



# Art History Careers

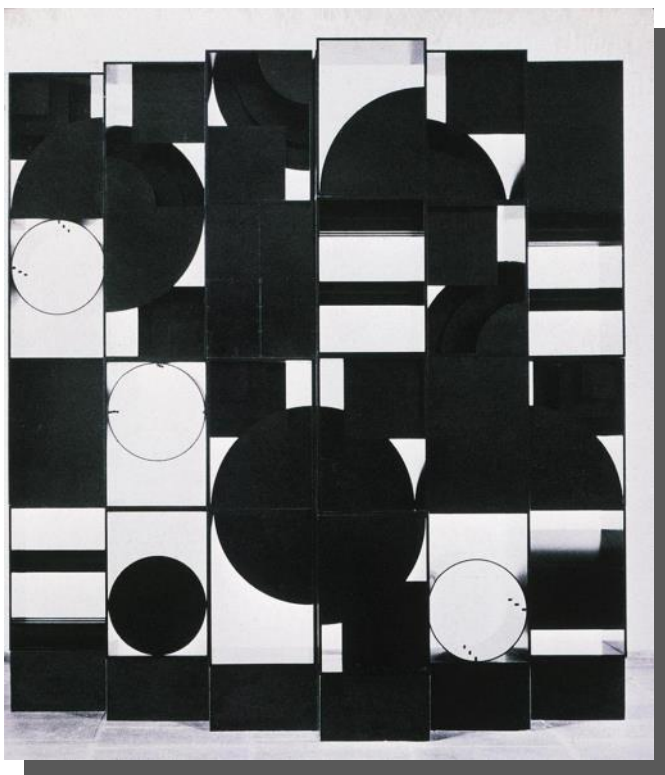
[arts.ucdavis.edu/art-history](https://arts.ucdavis.edu/art-history)

Q: What can I do with a Major in Art History?

A: Almost anything!

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# What Can I Do with an Art History Major?

“How can I get a job if I major in Art History?” is a question that prospective majors ask all the time. It is not uncommon for undergraduates who take a few courses in Art History to become passionate about the subject. Those who take the step of majoring in Art History often feel they have to justify their decision to skeptical parents, who wonder about its value in finding a job. We remind them that students who are passionate about their studies always get more from their education. That passion inevitably translates into greater success in the job market than when students drift from course to course without it.

Most people associate Art History with arts-related careers. In fact, the major can serve as the foundation for careers in teaching (in middle and secondary schools, in community colleges, in colleges and universities), research, museums, galleries, arts administration, art criticism, and art investment. Yet the major also represents a solid liberal arts education that provides an excellent foundation for a wide variety of careers: in business, law, non-profit development, architectural work, educational administration, publishing, journalism, public relations and marketing are just a few.

This handbook is intended to help answer the question, “What can I do with a degree in Art History?” Art History teaches concrete skills that can lead to a myriad of interesting careers and they provide a career flexibility that lasts a lifetime. Studying Art History turns out to be valuable in many careers because of two specific underlying skills. Art History majors develop: visually literacy and written analysis. In the words of one successful alumnus, “It teaches you how to figure things out.”

These are life skills, which join another to make Art History one of those disciplines that allows for great career flexibility. The study of Art History imparts a deeper understanding of the world. As John Ruskin, one of the early academic lecturers on the Fine Arts, famously wrote, “The teaching of art is the teaching of all things.”

Diana Strazdes  
Faculty Adviser  
Art History

# Careers with Art History

Below are a few examples of work places and job titles related to the study of Art History. Learn more by visiting this webpage:

*whatcanidowiththismajor.com/major/art-history/*

## **Museums and Galleries**

- Administration
- Archive Management
- Collections Management
- Conservation
- Curatorial
- Development
- Docent Coordination
- Education and School Programs
- Event Planning
- Exhibit Design/Preparation
- Facilities Management
- Marketing and Retailing
- Membership
- Preservation and Conservation
- Public Relations
- Publications
- Publicity
- Registration
- Rights and Reproduction

## **Art Sales**

- Antiques Dealing
- Appraisal: Art and Estate
- Art Authentication
- Public Relations
- Sales: Art Galleries
- Sales: Auction House

