

# The Boston Globe

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## Business

### For sale: students' artwork, before it even leaves campus

MassArt store helps counter the portrait of the starving artist

By Allison Knothe  
GLOBE CORRESPONDENT

**T**he Massachusetts College of Art and Design is trying to help its students set trends not just in the art world, but in the business world.

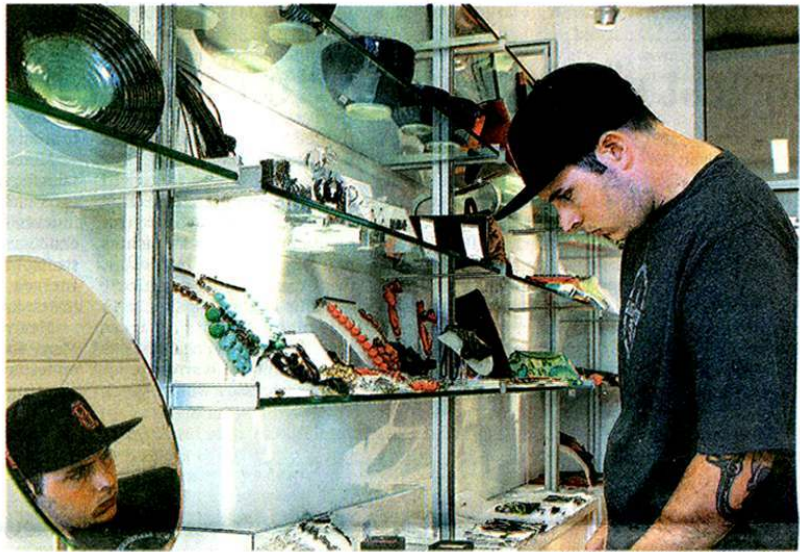
Last month, the university opened MassArt Made, a boutique that features the artwork of more than 50 students, staff, and alumni — everything from \$1.25 postcards to a \$13,000 painting.

The store is one of several that have popped up across the country as art schools seek more ways to showcase and sell the work of students and alumni, besides at art fairs and in galleries.

Such stores help the schools teach students how to market and sell their work and enable the community to buy unique photographs, sculptures, dresses, and other art.

"The people who come into MassArt get to experience art in a more visceral way instead of a more virtual way," said Maureen Keefe, vice president of student development at MassArt. "So that will, I think, always differentiate our store from other nice gallery-type stores as far as what we're going to offer as far as insight in the creative mind of an artist."

One of the main reasons art schools open retail stores is to help students and alumni ditch the stereotype of the "starving artist." It seems to be not true for many: In 2010, the average income for



PHOTOS BY WENDY MAEDA/GLOBE STAFF

James Mustin, a graduate student at the Massachusetts College of Art and Design, browsed at the school's new retail store, one of several at art colleges around the country.

works in all occupations was \$44,410, the Bureau of Labor Statistics reported, while artists earned an average of \$53,080.

The Rhode Island School of Design's retail store, RISDworks, opened in 2001 and pays artists upfront, selling their work to consumers for double the purchase price. The store showcases only work by alumni, which includes paintings starting at \$175, a \$600 coffee table, and

necklaces that range from \$48 to \$1,250.

And in Georgia, shopSCAD opened in 2003 on the campus of the Savannah College of Art and Design. It, too, prices art at double what it pays the artists.

The 1,000-square-foot store features 8,000 pieces of art created by more than 600 alumni, staff, and students, including jewelry, photography, paintings, and sweaters. One painting is priced at \$14,000.

"Many artists are just making things continuously, and they want a platform to exhibit them," said Amy Zurcher, director of shopSCAD.

She added that some of the art has been featured in Vogue magazine and sold in stores like Bed, Bath & Beyond, Urban Outfitters, and Anthropologie.

"It's almost effortless," she said, "because the pool from which we are gleaning are these students, who make the trends. They are naturally on that cutting edge."

