Madeline Baker ’12
Studio Art major
Art director for marketing, Conversant LLC

“I had been leaning toward an art major for a while and repeatedly talking myself out of it, thinking it impractical. I met with some of the professors and learned more about the program. After seeing the broad range of student work on display and experiencing the energy in the building, I was sold. It just felt right. The Studio Art major had everything I was seeking as a complement to my pre-health major—experienced professors, stimulating classes, and the chance to try new things while building my creative skill set.

“In my current position at an ad tech/digital media company, I use what I learned in my major on a daily basis through creative decisioning. I specialize in brand strategy and data visualization, two of the more analytical subsets of design, but even the calculated parts of my job are rooted in my foundational art knowledge. My traditional media background and fine art training make me a standout candidate in a digital design industry—since I came up in drawing and painting, I don’t always think the way designers are traditionally taught to think.

“Breaking into the job market with a Studio Art major first and foremost requires a willingness to try and a desire to learn in your chosen field—enthusiasm almost always trumps inexperience. Starting a creative career also often calls for persistence in hunting down open positions and connecting with people. Even if it takes some time, opportunities will present themselves if you keep trying.

“The benefits to studying Studio Art are very real. You learn the value of hard work and personal accountability. There’s no way to fake a painting—you have to put in the time. Professional success is difficult to find without that kind of work ethic. That creative passion can be channeled into any job or career path, not just artistic ones. Studio Art teaches you to really care about what you want to do regardless of what that is. The art program at Notre Dame educates you in finding your voice and expressing your opinion. The world is full of questions just waiting for creative answers—all you have to do is speak up.”