



Art Smarts:

How to Seize a Creative Career

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Introduction.

Congratulations! You've been one of those "creative types" your entire life, proving your prowess at your art genre of choice, which culminated in you seeking and obtaining a degree in art. Perhaps you even did so against the better wishes of well-meaning relatives and friends. Good for you! You followed your heart and chased your dreams and now you have a degree in your preferred field of study, ready to get out there and enter the work force.

Or, you may be wondering where to go from here.

Whether you're a recent graduate or one with many years between your graduation day and where you are now, this book aims to help guide you into a career that will fulfill your artistic hopes and dreams. Even if you don't have a degree or are still pursuing it, gathering up those last few credits, this book has advice on getting a job in the art world. Some jobs require that you have an art degree, and others might be more interested in your raw talent and experience — and your portfolio.

With a degree in hand, you make yourself stand out from everyone else clamoring for a job in the art world. Now you just have to make sure you get in there. This book is here to help.

So you're an artist

How do you know you're an artist? This is a serious question. It's sometimes not easy to break into the art world, and there might be some who would dissuade you from even trying. So are you an artist?

You're an artist if you're happier creating art than you are doing anything else. That art can take any and all forms — from sketching to painting, from sculpture to fashion design, from photography to digital and web design, from museum and gallery work to teaching. Art comes in many shapes and sizes, and jobs might come in places that surprise you.

You're an artist if you think about art more than you think about anything else. The passion consumes your waking moments, and you think of masterpieces in your sleep. You see art in everything — from the design of an advertisement in a magazine, to the shape of a skyscraper downtown. You see the possibility of art in everything — a blank expanse of brick wall would be a marvelous canvas for a thoughtful graffiti art piece, for example. Art invades your interactions, and you're inspired by those around you whether they're artists or not.

You're an artist if you create no matter what, if you get up in the middle of the night to jot down an idea and end up staying up until daybreak, yawning and dazed and frankly amazed that you were that inspired.

You're an artist if you share that singular joy you get with others, hosting art parties and dragging your friends to open gallery nights in your town. You dream up art projects for young relatives and praise them as they work, completing your own project right alongside them. You see the beautiful things in the world and want other people to recognize them, too.

If any of these struck a chord with you, you're an artist. Feel secure in the knowledge that you're meant to pursue a career in art because it is your greatest passion. Not many people love what they do for a living, but you have the opportunity to once you break into an art career.

How to say goodbye to your (non-artistic) day job

Perhaps, right out of college, you didn't have a lot of time to look around for a job in your preferred field. You had bills to pay, an apartment to pay for, and living expenses that necessitated you take something, anything, that pays and run with it.

That's nothing to be embarrassed about. You're not the first person to have done that, and you certainly won't be the last.

There may come a time, however, when you start to feel less than fulfilled at your job. Maybe you agreed to work there with the secret promise to yourself or someone close to you that you'd use nights and weekends on your artistic pursuit. And maybe you really did do that, for a while, at first. You still found the time to slap paint to canvas or complete a fashion sketch, even if you were tired and wanted to vegetate on the couch in front of the TV as soon as you got home from the demands of your day job.

Then, it got easier to slip away from your passion. Perhaps your work required you to travel during the weekend, or using your creativity to solve problems in the office took away from your energy to make art at home. You found that you didn't have time any longer to do the things you were really passionate about.

It could've even got easier to stay in that job that was supposed to be temporary — a means to an end that would allow you to create all the art you wanted to. You got a promotion and a

raise to go along with it. You did quite well in your job. You got comfortable. Why would you walk away from a regular paycheck and catapult yourself into uncertainty and a new career?

Think about why you pursued art in the first place. Does your day job make you feel the same exhilaration as working on your passion projects? Are you satisfied enough in your current position to leave art behind?

Don't live with complacency tinged with regret. Change is scary. Human beings like their routines. But when you find that you're spending your days thinking about what could've been, wishing you had more time at home to make your masterpieces, that's when you know you're ready to leave your day job and pursue a career in an actual art field.

Taking the leap of faith

Once you've made the decision to pursue an art career, make a plan. It might be possible to create a stringent budget for yourself and stick to it, saving money in case something doesn't go according to plan. If you're in a position to do so and your schedule allows it, there's nothing wrong with interviewing for jobs in the art world while you're still employed in another career.

Sometimes, though, you just have to take a leap of faith.

If you're just out of college and you want to get an art-related job before settling in another position, take that leap.

If you're finding yourself more and more miserable in your current position because you wished you were doing something in the art world, take that leap.

Leap to save your sanity. Leap to make yourself look forward to working in your preferred field. Leap because you've always wanted to try it. Just leap and trust yourself to find the art career that's right for you.

Leap and let this book be your guide on the road ahead.

Chapter 1: Your Approach.

Most paintings don't just spring up out of nowhere. The artist does research, travels, completes sketches and color tests and scopes out sites for the completion of the project, if they're not doing it in a studio. It's only after many hundreds of hours of preparation and hard work that the painting is finally finished — a true masterpiece.

