

# ***A Statistical Profile of Artists in Canada***

***Based on the 2001 Census***



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# A STATISTICAL PROFILE OF ARTISTS IN CANADA

## BASED ON THE 2001 CENSUS

This study provides an in-depth examination of artists in Canada, based largely on the 2001 census. Nine arts occupations are profiled, including:

- actors;
- artisans and craftspersons;
- conductors, composers and arrangers;
- dancers;
- musicians and singers;
- other performers;
- painters, sculptors and other visual artists;
- producers, directors, choreographers, and related occupations; and
- writers.

This report endeavors to present detailed, reliable and recent statistics about artists in Canada, specifically the number of artists in Canada, artists' earnings, selected demographic characteristics of artists, and trends in the arts labour force between 1971 and 2001.

This project complements a recent report on *Canada's Cultural Sector Labour Force*, prepared by Hill Strategies Research for the Cultural Human Resources Council (2004). In its examination of 45 occupations in the cultural labour force, that report touched only briefly on the nine arts occupations.

This study is based largely on a custom data request from the 1991 and 2001 census years, commissioned by the Canada Council for the Arts from Statistics Canada.<sup>1</sup> Data available online at Statistics Canada's website was used to examine demographic breakdowns that were not available in the custom data request.<sup>2</sup>

### Key findings

Based on 2001 census labour force counts, this study finds a number of significant characteristics about artists in Canada, including:

- high levels of education;
- a high proportion of self-employment;
- a predominance of women;
- very low earnings; and
- strong growth in the number of artists between 1971 and 2001.

More specifically, regarding the size of the arts labour force, this study finds that:

- There are 131,000 artists in Canada.

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<sup>1</sup> We wish to thank the Canada Council for the Arts for contributing the data from their custom data request.

<sup>2</sup> Statistics not available in the custom data set include labour force breakdowns by age, sex and education.

- The arts labour force comprises 0.8% of the overall labour force and 25% of the cultural sector labour force.
- Between 1971 and 2001, the number of artists in Canada more than tripled, compared with an 81% increase in the overall labour force.
- Between 1991 and 2001, the number of artists grew by 29%, close to three times the rate of growth of the overall labour force (10%).
- While the industry group employing the most artists is the “arts, entertainment and recreation” sector, many artists work in other sectors. For example, the census counted almost three times as many dancers in the “educational services” industry group than in the arts, entertainment and recreation group.

Concerning the earnings of artists, this study shows that:

- Artists’ earnings are very low, with average earnings of \$23,500, less than 75% of average earnings in the overall labour force.
- There is a great deal of variation in average earnings in the nine arts occupations. Of over 500 occupation groups captured by the census, only 27 have average earnings that are lower than the lowest paid arts occupation – dancers – who earn an average of just under \$15,000. On the other hand, “producers, directors, choreographers and related occupations” have average earnings of \$43,000, the only arts occupation with earnings above the overall labour force average.
- Economic returns to higher education are much lower for artists than for other workers. Over 40% of artists hold a university degree, yet university-educated artists earn, on average, just over half of the average earnings of university-educated workers in the overall labour force.
- A key factor in the low earnings of artists is the situation of self-employed artists, who earn 40% less than self-employed workers in the overall labour force. Self-employed artists also make much less than artists with a paid employment position.
- Artists’ earnings increased by 26% between 1991 and 2001, compared to a 29% increase in average earnings in the overall labour force. These figures are not adjusted for the 22% inflation during this period.

Regarding gender distribution, this study finds that:

- There are more female (71,000) than male (59,700) artists.
- Another key factor in the low earnings of artists is the situation of female artists, who earn, on average, almost \$10,000 less than male artists (\$19,400 versus \$28,300).

Other characteristics of the arts labour force include:

- High self-employment – The rate of self-employment is over five times higher for artists than for the overall labour force (44% versus 8%).
- High levels of education – The percentage of artists with a university degree, certificate or diploma (41%) is double the rate in the overall labour force (22%).

- Relatively little opportunity for full-time work in the arts – only one-third of artists indicated that they worked on a full-time full-year basis in 2000, compared to over one-half of the overall labour force.

## Counting artists: Census strengths and limitations

The terms “artists” and “arts labour force” are used interchangeably in this report to describe those Canadians 15 or older reporting employment or self-employment earnings in any of the nine occupation groups which have been identified as artistic by the Canada Council for the Arts in previous research, including *Artists in the Labour Force* (1999). As that report noted:

There are numerous reasons why it is difficult to count the number of artists in Canada. First, there is no widely accepted definition of which occupations should fall under the heading of “artist”. Second, Statistics Canada does not have one well-defined occupation category for artists. Third, membership in artist associations, another possible source of data, would not provide complete information as some artists belong to associations while others do not. Fourth, previous studies have shown that as many as 50% of cultural workers hold multiple jobs. Some artists (e.g., the musician who also works full time as a taxi driver) will therefore be counted in statistics under a non-artistic occupation.

The nine occupations were selected for this profile of artists on the basis of two criteria. First, occupations were chosen on the basis of artistic content (as found in the description of job content and job titles for each occupation under the Standard Occupation Classification used by Statistics Canada)...<sup>3</sup> Second, the definition of artist occupations was based on the range of types of professional artists applying to the Canada Council for funding each year. The artists eligible for funding include writers, visual artists, craft artists, film and video artists, dancers, choreographers, playwrights, artistic directors, actors, musicians, singers, composers and interdisciplinary and performance artists. Although occupation categories used in Statistics Canada data are not quite as precise and detailed as these, there are many similarities.

It should be noted that the Statistics Canada occupation classification does not distinguish between commercial and non-commercial activity. Figures on the number of artists from Census data therefore will include many individuals who would not be eligible for Canada Council grants. Also note that Statistics Canada figures do not include amateur artists as the data is based on labour force activity.

The number of people reporting wages or self-employment earnings, also referred to as “earners”, was chosen as the count of artists because this figure is readily available in the custom data set and because it provides a reasonable estimate of the number of people who commit a significant amount of time to their art. The position in which the person spent the most time working during the census week was used to classify census respondents by occupation.

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<sup>3</sup> [See the Appendix for these occupation descriptions. The nine arts occupation codes were drawn from the Standard Occupational Classification, developed in 1991.]

The earnings statistics in this report include wages, salaries and net self-employment earnings, but exclude government transfers, investment income and pension income. It is important to note that the earnings statistics include amounts received from all employment in 2000, not just the position at which the respondent worked the most hours.

Despite some limitations, the 2001 census is one of the best available sources of information on the arts labour force. The census provides estimates based on a very large population base – the 20% of households that completed a long census form.

However, the census is not a perfect source for information about artists. One issue is the timing of the census. The classification of occupations is based on the job that respondents spend the most hours at during the week of Sunday, May 6 to Saturday, May 12, 2001. This is an “in between” period for many artistic endeavors. For example, many performing arts organizations have seasons that extend from the fall to the spring. These seasons may be finished before the week of May 6, leaving some artists to find other employment during the late spring and summer. Other organizations may have summer seasons that do not begin in early May.

The focus on the job where the individual worked the most hours affects census labour force counts. Having multiple jobs is an important facet of the working life of many artists. Some may work more hours at other jobs during the week than at their art. Due to this, census-based estimates of artists are likely to be somewhat low.

Even though the 2001 census provides a very large sample, this still has limits. Some breakdowns of the arts labour force in areas with lower populations are less accurate because of the fairly small sample of artists in these locations. In addition, Statistics Canada’s efforts to ensure confidentiality of individual responses result in some distortion of the estimates of artists in areas with low populations.<sup>4</sup> No statistics under 250 are reported in this report due to possible inaccuracies.

The census is conducted once every five years, limiting the analysis of trends over time to the census years.

Given these limitations, census data will not fill all analytical needs. Census data does, however, allow us to provide a very detailed statistical portrait of artists in Canada.

## **Organization of the report**

The first section of this report highlights summary data about the arts labour force and provides comparisons with the overall labour force. Section 2 provides a demographic breakdown of the nine arts occupations based on age, sex, education level and other demographic characteristics. Section 3 discusses employment characteristics such as self-employment rates and hours worked. Finally, Section 4 illustrates changes in the number of artists between 1971 and 2001 as well as changes in artists’ average earnings between 1991 and 2001.

