



**Arts & Culture**  
**MYTH BUSTERS**

ROANOKE ECONOMIC DEVELOPMENT

**Myth:** The arts industry isn't profitable.



**Truth:** Nationally, the nonprofit arts are a \$166.3 billion industry, generating \$27.5 billion in revenue for local, state, and federal governments, a 450% return on \$5 billion in arts allocations. Not to mention the creative capital art professionals contribute.

The arts and cultural scene in Roanoke plays a role in business attraction and workforce development, while retaining a highly skilled and creative workforce, and contributing to overall quality of life.





**Myth:** The arts are the result of natural talent. You're artsy or you're not.



**Truth:** Proficiency in the arts is the result of focused curiosity and applied skill building. Like many other industries, becoming an arts professional requires iteration, commitment, and creativity.



**Myth:** The Arts and Technology don't overlap.



**Truth:** The arts and creative industries also play a key role in innovation and technology, as artists and creative professionals drive new ideas and perspectives, leading to new products and services. Doug Jackson said it best, "An artist can imagine what's not there," just like an entrepreneur.



**Myth:** The arts industry is loosely organized and run by volunteers.



**Truth:** The industry is staffed by specialized cultural workers who dedicate their careers to developing products that engage, delight, and challenge the communities in which they live. Nationally, the non-profit arts industry supported 2.3 million full-time jobs. Locally, that number is upward of 1,700.

**Myth:** I'm not creative, so the arts aren't for me.



**Truth:** The reason the arts resonate so widely is because everyone is innately creative even if you aren't applying your creativity to a work of art. When you engage with the arts as an audience member, you're co-creating with the professionals on the stage, in the gallery, on the page. Their work encourages you to imagine new perspectives which you can apply to your own relationships and work.



**Myth:** The arts are a “nice to have,” but not a necessity for growth.



**Truth:** The arts are a critical component of creating a sense of place and shared identity. A cohesive identity smooths the path for collaboration and collaboration speeds growth. A vibrant, creative culture is also attractive. People want to travel to (and spend their dollars in) places that offer interesting cultural experiences. Businesses want to locate and invest in places where quality of place includes a vibrant art scene.

**\$64.2 million**

Annual economic  
impact of arts

**1,774 jobs**

In Roanoke

**30 businesses**

Arts & nonprofits

**\$43.02**

Daily arts event  
tourism spending