Your art career is very similar. You don't just get a job in the art world the day you decide you want one. You have to prepare yourself, your resume, and your portfolio. You have to make loads of contacts. You have to do well in the interview and impress your potential employer well enough to ask you back to work for them.

All of this takes time, and preparation. You need an approach to getting that art job. Be patient, and settle in. Sometimes, it can be a long haul. The important thing is not to give up. There is an art job out there for you. You just have to do the work to get yourself there.

Decide on your theme or passion

Picking an area of artistic specialty for yourself is essential when pursuing an art career. Having a specialty helps you focus your efforts and consider what your audience might like. It will also help direct your career path into the job that's right for you.

Don't feel like deciding on your artistic theme or passion will limit you. Just because you settled on working at an art gallery even though you're also passionate about photography and landscape painting doesn't mean you won't still be able to embrace those passions. It only means that you'll pursue a career in gallery work while having those two significant passions available to boost your work. Many gallery owners would be pleased to have an employee with a photographic eye who also understands what goes into a painting. All of your interests can work together to support your theme you've decided to focus on.

And if your theme doesn't work out, revisit it. You might be surprised to discover that something you only did as a hobby can and often does lead to a highly rewarding and fulfilling career.

Pick your career path

Once you've settled on your artistic theme and passion, it's time to explore all the various careers that can be associated with it. Let's say your theme is photography, for example. There are a great many careers in the field of photography for you to choose from. You could be a news photographer, shooting photos of current events for a newspaper. Or you could choose fashion photography, setting up artistic shoots or covering fashion weeks for a well-known magazine or website. Maybe you're interested in working for yourself. You could create your own photography company, setting up an office or studio to take portraits. Or you could make yourself available to shoot such events as birthday parties, engagements, and weddings. The possibilities are endless. It all depends on you.

If you're not absolutely sure of the exact job you want, don't panic. It's perfectly fine to be interested in several possibilities for your career. Apply to several different positions to cage your bets. If you can't decide for yourself, let the strength of your application materials, portfolio, and interview help make the choice. Weigh the pros and cons of each position. A news photographer may pay less overall than a fashion photographer, but it may offer more regular work. It might also be hard to gain clients as a photographer working for yourself. Is there a photography studio that would be willing to take on an apprentice? Would you be willing to do that to learn the ropes? Ask yourself what you're comfortable with doing to get to where you want to be. Don't be afraid to take chances. You've already taken the leap of faith to get yourself a job in the art world. Don't stop now.

Draw a map of how to get there

You've decided the focus of your artistic passion. You see the career path that you actually want to pursue. Now it's time to draw a map of how to get there.

Make realistic goals for yourself. Write it down in your sketchbook, your laptop, or a series of sticky notes you put on the mirror in the bathroom where you can see them every single day. These goals should be feasible and lead you from the starting line, where you are right now, to the finish line, which is you going to work on the first day of your new career.

Examples of goals that would take you down the right path to a job in the art world — let's say, for a position as a graphic designer at a magazine — include:

- 1)** Updating your resume and cover letter. Be sure to include all relevant art experience and your most recent place of employment. This would now be a good time to speak with former art professors and classmates, as well as former employers, to secure references.
- 2)** Gathering pieces for your portfolio. You might have developed a portfolio as a requisite for one of your final college classes, but make sure it still contains your best work as well as pieces that apply to your position. For a graphic design position at a magazine, it will be more powerful if you include examples of layouts and spreads you've done rather than examples of jewelry design, for example.
- 3)** Researching different companies and publications you'd like to be a part of. Maybe you've heard good things about how a certain company treats its employees, and you'd like to enjoy those same benefits. Or maybe you're personally impressed with their style and design of a magazine and think you'd be a good fit there — your design style looks a lot like the work they're already doing. Develop a list of ten or so companies and publications you want to apply for, along with reasons you want to work for them. These reasons will come in handy for your cover letter and your interview.
- 4)** Speaking to friends and acquaintances who are already in the business. If you have a friend of a friend who already works at a magazine — even if it's not as a graphic designer — contact your friend for an introduction. Try and meet the person who works at a magazine for coffee or lunch and glean their knowledge about the kind of working environment they experience. What tips do they have for someone looking to break into the business? What did they wish they knew before working there? Do they know of any openings either at their publication or another one? It's valuable to make personal connections with people so that they remember you from a pile of applications.
- 5)** Actually applying to each job you're interested in. Take the time to read and understand all of the requirements of the application process to make sure your application isn't overlooked because it was incomplete. Some positions might want to examine your portfolio in a web format, while others prefer hard copies of your work. The application process might be done completely online in a form that the company provides, or you might be required to mail your application in. Do take time to try and find a name to address your application to. It might be the magazine's managing editor or executive editor, or it could be the head of the graphics department. Sometimes, this information will be available in the application itself, so pay attention. It's fine if you use the same cover letter for each of your applications, but make sure to tweak it for each position you're going for. Add in those personal details, such as the

excitement you felt when you saw a certain spread in a particular issue, or the feeling that you would be a good fit because you have a similar design philosophy as the magazine itself. It's these little tidbits that will help your application stand out in the crowd.

