY work out in terms of success if you have a larger reach. Unfortunately we live in a capitalist society and a lot of people don't have the income to support an artist every month. If you have a sizable following and think it might be a good idea to open a patreon, go for it! My suggestion is to keep early access and wips/sketches, maybe psds and speedpaint files to lower tiers like $1-3 (or pounds if you're in the UK like me), and ONLY if you think you can handle it should you consider monthly busts, illustrations etc. As someone who does that on top of everything else, it's a lot of work, and once I'm more financially stable I will probably get rid of those tiers. But always put those at a much higher tier, like $15 or so.
- **Email Newsletter and Portfolios:**
  - I don't have a newsletter but it is something that bigger creators have talked about highly. While I don't have too much research done on it you could give it a go! Mailchimp is a common facilitator for newsletters and they have free options!

- ○ Portfolios are a must have, I use google sites but you can use things like carrd as well or wix/squarespace etc. This is so people can see your entire body of work, ESPECIALLY if you want to get into the industry.

Social Media and YOU:

This is just specific info and tips for specific social media lol

- **Instagram:**
  - ○ Post reels every day at the same time. I post in the morning (UK time) and it is either an engaging question (what's your favourite arcane character, what do you like about your art style? etc) a silly video showing my pieces with or without my lineart, speedpaints with trending text etc. you HAVE to use trending audios, preferably ones that are higher up on the trending list and with a lot of uses.
  - ○ Here's how you find trending audio on a business account: *Settings/ Insights / Trending Audio

Insights ›

Meta Verified Not subscribed ›

Scheduled content ›

Creator tools and controls ›

Professional dashboard

Next steps

Show that your profile is verified
Sign up for a verified badge, account
protection and more. ›

