



'Co-opetition' – friendly competition

Combining traditional Vietnamese fine art with pioneering technology has created success for VietnamArtist.com, a virtual online gallery based in Ho Chi Minh City (Saigon).



Schoolgirls with Lotus Flower 2 by Nguyen Thanh Binh

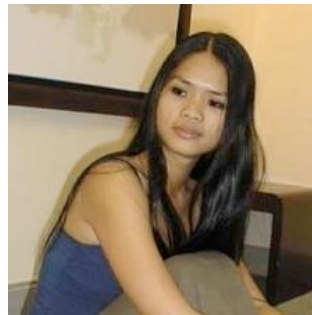
Tran Thi Anh Vu (pictured, right), an art gallery proprietor, set up VietnamArtsist.com in 1999, seizing the opportunities offered by e-commerce to develop her business. She engaged the services of an Indian web company and a design consultant from the USA to create one of the first websites in Vietnam to accept credit card transactions from all around the world.

The business currently promotes hundreds of works of art, at prices ranging up to \$10,000, by 20 artists, including the

most famous artists in Vietnam, such as Nguyen Thanh Binh, Bui Huu Hung, Do Xuan Doan and Ho Huu Thu.

One of the problems all art galleries face is that there is never enough room to display all the art available. However, in contrast to a walk-in gallery, the virtual world of the internet offers almost infinite 'gallery space'. This means that all the artwork, not just a select few, can be promoted online. These other works form what Chris Anderson calls the 'long tail', the many items that would never win gallery space yet can collectively achieve remarkable sales online. Unlike physical shops and galleries, online retailers can be 'scaled-up' without traditional constraints of space, cost and staffing.

VietnamArtist.com represents two galleries plus some individual artists. Anh invites other artists and galleries to join, even their competitors, because by working together to reach international markets, they can all benefit. "We have an open door policy" says Anh, "we call it co-opetition, friendly competition."



By being creative with her business model, Anh has transformed her enterprise from physical to virtual – 'from bricks to clicks' – replacing old problems with new opportunities. 50% of sales are online. No longer local, it's now truly global. Limited space is now infinite; previously seasonal trade is

now perennial. Inventory is 'virtual' – artworks can be displayed without the gallery having to store or buy them until they are sold to a customer. Trading globally on behalf of local artists, VietnamArtist.com has turned competition into co-opetition.