6) Following up after you've sent an application. This can come in the form of a simple email or phone call to the person you submitted your application to. Touch base and ask them to confirm that they received your materials. This shows that you care about getting the position and are responsible. It might even give you an edge over your competition, particularly those who didn't bother following up.

Once you've created all of your goals for getting your art position, start taking steady steps forward to completing them. Every step, however small, is important to getting to that finish line and the art job that's waiting for you there. Even if you can only research a handful of companies each day because you're busy with your day job to pay the bills, it's still important. Step by step, you'll get there. Step by step, you will find a job in the art world.

Chapter 2: Advertising Your Talents.

Whether you're a freelance artist looking for clients, a fine artist looking to sell your masterpieces, or a graduate with an art degree looking for a job in a company, you're going to have to advertise your various talents to get to the place you want to be. There are a number of approaches you could use to promote yourself and the kinds of talents you can use in the art world.

How to connect with potential clients, employees, buyers, and more

We live in a very lucky time — the age of the Internet. You're likely reading this very book thanks to a web connection and the ability to download it onto a device designed to examine it digitally. The Internet has enabled us to connect with one another in ways previously unknown and unexplored, and you should take full advantage of that when looking to connect with potential clients, employees, buyers, and other individuals you will need to make your art business successful.

Use the Internet to your advantage when making contacts on your search for a job in the art world. Go online to search various art job opportunities and openings in your area or in other cities. Develop a web presence for yourself by putting your art portfolio online or creating a website to advertise your talents and skills. Email potential contacts or engage with them respectfully on social media. You can nearly reach out and touch someone through the display of a computer or smartphone even if they're halfway around the world.

If you're looking for a local approach, think beyond the Internet. What mode of communication drives your community and how can you tap into that? If the local newspaper is widely read, think about taking out an advertisement to show people that you're ready for business. You could also write a short press release about a class you're leading, an exhibit you're producing in, or something interesting you recently did in the art world. Many newspapers and other publications have community sections that publish hyper-local community news, events, and announcements free of charge. Check with your local newspaper for more details.

If your ideal demographic frequents coffee shops, think about leaving a flier or promotional poster up on the community announcement boards that are frequently found in such establishments. If you're looking to get your name heard around town so more people will hire you to take photos of their events, conduct a free photography workshop at your local library or community center to increase the visibility of your skills and business. Go to where you think your client, employer, or buyer might be.

If you're a visual artist and your town has a monthly art walk event, look into the requirements for participating. Even if you don't show any of your personal works, it can be a great way to network with other artists, gallery owners, potential collectors, and more in your community. Don't be afraid to ask for advice from other people in the art world. One of the best things about the art world is that many of its members support one another. You all have something different to offer, and collectors' tastes are so different that you likely pose no form of competition. Artists want to help each other get ahead, and you might learn some valuable knowledge at these events.

Be friendly, courteous, helpful, and as memorable as possible in all of your interactions when looking to secure your place in the art world. You can't risk being rude to someone in a moment of weakness because you never know how it might come back around to haunt you. You could be short with a person who was considering buying one of your pieces, or with a reviewer who will make mention of it in the piece they're writing about the exhibit you partook in, or with someone who, down the line, will have something to do with your career. It can sometimes be a small world — smaller, still, if someone makes an offhand online comment about how much of a diva you can be when stressed out. Take a deep breath and keep your interactions positive and professional. Making important contacts on your way to a job in the art world is one of your most essential tasks.

Develop your promotional materials

You need to have visibility as an artist or even as a person looking for a job in the art world. These promotional materials will help people understand who you are and what you do — ideally at a quick glance. Don't make people try hard to understand you. It won't make you easily accessible and you might lose clients or opportunities because of it.

Think about what you want to convey as an artist. Brainstorm a list of qualities that you possess that you want to use to get hired. Include these ideas within your promotional materials as briefly or as detailed as you think they need to be. Look at other posters or materials from other people — artists or not — to see what works and what doesn't.

Promotional materials can include — but aren't limited to — websites, posters, pamphlets, banners, business cards, and more. Business cards are extremely easy to hand out to your contacts, so it's important to focus on what they should look like and the information they should contain.

Business cards

You're an artist. Make sure your contacts can tell that fact simply by looking at your business card. There are a variety of companies and online services available that can help you design your own business card, but you should be careful about getting a "cookie cutter" card. Your business card should stand out in a pile of other business cards simply because you are an artist and have a creative mind. People should remember your business card, the way it looked and felt, long after you've given it to them.

Think about what you want to convey on your business card. Your name and contact information should be foremost, along with how to reach you on the web or social media. Beyond that, you have lots of other design choices to consider. Everything from card shape and size to thickness and color are on the table. If you are a painter, consider some thematic design choices, such as brushstrokes or paint splashes, for example. Let your business card be a miniature work of art. It's a good way to make sure your contacts remember you.