Your tools See all

Best practices ›

Inspiration ›

Branded content ›

Partnership ads ›

Ad tools ›

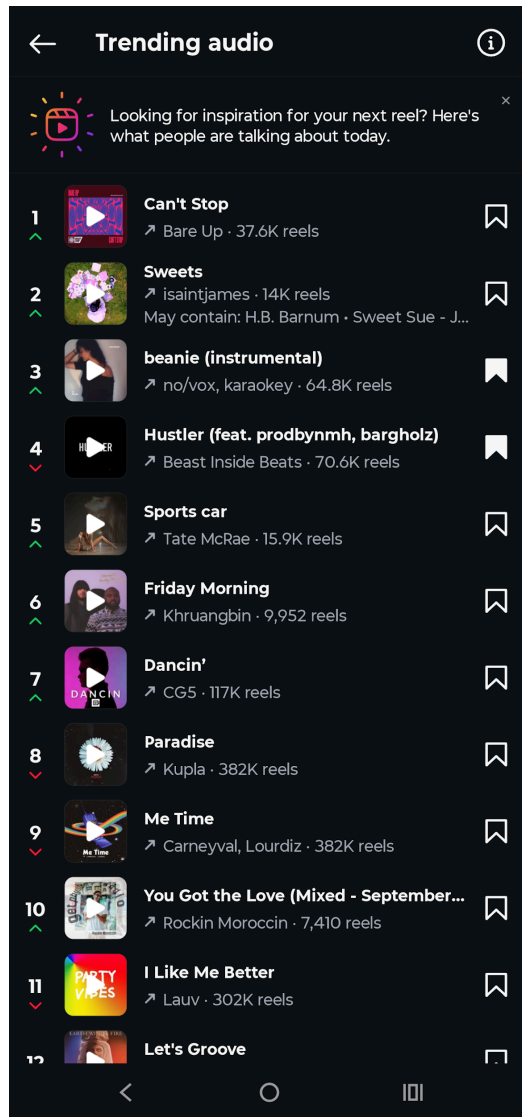Gifts ›

Shops
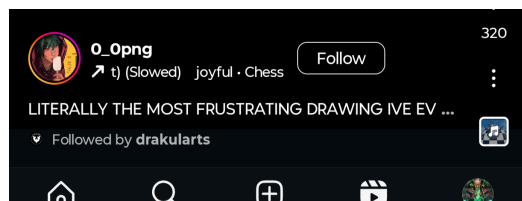Tag products and create a shop ›

Tips and resources
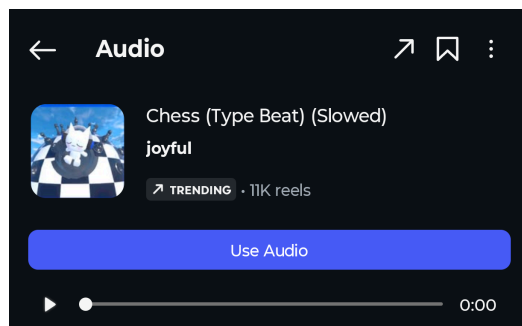
Trending audio ›

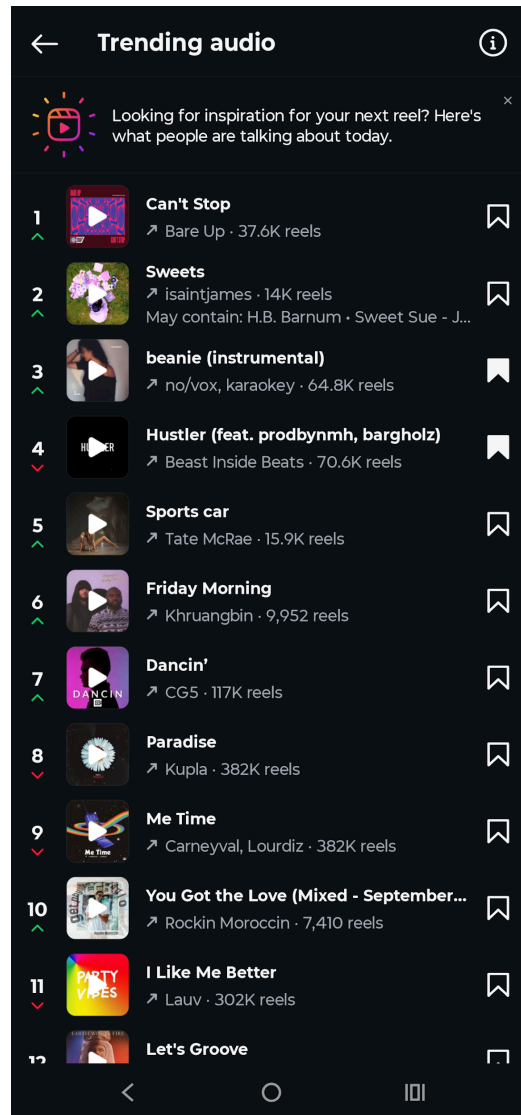Other helpful resources ›

- ○ Here's how to find it normally:
- ○ Go to reels tab, tap the name of the sound used with the arrow next to it

- ○ Tap the arrow when this comes up

- ○

- ○
- ○ And you're at the top of the list!
- ○ Examples of my tags:

clear tasks for each day. Hope all my fellow UK and Northern Ireland artists are safe after all the bad weather from Storm Eowyn, it wasn't so bad here but I know others had trees falling over 😞

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#digitalart #digitalillustration #sketchart #sketchpage #sketchbook #digitalartist #dndartist #dndcharacter #baldursgate #baldursgate3fanart #baldursgate3 #astarionbg3 #astarionxtav #astarionfanart #astarion #dragonageart #dragonageveilguard #veilguard #lucanisdellamorte

24 January

- ○
- ○ For carousel posts I will make sure my piece is zoomed in on the first picture and zoomed out to full the next. Multiple images do much better in one post because they make the person spend more time on your post. I guess Instagram tracks that??
- ○ Other than those tips, just try to engage with others and use every feature that you can!