## **Education**

- Academic Affairs
- Administration
- Community College Teaching
- Community Education
- Library/Information Sciences

## **Education**

- Primary and Secondary-school Teaching
- Student Affairs and Advising
- University Teaching and Research
- Visual Resources Curating

## **Media**

- Art Criticism
- Book Publishing
- Editing
- Free-lance Writing
- Magazine and Newspaper Publishing

## **Non-Profit**

- Administration and Management
- Public Relations
- Development
- Grant Writing

## **Government**

- Art in Public Places Management
- Audiovisual Producing
- Grant Evaluation
- Parks Commissions
- Public Affairs
- State and Municipal Arts Agencies
- Writing/Editing

## **Business**

- Corporate Collection Curator
- Management
- Market Research
- Operations
- Product Development
- Public Relations
- Sales
- Website Development

# How Do I Learn about Jobs?

There are many methods to learning about the range of jobs, both traditional and untraditional, that suit a background in Art History.

We recommend the following steps to begin your search:



## 1. Visit the UC Davis Internship and Career Center

The Internship and Career Center (ICC) offers resources, workshops and one to one assistance with job search techniques including: developing a resume, or curriculum vitae, interviewing skills, networking, using social media for the job search, job and internship opportunities, career fairs and more! Don't wait until your last quarter to take advantage of the resources provided by the ICC. Start early! Location: 2nd Floor South Hall, Web: [icc.ucdavis.edu](http://icc.ucdavis.edu)

## 2. Complete an Internship and Volunteer Before Graduating

An internship and volunteering that develop your skills make great additions to your resume. They show potential employers you have relevant experience and exposure to the world of art history beyond the classroom. It is important to be aware internships for undergraduates in museums and galleries are generally unpaid and rarely do they result in a paid job after the internship. The best and most rewarding internships are those that students themselves create, using their own ingenuity and initiative. The result will be a superior experience that stands out when you look for a paying job.

## 3. Learn How to Network and Conduct Informational Interviews

Career advisers will always say the best way to find a job is to network! Begin speaking with your professors, UC Davis Art History alumni, and people you know in the field about the types of career opportunities you are seeking. Next, conduct informational interviews to learn about career opportunities for Art History majors and grow your network. Visit the Internship and Career Center and learn to network and conduct informational interviews.

#### 4. Join Art History Associations

After you graduate, how will you keep in touch with the world of Art History? Join an Art History related association. Some of these associations have student and non-professional membership rates that will give you access, among other things, to their jobs databases. Other associations allow public access to their newsletters and to information about conferences through their websites. Becoming a member and especially subscribing to the association's job listings (a highly useful investment) will help you transition your identity from student to a professional in field of Art History, provide information related to the world of Art History, and enhance your networking ability. These associations will also provide you with a valuable resource for understanding the job opportunities in these various fields, including the expected professional preparation at various career levels, and salaries. Here are some potential resources to consider:

- ◆ American Association of Museums
- ◆ American Historical Society
- ◆ American Institute for Conservation of Historic and Artistic Works
- ◆ Americans for the Arts
- ◆ Americans for the Arts
- ◆ Appraisers Association of America
- ◆ Appraisers Association of America
- ◆ Art Libraries Society of North America
- ◆ Association of Art Editors
- ◆ Association of Art Historians
- ◆ Association of Art Museum Curators
- ◆ College Art Association
- ◆ Foundations in Art: Theory and Education
- ◆ International Association of Art Critics
- ◆ International Association of Art Critics
- ◆ National Antique and Art Dealers Association
- ◆ National Antique and Art Dealers Association
- ◆ National Art Education Association
- ◆ Society of American Archivists
- ◆ Visual Resources Association

# Graduate and Professional Training

The teaching of Art History at the college and university level requires a Ph.D., as do curatorial and senior administrative positions in major art museums. Other professional paths in education and art museums require an M.A. in Art History. Competition for Ph.D. study in Art History is particularly rigorous; candidates must show an extensive record of prior distinction in the study of Art History. UC Davis's Art History program sponsors a well-respected M.A. program in Art History, which has trained students for a variety of arts-related careers, including museum work and junior-college teaching, as well as further advanced study in Art History. For information about our M.A., consult this website - [arts.ucdavis.edu/art-history-graduate-program](http://arts.ucdavis.edu/art-history-graduate-program)

The College Art Association - [collegeart.org](http://collegeart.org) - publishes two guides, *Graduate Programs in Art History* and *Graduate Programs in the Visual Arts*, comprehensive resources of schools across the United States, Canada, the United Kingdom, Australia, and New Zealand. These list over 650 programs in fine art and design, art and architectural history, curatorial studies, arts administration and supply everything a prospective graduate student needs to know before beginning the application process.