A subsequent report will compare and profile the earnings, size and structure of artists in Canada’s provinces, territories and metropolitan areas. Another report will examine the arts labour force and arts participation activities of culturally diverse and Aboriginal Canadians.

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<sup>4</sup> This included “random rounding” of small figures, whereby occupation groups with 1 to 10 individuals are rounded to 0 or 10 on a random basis. This results in some distortion of the estimates of artists in the territories and other small population areas.

## **Section 1: A profile of artists in 2001**

This section examines the size and structure of Canada's arts labour force, including nine occupations:

- actors;
- artisans and craftspersons;
- conductors, composers and arrangers;
- dancers;
- musicians and singers;
- other performers;
- painters, sculptors and other visual artists;
- producers, directors, choreographers, and related occupations; and
- writers.

Readers are encouraged to refer to the Appendix, which provides descriptions of these arts occupation groups.

### **Key statistics on the arts labour force**

With 131,000 people reporting earnings, the arts labour force comprises less than one percent of Canada's overall labour force (0.8%).

The average earnings of artists are \$23,500, only 74% of the average earnings in the overall labour force (\$31,800).<sup>5</sup>

With \$3.1 billion in total earnings, the arts labour force comprises slightly over one-half of one percent of earnings in the overall labour force.

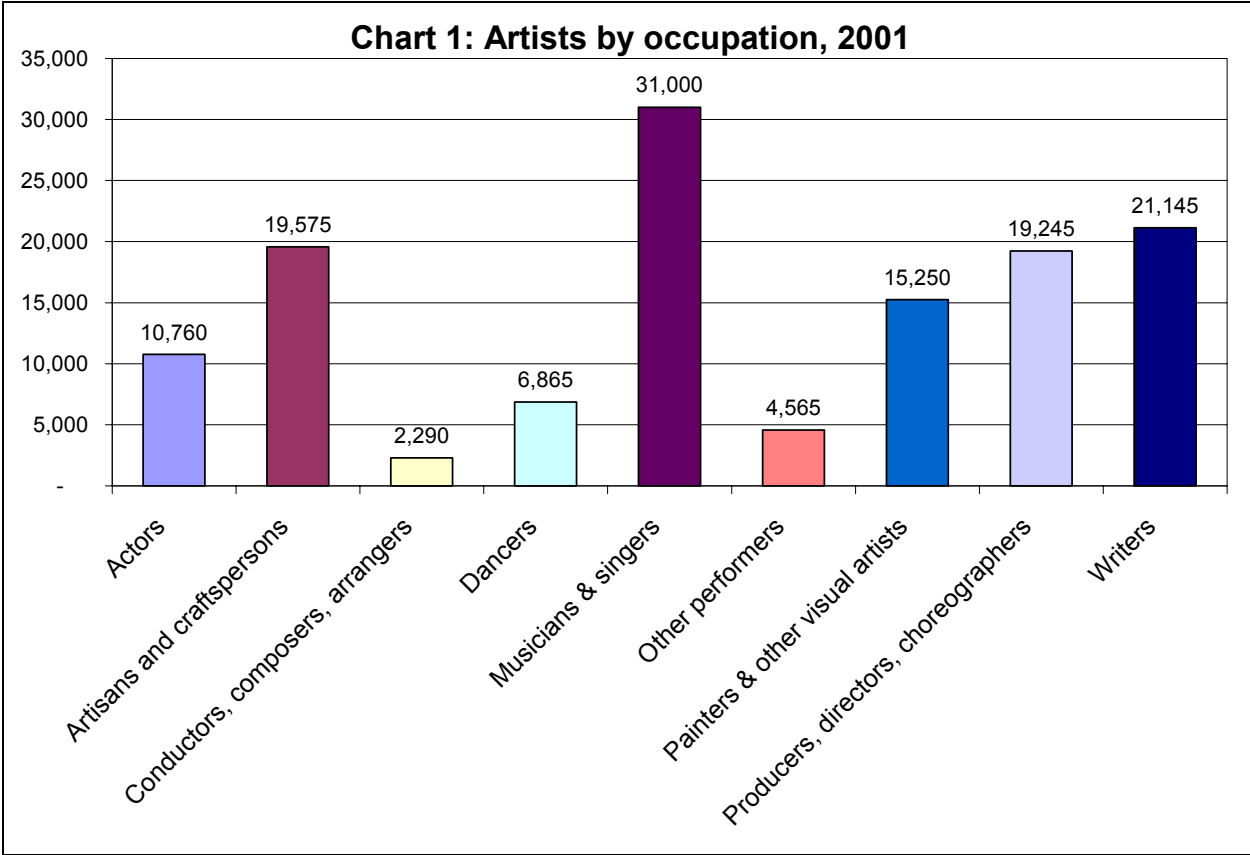
Table 1 illustrates these key statistics on the arts labour force.

<b>Table 1: Key data on artists in the labour force in 2001</b>			
	<b>Artists</b>	<b>Overall labour force</b>	<b>Artists as % of overall labour force</b>
Number reporting earnings	130,695	16.4 million	0.8%
Average earnings	\$23,490	\$31,757	74%
Total earnings	\$3.1 billion	\$521.3 billion	0.6%
<i>Source: 2001 Census custom data request.</i>			

<sup>5</sup> The custom data set did not provide data on average earnings for the arts labour force as a whole in each jurisdiction. Artists' average earnings were calculated using the number of earners and average earnings for each of the nine arts occupation groups (figures that *were* available in the custom data set). These figures were multiplied together to estimate total earnings for each arts occupation. The sum of the total earnings for the arts occupation groups was used as the estimate of the total earnings for the arts labour force as a whole in each jurisdiction. The total earnings were then divided by the number of artists to estimate the average earnings of the arts labour force in each jurisdiction.

**Occupations within the arts labour force**

Chart 1 shows that “musicians and singers” is the largest of the nine arts occupation groups (with 31,000 people reporting earnings), followed by “writers” (21,100), “artisans and craftspersons” (19,600) and “producers, directors, choreographers and related occupations” (19,200).



**Average earnings of artists**

With average earnings of \$23,500, artists are in the lowest quarter of average earnings of all occupation groups. That is, three-quarters of the 500-plus occupations have average earnings higher than artists. Other occupations with similar earnings include medical secretaries (\$23,300), customer service, information and related clerks (\$23,400), delivery drivers (\$23,500) and roofers and shinglers (\$23,800).

Table 2 shows that there is significant variation in average earnings between the nine arts occupations. Five of the nine arts occupations have average earnings that are less than or about equal to Statistics Canada’s low-income cutoff for a single person living in a community of 500,000 people or more (\$18,400).<sup>6</sup> In fact, of over 500 occupation groups captured by the

<sup>6</sup> The low-income cutoff measures a “threshold below which a family will likely devote a larger share of its

census, only 27 have average earnings that are lower than the lowest paid arts occupation – dancers – who earn an average of just under \$15,000.

Only two arts occupations (“producers, directors, choreographers and related occupations” and “writers”) earn the same as or more than the average earnings for the entire labour force.

<b>Table 2: Average earnings of artists and percentage of average earnings in the overall labour force, 2001</b>		
<b>Occupation</b>	<b>Average earnings</b>	<b>Percentage of average earnings in the overall labour force</b>
Actors	\$21,597	68%
Artisans and craftspersons	\$15,533	49%
Conductors, composers and arrangers	\$27,381	86%
Dancers	\$14,587	46%
Musicians and singers	\$16,090	51%
Other performers	\$18,156	57%
Painters, sculptors and other visual artists	\$18,666	59%
Producers, directors, choreographers and related occupations	\$43,111	136%
Writers	\$31,911	100%
<b>All 9 arts occupations</b>	<b>\$23,490</b>	<b>74%</b>
<b>Overall labour force</b>	<b>\$31,757</b>	<b>100%</b>
<i>Source: 2001 Census custom data request</i>		

The fact that artists earn much less than most Canadians is exemplified further by an examination of median earnings. The median is a measure of the earnings of a “typical” worker in various occupations. Half of individuals have earnings that are less than the median value, while the other half have earnings greater than the median. The median is less influenced than the average (more appropriately known as the “mean”) by extreme observations, such as a few individuals reporting very large incomes. As a consequence, median earnings are typically lower than average earnings. Median earnings are available only for individual arts occupations, as the data on median earnings for the nine arts occupations as a group was not available in the custom data set and could not be estimated.

