

Research paper

Art work analysed: Artists' jobs and opportunities 2003 - 2005

Accompanies a-n's analysis of artists' jobs and opportunities 1989 – 2003. Reviews the situation in 2005 and compares findings with those from 2003. Discusses the implications for artists in 2006 and beyond.

One advantage of publishing a monthly magazine for professional artists and their collaborators for as long as we have done is the steady accumulation of data about artists; the scope and nature of their practice, their professional engagements and the cultural climate in which they operate. Mining this unique, rich research resource, and analysing and quantifying the range of data within it unearths a fascinating changing picture of artists' practices and concerns, cultural and social trends and the impact of political and economic strategies on applications of the visual arts.

Last year, we published on www.a-n.co.uk the first ever substantial review of the climate for artists' work, by examining specific areas within the Opportunities listings, as published in 1989, in 1999 and in 2003. To check the speed and nature of change in work for artists, we've reviewed what happened in 2005 and compared the findings with the situation in 2003. Here, we present an analysis of what we have found and the implications for artists in 2006 and beyond, by concentrating on the main areas of awards and fellowships, commissions, competitions and prizes, exhibitions and residencies.

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Opportunities 2003 and 2005

Type	Number 2003	Number 2005	Value 2003 (£)	Value 2005 (£)
Awards and fellowships	88	86	2,030,370	3,138,650
Art vacancies	104	136	972,019	1,306,877
Commissions	127	113	2,491,160	2,010,905
Exhibitions	328	231	65,025	69,200
Residencies	81	108	380,724	514,946
Other	81	184	27,823	818,964
Totals	872	923	6,243,371	8,774,442

40% more work offered to artists

In 2003, the total value of work for artists was calculated at £6,243,371. By 2005, this had increased by £2,531,071. Note however that in order to make that like-for-like comparison, we have not included in 2005 any web-based opportunity listings, which increase those published in *a-n Magazine* annually by 43%. If these were to be added to the equation, the total value for 2005 might be calculated as £15,619,077, providing a 150% increase on 2003.

Opportunities compared 1

Expressed as % of overall volume of opportunities offered to artists in 2003 and 2005:

Type	2003	2005
Residencies	9%	12%
Commissions	15%	12%
Exhibitions	38%	25%
Awards and fellowships	10%	10%
Competitions	7%	7%

Commissions provide 12% of all work for artists

Although in 2003, commissions represented 40% of the value of all work offered, by 2005, this had dropped to 23%, with the average value also dropping by 9% (from £19,615 to £17,796).

Advertised commissions continue to offer the best rates of pay to artists, accentuating the value placed within this field on artists' experience. Examples include £250 a day for an artist within a design team for Somerset County Council (January 05) and £243 a day for a school-based commission for Shropshire County Council (September 05).

Commissioners frequently state that design fees are payable, varying from £500-1,000.

The volume of residencies increased by 3% in 2005

In 2003, residencies accounted for 9% of all opportunities. The 2003 average value of a residency (£4,700) has barely changed in 2005 (£4,768).

One reason may be that residency hosts seem to have been slow to take on board the recommendations of a-n's guidance and framework for payment to artists, with several continuing during 2005 to offer as little as £100 a day (Truro Cathedral, August 05). Jane Lewis' letter (June 2005) also commented on the artist-in-residence at Bootham School being offered only £3,600 for an academic year.

Signs of improvement in the situation include a secondary school in St Helens, Lancashire (October 05) offering £200 a day and Cywaith Cymru/Artwork Wales (December 05) advertising pro rata of £26,600 for a residency in a visitors' centre, (equivalent to paying for an artist with three years' experience on the a-n framework) Significantly, several residencies in the autumn of 2005 were specifying in their briefs, as they did in 1989, the percentage of time expected to be spent on the 'artist's own work'.

Exhibitions have lost their place as the major provider of opportunities

Whereas in 2003, 40% of all opportunities offered were in the form of exhibitions, by 2005, this had reduced to 25%, with the average value – pushed up by the odd mention in some listings of exhibitor prizes and awards – to £300.

It is hoped that a-n publication *Good exhibition practice*, along with our contribution to the Advisory Group that steered Arts Council England's 2005 Review of the Presentation of Contemporary Visual Art where we stated the need for adherence to good practice between galleries and artists, will lead to improvements within working relationships in 2006 and beyond.

Non-UK opportunities made up 8% of all opportunities in 2005

This growth area is perhaps not a surprise, given the sterling work of a-n Opportunities Development Team member artist Michael Cousin, appointed in 2004 specifically to research this area. The Beyond the UK listings on www.a-n.co.uk (with a selection printed in *a-n Magazine*) cover everything from artists' retreats and residencies, to academic fellowships and festival commissions, some of which contain the magic words that "fees are paid for selected works screened".

Opportunities compared 2

Expressed as % of overall annual value of opportunities offered to artists in 2003 and 2005:

Type	2003	2005
Residencies	6%	6%
Commissions	40%	23%
Exhibitions	1%	1%
Awards and fellowships	33%	36%
Competitions	4%	10%

The average value of a competition or prize has more than trebled in the period studied.

This rose from £4,384 in 2003 to £14,075 in 2005, as charitable trusts and others stepped up their efforts to provide 'no strings' career and research support for artists.

Awards and fellowships are still providing 10% of all opportunities

The overall value of awards and fellowships has increased to 36% (from 33% in 2003)

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