Aside from further study in Art History itself, the major in Art History can lead to graduate and professional training in the following fields:

- ◆ Architecture
- ◆ Historical preservation
- ◆ Museum Studies
- ◆ Library Science
- ◆ Education
- ◆ Law
- ◆ Management



Graduate programs offering advanced degrees in these and other areas post their academic requirements, curricula, and other information for prospective applicants on their websites. Since these requirements can differ from school to school, you should be aware of them prior to graduation, so that you can complete any necessary courses while you are still an undergraduate in college.



# Online Career Resources

Here are a few online resources we recommend to find Art History career information.

## **Art History Jobs**

Art Jobs - [artjobs.artsearch.us](http://artjobs.artsearch.us)

Art History Jobs - [arthistoryjobs.com](http://arthistoryjobs.com)

## **Art History Career Information**

National Endowment for the Arts - [arts.gov](http://arts.gov)

New York Foundation for the Arts - [nyfa.org](http://nyfa.org)

Resources in Art History for Graduate Students - [members.efn.org/~acd/resources.html](http://members.efn.org/~acd/resources.html)

The Art Project - [theartcareerproject.com](http://theartcareerproject.com)

United States Historical Societies - [daddezio.com/society/hill/index.html](http://daddezio.com/society/hill/index.html)

Visual Arts Career Guide - [khake.com/page42.html](http://khake.com/page42.html)

World Wide Art Resources - [wwar.com](http://wwar.com)



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## **Coursera - [coursera.org](http://coursera.org)**

Coursera partners with organizations and top universities to provide free online instruction including computer programming (e.g. HTML).

## **LinkedIn Alumni Tool - [linkedin.com/edu/?tab=alumni](http://linkedin.com/edu/?tab=alumni)**

Begin by exploring UC Davis alumni to view their career paths and where they are now.

## **UC Davis Aggie Job Link - [ucdavis-csm.symplicity.com](http://ucdavis-csm.symplicity.com)**

Your resource to internships and job opportunities provided the by Internship and Career Center.

## **Occupational Outlook Handbook - [bls.gov/ooh/](http://bls.gov/ooh/)**

We recommend beginning your research of Art History careers by visiting the United States Bureau of Labor Statistics Occupational Outlook Handbook where you will find career related data and information for specific job titles.

# Tips for Getting the Best Possible Job

Job and career anxiety seem to have become part of students' lives from the time they enter high school, and when students enter college, their choice of a major is often colored by their (or their parents') perceptions of that major's ability to deliver a job upon graduation. It is worth remembering that at schools like UC Davis, few seniors *in any major* will pursue careers based directly on their undergraduate training. Majors in Psychology, Economics, and Genetics do not become psychologists, economists, or geneticists as soon as they graduate. Few majors even eventually follow the professional path of their majors. For example, few Political Science majors enter politics; few Animal Science majors become veterinarians. Most graduates will seek entry-level jobs in fields unconnected to their majors and will by mid-career, be following careers they would not have predicted for themselves in college.

If you love Art History but aren't sure what "to do with it" after graduation, you are evenly matched with the vast majority of your fellow students. You will have one great advantage over some of them: the career flexibility of a liberal-arts education. You can optimize that flexibility and succeed in the great unknown of your future career with some judicious planning and by thinking like the prospective employer interviewing you.

The job for which any graduating senior interviews, is going to be an entry-level position. Employers hiring candidates for entry-level jobs look for interesting people who have creative minds and can think for themselves. They look for quick learners who are good with a variety of tasks, and self-starters who are also reliable, who can see a project through from start to finish. The employer who invests in you wants you to be promotable.

