Why Art?

Art students are taught to refine creative thought and apply acquired knowledge and skill to the making of images, objects, and experimental works. Students majoring in Studio Art take a focused program of courses folded into a liberal arts education offered by the University of Maryland. The diverse faculty of artists in the Department of Art strives to foster a sense of community through the common experience of the creative process, sharing their professional experience freely with students.

Majoring in Art prepares individuals for careers not only in fine and commercial arts but also a variety of specialties including art history, art education, and art administration. By combining additional coursework with a broad arts and humanities skill set, Art students can pursue careers in business, government and teaching or go on to pre-professional or graduate school.

What Skills Does a Degree in Art Provide?

Art majors will develop a variety of skills that are attractive to employers across all fields. Some of the top skills an Art major will develop include:

- Effective writing and oral communication
- Managing a project from conception to completion
- Understanding the structure and style differences of language
- Finding solutions to intricate problems
- Perceiving the world from multiple points of view
- Evaluating results
- Perceiving patterns/structures
- Comparing/contrasting
- Writing creatively
- Synthesizing information
- Ability to read, reflect, and critique
- Working with others
- Creativity
- Careful listening
- Gathering information
- Attention to detail and organization skills
- Using original sources
- Meeting deadlines and managing time
- Interpreting data
- Understanding components of complex problems
- Summarizing and presenting information
- Analyzing text/information
- Effective writing and oral communication
- Managing a project from conception to completion
- Understanding the structure and style differences of language
- Finding solutions to intricate problems
- Perceiving the world from multiple points of view
- Evaluating results
- Perceiving patterns/structures
- Comparing/contrasting
- Writing creatively
- Synthesizing information
- Ability to read, reflect, and critique
- Working with others
- Creativity
- Careful listening
- Gathering information
- Attention to detail and organization skills
- Using original sources
- Meeting deadlines and managing time
- Interpreting data
- Understanding components of complex problems
- Summarizing and presenting information
- Analyzing text/information

In the National Association of Colleges & Employers’ (NACE) 2011 Job Outlook, the skills and abilities such employers are seeking were listed in order of importance. The top ten skills were:

- Communication (verbal)
- Strong work ethic
- Teamwork
- Analytical skills
- Initiative
- Problem-solving skills
- Communication (written)
- Interpersonal skills (relates well to others)
- Computer skills
- Flexibility/adaptability

Organizations consistently seek candidates who possess a collection of “transferable skills” - skills acquired through your classes, extracurricular involvement, experience, and hobbies that are applicable to virtually any position. The skills listed above all fit into this category and students in the Arts & Humanities, as noted by professionals and academics alike, participate in a rich curriculum that develops their skills in many, if not all, of these areas and beyond, making them extremely marketable and valuable to potential employers. In the current Recruiting Trends report put out by the Collegiate Employment Research Institute, nearly 40% of employers indicate that they will seek candidates across “all majors,” focusing more on the skills and abilities needed in the organization than on a specific academic discipline.
What Can I Do With an Art Degree?

An Art degree can be shaped to fit a variety of disciplines and the broad skill set you acquire allows you to apply your knowledge in many exciting areas. From the University Career Center’s most recent graduate survey, upon graduation ARHU students entered into a range of dynamic industries including:

Arts, Government, Academia/Education, Non-Profit, Communications/Media, Advertising, Technology, Food & Hospitality Services, Entertainment, Social Services and more!

Sample Art job titles include:

- Museum Curator
- Freelance Writer
- Teacher
- Advertising Artist
- Art Librarian
- Sales Representative
- Art Preservationist
- Graphic Designer
- Animator
- Business Analyst
- Professor
- Photographer

- Technical Writer
- Book Illustrator/Designer
- Research Assistant
- Editor
- Interior Designer
- Art Dealer
- Sculpturist
- Art Therapist
- Motion Picture Artist
- Medical Illustrator
- Toy Designer
- Furniture Designer
- Art Critic
- Copy Writer
- Curatorial Consultant
- Antiques Dealer
- Catalog Illustrator
- Gallery Owner
- Corporate Curator
- Artist Representative
- Appraiser
- Layout Artist
- Exhibit Specialist

Gaining Experience With Your Degree

It’s never too early to start your search for experience. Ideally, you should begin at least one semester in advance. Make an appointment to talk with the University Career Center & The President’s Promise and/or your department internship coordinator and faculty advisor. Research shows that having an internship (or multiple internships) drastically increases your ability to obtain a full-time position upon graduation, especially since most employers use their intern pool as a direct talent pipeline. The most recent NACE Internship & Co-op Survey reported that 44.6% of employers’ hires came from their internship programs. The College of Arts & Humanities ensures that students can have an internship experience prior to graduating, offering numerous credit-granting courses for experiential education at the college and departmental level.

Internships enable students to gain a sense of what it would be like to work in a particular field as they develop marketable skills and establish contacts that may lead to a job offer upon graduation. To get started, visit the University Career Center & The President’s Promise website (www.Careers.umd.edu) and sign up for a Careers4Terps account, a free web-based job posting service, to search for internships and employment.