

How to Price Your Artwork

eBook by Mastrius



“The Secret Language of Swimming Pools” by Master Artist Aimee Erickson



The non-competitive learning community,
where artists grow fast, shoulder-to-shoulder, and THRIVE!

You Can Learn to Price with Confidence

Dear Artist,

You have put time, care, and experience into a piece. Then someone asks, “How much?” Suddenly, a simple question feels personal.

If that sounds familiar, you are in good company. Pricing is a skill you can learn. A clear method gives you something steady to return to when your confidence wobbles.

This guide draws on four Mastrius pricing panels. The Master Artists use different approaches. Their experience can help you choose a method that fits your work and your market.

Start with one body of work. Build a price list. Learn from what happens next.

With you for the journey,

THE MASTRIUS TEAM

Index

Find Your Starting Point	3
Build and Check Your Pricing Chart	5
Sell with Consistency	12
Make Your Own Pricing Plan	18

Separate the Price from the Pressure

“What we’re doing has a lot of value.”

Connie Geerts

Your selling price is a business decision. It does not measure your worth or the meaning your artwork holds.

Get an Informed Second Opinion

Ask a trusted mentor to review several recent pieces. Their experience can help you choose a price that fits your work, experience, and market.



Master Artist Victor Wang

Compare Like with Like

“The first thing you have to do is make an honest assessment of your work.”

Robert J. Simone

- 1 Choose artists at a similar stage who sell work like yours.
- 2 Compare medium, size, quality, framing, and where the work is sold.
- 3 Record sizes, prices, currency, and what is included. Look for actual sales.
- 4 Use several examples to choose a starting price range.



“Heartbeat of the Low Country” by Master Artist Robert J. Simone

Know What Your Revenue Needs to Cover

Before choosing a rate, check what will be left after costs.

Making the Artwork

Include the canvas or paper, paint, other materials, and finishing supplies.

Your Time and Running Costs

Allow for your work and a share of studio costs, tools, photography, and administration. Track your time to check whether the price is sustainable, even when you sell by size.

Selling the Artwork

Include gallery commission, event costs, payment fees, and any packing or delivery you promise to cover.

Count Each Cost Once

If your rate includes normal materials, do not add them again. Set a clear rule for extras such as framing.

Costs tell you what a sale needs to cover. Comparable sales tell you what your market may support. Check both.

Two Ways to Price by Square Inch

Start by finding the area of your painting. Then choose one rate for every size, or a rate that changes with size.

Width × Height = Square Inches

Square Inches × Rate = Artwork Price

For Example:

12 inches × 16 inches = 192 square inches

At a flat rate of \$2.50: $192 \times \$2.50 = \$480$

A flat rate stays the same. A sliding scale changes with size. The examples ahead show how both work.

Use the Artwork Dimensions

Measure the painted support, not the outer frame. To convert centimetres to inches, divide each dimension by 2.54.

All examples use US dollars (USD). Use and label your own selling currency. The example rates are not recommendations for your work.

Choose Your Starting Prices

“I also believe in square inch pricing.”

the late Master Artist Mark Heine

Use your research and costs to choose a starting rate. Then test it on your usual sizes.

Compare Prices per Square Inch

Divide the price of similar, unframed work by its area. Compare several sizes in the same currency.

For Example: A 16 × 20-inch painting has 320 square inches. At US\$800, its rate is $\$800 \div 320 = \$2.50$ per square inch.

Test the Result

Try the rate on your smallest and largest pieces. After costs, is enough left for your time? Does the price fit what buyers pay for similar work?

Use several examples and actual sales where possible. One asking price is not enough.



“Windblown” by the late Master Artist Mark Heine

Method 1 Flat Rate

Use the same rate per square inch for every size.

Build Your Price List

- 1 Choose a rate using your costs and prices for similar work.
- 2 Multiply width × height to find the area in square inches.
- 3 Multiply the area by your rate. Check your smallest and largest prices.

Example: \$2.50 per square inch · USD · unframed

Size (Inches)	Square Inches	Rate per Square Inch	Price (USD)
12 × 12	144	\$2.50	\$360
12 × 16	192	\$2.50	\$480
30 × 30	900	\$2.50	\$2,250
48 × 48	2,304	\$2.50	\$5,760

Benefits and Disadvantages

Benefits. Simple to calculate, explain, and update. New sizes fit the same formula.

