

STUDIO ART

CAREER GUIDE

Fine Arts Career Services

The University of Texas at Austin

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FINE ARTS CAREER SERVICES OFFERS:

ONE-ON-ONE ADVISING

Resume and cover letter reviews, mock interviews, graduate school advising, general career exploration. E-mail us for appointments!

JOB BOARD

Fine Arts Works is exclusively for COFA students and alumni. Check it out at www.bit.ly/fawjobs

PROGRAMMING

Tips and Tiffs professional development workshops, *Industry Insights* guest speaker series, info sessions on FACS-specific initiatives, and COFA Careers Week

FUNDING

Intern Scholarship, Professional Development Travel Initiative (PDTI), New York Seminar Scholarship, and more. www.bit.ly/facsfunds

AND MORE

Online internship classes, New York Seminar spring break trip, Networking Night, Undergraduate Professional Development Committee, and more

*Written by Nicole Anderson with excerpts adapted from previous studio art career guides
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ABOUT STUDIO ART

Studio art training prepares students to be both well-versed makers and inquisitive observers. Through painting, drawing, photography, printmaking, sculpture, video, digital, and performance coursework, students are especially well-prepared in a variety of media.

Studio art training prepares students to be complex problem-solvers. The same process of solving problems in art can be applied to any industry. Because studio art students participate in rigorous critiquing processes, you are also adept at receiving, processing, and applying feedback from peers and colleagues. These are desirable traits in any job or industry, and it's important that you recognize this, learn to articulate these skills, and most importantly, explore and define your career goals early.

DEFINE YOUR GOALS

More than almost any other arts-related discipline, a degree in studio art leads to a very self-guided career. It is critical that studio art students frequently reflect on professional interests. Internships, volunteering, job shadowing, and informational interviews are critical in your field because they provide many reflection opportunities to refine professional goals. Most studio art graduates maintain an art practice through the duration of their career. Some focus on it so intentionally that it becomes their full-time job. However, most maintain an art practice in addition to a full or part-time job(s), typically in the arts.

Studio art graduates tend to pursue career paths in jobs that allow them to problem-solve, experiment, and connect to the humanities. It is not unusual nor inappropriate for studio art graduates to experiment with different career paths for a few years following graduation.

INTRODUCTION

Congratulations on taking the next step in thinking about your career in studio art! Whether you are a freshmen or nearing graduation, now is a good time to start thinking about your future. This career guide is meant to give you lots of broad information to consider as you picture yourself working in different environments. We hope reading through this will spark your own curiosity and that you will come meet with the Fine Arts Career Services office for a one-on-one appointment. We are highly skilled in helping you to find the perfect job, internship, or just to brainstorm different career paths.

MAINTAINING AN ART PRACTICE

If you plan to maintain an art practice after graduation, refine your art practice goals early. Are you seeking gallery representation? Is it your goal to sell a few paintings a year on Etsy? Do you want to involve your community in a social justice dialogue? Defining related goals early will help you navigate the nuanced steps of having a successful art practice. Of course, you can shift your goals through your career as appropriate.

All practicing artists should start a routine of looking for opportunities to exhibit your work, to apply for grants, and to apply for artist residencies. Keep a list of resources featuring these opportunities and subscribe to relevant newsletters and social media accounts. Meet restaurant owners, community art center managers, library managers, doctors, and others who maintain public spaces to inquire about exhibiting your work in their space. Listen to podcasts featuring artists and entrepreneurs. Follow social media of people whose careers inspire you.

RELATED STUDIO ART CAREERS

There are many careers in the arts that may not be on your radar! Many hospitals employ Artists-in-Residence to work full-time with patients. Many non-profits and museums hire Community Educators who may not necessarily come from an education degree to either teach courses or help develop curriculum. Retail stores with curated aesthetics often hire Visual Merchandisers. Anytime that you see something beautiful or curated, consider if it might be someone's job to create or curate it. To explore these options more in-depth, schedule an appointment with a Career Advisors! Arts administration is the work done to support arts organizations, venues, and projects, and it includes the areas of development, marketing, and operations. For more information, check out our Arts Administration Career Guide!

