

Here are 12 tips if you are interested in an art and design career.

This is just for your mind to chew on.... you don't have to do all of these tips at once =)

- 1) **Take classes in both traditional art and graphic design.** The art industry is competitive and filled with people who are good at traditional art as well as creating art on the computer (Adobe Photoshop, Illustrator, InDesign, Painter). If your high school doesn't offer these classes, go to your local community college.
- 2) **Even if you are 99.99% sure that you want to become a working artist, don't neglect your other classes.** For example, when you are turning in your physics homework on time, you are building up your work ethic and learning to deal with deadlines. While you may not be using calculus at your art job, you need to know math to deal with measurements and price points. The writing skills you learn in English class will help you sound professional to your clients. The list goes on and on...
- 3) **Get good at drawing.** No matter what artistic field you go into, you must draw to put your ideas onto paper. Your client (who is probably not an artist), needs to see what you are thinking of. Get a sketchbook TODAY and PRACTICE!
- 4) **To practice your graphic design skills, join your school's journalism or yearbook class.** Another choice is to volunteer to make flyers and posters for clubs at your school. Again, this will allow you to practice designing for others.
- 5) **Create art for your friends and family.** Think of these folks as your first “clients.” For example: your friend just broke up with her boyfriend and you want to cheer her up. Since you know your friend so well, you can make a greeting card that is just for her. You know what her favorite colors are, what she is into, her sense of humor and what she needs to hear to bounce back. Creating art for your friends will sharpen your skills to design for others. Plus, your friends will think you are awesome!
- 6) **Reach out to artists you admire.** If you see artwork that you like, find out who the artist is and don't be afraid to reach out and ask them for advice. If approached respectfully, artists are generous with their knowledge and want to help out the next generation.
- 7) **When looking at art, don't just stick to your computer.** Go to museum and galleries to see the artwork in person. A JPG on your screen can't capture the details of a beautiful painting or sculpture. Also, look at all kinds of art-- in museums, galleries, poster shops, art and craft fairs, graffiti art, comic books, cartoons, CGI movies, etc... The more you see, the more you have to draw from for inspiration
- 8) **When you are consuming other people's art (such as someone's song, someone's movie, someone's drawing, etc.), be aware of what your reactions are.** Do you dislike the new Taylor Swift song because it's so cheesy? Then ask yourself “WHY IS IT SO CHEESY AND HOW CAN I AVOID THAT IN MY OWN ART?” Or did you get

teary during the last scene of a dramatic movie? Or were you laughing hysterically over a sitcom? Try to figure out what elements caused you to have the reaction. Those elements could be a jumping point for your own art! Remember, there are no original ideas... “new” artwork is just a combination of old ideas in your particular style.

- 9) **Be authentic in the art you create.** You may think “I’m only 17, I don’t have anything relevant to say.” The fact that you exist and interact with others in your environment gives you a perspective. Raw emotions (such as jealousy, love, loneliness, etc..) are things we ALL experience, no matter what age. If you allow yourself to be vulnerable and put those feelings into your artwork, eventually, **YOU WILL MAKE SOMETHING POWERFUL AND PROFOUND.** Even if your drawing “sucks,” your authenticity will shine through and resonate with the audience.
- 10) **Since art is subjective, it is difficult to “grade” like a math or science test.** When you are finished with your artwork, ask yourself: “What was the INTENTION behind my artwork? Did I achieve what I set out to do?” For example: If you are drawing a portrait of your friend, is there more you can do to make it look like him? Another example: If you are writing a funny skit, can it be funnier? There is no “good art” or “bad art”... it’s more about the degree the artist was able to fulfill his/her original intentions.
- 11) **DO NOT BELIEVE IN THE “STARVING ARTIST” SYNDROME.** There are so many career choices for artists/designers out there that pay good wages, offer health insurance and have 401K plans. Think about it... every single product you use was **DESIGNED BY SOMEONE.** When you are applying for an art job, your portfolio is **WAY MORE IMPORTANT** than what school you have gone to. Hence, if you can’t afford to go to an expensive private art school, you have many options (community college, trade school, online school, etc..) However you get there, **BUILD THE BEST ART PORTFOLIO THAT YOU CAN**
- 12) **Don’t do this alone. As an aspiring artist, it is SO IMPORTANT for you to surround yourself with support.** Learning how to draw, paint or sculpt is **HARD WORK** and is easier when you know that your classmates are also struggling with you. Be kind to your classmates because they too are putting themselves out there with their art.
- Also, there is a chance that your parents will want you to pick a “safer” career. They love you and are scared that you will not be able to find a job after graduation. Since their fears sprout from lack of information, it is your job to help them see the light. Your art teacher, career councilor or family friend can help you research and present information to your parents.

- **As a research starting points, check out the book and the blog:**

[Graphic Artist's Guild Handbook of Pricing and Ethical Guidelines](#)

-Clara Lieu's Ask the Art Professor Column: <http://claralieu.wordpress.com/ask/>