You can become the person that an employer will hire by paying attention to the content of your education and by attaining broadly useful skills. Here's a checklist:

- ◆ This will sound blunt, but unlike graduates from the largest majors (such as Psychology, Sociology, or Business), you will stand out and be more memorable by virtue of your major. A potential employer will be prepared to see you as an interesting person, one who is unafraid of going off the beaten path. A major like Art History suggests that you know your own mind.

- ◆ By the time you graduate, get to know three professors. Graduate programs and many employers ask for three academic references. The only letters worth anything are those that begin, “I know this candidate well.” Unfortunately, it is too easy at a large university to remain anonymous. Taking more than one course with a professor, participating in class, being engaged with your coursework are important for your depth of knowledge and your potential recommendations.
- ◆ By the time you graduate, write one really good paper. Interviewers will often ask about your academic work as a sign of your intellectual engagement. Some employers (and most graduate programs) require a paper as evidence of your intellectual skill.
- ◆ Have at least one independent accomplishment that you’re proud of. Your potential employer will want you to know what you’ve done on your own initiative. The best example would be senior honors work but an interesting independent project or an internship you’ve designed can work as well.
- ◆ Become numerate as well as literate. Art History majors learn to write, a great business skill to have. Increase your advantages in the job force by acquiring some quantitative skills as well. Learning some statistics is very useful.
- ◆ Develop some general business skills. Do you know how to create a mailing list, code HTML, use Adobe Photoshop, keep track of expenses on a spreadsheet, create an index, or write an executive summary of a project? You can learn business writing and skills through courses at UCD. If you can’t get into an intro Computer Science course, you can teach yourself how to use the most popular business computer programs. Such skills will prove useful in landing a job.

The greatest boost to your employability after college comes from *caring about what you’re learning in college*. Pursuing the major that you are passionate about and embracing courses that challenge will do you far more good than choosing a major because it looks good on the transcript or taking a course because it’s easy. A potential employer knows the difference!

# UC Davis Art History Alumni

Graduates from UC Davis in Art History have successfully pursued a wide range of jobs and careers after graduation. In each issue of the Art History program's annual *Newsletter*, you can read reports from alumni about their jobs as well as a page-long profile of a recent graduate about their career path. These profiles of real people in real jobs provide much useful advice to the prospective job-seeker. Paper copies of the current *Newsletter* are available at the Arts advising office, 101 Art Building, and at the Visual Resources Facility, 163 Everson.

You can also access the current and all past issues of our *Newsletter* through the Art History website; they are archived under "News and Events" - [arts.ucdavis.edu/annual-art-history-newsletter](https://arts.ucdavis.edu/annual-art-history-newsletter)

Here are just a few examples of the jobs UC Davis Art History graduates have acquired:

## **Museums and Galleries**

Assistant Curator for Education, Phoenix Art Museum  
Communications Associate, Hammer Museum  
Development and Marketing Coordinator, Crocker Art Museum  
Exhibitions Coordinator, Live-Abroad Program Coordinator, USS Hornet Museum  
Gallery Preparator Intern, Crocker Art Museum  
Art Conservator, Hirshhorn Museum, Smithsonian Institution  
Manager - Annual Giving, Smithsonian Institution, The National Museum of American History  
Manager of School and Teacher Programs, Asian Arts Museum, San Francisco  
Registrar and Exhibition Manager, Pasadena Museum of California Art

## **Art Sales**

Asian Department Receiver and Inventory Controller, Bonhams  
Assistant, Mark Grotjahn Studios, Fine Art Services  
Founder of a business that introduces collectors to galleries and art dealers  
Private Dealer, Fine Prints and Drawings

## **Education**

Administrative Coordinator, California College of the Arts  
Art Department Chair Cosumnes River College, Sacramento  
Art Department Chair, Sierra College, Rocklin  
Assistant Registrar, Cantor Arts Center, Stanford University  
English as a Second Language Teacher and Experienced Writer  
Lecturer, Art History, Sacramento City College  
Library Technician III, Santa Rosa Junior College  
Major Gifts Assistant, Arts and Humanities/Social Sciences, UC Berkeley  
Ph.D. Candidate, Art History, University of California, Berkeley  
Ph.D. Candidate, Art History, University of Virginia  
Ph.D. Candidate, Art History, Yale University  
Professor, Art History, Middle Tennessee State University  
Senior Associate Director, Undergraduate Admissions, UC Davis  
Student Affairs Officer, UC Davis  
Teacher, Arts and AP Art History, Davis High School  
Teacher, High School Visual Arts and Photography, Woodland School District  
Teacher, Technology Integration Support Teacher, Mark West Union District