ARTS ENTREPRENEURSHIP

Most studio art graduates will take on arts entrepreneurship responsibilities, especially if you sell work. It's best to lean into this!

Get started learning business skills earlier rather than later, and the best way to learn business skills is through immersive practice (aka just do it!).

Marketing is critical for arts entrepreneurs. No matter your practice or medium, you should have a polished website containing samples of your work. Take pictures of everything, and keep your files well-organized and accessible. Maintain a strong social media practice, print business cards, and spend time intentionally branding yourself and your product.

Money management involves tracking your income, putting aside a fraction of your profits to pay in taxes each year, and ensuring that your income and expenses are well-balanced. We highly encourage taking class(es) in this area either at UT Austin or via community resources such as the Small Business Program in the City of Austin. Austin is a very small business-friendly city, and there are countless resources to help you learn business skills even off-campus.

Networking in arts entrepreneurship is ultra important. Studio art is generally the most isolating artistic pursuit, so artists should intentionally build relationships both in and outside of the arts. This will not only help you secure clients, but you can also obtain lots of valuable advice. Conduct as many informational interviews with entrepreneurs and freelancers as possible while you are a student. Attend gallery openings. It usually takes several years to develop the relationships and contacts that lead to enough independent freelance work to support yourself full-time.

JOB TITLES

Museums and Galleries

Art Appraiser
Conservator
Curator
Exhibition Technician
Exhibition Designer

Commercial Work

Animator
Illustrator
Graphic Designer
Medical Illustrator
Mural Artist
Photographer
Videographer

Education

Community Educator
Museum Educator
Teacher
Professor

Note: The word “associate” in this context implies jobs around entry level. You could substitute “manager” or “director” for higher leadership roles which would require several years of experience and a graduate degree.

Arts Administration

Operations Associate
Social Media Associate
Marketing Associate
Development Associate

Miscellaneous

Art Critic
Art Therapist
Art Librarian
Arts Lawyer
Artist-in-Residence
Visual Artist
Visual Merchandiser
Printmaker

FURTHERING YOUR EDUCATION *(cont.)*

Generally, a *Master of Arts (M.A.)* is not awarded in studio art. However, related MAs include studies in art history, conservation, art education, museum studies, or arts administration.

Teaching certification can still be attained if you decide that you want to teach in public schools after you’ve earned your degree. You can earn this through either enrolling in an approved educator preparation program at a university or an alternative certification program.

As with career pathways, if you have a bachelor’s degree in studio art, you are not limited to exclusively graduate degrees in studio art. Each graduate program in every industry has slightly different standards for admission, so it’s important to do your research no matter what graduate program you are researching. Many graduates decide to enroll in a business graduate program which is broadly helpful to many industries and would strongly inform art entrepreneurship.

FURTHERING YOUR EDUCATION

The *Master of Fine Arts (M.F.A.) in Studio Art* is the terminal degree in studio art and usually focuses on concentration of a specific medium in the arts. The rest of the program focuses on art history and criticism, a master’s report, and a master’s exhibition. Most people who pursue this degree are seeking a more developed art career or a career teaching in higher education.

LET’S TALK ABOUT MONEY

Salaries within studio art pathways vary widely, and we encourage all students in every discipline to research within their field as early as possible so you know what to expect. Our office’s favorite resources specifically for salary research is Glassdoor (www.glassdoor.com). The Occupational Outlook Handbook (www.bls.gov/ooh/) is also a great resource because it provides average salary ranges, estimated growth for various industries, and more, and it is compiled by the U.S. Department of Labor. Students interested in entrepreneurial pursuits should especially be very conscious with how to manage their money and even consider taking accounting courses.

...NOW WHAT'S NEXT?

Maybe reading this has left you with even more questions, and feeling even less sure about what career opportunities you may want to explore.

That is okay!

Setting up an appointment with Fine Arts Career Services is a great place to brainstorm possible career pathways and help to make your application materials reflect you in the strongest way possible.

