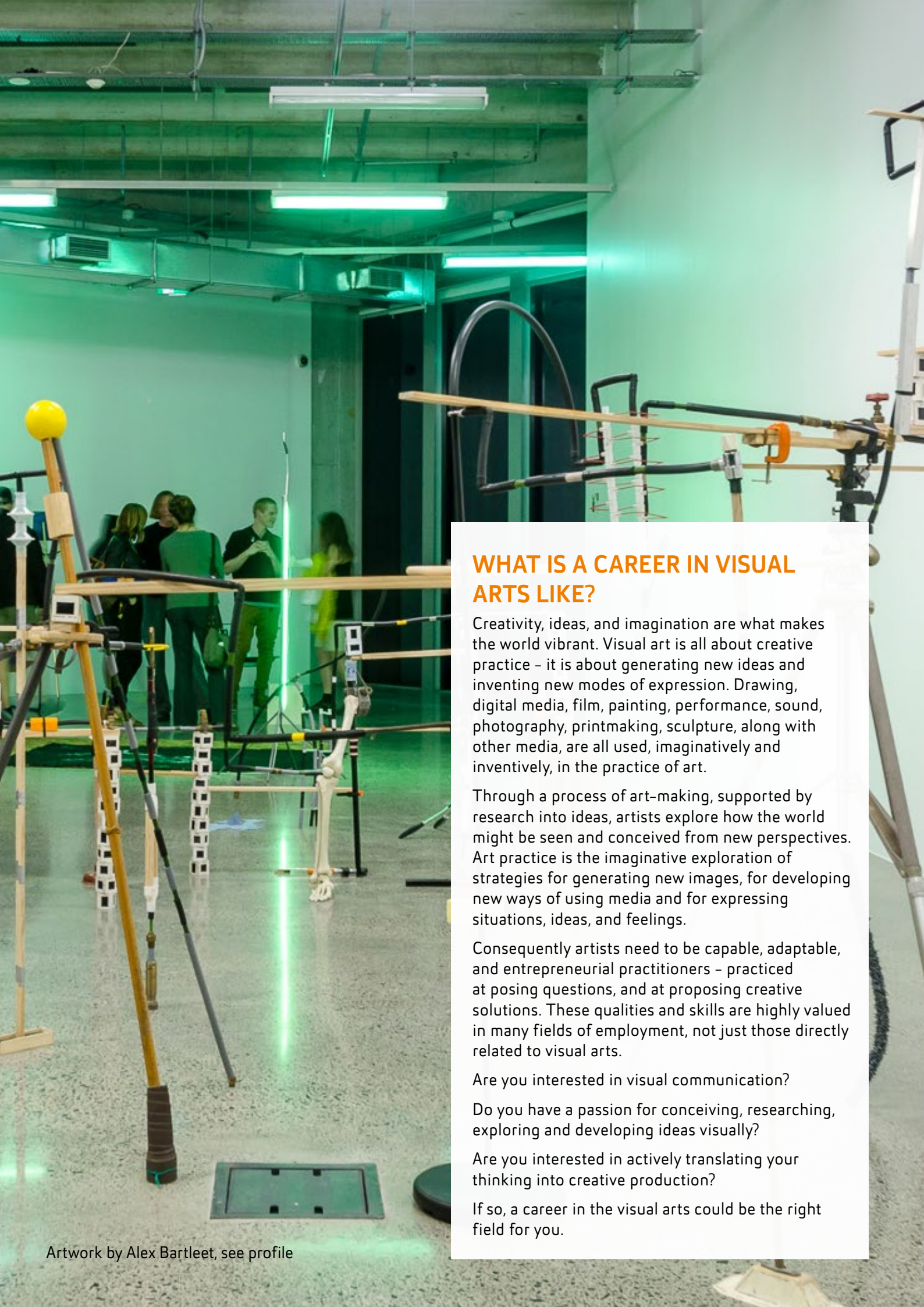


A FUTURE IN VISUAL ARTS

AUT





WHAT IS A CAREER IN VISUAL ARTS LIKE?

Creativity, ideas, and imagination are what makes the world vibrant. Visual art is all about creative practice – it is about generating new ideas and inventing new modes of expression. Drawing, digital media, film, painting, performance, sound, photography, printmaking, sculpture, along with other media, are all used, imaginatively and inventively, in the practice of art.

Through a process of art-making, supported by research into ideas, artists explore how the world might be seen and conceived from new perspectives. Art practice is the imaginative exploration of strategies for generating new images, for developing new ways of using media and for expressing situations, ideas, and feelings.

Consequently artists need to be capable, adaptable, and entrepreneurial practitioners – practiced at posing questions, and at proposing creative solutions. These qualities and skills are highly valued in many fields of employment, not just those directly related to visual arts.

Are you interested in visual communication?

