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Research Division Note #37 - November 30, 1992

## ARTIST EMPLOYMENT IN 1991

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Chairman*

*Arts in Education*

*Challenge &  
Advancement*

*Dance*

*Design Arts*

*Expansion Arts*

*Folk Arts*

*International*

*Literature*

*Locals*

*Media Arts*

*Museum*

*Music*

*Opera/Musical  
Theater*

*Presenting &  
Commissioning*

*State & Regional*

*Theater*

*Visual Arts*

In eleven occupational areas the artist labor force (total of those employed and unemployed) was up 0.6% from 1990 (1,608,000 to 1,618,000). These eleven occupations include the following: actors/directors, radio/television announcers, architects, authors, dancers, musicians/composers, painters/sculptors/craft-artists/artist printmakers, photographers, college/university teachers of art/drama/music, and artists not elsewhere classified. In 1991, total employment in these artist occupational groups stood at 1,533,000. This reflected a decrease of 1% since last year down from 1,548,000. This was the second consecutive annual decline in employment reported, which coincides with the national economic downturn years (1990 and 1991). The last previous year to year decline in artist employment occurred during the 1981-82 economic recession. In 1990 employment in these artist occupations declined 1.5% (to 1,548,000) from the 1989 level of 1,571,000.

During 1991, the number of unemployed artists in the eleven occupational groups increased from 60,000 to 85,000. This increase raised the artist unemployment rate (the ratio of the unemployed to the total labor force for artist occupations) from 3.7% to 5.3%, and marked the second consecutive year that the artist unemployment rate has increased.

These national employment statistics are obtained from the Bureau of Labor Statistics' Current Population Survey, which reports employment information on over 325 occupations, including eleven artist occupations. A respondent (16 years or older) is considered employed if during the survey week he/she did any paid work in his/her business, profession, or farm. To be considered as working in one of these artist occupations in the Bureau of Labor Statistics' survey, one must be working during the survey week and have described that job/work as one of the eleven artist occupations. It is important to note that those holding more than one job are counted in the job in which they worked the most hours during the survey week.

The Bureau of Labor Statistics counts a person as unemployed if they did not have a job during the survey week, were available for work, and had made specific efforts to find a job during the prior four

weeks. In order to be counted as unemployed in a particular occupation, an unemployed person's last full-time job must have been in that occupation. Therefore, to be counted as unemployed in one of the artist occupations, one must not have had a job in the survey week, been available for work, have made specific efforts to look for work in the last four weeks, and last worked in an artist occupation. The reader should be cautious about comparing these data to other estimates of employment and unemployment in artist occupations since differences in definition and methodology can cause wide variances. <sup>1/</sup>

Between 1990 and 1991, the labor force for all civilian workers increased 1% (124,067,000 to 125,303,000). For professional specialty occupations, a broad group of occupations that generally requires substantial professional training and/or education and includes the eleven artist occupations, the labor force increase over the year was 2% (16,132,000 to 16,451,000). For the eleven artist occupational groups, however, the increase from 1990 to 1991 was only .6% (1,608,000 to 1,618,000).

Over the year, total civilian employment declined by .9% (from 117,914,000 to 116,877,000). Employment among professional specialty occupations was up 1.5% in 1991 (15,818,000 to 16,058,000). Aggregate employment in the artist occupations declined by 1%, from 1,548,000 in 1990 to 1,533,000 in 1991.

Nationally, unemployment rose by 22.6% from 1990 to 1991, totaling 8,426,000 persons. Unemployment in professional specialty occupations increased 25.2% over the year, from 314,000 to 393,000. The increase in unemployment among artist occupations was 42%, nearly double the increase in other occupations.

The unemployment rate for all civilian workers rose from 5.5% in 1990 to 6.7% in 1991. The unemployment rate for professional specialty occupations rose from 1.9% to 2.4% from 1990 to 1991. The artist occupations had the largest proportional rise in unemployment rate from 3.7% in 1990 to 5.3% in 1991.