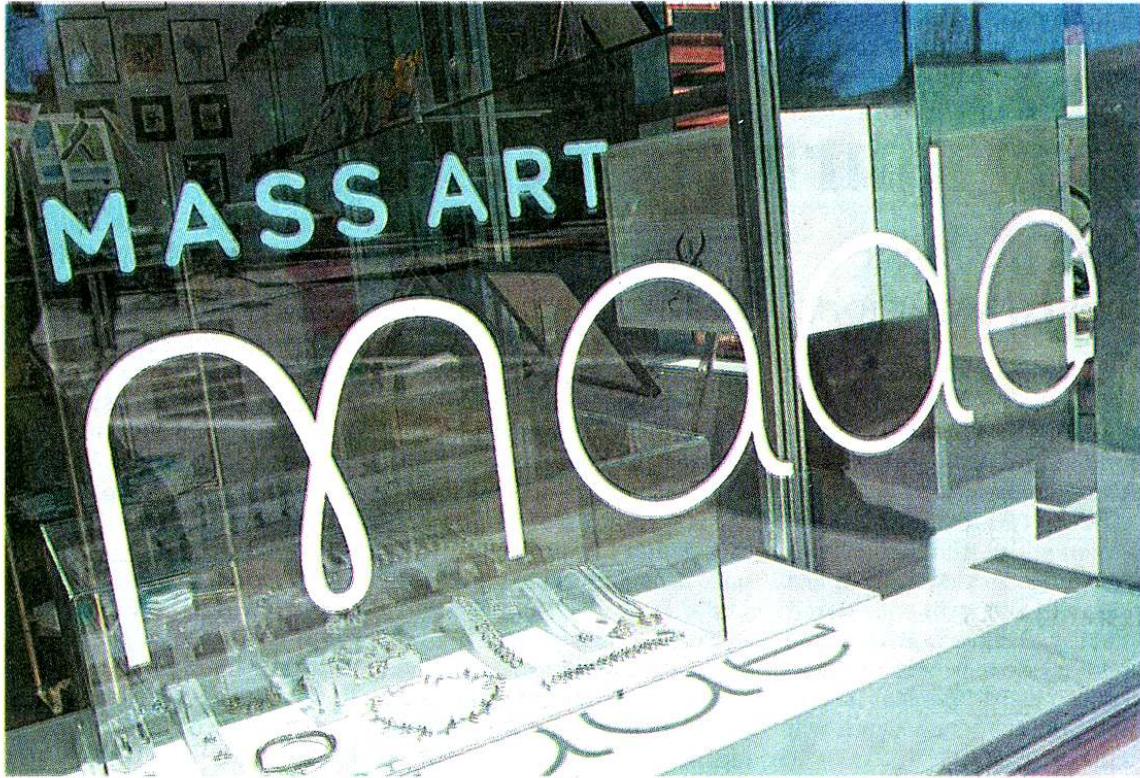
At MassArt, the average income for graduates who responded to a survey in 2009 was \$32,500. The total cost this year for a Massachusetts resident to attend MassArt, a state school, was about \$25,000, and \$42,000 for those from out of state.

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The artwork for sale at MassArt's boutique includes hand-painted ceramics by Jaye Ward, a senior at the college.

**ART FOR SALE**  
See more photos from inside the MassArt Made store at [www.boston.com/business](http://www.boston.com/business).



MassArt's boutique is not unique: Schools with retail shops include the Rhode Island School of Design and the Savannah College of Art and Design.

## Art school's a retailer, too

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At the store, items are held on consignment until they are sold. Half of the revenue from purchases goes to the artists, 40 percent is reinvested in the store, and 10 percent goes toward scholarships.

Artists must be approved by a committee of alumni, staff, and other advisers who evaluate their artwork. So far, they have reviewed 167 artists. Once an artist is chosen, the store carries his or her work indefinitely, as long as the artist produces merchandise to sell.

Things for sale alumni include Forrest Gump DVDs for \$13.99 to showcase the work of the movie's set designer, Nancy

Haigh. There are also illustrations of the cartoon "The Tick," which was created by alumni Ben Edlund.

But the work of everyday students is prominent, too.

For some students, it's a dream come true. Tori Kendrew recalls rushing home as a 10-year-old to her parents' house to make cards for a craft fair her mother helped her to set up. Today, Kendrew, 20, is a junior at the MassArt who is selling her work at the school's stores — \$15 purses she made by layering together plastic bags from Target.

"It's a really good first step to see what it's like to be selling your work and to have people recognizing your work and knowing your name," she said.

Jaye Ward, a senior ceramics major, has sets of two handmade cups and saucers with birds painted on them on sale for \$200, plus \$189 ceramic birds in the front window.

"I've definitely seen some people drawn in from the street after seeing my work in the window," she said.

Valerie Wencis, a customer who was visiting the store during her lunch break recently, agreed.

"It's nice to be able to get a cup of coffee and peruse, because there's not that much else in the Longwood Medical Area," where the Massachusetts College of Art and Design is located, she said.

*Allison Knothe can be reached at [aknothe@globe.com](mailto:aknothe@globe.com).*