

**Occupational
Outlook
Handbook**

2010-11 Edition

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Artists and Related Workers

Significant Points

- * About 60 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. Multimedia 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 control the overall visual direction of a project in fields such as advertising and publishing. They decide how best to present a concept visually, so that it is organized, eye catching, and appealing. Art directors decide which photographs or artwork to use and oversee the design, layout, and production of material to be produced. 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 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—for example, creating scenery or objects for a video game. 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 three-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 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 can then be printed onto paper.

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 re-touch damaged areas, and they apply preservatives to protect the paintings. Restoration is highly detailed work and usually is reserved for experts in the field.

Multimedia 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 multimedia artists model objects in three dimensions by computer and work with programmers to make the 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 workweek. 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.



Many artists receive formal training in their specialty.

Training, Other Qualifications, and Advancement

Art directors usually have years of work experience and generally need at least a bachelor's degree. Because of the level of technical expertise demanded, multimedia artists and animators also need a bachelor's degree. 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.

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 multimedia 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 2009 the National Association of Schools of Art and Design accredited approximately 300 postsecondary institutions with programs in art and design; most of these schools award a degree in art.

Art directors usually begin as entry-level artists or designers in advertising, publishing, design, or motion picture production firms. An artist is promoted to art director after having demonstrated artistic and leadership abilities. Depending on the scope of their responsibilities, some art directors may pursue a degree in art administration or management, which teaches business skills such as project management and finance.

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.

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 titled teachers—postsecondary and teachers—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 his or her work. A portfolio is a collection of samples of the artist's best work. Assembling a successful portfolio requires skills usually developed through postsecondary training in art or visual communications. Internships also provide excel-

lent 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 do freelance work 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 221,900 jobs in 2008. About 60 percent were self-employed. Employment was distributed as follows:

Art Directors	84,200
Multimedia artists and animators	79,000
Fine artists, including painters, sculptors and illustrators	23,600
Artists and related workers, all other	21,500
Craft artists	13,600

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 is projected to grow about as fast as the 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 12 percent through 2018, about as fast as the average for all occupations. An increasing reliance on artists to create digital or multimedia artwork will drive growth.

Art directors will see an increase in jobs in advertising due to demand for the overall vision they bring to a project. However, declining opportunities in publishing will hold down job growth. With many magazines moving to an online-only format, art directors are used less in this field.

Demand for illustrators who work on a computer will increase as media companies use more detailed images and backgrounds in their designs. However, illustrators and cartoonists who work in publishing may see job opportunities decline as newspapers continue to cut staffs. Many are instead opting to post their work on political Web sites and online publications. 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 need for computer graphics in the growing number of mobile technologies. The demand for animators is also increasing in alternative areas such as scientific research and design services. Some lower priority animation has been offshored, negatively affecting employment of animators.

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. Multimedia artists and animators should have better job opportunities than

other artists but still will experience competition. 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 intense, as will competition for grants from sponsors such as private foundations, State and local arts councils, and the National Endowment for the Arts. Because of their reliance on grants, and because the demand for artwork is dependent on consumers having disposable income, many of these artists will find that their income fluctuates with the overall economy.

Projection Data

Projections data from the National Employment Matrix

Earnings

Median annual wages of salaried art directors were \$76,980 in May 2008. The middle 50 percent earned between \$54,490 and \$108,090. The lowest 10 percent earned less than \$40,730, and the highest 10 percent earned more than \$154,840. Median annual wages were \$80,170 in advertising, public relations and related services.

Median annual wages of salaried craft artists were \$29,080. The middle 50 percent earned between \$20,730 and \$39,120. The lowest 10 percent earned less than \$16,290, and the highest 10 percent earned more than \$54,550.

Median annual wages of salaried fine artists, including painters, sculptors, and illustrators, were \$42,650. The middle 50 percent earned between \$29,230 and \$60,650. The lowest 10 percent earned less than \$20,780, and the highest 10 percent earned more than \$83,410.

Median annual wages of salaried multimedia artists and animators were \$56,330. The middle 50 percent earned between \$41,710 and \$77,010. The lowest 10 percent earned less than \$31,570, and the highest 10 percent earned more than \$100,390. Median annual wages were \$65,600 in motion picture and video industries, and \$52,530 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.

SOC Code	Occupation Title	Employment, 2008	Projected Employment, 2018	Change, 2008-18	
27-1010	Artists and related workers	221,900	247,700	25,800	12%
27-1011	Art directors	84,200	94,000	9,800	12%
27-1012	Craft artists	13,600	14,600	1,000	7%
27-1013	Fine artists, including painters, sculptors, and illustrators	23,600	25,700	2,100	9%
27-1014	Multi-media artists and animators	79,000	90,200	11,200	14%
27-1019	Artists and related workers, all other	21,500	23,200	1,700	8%