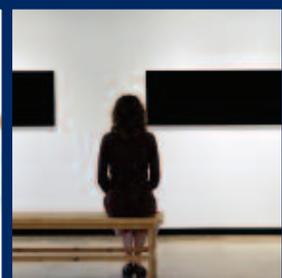


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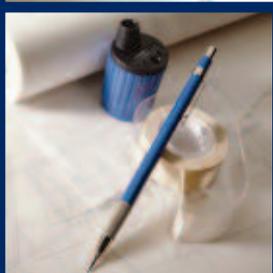


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# Art & Design

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# Job opportunities

New technology, public sector initiatives and developments in the creative industries are all creating opportunities for art and design graduates.



The arts embrace a wide range of activities including music, opera, dance, drama, literature, craft, and visual art and design. Although this guide is concerned specifically with art and design, there is a lot of collaboration among arts practitioners so you will find it useful to understand how creative skills are applied in a range of employment.

The audio-visual industry is a fast-growing sector which depends on the skills of the workforce being kept up to date, particularly in the use of ICT. Rapid technological developments mean that graduates need to constantly maintain and enhance their skills to ensure continued employment and to keep competitive in an increasingly global market. For more information on this area of work, see *gradireland Journalism & Media*, available to download from [gradireland.com/publications](https://gradireland.com/publications).

Other areas of art and design, particularly fine and applied arts and crafts, are more reliant on opportunities supported through public sector initiatives. For example, government departments, such as the Department of Culture, Arts and Leisure in Northern Ireland and the Department of Arts, Sport and Tourism in the Republic, have strategic aims for increasing participation in and improving access to the arts. This can mean improving the quality of arts infrastructure or promoting and celebrating creativity.

These strategic initiatives are carried out in collaboration with the respective Arts Councils of Northern Ireland and the Republic who themselves

work with a range of arts organisations to deliver world-class arts and cultural facilities. Other Government departments, particularly those involved with education, enterprise and employment, aim to 'harness' creativity, bringing it into the mainstream of cultural, educational, training and economic areas. The skills of artists and designers are in demand in a range of sectors, such as education, enterprise and culture, where creativity and entrepreneurship are seen as central to meeting the challenges of a global economy.

### Trends for the future

The future demand for artist and designer skills will depend on economic growth, changing patterns of demand and changing patterns of doing business (for example in technology). These are likely to result in a demand for new skills within the workforce.

The interface with information and communication technologies is predicted to have a major impact on the media, art and design industries over the next ten years. The audio-visual industry will be a key element in the emerging information and knowledge economy and there is an expected demand for people with web design and specific software applications skills.

The term 'creative industries' does not just mean traditional sectors such as advertising, design, music and film. Increasingly it includes new



types of work, bringing these traditional sectors together with technological innovation and new communication platforms. These may include computer games incorporating original music and film content; websites incorporating TV, animation and music; and interactive television over an internet platform.

The nature of these areas of work means that practitioners will need to create and innovate through new products and services, networking and developing business and entrepreneurial skills. An increasing emphasis on collaborative projects means they will also need to seek out expertise from other artists and businesses.

These changes mean that professional development will become increasingly important. Practitioners will need greater expertise in professional practice – everything from pricing to marketing and copyright to what to put in a contractual arrangement. And as groups of artists and designers increasingly manage short-term initiatives funded by local public sector and private sector sponsorship they will also need project management and people management skills.

Flexible and less formal working patterns are likely to continue across the media, art and design sectors, particularly with the increase in small entrepreneurial companies and self-employed artists or designer-makers that are the norm in the industry.



# What to expect after graduation

A job contract, self-employment and portfolio working are among your choices after you graduate.

Graduates from art and design disciplines enter a diverse range of industries in the months immediately after graduation, ranging from private sector employers (eg marketing, sales and advertising) to public sector services (eg education and culture).

Statistics collected by universities show that art graduates' first destination after university may be a short-term or interim choice as they explore the options during this early period. Graduates from these disciplines tend to secure their preferred option at a later stage compared to their peers in other disciplines. In particular, many art and design graduates work part time while developing their creative work or will combine employment with further study.

Graduates of fine arts and applied arts and crafts often pursue postgraduate study combined with self-employed practice as designer-makers. This reflects the need to pursue study within a short time of completing a degree, usually to develop specific vocational or technical skills.

