What can I do with a degree in Art History and Theory?

Art History and Theory.

Career planning: what do I need to know?
Knowledge of yourself is important for career decision making. Start by looking at your personal goals, abilities, values and interests to explore study and career options that are relevant to you. Some of these may change over time, so it is important to self-reflect and evaluate your career on an ongoing basis.

What do employers look for?
Many employers look for generic skills such as communication, customer-focus, cultural awareness and teamwork. With technology and globalisation changing the nature of society, skills such as resilience, problem solving and adaptability are valuable at work as well as in life.

How can I develop these skills?
• Some skills are developed through your degree
• Extra-curricular activities can help, for example getting involved in clubs, mentoring, cultural groups, part-time work or volunteering
• Be open to professional and personal development opportunities. Whether it is undertaking an internship, overseas exchange, skills seminar, or joining an industry group — these activities will enhance your employability.

What is Art History and Theory?
We are constantly surrounded by objects and images: these things have meanings, and affect our experiences. Art History helps you to find messages encoded within the visual world, and to think about the effects they have in and on society. In our courses, we study a range of artworks and objects – including paintings, moving images, crafts and everyday things – and these provide insights into a variety of places, histories and cultures.

The ‘visual literacy’ Art History courses develop is an extremely useful skill – highly applicable to many other subjects of study, and to a range of different career paths. Studying Art History also offers students the chance to develop expertise in how to look at things in detail, and to get the most out of what can be seen.
What skills have UC graduates gained?

Through their Art History and Theory degree, graduates develop a valuable set of skills that are transferable to a range of careers. These skills include:

- Highly developed skills in visual analysis and interpretation
- Knowledge of history, literature, philosophy, and religion as it relates to works of art and architecture
- Interpretive and analytical thinking
- Understanding of the influences on contemporary society
- Thinking critically and creatively, and challenging received ideas
- Logical and qualitative thinking
- Problem solving skills
- Oral and written communication
- Research and computing skills.

Opportunities to apply your learning outside the classroom are available, for example undertaking an internship can deepen your skillset, awareness of others, working knowledge and employability.

Where have UC graduates been employed?

Career destinations related to Art History and Theory include organisations and sectors such as:

- Museums
- Art galleries
- Governance and policy
- Arts management
- Fine arts auctioneers
- Archives and libraries
- Heritage and conservation
- Journalism, media and public relations
- Publishing
- Event management
- Education
- Tertiary sector
- Marketing and advertising
- Tech industry and start-ups
- Databases and image libraries.

Career possibilities are diverse. Recent UC graduates are found in a variety of organisations ranging from: art galleries to government departments, insurance to legal services, art suppliers to power companies, libraries to schools, alumni relations to health boards.

For examples of recruiting employers go to www.canterbury.ac.nz/recruitingemployers

AT A GLANCE

9,500

one museum for every 9,500 people in Aotearoa New Zealand, one of the world’s highest per capita.

160k+

UC’s Macmillan Brown Library has over 160,000 architectural drawings from the 19th century to today.

$100k

six figure salaries for Marketing and Digital Marketing Managers are the norm.

* 2015–16 Michael Page New Zealand Salary and Employment Outlook
What jobs and activities do graduates do?

Graduates with this degree are employed in a range of jobs — see examples below with key tasks.

Note: Some of the jobs listed may require postgraduate study. See the ‘Further study’ section.

Curator
- Designs and coordinates exhibitions
- Manages collections
- Conducts research and communicates information

Art gallery manager / director / assistant
- Assesses and selects art
- Plans and presents exhibitions, events, seminars, outreach activity
- Works with artists and negotiates purchases

Librarian, library assistant
- Categorises and catalogues library materials
- Selects materials for library use
- Helps customers find and use materials

Policy analyst / advisor
- Identifies and investigates issues and opportunities eg, in society, law or governance
- Interprets existing policies and briefs leaders
- Prepares reports and recommends changes

Editorial assistant
- Proofreads material and coordinates changes
- Adds elements in production eg, graphics
- Answers publication queries

Learning advisor
- Develops learning resources or courses
- Uses technology to deliver training
- Advises how to develop skills or plan studies

Secondary school teacher
- Plans and delivers instructional lessons
- Evaluates performance and provides feedback
- Sets and marks assignments and tests

Digital content analyst
- Develops a brand’s digital marketing strategy
- Increases web traffic and online engagement
- Oversees social media and search optimisation

Manager, project manager
- Oversees the effective use of resources
- Responsible for certain aspects or overall operation of an organisation, unit or project
- Plans, budgets, supervises, instigates, solves

Marketing assistant / associate
- Collects and analyses market insight
- Prepares and implements marketing plans
- Works with others to promote goods or services

Sales manager
- Identifies and develops new markets or business
- Manages client relationships and presentations
- Implements sales and marketing strategies

Arts administrator / manager
- Manages logistics, budgets, schedules for events, venues, managers
- Contributes to marketing materials and media
- Develops new projects and initiatives

Research officer / assistant
- Organises and conducts research
- Develops and tests theories, interprets results
- Writes reports and publishes research

Database assistant
- Administers data infrastructure
- Maintains an organisation’s database
- Provides analytical support to others

Entrepreneur and CEO
- Develops an idea to form their own business
- Gets involved in a start-up
- Offers services as a freelancer/consultant

Get started at www.canterbury.ac.nz/careers/Entrepreneurship/getting_started.shtml

What professional bodies can people link to?

