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## Artists and Related Workers

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(O\*NET 27-1011.00, 27-1012.00, 27-1013.00, 27-1014.00, 27-1019.99)

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### Significant Points

- About 62 percent of artists and related workers are self-employed.
- Keen competition is expected for both salaried jobs and freelance work because the arts attract many talented people with creative ability.
- Artists usually develop their skills through a bachelor's degree program or other postsecondary training in art or design.
- Earnings for self-employed artists vary widely; some well-established artists earn more than salaried artists, while others find it difficult to rely solely on income earned from selling art.

### Nature of the Work

Artists create art to communicate ideas, thoughts, or feelings. They use a variety of methods—painting, sculpting, or illustration—and an assortment of materials, including oils, watercolors, acrylics, pastels, pencils, pen and ink, plaster, clay, and computers. Artists' works may be realistic, stylized, or abstract and may depict objects, people, nature, or events.

Artists generally fall into one of four categories. Art directors formulate design concepts and presentation approaches for visual communications. Craft artists create or reproduce handmade objects for sale or exhibition. Fine artists, including painters, sculptors, and illustrators, create original artwork, using a variety of media and techniques. Multi-media artists and animators create special effects, animation, or other visual images on film, on video, or with computers or other electronic media. (Designers, including graphic designers, are discussed elsewhere in the *Handbook*.)

*Art directors* develop design concepts and review material that is to appear in periodicals, newspapers, and other printed or digital media. They decide how best to present information visually, so that it is eye catching, appealing, and organized. Art directors decide which photographs or artwork to use and oversee the design, layout, and production of material to be published. They may direct workers engaged in artwork, design, layout, and copywriting.

*Craft artists* make a wide variety of objects, mostly by hand, that are sold either in their own studios, in retail outlets, or at arts-and-crafts shows. Some craft artists display their works in galleries and museums. Craft artists work with many different materials, including ceramics, glass, textiles, wood, metal, and paper, to create unique pieces of art, such as pottery, stained glass, quilts, tapestries, lace, candles, and clothing. Many craft artists also use fine-art techniques—for example, painting, sketching, and printing—to add finishing touches to their art.

*Fine artists* typically display their work in museums, commercial art galleries, corporate collections, and private homes. Some of their artwork may be commissioned (done on request

from clients), but most is sold by the artist or through private art galleries or dealers. The gallery and the artist predetermine how much each will earn from the sale. Only the most successful fine artists are able to support themselves solely through the sale of their works. Most fine artists have at least one other job to support their art careers. Some work in museums or art galleries as fine-arts directors or as curators, planning and setting up art exhibits. A few artists work as art critics for newspapers or magazines or as consultants to foundations or institutional collectors. Other artists teach art classes or conduct workshops in schools or in their own studios. Some artists also hold full-time or part-time jobs unrelated to art and pursue fine art as a hobby or second career.

Usually, fine artists specialize in one or two art forms, such as painting, illustrating, sketching, sculpting, printmaking, and restoring. Painters, illustrators, cartoonists, and sketch artists work with two-dimensional art forms, using shading, perspective, and color to produce realistic scenes or abstractions.

*Illustrators* usually create pictures for books, magazines, and other publications and for commercial products such as textiles, wrapping paper, stationery, greeting cards, and calendars. Increasingly, illustrators are working in digital format, preparing work directly on a computer. This has created new opportunities for illustrators to work with animators and in broadcast media.

*Medical and scientific illustrators* combine drawing skills with knowledge of biology or other sciences. Medical illustrators work digitally or traditionally to create images of human anatomy and surgical procedures as well as 3-dimensional models and animations. Scientific illustrators draw animal and plant life, atomic and molecular structures, and geologic and planetary formations. These illustrations are used in medical and scientific publications and in audiovisual presentations for teaching purposes. 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 captions. Some cartoonists write captions themselves. Most cartoonists have comic, critical, or dramatic talents in addition to drawing skills.

*Sketch artists* create likenesses of subjects with pencil, charcoal, or pastels. Sketches are used 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.

*Sculptors* design three-dimensional artworks, either by molding and joining materials such as clay, glass, wire, plastic, fabric, or metal or by cutting and carving forms from a block of plaster, wood, or stone. Some sculptors combine various materials to create mixed-media installations. Some incorporate light, sound, and motion into their works.

*Printmakers* create printed images from designs cut or etched into wood, stone, or metal. After creating the design, the artist inks the surface of the woodblock, stone, or plate and uses a printing press to roll the image onto paper or fabric. Some make prints by pressing the inked surface onto paper by hand or by graphically encoding and processing data, using a computer. The digitized images are then printed on paper with the use of a computer printer.



Many artists develop their skills through formal training in art and design.