Those with specialist vocationally related design degrees secure longer term full-time employment contracts locally and outside Ireland. However, they will still need to develop skills that secure employability.

'Portfolio working' is becoming the norm, and artists and designers are adept at finding ways to keep sight of their artistic objectives while locating the money to pay the bills.

## Types of job

Fine and applied arts and crafts graduates move into practice as artists, painters, and arts and craft designer-makers, as well as teachers or art technicians. More vocationally specific design graduates progress to interior designer, junior designer, product developer or buyer where interior/spatial, product or industrial design have been degree subjects. Graphic design and communications graduates are employed as creative and graphic designers, illustrators and artistic directors.

Not surprisingly, given the flexibility and need for collaboration with other professionals, media, art and design graduates find employment outside conventional arts and design employers. Some typical employers include retail outlets, community, educational and training providers, specialist publishers, web and multimedia design services, media communications companies, and advertising and publishing companies.

## Training and development

Most artists continue to practise, possibly combined with temporary and part-time employment, while pursuing further courses for their own professional development. Examples of further training following a primary degree are teacher training; computing and multimedia; higher degrees in fine arts and culture

## WORKING WITH OTHER CREATIVE PEOPLE

**Name** Geraldine Lane

**Job** Video Tutor, Media Initiative Collective (MIC)

**Degree** Fine Art (2005)



In college I specialised in video in my second year, and the technical facilities in the college meant that I was proficient in using digital video cameras and editing in Final Cut Pro, which was a great help when it came to looking for a job.

The MIC Project is a long-term training course primarily aimed at early school leavers in Dublin. We teach video production, sound engineering, photography and design. The job is really interesting and varied. Even though my main job is to tutor the trainees in video production, I also edit videos for organisations in the area.

A job like this can support your career as an artist. I'm still making art work in my spare time, and working with and meeting other creative people through my job is very encouraging. We also run a European art exchange programme, which also helps me keep involved in art practice.

There is good support in this job for my own personal development and learning. I've completed a number of training courses, one in facilitation skills and two shorter courses that have improved my skills in film-scriptwriting and storyboarding.

### Advice for graduates

Be open to any opportunities that come along and don't discount a job because you think it isn't in your area of expertise. If you really aren't qualified for it you'll find out soon enough, but most jobs in this area require multi-skilled employees. I regularly liaise with youth workers, people working in the film industry, and artists, so there are plenty of chances to keep up with what's going on in the art/film/community sector.

## ORGANISING FASHION SHOWS

**Name** Anne Babel

**Job** Assistant General Manager and Personal Assistant to Hussein Chalayan

**Degree** Fashion Design (2006)



My work generally consists of the administration side of a design studio. As Hussein Chalayan's work is frequently exhibited all around the world, I coordinate quite a lot of the correspondence with museums and curators. A large part of my job has to do with show preparation: printing and sending out invitations, arranging seating plans and organising venues. After each show there are tasks such as dealing with sales orders. But on a day-to-day basis my work is centred on regular office duties such as responding to e-mails, answering calls and organising the studio space properly.

Although it is very different from what I trained for, it is fascinating to understand the clockwork that drives this company. And the biggest pleasure is to work as the direct assistant to a designer I have admired for such a long time.

I think that fashion is something you pursue because your heart is in it, but it does demand a huge amount of time, dedication and determination. At college I found this discouraging, but I can now see that this experience is necessary as it definitely doesn't get easier in the real world.

I selected the least specialised area in the fashion industry for myself, ready-to-wear womenswear, but I discovered the limitations of such a broad field very quickly. I would always recommend that students learn some form of specialisation, such as textiles, print or advanced pattern cutting. It is important to have something to distinguish yourself.

Work experience is hugely important to help you decide what you want to do – or eliminate what you are not interested in. And, from my experience, jobs often arise out of internships.

## SUCCESS AS A FASHION DESIGNER

**Name** Joanne Hynes

**Job** Fashion Designer

**Degree** Fashion Design (1999)

Joanne Hynes says, 'My degree prepared me for the fashion industry both personally and creatively and I will always remember it as the most creative, enjoyable and challenging time. It was hard work but I felt prepared for the industry and confident about my future within the cut-throat fashion industry.'

