

A Career Guide for Studio Art Majors

The study of art encompasses a variety of media to express human thoughts, interests, attitudes, emotions and ideas. Visual artists generally fall into one of two broad categories: designers or fine artists. Designers put their artistic skills to use in the service of commercial clients such as corporations, retail stores, and advertising, design, or publishing firms. Fine artists create art to satisfy their need for self-expression, and may display their work in galleries, museums, and homes. Often, they specialize in one or more forms of art such as painting, sculpting, printmaking, or photography.

Fine arts is a complex field from a career standpoint because the fine artist is his/her own employer and promoter. Because it may take many years to develop a career as a successful artist, most graduates initially seek ways of earning a living other than from sales of their

personal work. This takes determination and perseverance with no strictly defined career path.

The choices are very individual. This might mean a position in an arts organization (museum, gallery, etc.) or a design support position. Some art students prepare to teach. It is not unusual for fine artists to experiment with different options for a few years. It is advisable for art students to prepare for the job market by developing strong computer skills. Knowledge of business as it relates to one's career is helpful for any artist. The role of the artist in society is unique, and a major in studio art can result in a rewarding career path. Artists are creative problem solvers, enjoy experimentation, are self-disciplined, and are visually aware.

Skills

Specific skills developed by artists depend to some degree on their creative interests. However, many of the skills learned are transferable to a variety of sectors and jobs. For example, understanding formal elements such as color, line, and space is important for an art teacher, museum curator, display designer, or independent artist.

Technical	Communication	Artistic	Problem Solving
Knowing the qualities and limitations of each medium	Communicating visually	Seeing, drawing, and understanding form	Taking multiple approaches to problems
Working with a variety of media	Criticizing, evaluating, and explaining works of art	Relating abstract ideas and visual forms	Utilizing available resources
Attaining a high level of craftsmanship	Collaborating with others	Mastering the use of color, space, and line	Work under pressure and meet deadlines
Good finger and manual dexterity	Interpreting data or verbal instructions to produce art work	Utilizing theories of composition	Adapting techniques
Working independently	Presenting and displaying work	Thinking creatively	
		Visualizing shapes and spatial relationships	

Career Opportunities

There are a variety of art-related careers in commercial and non-profit settings. Art teaching positions in the public schools are available to those with teacher certification. Digital media is a constantly expanding field with opportunities for artists in gaming, film, Web design, animation, and interactive media for educational tools and advertising. Most large corporations and small companies have web sites, so there is a great demand for webpage designers. Students with knowledge of interactive media tools have excellent employment potential in a variety of settings. In general, the commercial side of art has more opportunities than the non-profit side. Government agencies, non-profit organizations, and museums depend on appropriations and donations for funds, so they tend to hire fewer people and have less to pay them.

Fine Arts

Painting, printmaking, weaving, ceramics, photography, sculpture, and drawing are all examples of fine arts. Of all arts areas, fine arts can be the most isolating. Aspiring artists would do well to connect with other artists by sharing studio space or joining an arts group. Regardless of how you do it, finding a way to connect with others means that you are not working in a vacuum. This strategy will likely benefit both your emotional well-being and your art. Try to find opportunities to exhibit your work. Look for calls for submissions in publications, journals, and newsletters. Also, look for receptive restaurant owners, community arts centers, libraries, banks, and other public spaces to show your work.

Graphic Arts

Graphic arts or graphic design is the largest area of commercially sold art. A graphic designer uses type and images (photographic or illustrative) to communicate. Graphic designers can work on a freelance or contract basis or as an in-house staff member for publishers, advertising agencies, design firms, museums, and at companies that have communications departments. In today's workplace, graphic artists need to be comfortable using various computer graphics programs and desktop publishing software.

Illustrators and photographers can often sell their art on a freelance basis to the kinds of employer organizations listed previously. Staff positions as an illustrator or photographer are rare, but do exist in universities, hospitals, and other large organizations. Keep in mind that it usually takes several years to develop the relationships and contacts that lead to enough freelance work to support yourself as an artist. In graphic design, illustration, and photography, you will need a portfolio containing samples of your art in order to look for work.

Medical and scientific illustrators combine drawing skills with knowledge of the biological sciences. Medical illustrators draw illustrations of human anatomy and surgical procedures. Scientific illustrators draw illustrations of animals and plants. These illustrations are used in medical and scientific publications and in audiovisual presentations for teaching purposes. Medical illustrators also work for lawyers, producing exhibits for court cases.