Logo

A logo can be a great way to define yourself and your personal art business, particularly if you're a fine artist or freelance graphic designer or photographer. Logos convey your business and purpose in a quick glance. If you're a freelance photographer with a studio, your logo should be something that communicates your business, like a camera, a flash, or a snapshot. Other clever logos might offer a play on words or even your name. Logos are great things to include on everything from promotional materials to websites. It can become as recognizable as a corporate logo to people familiar with your services, so it's beneficial to put some thought into it.

Staying in contact

Once you've made contact with people you're interested in connecting with, keep in contact with them so that you remain in their minds. Perhaps you exchanged a business card with someone who also has social media and contact information on their card. This isn't a time to be shy. You need to be memorable and maintain these connections in order to support your art. Add your new contact as a friend or follow them on your social media account. Add a personalized message on their wall or timeline along the lines of, "It was so nice to chat with you about art at the show last night." This ensures that your new contact understands that you are eager and professional — and that you thought they were important enough to remember.

There's an art to interviewing

Whether you're interviewing with a traditional employer or a gallery owner to display your artwork, there is an art to interviewing. You shouldn't go in and expect to wing it. Careful preparation is going to be what makes you stand out at this point.

Do your homework about the company you're interviewing with. Go back to your notes, referencing your application materials and your cover letter in which you named specific reasons you wanted to work for the company. Make sure you mention these reasons during your interview.

It's important that you dress very professionally for the interview, giving the interviewer a taste of how serious you are. However, since you're applying for a creative position in the art world, don't be afraid to let your artistic leanings shine through. This could be a fun and creative tie for men, or graphically beautiful blouses for women. Feel the company out ahead of time, if possible. How do people who already work there dress? Does the company have a dress code or other guidelines on employees' appearances? When in doubt, it's always preferable to be underdressed than overdressed.

Questions that you can anticipate answering during your interview can range widely from position to position, but at this point, interviewers are trying to get to know you and your character. Your basic information, from education to past experience and related skills, are already there on your resume. Interviewers are trying to determine if you're a good fit for the specific company. Be friendly and professional, but don't be afraid to let your personality shine. Describe the things you know about the company and mention how your skills would help the company achieve its goals. Be prepared to outline what you hope to get from working at the



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company, as well. Many organizations want their positions to be interesting and dynamic learning experiences.

After your interview is complete, take the opportunity either that evening or the morning after to send an email to your interviewer thanking them for their time. This can be a great way to stick out in the interviewer's mind, as well as demonstrate that you really are interested in the position.

Chapter 3: Art On Social Media.

Hand in hand with the age of the internet is the age of social media. Many artists find social media to be a valuable tool in marketing, visibility for their work, and connecting with fans and potential buyers or exhibitors. Give social media a try. You might be surprised at the boost it will give to your art. However, just like with many other things, there's a right way and a wrong way to act on social media.

The positives and pitfalls of social media

Social media can be an effortless way to connect with contacts on a platform that's intuitive and easy to understand. You can easily let your friends and followers know when you're having a sale on your art, if you're looking for a job, when the date of your first solo art show is, and the kinds of projects you're working on. You can communicate as much or as little as you want with people on social media with the possibility of gaining visibility from people you may have never met in person.

There are several considerations to keep in mind for shaping your presence on social media. For instance, don't let it take control over you. It's easy to get lost on social media, and the last thing you need is a distraction from your true purpose: art. Set a time every day to engage with people on social media and stick to it. Don't spend more time on your pages than absolutely necessary.

Also, try to stay above the fray. Trolls lurk in social media — people looking to antagonize other users just for pure fun or to get a reaction. Don't get sucked in. Remain positive in your postings and if someone really bothers you, report their account or block them. You control what you react to on social media, not the other way around.

Decide early on what kinds of information about yourself and your art skills you're going to share on social media. Try to limit the negativity. Don't fight with friends or followers on social media, as this might affect your online perception. Potential employers, clients, and collectors all use social media, too. Always present your best self when online. Determine how much of your private life will pop up on your sites, including postings and pictures. Will you post vacation photos or keep your photos strictly of your art? Some artists have been successful in

separating their private and professional lives into two unique social media accounts. It's up to you. Do what you're comfortable with.

A final word of caution: Take care on what you post about your job, especially if you work for a traditional company and not yourself. Many companies have policies in place that outline guidelines for employees posting — whether about the company, their work, or their personal lives. If you work for a company, it's always a good idea to take a look at the social media rules before posting, or speak with the human resources director if you have any questions. Err on the side of caution — you wouldn't want to lose your job over an ill-advised social media post. It might be prudent to use a nom de plume or the name of your art company instead of your real name on social media if you think some of your postings might conflict with the company's philosophy.

Your art on Facebook

Facebook is an undeniably successful place to get your social media feet wet. At the time of this writing, more than one billion people have Facebook accounts. It is one of the easiest ways to get your taste of social media and what it means for your art.

