

The study of art encompasses the exploration of a variety of media as a vehicle to express human thoughts, interests, attitudes, emotions and ideas. Fine art 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	Criticizing, evaluating, and explaining works of art	Seeing, drawing, and understanding form	Pursuing innovative and unconventional solutions
Working with a variety of media	Collaborating with others	Relating abstract ideas and visual forms	Taking multiple approaches to problems
Attaining a high level of craftsmanship	Interpreting data or verbal instructions to produce art work	Mastering the use of color, space and line	Work under pressure and meet deadlines
Good finger and manual dexterity	Presenting and displaying work	Utilizing theories of composition	Utilizing available resources
Working independently	Communicating visually	Visualizing shapes and spatial relationships	Adapting techniques

## Career Opportunities

There are a variety of art-related careers in commercial, nonprofit and government 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. There is 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. Non-profit organizations, museums and some government agencies depend on appropriations and donations for funds, so they tend to hire fewer people and have less to pay them.

### Fine Arts

Painting, printmaking, ceramics, photography, sculpture and drawing are all examples of the fine arts. Of all artistic pursuits, 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. No matter 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.

Illustrators and photographers can often sell their art on a freelance basis to many types of organizations, including print publishers, stock agencies and advertising firms. 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.

## 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 or 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.

Medical and scientific illustrators combine drawing skills with knowledge of 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.

## Art Therapy

The American Art Therapy Association (AATA) defines art therapy as a mental health profession that uses the creative process of art making to improve and enhance the physical, mental and emotional well-being of individuals of all ages. Research in the field confirms that the creative process involved in artistic self-expression helps people to become more physically, mentally, and emotionally healthy and functional, resolve conflicts and problems, develop interpersonal skills, manage behavior, reduce stress, handle life adjustments, and achieve insight.

The AATA sets educational, professional, and ethical standards for its members. The Art Therapy Credentials Board (ATCB), an independent organization, grants credentials. Registration is granted upon completion of graduate education and post-graduate supervised experience. Board Certification is granted to Registered Art Therapists who pass a written examination and is maintained through continuing education. Some states regulate the practice of art therapy and in many states art therapists can become licensed as counselors or mental health therapists.

## Arts Administration

Arts organizations, like most for profit companies, 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.

The specific positions available at an arts organization will depend on what the organization

does and how large its budget and staff are. Since arts managers are needed in virtually every arts organization, from theatre companies to museums, many opportunities exist in this field. For example, a museum is likely to have staff members in education that work with school groups to introduce children to the exhibits. An opera company, concert hall, or theatre needs box-office and front of the house workers to manage ticket sales, write press releases, market the productions in the community, and create visibility. Some theatre companies need general managers to schedule tours, monitor union agreements, and run the business side of performances.

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.

## **Art Education**

Arts education is an intersection of two fields that includes the traditional teaching of art and the use of art as an educational tool. 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. There is typically no certification requirement to teach in private schools, but many require advanced degrees. 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 a method to change behavior and a vehicle for personal expression. There are many ways to explore this kind of work. Volunteering at a community agency or community service program is an opportunity to get experience and see if this use of art appeals to you.

## **Digital Art**

Rapid technological advances have provided 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.

Digital media artists and animators work primarily in the video, advertising, gaming and 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 for placing actors, cameras, and other details during the production of commercials.

## **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, 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.

## **Museum Technicians**

Museum technicians, commonly known as registrars, help curators by preparing and taking care of museum items. Registrars also may answer questions from the public and help curators and outside scholars use the collections. Registrars usually need a bachelor's degree related to the museum's specialty, training in museum studies, or previous experience working in museums, particularly in designing exhibits.