<sup>1/</sup>One example of disparate methodology is Actors Equity Association's tracking of its members' employment. In its December 1991 issue of "Equity News," the Association reports that its paid membership is 35,252, of whom 14,582 paid members are working under Equity contracts. Actors Equity defines its paid membership as those people who are registered members of Actors Equity, fully paid in dues, and eligible for Equity-contracted work. Consequently, Actors Equity bases its employment figures on the number of work weeks for which the total membership was engaged and compensated in Equity-contract work. Actors Equity does not collect information on the employment status of its membership that did not work under Equity contracts. Therefore, whether these members are holding acting jobs outside of Equity contracts, or working at jobs other than acting, or are without any job is not known.

### EMPLOYMENT TRENDS 1985-91

Since 1985, the artist labor force has increased by 9.2% (1,482,000 to 1,618,000), only about one-half of that of the Professional Specialty Occupation category, (18%). Although most comparable with other professional occupations in terms of education and training, the artists experienced growth rates more similar to that for the overall civilian labor force, (8.5%).

Again, the growth in artist employment from 1985 to 1991 coincides more closely with that for all civilian workers than with the Professional Specialty Occupations. Employment for artists and civilians grew at a rate of 8.6 and 9.1%, respectively. The Professional Specialty Occupations, on the other hand, grew at a rate of 17.8%.

During the period 1985 to 1991, the unemployment rates for civilian workers, the Professional Specialty Occupations, and artists followed the same trend; decreasing from 1985 until 1989 and then increasing between 1989 to 1991. However, the artists unemployment rate increased by a significantly higher proportion between 1989 and 1991, 90%, than the Professional Specialty Occupations, 40%, and all civilian workers, 26%.

### INDIVIDUAL ARTIST OCCUPATIONS 2/

This section compares the employment trends among individual artist occupations. As of 1991, total unemployment for all eleven occupations was 85,000, a 41.7% increase from 1990. Two categories which experienced extremely high unemployment rate increases between 1990 and 1991 were designers, 68.8%, and 'other artists', 78%. Between 1985 and 1991, architects experienced a significantly large increase in their unemployment rate, over 100%. The second largest unemployment rate increase between this time occurred among authors, 64.3%. In comparison, the teachers of art/drama/music had the largest decrease in unemployment rate, 54.2%.

The total labor force for artists had increased .6% between 1990 and 1991. The dancers experienced the largest increase among all eleven occupations, 25%. However, between 1985 and 1991, 'other artists' experienced the greatest labor force increase, 34.8%.

Total employment of all eleven occupations decreased by 1% between 1990 and 1991. The individual artist occupation with the greatest employment increase was dancers, 28%. Between 1985 and 1991, total employment increased by 8.6% and 'other artists' had the largest increase in employment, 33.9%.

2/These data are based on a sample survey and are subject to sampling errors. Small occupation groups (less than 75,000) are less likely to be accurate than the larger occupation groups. (See note at bottom of Table 1.)

#### ACTORS AND DIRECTORS

The unemployment rate for actors and directors in 1991 was 13.2%, up from 10.6% in 1990. The labor force for this group decreased 7.4% (108,000 to 100,000), and the number employed decreased 10.3% (97,000 to 87,000). The number of unemployed increased 18.2% from 11,000 in 1990 to 13,000 in 1991. Since 1985 there has been a 9.9% increase in the size of the labor force (91,000 to 100,000), with a 7.1% decrease in the number of unemployed. This has cut the unemployment rate from 15.4% to 13.2%, a 14.3% reduction.

#### ANNOUNCERS

The unemployment rate for announcers in 1991 was 4.1%, down from 5.5% in 1990. Increases were noted in the labor force (55,000 to 63,000) and the number employed (52,000 to 60,000). The number of unemployed remained constant at 3,000. Since 1985 there has been a 16.7% increase in the labor force (54,000 to 63,000), and a 22.6% drop in the unemployment rate (5.3% to 4.1%).

#### ARCHITECTS

The labor force for architects decreased for the second consecutive year in 1991, down from 147,000 in 1990 to 134,000 (an 8.8% decrease). The number of employed dropped 10.6% (142,000 to 127,000). The number of unemployed increased 40% (5,000 to 7,000). Although there was a decrease in the labor force, their unemployment rate rose from 1990 (3.7% to 5.0%). Since 1985 the architects' labor force has grown only 0.8% (133,000 to 134,000) and the number employed has decreased 2.3% (130,000 to 127,000), leading to an overall increase of over 100% (2.2% to 5.0%) in their unemployment rate.

