



## Michael Shapiro Biography

Born and raised in Montreal, Canada, **Art Vows** Founder and President **Michael Shapiro** has 15 years of experience offering fine art for weddings as CEO of Ketubah.com, the world's number one provider of limited edition fine art Ketubahs which he founded in 1996. With **Art Vows**, he brings his expertise in printing heirloom quality prints on demand to this first of its kind online gallery offering personally significant fine art pieces that celebrate marriage by displaying a couple's vows in a unique and enduring way.

Shapiro had always wanted to have his own business. After achieving an undergraduate Arts degree at the University of Toronto in 1989, he earned an MBA from the University of Michigan in 1992 and was recruited by Procter & Gamble International to return home to Canada to work in Brand Management at the national head office in Toronto.

After honing his strategic business thinking in the corporate environment, he left to study and travel abroad intent on coming up with a business idea that would be both financially viable and consistent with his personal interests. As he prepared for his journey, Shapiro organized an interfaith weekend retreat. Surrounded by participants and speakers from a wide range of traditions, he was struck by the underlying similarities among people of various backgrounds in their quest to connect with and express "what really matters to them" in life.

Upon his return to Toronto, Shapiro set out to plan the opening of a "bricks and mortar" fine art gallery serving the local market. While planning his gallery, he became aware of the commercial potential of the then fledgling internet, particularly its ability to serve customers in other countries, especially the USA. Building on an influential meeting abroad with a Ketubah artist who he immediately signed up to represent back home, he promptly turned his gallery idea "on its head" and decided instead to open an online gallery that would focus on fine art Ketubah prints and make them available to customers everywhere.

In April 1996, Shapiro registered the domain name [www.ketubah.com](http://www.ketubah.com). In July 1996 – over a year before google.com was registered – **Ketubah.com's** first website was launched with two dozen Ketubahs by a handful of artists. Over the next 15 years, the number of artists (80+) and designs (800+) continued to grow. And with the help of a talented team, with a laser sharp focus on delighting customers and doing one thing (i.e., Ketubahs) exceptionally well, the business continued to grow.

On Valentine's Day of 2011, responding to a trend in which couples of all backgrounds were appreciating the beauty of this traditional wedding ritual, and drawing inspiration from the interfaith retreat he had organized 16 years earlier, Shapiro launched **Art Vows** ([www.artvows.com](http://www.artvows.com)). With 100 exclusive designs in a range of styles by a select group of leading artists, **Art Vows** transforms wedding vows, or a favorite blessing or piece of poetry into full color fine art that is displayed and signed at the wedding and becomes an enduring keepsake.