*Painting restorers* preserve and restore damaged and faded paintings. They apply solvents and cleaning agents to clean the surfaces of the paintings, they reconstruct or retouch damaged areas, and they apply preservatives to protect the paintings. Restoration is highly detailed work and usually is reserved for experts in the field.

*Multi-media artists and animators* work primarily in motion picture and video industries, advertising, and computer systems design services. They draw by hand and use computers to create the 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 commercials proposed by advertising companies. Storyboards also serve as guides to placing actors and cameras on the television or motion picture set and to other production details. Many multi-media artists model objects in three dimensions by computer and work with programmers to make those images move.

**Work environment.** Many artists work in fine art or commercial art studios located in office buildings, warehouses, or lofts. Others work in private studios in their homes. Some fine artists share studio space, where they also may exhibit their work. Studio surroundings usually are well lighted and ventilated; however, fine artists may be exposed to fumes from glue, paint, ink, and other materials and to dust or other residue from filings, splattered paint, or spilled cleaners and other fluids. Artists who sit at drafting tables or who use computers for extended periods may experience back pain, eyestrain, or fatigue.

Artists employed by publishing companies, advertising agencies, and design firms generally work a standard work-week. During busy periods, they may work overtime to meet deadlines. Self-employed artists can set their own hours. They may spend much time and effort selling their artwork to potential customers or clients and building a reputation.

### **Training, Other Qualifications, and Advancement**

Artists usually develop their skills through a bachelor's degree program or other postsecondary training in art or design.

Although formal schooling is not strictly required for craft and fine artists, it is very difficult to become skilled enough to make a living without some training. Art directors usually have years of work experience and generally need at least a bachelor's degree. Due to the level of technical expertise demanded, multimedia artists and animators generally also need a bachelor's degree.

**Education and training.** Many colleges and universities offer programs leading to a bachelor's or master's degree in fine arts. Courses usually include core subjects such as English, social science, and natural science, in addition to art history and studio art. Independent schools of art and design also offer postsecondary studio training in the craft, fine, and multi-media arts leading to certificates in the specialties or to an associate or bachelor's degree in fine arts. Typically, these programs focus more intensively on studio work than do the academic programs in a university setting. In 2007 the National Association of Schools of Art and Design accredited 282 postsecondary institutions with programs in art and design; most of these schools award a degree in art.

Many educational programs in art also provide training in computer techniques. Computers are used widely in the visual arts, and knowledge and training in computer graphics and other visual display software are critical elements of many jobs in these fields.

Medical illustrators must have both a demonstrated artistic ability and a detailed knowledge of living organisms, surgical and medical procedures, and human and animal anatomy. A bachelor's degree combining art and premedical courses usually is required. However, most medical illustrators also choose to pursue a master's degree in medical illustration. This degree is offered in four accredited schools in the United States.

Art directors usually begin as entry-level artists in advertising, publishing, design, and motion picture production firms. Artists are promoted to art director after demonstrating artistic and leadership abilities. Some art schools offer coursework in art direction as part of their curricula. Depending on the scope of their responsibilities, some art directors also may pursue a degree in art administration, which teaches non-artistic skills such as project management and finance.

Those who want to teach fine arts at public elementary or secondary schools usually must have a teaching certificate in addition to a bachelor's degree. An advanced degree in fine arts or arts administration is usually necessary for management or administrative positions in government or in foundations or for teaching in colleges and universities. (See the statements for teachers—postsecondary; and teachers—preschool, kindergarten, elementary, middle, and secondary school elsewhere in the *Handbook*.)

**Other qualifications.** Evidence of appropriate talent and skill, displayed in an artist's portfolio, is an important factor used by art directors, clients, and others in deciding whether to hire an individual or contract for their work. A portfolio is a collection of handmade, computer-generated, photographic, or printed samples of the artist's best work. Assembling a successful portfolio requires skills usually developed through postsecondary training in art or visual communications. In-

ternships also provide excellent opportunities for artists to develop and enhance their portfolios.

**Advancement.** Artists hired by firms often start with relatively routine work. While doing this work, however, they may observe other artists and practice their own skills.

Craft and fine artists advance professionally as their work circulates and as they establish a reputation for a particular style. Many of the most successful artists continually develop new ideas, and their work often evolves over time.

Many artists freelance part-time while continuing to hold a full-time job until they are established. Others freelance part time while still in school, to develop experience and to build a portfolio of published work.

Freelance artists try to develop a set of clients who regularly contract for work. Some freelance artists are widely recognized for their skill in specialties such as cartooning or children’s book illustration. These artists may earn high incomes and can choose the type of work they do.

**Employment**

Artists held about 218,000 jobs in 2006. About 62 percent were self-employed. Employment was distributed as follows:

Multimedia artists and animators.....	87,000
Art directors .....	78,000
Fine artists, including painters, sculpters and illustrators .....	30,000
Craft artists .....	8,800
Artists and related workers, all other .....	14,000

Of the artists who were not self-employed, many worked for advertising and related services; newspaper, periodical, book, and software publishers; motion picture and video industries; specialized design services; and computer systems design and related services. Some self-employed artists offered their services to advertising agencies, design firms, publishing houses, and other businesses.