## **Law**

Associate, Pillsbury Winthrop Shaw Pittman LLP  
Associate Attorney, Grancell, Stander, Reubens, Thomas & Kinsey  
Program & Design Developer, California Attorneys for Criminal Justice

## **Marketing/Media**

Digital Marketing, Web, and E-commerce Consultant  
Graphic Artist, CCP Printing and Direct Mail Marketing  
Graphic Artist, HOMMAGE, Luxury Men's Grooming  
Graphic Production Artist, One Bella Casa, Inc.  
Marketing Coordinator, Moving Brands  
Operations Analyst, Marketing Strategy, Kepler Group LLC  
Photo Editor, Twenty20 Inc.  
Senior Editor, Co. Design, Fast Company  
Visual/UI Designer, YDesign Group

## **Writing/Publishing**

Freelance Editor and Travel Writer  
Marketing Department, Journals division, University of California Press

# UC Davis Art History Alumni (cont'd)

## **Non-profit**

Assistant to Conference Coordinators, Media Art Histories Conference  
Associate Attorney, Grancell, Stander, Reubens, Thomas & Kinsey  
Design Communications Arts Certificate Candidate and Communications  
Associate, Breathe California  
Executive Assistant, Queen Liliokalani Children's Center  
Language and Culture Assistant, BEDA  
Manager of Quality Improvement Projects, HealthRIGHT 360  
Operations Chair, Initiative for Community Wellness  
Public Education Specialist, UC Davis Extension; Certified Personal  
Trainer @ National Academy of Sports Medicine (NASM)  
Registrar/Field Service Assistant, Balboa Art Conservation Center  
Underwriter, KQED Public Radio

## **Business**

Community Manager, Vinted  
Community Recruitment and Inside Sales, Chloe + Isabel, Inc.  
Dynamic Creative Account Strategist, AdRoll  
Fabric Research and Development Associate, GUESS? Inc.  
Founder and Designer, Elise Jeanne Designs  
Gold Standard Diagnostics, Laboratory Tech  
Graduate Student, Co-Founder of Rosa Vertov  
Manger of Outreach Programs, Walt Disney Family Films  
Outreach Manager, Google Scholar  
Principal, Vivian Yoon Company, LLC  
Product Development Assistant, Levi Strauss & Co.  
Project Assistant, Technology Transition Corporation  
Senior Consultant, Lord Cultural Resources  
Territory Development Manager, RetailNext

# Your Campus Resources

## **Art History, University of California, Davis**

Everson Hall  
One Shields Ave, Davis, CA 95616  
Web - [arts.ucdavis.edu/art-history](http://arts.ucdavis.edu/art-history)

## **Art History Academic Advising, University of California, Davis**

Julie McGilvray, Undergraduate Adviser  
Barbara Olivier, Undergraduate Program Coordinator  
101 Art Building  
One Shields Ave, Davis, CA 95616  
Monday - Friday: Drop-in advising 9:00 am -12:00 pm, and by appointment  
1:00 pm - 4:00 pm. Schedule an appointment online at - [appointments.ucdavis.edu](http://appointments.ucdavis.edu)

## **Internship and Career Center, University of California, Davis**

2nd Floor South Hall  
One Shields Ave, Davis, CA 95616  
Web - [icc.ucdavis.edu](http://icc.ucdavis.edu)  
Phone - 530-752-2855

# Acknowledgments

This handbook was prepared by Diana Strazdes, Faculty Adviser, Art History and Julie McGilvray, Undergraduate Adviser, Art History; with assistance from Barbara Olivier, Undergraduate Program Coordinator, Art History; Leah Theis, Visual Resources Library Manager, Visual Resources Facility

October 2015

