ART, MFA

The Department of Art offers an M.A. and MFA in Art. Within the MFA are three areas of specialization: Graphics, 2D, 3D/4D.

The graduate program in art is currently comprised of approximately 80 graduate students and 29 full-time faculty. The faculty is a distinguished group of professional artists who are active in the research and exhibition of their work and are also devoted teachers. An important strength of the graduate program lies in the breadth and diversity of its faculty. The program continues to grow and provides a wealth of artistic experiences for its students.

GRAPHICS AREA

The graphics area consists of courses in relief print, serigraphy, intaglio, lithography, digital printmaking, paper arts, photography, and graphic design. Each medium outfitted with a classroom of state-of-the-art print equipment for specific printing techniques. The area emphasizes the development of ideas and concepts while honing skill and technical command. Graphic design is defined in the broadest terms to include typography, book design and structure, artists books, paper making, illustration, production techniques, and computer typesetting.

Relief Printing

The graduate relief printing area concentrates on all forms of relief printmaking and unique prints. Specialized courses are offered in woodcut, linocut, and other forms of raised surface printing. The interrelationship between relief printing, monotype/monoprints, hybrid print techniques, installation and those in typographic design and fine book reproduction is encouraged. The Relief lab is equipped with a Takach press, Vandorcook letter press, Charles Brand Press, and Reliance Press.

Serigraphy

Graduate serigraphy (screenprint) concentrates on formulating ideas and developing a personal visual language. The program utilizes the technical experience of the intro course (photo based, hand-cut and painted stencils, digital media) and develops the use of color, transparencies, and textural effects to realize print editions and unique prints that reflect creativity and technical competence. The use of the multiple in a contemporary context for installation-based artworks, multimedia, and dimensional prints is encouraged. The serigraphy lab is equipped with two large vacuum bases to print 4x5ft and 5x8ft, three medium size vacuum bases, two washout units, two light exposure tables, light tables, and a variety of screens.

Etching/Intaglio

The etching/intaglio classes present this traditional process by laying the groundwork of basic technique to further understanding of its experimental possibilities. Five presses of varying size offer the capacity to explore many techniques, from traditional engraving and etching with hard, soft and granular grounds, to photo etching processes. There is an emphasis on color and multiple plate printing as well as monoprint methods. Aside from methods, students do research into the history of the multiple and its current use in all areas of contemporary art. Enlargement of the medium into installation and use of nontraditional substrates and formats are expected. The use of digital technology such as digital camcorders, digital cameras and inkjet printing expand this medium's contemporary currency.

Lithography

Lithography works are based in individual conceptual development while utilizing both stones and aluminum plates. Course work is geared to a high degree of craft and professionalism. All phases of lithography are stressed including direct, transfer and photo. The center of the program is a well-equipped workshop incorporating five presses, a very large graining sink, and more than 100 stones of varying sizes up to 30 inches by 40 inches.

Digital Printmaking

Courses in digital print-production techniques provide graphics students with the necessary skills to take original art or digital media to printed output. Courses also provide a thorough explanation of the various systems, software, and hardware fundamentals involved in the integration of digital forms with etching, lithography, screen printing, photography, book arts, and graphic design. Print Production Techniques (Digital Printmaking) is also designed as an introductory course to ART 636 Computer Augmented Printmaking. As part of their course work, students will learn to utilize campus computer facilities as well as the Design Center or MERIT Lab, Print Production Studio, and the Digital Printmaking Center.

Topics covered will include an introduction to image acquisition for high resolution output, color proofing, imaging for photo plates and screens, introductory digital color-management and theory, printmaking and computer art history, and a survey of emerging print technologies including an expanded notion of electronic image presentation and distribution for the web. Simulations in virtual classrooms will be included as part of the learning environment. Student evaluations will be based on work produced for three critiques during the semester and a final portfolio review.

Graphic Design and Typography

The courses in graphic design emphasize the process of visual communication of ideas and information, with attention to aesthetic considerations, techniques, and methods. Course work in letterpress and computer typesetting introduce historical and visual aspects of formal typography and serve to facilitate experimentation with the communicative properties of type. Practical study in this area involves the design and production of books, broadsides, brochures, and posters; the development and application of logotypes and design formats; and utilizing the facilities of letterpress, computer technologies, and graphic reproduction techniques. In addition, a focus on book structures and artists’ books is provided.