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income to the necessities of food, shelter and clothing than an average family would.” For 2000, the percentage of family income spent on necessities in low-income households was 64% or more.

Table 3 shows that, in five arts occupations, median earnings are about \$10,000. This means that a *typical* artisan, craftsperson, dancer, musician, singer, other performer, painter, sculptor or other visual artist earns only about \$10,000.

At \$12,700, the median earnings of actors are about one-half of median earnings in the overall labour force (\$25,100).

Median earnings in these six arts occupations are well below the low-income cutoff figure for a single person living in a community of 500,000 people or more (\$18,400).

Table 3 also shows that the median earnings of conductors, composers and arrangers are about \$20,000. The median earnings of writers are slightly higher than the overall labour force median, while the median earnings of producers, directors, choreographers and related occupations are greater than the median in the overall labour force.

<b>Table 3: Median earnings of artists and percentage of median earnings in the overall labour force, 2001</b>		
<b>Occupation</b>	<b>Median earnings</b>	<b>Percentage of median earnings in the overall labour force</b>
Actors	\$12,652	51%
Artisans and craftspersons	\$10,042	40%
Conductors, composers and arrangers	\$20,043	80%
Dancers	\$9,999	40%
Musicians and singers	\$10,023	40%
Other performers	\$10,036	40%
Painters, sculptors and other visual artists	\$10,023	40%
Producers, directors, choreographers and related occupations	\$35,933	143%
Writers	\$25,841	103%
<b>All 9 arts occupations</b>	<b>n/a</b>	<b>n/a</b>
<b>Overall labour force</b>	<b>\$25,052</b>	<b>100%</b>
<i>Source: 2001 Census custom data request. Median earnings are available only for individual arts occupations, as the data on median earnings for the nine arts occupations as a group was not available in the custom data set and could not be estimated.</i>		

## Section 2: Demographic analysis

This section examines employment and earnings in the nine arts occupations based on selected demographic characteristics, including sex, age, level of education, language and other characteristics.<sup>7</sup>

### Sex

In contrast to the overall labour force, the arts labour force has more women than men. The 71,000 female artists represent 54% of artists. This is almost a mirror image of the overall labour force, where 47% of workers are women. Table 4 also shows that six of the nine arts occupations have more women than men. In particular, 85% of dancers are female, the highest proportion of women among the nine arts occupations.

<b>Table 4: Artists by sex and occupation, 2001</b>				
<b>Occupation</b>	<b>Women</b>	<b>Men</b>	<b>Total</b>	<b>Female %</b>
Actors	4,805	5,960	10,760	45%
Artisans and craftspersons	12,100	7,480	19,575	62%
Conductors, composers and arrangers	740	1,550	2,290	32%
Dancers	5,805	1,060	6,865	85%
Musicians and singers	17,305	13,695	31,000	56%
Other performers	3,070	1,500	4,565	67%
Painters, sculptors and other visual artists	8,205	7,050	15,250	54%
Producers, directors, choreographers and related occupations	7,520	11,720	19,245	39%
Writers	11,460	9,690	21,145	54%
<b>All 9 arts occupations</b>	<b>71,010</b>	<b>59,705</b>	<b>130,695</b>	<b>54%</b>
<b>Overall labour force</b>	<b>7,751,235</b>	<b>8,664,545</b>	<b>16,415,780</b>	<b>47%</b>
<i>Source: 2001 census, Statistics Canada Catalogue no. 97F0019XCB01050</i>				

Despite the predominance of women in the arts labour force, female artists still earn much less than male artists. Table 5 shows that, on average, female artists earn \$19,400, 69% of the average earnings for male artists (\$28,300). In the overall labour force, women earn, on average, 64% of what men earn.

Women earn less than men in all nine of the arts occupations. In two arts occupations (“artisans and craftspersons” and “painters, sculptors and other visual artists”), women’s earnings amount to just over one-half of men’s earnings. Only in three arts occupations (“actors”, “other

<sup>7</sup> The breakdowns by sex, age and level of education were not available in the custom data set but were drawn from online data available from Statistics Canada (Catalogue no. 97F0019XCB01050).

performers”, and “producers, directors, choreographers and related occupations”) do women’s earnings come within 10% of men’s earnings.

<b>Occupation</b>	<b>Women</b>	<b>Men</b>	<b>Women’s earnings as % of men’s</b>
Actors	\$20,663	\$22,350	92%
Artisans and craftspersons	\$11,843	\$21,504	55%
Conductors, composers and arrangers	\$20,741	\$30,547	68%
Dancers	\$13,587	\$20,058	68%
Musicians and singers	\$13,416	\$19,469	69%
Other performers	\$17,991	\$18,495	97%
Painters, sculptors and other visual artists	\$13,754	\$24,384	56%
Producers, directors, choreographers and related occupations	\$40,342	\$44,888	90%
Writers	\$29,587	\$34,660	85%
<b>All 9 arts occupations</b>	<b>\$19,426</b>	<b>\$28,320</b>	<b>69%</b>
<b>Overall labour force</b>	<b>\$24,390</b>	<b>\$38,347</b>	<b>64%</b>

*Source: 2001 census, Statistics Canada Catalogue no. 97F0019XCB01050*

## Age

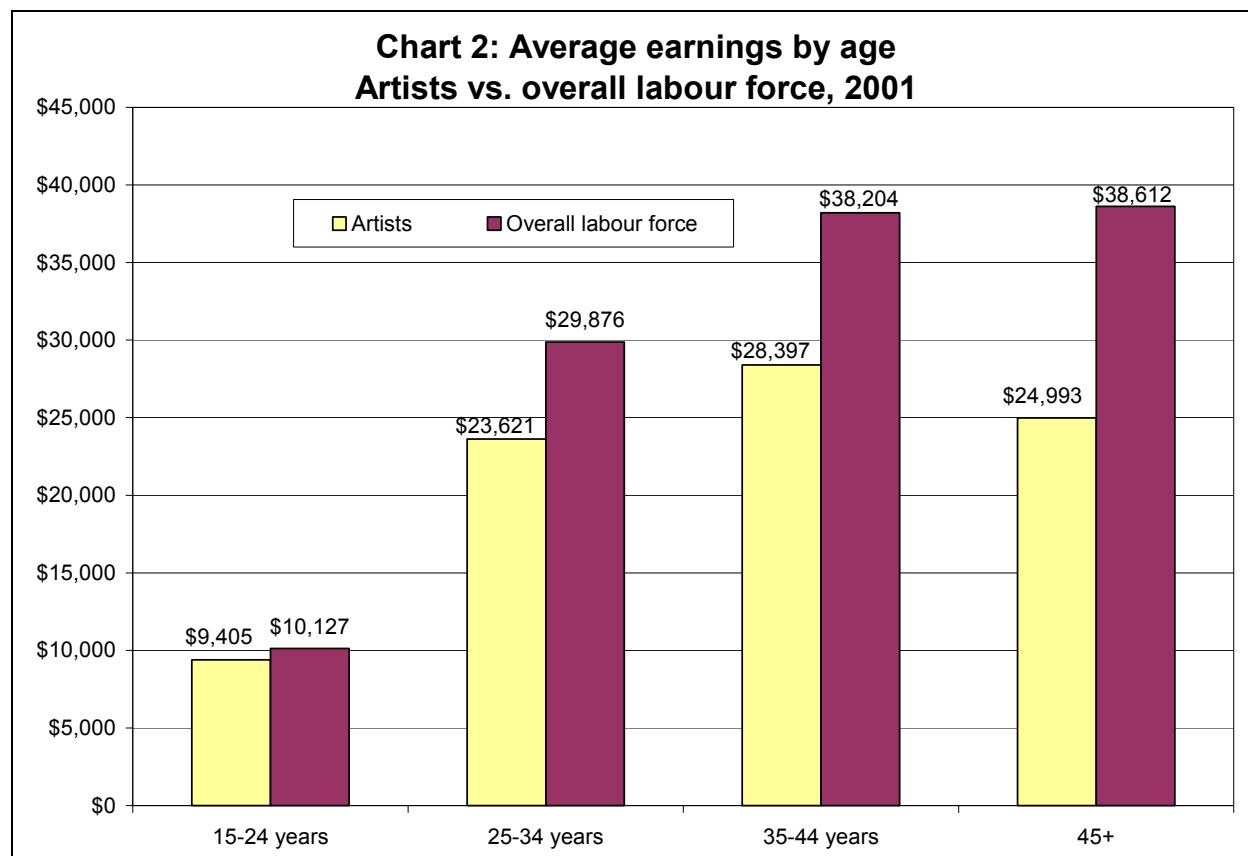
The distribution of artists by age is fairly similar to the distribution of the overall labour force, although there is a smaller percentage of artists in the youngest age group and a larger percentage in the oldest age group (45 and over). The distribution of artists and the overall labour force by age is shown in Table 6.