On Facebook, you have the advantage of connecting with people who are already contacts in your phone, email, or friends and family. This is a ready audience for your art with endless possibilities of connecting further with friends of friends and more. The key is to be active. Try and find a time to post every day, whether it's updates about upcoming events, art projects you're involved with, or photos and videos of you creating a masterpiece. Art aficionados will appreciate this sneak peek into your world, and you might gain more friends interested in keeping track of your work. You can also think about creating a “page” rather than a profile for your art business, keeping your personal and professional accounts separate. Other Facebook users can “like” your page, a promotional tool that helps people gauge just how popular your artwork and services are.

An advantage of Facebook is the ability to create groups. You could ask to belong to a host of artistic and creative groups, which is a great way to network across the globe. You might find yourself giving critiques of artworks posted in your groups, or chatting with other artists about the projects you're currently completing. You might just find inspiration for your next work through these groups.

One downfall on Facebook is its limitations on some content. If your art is risqué or contains nudity, your posts could be taken down or your account suspended. Think about the kind of

posts you're making on your account and whether you and your art might fare better on a social media site with fewer restrictions on content.

Your art on Twitter

Twitter is often touted as a place for people to get away from Facebook. Your entire family — extended relatives included — might be on Facebook, but Twitter is frequented by other people, like creative professionals and people eager to share their opinion on culture, news, and more. Twitter is a great place for breaking news and to communicate with followers in short bursts of text no longer than 140 characters. You're forced to be brief and succinct on Twitter, which might be a draw for artists who dislike being long-winded.

Twitter offers the option of posting photos along with your words, though the photos also go toward your character count. At the time of this writing, you can post as many as four images in one posting, which arrange themselves into a collage-like presentation.

Twitter can be a good place to quickly update your followers on your progress with projects and current status on everything from professional work to your day-to-day interactions. Follow design firms and art museums for inspiration.

Twitter is also a good place to gain visibility. Promote your other social media accounts through Twitter. One tool you can take advantage of on Twitter is the ability to see what kinds of hashtags or other subjects are trending. If you can make witty or insightful comments about those topics, you might gain new followers who are unfamiliar with your art but were impressed with your comments.

Your art on Instagram

Instagram is one of the most popular social media websites for sharing photos, and almost all artwork translates well into photos. Post examples of your body of work on Instagram as well as things that inspire you. Instagram is different from Twitter in that visuals are the emphasis on Instagram. You can choose to caption your photos or let the images simply speak for themselves. Use Instagram to let people meet you through your art.

It's in your best interests to maintain an active Instagram account. Many collectors watch Instagram to see emerging artists and collectable art. Make sure you follow artistic accounts and promote other artists. You never know when one will follow you back, or like one of your

posts — ensuring that even more people will see what you’ve posted. Try different approaches to gain followers on Instagram and see other accounts for examples on how to interact. Be yourself, but keep in mind the whole reason you’re there — to promote your art or art business.

Your art on Tumblr

Tumblr is one of the more popular social media sites for artists. Tumblr blogs number in the hundreds of millions, so there’s no time like the present to develop your own Tumblr presence.

Tumblr is used by artists and those interested in art and design from all walks of life. You're given the opportunity to develop your own blog and theme. To be successful at Tumblr, try to focus on one area. If you're a jewelry designer, stick to only posts about that to successfully hone your interests. Stay on topic to enjoy a more organized blog and to gain more followers.

Another advantage of Tumblr is the ability to use “tags” to categorize your postings. When a tag like “typography” is searched, for example, all posts that tagged that term will pop up, leading interested bloggers to your personal blog.

Chapter 4: Your First Art Job.

You received a good response to your applications, your interview sessions went well, and now you're getting ready for your first day on the job — awesome work! You deserve to celebrate your success in getting a position in the art world and pursuing your passion. Here's what to expect when working in several different types of art jobs, including what and where those jobs might be.

Graphic design

There are a wide range of positions available for individuals working in the graphic design field. Graphic designers work at magazines and newspapers, at corporations and government entities, at data think tanks and colleges and universities. Every time you pick up a newsletter or cereal box or look at a sign to determine which way to go to get to your destination, a graphic designer has been at work.

If you're reporting to your first day on the job at a newspaper or magazine, you can be expected to create graphics with an editorial tilt, meaning they will be used to illustrate stories as maps, informational pullout boxes, infographics, and more. Your work will need to be slick and clear so as not to confuse readers and to compliment the stories they accompany. You might even be asked to develop special covers or layouts for specific pages in your publication. You will be valued for your expertise in software programs like Adobe Suite as well as your artistic eye, knowing how to conceptualize ideas editors and reporters might have to help people understand issues better.

At corporations and government entities, you will be working with supervisors to develop a wide range of designs for their uses. They could include promotional materials like advertisements or marketing campaigns for the corporation, or health initiatives and mailings for the government entities. Expect to use your creativity while following closely what your employer has asked of you. They often have very specific requirements that must be met.