Cartoonists draw political, advertising, social, and sports cartoons. Some cartoonists work with others who create the idea or story and write the captions. Most cartoonists have comic, critical, or dramatic talents in addition to drawing skills.

Sketch artists create likenesses of subjects using pencil, charcoal, or pastels. Sketches are used in film for sketch rendering, by law enforcement agencies to assist in identifying suspects, by the news media to depict courtroom scenes, and by individual patrons for their own enjoyment.

Digital media artists and animators work primarily in computer and data processing services, advertising, and the motion picture and television industries. They draw by hand and use computers to create the large series of pictures that form the animated images or special effects seen in movies, television programs, and computer games. Some draw storyboards for television commercials, movies, and animated features. Storyboards present television commercials in a series of scenes similar to a comic strip and allow an advertising agency to evaluate proposed commercials with the company doing the advertising. Storyboards

also serve as guides to placing actors and cameras and to other details during the production of commercials.

Arts Management

Arts organizations, like most for-profit companies and nonprofit organizations, have a number of administrative, business, or management functions. These roles require people with creativity and an understanding and passion for the arts as well as skills in a range of areas from finance and marketing to education.

Arts management and arts administration are interchangeable terms. Some people draw a distinction between them, using administration to mean the more bureaucratic, operational side, and management to mean the more creative, strategic side of the field. However, that distinction is not widely made. In fact, some of the oldest and most respected programs train arts administrators. The specific positions available at an arts organization will depend on what the organization does and how large its budget and staff is. For example, a museum is

likely to have staff members in education who work with school groups to introduce children to

the exhibits. A gallery needs employees with good organizational and computer skills to coordinate exhibits and work with artists to track various art submissions.

Over the last decade, arts management has become a growing field with increasing specialization and training. A number of new graduate training and certification programs have emerged. These programs may be useful, depending on your interests and goals. Some arts managers, for example, suggest eventually pursuing a business degree with a specialization in nonprofit management. Almost without exception, however, arts managers advise getting work-related experience first and considering graduate study later on. If you decide to investigate graduate study, begin by asking professionals what programs they think are valuable and respected in the field; do not just ask one or two people and assume their opinions are representative.

Hybrid Careers

Combining art with other fields is an exciting way to approach working in the arts. While the possible intersections are limited solely by your imagination, here is a sampling of the fields that are frequently combined:

Art and Psychology/Health

Expressive therapy integrates the modalities of dance, drama, literature, music, poetry, and the visual arts with the practice of psychotherapy. The goals of expressive therapy are to restore, maintain, and improve mental health. This therapy is used in clinical settings (i.e., hospitals, mental health centers), educational settings, and other independent positions related to arts in the human services.

Art and Education

Arts education is an intersection of two fields that includes (1) the traditional teaching of art and (2) the use of art as an educational tool. In private schools, people who can teach an art class (or coach a sport, etc.) in addition to teaching a subject are better positioned in the job market. If you are uncertified to teach in a

public school, look for after school, extracurricular, or summer programs as ways to get experience before considering certification.

The second major intersection of arts and education involves human service work and uses art as an educational tool. For example, educators working with youths living in high-risk environments often use art as an intervention to change behavior and as a vehicle for expression. There are many ways to explore this kind of work. Volunteering at a community agency or community service program is a way to get experience and see if this use of art appeals to you.

Art and Computers

The field of special effects is one traditional intersection of art and computers. However, rapid technological advances provide many intersections with art. Computer graphics, animation, CAD (computer aided design), simulation, image processing, systems design, and scientific visualization all draw from both art and technology.

Art and the Environment

Art can intersect with the built environment in a number of ways. Architectural firms often employ graphic designers to collaborate with architects to develop sign systems. Environmental graphics can include banners and sign systems or exhibits for commercial, industrial, or educational purposes (i.e., trade

shows, hospitals, schools, museums, or other institutions). Industrial and product design is another area in which artists can look for work. As in graphic design, some training is essential. Remember that in each of these fields where products are created, production jobs with vendors exist as well.

