

Art Isn't Optional: How Art Shapes Our World

Think about the last time you bought something you were excited about. How did you make your decision between this brand or that brand? Did you carefully pour over features and specifications, comparing speed, power, and other metrics? Did you look at endurance and durability and decide how long your investment would last you? Did the aesthetics play a role, did you want something that was sleek, sharp, sophisticated, or just plain cool? Were you willing to settle for something that was a little blocky and awkward because it was more durable or less expensive?

If you're like most people, aesthetics matter. And not just when it comes to the things that you buy, but also the tools that you use and the space that you occupy. None of us wants to spend time in a plain white or black box - or worse, the dreaded beige (despite what the real estate market tells us). You may find yourself doing what you can to personalize your own space - folks decorate their boring, gray office cubicles with plants, photos, or toys. Desktop and phone wallpapers are extremely popular. And business use art to create branding and personas to relate to people on a more emotional level.

When we can't have something that's beautiful to look at, we want some other soothing aesthetic - we put music in our elevators, gas stations, waiting rooms and stores - anything that we can do to add some element of beauty somewhere, wherever we can sneak it in. We are practically addicted to art - it even informs our decisions about what car we buy, what phone we want to use, and what computer we'll work on - even when practicality says that some other tool would be better suited for the task at hand.

Commercial Art: Where Creativity Meets Commerce

Creating art can be a lucrative career and we can all think of artists whose fame is legendary. Michelangelo. Leonardo Da Vinci. Stephen Spielberg, Dolly Parton and Meryl Streep. Incredible artists who are known around the world and well rewarded for their incredible talents and, unfortunately, becoming one of these top tiered famous artists is an incredibly difficult field with fierce competition.

But there's many more less known careers available for artists, too, without the accompanying fame that still pay fairly well and perhaps with a bit more stability, too. Industrial Designers can design a variety of everyday objects from coffee makers to cars and we appreciate how they make our environments look modern and sleek and wax nostalgic about the designs of generations past. User experience (UX) designers create the look of our websites and applications and make sure they're visually appealing and easy to use - we use their work constantly without even realizing it. Grocery and other retail stores employ merchandisers who

design product displays that show off their products and make shopping easier to navigate and communicate the culture of the store.

Interior design is well known, but this career can be well paid and highly impactful as well. Hospitals recognize that the aesthetics of their environments, not just the functionality, can have a [significant impact](#) on the recovery time and outcomes of their patients.

Art really is everywhere in all the little things that we do, not just in the things we traditionally considered to be art. They matter to businesses, consumers, and even just folks passing by. Art can make or break an entire product, so it's essential to hire the right artists, designers, and marketers because no matter how good a product is, if people aren't aware of it, then it doesn't matter.

And some of these arts, when best done, are completely invisible. As an example, the average person doesn't think about typography very often - except when it has been done badly. A well-chosen font compliments a product, reinforcing and supporting every other design decision without ever distracting from them. But a badly chosen font, one that clashes with the design or is difficult to read, detracts from the product and draws attention to itself. Similarly, sound design often blends seamlessly into an environment - notifications provide nudges when they're wanted without becoming jarring, startling, or distracting, else we'd turn them off.

The Paradox of Undervaluing Artists

With the all-pervasiveness of aesthetics and the essential nature of arts in business, it's surprising how little businesses are willing to pay for art. It may be because art is simply everywhere that businesses start to think that it's valueless - because there's a weird equivalence between rarity and value.

Steve Jobs [revitalized Apple](#) by focusing on design when he returned to the company in 1997, which has allowed Apple to charge for premium prices on its products and position itself in the market as a premium product with a superior and more unified user experience ever since. As a software engineer, a marketer, and an artist, I will always find this fascinating because even software engineers prefer Apple machines.

Uber and Airbnb also invested heavily in design and marketing to stand out in the market and have been incredibly successful as a result - and, just like them, businesses that are secure in their own value understand that art is worth paying for and are happy to do so. They understand the value that the right art can bring to their business and are appreciative.

The success of businesses like Apple, Airbnb, and Uber aren't just about technology or services, they're a demonstration of how strategic design can transform a good product and service into an unforgettable brand. We know that art and design aren't just aesthetics, they affect our lives, health, and define our businesses. The most successful companies understand that art isn't a luxury that comes after success - it's a catalyst that creates it.

If you'd like to explore how to better market your own art, [reach out](#) to Ardea for a free consultation - we'd love to discuss your art with you!

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