Immediately after graduating, in September 1999, Joanne went on to do a Masters in Women's Fashion, graduating in 2001. Her graduate collection welcomed orders from stores in LA, London, Japan, Dubai, Belgium and Ireland.

The Joanne Hynes label was officially established in September 2003, showing her first solo Spring 2004 catwalk show in Dublin and at London Fashion Week. She previewed her Autumn 2004 Collection in London and during Paris Fashion Week. In September 2004 she presented Spring 2005 during Paris Fashion Week. Alongside the clothing, the Joanne Hynes label is known for trademark neckpieces and accessories. In 2004, Joanne's bag was nominated as bag of the season in *Harpers & Queen* Magazine.

Joanne's Spring 2006 catwalk showed at the Irish Embassy in Paris, London and Dublin Fashion Weeks, and in the same year she launched a diffusion range called 'Joanne Hynes For Topshop'. In February 2006 Joanne was awarded the Brown Thomas 'Irish Designer of the Season'. In September 2006, she had a catwalk show at the Irish Embassy in Paris to international buyers and press.

Joanne Hynes' collections feature extensively in *Vogue*, *Elle*, *Irish Tatler*, and many more. Joanne's clientele includes Rosin Murphy from Moloko, Natalie Imbruglia and The Sugababes.

## BUILDING A SUCCESSFUL BUSINESS

**Name** Niamh Brown

**Job** Creative Director,  
Designers Ink

**Degree** Design in Visual  
Communications (1996)



After gaining valuable experience working in design and advertising, Niamh founded Limerick-based Designers Ink Brand & Design Consultants in 1999. She now employs a staff of four, working on branding, corporate identity, packaging design, promotional material, multimedia, web and advertising. The company's clients include Kerry Foods, Island Theatre Company, RTE Lyric FM, and University of Limerick.

Designers Ink became the first design company in the mid-West region to win a prestigious Irish Design Effectiveness Award for the Branding of Munster Rugby: 'We were involved in all aspects of the branding from the initial logo concept and design to its implementation on all the official merchandise and corporate literature.'

This project led to Designers Ink being chosen to re-brand Kildare GAA. Niamh says, 'I feel that the success of these projects has been due to the importance we place on research, which is one of the key areas emphasised by lecturers in the School of Art & Design.'

Another achievement was when Enterprise Ireland asked Niamh to participate in their Design Clinics as a design consultant. This gave the opportunity to talk about branding and design to small businesses in seminars around the country.

Niamh feels that the strong emphasis placed on lateral thinking and conceptual development at the School of Art and Design has proved invaluable in her design career. She personally oversees all projects carried out in Designers Ink and considers this a key factor in the creative and design success of the company.

# Getting a job: the creative career search

Use your creative skills to research job opportunities and broaden your networks.

A creative career search involves a creative, active approach to researching career opportunities and making applications. Rather than waiting for an opportunity to appear before making an application, use your initiative. Not everybody will use all the aspects of creative career searching. You can use a 'pick and mix' approach to choose the most useful aspects; this will boost the effectiveness of your professional development.

## Why use a creative career search?

The creative career search is particularly important for visual artists and designers when there is much competition for relatively few jobs, or for the more popular jobs such as those in the media or culture sectors. In these sectors an understanding of the recruitment or commissioning process is key.

## Step one – doing your research

This stage is essential because any potential employer or funding body will be interested in you showing them that you have at least gone to the trouble of finding out the basics. Find out as much as you can about the work in which you are interested and focus on the sector you are targeting (community, media, design practices, etc):

- Use books, videos and reference sources on the internet.
- Read relevant trade, national and local press and directories.
- Use libraries (public, academic and business).

## Step two – networking

Artists and designers nowadays are familiar with professional networking as part of their work, collaborating across geographical and art-form boundaries. Even when you are just starting your career, you are already within a network of artists and designers:

- university staff
- guest speakers on campus



- relatives, family friends
- colleagues inside and outside university.

Remember when networking that your first contact does not need to be a person actually doing the work that you want to do, but they might be able to put you in touch with the right person. This is what networking is all about: once you've found the first people to start your network, others will begin to fall into place.

Be proactive in developing and maintaining contacts – this will inform you on making the right career choice. Most visual artists enjoy talking about their work and are usually happy to help others who show interest.