Photography

The photography area encourages students to pursue their advanced research in a multidisciplinary program. Students may work strictly in photography or in combination with other disciplines such as bookmaking, typography, printmaking, installation, video, or web-based work. There is a high teacher-to-student ratio in order to promote a supportive atmosphere for artist development. Students are given a studio with access to a private black & white darkroom and digital lab. The general photography labs include facilities for digital, black & white, and alternative processes.

Paper Making

The courses in paper making are concerned with understanding the inherent materials used in the paper making processes as applied to traditional sheet forming and as they relate to other contemporary concepts in book arts, sculpture and drawing. New paper-making facilities were opened in May 2009 in the Art Lofts building.
2D AREA

Painting, Drawing, Life Drawing, Color

The graduate 2D area emphasizes conceptual, formal, and material logic in the development of an individualized studio practice. This course of study promotes an understanding of contemporary and historical painting and drawing practice as well as the theoretical premises pertinent to furthering the student’s intellectual and creative development.

Within the multidisciplinary department, the student is encouraged to access the broad variety of available facilities, equipment, and faculty fundamental to their continued artistic growth and specialization. Graduate students are provided with a private studio space.

3D/4D AREA

Sculpture

The sculpture area offers a balance between techniques and concepts. Various forms of expression from object making, installation, and time-based media are encouraged. Issues of professional practice within the traditional art venues as well as in the larger public domain are addressed. Students are encouraged to develop their individual voice as artists, be part of a constructive community, and prepare to be creative citizens.

Facilities are available for most of the processes needed to produce sculpture: welding (including MIG and TIG), a foundry with a large alpine sculpture kiln for foundry molds and two gas melt furnaces, forging facilities, and shops for mixed media construction, casting and paint.

Woodworking and Furniture Design

The wood/furniture area explores the technical and conceptual possibilities of woodworking and furniture design. The curriculum is project-based and teaches a full range of skills from design development through drawing and model building, as well as hand and machine based construction skills. Graduate students receive a work space in one of two private bench rooms attached to the machine room and have 24-hour access to the studio facility. The graduate program stresses advanced visual research and is highly flexible. Graduate students produce both functional and nonfunctional work that represents a wide spectrum of aesthetic perspectives. The context of a very large and diverse research university allows for effective support and mentoring of varied and wide-ranging approaches to art making. Experimentation and collaboration with other areas of the art department and the larger university are actively encouraged.

The wood/furniture facilities offer a state-of-the-art laboratory for working with wood. However, the program promotes and endorses a far-reaching exploration of traditional and cutting edge materials as well as newer digitally driven approaches to design and fabrication. Graduate studio research includes extensive one-on-one interaction with faculty from all areas of the art department. Additional feedback is provided through group critiques by faculty, fellow students, guest critics, and visiting artists.

Ceramics

The ceramics area emphasizes a relationship between the field of ceramics and contemporary approaches to art making, theory, and criticism. The area offers a diverse approach to materials and processes, emphasizing work that is both technically proficient and conceptually diverse. Through advanced study, students will gain an understanding of the technical concerns involved in ceramic production such as clay and glaze calculation and mold making, while simultaneously developing the critical and historical skills necessary to apply those processes to finished works. The ceramics studio offers a wide assortment of equipment including a fully stocked supply of raw materials for clay and glaze mixing, digital scales and test kilns, electric wheels, extruders, slab rollers, an industrial spray booth, slip casting equipment, and a variety of both updraft gas and computer-controlled electric kilns. Graduate students receive private studio space, and are strongly encouraged to experiment and collaborate with other areas of the art department and university. Graduate-level research includes extensive one-on-one interaction with faculty from all areas of the department, with additional feedback provided through group critiques by faculty, fellow students, guest critics, and visiting artists.

Glass

Courses in glass stress proficiency in the basic manipulative processes inherent in the glass medium and encourage students to expand traditional boundaries to use old technologies along with new lighting technologies. The glass area has been one of the first tenants in the department’s loft building. Facilities are available to accomplish most hot and cold working methods. Students, faculty, and lecturers often exhibit their work in public settings beyond the traditional gallery setting. The graduate studios are in the Art Lofts building, creating a lively environment for making and studying artwork.