#### AUTHORS

The authors labor force experienced an increase of 9.4% in 1991 (from 85,000 to 93,000). The number of employed has also increased 8.3% from 84,000 to 91,000. The number unemployed in this category doubled, raising their unemployment rate 64.3% to 2.3%. Since 1985 the number of employed authors has grown from 70,000 to 91,000, an increase of 30%.

#### DANCERS

The labor force for dancers increased 25% in 1991 (16,000 to 20,000). The number of employed has increased from 14,000 in 1989 and 1990 to 18,000 in 1991. The labor force for dancers has risen 17.6% since 1985 (17,000 to 20,000), and employment 20% (15,000 to 18,000). The data on unemployment for dancers is not provided since it was not possible to make reliable estimates given the small size of this category.

### DESIGNERS

The 1991 unemployment rate for designers was 5.4%, up from 3.2% in 1990. There was a 1.5% increase in the labor force (549,000 to 557,000), a 0.8% decrease in the number of employed (531,000 to 527,000), and a 66.7% rise in the total unemployed (18,000 to 30,000). Since 1985 there has been a 10.5% increase in the labor force (504,000 to 557,000) and a 8.9% increase in the number employed (484,000 to 527,000). The number of unemployed persons increased 50% (20,000 to 30,000), raising the unemployment rate by 38.5% (3.9% to 5.4%).

### MUSICIANS/COMPOSERS

The labor force for musicians and composers decreased 3% in 1991 (167,000 to 162,000) and there was a 3.7% drop in the number employed (162,000 to 156,000). The number of unemployed rose from 5,000 to 6,000, increasing the unemployment rate by 25% (3.2% to 4.0%). Since 1985 the labor force dropped 0.6% (163,000 to 162,000). During the period of 1985-91 there has been a 45.5% decrease in the number of unemployed musicians and composers (11,000 to 6,000) and a 38.5% decrease in the unemployment rate (6.5% to 4.0%).

### PAINTERS/SCULPTORS/CRAFT ARTISTS/ARTIST PRINTMAKERS

The labor force for this group decreased 3.1% in 1991 (224,000 to 217,000) and the number of employed dropped 4.1% (217,000 to 208,000). The number of unemployed in this category rose 28.6% (7,000 to 9,000), raising the unemployment rate from 3.0% to 4.0%. Since 1985 there has been a 4.8% growth in the labor force (207,000 to 217,000) and the number of unemployed rose 28.6% (7,000 to 9,000). The unemployment rate increased 25% (3.2% to 4.0%).

### PHOTOGRAPHERS

The unemployment rate for photographers rose 54.8% in 1991 from 3.1% to 4.8%. This was due to an 12.6% growth in the labor force (127,000 to 143,000) and a 75% growth in the number of unemployed (4,000 to 7,000). Since 1985 there has been a 6.7% increase in the labor force in this artist category (134,000 to 143,000), a 40% increase in the number of unemployed (5,000 to 7,000), and a 37% increase in the unemployment rate (3.5% to 4.8%).

### TEACHERS OF ART/DRAMA/MUSIC (higher ed.)

The labor force for this group decreased 13% in 1991 (46,000 to 40,000). The number of employed also declined, from 45,000 to 40,000. The number of unemployed declined to an estimated less than 1,000 for 1991, causing the unemployment rate to fall 59.3% (2.7% to 1.1%). Since 1985 there has been a 4.8% decrease in the size of the labor force (42,000 to 40,000) and a 2.4% decrease in the number of employed (41,000 to 40,000). The number of unemployed has consistently remained at or below 1,000 with an decrease of 54.2% (2.4% to 1.1%) in the unemployment rate.