Do you have a passion for conceiving, researching, exploring and developing ideas visually?

Are you interested in actively translating your thinking into creative production?

If so, a career in the visual arts could be the right field for you.

OUTLOOK AND TRENDS

Creative industries' contribution to the economy on the rise

Employers are increasingly looking for people who can think and perform creatively, laterally, quickly and independently. This opens many potential avenues of employment and careers for visual artists within what is often referred to as the creative or cultural industries – a global growth area of employment.

New Zealand's creative industries are a significant contributor to national employment with approximately 20,000 New Zealanders directly employed in these industries.

When wider industry employment is taken into account, this number more than doubles to almost 42,000 full-time equivalent jobs.

Sources: www.wecreate.org.nz, UNESCO's 'Creative Economy' Report

WeCreate supports creative industries

WeCreate was launched in July 2014 in New Zealand with the objective of increasing opportunities and employment for the creative industries. It aims to be the unified voice for the creative sector by gaining investment, nurturing innovation and increasing collaboration and output, while also providing business skills for creatives.

Portfolio careers for visual arts professionals

Rather than having a single full-time job, visual arts graduates tend to have what is referred to as a 'portfolio career', which is the combination of multiple jobs across several paid activities. These activities are often complementary. For example, someone who enjoys painting, writing, and graphic design may make a living through each of these interests combined. A portfolio career can take a variety of different and flexible structures. For instance, you can be fully independent (freelance, self-employed) or have a combination of self-employment and part-time and/or temporary jobs.

- Private and public galleries and museums need employees for positions involving curating, education, developing public programmes, exhibition installation, technical maintenance, management, marketing.
- The film and television industry requires creatives for varied roles such as set design and construction, lighting, prop design and production, art department coordinator, concept artist and editor.
- Artists are able to develop opportunities within the photographic industries by either working independently for large or small advertising agencies and magazines, or working for specific businesses, including weddings and portraiture, or developing knowledge in specialist areas such as medicine.
- Designers often employ artists as part of their concept teams in design studios, as they bring a lateral approach to the collaborative team environment. Their roles vary, and can include any number of roles with the team. Many become creative directors, production managers, art directors, and editors.

CAREER ROLE EXAMPLES

Artist – self employed – An artist is a multi-layered job involving research, creativity, artistic production, self-promotion, publishing and exhibiting.

Arts administrator – Involves the business operations of an arts organisation. Arts administrators develop budgets, hire and manage staff, engage in marketing and fund raising, communicate with artists, and develop community and public relations.

Curator – Develops, maintains, researches and exhibits collections for museums, art galleries and artists. Researches and writes information for collections/exhibitions, gives public talks. Liaises with artists, art dealers, and other museums or galleries to source and acquire items for exhibitions and collections.

Arts educator – Develops public and educational programmes for a museum or gallery. Organises and runs a diverse range of public events for individuals, families, students and children that involves lectures, artist-led floor talks, workshops and symposia.

Exhibition technician – Works with curators, artists and other gallery staff in the installation and maintenance of in-house, travelling and off-site exhibitions. Sometimes also involves exhibition design, lighting and conservation.

Art teacher (secondary* and tertiary) – Engages and inspires student pursuit of visual arts education. Monitors and assesses student progress, provides feedback, maintains accurate records. Collaborates with colleagues, sharing ideas, teaching strategies, while developing and planning coursework in accordance with learning objectives. Research and professional development is also part of teaching – teachers continue to maintain, build and develop their own art practice.

*After completion of a Graduate Diploma in Teaching

WORK SETTINGS

The visual arts/creative sector spans several professions and industries, so artists find work opportunities in a range of settings. These may include working for other organisations – such as galleries or museums, advertising agencies, magazines, film companies, schools and universities – or working in a self-employed capacity for clients. Here are examples of potential work scenarios for visual arts graduates:

- Self-employed artists earn income by selling their work through galleries, as well as working from commissions via museums, private corporations and community groups.

Alternative career options

Visual arts graduates may also enter roles requiring creative problem solving talent. For example, artists are employed by advertising and marketing industries as illustrators, designers, researchers, photographers and web developers.

SKILLS AND KNOWLEDGE

- Creative capacity to imagine, research, analyse and produce art works utilising varied media and concepts.
- Awareness of contemporary and historical art and exhibition practices, as well as specialised subject and media areas.
- Critical thinking and problem solving skills related to the implementation of visual strategies as related to artworks and exhibitions.
- Project/exhibition management – working within time and budget constraints, researching, marketing, and finding funding sources.
- Written and oral communication.
- Specific photographic/film awareness, including cameras, lighting control and effects, lenses, digital image processing using software such as Photoshop/Lightroom, and editing software such as Final Cut Pro/Premiere Pro/After Effects.
- Technical exhibition installation skills, including building and construction, digital media, handling of artworks, lighting etc.
- Software knowledge related to design (Illustrator, InDesign) and to web development coding (CSS, HTML, PHP).
- 3D workshop skills in dry areas and wetlabs, including wood and metal fabrication and casting.