## 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 an asterisk (\*) on the following list:

Billboard Artist/Sign Painter	*Art Therapist	*Historical Preservation Coordinator
Gallery Owner/Operator	Community Arts Center Director	Photographer
Artist-In-Residence	Greeting Card Artist	Art Appraiser
Museum Publications Director	Auctioneer	Art Critic/Reporter
Cartoonist	Museum Education Coordinator	Exhibit Designer
Web Page Designer	*Conservator/Restorer	Scenic Artist (Film/Theatre)
Art Teacher	*Medical Illustrator	Corporate Art Consultant
Arts Fundraiser	Visual Merchandiser	Mural Artist
Book/Cd Cover Designer	Grants Specialist	Arts & Humanities Council Director
Art Director	*Museum Curator	Printmaker
*Art Librarian	Police/Courtroom Artist	*Arts Lawyer
Arts Council Director	Layout Artist	
Illustrator	Audio-Visual Specialist	
Picture Framer		

## Employers of Art Majors

Advertising Agencies	Amusement Parks
Colleges, Universities, Schools	Retail Stores
Sign Shops	Film Industry
Art Galleries	Greeting Card Companies
Libraries	Auction Houses
Art Supply Stores	Recreation Departments
Public Relations Firms	Corporate Communication Departments
Magazines And Newspapers	Photo Agencies
Printing Firms	Camps
Publishing Companies	Restoration Firms
Museums	Media Production Companies
Textile Industry	

## First Jobs Held by Recent UT Graduates

Web Design Coordinator	Assistant To Project Coordinator
Decorator's Assistant	Administrative Assistant
Photographer's Assistant	Freelance Artist
Sign Designer	Computer Animator
Sales Associate	Architectural Intern
Carpenter	Installation Expert
Preparator	Computer Support Coordinator
Decorative Painter	Museum Technical Staff
Graphic Designer	

## Earnings

Craft and fine artists held about 56,900 jobs in 2010. Most craft and fine artists are self-employed, while others are employed in various private sector industries and by government. Fine artists are often employed by newspaper, periodical, book, and directory publishers; colleges and universities; and software publishers. Other types of artists and related workers work for the federal government, motion picture and video production companies, and advertising and public relations firms.

The median hourly wage of craft and fine artists was \$20.90 in May 2010. The median wage is the wage at which half the workers in an occupation earned more than that amount and half earned less. The lowest 10 percent earned less than \$9.10, and the top 10 percent earned more than \$44.04.

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.

Part-time and variable work schedules are common for artists. Many also hold another job in addition to their work as an artist. During busy periods, artists may work overtime to meet deadlines. Self-employed artists can set their own hours.

Multimedia artists and animators held 66,500 jobs in 2010. In 2010, 59 percent of workers were self-employed. They often work from home. Some work for motion picture or video game studios. They frequently work in offices.

The median annual wage of multimedia artists and animators was \$58,510 in May 2010. The median wage is the wage at which half the workers in an occupation earned more than that amount and half earned less. The lowest 10 percent earned less

than \$33,840, and the top 10 percent earned more than \$99,830.

Multimedia artists and animators often work long hours; it is not unusual for them to work 50-hour weeks. When deadlines are approaching, they may work nights and weekends.

Photographers held about 139,500 jobs in May 2010, and 63 percent were self-employed. The median hourly wage of photographers was \$14.00 in May 2010. The median wage is the wage at which half the workers in an occupation earned more than that amount and half earned less. The lowest 10 percent earned less than \$8.34, and the top 10 percent earned more than \$30.48.

Self-enrichment teachers held about 252,800 jobs in 2010, and about 14 percent were self-employed. Others worked for community educational programs, religious organizations, or elementary and secondary schools.

The median hourly wage of self-enrichment teachers was \$17.47 in May 2010. The median wage is the wage at which half the workers in an occupation earned more than that amount and half earned less. The lowest 10 percent earned less than \$9.03 and the top 10 percent earned more than \$33.92.

It is common for teachers to have a full-time job in another occupation, but some have several part-time teaching assignments. Part-time instructors are usually paid for each class that they teach and receive few benefits.