Many graphic designers actually work at graphic design firms, which develop quality designs for clients who have hired them for different tasks, while still others freelance. If you work as a freelance graphic designer, it's up to you to develop a client base, advertising your talents and

relying on word of mouth and advertising presence to obtain jobs. You set your own schedule, but your paycheck might not be as regular as other jobs.

Fine art

Working in fine art is perhaps the most broad of all the art jobs. Fine art encompasses every genre of art that you can create, from sketches to portraits, from oil landscapes to 3-D installations, from graffiti art to nail art. A majority of fine artists work by creating their art and showing or selling it. This means that you are often your own boss and must motivate yourself to push through any creative blocks. Your artwork is your livelihood, and you might also find you're the one who promotes it the most.

Some artists engage the services of an agent. Make it your mission to meet everyone who has anything to do with the art world in your community. Don't be afraid to introduce yourself and your work to gallery owners, museum members, and art festival organizers. This is where your promotional materials really come into play. Giving someone a well-designed and memorable business card is the first step to being noticed. Ask your friends for introductions to people in the art world, if applicable. Making these kinds of connections are key in being remembered and considered for future shows and purchases.

On a different scale, you might have good luck selling your art yourself via an online presence. Perhaps you or someone you know has web design skills, and your website is elegant while easy to navigate, showing your wide range of works to an Internet audience who often buys your masterpieces. The world is your marketplace, and as long as you market yourself well, you could have buyers from around the globe.

On a more local note, look into galleries and art show opportunities in your area. For a small fee, you might be able to show your pieces at your city's monthly art walk event, or at a number of other shows. Look into art organizations in your area and see if you can become a member. These types of organizations often coordinate art shows for their members, which is a great way to gain visibility for your art. Participate in everything you have time for, letting people meet you. You're your best asset.

Museum/gallery work

Working in a museum or art gallery, you will find yourself assisting the rest of the staff and your supervisors with such tasks as organizing artworks and other displays pieces, planning upcoming shows and exhibits, doing the physical work of hanging the artwork to the specifications of your supervisor or the artist, and formulating captions and explanations for the art that will be on display. You could also be asked to give your input on curating shows and arrangements of exhibits, which is a chance to shine. You have your degree in art, and you bring a fresh and unique perspective to your place of employment. Don't be afraid to speak your mind and take risks. Even if you make a mistake, or are corrected by your supervisor, don't give up. Take lots of mental or physical notes, and take it as a learning experience.

It might also be helpful if you have additional skills that bolster your understanding of art history and appreciation. Many galleries might require your skills in customer service, helping potential buyers and collectors to navigate the exhibit space while explaining the artwork on display. Others might employ you to man their social media and web accounts, providing viewers with an immersive and interactive journey online. There are many facets in gallery and museum work where you will be able to shine if you have the right kinds of skills for the job.

Teaching

Perhaps while you received your art education, a teacher inspired you to seek your career in art education. Teaching art can be one of the most fun and rewarding positions available.

As an art teacher at any level, it's your job to inspire students while ensuring they learn everything required of them to pass a class or as defined by the curriculum. It's up to you to develop fun and exciting lessons and projects while enabling them to learn and explore the world of art.

You can expect to be on constant lookout for new projects for all age groups and art levels. You can also expect to become a mentor for many of your students. You will be pushing your students to develop new skill and hone existing ones throughout the course of your teachings. You will also maintain supplies in your studio and workroom, purchasing or requiring students to purchase mediums and canvases or paper for projects.

Art teachers might also find the time to inspire students by completing their own projects and encouraging students to attend art shows and exhibits. Teaching art is one of the best ways to continue creating art. You have the time and materials on hand to continue to make your own

pieces. Open yourself to being inspired by your students' works and enthusiasm. You could develop a thriving art community within your own classes.

As an art teacher, you may also be expected to lecture students on art history and movements, introducing them to greats and classics in the art world and encouraging them to develop their own artistic tastes.

Illustration

Like graphic designers, illustrators can enjoy a broad range of different kinds of positions. You might find yourself drawing political comics for a media organization or publication, or creating illustrations alongside the author of a children's book. You could also work in animation or another format that utilizes your variety of skills, from sketching and character work to creating your own typefaces for websites and posters. You could work at a media organization, a broadcasting company, a publishing firm, a design company, and a host of other companies that need illustrations to show what they need to get across to their various audiences and clients. You might also have great success in a freelance capacity as an illustrator, offering your services to numerous clients across different platforms. Illustration can extend to many other art job genres, including graphic design and fashion design.

Fashion/makeup

As a fashion designer, you might work in a fashion house, at a magazine, with a large department store, or other companies. You can expect to work with your colleagues to develop pieces that are in line with the company's look and brand. You will also work to align your own design skills with your employer's vision, along with taking creative risks to push both your own personal style and the company's fashion. You will work closely with fellow fashion designers and supervisors in this role.

At magazines and department stores, you might be responsible for pulling existing pieces together for fashion photo spreads and other advertisement materials. Your company will rely on your artistic eye to make the right combinations that are just fashion forward enough to work well together. You might also work with the photographer of such shoots to tell them about the outfits and what kinds of poses or backgrounds might work well with them.

