

## Art and Design Occupations

### Artists and Related Workers

(O\*NET 27-1011.00, 27-1013.01, 27-1013.02, 27-1013.03, 27-1013.04, 27-1014.00)

#### Significant Points

- More than half are self-employed—about 7 times the proportion in all professional and related occupations.
- Artists usually develop their skills through a bachelor's degree program or other postsecondary training in art or design.
- Keen competition is expected for both salaried jobs and freelance work, because many talented people are attracted to the visual arts.

#### 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 three categories. *Art directors* formulate design concepts and presentation approaches for visual communications media. *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 using film, video, computers or other electronic media. (Designers, including graphic designers, are discussed elsewhere in the *Handbook*.)

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

*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 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 must work in an unrelated field to support their art careers. Some work in museums or art galleries as fine arts directors or as curators, who plan and set up art exhibits. Others work as art critics for newspapers or magazines, or as consultants to foundations or institutional collectors.

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. These artists use shading, perspective, and color to produce realistic scenes or abstractions.

*Illustrators* typically create pictures for books, magazines, and other publications; and commercial products, such as textiles, wrapping paper, stationery, greeting cards and calendars. Increasingly, illustrators work in digital format, preparing work directly on a computer.



*Fine artists, such as sculptors, often work in private studios.*

*Medical and scientific illustrators* combine drawing skills with knowledge of the biological sciences. Medical illustrators draw illustrations of human anatomy and surgical procedures. Scientific illustrators draw illustrations of animals and plants. These illustrations are used in medical and scientific publications and in audiovisual presentations for teaching purposes. Medical 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 the captions. Most cartoonists have comic, critical, or dramatic talents in addition to drawing skills.

*Sketch artists* create likenesses of subjects using 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 art works—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 data and processing it, using a computer. The digitized images are printed on paper using computer printers.

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

*Multi-media artists and animators* work primarily in computer and data processing services, advertising, and the motion picture and television industries. They draw by hand and use computers to create the large 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 proposed commercials with the company doing the advertising. Storyboards also serve as guides to placing actors and cameras and to other details during the production of commercials.

### Working Conditions

Most artists work in fine or commercial art studios located in office buildings, or 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. Artists who sit at drafting tables or 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 40-hour week. During busy periods, they may work overtime to meet deadlines. Self-employed artists can set their own hours, but may spend much time and effort selling their artwork to potential customers or clients and building a reputation.

### Employment

Artists held about 147,000 jobs in 2000. More than half were self-employed. Of the artists who were not self-employed, many worked in motion picture, television, computer software, printing, publishing, and public relations firms. Some self-employed artists offer their services to advertising agencies, design firms, publishing houses, and other businesses.

### Training, Other Qualifications, and Advancement

Training requirements for artists vary by specialty. Although formal training is not strictly necessary for fine artists, it is very difficult to become skilled enough to make a living without some training. Many colleges and universities offer degree programs leading to the Bachelor in Fine Arts (BFA) and Master in Fine Arts (MFA) degrees. Coursework usually includes 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 fine arts leading to an Associate in Art (AA) or Bachelor in Fine Arts (BFA) degree. Typically, these programs focus more intensively on studio work than the academic programs in a university setting.

Formal educational programs in art also provide training in computer techniques. Computers are used widely in the visual arts,

and knowledge and training in them are critical for many jobs in these fields.

Those who want to teach fine arts at public elementary or secondary schools must have a teaching certificate in addition to a bachelor's degree. An advanced degree in fine arts or arts administration is 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 teachers elsewhere in the *Handbook*.)

Illustrators learn drawing and sketching skills through training in art programs and extensive practice. Most employers prefer candidates with a bachelor's degree; however, some illustrators are contracted based on their portfolios of past work.

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 4-year bachelor's degree combining art and premedical courses usually is preferred, followed by a master's degree in medical illustration. This degree is offered in only five accredited schools in the United States.

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 or contract out work. The portfolio is a collection of hand-made, computer-generated, photographic, or printed samples of the artist's best work. Assembling a successful portfolio requires skills usually developed in a bachelor's degree program or other postsecondary training in art or visual communications. Internships also provide excellent opportunities for artists to develop and enhance their portfolios.

Artists hired by advertising agencies often start with relatively routine work. While doing this work, however, they may observe and practice their skills on the side. Many artists freelance on a part-time basis 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 magazine or children's book illustration. These artists may earn high incomes and can pick and choose the type of work they do.

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.

### Job Outlook

Employment of artists and related workers is expected to grow as fast as the average for all occupations through the year 2010. Because the arts attract many talented people with creative ability, the number of aspiring artists continues to grow. Consequently, competition for both salaried jobs and freelance work in some areas is expected to be keen.

Art directors work in a variety of industries, such as printing, publishing, motion picture production and distribution, and design. Despite an expanding number of opportunities, they should experience keen competition for the available openings.

