

# ART HISTORY

## What can I do with this major?

### AREAS

#### MUSEUMS AND GALLERIES

Administration  
Curatorial  
Preservation and Conservation  
Restoration  
Registrarial  
Collections Management  
Exhibit Design/Preparation  
Archive Management  
Art Authentication  
Education  
Publications  
Development  
Docent Coordination  
Public Relations  
Reproductions and Retailing

### EMPLOYERS

Art museums:  
    University, public, private  
Archives  
Historical societies  
Natural history museums  
Living history museums  
Galleries

### STRATEGIES

Gain relevant experience through internships or volunteer positions in museums or galleries.  
Visit museums around the country and world to gain exposure to art.  
Learn a foreign language and plan to study abroad.  
Supplement curriculum with courses in history, religion, anthropology, and classical civilizations.  
Most art historians will specialize in a period or region.  
Acquire strong skills in research, fundraising, speaking, writing, and an attention to detail.  
Plan to earn a graduate degree in art history, museum studies, or other related discipline depending on specific interests. Each specialty has varying qualifications and required training.  
Develop good interpersonal skills, including the ability to work well on teams.  
Read published resources provided by the American Association of Museums (AAM).

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#### ART SALES

Appraisal: Art and Estate  
Sales  
Antiques Dealing  
Art Authentication  
Public Relations

Self-employed  
Art dealers  
Galleries:  
    Profit and non-profit  
Museums  
Auction houses  
Specialty stores  
Interior design firms  
Insurance agencies

Learn to communicate effectively with a wide range of people. Take additional courses in interpersonal communication and public speaking.  
Pursue a business minor to increase knowledge of business principles. An understanding of public relations is also helpful.  
Prepare to work independently and be self-motivated.  
Plan to work irregular or long hours.  
Entrepreneurial spirit, including self-discipline and perseverance, are keys to success.  
Obtain sales experience through internships or summer and part-time jobs.  
Volunteer in museums, membership drives, local galleries, and community outreach programs.

**AREAS**

**EMPLOYERS**

**STRATEGIES**

**ART SALES CONTINUED**

Serve as a student assistant in a university gallery.  
Research certificate programs in appraisal studies to prepare for that field.  
Consider earning a minor in a foreign language.

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**EDUCATION**

Teaching  
Research  
Administration  
Library/Information Sciences  
Visual Resources Curating  
Student Affairs, e.g. Student Activities, Leadership Development, Admissions, Orientation, Career Services, Residence Life, Multi-cultural Affairs, Study Abroad, International Student Services  
Academic Affairs, e.g. Academic Support Services, Advising, Educational Advancement Programs, Honors Programs  
Community Education

Public and private schools  
Colleges and universities  
Art and design schools  
Art libraries  
Museums

Develop excellent speaking, writing, and research skills.  
Learn how to develop curriculum and workshops and how to use multimedia.  
Become an expert in a particular subject.  
Acquire a background in foreign languages such as German or French.  
Obtain degree and certification in art education for public school teaching.  
Ph.D. is required for teaching and research in colleges and universities. Teaching art history at this level is extremely competitive.  
Earn a master's degree in information science for librarianships or college student personnel/ higher education administration for other positions in colleges and universities.  
Maintain a high grade point average and secure strong faculty recommendations.  
Seek campus leadership positions such as peer mentor, orientation leader, or resident assistant.

## AREAS

## EMPLOYERS

## STRATEGIES

### MEDIA

Publishing  
Editing  
Free Lance Writing  
Art Criticism  
Set Design  
Costuming

Newspapers  
Art magazines and journals  
Textbook or commercial publishing houses  
News departments of local, public, and commercial radio and TV stations  
Syndicated radio services  
Internet sites  
Movie studios  
Production companies

Consider obtaining a minor or double major in journalism or broadcasting/electronic media, English, or theater depending upon interests.  
Develop excellent writing and editing skills along with knowledge of the history and culture of art.  
Learn web design skills to prepare for online work. This area of journalism is growing while print is declining.  
Become comfortable working in a deadline-oriented atmosphere.  
Work with campus or local newspapers, TV, or radio stations. Create a portfolio of work samples, especially those that have been published.  
Seek opportunities for recognition and networking through writing contests and freelance writing submissions.  
Complete internships, even if unpaid, in movie studios or other relevant organizations.