Job Titles

These job titles are examples of some of the ways in which Art majors have applied their skills and abilities. In general, an advanced degree is required for those occupations marked with a * on the following list:

Billboard artist/sign painter	*Art therapist	Audio-visual specialist
Gallery owner/operator	Community arts center director	*Historical preservation coordinator
Artist-in-residence	Greeting card artist	Photographer
Museum publications director	Auctioneer	Art appraiser
Cartoonist	Museum education coordinator	Art critic/reporter
Web-page designer	*Conservator/restorer	Exhibit designer
Art teacher	*Medical illustrator	Scenic artist (film/theatre)
Arts fundraiser	Visual merchandiser	Corporate art consultant
Book/CD cover designer	Grants specialist	Mural artist
Art director	*Museum curator	Arts & humanities council director
*Art librarian	Police/courtroom artist	Printmaker
Arts council director	Layout artist	*Arts lawyer
Illustrator		
Picture framer		

Employers of Art Majors

Advertising agencies	Publishing companies	Recreation departments
Colleges and universities	Museums	Corporate communication departments
Sign shops	Textile industry	Photo agencies
Art galleries	Amusement parks	Camps
Libraries	Retail stores	Restoration firms
Art supply stores	Schools	Media production companies
Public relations firms	Film industry	
Magazines and newspapers	Greeting card companies	
Printing firms	Auction houses	

First Jobs Held by Recent UT Graduates

Web design coordinator	Preparator	Computer animator
Decorator's assistant	Decorative painter	Architectural intern
Photographer's assistant	Graphic designer	Installation expert
Sign designer	Asst. to project coordinator	Computer support coordinator
Sales Associate	Administrative assistant	Museum technical staff
Carpenter	Freelance artist	

Earnings

From the 2008-2009 edition of the Occupational Outlook Handbook: Median annual earnings of salaried art directors were \$68,100 in May 2006. The middle 50 percent earned between \$49,480 and \$94,920. The lowest 10 percent earned less than \$37,920, and the highest 10 percent earned more than \$135,090. Median annual earnings were \$70,630 in advertising and related services.

Median annual earnings of salaried craft artists were \$24,090. The middle 50 percent earned between \$18,860 and \$35,840. The lowest 10 percent earned less than \$14,130, and the highest 10 percent earned more than \$46,700. Earnings data for the many self-employed craft artists were not available.

Median annual earnings of salaried fine artists, including painters, sculptors, and illustrators were \$41,970. The middle 50 percent earned between \$28,500 and \$58,550. The lowest 10 percent earned less than \$18,350, and the highest 10 percent earned more than \$79,390. Earnings data for the many self-employed fine artists were not available.

Median annual earnings of salaried multi-media artists and animators were \$51,350, not including the earnings of the self-employed. The middle 50 percent earned between \$38,980 and \$70,050. The lowest 10 percent earned less than \$30,390, and the highest 10 percent earned more than \$92,720. Median annual earnings were \$57,310 in motion picture and video industries and \$48,860 in advertising and related services.

Earnings for self-employed artists vary widely. Some charge only a nominal fee while they gain experience and build a reputation for their work. Others, such as well-established freelance fine artists and illustrators, can earn more than salaried artists. Many, however, find it difficult to rely solely on income earned from selling paintings or other works of art. Like other self-employed workers, freelance artists must provide their own benefits.

From: **Occupational Outlook Handbook** at <http://www.bls.gov/oco/ocos092.htm>

Strategies to Prepare for a Career in Art

Fine Arts

- * Participate in juried shows.
- * Secure guild membership.
- * Learn to network and make contacts.

Commercial Art

- * Gain computer and technical skills.
- * Find a graphic design internship.
- * Work on campus publications in design or layout.
- * Get summer or part-time experience at book, magazine or newspaper publishers.

Education

- * Obtain certification for public school teaching.
- * Volunteer in after-school programs or as tutor or camp counselor.

Photography

- * Apprentice with free-lance photographer.
- * Be a staff photographer for yearbook, campus newspaper or magazine.
- * Act as photographer for campus events.

Art Therapy

- * Supplement curriculum with psychology courses.
- * Volunteer to work with people of all types and ages.

Media

- * Freelance or obtain an internship.
- * Gain knowledge of variety of technical equipment and develop computer skills.
- * Participate in student theatrical productions.
- * Serve as audio-visual aide for campus films and lectures.
- * Work on student publications.

Common Graduate School Options

Studio Art

The Master of Fine Arts (MFA) is the advanced degree in studio art. About half of the 60-hour program is devoted to an area of concentration: painting, sculpture, printmaking, photography ceramics, etc. The rest of the program focuses on art history and criticism, a master's thesis, and a master's exhibition. The MFA is usually necessary to teach at the college level.

Arts Administration

Arts management is a multidisciplinary field, focused on promoting the arts and culture for individuals and societies. Professional arts managers must be familiar with the social, cultural, economic, political, technical and ethical contexts of the arts. The masters in arts administration is concerned with the role of art and arts organizations in society.

