

NEWS

‘Virtual’ Gallery Opens Retail Options

by Glen Warner

TORONTO—The continuing slump throughout eastern Canada has forced many Canadian art sellers to seek out innovative new ways to market their wares.

Artalog, a new service recently launched by former Toronto gallery owner Mark Buck, matches art buyers and sellers using CD-ROM technology and an

extensive data base containing information on art for sale by artists, art dealers and collectors.

“The traditional ways of selling art to consultants and designers don’t work anymore,” says Buck, who operated First Impressions Gallery here for 10 years. “Galleries have been forced to specialize, but many people in the trade need to review a broad selection

of art in one place because they don’t have time to visit artists’ studios or retail galleries.”

The Artalog service enables buyers to view a large number of works quickly. Buyers can select the type of art they want to look at using search criteria such as the artist’s name, nationality, price range, subject matter, predominant colors, medium and artistic style, such as Art Deco or Impressionist. They then review full-color representations of the works that meet their criteria on a television screen.

Artists and art dealers are charged \$10 for each work of art they list on the Artalog system, and listings are maintained for eight weeks. Collectors who wish to sell works privately pay between \$25 and \$75, depending on the value of the art listed, and their listings remain in the system for up to nine months.

As well, Artalog charges art sellers a commission of between 10 percent and 25 percent when a work is sold, and a 10 percent “buyer premium” is charged to the purchaser when the transaction is completed.

Buck only accepts listings for original works including paintings, drawings, sculpture and original prints, with no limited edition reproductions or posters. To date, about 150 works are listed in the system and these range in price from \$500 to \$7,000. He is marketing Artalog by direct mail and newspaper ads placed in Toronto’s *Globe and Mail*.

“Artalog enables dealers and collectors to put artworks on the market without having them leave their possession,” says Buck. “And for art consultants, interior designers and collectors, the service greatly simplifies the task of reviewing a large number of works.” Buck refers to the system as a “portable gallery on a disk” and frequently makes presentations in offices and residences of potential art buyers.

Artalog is located in the Elte Carpet and Home Design Centre at 80 Ronald Ave., midtown Toronto. Call, (416) 789-0568. □



Artalog