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[Finding your passion](#)

# Combine multiple talents to become a successful artist

By Andrea Kay  
Gannett News Service

So you want to make music, act, produce films, design fashion, dance or write movies? No sweat. That is, if you tweak your thinking a bit.

That includes eliminating the term "starving artist" from your vocabulary. For one thing, if you think that's what you're getting into when you pursue a creative career, well, that's what you'll get.

Just as predictable is the possibility for success if you can envision a wider path – not limiting yourself to a particular title and, you've got them, combining multiple talents.

Take Nick Radina, who plays guitar, cuatro and percussion and is also a singer, composer, band leader, sound engineer and public-relations master. He wears all these hats to be a successful musician.

"It's not just how well you play your instrument, it's about treating your career like a business," he says.

The Cincinnati-based artist has been nurturing his creative career since he was 14, when he and a friend started the band, Out of the Blue. Today, he plays in four Latin groups and can be heard on eight CDs, one of which was nominated for a Grammy award.

He also just returned from a tour with the group Over The Rhine, where he acted as sound engineer and tour manager on the group's coast-to-coast American tour. It's all about "filling your book," and "improving the odds of what you can do," he says.

Musicians in particular understand the advantage of combining multiple talents. A professional musician might be a composer, performer, teacher and an arranger, says Elaina Loveland in her book, "Creative Careers."

Overall employment outlook for musicians is expected to grow about as fast as the average for all occupations through 2014, she says, with most new wage and salary jobs for musicians arising in religious organizations.

Among all the creative jobs, visual artists seem to have the most opportunity for fulfilling careers in a variety of fields, Loveland says. Besides designing fashion, furniture, jewelry, graphics or

flower arrangements, today's artists incorporate technological skills that result in careers in digital animation, Web design and Web-user interface design. It's all about demand.

Demand, for instance, for a multimedia artist and animator will "increase as consumers continue to expect more realistic video games, movie and television special effects and 3-D animated movies," says Loveland, who also predicts increasing demand for Web site development and computer-graphics adaptation.

Employment outlook for landscape architects is also expected to increase faster than the average occupation, as their expertise is "highly sought after in the planning and development of new residential [and] commercial" construction to meet the needs of a growing population, Loveland says.

Art therapy is a newer and popular area and is indeed a growing field. An art therapist might work with physicians, psychologists, nurses, therapists or teachers to help a patient or client using art media, images and the creative process. And while an art therapist makes a living doing that, he or she may be a performing artist as well.

Many people who want a creative career tell me they have a "practical backup career," like accounting, sales or teaching – just in case the creative one doesn't work out. Sometimes their parents strongly suggested it. The problem is that most end up being frustrated accountants, salespeople and teachers and never pursue what they really want.

You can have a creative career without being a starving artist. Just be practical in how you go about it.

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