- **YouTube**:
  - Post consistently, if you can't post weekly at least post on the same day at the same time. Meaning for me I always post Saturdays at 3:45pm UK Time for Longform, and 5pm UK time or so for shorts.
  - I found out what times my followers/subscribers were online and posted when I thought would be best for everyone to see it. Depending on how much you post you will or won't have this feature.
  - Eventually you'll find that info here:
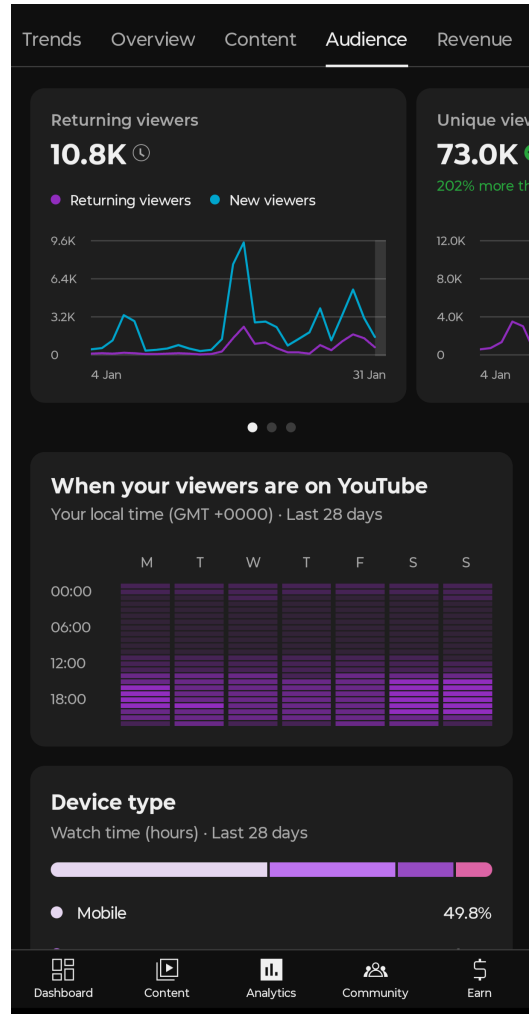
  - In the YTStudio app or on that section on the website you'll tap on Analytics, Audience and then scroll ever so slightly to see the above.
  - Your thumbnails must be consistent, easy to read, and eye grabbing:
  - Example 1: Consistent font, colours, and composition, eye catching language

○
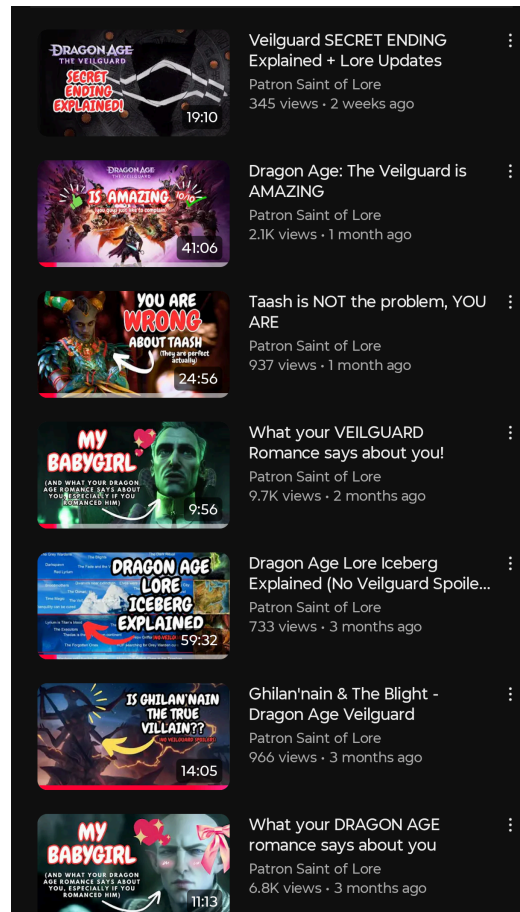
○ My art channel had some inconsistencies so I began drawing my thumbnails and making sure my font and mascot/colours were consistent. So far my views and watch time are up!:

