

2022

ARTS & DESIGN

MICROREPORT



TAKE **CREATIVE** CONTROL

NEARLY ALL ONLINE VISUAL ARTISTS DON'T EARN MONEY. THOSE WHO DO ARE MOSTLY WHITE.

In most online creator industries, a reasonable proportion of participants are able to monetize their work, even if the income they generate is less than \$1000 per year. For visual artists, however, only a tiny fraction—2.1%—earn any income at all from the work they post online. That small income-earning population is divided evenly between women and men, but, as with so many other industries, there are wide racial gaps.

Black and white people are equally likely to post art or design work online, but white artists are three times more likely to monetize their work. Asian and Hispanic artists face both participation and monetization gaps, with both groups about half as likely to post or earn money from artwork online compared to whites.



\$3.2 BILLION
EARNED ONLINE BY ARTISTS IN 2020,
75.6% OF IT WENT TO WHITE ARTISTS



In raw dollars, the impact of these monetization gaps is clear: of the **\$3.2 billion earned online by artists in 2020, 75.6% of it went to white artists.** Here, a gender gap also emerges. Though women and men are about as likely to earn income from their artwork, men take home a larger share—57.4%.

Although nearly all artists do not earn money from their online postings, those who do usually take home more than creators in other industries. Only 9.6% of income-earning artists and designers earn less than \$1000, and 36.8% earn more than \$20,000.



ONLY 2.1%

OF VISUAL ARTISTS AND DESIGNERS WHO POST THEIR WORK ONLINE

EARN ANY INCOME



BY THE NUMBERS

- **Only 2.1% of visual artists and designers who post their work online earn any income** from doing so.
- **Of those income-earning artists, 51.4% are women.** However, despite being larger in number, women only take home 42.6% of the revenue generated in this sector.
- Black and white people are equally likely to post artwork online, but **white creators are three times more likely to earn income.**
- Asian and Hispanic artists are about half as likely to post artwork online and about half as likely to earn money from it, compared to whites.
- Those who do earn income tend to make more than other online creators, with 53.7% earning between \$1000 and \$20,000 and 36.8% earning even more than that.
- Overall, online artists and designers earned over \$3.2 billion online in 2020, but 75.6% of those earnings went to whites.

BLACK & WHITE PEOPLE ARE EQUALLY LIKELY TO POST ARTWORK ONLINE, BUT

WHITE CREATORS ARE 3X MORE LIKELY TO EARN INCOME

BACKGROUND

Unlike other online creators whose income is directly tied to the work they post—royalties from music on Spotify, advertisements embedded in podcasts, sales of crafts—visual artists are more likely to use social media to promote themselves. Income-earning artists and designers may then be hired by their followers or commissioned outside of the platforms where they post their work. We've used the data from the Census Bureau to capture this income holistically.



TAKE ACTION

The online creator economy shows great promise. However, it is far from perfect and, in many ways, continues to suffer from systemic racism, sexism, and classism. As the online creator community grows, it is important that we continue to fight for equal pay, fair working conditions, and inclusive and accepting environments for all creators. Our toolkits will help creators stay active and up-to-date on the policies moving through Washington, while also providing information on the essential legal considerations to ensure that creators are protected and compensated. To download, please visit <https://takecreativecontrol.org/Creator-Report-2022>