

Assistant Art Director

From ADG Art Direction Wiki

["http://www.wiki.artdirectors.org/~wiki2/index.php?title=Asst. Art Director"](http://www.wiki.artdirectors.org/~wiki2/index.php?title=Asst._Art_Director)

The Assistant Art Director is the third in command after the [Production Designer](#) and the [Art Director](#).

Understanding the role of the Assistant Art Director requires awareness that he/she is frequently an [Art Director](#) in training and that the Art Director is responsible for all that is set forth below, and more. This role can also be described as being a "man Friday" who is able to bring many tools to the table.

Experience

The Assistant Art Director should have four to five years of hands-on, practical experience in film set design (not necessarily as a set designer).

They should have knowledge and experience working with film construction crews such as [coordinator](#), foreman, painters, plasters, greens, sign painters, metal shop workers, staff shop workers, mechanical effects builders and grips. A proven ability to take a project from conception to finished product on one's own by interfacing with the above departments is essential.

They should have knowledge and proven ability to quickly hunt down materials both common and unusual, and have the ability to make recommendations, verify availability, place orders, and follow through.

They should have complete knowledge of period hardware, and have familiarity, not only with styles appropriate to a given period, but with how the selected hardware operates and is installed. The Assistant Art Director should have experience in dealing with the construction crew's specific problems related to installation.

Skills and Experience Required

- Overall, should have a good eye and sense of design, as well as creativity and imagination when doing research.
- Understand design, construction, and set dressing schedules as applied to film prep.
- Experience with and knowledge of [photographic and painted backings](#), the conditions under which they are used and how they are produced, and the requirements of the cinematographer, set lighting and grips (both rigging and on-set grips).
- Understanding of camera and set lighting and complete proficiency in the layout and use of camera angles for 1:33, 1:85 and 2:35 film formats.
- Experienced in finding and using stock units, and be familiar with various studio and independent scene docks and prop houses.

- Have knowledge, understanding and experience with [Visual Effects](#), and exposure to a variety of visual effects problems and their solutions. The Assistant Art Director should have understanding of the appropriate application of blue screen, foreground miniatures, forced perspective, rear screen projection, gimbaled sets and computer generated effects.

The Assistant Art Director is frequently left on his/her own to sometimes handle problems or situations that are of great importance to the Art Department and the overall film. The skills brought to the job will have a direct effect upon the productivity and effectiveness of the Art Department, and ultimately will shape the budget of the department as well.

Responsibilities

- **Sourcing Materials** - An Assistant Art Director might be required to research and find a particular purveyor of exotic plastics or whatever the design du jour might require, it is for this reason, no Asst. Art Director should not be afraid of searching beyond what the internet might provide, and rather be prepared to just hunker down and look through a series of local yellow pages!
- **Outfitting Sets with Hardware** - On certain projects they may initially just be given a series of blue-lines and be told to "outfit" that particular interior set with it's working door, window and register hardware. The Assistant Art Director should have complete knowledge of period hardware, and have familiarity, not only with style appropriate to a given period, but with how the selected hardware operates and is installed. The Assistant Art Director should have experience in dealing with the construction crew's specific problems related to installation. Having a "working man's knowledge" of just how hardware works is important! Also already owning various hardware catalogs doesn't hurt either. Knowing the various local hardware stores as well as having an intimate knowledge of each and every studios stock can save countless hours of frustration.
- **Research** - Depending on the particular project, the Assistant Art Director may be called to help the Art Director and Production Designer with various aspects of research; be it culling through stacks of period clippings for the one right photograph of a particular piece of signage or just helping condense various research or coffee-table books down to a more manageable amount of visual information, for "visual boards" used later by the art department to pitch a particular style of art direction.
- **Drafting** - Being able to draft details and signage can come in handy at times. It is *not* the job of an Assistant Art Director to take the place of a [Set Designer](#). If there are drawings to be done, then a Set Designer should be retained for this purpose.