Art Therapy

Graduate programs in art therapy prepare students to use art as a therapeutic tool in working with all clients-children, adolescents, adults. Admission to these graduate programs usually requires the equivalent of a double major in art and psychology, or a major in one with considerable coursework in the other.

Art Education

Art education programs are designed for students interested in advanced professional training as artist-teachers in public and private schools, for researchers in the arts, and for art professionals committed to developing the visual arts in schools, museums, community-based educational programs, and other alternative educational sites.

Museum Studies

Courses treat the principles of museology, administration, collections management, education, and professional development. Additional courses cover conservation, exhibits, museum facilities, marketing and development, material culture, decorative arts, and historic preservation. Students usually undertake a museum internship or field experience.

Conservation

Conservators work with paintings, sculpture, and works on paper, etc., to maintain them in the best possible condition that most closely approximates their original state. They need extensive training in chemistry as well as in both studio art and art history. Graduate programs, though highly competitive, can virtually guarantee employment to their students.

FACS Resources for Art Majors

Art Calendar Magazine
Wow! Resumes: Creative Careers
Legal Guide for the Visual Artist
Copyright and the Visual Artist
2004 Artist's & Graphic Designer's Market
2004 Photographer's Market
Art That Pays
Animation and Cartooning Careers
Art Journal (Fall 2006)
The Photographer's Guide to Marketing and Self Promotion
Art Marketing 101-Handbook for the Fine Artist
How to Start a Home-Based Photography Business
Artists Communities
Starting Your Career as a Freelance Illustrator or Designer
The Practical Handbook for the Emerging Artist
An Artist's Guide: Making it in NYC
Career's in Computer Graphics & Animation
Game Art: Creation, Direction, and Careers
The 100 Best Small Art Towns in America
Visual Arts Careers
Artist's & Writers Colonies
Art Guide Texas
The Business of Being an Artist
Great Jobs for Art Majors
Top Careers for Art Graduates
Careers in Art
Careers in Art: An Illustrated Guide
The Graphic Designer's Guide to Pricing, Estimating & Budgeting
Building Design Portfolios: Innovative Concepts for Presenting Your Work

Online Resources for Art Majors

Career Information, Job Listings, Grants, & Fellowships

AccessUT

<https://accessut.utexas.edu/students>
UT's online job and internship database which posts professional opportunities for all majors.

Fine Arts Works

<https://www.myinterfase.com/ut-finearts/student/home.aspx>
Fine Arts Career Services' database of art-related opportunities. Fine Arts students can post a resume and view job postings and upcoming career events.

Alliance of Artist Communities

<http://www.artistcommunities.org/>
The Alliance is a national consortium of organizations and individuals that offer artists time and space to create new work. It includes approximately 100 organizations and 100 individuals.

Aquent

<http://www.aquent.com/careers/>
Employment agency that specializes in contract, project-based, and permanent work for a broad range of creative and information technology professionals.

Art Career Network

<http://www.artcareer.net/>
Jobs from museums, art galleries, educational institutions, and multi-disciplinary organizations as well as other art-related businesses/concerns worldwide.

Art Deadline

<http://artdeadline.com/>
A subscription-based source of income and exhibition opportunities for artists. FACS has a subscription. Contact us for the user name and password.

Arthouse at the Jones Center

<http://www.arthousetexas.org/>
The mission of the Arthouse is to promote the growth and appreciation of contemporary art and artists in Texas. The Center provides grants and internships to visual artists.

Art Job Online

<http://www.artjob.com/>
Search available art jobs: full- & part-time employment, internships, grants, public art projects, and residencies. FACS subscribes. Contact us for the user name and password.

Artslynx

<http://www.artslynx.org/>
With a neat and well-organized series of connecting icons, Artslynx has master folders dealing with Visual Arts, Film, Arts Administration, and Arts Advocacy.

Artspan

<http://www.artspan.com/>
An excellent, inexpensive promotional tool for artists, artisans, and photographers. Artspan gives you your own web site, where you can upload images of your work, your artist statement, pricing information, and contact information, all of which becomes searchable by galleries, collectors, and other artists.

Artist Help Network

<http://www.artisthelpnetwork.com/welcome.asp>
A free information service designed to help artists take control of their careers. The network assists artists in locating information, resources, guidance, and advice on a comprehensive range of career-related topics.