○
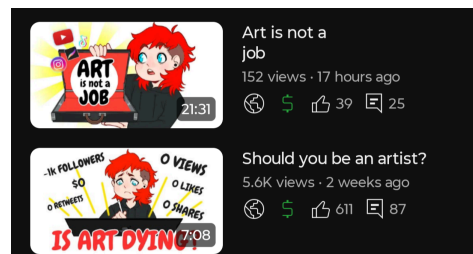
○ Keywords are important but are a bit nebulous. How I understand them is that whatever your video is about in a broader sense needs to be mentioned a lot so for these two: art, artist, and art community are the starting keywords. Then to research other keywords, or a jumping off point from the starter keywords, I went to the YouTube search bar. From there I typed in my starting keywords and picked the next ones that fit my videos and were ranked higher in the search. No idea if that's how you're supposed to do it honestly, my research was frustrating in that regard.

○ Hashtags and tags somewhat matter: I use 3-4 tags in my Longform videos, they're always put at the bottom, they relate to my niche and what the video is. TAGS are just keywords that you put into the tags section when you upload a Longform video

○ Example:
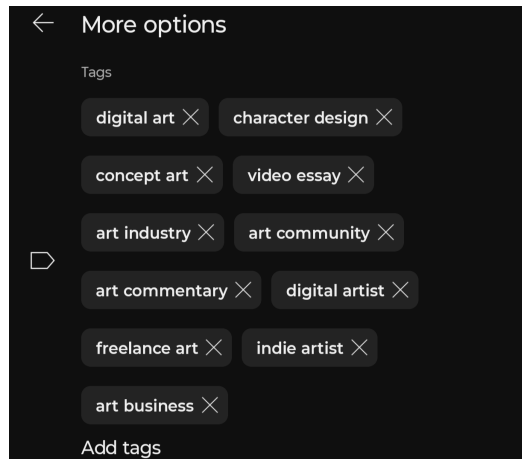
- ○ The tags may be under more or advanced options when uploading!
- ○ Make sure that your language section is set to the language you're speaking. People have told me to do this a lot so I just do it to make sure lol
- ○ Engage with your audience, ask them questions and post in your community tab as much as you can.
- ○ For shorts the same logic applies from reels, use top audios and do research on trends. You'll have to scroll a bit and analyse.
- ○ How to find trending sounds:
- ○ Pause a reel, tap on the trend button
- ○

