MFA in Visual Art

The Master of Fine Arts (MFA) in Visual Art (https://samfoxschool.wustl.edu/programs/mfa-va/) program provides a dynamic, experimental environment that supports the production of original creative work while challenging the conventional and habitual. Students explore a wide spectrum of media, production methods and distribution strategies and learn to balance making with the generation of ideas. It is a two-year, critically engaged studio practice program with myriad opportunities for collaboration, cross-disciplinary work and research. The program promotes a rigorous exchange of ideas within a tight-knit community.

The program is an open landscape for the emerging artist — one that reflects the dynamic cultural shifts, global perspectives and evolving technologies that shape today’s complex art world. While investigating their roles and responsibilities as artists, students challenge traditional hierarchies and embrace new forms of aesthetic thinking that include socially engaged and situated practices, site-responsive work, post-studio production, de-skilling and DIY/maker movements.

Graduate seminars provide contemporary and historical contexts for art making, while a thesis seminar supports students in their writing and the development of their ideas. Through a combination of self-directed study, studio critiques, visiting artist reviews and research, students build a sophisticated awareness of the cultural conversations of our time.

Website: http://samfoxschool.wustl.edu/gradart

Faculty

Our faculty (http://samfoxschool.wustl.edu/node/4159/) are practicing artists and designers who engage in projects internationally, nationally and regionally. They exhibit their work in museums, galleries and other venues. They engage a variety of audiences, receive critical review in periodicals, publish their own writing and produce documentaries. Others produce site-specific performances and lead community-based programs.

Their range of creative practice spans conceptual and media territories that include art and social practice, propaganda and print media, figurative painting, and cinematic, time-based work including sound and digital film-making, book arts and large-scale sculptural installations. Students often have the opportunity to assist faculty members with studio-based work and research that addresses timely and relevant topics, including race, global politics, the environment, art + science, evolving technologies, social justice, and materials culture and studies.

Visiting Artists and Lecturers

The school brings nationally and internationally recognized artists, designers, historians and critics to campus to promote new ideas in practice, theory and technology. Invited speakers often participate in graduate studio visits and conduct one-on-one reviews of work.

The Creative Research Fellows Program (http://samfoxschool.wustl.edu/node/6109/) supports cross-disciplinary discourse, research and collaboration by providing MFA in Visual Art students with access to visiting artists and scholars.

The Henry L. and Natalie E. Freund Teaching Fellowship (https://samfoxschool.wustl.edu/freund/) is an internationally recognized program that consists of two month-long artist residencies in the Graduate School of Art that culminate with a public lecture and solo exhibition at The Saint Louis Art Museum. During their fellowship, artists teach the graduate students and conduct studio critiques with students.

The Arthur L. and Sheila Prensky Island Press (https://islandpress.samfoxschool.wustl.edu/) Visiting Artist Program brings distinguished artists to the school for intensive studio residencies at Island Press. Visiting artists work closely with faculty, graduate students and advanced undergraduate students to create innovative prints that garner a critical response from national and international audiences.

Degree Requirements

MFA in Visual Art

The Graduate School of Art subscribes to the standards for the MFA degree as set forth by the College Art Association of America (CAA) and the National Association of Schools of Art and Design (NASAD).

The residence requirement for the MFA degree is at least two academic years of full-time study (minimum 12 credits each semester). Students have three calendar years from the date of first registration to complete the degree. Individual programs are arranged with the program chair. Graduate students work with faculty advisers according to their areas of interest within the Sam Fox School and the university at large.

In order to earn the MFA in Visual Art — the terminal professional degree in studio art — students must complete the following requirements:

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<thead>
<tr>
<th>Requirement</th>
<th>Units</th>
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<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Graduate Studio</td>
<td>42</td>
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<tr>
<td>Graduate Seminar</td>
<td>6</td>
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<tr>
<td>Thesis</td>
<td>3</td>
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<tr>
<td>Art/Art History /Academic Electives</td>
<td>9</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>Total</strong></td>
<td><strong>60</strong></td>
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Students must complete a total of 42 units of Graduate Studio (9 credits each semester during the first year; 12 credits each semester during the second year) as well as two seminars in contemporary practice (3 credits each) during the first year. During their last semester, students take a 3-credit thesis seminar. The culminating event of the graduate program requires students to present, defend and document a thesis exhibition (http://samfoxschool.wustl.edu/node/4182/).

Electives may be taken from art, art history, and academic courses:

- Art electives introduce students to the intellectual and conceptual issues and production methods of a broad array of practices that complement and expand the student’s area of study. First-year students must take all art electives at the 500 level; second-year students must take all art electives at the 600 level.

- * A combined total of 18 units of undergraduate and graduate art history course work is required for the degree. To earn graduate-level credit as a matriculated student, courses in the Department of Art History and Archaeology (http://arthistory.artsci.wustl.edu/) must be taken at the 300 level or higher.

- Academic electives must be taken at the 400 or 500 level to earn graduate credit.

Students may not register for courses in University College.