Jewelry and Metalsmithing

The metals area at UW–Madison has a long and distinguished history. The area is designed to challenge students to learn about the making of art through the specific materials, techniques, history, and cultural significance of the metalsmithing and jewelry fields. Technical proficiency is encouraged in the service of deep socially significant investigation and research. Analytical and critical thinking, historical responsibility, and theoretical awareness are explored in a seminar setting with metals faculty. Visiting artists offer lectures, demonstrations, and individual critiques with grad students that round out this rigorous and comprehensive area.

The metals studios occupy six rooms on the seventh floor of the Mosse Humanities Building. With approximately 4,500 square feet of instructional and studio space, these well-equipped facilities include acetylene, ox/acetylene and propane torches, annealing booths, centrifugal and vacuum casting equipment, enameling kilns and enamels, flexible shaft machines at every work station, a large selection of anvils, hammers and stakes for raising, forming and forging, hydraulic die forming, a gas forge, electroforming, manual and electric rolling mills, sand blaster, band and jig saws, lathes, milling machines and drill presses, a dedicated polishing room, spray etchers, sheet metal working equipment, mold making equipment, and a full compliment of hand tools. The resource center includes a computer, digital projector, photo equipment, and metals library.

Non-Static Forms

Courses in non-static forms include video and performance art. Students have access to media facilities throughout the university and are encouraged to participate in classes in non-static forms and to experiment with new media. Courses stress methods of exhibition, documentation, and distribution that are unique to the non-static media. Both individual and collaborative projects are possible, and frequent opportunities are available for students to exhibit or perform.

Digital Media

The Digital Media area provides classes and faculty which allow graduate students to expand their use of digital media tools in the context of their own fine art practice. Classes offered cover a wide range of digital forms including digital imaging, web authoring, flash animation, video and audio
manipulation and 3D modeling and animation using Rhino and Maya. All classes provide a balance of technical information on the relevant media and coverage of the historical and conceptual implications of their use in a fine art context. Students are encouraged to consider digital tools as part of an integrated art practice that is concept and content driven rather than media specific. As well as supporting students whose art work is presented in digital formats the Digital Media area provides opportunities for artists working in all media to incorporate new methodologies into their practice. In the department and wider campus both Mac and PC based facilities are available with specialized facilities provided for 3D animation, video editing, 3D printing (rapid prototyping) and large format 2D printing.

FUNDING

Prospective students should see the program website for funding information.

REQUIREMENTS

MINIMUM DEGREE REQUIREMENTS AND SATISFACTORY PROGRESS

To make progress toward a graduate degree, students must meet the Graduate School Minimum Degree Requirements and Satisfactory Progress (http://guide.wisc.edu/graduate/#policiesandrequirementstext) in addition to the requirements of the program.

MASTER OF FINE ARTS DEGREE

MFA

MINIMUM GRADUATE DEGREE CREDIT REQUIREMENT

60 credits

MINIMUM GRADUATE RESIDENCE CREDIT REQUIREMENT

24 credits

MINIMUM GRADUATE COURSEWORK (50%) REQUIREMENT

Half of degree coursework (30 credits out of 60 total credits) must be completed in graduate-level coursework; courses with the Graduate Level Coursework attribute are identified in the university's Course Guide (http://my.wisc.edu/CourseGuideRedirect/BrowseByTitle).

PRIOR COURSEWORK REQUIREMENTS: GRADUATE WORK FROM OTHER INSTITUTIONS

With program approval, students are allowed to count no more than 9 credits of graduate coursework from other institutions. Coursework earned five or more years prior to admission to a master’s degree is not allowed to satisfy requirements.

PRIOR COURSEWORK REQUIREMENTS: UW–MADISON UNDERGRADUATE

No credits from a UW–Madison undergraduate degree are allowed to count toward the degree.

PRIOR COURSEWORK REQUIREMENTS: UW–MADISON UNIVERSITY SPECIAL

With program approval, students are allowed to count no more than 9 credits of coursework numbered 300 or above taken as a UW–Madison University Special students. Coursework earned five or more years prior to admission to a master’s degree is not allowed to satisfy requirements.

CREDITS PER TERM ALLOWED

12 credits per semester, 13 with petition

PROGRAM-SPECIFIC COURSES REQUIRED

MFA students must complete courses for MA and in addition, one seminar course (ART 908 Seminar-Art or other).

OVERALL GRADUATE GPA REQUIREMENT

3.00 GPA required.

OTHER GRADE REQUIREMENTS

No other specific grade requirements.