PERSONAL QUALITIES

- Creative, curious and imaginative.
- Collaborative and able to relate well to people from diverse backgrounds.
- Patient, self-motivated, disciplined and entrepreneurial.
- Confident, enthusiastic.
- Flexible and able to work under pressure.



SALARY GUIDE

What you earn as a visual artist depends on your abilities, your productivity and the way you choose to approach employment.

	Salary (per year)
Visual artist	min wage – \$100,000 +, depending on ability and reputation
Curator at regional museums or galleries	\$45,000 – \$70,000
Senior curator with 5+ years' experience	\$70,000 – \$95,000 (5 years +)
Photographer	\$35,000 – \$100,000

Sources: New Zealand Institute of Professional Photography/Careers New Zealand.

Salary range is indicative of the New Zealand job market at the time of publication (mid 2016) and should only be seen as a guideline.

THE AUT APPROACH

Throughout the visual arts degree, students are presented with 'real-world' exhibiting opportunities through the professional practice paper, which involves industry and community based learning in the creation of a professional body of work. Students also have to produce a final third year graduating exhibition.

The Art+Design Department has state of the art facilities and equipment, including 3D Labs, screen printing, book binding, photographic darkrooms and lighting studios, digital printing and scanning, motion capture, moving image, audio design, textile design laboratory.

Through MESH (the Art+Design minor programme), students gain additional expertise in a subject of their choosing.

AUT places particular importance on Tikanga Maori in visual art, and part of the course takes place on the AUT marae.

FURTHER STUDY OPTIONS

Further study in visual arts is available at postgraduate level, including the Master of Visual Arts, Master of Philosophy and Doctor of Philosophy. There are also postgraduate professional programmes in design and cultural and creative practice.

Staff specialisations and research areas include expanded drawing, painting, photography, printmaking, sculpture, installation, Kaupapa Māori research, analogue and digital film-making, and social art practice.



ALEX BARTLEET

Artist

Bachelor of Visual Arts, Postgraduate Diploma in Creative Advertising and Master of Art and Design (Honours) First Class

"I chose to do visual arts simply because I have always been a visual person. Through making art, I explore the potential of everyday things and challenge existing perceptions we have toward them. I create sculptures and installation works using a range of materials including familiar functional objects, which are re-contextualised as artworks.

I am currently living in London using my time here to research and generate artworks for an exhibition. Every day differs depending on my projects. I generally break my week into administration days and making days (studio time). Often I designate two days to administration and exploring new opportunities for exhibitions, residencies and awards. The other three days I make artworks, buy materials and supplies and do other exhibition preparation tasks. A solo exhibition can take between 6-12 months to prepare depending on other upcoming exhibitions.

I often do freelance contract jobs to sustain an income between exhibitions. These jobs could include art tutoring, graphic and web design work, event based installations, and arts festivals. The flexible hours of these roles mean I can work around my art practice.

When preparing for an exhibition, you have to be prepared for a few late nights and some physically draining days, but this all adds to the excitement of having an exhibition opening and celebrating at the end of it all.

It is very satisfying when the work pays off - I've won a couple of emerging artist awards which have had cash prizes. Being selected for these awards has been a boost for my art practice and confidence as a young artist establishing a career.

Self-motivation can be a big challenge as a solo artist. I often discuss projects with artist peers and mentors - however I spend most of the working week alone in my studio and it can be difficult to maintain a decent routine. It is often beneficial to set a strict weekly schedule so that you don't fall into bad habits or miss deadlines.

I am currently planning a solo exhibition for when I return to New Zealand at The Pah Homestead in Auckland. I am also pursuing several residency opportunities in Europe leading up to my exhibition. I would like to continue my research and art practice in the future and explore new opportunities that support my career as an artist."

USEFUL WEBSITES

The Big Idea

www.thebigidea.nz

Art and Education

www.artandeducation.net

WeCreate

www.wecreate.org.nz

FURTHER INFORMATION


To find out more information about the Bachelor of Visual Arts, please visit our website:

www.aut.ac.nz/visual-arts

FUTURE STUDENTS

Contact the Future Student Advisory team for more information: www.aut.ac.nz/enquire

futurestudents@aut.ac.nz

 @AUTFutureStudents

CURRENT AUT STUDENTS

Contact the Student Hub Advisors team for more information: 0800 AUT UNI (0800 288 864)

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For other Future Career Sheets visit:

www.aut.ac.nz/careersheets


For employability and career support, AUT students can book an appointment through

<https://elab.aut.ac.nz/>

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The information contained in this career sheet is correct at time of printing, August 2019.

