

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 and general career exploration. Call us for appointments!

JOB BOARD

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

PROGRAMMING

Tips and Tiffs professional development workshops, *Creative Exchange* guest speaker series and info sessions on FACS-specific initiatives

FUNDING

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

AND MORE

Online internship classes, New York Seminar spring break trip, Networking Night and more!

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INTRODUCTION

Congratulations on taking the next step in thinking about your career in art history! Whether you are a freshman or nearing graduation, now is a good time to think about your future. This career guide is meant to give you broad information as you picture yourself working in different environments. You are welcome to meet with Fine Arts Career Services for further guidance! We are here to brainstorm different career paths, give guidance on professional documents or help you find the right job or internship for your goals.

ABOUT STUDIO ART

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

Studio art graduates are complex problem-solvers with skills that can be applied to any industry. Studio art students participate in rigorous critiquing processes, and are adept at receiving, processing and applying feedback from peers and colleagues. These are desirable traits in any industry, and we recommend that students learn to articulate these skills as they explore and define their career goals early on.

DEFINE YOUR GOALS

More than almost any other arts-related discipline, a degree in studio art leads to a self-guided career. It is critical that you frequently reflect on your professional interests. Internships, volunteering, job shadowing and informational interviews are critical in studio art as they provide reflection opportunities that help to refine your 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 or inappropriate for studio art graduates to experiment with different career paths for a few years following graduation.

MAINTAINING AN ART PRACTICE

For those planning to maintain an art practice after graduation, we recommend refining personal art practice goals early. A few questions to consider: 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 your goals early will help you navigate the nuanced steps of having a successful art practice. Keep in mind, those goals will likely shift throughout a career.

All practicing artists should start a routine of looking for opportunities to exhibit their work, 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. Listen to podcasts featuring artists and entrepreneurs and follow the social media presence of artists 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 without education degrees to teach courses and help develop curriculum. Retail stores with curated aesthetics often hire Visual Merchandisers. Any time that you see something beautiful or curated, consider if it might be someone's job to create or curate it. 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 they sell work. It's best to lean into entrepreneurial habits and skills now! Get started learning business skills earlier rather than later, and know that the best way to learn business skills is through immersive practice (aka just do it!).

Marketing is critical for arts entrepreneurs. No matter their practice or medium, artists should have a polished website containing samples of their work. We recommend taking high resolution pictures of everything and keeping files well-organized and accessible. In addition, artists should maintain a strong social media practice, print business cards and spend time intentionally branding themselves and their 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 on- and off-campus.

Networking in arts entrepreneurship is vital. 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 artists secure clients, but obtain valuable advice and make meaningful connections within their artistic community. We recommend you conduct as many informational interviews with entrepreneurs and freelancers as possible while you are in school, and attend gallery openings and support fellow artists' events. 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 typically 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

A *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 typically 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 position teaching in higher education.

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 after you've earned your degree if you decide that you want to teach in public schools. You can earn this by enrolling in an approved educator certification program.

As with many career pathways, a bachelor's degree in studio art does not limit students exclusively to graduate degrees in studio art. Each graduate program has different focuses and standards for admission, so it's important to do your research no matter what your academic interests are. Many graduates decide to enroll in a business graduate program which strongly informs art entrepreneurship.

LET'S TALK ABOUT MONEY

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

...NOW WHAT'S NEXT?

Maybe reading this guide has left you with questions, or feeling unsure about which career opportunities you want to explore.

That is okay!

Setting up an appointment with Fine Arts Career Services is a great way to brainstorm your next steps, whatever your goals may be!