From: **Occupational Outlook Handbook** at <http://www.bls.gov/ooh/arts-and-design/craft-and-fine-artists.htm>, <http://www.bls.gov/ooh/arts-and-design/multimedia-artists-and-animators.htm>, and <http://www.bls.gov/ooh/media-and-communication/photographers.htm>.

## Graduate School Options

For a thorough explanation of the different degrees related to studio art, see the College Art Association's Graduate Programs in the Visual Arts directory available in Fine Arts Career Services.

**Master of Fine Arts (M.F.A.):** The M.F.A. is the terminal degree in studio art. The majority of the 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 report and a master's exhibition. The M.F.A. is usually necessary

to teach at the college level. Some schools offer a low-residency program. Low-residency programs consist of periods of residency at the institution combined with independent study.

**Master of Arts (M.A.):** This is typically a one to two year academic degree that is course and/or research based and often requires a thesis. Studio art majors may want to consider graduate study in art history, conservation, art education, museum studies or arts administration. Generally, an M.A. is not awarded in Studio Art.

## FACS Resources for Art Majors

Fine Arts Career Services keeps a small library of arts career and job search related books, many of which are not available at other University of Texas libraries. Students may come by the office (DFA 1.103) to browse books during our regular hours.

Art and Art History Fellowship Opportunities  
 Art Dealer's Field Guide  
 Art Marketing 101  
 Art That Pays: The Emerging Artist's Guide to Making a Living  
 Artists & Writers Colonies: Retreats, Residencies, and Respite for the Creative Mind  
 Beginner's Guide to Community-Based Arts  
 Breaking into the Art World  
 Building Design Portfolios  
 Careers in Art  
 Careers in Computer Graphics and Animation  
 Copyright and the Visual Artist  
 Corporate Art Consulting

Game Art  
 Gardner's Guide to Internships in New Media  
 The Graphic Designer's Guide to Pricing, Estimating and Budgeting  
 How to Start a Home-Based Photography Business  
 Opportunities in Animation and Cartooning Careers  
 Selling Art Without Galleries  
 Starting Your Career as a Freelance Illustrator or Graphic Designer  
 Studio Art, Design, & VAS Resumes & Curriculum Vitae

\* For a complete list of FACS Resources visit <http://www.utexas.edu/finearts/careers/career-information>

\* Visit [http://www.lib.utexas.edu/fal/collections/current\\_periodicals/index.php](http://www.lib.utexas.edu/fal/collections/current_periodicals/index.php) for a complete listing of art journals available in the Fine Arts Library

## Online Resources for Art Majors

### Fine Arts Career Services

#### HireUTexas

<http://recruit.utexas.edu/hireutexas/>  
 UT's online job and internship database which posts professional opportunities for all majors.

#### Fine Arts Works

<https://finearts-utexas-csm.symplicity.com>  
 Fine Arts Career Services' database of art-related opportunities. Fine Arts students can post a resume and view job postings and upcoming career events.

## Job Listings

### **Alliance of Artist Communities**

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

The Alliance of Artists Communities is the service organization for the field of artists' communities and residencies. They maintain artist residency listings, advocate for artist residency programs and communities, and offer professional development for artists. Their website includes job postings.

### **Americans for the Arts**

<http://jobbank.artsusa.org>

This advocacy organization supports the arts in many ways. Their job bank is the premier electronic recruitment resource for the industry and includes national job listings for all of the fine arts. It includes postings in academia, arts administration and management. Check out the rest of their site for other helpful arts resources.

### **Art Job**

<https://www.artjob.org/>

Comprehensive, up-to-date national listings of jobs, internships, fellowships and other employment opportunities in the arts. Contact Fine Arts Career Services for the username and password.

### **Artists Register**

<https://artistsregister.com/>

An affordable marketing tool for artists, this site also offers information on artist opportunities and jobs, as well as professional development articles.

