Sam Fox School of Design & Visual Arts

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Mildred Lane Kemper Art Museum

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About Us

The Sam Fox School of Design & Visual Arts (http://www.samfoxschool.wustl.edu) is a unique collaboration in architecture, art and design education, linking professional studio programs with one of the country’s finest university art museums in the context of an internationally recognized research university.

The Sam Fox School is composed of the College of Architecture, the Graduate School of Architecture & Urban Design, the College of Art, the Graduate School of Art and the Mildred Lane Kemper Art Museum (http://www.kemperartmuseum.wustl.edu).

The College of Art, founded in 1879, was the first professional, university-affiliated art school in the United States. In the 1940s, its broad-based core program helped set the standards for the bachelor of fine arts degree. Faculty over the years have included Max Beckmann, Philip Guston and other internationally known artists.

The College of Architecture, established in 1910, was one of eight founding members of the Association of Collegiate Schools of Architecture (ACSA). In 1962, Architecture launched one of the nation’s first Master of Urban Design programs. Four winners of the Pritzker Prize, considered architecture’s highest honor, have taught at the school.

The Mildred Lane Kemper Art Museum dates back to 1881, making it the first art museum west of the Mississippi River. The collection has historically focused on contemporary work. Today the Kemper Art Museum holds roughly 3,500 important paintings, sculptures, photographs and installations by 19th-, 20th- and 21st-century American and European artists, along with significant antiquities and a large number of prints and drawings.

Additional collaborative opportunities are provided by the Department of Art History and Archaeology (http://arthistory.artsci.wustl.edu) in Arts & Sciences, the Kenneth and Nancy Kranzberg Art & Architecture Library (https://library.wustl.edu/units/artarch), and the D.B. Dowd Modern Graphic History Library (https://library.wustl.edu/spec/mghl).
Inquiry, Creativity and Synthesis
The Sam Fox School offers rigorous art and architecture education at both the undergraduate and graduate levels, within the unique context of an independent, nationally prominent research university.

The student body is composed of approximately 300 undergraduate and 40 graduate students in Art, as well as 200 undergraduate and 280 graduate students in Architecture. In all, they represent 17 countries, 47 states and the District of Columbia. Roughly 30 percent of undergraduates pursue combined studies within another university area.

Both core and advanced studios integrate contemporary theory and practice. Among the innovative programs are:

- Multidisciplinary courses co-taught by Art, Architecture, and Art History and Archaeology faculty. Recent seminars have explored the history of illustrated entertainment, combined urban theory with book design and production, and crafted a variety of online publications. Courses in exhibition studies are being offered, and a new program of exhibition studies is under development.

- International studios in Barcelona, Berlin, Buenos Aires, and Florence are taught by Washington University faculty and offer a range of distinctive programs in art and architecture.

- Community projects include the University City Sculpture Series, which funds student-designed public artworks; WashUCity, a mentoring program for local high school artists; and Architecture’s Building Community/Community Building, which explores relationships between St. Louis’ inner city, nearby municipalities and outlying suburbs.

Uniting Creativity and Scholarship
The Sam Fox School boasts a unique combination of academic and intellectual resources.

The Architecture faculty includes practicing architects, urban designers and landscape architects as well as eminent architectural theorists and historians and a select number of international visitors. The resident, full-time faculty members have won national and regional awards for design excellence and planning, including more than two dozen from the American Institute of Architects alone.

Art’s full-time faculty members include prominent painters, sculptors, printmakers and mixed-media artists as well as leading illustrators, graphic designers, fashion designers and photographers. Design faculty have won numerous professional honors while fine art faculty have been featured in more than 100 solo exhibitions and 300 group shows on five continents.

The nationally recognized Kemper Art Museum maintains a vital program of exhibitions, publications and educational events. Major thematic shows are drawn from institutions and private collections around the world, highlighting nationally and internationally emerging artists. The acclaimed permanent collection includes key works by modern and contemporary artists from Henri Matisse, Pablo Picasso and Jackson Pollock to Christian Boltanski, Candida Hofer and Olafur Eliasson.

Public events include concerts, film screenings, lectures and discussions with distinguished visitors, and museum tours led by student docents. The museum also provides workspace for faculty- and student-curated exhibitions (usually relating to Sam Fox School curriculum). Courses in Art History and Archaeology further complement the critical and practical study of exhibitions while facilitating student involvement in professional curatorial projects.

A Comprehensive Campus
The Sam Fox School is housed in a comprehensive, five-building campus for design and the visual arts. Conceived around a central courtyard, it both reflects and updates Washington University’s original campus plan, developed in 1895 by Frederick Law Olmsted, the founder of American landscape architecture.

The architectural centerpiece is prize-winning Japanese architect Fumihiko Maki’s Kemper Art Museum. This elegant, 65,000-square-foot limestone clad structure — a gathering point for scholars and the general public — includes more than 10,000 square feet of exhibition space, art storage facilities, and the Florence Steinberg Weil Sculpture Garden. The museum also houses the Kranzberg Art & Architecture Library, Art History and Archaeology, and the Newman Money Museum, a state-of-the-art numismatics center.

Adjacent to the Kemper Art Museum is Maki’s Earl E. and Myrtle E. Walker Hall. The three-story, 38,000-square-foot building contains painting and sculpture studios and the Nancy Spirtas Kranzberg Studio for the Illustrated Book.

Flanking these buildings are Bixby and Givens Halls — historic homes to Art and Architecture, respectively — as well as Steinberg Hall, Maki’s iconic modernist pavilion. Sam Fox School facilities include state-of-the-art computing environments; accessible, light-filled studios; additional workspaces; an auditorium; and a café.

Visiting Artists and Architects
The Sam Fox School invites distinguished academics and professionals to lecture (http://www.samfoxschool.wustl.edu/calendar/events/lectures), attend critiques and visit major studios. Recent visitors include:

2017–18
Daniel M. Abramson
Morehshin Allahyari
Lisa Anne Auerbach
Pierre Bélanger
Ellen Blumenstein
Jennifer Bornstein
Candy Chang
Keetra Dean Dixon
Vittoria Di Palma
Kathryn Ewing
Alex Gerber
Alan Gordon
Mindy Fullilove
Bijoy Jain
Brian MacKay-Lyons
Elena Manferdini
Thom Mayne
Mary McLeod
Eric Mumford
Lorcan O'Herlihy
Michael Rakowitz
Peter Rose
Michael Roth
Emmy Thelander
Dirk van den Heuvel
Xavier Vendrell
Diane Victor

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