

## **From National to International Art Advisor - Susan Almrud**

After seven years in the Vancouver art world, Susan Almrud found both her business and her interests expanding. Six months ago she made a pivotal decision to refocus her business. She closed her Vancouver-based contemporary art gallery, State Gallery and Projects, and began pursuing the art world at an international level.



Today, Susan works successfully with private and corporate clients across the globe, helping them acquire significant pieces of art for emerging and established collections.

Still based in Vancouver, Susan makes a monthly commute to her satellite office in New York City, a world-renowned cultural centre. From New York, she can source work and build up important networks with art communities around the world. "Finding the right work for a client often involves being at the right place at the right time," says Susan. "Good work does not stay on the market for long, so being in New York allows me access to works, to physically view them and to respond very quickly".

When Susan looks back at her entrepreneurial journey, she recognizes that the results were well worth her hard work. "I've faced some very big challenges and often experienced a lot of fears, but this is the process of reaching your goals and of learning," says Susan. "I try to always remember that I am not perfect, nor is anyone, but I am happy and inspired every day when I wake up."

Susan arrived on the international art scene in a somewhat roundabout fashion. Before starting her business, she worked as a consultant sourcing art for Intrawest Corp., one of the largest resort developers in Canada. In no time, artwork she sought out was gracing high-profile tourist establishments such as the ones nestled in the Whistler/Blackcomb resort area.

Susan opened her art gallery, State Gallery and Projects, in 1999. She developed a roster of more than 20 North American artists and supplied more than 7,000 pieces of original and reproduction art to individual and corporate customers. It wasn't long before her next move; relocation to the heart of Vancouver's arts district in South Granville.

The expansion was good, but the business moved faster than even Susan expected. She quickly realized the need for more working capital and better computer equipment. Women's Enterprise Centre responded by providing her with an expansion loan.

"Women's Enterprise Centre gave me hope and inspiration and said, 'yes, you can do this' by supporting me. They opened one door that led to many more open doors over the last five years," says Susan. "As an international art advisor, working at what I am passionate about, I feel like every day is a gift. It is a wonderful feeling to be financially secure, debt free and empowered in my own life as a single, independent woman."

Feeling fortunate about her entrepreneurial success, Susan now wants to start giving back. "My future definitely includes helping others. My interest is in helping women like myself, who face adversity, but have potential, motivation and share a belief in themselves," she says. "Entrepreneurs must enjoy each step along the way...happiness is not the destination, it is the path itself."