- ○
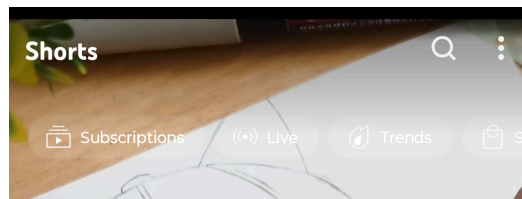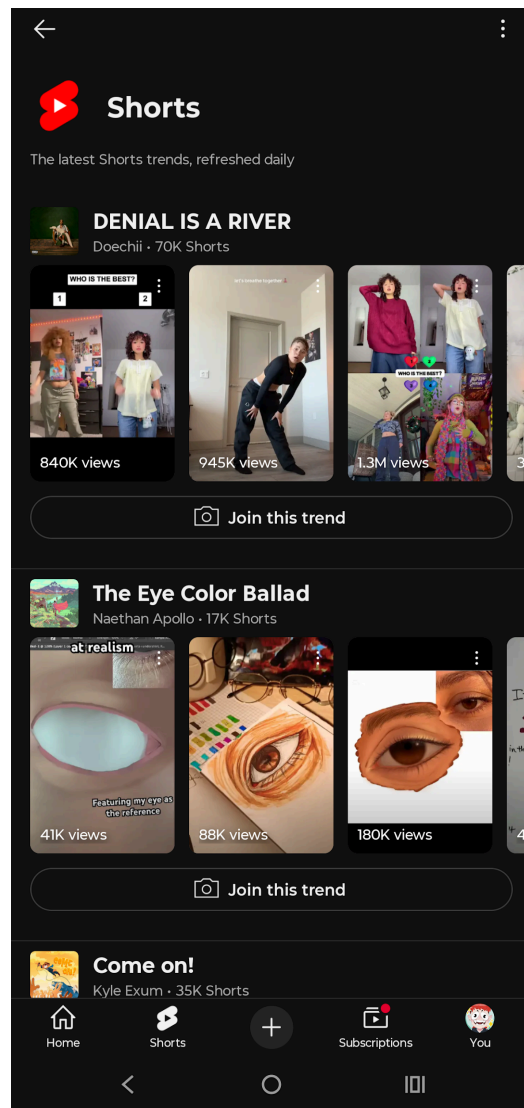
- ○
- ○ Here's the trends at the moment!
- ○ Another way is just by making a short and tapping 'add sound'
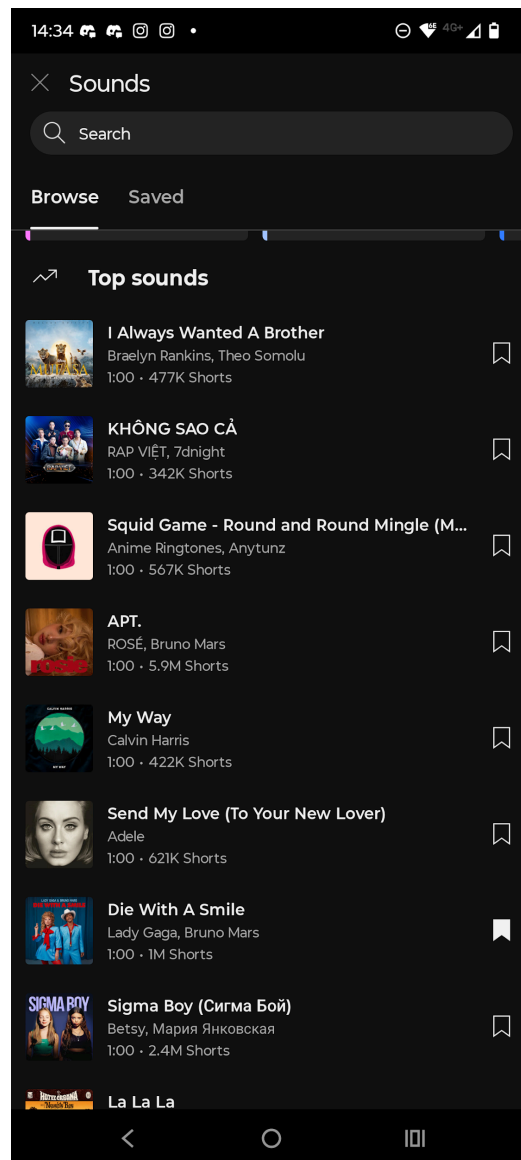
- ○
  - ○ And then just scroll a bit!
  - ○ YouTube by far will take you the longest to build up so keep that in mind, and artists are somewhat paid poorly as a niche.
- **TikTok:**
  - ○ My tips for reels, shorts, and any short form video content will always be: analyze your for you page. You have to spend some time looking for trends and see what sounds people are using. You have to do this on Bluesky and twitter as well to figure out if people are doing another Hatsune Miku redraw.
  - ○ The sounds tips can be applied here as well but TikTok has a function where it applies sounds for you at the start and they're usually good options with a lot of uses.
  - ○ Engagement is key on TikTok, share, repost, comment, and bookmark everything you can. It helps a lot.
  - ○ Tags have the same advice here as well, use things relevant to what you post and none of that #fyp stuff. Be specific.
  - ○ Speedpaints less than 30 seconds, eye catching text, and funny memes do a lot for TikTok especially in the art community