<b>Age group</b>	<b>Artists</b>	<b>% of artists</b>	<b>Overall labour force</b>	<b>% of overall</b>
15-24 years	17,175	13%	2,836,945	17%
25-34 years	29,080	22%	3,426,020	21%
35-44 years	33,565	26%	4,385,410	27%
45+	50,700	39%	5,767,405	35%
<b>Total</b>	<b>130,695</b>	<b>100%</b>	<b>16,415,785</b>	<b>100%</b>

*Source: 2001 census, Statistics Canada Catalogue no. 97F0019XCB01050*

In terms of earnings, Chart 2 shows that artists earn significantly less than the overall labour force in all age groups with the exception of those between 15 and 24, who have very low earnings in both the arts and the overall labour force.

Artists between 15 and 24 years of age earn an average of \$9,400, or 93% of similarly-aged workers in the overall labour force. The difference between the earnings of artists and earnings in the overall labour force increases at every age level. With average earnings of \$23,600, artists between 25 and 34 years of age earn 79% of the earnings of similarly-aged workers in the overall labour force. Artists between 35 and 44 earn an average of \$28,400, or 74% of similarly-aged workers in the overall labour force. Average earnings for artists over 45 (\$25,000) are lower than for artists between 35 and 44. Artists who are 45 and over earn only 65% of similarly-aged workers in the overall labour force.



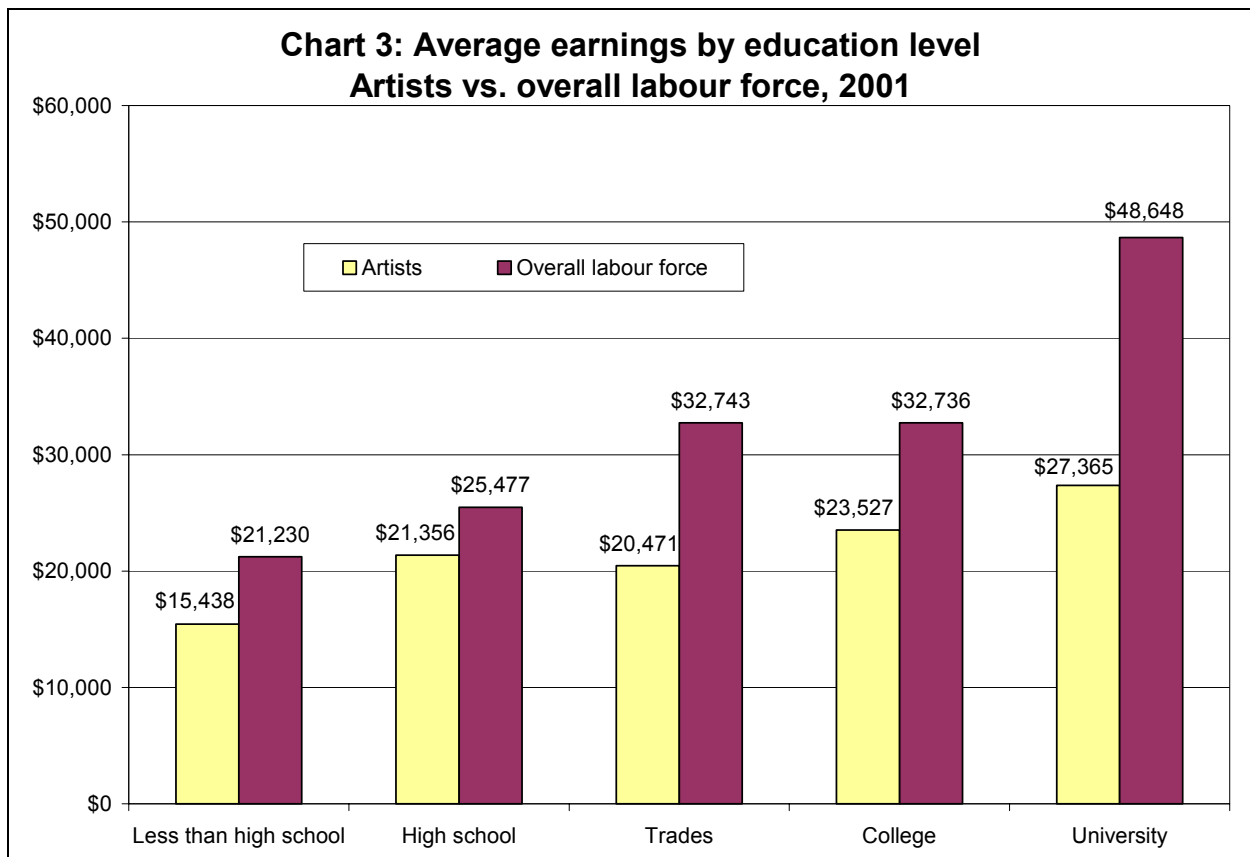
## Education level

Canada's artists are much more highly educated than the overall labour force yet earn significantly less at all education levels than those in non-arts occupations.

The percentage of artists with a university degree, certificate or diploma (41%) is nearly double the rate in the overall labour force (22%). On average, university-educated artists earn only slightly more than overall labour force workers with only a high school diploma. Table 7 shows the number and percentage of artists at all education levels.

<b>Table 7: Artists by education level, 2001</b>				
	<b>Artists</b>	<b>% of artists</b>	<b>Overall labour force</b>	<b>% of overall labour force</b>
Less than high school graduation certificate	15,260	12%	3,529,905	22%
High school graduation certificate and/or some post-secondary	29,905	23%	4,395,975	27%
Trades certificate or diploma	8,090	6%	2,003,675	12%
College certificate or diploma	23,960	18%	2,938,975	18%
University certificate, diploma or degree	53,230	41%	3,547,250	22%
<b>Total</b>	<b>130,695</b>	<b>100%</b>	<b>16,415,785</b>	<b>100%</b>
<i>Source: 2001 census, Statistics Canada Catalogue no. 97F0019XCB01050</i>				

Average earnings are low for artists at all education levels, although earnings do increase with each increase in education (as is shown in Chart 3).



When compared with the overall labour force, it is the best-educated artists that fare the worst. Artists with a university degree, diploma or certificate earn \$27,400, which is only 56% of the average earnings of university-educated workers in the overall labour force (\$46,600). With 41% artists having university credentials, this is a very troubling statistic. For other education levels, artists' earnings as a percentage of overall labour force earnings vary between 63% (for those with a trades education) and 84% (for those with a high school education).

## Other demographic characteristics

Table 8 shows that the 87,400 artists with English as their mother tongue comprise two-thirds of all artists in Canada (67%), somewhat higher than English-speakers' percentage of the overall labour force (60%). Those with French or non-official languages as their mother tongue are somewhat under-represented in the arts labour force compared with the overall labour force. The 24,100 francophone artists account for 18% of the arts labour force, while francophones comprise 22% of the overall labour force. The 17,900 artists with a non-official language as their mother tongue account for 14% of the arts labour force, while non-official language Canadians comprise 17% of the overall labour force.

The 3,100 Aboriginal artists represent 2.4% of the arts labour force, which is essentially equal to the percentage of Aboriginal people in the overall labour force (2.5%).

The 11,700 visible minority artists in Canada represent 9% of the arts labour force, somewhat lower than the percentage of visible minority Canadians in the overall labour force (12%).

The 26,400 immigrant artists account for one-fifth the arts labour force, the same percentage of immigrant Canadians in the overall labour force.