PROBATION POLICY

Student progress will be reviewed through coursework or at yearly meetings. If the advisor and graduate committee find that at the yearly meeting or at any other time that a student has failed to achieve satisfactory progress with academic or conduct expectations the student may be dismissed from the program.

Students placed on probation will be placed on probation for one semester and will be reviewed by the program steering committee following the probationary semester. Students placed on probation may be dismissed or allowed to continue based upon review of progress during the probationary semester.

ADVISOR / COMMITTEE

All students are required to conduct a yearly progress report meeting with the chair and members of their committee. The committee will meet at the end of the student’s sixth semester to review work for the MFA degree.

ASSESSMENT AND EXAMINATIONS

At the end of the sixth semester, MFA candidates will have an oral review of their creative work conducted by a committee of fourth tenure-track professors and an optional fifth, nonsigning member.

TIME CONSTRAINTS

The MFA show of creative work must be completed by the sixth or seventh semester of the candidate’s studies.

Master’s degree students who have been absent for five or more consecutive years lose all credits that they have earned before their absence. Individual programs may count the coursework students completed prior to their absence for meeting program requirements; that coursework may not count toward Graduate School credit requirements.

LANGUAGE REQUIREMENTS

No language requirements.
ADMISSIONS

For up-to-date application instructions, see Degrees & Admission (https://art.wisc.edu/graduate/graduate-application) on the art department website.

To be admitted as a graduate student with full standing, an applicant must meet the minimum Graduate School requirements. The Graduate Record Exam (GRE) is not required for admission, however it may be useful for some fellowships. A limited number of applicants who do not meet the minimum grade point requirement but who provide other evidence of the capacity to do exemplary graduate work may be admitted on probation.

The following materials are required: the Graduate School application; three letters of recommendation from instructors or others who can evaluate potential for graduate study, an official transcript from each college/university attended, a brief statement of reasons for wanting to attend graduate school, a resume/cv, and a portfolio of up to 20 images of recent work in digital format, submitted to the art department’s online portfolio site (for details, see Degrees & Admission (https://art.wisc.edu/graduate/graduate-application) on the department website). Applicants in video or performance only may present portfolios in either video or digital images with accompanying text. The portfolio should contain 20 images that show the work to its best advantage. Faculty members are interested in the ideas behind the work, as well as technical skills used in producing it.

The deadline for fall session is January 5. Visits from potential graduate students are always welcome. Department faculty teach Monday through Thursday and can show the facilities and talk about special areas of interest Department Faculty Resource (https://art.wisc.edu/art/people/#https://artwisc.edu/art/people). Graduate student studios may also be visited.

LEARNING OUTCOMES

KNOWLEDGE AND SKILLS

• To facilitate a mastery in both the practice and understanding of major trends in contemporary art.
• To facilitate a broad and diverse understanding of the historical underpinnings, methodologies and techniques of contemporary visual art.
• To facilitate the development of critical thinking through coursework within the department and across campus as well as through independent study with individual professors.
• To facilitate exposure to a wide set of professional resources and career opportunities.
• To develop and complete original research that advances a field of study in at least one of the broad based discipline areas offered by our program.
• To attain the skill set necessary to evaluate and interpret professional writing from a variety of disciplines in order to develop a theoretical framework for their own artistic research.

PROFESSIONAL CONDUCT

• To develop develop a rigorous and sustainable studio art practice both in and out of a studio context.

• To develop professional practices that facilitates a sustainable career in the arts; that allows students to present their research to diverse audiences through public lectures, symposia and exhibitions.

PEOPLE

Art Faculty: Professors Rosenberg (chair), Buisch, Clark, Connors, Damer, Escalante, Georgiades, Gralnick, Hitchcock, Loeser, Miller, Mladenoff, Scheer, Simpson, Solien; Associate Professors Abdu’allah, Hilyard, Jones, Stonehouse; Assistant Professors Arthur, Bakkom, Barry, Clancy, Fitzsimons, Grimm, Lee, Mitchell, Smith

Art Education Faculty: Professors Loeser (chair), Buisch, Clark, Damer, Escalante, Feren, Georgiades, Gralnick, Hitchcock, Marschalek, Myers, Nelson, Scheer, Solien; Associate Professors Connors, Cridler, Hilyard, Marche, Miller, Mladenoff, Rosenberg, Sacaridiz, Simpson; Assistant Professors Bakkom, Fitzsimons, Hixson, Jones, McClure, Mitchell, Simpson, Smith, Stonehouse