Film Industry Roles: Art Director

What Is an Art Director?

An art director reports to the production designer. They design sets, oversee artists and construction workers, and help determine the overall look of a film production. During <u>pre-production</u>, the art director acts as a liaison between the production designer and the construction crew. When principal photography begins, they report to set and keep the production designer informed of how the look is coming to life.

An Art Director's Responsibilities During Preproduction

The art director's job begins during preproduction. The director will have concepts about the overall design of a movie or TV show, and it is the art director's job to implement that creative vision.

It falls to the production designer and art director to come up with a specific visual style for a production, working with concept artists to come up with design elements that can be translated into sets, props, and other visual aspects of a film set.

Some of the details of an art director's job during pre-production:

- 1. **Supervise the creation of concept art**. These are illustrations meant to visualize ideas for characters, sets, costumes and other elements of a film.
- 2. **Oversee pre-visualizations**. These are illustrations or animations of scenes from the film that are meant to demonstrate design concepts and visuals.
- 3. **Supervise the creation of maquettes and models**. These are three-dimensional sculptures used to illustrate visual designs for characters, creatures, or sets.

An Art Director's Responsibilities During Production

The art director's job shifts when a film or TV show goes into production:

- 1. **Manage a detailed budget** for materials and labor to create sets and other art elements.
- 2. **Oversee the administrative operations** of the art department, including scheduling, budgets, and personnel assignments.
- 3. **Act as the coordinator** between the art department and other departments, such as visual effects, costumes, property, transportation, and locations.
- 4. **Manage or work closely** with the teams who design and build all sets, props, graphics, and other visual elements.
- 5. **Oversee construction and dressing of sets**.

How to Become an Art Director

The requirements for a film or TV art director's job include education in film school or a related field and experience in a mix of fields, including the arts, business, and entertainment.

Production companies favor candidates with a background or education in drawing, painting, sculpture, still photography, graphic design, typography, color theory, and art history.

An art director should have knowledge of theatrical design, architecture and interior design, computer-aided design, as well as in TV or film production.

An art director can work his or her way up to the job by working in roles such as scene painter, concept artist, previsualization artist, sculptor, model builder or the like.

It would also help to have some skill or knowledge of crafts that include carpentry, costume design and construction.

Other useful experience or skills for a film art director:

- 1. Strong conceptual skills.
- 2. Leadership or management experience.
- 3. Excellent time management.
- 4. Great communication skills.
- 5. Excellent organizational skills.
- 6. An ability to meet deadlines and juggle multiple tasks.
- 7. Creative problem-solving.