<b>Demographic group</b>	<b>Artists</b>	<b>% of artists</b>	<b>Overall labour force</b>	<b>% of overall labour force</b>
English mother tongue	87,405	67%	9,789,415	60%
French mother tongue	24,145	18%	3,678,045	22%
Non-official language mother tongue	17,880	14%	2,765,215	17%
Aboriginal	3,135	2.4%	408,645	2.5%
Visible minorities	11,650	9%	2,043,825	12%
Immigrants	26,375	20%	3,214,645	20%
<b>Total</b>	<b>130,695</b>	<b>100%</b>	<b>16.4 million</b>	<b>100%</b>

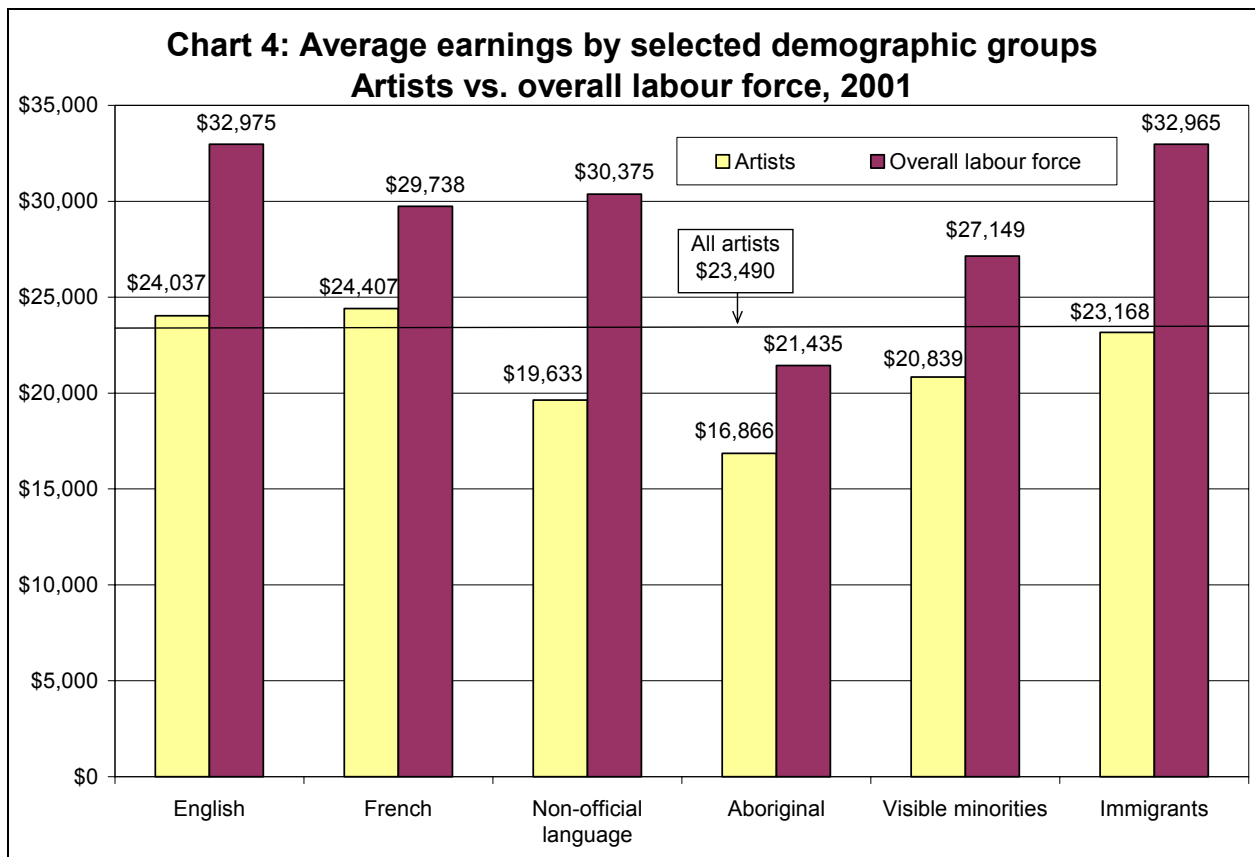
*Source: 2001 Census custom data request*

Chart 4 shows that artists in each demographic group earn much less than other workers in each group. Francophone artists have the highest average earnings (\$24,400), which represent 82% of the average earnings of all francophone workers in Canada (the highest percentage of overall labour force earnings of any group of artists). With average earnings of \$24,000, anglophone artists earn slightly less than three-quarters of the average earnings of all anglophones in Canada. Both of these groups earn slightly more than the average for all artists

(\$23,500). With average earnings of \$19,600, non-official language artists take in 16% less than the average for other artists.

Aboriginal artists have particularly low average earnings (\$16,900), 28% lower than the average for all artists (\$23,500). The average earnings of Aboriginal artists reflect the low earnings for Aboriginal people in Canada's overall labour force. In fact, Aboriginal artists earn 79% of the average earnings of all Aboriginal workers in Canada. This is a relatively high percentage compared to some other groups of artists.

With average earnings of \$20,800, visible minority artists earn 11% less than the average for other artists. Immigrant artists fare somewhat better, with average earnings (\$23,200) only slightly below the average earnings for all artists (\$23,500).



## **Section 3: Employment characteristics**

This section examines self-employment, hours worked and the industry sectors of artists compared to the overall labour force.

### **Self-employed and paid workers**

At 44%, the percentage of artists who are self-employed is over five times the self-employment rate in the overall labour force (8%). The average earnings of self-employed artists are strikingly low (\$18,400) compared to artists with a paid position (\$27,600). Both of these figures are substantially lower than the average earnings in the overall labour force (\$30,400 for the self-employed and \$32,300 for those with a paid position).

Table 9 shows that self-employment rates for different arts occupations vary between a low of 19% for “producers, directors, choreographers and related occupations” to a high of 67% for “painters, sculptors and other visual artists”.<sup>8</sup>

Some in the arts community believe that even these relatively high self-employment rates may be unduly low. For example, very few actors are believed to have a paid position, yet the census data shows the self-employment rate for actors at only 35%.<sup>9</sup> The custom data request was not sufficiently detailed to allow for a finer examination of where actors and other artists with employment positions work.

Chart 5 presents data showing that both self-employed artists and those with a paid position earn much less, on average, than similarly-employed individuals in the overall labour force. Self-employed artists have very low average earnings (\$18,400), which represents only 60% of the average earnings of all self-employed workers in Canada. With average earnings of \$27,600, artists with a paid position earn 85% of the average earnings of all paid workers in Canada.

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<sup>8</sup> In addition to self-employed and paid workers, there is a third employment category known as unpaid family workers. These figures are very small in the arts labour force and are not presented in this paper. However, the self-employed and paid worker categories do not add to 100% for all of the arts occupations because of the few unpaid family workers.

<sup>9</sup> We wish to thank the Cultural Human Resources Council and Pat Bradley, Theatre Officer and Research Manager at the Ontario Arts Council, for providing comments on this point.

<b>Table 9: Self-employment and paid work of artists, 2001</b>		
<b>Occupation</b>	<b>Self-employed as % of total</b>	<b>Paid workers as % of total</b>
Actors	35%	65%
Artisans and craftspersons	50%	49%
Conductors, composers and arrangers	39%	61%
Dancers	30%	70%
Musicians and singers	56%	44%
Other performers	26%	74%
Painters, sculptors and other visual artists	67%	33%
Producers, directors, choreographers and related occupations	19%	81%
Writers	45%	55%
<b>All 9 arts occupations</b>	<b>44%</b>	<b>55%</b>
<b>Overall labour force</b>	<b>8%</b>	<b>92%</b>
<i>Source: 2001 Census custom data request</i>		