### Step three – information interviewing

'Information interviewing' is basically talking to people about the work they do and it can be a great help in making decisions. It will enable you to:

- gather information about artists' careers
- learn what types of opportunities exist in a given field or organisation
- develop contacts with key people who either do the contracting or who know those who do.

Speaking to a variety of professionals in a non-threatening, open-ended situation will build your confidence and improve your interview skills.

Remember, you are not asking the person for a job: you are gathering information on which to make choices. Explain how you obtained the person's name, for example the professional arts circle you have or a friend who works in the same field of work. Unless the person has asked you to call them directly, it is best to write a letter or send an e-mail requesting a meeting. Follow up your letter with a phone call to set the appointment time, asking for just a few minutes.

Remember to do your research first, so that you come across to your new contact as a clued-in

and interested person over whom it's worth taking time and trouble. Always dress appropriately and professionally (quick judgements are made at the first visual impact). Take a notebook in which you have prepared the questions you want to ask and where you can record information gathered. Be prepared to take the lead in the conversation, if necessary. Remember, you are interviewing. Respect the person's time, and do not wear out your welcome.

Recognise that everyone has their own attitudes, biases and feelings, which must be evaluated. By talking to several people, you will gain a variety of opinions.

### Step four – promotional approaches

Speculative applications are those you make when you don't know whether there is an opportunity but which still allow you to promote yourself.

The old-fashioned method is to send out lots of CVs but generally the response rate is low. There are, however, a number of techniques you can use to increase this response rate dramatically. Some people use a shortened, one-sided CV for promotional approaches – a busy manager may be more likely to read this than a longer document. You might use the following:

- business stationery – headed paper, business cards and postcards
- brochures – visual illustration of your ability
- showreels – keep them short (about three minutes)
- portfolio – relevant to the client and containing recent examples of work.

Follow up with a phone call, letter or even a 'thank you' card that gives you an opportunity to update people on your own work.

# Further information

For web-based networking, information and support, use these sources in addition to your professional and trade network.



- 4 Talent <http://northernireland.ideasfactory.com> Channel 4's talent website.
- Arts & Business [www.aandb.org.uk](http://www.aandb.org.uk) Networks connecting arts and business in the UK.
- Arts and Disability Forum [www.adf.ie](http://www.adf.ie) Voluntary organisation.
- Arts Councils [www.artscouncil.ie](http://www.artscouncil.ie) and [www.artscouncil-ni.org](http://www.artscouncil-ni.org)
- Axis [www.axisweb.org](http://www.axisweb.org) Online resource for information about contemporary art and artists.
- Business 2 Arts [www.business2arts.ie](http://www.business2arts.ie) Connecting arts and business in ROI.
- Community Arts Forum [www.caf.ie](http://www.caf.ie) Umbrella body for community arts in Northern Ireland.
- Crafts Council of Ireland [www.ccoi.ie](http://www.ccoi.ie) Design and economic development organisation for the craft industry in Ireland.
- Creative & Cultural Skills [www.ccskills.org.uk](http://www.ccskills.org.uk) Sector Skills Council for advertising, crafts, cultural heritage, design, music, performing, literacy and visual arts.
- Creative Futures [www.creativefutures.cadise.ac.uk](http://www.creativefutures.cadise.ac.uk) Specialist careers resource for creative and performing arts, design and communication students and graduates.
- Creative Ireland [www.creativeireland.com](http://www.creativeireland.com) Directory, jobs and forum.
- Design Ireland [www.designireland.ie](http://www.designireland.ie) Representative body for the Irish design community.
- Institute of Designers in Ireland [www.idi-design.ie](http://www.idi-design.ie) Professional body for Irish designers.
- The Artists Information Company [www.a-n.co.uk](http://www.a-n.co.uk) Magazine looking at artists' practice.
- The National Campaign for the Arts [www.artscampaign.org.uk](http://www.artscampaign.org.uk) UK-wide voice for the arts.
- Visual Artists Ireland [www.visualartists.ie](http://www.visualartists.ie) All-Ireland body for professional visual artists.
- Voluntary Arts Ireland [www.vaireland.org](http://www.vaireland.org) A charity that encourages people to take part in arts or crafts.
- VSA Arts [www.vsarts.org](http://www.vsarts.org) Non-profit organisation for people with disabilities to learn through, participate in and enjoy the arts.



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