### **ArtSearch**

<http://www.tcg.org/artsearch/>

The publication from the Theatre Communication Group for full-time, part-time, seasonal, year-round and internship opportunities in the performing arts. Contact FACS for the username and password.

### **Art Source**

<http://www.smfa.edu/artsource>

This site has links to internships, freelance work, grants, fellowships, residencies, exhibitions, competitions and public art commissions.

### **Creative Hotlist**

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

A career site for creative professionals with job

postings in many industries.

### **Greenlights**

[www.greenlights.org](http://www.greenlights.org)

Greenlights is a provider of nonprofit strengthening and support services including professional development events, workshops, and a job board containing hundreds of postings by member organizations.

### **Idealist**

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

Idealist.org connects people with job, volunteer and action opportunities posted by 90,000 organizations around the world.

### **New York Foundation for the Arts**

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

This website provides a number of services for artists including job and internship postings, funding opportunities, arts advocacy and services for artists. They also maintain an online newsletter covering current issues affecting artists.

### **USA Jobs**

<https://www.usajobs.gov/>

USAJOBS is the U.S. Government's official system/program for Federal jobs and employment information. They offer an excellent page dedicated to students and recent graduates seeking Federal jobs.

## Overseas Job Opportunities

### **Going Global**

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

Search for job openings and internship opportunities in countries around the world. Listings are updated daily! Additionally, Going Global career and employment resources include more than 10,000 pages of constantly-updated content on topics such as: job search sources, work permit/visa regulations, resume writing guidelines and examples, employment trends, salary ranges, networking groups and cultural/interviewing advice.

## **US/Japan Creative Artists Program**

[jusfc.gov/faqs/creative-artists-programs](http://jusfc.gov/faqs/creative-artists-programs)

The Japan U.S. Friendship Commission offers leading contemporary and traditional artists from the United States the chance to spend three months in Japan via a grant award.

## **Regional Organizations**

### **The Contemporary Austin**

<http://thecontemporaryaustin.org>

Austin's major art museum. Their website also features information on their lecture series and teacher resources.

### **Austin Art in Public Places**

<http://www.austintexas.gov/department/art-public-places>

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

### **Austin Creative Alliance**

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

As a nonprofit arts service organization, ACA focuses on sponsoring projects and programs that both strengthen Austin's performing arts community and bring new audiences to the arts. Find links to some of the Austin-area arts organizations.

### **Austin Museum Partnership**

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

The Austin Museum Partnership is a consortium of thirty-two 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/>

Museums, galleries and alternative spaces working to promote visual arts in Austin.

### **Texas Art Education Association**

<http://taea.org>

The TAEA promotes quality visual arts education in Texas. Their website offers job listings, web resources and advocacy information.

### **Texas Commission on the Arts**

<http://www.arts.texas.gov>

Includes links to numerous visual and performing arts sites, opportunities, and assistance for artists. View their employment links by going to New Opportunities.

### **Texas State Agencies List**

<https://www.tsl.texas.gov/app/lrs/agencies/index.html>

The list contains an entry for each current Texas state agency with links to contact and other information about the agency.

## **Professional 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 Institute of Graphic Arts, Austin Chapter**

[austin.aiga.org](http://austin.aiga.org)

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

### **American Society of Media Photographers**

<http://asmp.org/>

This organization's website includes business and legal information for photographers.

### **Association of Medical Illustrators**

<http://www.ami.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 program.

### **Illustrators' Partnership**

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

This organization offers many articles and resources related to the business of illustration and advocacy for artists.

### **National Art Education Association**

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

This association serves and represents art educators at all levels.

## **Texas Association of Museums**

[texasmuseums.org](http://texasmuseums.org)

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

## **Other**

### **Artist Help Network**

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

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.

### **ResArtis**

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

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

### **Sculptor.Org**

<http://www.sculptor.org>

Contains over 400 pages of resources and tools, including a list of professional organizations for sculptors.

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