As they progress, students and graduates often join professional bodies or organisations relevant to their area of interest. These organisations can provide regular communications and offer the chance to network with others in a community.

- The Art Association of Australia and New Zealand [www.aaanz.info]
- The New Zealand Art History Teachers’ Association [www.nzahta.org.nz]

Social media networks such as LinkedIn, Facebook and Twitter can provide avenues to keep up-to-date with industry knowledge, networking opportunities, events and job vacancies.

Why do further study and what are my options?

Postgraduate study can facilitate career benefits such as specialist skills, entry into a specific occupation, and advanced research capability. It is important to determine which, if any, further study will help you in your future career.

Art History and Theory graduates can progress their studies at honours, master’s and PhD level. These degrees provide advanced research, project and writing skills. Postgraduate study can also lead to an academic career in teaching and research.

Many Arts graduates do additional training, for example in Teaching and Learning, Policy and Governance, Librarianship, Journalism or Digital Humanities. UC offers a popular Postgraduate Diploma in Art Curatorship. For listings and prerequisites visit [www.canterbury.ac.nz/courses]

UC Careerhub

UC students and alumni can find details of internships, job vacancies and employability tips at [www.careerhub.canterbury.ac.nz]

Useful links

UC Careers, Internships & Employment [www.canterbury.ac.nz/careers]
Careers New Zealand [www.careers.govt.nz]
UC School of Fine Arts exhibitions [www.canterbury.ac.nz/art/fine-arts]
The Big Idea [www.thebigidea.nz/work]
Creative NZ [www.creativenz.govt.nz]
The Arts Foundation [www.thearts.co.nz]
At UC we take a broad view of Art History; this is reflected in the variety of objects we look at and the ways we discuss them. We also consider the mechanics of the art world, as practices such as collecting, display, patronage, art education, art criticism, and community engagement all affect how we understand art and objects.

Our lecturers cultivate research interests that connect to other disciplines. This interdisciplinary aspect is woven into a number of our courses.

The opportunity to work within the arts field was incredibly valuable in giving me a glimpse into what it would be like to follow that path. It also gave me a lot of confidence and a feeling that, even as a student, my input and contributions were valid.

Anyone seeking careers advice.
Careers, Internships & Employment
Te Rōpū Rapuara
CIE offers intending and current students and recent graduates a wide range of services, including individual career guidance, seminars, career resources and student and graduate employment opportunities.
T: +64 3 364 3310
E: careers@canterbury.ac.nz
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Te Rāngai Toi Tangata | College of Arts

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Prospective students seeking study advice.
Student Liaison
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Student Liaison provides intending students with information about the university system in general and the courses, qualifications, support and facilities available at UC.
Ōtāutahi | Christchurch
T: 0800 VARSITY (0800 827 748)
E: liaison@canterbury.ac.nz
Tāmaki-makaurau | Auckland
T: 0800 UCAUCK
E: auckland@canterbury.ac.nz
Te Whanganui-a-Tara | Wellington
T: 0800 VARSITY (0800 827 748) ext 93231
E: wellington@canterbury.ac.nz
[www.canterbury.ac.nz/liaison](http://www.canterbury.ac.nz/liaison)

Bachelor of Arts in Art History and Theory, and English
Bachelor of Arts with Honours in Art History

**Rata Holtslag**

**What are you interested in?**
I’m passionate about travel and literature and enjoy visiting galleries and museums.

**Do you have a career goal?**
I’m hoping to become a curator. The beauty of a UC Arts degree is that it allows you to figure things out along the way, and experiment a bit in terms of career paths. I’m hoping to do Museum Studies when I return from overseas and eventually my Master of Arts, perhaps on domestic mid-century architecture and furniture in New Zealand.

**Have you gained any practical experience?**
I took an internship course which allowed me to work on projects at the A A Deans Art Trust and UC’s Art History department. Both projects gave me the opportunity to put what I have learned into practice, and to gain skills that will benefit me in pursuing a career as a curator.

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Read more online
Read Rata’s full story about her university experience online. UC alumni like Rata make a difference in varied ways around the globe. To find out where Art History and Theory graduates are now visit [www.canterbury.ac.nz/profiles](http://www.canterbury.ac.nz/profiles)

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