



CENTER FOR CAREER & PROFESSIONAL DEVELOPMENT

Major Possibilities: Art History

Quick Facts

- Students will be prepared for application to MA and PhD programs in art history, as well as for work in areas of visual arts such as arts administration or museums, and in other academic disciplines (history, philosophy, etc.)
- Art historians develop skills in doing research; conceptualizing relationships between structure, agency, and culture; combining research and analysis to present arguments with clarity and economy; knowing how to plan and carry out long-term projects; and the ability to analyze and "read" images as carriers of implicit and explicit meaning. These skills are transferable to many contexts in our ever more visually-oriented world.
- The New York Arts Program offers Art History majors the opportunity to serve as apprentices or interns during a semester in New York City, working with faculty sponsors and taking related seminars. Internships help shape professional identities, develop 21st century career-readiness skills, and make meaning of the academic experience.

Art History Major Synopsis

Art history is a humanistic discipline that investigates objects and images through stylistic analysis, study of cultural and historical contexts, and theoretical models of interpretation. The Art History major enables the student to develop visual literacy and critically to assess the complex meanings of material culture within diverse settings. To foster such understanding, Art History courses take a broadly contextual approach by situating art objects in relation to their contemporary political and historical events, such as issues of race, gender, class, and power structures, through intellectual history and aesthetic criticism. All Art History courses are "writing attentive."

Sample Occupational Areas

The skills and abilities developed through a major in Art History serve as the building blocks for a wide range of occupations and career paths. The employment outlook for graduates is competitive, but jobs are available in art publishing, art journalism, libraries, public art councils, art galleries, and companies specializing in furniture and architectural restoration. There are some entry-level jobs in museum work, but most jobs in this field require advanced degrees.

ART MUSEUMS AND GALLERIES

Working in art museums and galleries requires knowledge of art, not necessarily the ability to create art. The difference between art museums and galleries is that an art gallery depends upon the sales of its artwork to stay open, while art museums receive government funding and private donations in order to function.

- **Museum Technicians**, commonly known as **Registrars**, help curators by preparing and taking care of museum items. Registrars may also answer questions from the public and help curators and outside scholars use the collections. Registrars usually need a bachelor's degree related to the museum's specialty, training in museum studies, or previous experience working in museums, particularly in designing exhibits.
- **Conservators** maintain and preserve works of art and other materials. They must be knowledgeable about art methods as well as the science behind preserving and restoring art. Museums and conservation firms employ conservators, but some conservators work on a freelance basis.
- **Curators** usually work with objects of cultural, biological, or historical significance. As they direct the acquisition, storage, and exhibition of collections, they also need to negotiate and authorize the purchase, sale, exchange, or loan of these collections. In addition, they are responsible for authenticating, evaluating and categorizing the specimens in a collection. Curators oversee and help conduct the institution's research projects and related educational programs. Today, an increasing part of a curator's duties involves fundraising and promotion, which may include the writing and reviewing of grant proposals, journal articles and publicity materials, as well as attending meetings, conventions, and civic events.
- **Archivists** collect, organize, and maintain control over a wide range of information deemed important enough for permanent safekeeping. This information takes many forms: photographs, films, video and sound recordings, and electronic data files in a wide variety of formats, as well as more traditional paper records, letters, and documents. Archivists mainly handle records and documents that are retained because of their importance and potential value in the future.

ARTS ADMINISTRATION

Non-profit arts organizations, like most for-profit companies, have a number of administrative, business, or management functions. These roles require people with creativity and an understanding and passion for the arts, as well as skills in a range of areas from finance and marketing to education. In a small company, an administrator is likely to cover a number of functions, marketing and managing performers/audiences to handling finance and insurance. In large companies, the role may be more specific to an area such as programming, education, or sponsorship. Over the last decade, arts management has become a growing field with increasing specialization and training. A number of new graduate training and certification programs have emerged. Some arts managers, for example, suggest eventually pursuing a business degree with a specialization in nonprofit management. Almost without exception, however, arts managers advise getting work-related experience first and considering graduate study later on. If you decide to investigate graduate study, begin by asking professionals what programs they think are valuable and respected in the field.

TEACHING

Teaching positions in higher education require at least a Master's degree (for community college) or a PhD for four-year school.

APPRAISAL

Appraisers use their knowledge of art, the market, and research skills to assess an artwork's dollar value, usually for tax, insurance or estate planning purposes. Appraisers could work for auction houses, insurance companies, or independently.

ART CONSULTING

Art consultants (working independently or for a firm) advise clients on art acquisition, planning, and maintenance of artwork.

Sample Job Titles

Antiquarian Book Trader	Art Journalist	Curatorial Consultant	Information Specialist
Antiquities Dealer	Art Law/Law Enforcement	Education Manager	Language Teacher
Archivist	Art Librarian	Estate and Art Appraiser	Museum Work / Preservation
Architectural Conservation	Arts Organization Consultant	Event Coordinator	Publisher
Art Consultant	Auction House Employee	Gallery Assistant	Marketing Research Executive
Art Investor	Corporate Curator	Historic Interpreter	Visual Resources Curator

Sample/Possible Internship Employers of SU Students

American Art Clay - Indianapolis, IN	Galerie W - Paris, France
Art Institute of Chicago	Kimbell Art Museum - Fort Worth, TX
Arthouse at the Jones Center - Austin, TX	Mabee-Gerrer Museum of Art - Shawnee, OK
Austin Museum of Art - Austin, TX	Mexic-Arte Museum - Austin, TX
Blanton Museum of Art - Austin, TX	Overland Partners Architects - San Antonio, TX
Bruce Pearson, Independent Artist - New York, NY	SU Special Collections - Georgetown, TX
Dougherty Arts Center - Austin, TX	The Metropolitan Museum of Art
Flatbed Press - Austin, TX	The Museum of Modern Art
Ford, Powell, & Carson Architects	Tribeza Magazine Williamson Museum - Georgetown, TX
	Women and Their Work - Austin, TX

Sample Full-Time Employers of SU Grads

Activity Specialist (Austin Parks and Rec, Dougherty Art Center)	Manager (Art360)
Discovery Guide (Children's Museum of Houston)	Photoarchivist (Texas State Preservation Board)
Executive Asst. to Director (Smithsonian National Portrait Gallery)	Program Assistant (Tampa Museum of Art)
Family Programs Assistant (Museum of Fine Arts, Houston)	Social Media & Content Marketing Coordinator (Wondercide)
Gallery Assistant (Mexican American Cultural Center)	Teacher (Teach For America)
Graphic Artist (Jacobs Engineering)	Visual Resources Collection Tech (Southwestern University)