Fine artists mostly work on a freelance, or commission, basis and may find it difficult to earn a living solely by selling their artwork. Only the most successful fine artists receive major commissions for their work. Competition among artists for the privilege of being shown in galleries is expected to remain acute. And grants from sponsors such as private foundations, State and local

arts councils, and the National Endowment for the Arts, should remain competitive. Nonetheless, studios, galleries, and individual clients are always on the lookout for artists who display outstanding talent, creativity, and style. Population growth, rising incomes, and growth in the number of people who appreciate the fine arts will contribute to the demand for fine artists. Talented fine artists who have developed a mastery of artistic techniques and skills, including computer skills, will have the best job prospects.

The need for artists to illustrate and animate materials for magazines, journals, and other printed or electronic media will spur demand for illustrators and animators of all types. Growth in the entertainment industry, including cable and other pay television broadcasting and motion picture production and distribution, will provide new job opportunities for illustrators, cartoonists, and animators. Competition for most jobs, however, will be strong, because job opportunities are relatively few and the number of people interested in these positions usually exceeds the number of available openings. Employers should be able to choose from among the most qualified candidates.

### Earnings

Median annual earnings of salaried art directors were \$56,880 in 2000. The middle 50 percent earned between \$41,290 and \$80,350. The lowest 10 percent earned less than \$30,130, and the highest 10 percent earned more than \$109,440. Median annual earnings were \$63,510 in advertising, the industry employing the largest numbers of salaried art directors.

Median annual earnings of salaried fine artists, including painters, sculptors, and illustrators were \$31,190 in 2000. The middle 50 percent earned between \$20,460 and \$42,720. The lowest 10 percent earned less than \$14,690, and the highest 10 percent earned more than \$58,580.

Median annual earnings of salaried multi-media artists and animators were \$41,130 in 2000. The middle 50 percent earned between \$30,700 and \$54,040. The lowest 10 percent earned less than \$23,740, and the highest 10 percent earned more than \$70,560. Median annual earnings were \$44,290 in computer and data processing services, the industry employing the largest numbers of salaried multi-media artists and animators.

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 art skills include architects, except landscape and naval; archivists, curators, and museum technicians; designers; landscape architects; and photographers. Some computer-related occupations require art skills, including computer software engineers and desktop publishers.

### Sources of Additional Information

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

► The National Association of Schools of Art and Design, 11250 Roger Bacon Dr., Suite 21, Reston, VA 20190. Internet: <http://www.arts-accredit.org/nasad/default.htm>

For information on careers in medical illustration, contact:

► The Association of Medical Illustrators, 2965 Flowers Road South, Suite 105, Atlanta, GA 30341. Internet: <http://medical-illustrators.org>

## Designers

(O\*NET 27-1021.00, 27-1022.00, 27-1023.00, 27-1024.00, 27-1025.00, 27-1026.00, 27-1027.01, 27-1027.02)

### Significant Points

- Three out of 10 designers are self-employed—almost 5 times the proportion for all professional and related occupations.
- Creativity is crucial in all design occupations; most designers need a bachelor's degree, and candidates with a master's degree hold an advantage.
- Keen competition is expected for most jobs, despite projected faster-than-average employment growth, because many talented individuals are attracted to careers as designers.

### Nature of the Work

Designers are people with a desire to create. They combine practical knowledge with artistic ability to turn abstract ideas into formal designs for the merchandise we buy, the clothes we wear, the publications we read, and the living and office space we inhabit. Designers usually specialize in a particular area of design, such as automobiles, industrial or medical equipment, or home appliances; clothing and textiles; floral arrangements; publications, logos, signage, or movie or TV credits; interiors of homes or office buildings; merchandise displays; or movie, television, and theater sets.

The first step in developing a new design or altering an existing one is to determine the needs of the client, the ultimate function for which the design is intended, and its appeal to customers. When creating a design, designers often begin by researching the desired design characteristics, such as size, shape, weight, color, materials used, cost, ease of use, fit, and safety.

Designers then prepare sketches—by hand or with the aid of a computer—to illustrate the vision for the design. After consulting with the client, an art or design director, or a product development team, designers create detailed designs using drawings, a structural model, computer simulations, or a full-scale prototype. Many designers increasingly are using computer-aided design (CAD) tools to create and better visualize the final product. Computer models allow greater ease and flexibility in exploring a greater number of design alternatives, thus reducing design costs and cutting the time it takes to deliver a product to market. Industrial designers use computer-aided industrial design (CAID) tools to create designs and machine-readable instructions that communicate with automated production tools.

Designers sometimes supervise assistants who carry out their creations. Designers who run their own businesses also may devote a considerable amount of time to developing new business contacts, reviewing equipment and space needs, and performing administrative tasks, such as reviewing catalogues and ordering samples. Design encompasses a number of different fields. Many designers specialize in a particular area of design, whereas others work in more than one area.

*Commercial and industrial designers*, including designers of commercial products and equipment, develop countless manufactured products, including airplanes; cars; children's toys; computer equipment; furniture; home appliances; and medical, office, and recreational equipment. They combine artistic talent with research on product use, customer needs, marketing, materials, and production methods to create the most functional and appealing design