Disadvantages. One rate may underprice small work or make large work too costly for your buyers. It may also miss extra work needed at larger sizes.

Method 2 Sliding Scale

Change the rate per square inch with size. It can fall for larger work or rise when costs and buyers support higher prices.

Build Your Price List

- 1 List your usual sizes and calculate each area (width $\times$ height).
- 2 Set total prices for small, medium, and large pieces using costs and similar sales.
- 3 Fill in other sizes. Divide each price by its area to check the rate.
- 4 Keep one price for each area. Check that total prices rise with size and cover your costs.

Two Examples

Straight Line. Prices rise evenly, but the rate falls - from about \$2.37 per square inch at 30 $\times$ 30 to \$2.24 at 48 $\times$ 48.

Upward Curve. Prices rise more sharply above 30 $\times$ 30, reaching \$8,000 at 48 $\times$ 48. See both examples on the next page.

Benefits. More flexibility to match your costs and buyers at different sizes.

Disadvantages. Takes more work to maintain. Sharp price jumps can confuse buyers, and higher prices still need buyer demand.

“Large pieces have to be within the limits of the market.”

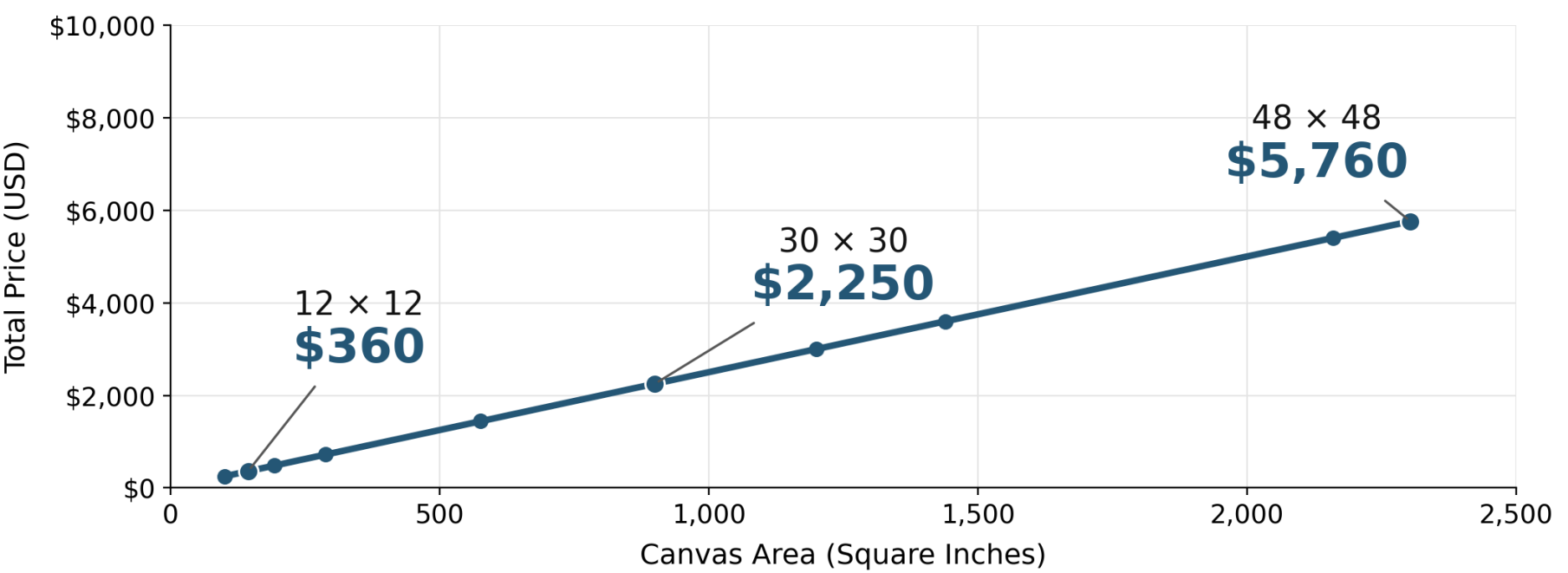
Steve Puttrich

