

## **Freelance Artists by Dana Ailer**

Freelancing (working on a contract basis) is often the most desirable type of work for artists who want to maintain their creative freedom and make a living from their artwork. While freelancers aren't considered employees of the companies they work with - so they don't receive benefits – companies identify their favorite artists and many freelancers are asked to return to the same company for multiple projects. Because they're not tied to one company, freelancers enjoy the freedom of working with multiple companies at once on varied types of projects.

If you're considering a career in freelance art, your most vital tool is your portfolio. Your portfolio should be a well-organized online collection of your work which identifies your style and highlights your strengths. If you excel in multiple forms of art, or are approaching a wide range of clients, you should consider creating multiple portfolios. Some of the same pieces may appear in more than one of your portfolios, but each portfolio should reflect a clearly defined style and focus. This is the same type of self-marketing as rewriting your resume to highlight skills a particular company is looking for.

When you're approached by a company to provide freelance services, your next step is to write a contract. Your contract will include a detailed scope of work as well as deadlines for completion. For a simple project, there will only be one deadline; but if you're working on a large project, you should set intermediate deadlines for yourself as a time for you and your client to review what's been done so far and for your client to confirm that the project is heading in the right direction. Your contract will also stipulate your compensation rate (whether it be by the hour or by the project), as well as the method of payment. Many companies work on a 'net 30' schedule. That is, payment for your work is due 30 days after the completion of the project. When working on a large project, it would be acceptable to require partial payments corresponding to your intermediate deadlines. Many freelancers find payment through PayPal to be a quick and easy way to be compensated, while others prefer to receive a paper check. All of these details need to be addressed in your contract.

Freelancing is a valuable, flexible means for artists to earn a living through their craft. With a strong portfolio and a clear idea of what your freelance contract should include, you're ready to pursue exciting independent opportunities.