

New study finds limited overlap between visual and performing arts graduates and working as an artist

Statistical Insights on the Arts

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Educating artists, the 45th report in the *Statistical Insights on the Arts* series, has a two-pronged goal: 1) to examine the post-secondary educational qualifications of artists in Canada; and 2) to provide information about the occupations and workforce characteristics of graduates of post-secondary arts programs.

28% of artists graduated from a visual or performing arts program

According to data from the 2011 National Household Survey, artists come from a diverse array of educational backgrounds. Over one-quarter of the 134,500 Canadian artists 25 or older (28%) graduated from a post-secondary visual or performing arts program. Three other groups of post-secondary programs each account for 5% or 6% of artists: education (6%); communications and journalism (also 6%); and business, management, and marketing (5%).

11% of visual and performing arts graduates work as artists

There are 396,400 Canadians 25 or older who have completed post-secondary studies in a visual or

Data sources and inspiration

Data for the report are drawn from the National Household Survey (2011) and the National Graduates Survey (2009/10 graduates, surveyed in 2013).

Two recent American reports were influential in the framing of this report: *Artists Report Back: A National Study on the Lives of Art Graduates and Working Artists and Making It Work: The Education and Employment of Recent Arts Graduates*. An older Statistics Canada article (*Labour market outcomes of arts and culture graduates*) was also helpful in the development of this report.

performing arts program, representing 2.9% of all post-secondary graduates 25 or older.

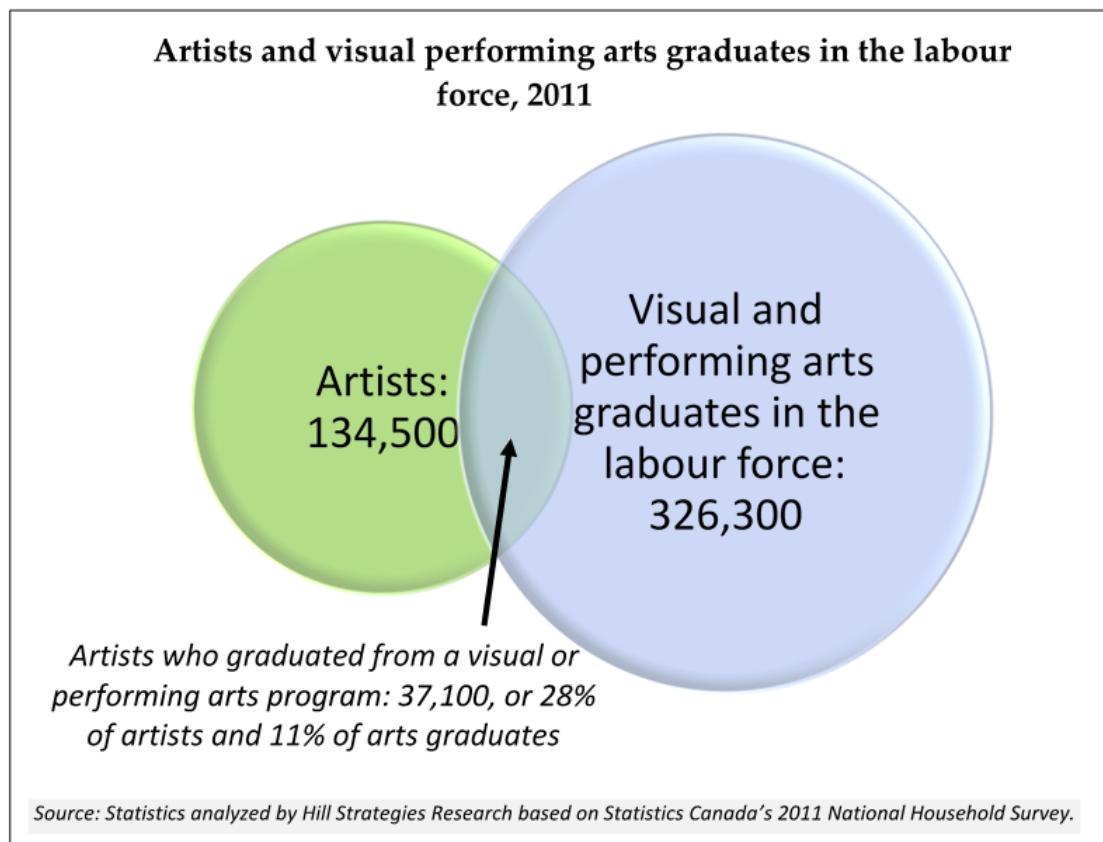
Eleven percent of the visual and performing arts graduates who were in the labour force in May of 2011 worked as artists. Another 20% worked in other occupations within the broad category of arts, culture, recreation, or sports.

Between 10% and 20% of visual and performing arts graduates worked in sales and service occupations (18%), business, finance, and administration occupations (14%), management occupations (11%), and occupations in education, law and social, community, or government services (also 11%).

Limited overlap between visual and performing arts graduates and working as an artist

One of the key findings of the report is that there is limited overlap between visual and performing arts graduates and working as an artist, as shown in the figure below:

- 28% of the 134,500 Canadian artists 25 or older graduated from a post-secondary visual or performing arts program.
- 11% of the 326,300 visual and performing arts graduates who were in the labour force in May of 2011 worked as artists.



Signs of underemployment among recent arts and communications graduates

Statistics Canada's National Graduates Survey provides detailed information about post-secondary graduates in 2009/10 using an aggregated combination of educational programs. In the National Graduates Survey, the closest grouping for "arts graduates" is those who graduated from a visual or performing arts program as well as those who graduated from a communications technology program at the post-secondary level. There are 16,100 Canadians who, in 2009/10, graduated from an arts or communications program.

While the data in the report are not definitive, recent arts and communications graduates may be underemployed compared with other recent post-secondary graduates. Three years after their graduation, arts and communications graduates are much less likely than all graduates to hold a job that is closely related to their studies (36% vs. 58%). Similarly, only 46% of arts and communications graduates indicated that the job they held at the time of the survey (2013) was the job that they had hoped to have after graduating, compared with 62% of all graduates.

Furthermore, arts and communications graduates are much more likely than other graduates to have held a low-paying position at the time of the survey: 23% of arts and communications graduates worked at a job with gross annual earnings below \$20,000, compared with 10% of all graduates. Arts and communications graduates are much more likely than other graduates to be employed in sales and service occupations (22% vs. 13%).

Despite these labour market challenges, 72% of recent arts and communications graduates would choose the same program of studies again. This is only slightly less than the percentage of all graduates (76%).

Media contact

For media interviews, please contact Mr. Kelly Hill, President of Hill Strategies Research, Hamilton, Ontario, at kelly@hillstrategies.com or 1-877-445-5494, ext. 1.

Hill Strategies Research is a Canadian company that specializes in applying social science research methods to the arts sector. Hill Strategies has extensive experience conducting, interpreting, and communicating quantitative and qualitative analysis in the arts.

Full report also available

... on the websites of Hill Strategies Research (<http://www.hillstrategies.com>), the Canada Council for the Arts (www.canadacouncil.ca), and the Ontario Arts Council (www.arts.on.ca).