### OTHER ARTISTS

This heterogeneous group of artists not classified elsewhere in the survey (which includes such varied professions as animators, comics, puppeteers, and translators) had a labor force of 89,000 in 1991, up 6% from 84,000 in 1990. The number employed in this category increased 2.5%, from 81,000 to 83,000. The number of unemployed doubled from 3,000 to 6,000 causing a 78% rise in the unemployment rate from 4.1% to 7.3%. Since 1985 this category has grown 34.8% (66,000 to 89,000) and the number of unemployed has grown 50% (4,000 to 6,000). This is reflected in a 30.4% increase in the unemployment rate (5.6% to 7.3%).

CAVEATS: This Research Division Note is the ninth of an annual series utilizing the Standard Occupational Classification (SOC) put into effect in the Current Population Survey in 1983. The changes in the occupational classification system improved the consistency in measuring employment in the artist occupational groups. Caution should be used when comparing these data with pre-1983 data.

Research Division Reports and Notes of related interest:

#### Reports

- #1 Employment and Unemployment of Artists: 1970-1975
- #16 Artist Employment and Unemployment: 1971-1980

#### Notes

- #2 Artist Employment in 1982
- #7 Artist Employment in 1983
- #11 Artist Employment in 1984
- #15 Artist Employment in 1985
- #22 Artist Employment in 1986
- #29 Artist Employment in 1987
- #31 Artist Employment in 1988
- #33 Artist Employment in 1989
- #35 Artist Employment in 1990