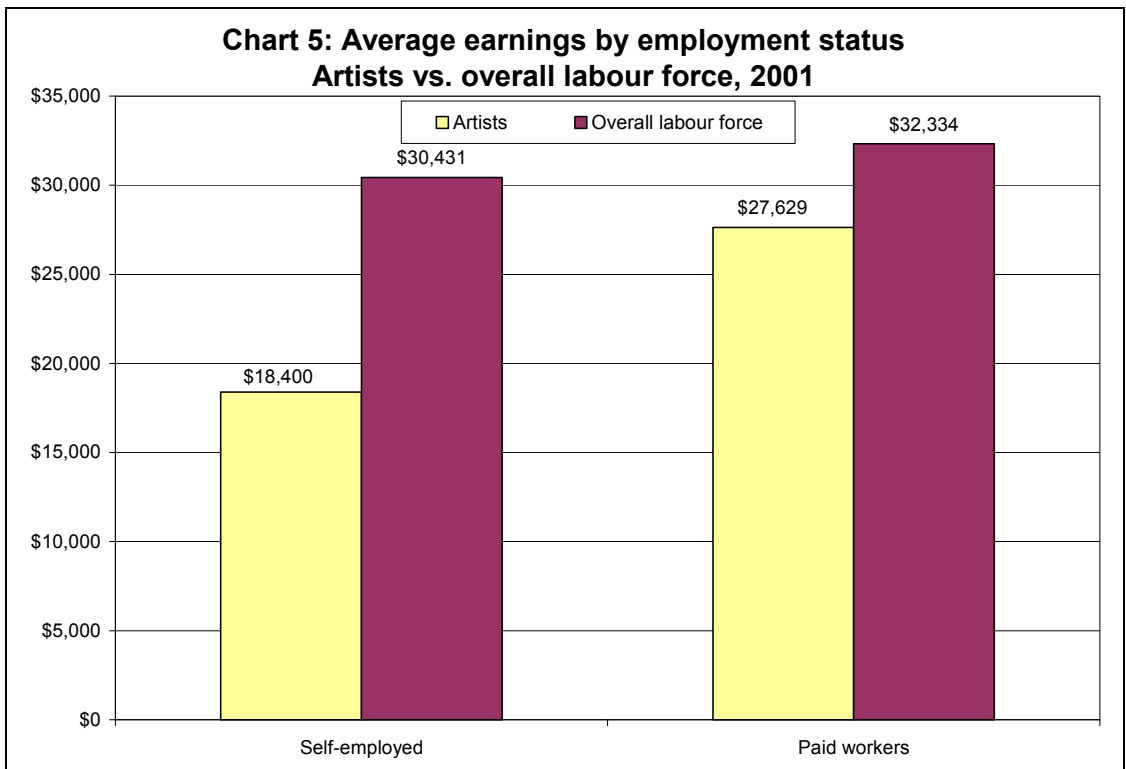


Table 10 provides the average earnings of self-employed and paid workers in each of the nine arts occupations. In six of the nine occupations, the average earnings of self-employed workers are much lower than the average earnings of artists with a paid position. In the other three arts occupations (actors, dancers, and painters, sculptors and other visual artists), self-employed artists earn more, on average, than those with a paid position.

<b>Table 10: Average earnings of self-employed and paid workers in arts occupations, 2001</b>		
<b>Occupation</b>	<b>Self-employed</b>	<b>Paid workers</b>
Actors	\$24,863	\$19,841
Artisans and craftspersons	\$13,135	\$18,014
Conductors, composers and arrangers	\$20,940	\$31,553
Dancers	\$15,928	\$14,011
Musicians and singers	\$15,035	\$17,433
Other performers	\$17,773	\$20,515
Painters, sculptors and other visual artists	\$18,767	\$17,860
Producers, directors, choreographers and related occupations	\$31,310	\$45,893
Writers	\$23,400	\$38,852
<b>All 9 arts occupations</b>	<b>\$18,400</b>	<b>\$27,629</b>
<b>Overall labour force</b>	<b>\$30,431</b>	<b>\$32,334</b>
<i>Source: 2001 Census Custom data request</i>		

### Full-time full-year work

Another factor in the low earnings of artists is the difficulty in finding full-time and full-year work in the arts. Table 11 shows that only one-third of artists indicated that they worked on a full-time full-year basis in 2000, compared to over one-half of the overall labour force.

<b>Table 11: Full-time full-year work, artists vs. overall labour force, 2000</b>		
	<b>Number full-time full-year</b>	<b>Full-time full-year as % of all</b>
All 9 arts occupations	43,525	33%
Overall labour force	8,685,230	53%
<i>Source: 2001 Census, Statistics Canada Catalogue No. 97F0019XCB01003</i>		

During the census week, less than two-thirds of artists worked 30 hours or more, Statistics Canada's cutoff for full-time work. This is well below the rate of full-time work in the overall labour force in May 2001 (83%). Table 12 provides these statistics.

	<b>Less than 30 hours</b>	<b>30 hours or more</b>
All 9 arts occupations	37%	63%
Overall labour force	17%	83%
<i>Source: 2001 Census custom data request</i>		

### **Where are artists employed?**

Artists work in many different sectors of the economy, although the top three industries employ about 75% of artists. These top three industry groups are:

- *Arts, Entertainment and Recreation - 50,600 artists*  
Independent artists, performing arts companies, museums, art galleries and heritage institutions as well as spectator sports and amusement, gambling and recreation industries
- *Educational Services - 24,400 artists*  
Schools teaching dance, drama, music, photography and fine art (except commercial and graphic arts), language schools, elementary, secondary and post-secondary schools, and various specialized schools
- *Information and Cultural Industries - 21,900 artists*  
Publishing, motion pictures, sound recording, broadcasting, telecommunications, information services and data processing<sup>10</sup>

Table 13 shows the number of artists and average earnings in each industry sector. Artists working in the arts, entertainment and recreation sector have average earnings of \$20,900. Artists' average earnings are lowest in the education services industry (\$14,500) and highest in information and cultural industries (\$39,500). The average earnings for artists in all other industries are \$23,500. These statistics demonstrate that, outside of the cultural industries, artists have relatively low earnings in all industries.

<sup>10</sup> Based on the definitions of the North American Industry Classification System (1997) available at <http://www.statcan.ca/english/Subjects/Standard/naics/1997/naics97-menu.htm>.

<b>Industry group</b>	<b>Number of artists</b>	<b>% of artists</b>	<b>Average earnings of artists in this industry</b>
Arts, entertainment and recreation	50,630	39%	\$20,930
Educational services	24,370	19%	\$14,453
Information and cultural industries	21,900	17%	\$39,487
All other industries	33,620	26%	\$23,478
<b>Total – all artists in all industries</b>	<b>130,695</b>	<b>100%</b>	<b>\$23,490</b>
<i>Source: 2001 census custom data request.</i>			

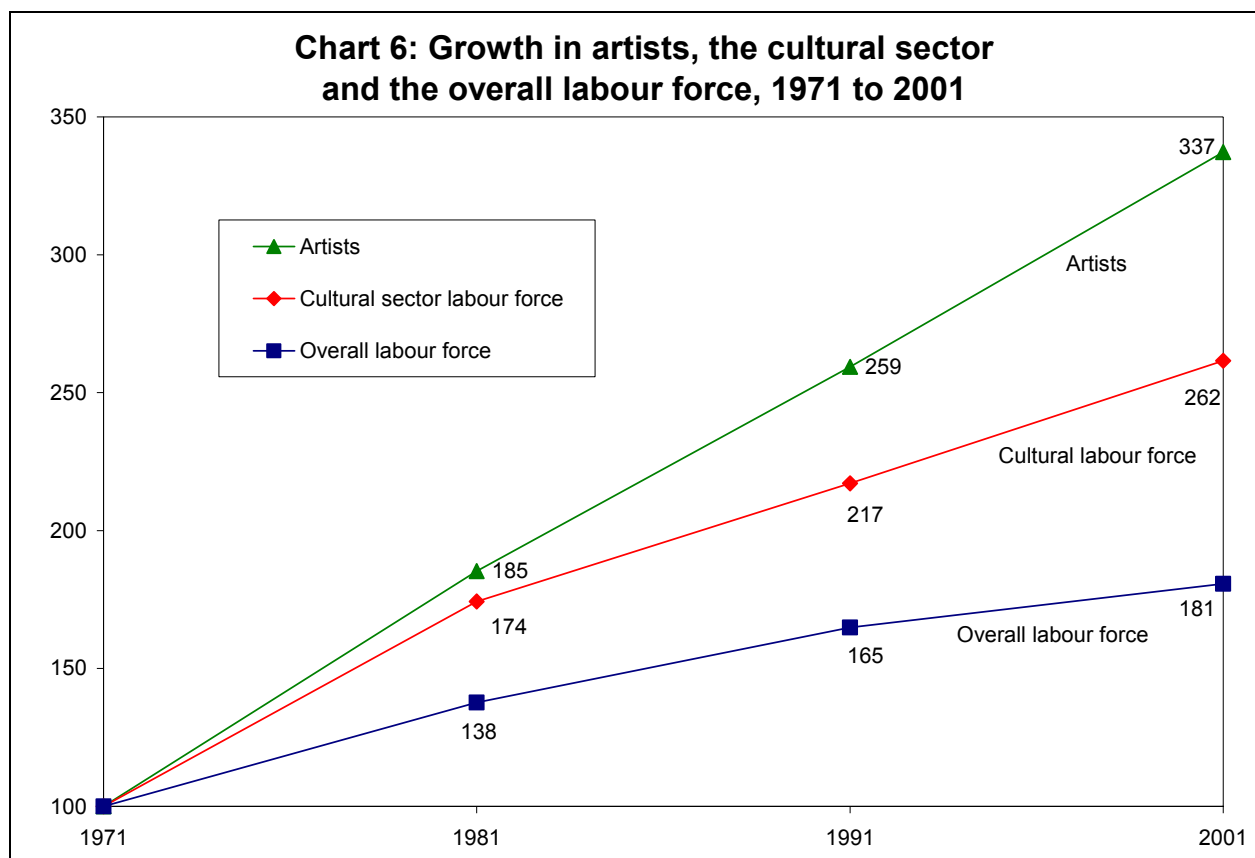
Table 14 shows the number of people in each of the nine arts occupations in various sectors of the economy. Most arts occupations have the largest number of workers in the arts, entertainment and recreation sector, with the notable exception of dancers. There are three times more dancers in education than in the arts, entertainment and recreation sector.