Three Pricing Examples

One Flat Rate • Two Sliding Scales

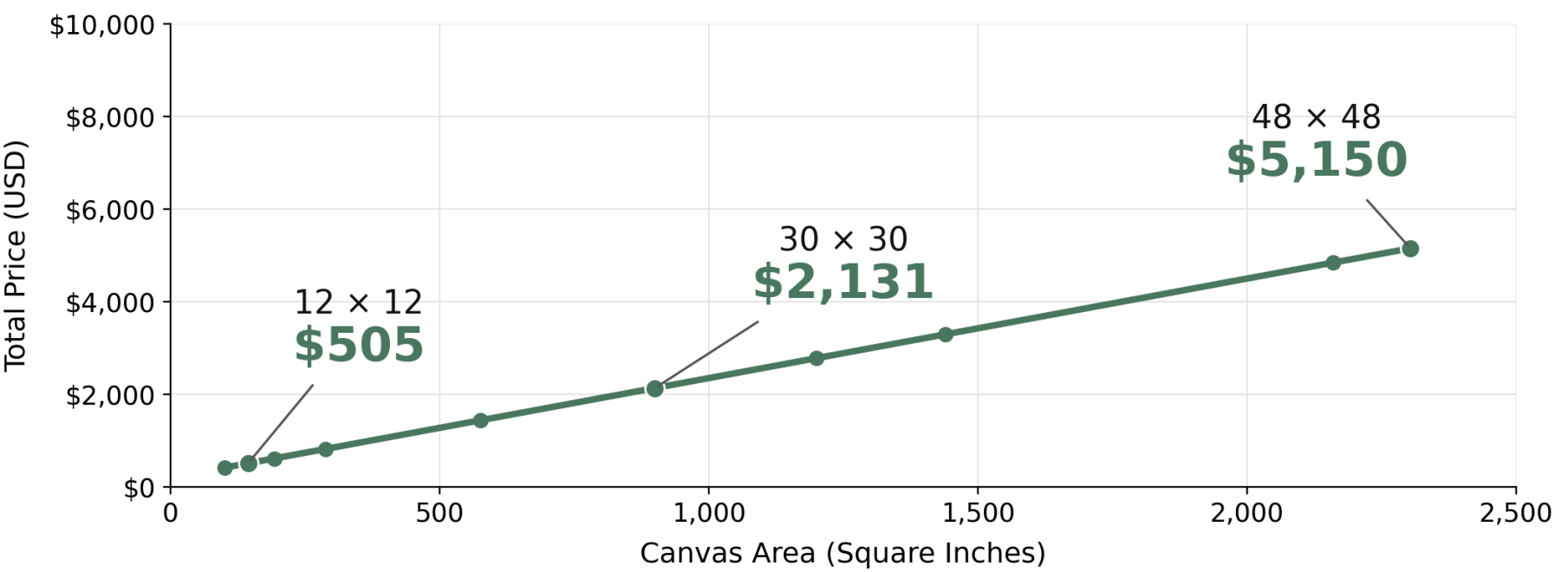
1 Flat Rate

\$2.50 per square inch at every size



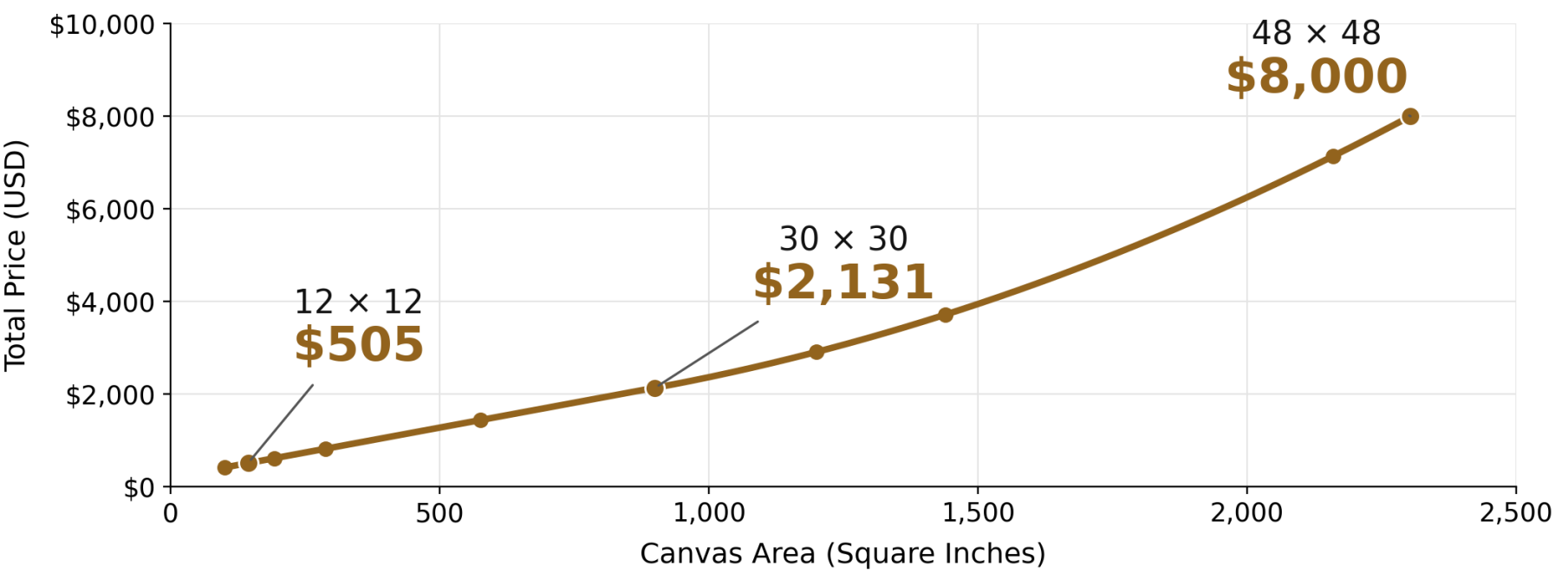
2 Sliding Scale: Straight Line

Rate per square inch decreases as size increases



3 Sliding Scale: Upward Curve

Prices rise more sharply above 30 × 30



Both sliding scales use a rate per square inch that varies with size.

Proposed examples in USD • Unframed • Prices rounded to the nearest dollar

Make the Extras Clear

Framing

Say whether prices include a frame. If a gallery takes commission on the framed total, adding the frame at cost may leave you out of pocket. Agree on the frame price with the gallery.

Shipping and Packing

State whether these costs are included or quoted separately. If you include shipping, make sure the sale can cover it.

Tax and Currency

Label your currency and say whether tax is included or added. Give buyers a clear total before payment. Then check what remains after selling costs.



“Elusive” by Master Artist Connie Geerts

One Clear Price Wherever You Sell

“Consistency is really key.”

Cindy Revell

Use one public retail price list for a consistent body of work. Update your website, studio, shows, and galleries together.

A gallery earns a share of the retail price. A lower studio price can confuse collectors and damage that relationship.

Explain differences for framed pieces, commissions, or studies. Agree on discounts with your gallery.



“Beach Couple” by Master Artist Alicia Farris

The Buyer's Price Is Not Your Take-Home

Using the flat-rate 12 × 16-inch example, suppose a gallery takes 40% commission. This is an illustration; use the percentage in your agreement.

Retail Selling Price	\$480
Gallery Commission: 40%	- \$192
Paid to the Artist	\$288
Example Materials and Finishing	- \$90
Left for Time, Overhead, and Profit	\$198

What If You Need to Keep More

To keep \$300 after \$90 of costs, the gallery must pay you \$390. With a 40% commission, you keep 60% of the retail price:

$$\text{\$390} \div 0.60 = \text{\$650 retail}$$

Check whether your market supports that price. If it does, update your public pricing consistently before agreeing to sell through the gallery.

Adding 40% to \$390 gives \$546. After commission, you would receive only \$327.60, before the \$90 of costs.

Raise Prices with Evidence

Review prices when you see regular sales, repeat buyers, stronger work, or demand you struggle to meet. Rising costs are also a reason to review the numbers.