A Sourcebook of Arts Statistics: 1989, Research Division, April 1990

1992 Addendum to the Sourcebook of Arts Statistics, Research Division, April 1992

Table 1. Artist Labor Force, Employment and Unemployment, 1985-91

Occupation	1991	1990	1989	1987	1985
<b>Total, All Civilian Workers</b>	<b>125,303,000</b>	<b>124,067,000</b>	<b>123,869,000</b>	<b>119,865,000</b>	<b>115,462,000</b>
Employed	116,877,000	117,914,000	117,342,000	112,440,000	107,150,000
Unemployed	8,426,000	6,874,000	6,528,000	7,425,000	8,312,000
Unemployment Rate	6.7%	5.5%	5.3%	6.2%	7.2%
<b>Professional Specialty Occupations</b>	<b>16,451,000</b>	<b>16,132,000</b>	<b>15,815,000</b>	<b>14,726,000</b>	<b>13,946,000</b>
Employed	16,058,000	15,818,000	15,550,000	14,426,000	13,630,000
Unemployed	393,000	314,000	265,000	300,000	316,000
Unemployment Rate	2.4%	1.9%	1.7%	2.0%	2.3%
<b>All Artists</b>	<b>1,618,000</b>	<b>1,608,000</b>	<b>1,617,000</b>	<b>1,558,000</b>	<b>1,482,000</b>
Employed	1,533,000	1,548,000	1,571,000	1,503,000	1,411,000
Unemployed	85,000	60,000	46,000	55,000	71,000
Unemployment Rate	5.3%	3.7%	2.8%	3.5%	5.0%
<b>Actors and Directors</b>	<b>100,000</b>	<b>108,000</b>	<b>107,000</b>	<b>98,000</b>	<b>91,000</b>
Employed	87,000	97,000	96,000	88,000	77,000
Unemployed	13,000	11,000	11,000	10,000	14,000
Unemployment Rate	13.2%	10.6%	10.4%	9.8%	15.4%
<b>Announcers</b>	<b>63,000</b>	<b>55,000</b>	<b>53,000</b>	<b>62,000</b>	<b>54,000</b>
Employed	60,000	52,000	51,000	59,000	51,000
Unemployed	3,000	3,000	2,000	3,000	3,000
Unemployment Rate	4.1%	5.5%	2.9%	4.7%	5.3%
<b>Architects</b>	<b>134,000</b>	<b>147,000</b>	<b>161,000</b>	<b>136,000</b>	<b>133,000</b>
Employed	127,000	142,000	157,000	135,000	130,000
Unemployed	7,000	5,000	4,000	1,000	3,000
Unemployment Rate	5.0%	3.7%	2.4%	1.0%	2.2%
<b>Authors</b>	<b>93,000</b>	<b>85,000</b>	<b>83,000</b>	<b>86,000</b>	<b>71,000</b>
Employed	91,000	84,000	82,000	85,000	70,000
Unemployed	2,000	1,000	1,000	1,000	1,000
Unemployment Rate	2.3%	1.4%	1.4%	0.8%	1.4%
<b>Dancers</b>	<b>20,000</b>	<b>16,000</b>	<b>17,000</b>	<b>16,000</b>	<b>17,000</b>
Employed	18,000	14,000	14,000	15,000	15,000
Unemployed	*	*	*	*	*
Unemployment Rate	*	*	*	*	*
<b>Designers</b>	<b>557,000</b>	<b>549,000</b>	<b>548,000</b>	<b>546,000</b>	<b>504,000</b>
Employed	527,000	531,000	534,000	531,000	484,000
Unemployed	30,000	18,000	14,000	15,000	20,000
Unemployment Rate	5.4%	3.2%	2.5%	2.7%	3.9%
<b>Musicians/Composers</b>	<b>162,000</b>	<b>167,000</b>	<b>174,000</b>	<b>177,000</b>	<b>163,000</b>
Employed	156,000	162,000	170,000	169,000	152,000
Unemployed	6,000	5,000	4,000	8,000	11,000
Unemployment Rate	4.0%	3.2%	2.4%	4.7%	6.5%
<b>Painters/Sculptors/ Craft Artists/ and Artist Printmakers</b>	<b>217,000</b>	<b>224,000</b>	<b>232,000</b>	<b>198,000</b>	<b>207,000</b>
Employed	208,000	217,000	229,000	191,000	200,000
Unemployed	9,000	7,000	3,000	7,000	7,000
Unemployment Rate	4.0%	3.0%	1.3%	3.4%	3.2%
<b>Photographers</b>	<b>143,000</b>	<b>127,000</b>	<b>114,000</b>	<b>131,000</b>	<b>134,000</b>
Employed	136,000	123,000	112,000	126,000	129,000
Unemployed	7,000	4,000	2,000	5,000	5,000
Unemployment Rate	4.8%	3.1%	1.9%	4.0%	3.5%
<b>Teachers of Art, Drama, and Music (higher ed.)</b>	<b>40,000</b>	<b>46,000</b>	<b>45,000</b>	<b>41,000</b>	<b>42,000</b>
Employed	40,000	45,000	45,000	40,000	41,000
Unemployed	***	1,000	***	1,000	1,000
Unemployment Rate	1.1%	2.7%	0.7%	1.6%	2.4%
<b>Other Artists**</b>	<b>89,000</b>	<b>84,000</b>	<b>83,000</b>	<b>67,000</b>	<b>66,000</b>
Employed	83,000	81,000	81,000	64,000	62,000
Unemployed	6,000	3,000	2,000	3,000	4,000
Unemployment Rate	7.3%	4.1%	2.3%	4.5%	5.6%

\*Data base is too small for reliable estimate; \*\*Not elsewhere classified; \*\*\*Less than 1,000.

Note: These labor force statistics are based on a sample survey and, consequently, are subject to sampling errors. Relatively small changes in employment in the smaller artist occupations are often not statistically significant. For a more detailed discussion, see Research Division Report #16, Artists Employment and Unemployment 1971-1980, Appendix B, "Reliability of Current Population Survey (CPS) Statistics." All the unemployment rates shown in the table (with the exception of the rates for 'All Artists') were calculated by the Bureau of Labor Statistics using unrounded data.

Source: Bureau of Labor Statistics.

