

Interview with Michael Olguin, President of Formula Public Relations

Art has always played an important role in my life. My father, though not classically trained, dabbled in acrylic painting pretty much his whole life. As a result, my ongoing passion for art has played a pivotal role in the design of each of Formula's offices in San Diego, Los Angeles and New York. When I met with my architect to share my vision for our office design, I told him that I wanted the look and feel to be much like an art gallery, with high ceilings, natural materials and lots of open space. I'm happy to report that he delivered just this as each office feels both creatively exciting and culturally diverse. Much of this can be attributed to the original art that fills each space, the majority of which I purchased at San Diego ArtWalk—one of San Diego's cultural institutions.

Q. What type of art do you like?

A. My personal art collection is mostly comprised of oil and mixed media paintings of faces, profiles and people. I like art that tells a story through the eyes of the subject matter, which is consistent with how we look at public relations. We consider ourselves storytellers and look to create brand exposure and buzz that creates emotional connections between brands and their target consumers.

Q. Do you select specific art to fit a specific wall/space or do you select your art based upon what you like?

A. I select art that I love and that really speaks to me with very little thought into where it might hang or in which of Formula's offices. For me art helps to create a warm and inviting office environment, which ultimately contributes to overall employee satisfaction.

Q. What role does art play in your creative process or PR offering?

A. Since we are in a creative business, and our clients are looking for creative solutions to challenging situations, I believe that the art in our offices helps to inspire a creative mindset that transcends our thinking process, as well as our clients' reactions to our thinking. When clients walk into our office, they already believe we're creative because the culture is all about creativity.

Q. Do you stay in touch or follow any of the artists whose pieces you currently own?

A. Very much so. I subscribe to many newsletters and attend various exhibit openings. In fact, I have purchased a number of pieces from artists who I first met at ArtWalk and then later came across another piece of theirs that I really liked.

Q. How long have you been a supporter of ArtWalk?

A. My agency, Formula, handled all of the PR for ArtWalk for a couple of years and a number of our clients have been active sponsors of ArtWalk, including Cymer and Kashi. However, my love of original art is the driving force behind my support of this excellent cultural event.

Q. Any tips that you could provide on buying original art?

A. I would always recommend buying art that is timeless and that makes you smile when you look at it. You don't want to invest in pieces that are trendy or that you will tire of in a short time. Most importantly, I recommend buying art that you love and that you believe will work well in your office or home.