<b>Occupation</b>	<b>Arts, entertainment and recreation</b>	<b>Educational services</b>	<b>Information and cultural industries</b>	<b>All other industries</b>
Actors	6,975	390	2,600	755
Artisans and craftspersons	3,175	495	n/a (<250)	15,810
Conductors, composers and arrangers	1,110	n/a (<250)	285	725
Dancers	1,655	4,980	0	235
Musicians and singers	12,585	15,620	425	2,370
Other performers	2,285	500	n/a (<250)	1,690
Painters, sculptors and other visual artists	11,925	1,265	310	1,745
Producers, directors, choreographers and related occupations	3,180	480	13,765	1,795
Writers	7,740	515	4,370	8,495
<b>Total - all 9 arts occupations</b>	<b>50,630</b>	<b>24,370</b>	<b>21,900</b>	<b>33,620</b>
<i>Source: 2001 census custom data request</i>				

## **Section 4: Changes in the arts labour force between 1971 and 2001**

The arts labour force grew more quickly than the broader cultural labour force and much more quickly than the overall labour force between 1971 and 2001. Chart 6 shows that there were over 3 times the number of artists in 2001 than in 1971. This is higher than the roughly 2½ times growth in the cultural labour force and the 81% growth in the overall labour force.

Given that occupational classifications have changed roughly every 10 years since 1971, an index system is used to determine long-term trends. The index starts at 100 in 1971. This methodology allows us to adjust for changes in occupational definitions and to provide a reasonable estimate of “real” changes in the number of artists.



The arts labour force grew by much more than the overall labour force in every decade between 1971 and 2001. In the 1970s, the number of artists increased by 85%, compared with 38% growth in the overall labour force. In the 1980s, the number of artists grew by 40%, double the 20% growth in the overall labour force. Between 1991 and 2001, the number of artists in Canada increased by 29% (an increase of almost 30,000 artists), nearly three times the 10% growth in the overall labour force.<sup>11</sup>

<sup>11</sup> Estimates of the number of artists in 1971 and 1981 were taken from a 1984 Canada Council report entitled *Canadian Dictionary and Selected Statistical Profile of Arts Employment, 1981*. Using 8 occupation codes from the

Between 1991 and 2001, eight of the nine arts occupations grew more quickly than the overall labour force. The number of actors doubled during this time frame, followed by 64% growth in dancers and 50% growth in producers, directors, choreographers and related occupations. The artisans and craftspersons group fell by 10% between 1991 and 2001. Table 15 shows the figures for each of the nine arts occupations.

<b>Occupation</b>	<b>1991</b>	<b>2001</b>	<b>Change (#)</b>	<b>Change (%)</b>
Actors	5,195	10,760	5,565	107%
Artisans and craftspersons	21,860	19,575	-2,285	-10%
Conductors, composers and arrangers	1,875	2,290	415	22%
Dancers	4,190	6,865	2,675	64%
Musicians and singers	26,165	31,000	4,835	18%
Other performers	3,280	4,565	1,285	39%
Painters, sculptors and other visual artists	10,990	15,250	4,260	39%
Producers, directors, choreographers and related occupations	12,860	19,245	6,385	50%
Writers	15,190	21,145	5,955	39%
<b>All 9 arts occupations</b>	<b>101,605</b>	<b>130,695</b>	<b>29,090</b>	<b>29%</b>
<b>Overall labour force</b>	<b>14,905,395</b>	<b>16,415,785</b>	<b>1,510,390</b>	<b>10%</b>
<i>Source: 1991 and 2001 census custom data request</i>				

### Change in artists' earnings in the 1990s

Between 1991 and 2001, the average earnings of artists increased by 26%, 4% higher than the rate of inflation for this period (22%).<sup>12</sup> The 26% growth in artists' average earnings is less than the 31% growth in average earnings in the overall labour force. Despite a relatively low earnings base in 1991, the growth in artists' earnings still lagged behind the overall labour force.

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1970 Occupational Classification, the number of artists was estimated at 47,485 in 1971 and 88,005 in 1981. A Statistics Canada report for a 1991 Census consortium provided data on artists in 1981 and 1991 based on 9 occupation codes from the 1980 Standard Occupational Classification. The data from that report show the number of artists to be 86,235 in 1981 and 120,685 in 1991. Estimates for 1991 and 2001, based on the 9 occupation codes from the 1991 Standard Occupational Classification available in the custom data set, are 101,605 in 1991 and 130,695 in 2001.

<sup>12</sup> Inflation data was calculated based on Statistics Canada, CANSIM II, table 326-0002 and Catalogue nos. 62-001-XPB and 62-010-XIB, available at <http://www.statcan.ca/english/Pgdb/econ46.htm>. The inflation data was calculated from 1990 to 2000, the years for which census respondents reported their earnings.

The only arts occupation to see an increase exceeding that in the overall labour force was the “other performers” category, which saw a 32% increase in average earnings between 1991 and 2001.

Three other arts occupations saw an increase in average earnings that exceeded the 22% inflation rate between 1991 and 2001: artisans and craftspersons (a 29% increase in average earnings); producers, directors, choreographers and related occupations (25% increase); and painters, sculptors and other visual artists (24% increase).

The five other arts occupations saw increases below the rate of use inflation, including two that saw very limited earnings growth: actors (9%) and conductors, composers and arrangers (7%). Table 16 shows the growth in average earnings for all nine arts occupations.

<b>Table 16: Change in average earnings by occupation, 1991 to 2001</b>				
<b>Occupation</b>	<b>1991</b>	<b>2001</b>	<b>Change (\$)</b>	<b>Change (%)</b>
Actors	\$19,797	\$21,597	\$1,800	9%
Artisans and craftspersons	\$12,070	\$15,533	\$3,463	29%
Conductors, composers and arrangers	\$25,645	\$27,381	\$1,736	7%
Dancers	\$12,821	\$14,587	\$1,766	14%
Musicians and singers	\$13,997	\$16,090	\$2,093	15%
Other performers	\$13,784	\$18,156	\$4,372	32%
Painters, sculptors and other visual artists	\$15,013	\$18,666	\$3,653	24%
Producers, directors, choreographers and related occupations	\$34,391	\$43,111	\$8,720	25%
Writers	\$26,742	\$31,911	\$5,169	19%
<b>All 9 arts occupations</b>	<b>\$18,635</b>	<b>\$23,490</b>	<b>\$4,856</b>	<b>26%</b>
<b>Overall labour force</b>	<b>\$24,329</b>	<b>\$31,757</b>	<b>\$7,428</b>	<b>31%</b>
<i>Source: 1991 and 2001 census custom data request</i>				

## Demographic changes

Female artists have been an important factor in the growth in the number of artists since 1971. Based on a Canada Council study, only 40% of artists in 1971 were female.<sup>13</sup> By 2001, the proportion of female artists had grown to 54%, and this percentage is based on a much larger

<sup>13</sup> Canada Council for the Arts. A Canadian Dictionary and Selected Statistical Profile of Arts Employment 1981. Research and Evaluation Section, January 15, 1984.

number of artists. During the 1990s, however, the number of female and male artists grew by similar amounts (31% and 29% respectively).<sup>14</sup>

Table 17 shows the changes in the number of artists in various demographic groups between 1991 and 2001. Demographic groups with particularly large increases include:

- artists 45 or older (80% growth);
- artists from visible minority groups (71% growth);
- artists with a university certificate, diploma or degree (58% growth);
- artists with a college certificate or diploma (39% growth);
- artists with a non-official language as their mother tongue (39% growth);
- artists who are immigrants to Canada (31% growth); and
- artists with English as their mother tongue (30% growth).

