



Make Art with Other Artists, Says Amazon's Joe Nichols

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Many consider art and creativity to be the center of today's most successful campaigns-but Amazon Prime Video takes the concept quite literally.

During the 2019 Promax Conference session, "Making Art with Other Artists," Joe Nichols, creative director, global brand marketing at Amazon, displayed the streamer's most prominent, art-driven campaigns to encourage entertainment marketers to incorporate actual art in their next campaign.

"Artist collaborations make campaigns more fresh, unexpected, exciting, creative, unique and dynamic, because they infuse new energy into the marketing process," he said.

Nichols uses Amazon Prime Video's *Transparent* as an example.

The comedy-drama follows a family after their patriarch comes out as transgender. As Amazon approached the fourth season of the show, they faced one challenge: taking a show that seemed "niche" and letting viewers know that above all else, it's about something everyone can relate to-family.

Therefore, they decided to approach the campaign in a new way-by reaching

out to an artist they found on Instagram, who created an oil painting from a family portrait photo.

The painting inspired a 360-campaign, where Amazon used an animated version of the art as on its homepage, social media and other digital platforms. The painting also became translated into key art for that season.

'Transparent' season 4 key art. [Amazon]

But Amazon used art to fuel multiple campaigns, like the launch for season two of Goliath, the Billy Bob Thornton-led legal drama that premiered in 2016.

"Goliath is a show about a lawyer, but how do we communicate that it is more than just another lawyer show?" Nichols said.

The answer? They tapped Los Angeles street artist Joel Artista, who created a mural based on the show's Venice Beach location.

Amazon created a time lapse of the mural's development, which was later animated and translated into the show's teaser, key art and digital board. The spot later went on to be nominated for a Promax award.

'Goliath' season 2 key art. [Amazon]

But collaborating with artists goes beyond working with painters and muralists. Amazon has also tapped musical artists -- such as Karen O, frontwoman of the Yeah Yeah Yeahs -- to launch its highly acclaimed action series, Hanna.

"Her voice can be vulnerable and soft, but totally ferocious at other times. It was perfect to capture complexities and layers of Hanna's character," Nichols said.

Karen O was the voice of the series' teasers, like the one below, which features a cover of The Smashing Pumpkins' "Bullet with Butterfly Wings."

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"It was more than just a cool song. It became a story," Nichols said.

But Amazon did more than use her voice-they took pride in collaborating with her on a deeper level, one that got the singer excited for the series herself. She shared her music-and as a result, the series' spots-through her own social media, a tactic that Nichols encourages when working with artists.

RELATED: Amazon to Introduce 'Hanna' During Super Bowl

Amazon went on to release Hanna's music on iTunes, Amazon Music and Spotify to deepen the collaboration and inspire others to share the content. The collaboration with Karen O also inspired a cross-promotional rock concert, "Women Who Rock," which the streamer launched in light on International Women's Day on March 8. Karen O, K. Flay, and Meg Myers were among the performers for the first event of its kind.

In the end, Amazon's efforts to work with artists stems from its goal to create something original that goes beyond standard marketing. And sometimes, it's much easier than it seems, Nichols says.

"Everyone is just a DM away," he concluded.