Choose an increase you can explain. One excellent painting or enthusiastic comment does not establish a new price level.

Set a date and update your galleries, price list, and website together. Check that older pieces still represent the standard of work you want to sell.

Keep a Sales Record

Record asking and selling prices, costs, and dates. Look for patterns across several sales.



“Rocky Mountain Courage” by Master Artist Steve Puttrich

Be Kind. Be Clear. Keep Your Boundaries.

“That’s the price.”

Veronica Funk

Decide your discount policy before someone asks. A written policy is easier to follow under pressure.

When Someone Asks for a Lower Price

“This piece is \$480 unframed. If you have a different budget in mind, I can show you some smaller works.”



Master Artist Petra Schott in her studio

When a Friend Asks for a Special Deal

“Thank you for wanting to support my work. I use the same price list for everyone.”

These are sample responses, not mentor quotes. If you offer discounts or payment plans, put the terms in writing and check your gallery agreement.

Different Work May Need Different Rules

“Have a price guide if you do commissions.”

Rochelle Andrews

Commissions

Start with your price for comparable work. Allow for extra planning, meetings, revisions, and special materials. Agree on the scope, payments, and approval points before you begin.

Studies, Prints, and Other Media

A study, an original painting, and a reproduction do not need the same pricing rule. Keep each category clear and compare it with its own market.



Master Artist Leena Al Ayoobi

If the Work Is Not Selling

“Talk to people who know the business.”

David Langevin

A quiet month does not tell you the whole story. Before changing prices, look at how your work reaches people.

- ☐ Are the right buyers seeing the work often enough?
- ☐ Do your photos show the colour, size, and detail clearly?
- ☐ Is the price easy to find, and is buying straightforward?
- ☐ Does this body of work feel consistent and ready to sell?

Ask for informed feedback. Improve your presentation or try a different selling setting. If a price needs correcting, plan the change with your gallery or mentor and consider your collectors.



“Cloudmaker” by Master Artist Carol Strock Wasson

Your Pricing Worksheet

Choose one medium and one consistent body of work. Use these prompts to build a price list.

The work I am pricing, and my selling currency:

Comparable artists or recent sales I will study:

What each sale needs to cover, including my time:

My method: flat rate or sliding scale. My rate or small, medium, and large benchmark prices:

Test One Piece

Width _____ × height _____ = _____ square inches

Flat rate: area _____ × rate _____ = _____ artwork price

Sliding scale: listed price _____ ÷ area _____ = _____ per square inch

Retail price _____ – selling costs _____ – making costs _____ = _____ left for my time, overhead, and profit

Does the result work for me and my market? What needs to change?

Build Your Own Price List

For a flat rate, repeat the same rate in every row. For a sliding scale, enter each total price and divide it by the area to check the rate. Check that total prices rise with size and the smallest pieces cover their costs.

Size (Inches)	Square Inches	Your Rate	Your Price
------------------	------------------	-----------	------------

--	--	--	--

--	--	--	--

My prices include:

I will quote these extras separately:

My discount policy and next review date:

Your Next Step

Price three pieces. Ask a mentor to review your assumptions. Publish one consistent list, then record what sells and what you learn.

You Do Not Have to Figure It Out Alone

“I’m always trying to make better work.”

Janice Robertson

A mentor can help you see your work more clearly, build your skills, and make decisions about your next steps as an artist.

Bring your price list, recent work, and questions. You can start right where you are.

Explore Art Mentorship



Stay Connected

Mastrius Base Membership connects you with live events and an encouraging artist community. Visit the membership page for current details.

Explore Base Membership



Keep creating. Keep learning. A clear pricing method can give you more space to focus on your art.

Discover Mastrius



About the Examples

The charts, calculations, worksheets, and sample responses illustrate pricing methods. They are not appraisals or recommended prices for a particular artist. The flat-rate and sliding-scale examples use the same currency, sizes, and selling terms.

Artwork and photographs are supplied through Mastrius mentor materials and remain the property of their respective artists.

The red SOLD sign on the cover is an illustrative design element.



“Sunset at Frank Lake” by Master Artist Doug Swinton

Keep Creating. Keep Learning.

Discover Mastrius



© 2026 Mastrius · mastrius.com