Table 2. Trends in Artist Labor Force, Employment and Unemployment, 1985-1991

<u>Occupation</u>	<u>Change, 1990-1991</u>		<u>Change, 1985-1991</u>	
	<u>Level</u>	<u>Percentage</u>	<u>Level</u>	<u>Percentage</u>
<u>Total, All Civilian Workers</u>	+1,236,000	+1.0%	+9,841,000	+8.5%
Employed	-1,037,000	-0.9%	+9,727,000	+9.1%
Unemployed	+1,552,000	+22.6%	+114,000	+1.4%
Unemployment Rate	+1.2%	+21.8%	-0.5%	-6.9%
<u>Professional Specialty Occupations</u>	+319,000	+2.0%	+2,505,000	+18.0%
Employed	+240,000	+1.5%	+2,428,000	+17.8%
Unemployed	+79,000	+25.2%	+77,000	+24.4%
Unemployment Rate	+0.5%	+26.3%	+0.1%	+4.3%
<u>All Artists</u>	+10,000	+0.6%	+136,000	+9.2%
Employed	-15,000	-1.0%	+122,000	+8.6%
Unemployed	+25,000	+41.7%	+14,000	+19.7%
Unemployment Rate	+1.6%	+43.2%	+0.3%	+6.0%
<u>Actors and Directors</u>	-8,000	-7.4%	+9,000	+9.9%
Employed	-10,000	-10.3%	+10,000	+13.0%
Unemployed	+2,000	+18.2%	-1,000	-7.1%
Unemployment Rate	+2.6%	+24.5%	-2.2%	-14.3%
<u>Announcers</u>	+8,000	+14.5%	+9,000	+16.7%
Employed	+8,000	+15.4%	+9,000	+17.6%
Unemployed	0	0.0%	0	0.0%
Unemployment Rate	-1.4%	-25.5%	-1.2%	-22.6%
<u>Architects</u>	-13,000	-8.8%	+1,000	+0.8%
Employed	-15,000	-10.6%	-3,000	-2.3%
Unemployed	+2,000	+40.0%	+4,000	+133.3%
Unemployment Rate	+1.3%	+35.1%	+2.8%	+127.3%
<u>Authors</u>	+8,000	+9.4%	+22,000	+31.0%
Employed	+7,000	+8.3%	+21,000	+30.0%
Unemployed	+1,000	+100.0%	+1,000	+100.0%
Unemployment Rate	+0.9%	+64.3%	+0.9%	+64.3%
<u>Dancers</u>	+4,000	+25.0%	+3,000	+17.6%
Employed	+4,000	+28.6%	+3,000	+20.0%
Unemployed	"	"	"	"
Unemployment Rate	"	"	"	"
<u>Designers</u>	+8,000	+1.5%	+53,000	+10.5%
Employed	-4,000	-0.8%	+43,000	+8.9%
Unemployed	+12,000	+66.7%	+10,000	+50.0%
Unemployment Rate	+2.2%	+68.8%	+1.5%	+38.5%
<u>Musicians/Composers</u>	-5,000	-3.0%	-1,000	-0.6%
Employed	-6,000	-3.7%	+4,000	+2.6%
Unemployed	+1,000	+20.0%	-5,000	-45.5%
Unemployment Rate	+0.8%	+25.0%	-2.5%	-38.5%
<u>Painters/Sculptors/ Craft Artists/ and Artist Printmakers</u>	-7,000	-3.1%	+10,000	+4.8%
Employed	-9,000	-4.1%	+8,000	+4.0%
Unemployed	+2,000	+28.6%	+2,000	+28.6%
Unemployment Rate	+1.0%	+33.3%	+0.8%	+25.0%
<u>Photographers</u>	+16,000	+12.6%	+9,000	+6.7%
Employed	+13,000	+10.6%	+7,000	+5.4%
Unemployed	+3,000	+75.0%	+2,000	+40.0%
Unemployment Rate	+1.7%	+54.8%	+1.3%	+37.1%
<u>Teachers of Art, Drama, and Music (higher ed.)</u>	-6,000	-13.0%	-2,000	-4.8%
Employed	-5,000	-11.1%	-1,000	-2.4%
Unemployed	"	"	"	"
Unemployment Rate	-1.6%	-59.3%	-1.3%	-54.2%
<u>Other Artists**</u>	+5,000	+6.0%	+23,000	+34.8%
Employed	+2,000	+2.5%	+21,000	+33.9%
Unemployed	+3,000	+100.0%	+2,000	+50.0%
Unemployment Rate	+3.2%	+78.0%	+1.7%	+30.4%

\* Data base is too small for reliable estimate; \*\* Not elsewhere classified.

See note at bottom of Table 1.

Source: Bureau of Labor Statistics.

Research Division  
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