

Careers involving Art



There are jobs to do with art and design in many industries, whether you actually want a career as an artist or designer yourself or would prefer to look after works by important artists or help others appreciate art.

Art careers come in all shapes and sizes. There are art industry jobs creating original works, selling and promoting them, and displaying them to the public in museums and galleries. There are jobs teaching others about art and jobs helping people to express themselves through art.

There are also lots of art related jobs outside the world of art. Artistic vision and design skills are needed in areas such as architecture, fashion, media, film and theatre. Here we're concentrating on visual art and design careers, but take a look at the rest of the [arts and creative careers section](#) if you're interested in other areas such as writing, acting or music.

Use our list of art careers below to get inspiration, then head to the course search section to search for [art degrees](#) or [design degrees](#).

Jobs directly to do with art

Fine artist

Fine artists create original works of art. This can be in any medium, such as paint, wood, metal or textiles. What distinguishes the work of fine artists from most other careers on this list is that its purpose is purely to be a work of art, rather than to add visual appeal to something with a functional purpose (such as making a building, clothing item or webpage look good). Fine artists make money by selling their work, and many have another job too to give them a

regular, reliable income. You don't have to have qualifications in art to be an artist, but a degree in art is a typical starting point.

Art gallery curator

Art gallery curators are in charge of the artworks that a gallery owns or has on loan. Large galleries often divide their collections up into groups, each with its own curator. Curators are involved in buying or borrowing artworks, deciding how to display them, writing explanatory materials for visitors, giving talks to students and the public, keeping records of the works, working with conservators to ensure that artworks stay in good condition, overseeing junior staff and potentially carrying out relevant academic research. You'll usually need a relevant degree, such as art or art history.

Art therapist

Art therapists work with people who are facing problems such as mental health, addiction, behaviour or communication issues, or who are recovering from illness or brain injury. Therapists encourage them to use art as a way to explore and understand their feelings, and find a way to move forwards with their lives. It's about using an activity that people may find easier than talking about their experiences, rather than training them as artists. Art therapists work in places such as schools, hospitals, prisons and rehab units, and may develop specialisms such as working with children or people with autism. To train as an art therapist you'll usually need a degree in art and design, or to start out in a career such as psychology, nursing or social work.

Read our [art therapist job description](#) to find out more.

Art teacher

You can teach art at secondary school or a further education college. Alternatively, if you become a primary school teacher you can teach art some of the time, but you'll need to teach other subjects too. A typical entry route is to do an art degree followed by a teaching qualification. Alternatively, you could become a primary school teacher by taking a degree in education – there are some courses that will let you specialise in art teaching.

Art lecturer, design lecturer or art history lecturer at a university

University lecturers plan and deliver degree courses to students. They also carry out their own research or practical projects, which could be anything from studying the work of a particular artist to looking at ways that art can

help improve social or health issues. For practical art and design courses, lecturers have often already worked in the industry and may continue to produce their own work while they teach. Alternatively you could lecture in art history, teaching students about important art movements of the past. Again, studying art, design or art history at university is a typical first step.

Art technician/demonstrator at a university

Art technicians, aka art demonstrators, also work in colleges or universities and help teach students. Their work is very practical – they set up the technical equipment needed in an art studio and then help students to use it, for example guiding them through InDesign, using a 3D printer, screenprinting or traditional photographic processing in a darkroom. You'll typically need a relevant qualification – often a degree, but you may be accepted with a lower level qualification if you have lots of experience.

Art valuer/auctioneer

Art valuers assess how much an artwork or antique is worth and therefore how much it should be sold or insured for. They can work for auction houses, insurance companies or art dealers, and can specialise in areas such as paintings, jewellery or furniture. The job is often combined with that of auctioneer, in which case you'll run auctions too. A relevant degree such as art history is a typical first step, though you may be able to get a job as an assistant or porter at an auction house without one and work your way up.

Illustrator

Illustrators use their painting or drawing skills to create images for products such as books, greetings cards, clothing, posters and animations. They can work with traditional materials to create physical images, or use relevant software packages. Specialist areas include scientific and medical illustration, for example for use in textbooks. Most illustrators are self-employed but there are some permanent jobs available. Your skill as an illustrator is more important than your qualifications, but you'll probably find that a relevant course will increase your skills. Degrees or HNDs in subjects such as art or illustration are relevant, and there are specialist postgraduate courses if you wish.

Conservator

Conservators take care of works of art, historical objects or historical properties. They ensure that these are kept in appropriate conditions to prevent deterioration, and help restore them to their original condition if they do deteriorate. Typically conservators work on a series of short-term contracts for different employers. To become a conservator you can do a degree in conservation as an undergraduate or a postgraduate. Some postgraduate courses only accept a limited range of undergraduate degree subjects; these vary but can include chemistry, physics, art, art history and archaeology.

Arts admin and fundraising

A range of people working in different jobs are needed to keep large art galleries and museums running smoothly – for example fundraisers, marketing and PR staff, managers, admin assistants and education team members to work with school students or the public. In a smaller venue, there might be just one or two staff members responsible for everything from managing the budget to dealing with enquiries from visitors. Some entry-level jobs don't require a degree – office admin experience and volunteering in a museum or gallery will help. For others a degree is required or helpful – subjects related to art or business are relevant but not always essential. Alternatively, you could start a career in business outside the art world and then apply once you have experience.

Architecture careers

Architects design buildings while landscape architects design outdoor environments, such as parks or urban spaces. Follow the links to read more about them about how to start your career.

Art and design jobs in fashion

Fashion designers can design clothes or work in specialisms such as jewellery, shoe design, bags or accessories. Textile designers design fabrics, while fashion stylists use their knowledge of emerging trends to dress models for fashion shoots or help individuals to update their wardrobes. There are some apprenticeships available, though university is the typical path, particularly for would-be designers. Find out more about fashion degrees and the careers they can lead to and how to succeed at fashion degree interviews.

Jobs to do with art in media, film and theatre

There are lots of jobs in the media, film and theatre that will put your design skills or eye for beauty to good use. You could work in publishing or advertising as a web designer, graphic designer or photographer. Art-related jobs in TV, film or theatre include set designer, costume designer, make-up artist, lighting technician and lighting designer/director. In TV and film there are also roles such as camera operator, cinematographer and film/video editor.