Characteristic	Artists				% change in overall labour force
	1991	2001	change	% change	
15-24 years old	14,510	17,175	2,665	18%	2%
25-34 years old	30,175	29,080	-1,095	-4%	-18%
35-44 years old	28,770	33,565	4,795	17%	16%
45 years of age and over	28,145	50,700	22,555	80%	37%
Less than high school graduation certificate	17,055	15,260	-1,795	-11%	-17%
High school graduation certificate and/or some post-secondary	26,080	29,905	3,825	15%	5%
Trades certificate or diploma	7,565	8,090	525	7%	5%
College certificate or diploma	17,245	23,960	6,715	39%	39%
University certificate, diploma or degree	33,680	53,230	19,550	58%	44%
English mother tongue	67,100	87,405	20,305	30%	9%
French mother tongue	20,640	24,145	3,505	17%	5%
Non-official language	12,865	17,880	5,015	39%	23%
Aboriginal	3,585	3,135	-450	-13%	-5%
Visible minorities	6,685	11,650	4,965	74%	55%
Immigrants	20,065	26,375	6,310	31%	19%
<b>Total</b>	<b>101,605</b>	<b>130,695</b>	<b>29,090</b>	<b>29%</b>	<b>10%</b>

*Source: 1991 and 2001 census custom data request*

<sup>14</sup> Because the breakdown by sex was not available in the custom data set, these figures were calculated using the 2001 census, Statistics Canada Catalogue no. 97F0012XCB01022.

## **Section 5: Summary**

Based on 2001 census labour force counts, *A Statistical Profile of Artists in Canada* demonstrates a number of significant characteristics about artists, including:

- high levels of education;
- a high proportion of self-employment;
- a predominance of women;
- very low earnings; and
- strong growth in the number of artists between 1971 and 2001.

More specifically, this report shows that:

- There are 131,000 artists in Canada who spent more time at their art than at any other occupation in May 2001.
- Between 1971 and 2001, the number of artists in Canada more than tripled, compared with an 81% increase in the overall labour force.
- Increases in the number of artists in each decade during this period (i.e., the 1970s, 1980s and 1990s) were much larger than overall labour force growth.
- Artists' average earnings are well below the labour force average. In fact, artists' earnings fell further behind the overall labour force between 1991 and 2001. In 1991, artists earned 76% of the labour force average, but this figure decreased slightly to 74% in 2001.
- With average earnings of \$23,500, artists are in the lowest quarter of average earnings of all occupation groups. That is, three-quarters of the 500-plus occupations tracked by Statistics Canada have average earnings higher than artists. Other occupations with average earnings similar to artists include medical secretaries, customer service clerks, delivery drivers and roofers.
- Female, Aboriginal and visible minority artists have particularly low average earnings.
- Compared to the earnings of similar groups in the overall labour force, average earnings are lowest for self-employed artists, university-educated artists, artists 45 or older, those with a non-official language as their mother tongue, and immigrant artists.
- Of all demographic groups, francophone artists have the highest average earnings (\$24,400). This figure represents 82% of the average earnings of all francophone workers in Canada, the highest percentage of overall labour force earnings of any group of artists.
- Economic returns to higher education are much lower for artists than for other workers. Over 40% of artists hold a university degree, yet university-educated artists earn, on average, slightly over half of the average earnings of university-educated workers in the overall labour force. In fact, university-educated artists earn only slightly more than overall labour force workers with only a high school diploma.
- In five arts occupations, median earnings are about \$10,000. This means that a *typical* artisan, craftsperson, dancer, musician, singer, other performer, painter, sculptor or other visual artist earns only about \$10,000.

## **Appendix: Descriptions of the nine arts occupations**

Source: 1991 Standard Occupation Classification, Statistics Canada  
<http://www.statcan.ca/english/Subjects/Standard/soc/1991/soc91-menu.htm>

<b>Occupation (Code)</b>	<b>Definition</b>
Actors (F035)	<p>Occupations in this unit group are primarily concerned with acting in productions for stage, motion picture, television, radio or other settings to entertain audiences. Persons in these occupations may specialize in stage acting or film acting. Acting teachers, other than those who teach in educational institutions, are also included in this unit group.</p> <p><b>Exclusions</b> - Persons who teach acting in post-secondary, secondary or elementary schools are classified in an appropriate unit group of major group E1 - Teachers and Professors.</p>
Artisans and craftspersons (F144)	<p>Occupations in this unit group are primarily concerned with using manual and artistic skills in designing and making various craft objects, such as jewellery, ornamental objects, pottery, stained glass, rugs and woven fabrics. Makers of hand-crafted stringed musical instruments, hand bookbinders, and craft teachers are also included in this unit group.</p> <p><b>Exclusions</b> - Machine operators and assemblers who produce similar objects in manufacturing are classified in an appropriate unit group of broad occupational category H - Trades, Transport and Equipment Operators and Related Occupations, or an appropriate unit group of broad occupational category J - Occupations Unique to Processing, Manufacturing and Utilities. - Painters, sculptors and other visual artists are classified in unit group F036 - Painters, Sculptors and Other Visual Artists.</p>
Conductors, composers and arrangers (F032)	<p>Occupations in this unit group are primarily concerned with conducting, composing and arranging instrumental or vocal music.</p> <p><b>Exclusions</b> - Occupations concerned with performing or teaching instrumental or vocal music are classified in unit group F033 - Musicians and Singers.</p>
Dancers (F034)	<p>Occupations in this unit group are primarily concerned with performing dances. Also included in this unit group are dance teachers, other than those that teach in post-secondary, secondary or elementary schools.</p> <p><b>Exclusions</b> - Exotic and striptease dancers are classified in unit group F132 - Other Performers. - Choreographers are classified in unit group F031 - Producers, Directors, Choreographers and Related Occupations. - Persons who teach dance in post-secondary, secondary or elementary school are classified in an appropriate unit group of major group E1 - Teachers and Professors.</p>
Musicians and singers (F033)	<p>Occupations in this unit group are primarily concerned with performing instrumental or vocal music. Musicians and singers perform with orchestras, opera companies or popular bands in lounges, theatres, film, television and recording studios. Music teachers, other than those in educational institutions, are included in this unit group. They teach in conservatories, academies and private homes.</p> <p><b>Exclusions</b> - Music composers and arrangers are classified in unit group F032 - Conductors, Composers and Arrangers. - Persons who teach music in post-secondary, secondary or elementary school are classified in an appropriate unit group of major group E1 - Teachers and Professors.</p>

Other performers (F132)	Occupations in this unit group are those, not elsewhere classified, primarily concerned with entertaining the public, such as circus performers, magicians and puppeteers.
Painters, sculptors and other visual artists (F036)	<p>Occupations in this unit group are primarily concerned with creating original artistic works using methods such as painting, drawing, sculpting, or etching. This unit group also includes art instructors and teachers, who teach in art schools other than primary, secondary or post-secondary schools.</p> <p><b>Exclusions</b> - House painters are classified in unit group H144 - Painters and Decorators. - Art teachers in primary, secondary or post-secondary institutions are classified in an appropriate unit group of major group E1 - Teachers and Professors. - Skilled craftspersons are classified in unit group F144 - Artisans and Craftspersons. - Graphic designers are classified in unit group F141 - Graphic Designers and Illustrating Artists.</p>
Producers, directors, choreographers and related occupations (F031)	<p>Occupations in this unit group are primarily concerned with producing, directing and overseeing film, television, radio, theatre, recording or dance productions or a specific aspect of the production.</p> <p><b>Exclusions</b> - Editors of pre-recorded videos, sound recording mixers and other radio and video technicians are classified in unit group F125 - Audio and Video Recording Technicians.</p>
Writers (F021)	<p>Occupations in this unit group are primarily concerned with researching and writing books, scripts, plays, essays, speeches, manuals, specifications and other non-journalistic articles for publication or presentation. Writers may specialize in a particular subject, type of publication or type of writing. Free-lance writers are classified in this unit group.</p> <p><b>Exclusions</b> - Journalists are classified in unit group F023 - Journalists.</p>