- **Bluesky:**
  - Engage engage engage!!
  - Use 2-3 tags at the most
  - People actively are shown posts with large fandom tags and tags in general. It's a great system.
  - Make sure to repost rather than just like as it's more like Tumblr and those posts don't see the light of day if you don't repost.
  - Links aren't banned but I haven't seen them do well so put them in the replies
  - Post as consistently and regularly as you can, just like all of these places
- **Tumblr:**
  - Wild West lol be consistent but also good luck. I never know what actual illustration will take off on Tumblr anymore.
  - This platform suffers from people not reblogging things which means your post is dead in the water a lot of the time. So always remember that if you're not saving it for queuing or bookmarking for later – always reblog something you like.
  - I use a handful of tags relevant to my post plus #artists of Tumblr which seems to help! Fandoms are big here so shoot your shot.
  - Communities could be helpful? Join some and post your art! See what happens!

Commissions:

I was asked to include general info about these here so I will!

- Do not price your commissions $5 for a 5 hour painting. Charge at least $10 an hour. Not only does this help you not take on so much work it also means you're not undervaluing yourself and your fellow artists.
- Do not ghost your clients, ever. Be clear about if you're having problems or need to extend deadlines. Most people will understand.
- You should have a Terms and Conditions, in that TOS you should have these things
  - Your stance on AI and AI being part of references given to you. **Example:** *I do not give consent for anyone to use my artwork to train AI generators. Please do not include AI in your references, if you're not sure if it's AI please ask and we can work on finding another reference for your piece.*
  - Unless it is a base/pose reference that is made by someone who does them (**kibbitzer, adorkastock etc)** or is in **public domain** I would strongly suggest that you never use someone else's work as a reference. If the client gives you a reference that is someone else's art I would give a response similar to this: *"I'm not comfortable using another artist's work, could we find a similar reference as a compromise?"* If you don't feel comfortable saying this, you can also frankenstein a similar pose from free to use references – which is a good practice to get into anyhow!
- Personally I use google forms to keep everything in a tidy place. So I make a form, state my TOS, which includes how long a commission takes usually, how I will take payment (on paypal, half up front, half after it's done), how I send updates (through

clients preferred platform, sketch stage, line art, colour, render, also I highly suggest watermarking these just in case), if the client has major changes/edits after the lineart phase and definitely after the render phase I have additional charges and state that. I also ask for full references, meaning colour palette, pose, tell me about their character, give me screenshots they might have, etc.

- My commissions are only sketch commissions and symmetry busts as I get too burnt out on illustrations (which is a personal preference). How I personally price commissions are as follows:
    - **Half Body Sketch, 60 GBP, + 30 GBP per added character:** Fully coloured and rendered, plus an abstract background
    - **Full Body Sketch, 90 GBP, +45 GBP per added character:** Fully coloured and rendered, plus an abstract background
    - **Symmetry Busts, 45 GBP per character:** Fully coloured, lined, and rendered, plus an abstract background, mostly done with the symmetry tool but with some asymmetrical elements like hair, eyes, jewellery, horns etc.
- Edit: Here is my February Commissions form that you can have the TOS from if you'd like! https://forms.gle/ahwvwgAB62RFL7HV9
- Oh also use an email specifically for your art business or only for commissions so that you can stay organized. I also highly recommend sending invoices to clients rather than them sending you the money directly – which is for tax reasons, especially if you use Paypal.
- Having an optional waitlist like Trello may also help keep you and everyone else accountable. Plus it's a good way to keep everyone informed about where their commissions are within your process!

If you have any questions feel free to ask them on my socials linked in the Intro, and if you want me to add any sections to this doc feel free to ask for that as well!