**Job Outlook**

Employment of artists is projected to grow faster than average. Competition for jobs is expected to be keen for both salaried and freelance jobs in all specialties because the number of people with creative ability and an interest in this career is expected to continue to exceed the number of available openings. Despite the competition, employers and individual

clients are always on the lookout for talented and creative artists.

**Employment change.** Employment of artists and related workers is expected to grow 16 percent through 2016, faster than the average for all occupations.

Demand for illustrators who work on a computer will increase as Web sites use more detailed images and backgrounds in their designs. Many cartoonists, in particular, opt to post their work on political Web sites and online publications. Cartoonists often create animated or interactive images to satisfy readers’ demands for more sophisticated images. The small number of medical illustrators will also be in greater demand as medical research continues to grow.

Demand for multimedia artists and animators will increase as consumers continue to demand more realistic video games, movie and television special effects, and 3D animated movies. Additional job openings will arise from an increasing demand for Web site development and for computer graphics adaptation from the growing number of mobile technologies. Animators are also increasingly finding work in alternative areas such as scientific research or design services.

**Job prospects.** Competition for jobs as artists and related workers will be keen because there are more qualified candidates than available jobs. Employers in all industries should be able to choose from among the most qualified candidates.

Despite the competition, studios, galleries, and individual clients are always on the lookout for artists who display outstanding talent, creativity, and style. Among craft and fine artists, talented individuals who have developed a mastery of artistic techniques and skills will have the best job prospects. Multi-media artists and animators should have better job opportunities than other artists, but still will experience competition. Job opportunities for animators of lower-technology cartoons could be hampered as these jobs continue to be outsourced overseas.

Despite an expanding number of opportunities, art directors should experience keen competition for the available openings. Craft and fine artists work mostly on a freelance or commission basis and may find it difficult to earn a living solely by selling their artwork. Only the most successful craft and fine artists receive major commissions for their work. Competition among artists for the privilege of being shown in galleries is expected to remain acute, as will competition for grants from sponsors such as private foundations, State and local arts councils, and the National Endowment for the Arts.

**Projections data from the National Employment Matrix**

Occupational Title	SOC Code	Employment, 2006	Projected employment, 2016	Change, 2006-2016	
				Number	Percent
Artists and related workers .....	27-1010	218,000	253,000	34,000	16
Art directors .....	27-1011	78,000	85,000	7,000	9
Craft artists.....	27-1012	8,800	9,500	700	8
Fine artists, including painters, sculptors, and illustrators.....	27-1013	30,000	33,000	3,000	10
Multi-media artists and animators .....	27-1014	87,000	110,000	23,000	26
Artists and related workers, all other .....	27-1019	14,000	15,000	1,200	8

NOTE: Data in this table are rounded. See the discussion of the employment projections table in the *Handbook* introductory chapter on *Occupational Information Included in the Handbook*.

The growth in computer graphics packages and stock art Web sites is making it easier for writers, publishers, and art directors to create their own illustrations. As the use of this technology grows, there will be fewer opportunities for illustrators. However, it also has opened up new opportunities for illustrators who prefer to work digitally. Salaried cartoonists will have fewer job opportunities because many newspapers and magazines increasingly rely on freelance work.

### Earnings

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.

### Related Occupations

Other workers who apply artistic skills include architects, except landscape and naval; archivists, curators, and museum technicians; commercial and industrial designers; fashion designers; floral designers; graphic designers; interior designers; jewelers and precious stone and metal workers; landscape architects; photographers; and woodworkers. Some workers who use computers extensively, including computer software engineers and desktop publishers, may require art skills.

### Sources of Additional Information

For general information about art and design and a list of accredited college-level programs, contact:

► National Association of Schools of Art and Design, 11250 Roger Bacon Dr., Suite 21, Reston, VA 20190.

Internet: <http://nasad.arts-accredit.org>

For information on careers in the craft arts and for a list of schools and workshops, contact:

► American Craft Council Library, 72 Spring St., 6th Floor, New York, NY 10012. Internet: <http://www.craftcouncil.org>

For information on careers in illustration, contact:

► Society of Illustrators, 128 E. 63rd St., New York, NY 10021. Internet: <http://www.societyillustrators.org>

For information on careers in medical illustration, contact:

► Association of Medical Illustrators, 245 First St., Suite 1800, Cambridge, MA 02142. Internet: <http://www.ami.org>

For information on workshops, scholarships, internships, and competitions for art students interested in advertising careers, contact:

► Art Directors Club, 106 W. 29th St., New York, NY 10001. Internet: <http://www.adcglobal.org>