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Artist Trading Cards

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Trading Cards

What are artist trading cards?

Artist trading cards (ATCs) are miniature pieces of art that are traded around the world.

Artists create, trade and collect art at organized "swap" events, either in person or online. The only official rule for ATCs is the size: 2.5" x 3.5".

How did the movement start?

In 1997, M. Vanci Stirnemann, a Swiss artist, created 1200 cards by hand as part of an exhibit. On the last day, he invited others to create their own cards and trade with him during the closing reception. The movement took off, and today, there are ATC swaps in almost every major city around the world. There are also many online swaps.


How do I create ATCs?

Most swaps are open to any media, materials or techniques as long as the card fits into a standard trading card sleeve. ATCs are traded, not sold. However, there are some artists who choose to

Some artists who choose to sell cards. Cards that are sold are called Art Card Editions and Originals (ACEO).

How do I trade cards?


You can locate an in-person swap in your area, find an online swap, or organize your own swap. There are a number of Web sites that others have created to help artists get started. They can be found by doing online searches using key words such as “artist trading cards.”



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