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### NONPROFIT

Administration  
Management  
Public Relations  
Development  
Research  
Grant Writing  
Direct Service

Local and national nonprofit agencies, e.g. Arts Education Partnership, National Arts Education Association, or Americans for the Arts  
Foundations, e.g. International Child Art Foundation, Andy Warhol Foundation for the Visual Arts  
Trade or professional associations  
Special interest groups  
Libraries  
Museums:  
University, public, private  
Historic sites, e.g. The Biltmore, Mount Vernon  
Historical societies

Gain experience through volunteering or completing an internship.  
Supplement curriculum with courses in business, psychology, sociology, or social work.  
Obtain leadership roles in relevant campus and community organizations.  
Develop strong communication and research skills.  
Learn how to write grants.  
Research organizations' values to find a good fit with yours. It is critical that you are knowledgeable about and committed to the work you're going to do.  
Investigate term of service or service corps positions as a way to gain entry into the field.  
Earn a graduate degree for more job opportunities and advancement.

**AREAS**

**EMPLOYERS**

**STRATEGIES**

**GOVERNMENT**

Public Affairs  
Writing/Editing  
Audiovisual Producing  
Museum Work  
Curating  
Development

State arts agencies  
Local, state, and national councils for the arts  
Historical commissions  
Museums/galleries, e.g. Smithsonian Institute, The National Gallery  
Film boards  
Libraries and archives  
Endowments/grant making agencies  
Cultural affairs agencies

Maintain a strong grade point average as many government programs are very competitive.  
Complete an internship with the federal government.  
There are a large number of specialized agencies within the federal government. Do extensive research to find the area that best fits your interests.  
Earn a graduate degree for advancement.  
Become familiar with the government application process. Utilize applicable websites and seek assistance from your college career center.  
Develop a network of contacts through informational interviews and referrals.

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**BUSINESS**

Management  
Sales  
Public Relations  
Market Research  
Creative Design

Product and service organizations  
Retail stores  
Hotels  
Restaurants  
Wholesalers  
Manufacturers  
Banks and financial institutions  
Insurance companies  
Real estate agencies  
Consulting firms  
Other business corporations

Develop strong analytical, verbal, and writing skills.  
Acquire a business minor or add business as a double major.  
Gain experience in an area of interest through internships or other employment.  
Obtain leadership roles in campus organizations.  
Demonstrate excellent interpersonal skills.  
Hone computer skills and learn software packages for databases, spreadsheets, and presentations.  
Be prepared to start in entry level positions, such as management trainee programs.

### **GENERAL INFORMATION**

- A bachelor's degree in art history is valuable for entry-level positions, but an advanced degree is usually necessary to attain competitive, upper-level positions in museums and historical sites.
- Explore more specific careers related to art history such as art appraisal or art authentication. Careers also exist with auction houses and the storage and transportation of art work, art investment, corporate curation, art law, and law enforcement.
- Develop career goals and then gain the necessary education, skills, and experiences to achieve them.
- Gain as much relevant experience as possible through volunteer positions and internships.
- Be prepared to relocate to the larger markets of metropolitan areas where more opportunities exist.
- Join art-related professional and student organizations.
- Develop skills in business management, computers, marketing, and other related areas to increase marketability.
- Gain experience in fundraising and grant writing techniques. Often research and nonprofit organizations must be funded in this manner.
- Seek exposure to art by visiting museums around the country and world. Learn about world history, cultures, and languages.
- Conduct informational interviews with professionals in areas of interest to learn more about opportunities and strategies for these areas. Learn to network.