

# CAREER OPTIONS IN History of Art and Visual Culture/Art History

## Teaching

- PhD in History of Art and Visual Culture/ Art History
- German, French and/or other appropriate languages
- Research oriented
- Maximum involvement with people
- Strong writing and communication skills essential
- Travel and study abroad may be important depending on field

## Museum Work

1. Curatorial
  - PhD in History of Art and Visual Culture/ Art normally expected, depending on the institution
  - German, French or other appropriate languages
  - Research oriented (may start out as research assistant)
  - Involvement with people, ability to collaborate
2. Education
  - MA in History of Art and Visual Culture/ Art History
  - Languages may be necessary, e.g. Spanish, in order to be able to work with an ethnically diverse audience
  - Some research depending on level of audience
  - Maximum involvement with people
  - Good communication skills essential
3. Exhibition installation
  - BA; MA may be helpful
  - No language necessary
  - No research
  - Some involvement with people
  - Some artistic training and mechanical skill
4. Administration
  - BA; MA in Museology and PhD for top positions
  - No languages necessary
  - No research except for fund-raising
  - Varying range of involvement with people
  - Business skills useful, including clerical skills
4. Reproductions and Retailing
  - BA required
  - No languages necessary
  - No research except perhaps in legal areas
  - Some to maximum involvement with people
  - Business, administrative, and communication skills necessary

- This area can include positions ranging from work in a museum store, to overseeing the selection, production and marketing of museum reproductions. If involved with the latter aspect, should have some familiarity with copyright law and artists' rights, though this could be acquired on the job. Also some design skills may be useful.

5. Conservation (see “Preservation and Conservation” or Architectural Conservation”)

### **Publishing**

- BA; MA or PhD useful but not necessary
- Languages often useful
- Research depends on position; copy editor–none; editor–some; writer–a lot
- Significant involvement with people
- Business and/or graphic design skills along with strong writing skills are essential depending on position; possibility of freelancing

### **Freelance Writing (Criticism, History of Art and Visual Culture/ Art History, Art-Related Travel, etc.)**

- BA in History of Art and Visual Culture/Art History; advanced degrees may help to broaden opportunities
- Languages may be necessary
- Research necessary
- Some involvement with people; may need to be aggressive in obtaining assignments or marketing work
- Excellent communication and writing skills
- High tolerance for economic uncertainty

### **Art Librarian**

- Master in Library Science, and usually an MA in History of Art and Visual Culture/Art History
- French, German, or other languages often necessary
- Some research covering a wide variety of topics
- Varying levels of involvement with people
- Good communication and writing skills
- Excellent administration/management skills
- Some computer and image technology skills
- Attention to detail

### **Visual Resource Materials Librarian**

- BA or MA in History of Art and Visual Culture/ Art History
- French, German, or other languages may be necessary
- Some involvement with people
- Knowledge of computer programs for slide libraries
- Knowledge of basic photographic techniques for the production of slides
- Openness to technology and technological change
- Attention to detail

### **Independent Producer: TV and Film Documentaries**

- BA; MA or beyond useful but not necessary
- Languages may be necessary
- Research necessary
- Maximum involvement with people
- Background in TV or film production; good business and writing skills; strong organizational skills

### **Preservation and Conservation**

- MA or beyond in History of Art and Visual Culture/ Art History with special training in conservation and restoration
- Languages may be useful
- Research oriented
- Some involvement with people
- Good background in chemistry and physics, as well as studio techniques

### **Architectural Conservation**

- BA; MA or beyond useful with a special knowledge of architectural traditions, including interior design; BA or MA in architecture and specialized training in conservation techniques for work at the highest level.
- Languages only necessary as one is involved with international projects
- Research often necessary
- Maximum involvement with people
- Depending on whether one is working as an employee of a governmental office, a not-for-profit group, or as a private consultant, knowledge of the law, zoning ordinance, estimating procedures, etc., can be necessary. A certain amount of political savvy also is useful particularly if one is attached to a government agency or not-for-profit group.

### **Art Gallery and Auction Houses (for profit—see below for non-profit)**

- BA; MA or PhD may be necessary depending on position and type of gallery
- Languages may be useful
- Depending on position can be research-oriented or not at all
- Maximum involvement with people
- Depending on position good business, marketing, communication and writing skills may be necessary; training in connoisseurship

### **Corporate Curator**

- BA; MA or PhD may be helpful
- Languages may be necessary depending on the nature of the collection
- Some research
- Some involvement with people
- Ability to communicate particularly with people not necessarily knowledgeable about art; may also need installation and interpretive skills; training in connoisseurship

### **Art Investment**

- BA in History of Art and Visual Culture/ Art History; BBA and/or MBA (may wish to take an MA in History of Art and Visual Culture/ Art History, too)
- No languages necessary
- Some research
- Some involvement with people
- Good business and investment skills; training in connoisseurship; good communication skills

### **Art Law (Conservation, Restoration, Artists' Rights, etc.)**

- BA and/or MA in History of Art and Visual Culture/ Art History; JD in contract law
- No languages necessary
- Research oriented
- Some involvement with people
- Good business and communication skills

### **Governmental Agencies**

(NEA, NEH, Archives of American Art, state and local arts councils, etc.)

- BA, MA and/or PhD can all be appropriate depending on duties
- Languages may be necessary
- Some to a great deal of research depending on position
- Some involvement with people
- Good communication and writing skills; political abilities

### **Artist Representative**

- BA in History of Art and Visual Culture or Studio, or equivalent knowledge and experience
- No languages necessary
- Some research of markets may be necessary
- Some to frequent involvement with people
- Business experience (marketing and sales), organizational skills, self-motivation, and a sensitivity to working with artists.

### **Art Gallery**

- BA; MA or Ph.D. may be helpful, but not necessary
- No languages necessary
- Research may be necessary
- Maximum involvement with people
- Good business, marketing, communication and writing skills; fundraising skills; flexibility; diplomacy; ability to motivate others; sensitivity to artists' needs; and, depending on the scale of the gallery, experience in exhibition design, curatorial work, sales, and art education can all be useful.