As a fashion designer, you will be expected to keep up with current trends in the fashion world, including predicting how fashion might evolve in the future. You will also research past and current fashion designers in order to glean tips and techniques from their successes and failures. Being a fashion designer is very much a position that is always learning.

If you are a makeup artist, you will work very closely in the same arenas as the fashion designer. If you work for a fashion house, you could be expected to develop palettes and makeup looks for models showcasing the fashion. At department stores, you could work at various makeup counters, providing expert advice to shoppers and scheduling makeovers and other cosmetics services. Your work ties looks together.

Makeup artists can also enjoy success through working for themselves. Advertise your services and set your prices to do makeup for events like birthday parties, weddings, proms, and other important events. You can also develop your skill set to counsel clients on different brands of makeup, brushes, skin care projects and regimens, and more. Other highly successful skill sets to develop as a part of being a makeup artist include nail art, which gives you the opportunity to create tiny masterpieces on clients' hands and feet. Some nail art is highly intricate, including 3-D elements, beads, jewels, marbling, and illustrations on the canvas of a single nail bed.

Web design/digital art

Web design is one of the hottest markets to work in during this moment, particularly with the proliferation of smartphones and internet connectivity. You're going to be valuable to your company particularly if you have experience with art and design coupled with coding. Traditional companies are eager to take on web designers with experience in making websites look good and navigate easily. Even if you don't have much experience with the intricacies of coding, if you can work with software to develop attractive websites, you will find easy employment at a company interested in a strong web presence.

Web designers can also work at firms that contract with companies looking to boost their websites, or work on a freelance basis, developing a client list through the proof of their good work. As with other freelance art positions, you will need to work hard to promote yourself and your work, showing potential clients a range of examples of the websites you have worked to improve in the hopes that you will be a good fit to modify their existing presence online.

Digital art is another facet of this kind of position. Digital artists take advantage of the technology available via the internet, smartphone apps, and devices like tablets to create their art. Digital art can be printed and framed or put on canvas for fine art purchases, or the rights

to the piece can be purchased for use on a website or the cover of an ebook. As a digital artist, you might also find luck helping to develop graphics or interfaces for websites or smartphone apps. For some digital artists, the only limitations to what they can do and where they can work are their imaginations. With an easily transportable tablet and stylus, you can work on anything at anytime, anywhere.

Photography

Many photographers, whether they work at an actual company or are freelancers, enjoy a range of freedom when completing their work. Photographers can be employed by newspapers, magazines, government groups, companies, sports teams, studios, and much more. Freelance photographers can set up their own studios and offer portrait sessions or coverage of events like birthdays, engagements, or weddings. They can also attend sports and cultural events and work to sell those photos to media organizations or other interested parties.

As a photographer at a media organization like a newspaper or magazine, you can expect to be given assignments at the beginning of your work day detailing events you are going to cover for the publication. Make sure that your photos — and captions — offer a comprehensive and accurate representation of the event, whether it's a festival or news conference. You can, however, pepper your straightforward shots with creative takes on the events you cover, using such techniques as fisheye lenses or long exposures for interesting shots. Work with your editor or supervisor on the creative risks you can take in your position, and you might just be rewarded.

If you work for yourself, you have the advantage of picking what events and happenings you cover. You can choose to sell these photos to media organizations, meaning that you will have to learn to make contacts in that realm. Or you can keep some of the images in your personal collection, selling them at art fairs or curating a collection for a solo exhibition at a gallery. Again, contacts are key here. Don't be afraid to really sell your skills and showcase your photo portfolio. As a freelancer, you rely on word of mouth, social media, websites, advertising, and connections you make in your daily life. Chat with people at the event you're covering, and be open about what you do. You never know which connection is going to pay off for your photography.

Epilogue.

If you work hard at what you do, stay persistent in your pursuit of what you really want to do, and never stop until you get the thing that you want the most, you will be successful. Never give up. You were meant to have a job in the art world if you're an artist. You just have to find the right fit for you.

Your artistic journey isn't at an end once you find a career in your art field of choice. Instead, it's just beginning. You have your entire creative career in front of you, ready to take you in directions you never might've imagined.

Congratulations — you've worked hard to get here and you deserve to be happy in your art job. It utilizes your special talents and the skills you developed while earning your art degree. Your adventure is just getting started, and you should understand that many twists and turns might still be ahead of you.

Keeping the door open to all possibilities

As you start to learn the ropes of your new job, resist the urge to get comfortable. Even though you've been working toward getting a position in the art world — and now have it — you never know when another chance to shine is going to happen along. Give yourself a chance to explore your options if you get offered several jobs in your preferred art field.

If you're working at a company that utilizes your web design skills, don't let your digital art languish if there's an upcoming opportunity to showcase your work. You never know when something you're really passionate about will become a reality for you.