Artists Register

<http://artistsregister.com/index.phtml>
A web site that serves to connect artists and their work with private collectors, gallery owners, interior designers, corporate art buyers, public art administrators, and art enthusiasts.

Artists Resource: Job-hunting Advice for Designers, Artists, Illustrators

<http://www.artistresource.org/jobhunt.htm>
Links to sites with information on careers and salaries, job status, informational interviews, resumes, portfolios, developing portfolio projects, job interviews, job-hunting resources, books and publications for finding jobs, and business advice.

Artist's Resource Center

http://www.smfa.edu/Student_Life/Professional_Development/artSource/Index.asp

Sponsored by the School of the Museum of Fine Arts in Boston this site has links to internships, community organizations, galleries and museums, college teaching, electronic media, traditional media, freelance work, grants, fellowships, and residencies, exhibitions and competitions, and public art commissions.

The Creative Group

<http://www.creativegroup.com/>

This agency specializes in marketing and advertising positions from Art Director to Illustrator in states across the U.S. Temporary and permanent positions are listed. They have excellent job search advice including tips for creating portfolios.

Creative Hotlist

<http://www.creativehotlist.com/index.asp>

A career site for creative professionals.

Current Jobs in Visual Arts

http://graduatejobs.com/sub_login.htm

The National Employment Bulletin for the Visual Art Professions. Contact us for the user name and password.

Global Art Information Directory 2004

<http://www.globalartinfo.com/>

The 2004 Directory is available in FACS and lists thousands of grants, competitions, and residencies for artists. Monthly updates to the directory are available online through this link.

Grants and Awards in the Visual Arts

<http://www.lib.umd.edu/ART/guides/grants.html>

A guide from the University of Maryland Library that contains sources of information on grants, foundations, internships, and scholarships in the visual arts.

International Association of Residential Arts Centres

<http://www.resartis.org/>

A worldwide network of residential arts centers and programs which provide artists with facilities and conditions conducive to creative work.

New York Foundation for the Arts

<http://www.nyfa.org/default.asp>

New York Foundation for the Arts' weekly newsletter of national news in the arts, which includes opportunities for artists, jobs, and events.

Professional Associations/Organizations

American Art Therapy Association

<http://www.arttherapy.org/>

This is the professional association for art therapists and includes information about art therapy graduate programs.

American Association of Museums

<http://www.aam-us.org/>

Representative organization of all types of American Museums. Includes a job board.

American Institute of Graphic Arts, Austin Chapter

<http://aigaaustin.org/community/>

This is the Austin chapter of the national professional organization for design. The site includes local job listings in the graphic arts.

Association of Medical Illustrators

<http://medical-illustrators.org/>

This professional organization's Web site has information about preparing for a career as a medical illustrator including a list of suggested coursework and accredited graduate programs.

Austin Advertising Federation

<http://www.austinadfed.com/index.shtml>

Check out the JOBLINE for up-to-the minute listings of jobs (and internships) in all fields of advertising in Austin and surrounding areas. New jobs are put online weekly.

Austin Museum Partnership

<http://www.austinmuseums.org/>

The Austin Museum Partnership is a consortium of twenty-six Austin area museums organized in 1998 to promote collaborations for the mutual benefit of the public and the museums.

Austin Visual Arts Association

<http://www.avaaonline.org/>

Founded in 1977, this local visual arts association is useful for students interested in making connections with other artists.

In the Galleries Austin

<http://www.inthegalleriesaustin.com/>

Twenty-four galleries and museums working together to promote the visual arts in Austin.

National Art Education Association

<http://www.naea-reston.org/>

This association serves and represents art educators at all levels.

Sculptor.Org

<http://www.sculptor.org>

Contains over 320 pages of resources and tools, and over 12,000 links. Sculptor.Org consistently shows up as one of the top sites for sculpture and sculptors on the web.

Society of Illustrators

<http://www.societyillustrators.org/>

Contains career information and other information for illustrators.

Texas Association of Museums

<http://www.io.com/~tam/>

The TAM represents 260 museums and contains a job bank that features positions in Texas museums.

Government Agencies**The Texas Commission on the Arts**

<http://www.arts.state.tx.us/>

This government office is charged with bringing the Arts to Texans and they do so with financial support and through education. Includes grant listings, a job board (under opportunities), and useful information about careers in the arts.

Austin Art in Public Places

<http://www.ci.austin.tx.us/aipp/>

This arm of city government works to select art for public spaces in Austin.

*The information in this guide was compiled from resources available online and in DFA 1.103.
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