In that same vein, don't be afraid to accept a job at a company or position that you never really imagined yourself in. Your success in the position, along with the lessons you'll learn along the way, could make the position an excellent — if unexpected — fit for you and could determine the course of the rest of your life. If you always thought you would be a fashion designer but got a job offer as a makeup artist, for example, because you have experience doing makeup, take the makeup artist job. In the art world, all you need to be successful is often simply a foot in the door. Explore everything your new position has to offer and then decide if you'd like to make another career move. You might make connections in your first job that will lead to subsequent jobs — connections you wouldn't have made otherwise, if you hadn't taken the job you weren't sure about.

Don't be afraid of failure

Everyone experiences setbacks when striking out for their dreams, so don't despair if you don't hear back from one of your applications or don't get a position at a place where you thought you had a good chance of working. Even if you get a job, work in your position for several months, and realize it wasn't the dream job you thought it would've been, don't panic. Pick yourself up and try again. Don't remain in a position that makes you unhappy or causes you to doubt your convictions. Life is too short to stay unhappy without trying to do something about it.

You will be exposed to failure by seeing those around you make mistakes, and you might even fail yourself. Everyone makes mistakes, and it might turn out to be one of the most valuable learning experiences of your life and career. After all, if you make a mistake, you learn the correct way to do something because of it. You might even glean insights into your original task through your mistake that you might not have understood by doing something perfectly. If you start work at your art job and complete your responsibilities perfectly every day, how can you expect to learn and grow as a person?

Failing is just a part of life. It's how you respond to your failures that define who you are as a person.

If you get a job in the art world but it doesn't work out — perhaps you weren't the right fit for the position, or you were laid off because of an economic downturn, or even if you made a mistake that resulted in you losing your job — don't despair. The worst thing you can do after experiencing failure in any realm of your life is to give up. Giving up means you learned nothing from your failure, and that means the failure — and the learning opportunity that always accompanies it — has been wasted effort.

Don't be afraid of failures. You might find unexpected opportunities within them. Your next greatest success could come after a failure, but you'll never know if you simply give up.

Every experience (even negative ones) is valuable

Maybe at your job at a museum, you dropped a painting and got reprimanded by your supervisor. Or in your position as a freelance photographer, you had a client renege on the payment you both agreed on for your time and expertise. Or perhaps on your art website, you had to field several negative online comments about your art from viewers who either didn't understand or didn't appreciate your vision.

All of these experiences are valid and valuable. They teach you critical aspects of your art job and you can learn from them so you can go forward as a more knowledgeable artist. Even if they weren't pleasant experiences, all of the examples above are teachable moments. These are the most essential moments of all in the art world.

At the museum job, even though you had to bear the shame of the reprimand, you learned how to properly handle the paintings you had been tasked to care for. You move forward with an enhanced understanding on how to transport even awkwardly sized pieces around the museum without committing the same error as before.

As the freelance photographer, you lost out on time and money that you can't get back. Short of litigation to exact the funds you were owed, you learn new business practices to protect yourself in the future. You develop a loyal client base and make sure that you receive payment up front, at the time you agree on a contract with a client. Or perhaps you develop an invoicing system and enlist the help of a professional accountant. Whatever path you choose, you're taking your negative experience and turning it around into a tool that will be valuable for the success of your continued business.

And as the visual artist with the website, it's understandable if the negative comments left on your website hurt your feelings. Creating art is a deeply personal experience. At the same time, it's subjective. What you might find beautiful can be ugly to another person. It's one of the most thrilling parts of art. There are so many different approaches and genres and understandings that there's a place in the art world for everyone whether they recognize it or not. What you should understand moving forward from those comments are that everyone has a different opinion. Perhaps you learned to respond to the comments using your humor and artistic insights to garner even more followers and fans. Or maybe you decided to institute a procedure for vetting comments before they go live on your website to ensure malicious users won't harm your image. And maybe those negative comments spurred you to create your next great masterpiece. The point is that you weren't crippled by them. You used them for your own purposes, taking that initially negative experience and molding it into something that worked for you.

Every single experience you have during your art career is valuable. Whether it's praise from a viewer, an interaction with a collector, or a fight over a vision with a colleague, being aware of

these experiences and their ability to reshape your knowledge and creative practice is key. Be conscious of what you are doing in your job and use those experiences to do things differently or better in the future.

Never stop creating

You can never be sure where life may take you, even if you do end up getting a career in your art field of choice. What's important to remember is that you should never stop doing what you love no matter where you may find yourself in five, ten, or even twenty years after you graduated with your art degree. Creating your art is the most important thing to you. It's your passion. You should continue to make your art even if you're not working in an artistic field. And if you are working in an artistic field, don't lose your drive in favor of satisfaction.

If you got that art gallery job you had always dreamed of, congratulations. But don't let your passion for oil painting languish while you work at the gallery. Continuing to pursue your passion projects will always be rewarding and remind you why you decided to pursue an art career in the first place. These hobbies and side projects will help stretch your creative muscles and help you to always choose an innovative approach to every challenge in your career.

Keep creating. Never stop. It's as essential to your well being as breathing is because you're an artist.

You are an artist.