INTRODUCTION: The University of Massachusetts Amherst (UMass Amherst) is the flagship campus of the University of Massachusetts system and part of the five college consortium.

The Department of Art maintains facilities in three separate buildings: the Fine Arts Center, which houses the Foundations classrooms, as well as Animation and Art Education studios; the Studio Arts Building, completed in 2008, which houses the main offices, classrooms, and faculty and graduate studios; and Clark Hall, which also houses faculty and graduate studios.

GENERAL FACILITIES: The department provides extensive facilities in Studio Arts: Foundations and Art Education classrooms, Mac and PC computer classrooms, a digital output facility, and studios in animation, analog and digital photography, printmaking, painting, drawing, plaster, clay, metals, and wood. Some facilities require specialized orientation, and most require periodic training in Environmental Health and Safety regulations.

GENERAL: The Master of Fine Arts in Studio Arts is a 60-hour program emphasizing both theory and practice in the production, history, and teaching of visual art. The program requires a 60-credit, three-year on-campus residency. Incoming students enroll in the fall. The Department maintains facilities for the following disciplines:

- Animation
- New Media
- Painting
- Interdisciplinary Studies
- Printmaking
- Sculpture
- Photography
- Ceramics
- Performance
- Social Practice

Our program is interdisciplinary, and we encourage working across disciplines. Students admitted to the program are not required to work only in designated areas. We encourage students to work across disciplines.

Updated 9/12/16
STUDENTS ADMITTED: The MFA program admits approximately six or seven students per year, providing a community of eighteen students in total. The faculty reviews applications as a whole, not by discipline.

ADMISSIONS: To satisfy minimum standards for the University, applicants need at least a 2.75 cumulative average and a Bachelor’s degree from an accredited four-year undergraduate institution. Foreign students need the equivalent of a baccalaureate degree and need to pass the Test of English as a Foreign Language (TOEFL) in order to be considered for admission. An additional SPEAK test is required for students whose assistantship is in teaching. The Graduate Record Exam (GRE) is not required.

APPLICATIONS: Applicants to the MFA program must file an application with the Graduate School, providing the requisite transcripts and two letters of recommendation. In addition to these standard admission materials, applicants must submit a resume, statement, and portfolio directly to the Studio Arts Program: https://umassamherstart.slideroom.com/#/Login

The application window is 12/1/15 – 1/15/16.

PORTFOLIO: A portfolio of 20 images should demonstrate a cohesive body of work, independent thought, and the diversity of your experience in the visual arts.

Detailed Portfolio instructions are provided on our website www.umass.edu/art

VISTING: Admission to the MFA program is based primarily on the quality of the portfolio. Skype Interviews are required, and whenever possible, in-person visits can be helpful to inform the applicant about the program. Appointments can be made through the Graduate Office of the Studio Arts Program at (413) 545-1903 or by contacting:

Graduate Program Director
Department of Art
Studio Arts Building
110 Thatcher Way
University of Massachusetts Amherst
Amherst, MA 01003

413 545 1903  ymoon@art.umass.edu

DEADLINE: JANUARY 15th (Fall admissions only)
The Studio Arts Program does not have rolling admissions.
INTERNATIONAL APPLICANTS: The Test of English as a Foreign Language TOEFL is required of those applying from countries whose native language is not English. An additional SPEAK test will also be required in order to qualify for an assistantship in teaching. Further information about the TOEFL can be obtained by contacting the Graduate Admissions Office of this University or from the Educational Testing Service in Princeton, New Jersey 08540 (USA).

MFA PROGRAM MFA students must take 60 graduate level credits including the 18-credit master’s thesis in order to receive the MFA. The Art History requirement (3 credits) must be taken as a graded course, not as pass/fail or audit; the requirement may not be completed as an independent study. The MFA has a required sequence of courses that must be taken during the first two years, including the Graduate Seminar, (‘Grad Block’), TA Workshop, Visual Culture, and NYPOP.

Coursework should be at the 500, 600 and 700 levels. Courses of Independent Study (ART 696 and 796) are encouraged, though may not duplicate work done for the Graduate Seminar course. Twenty-one credits of Independent Study is the maximum allowed. Graduate Teaching Assistants are required to take the 1-credit teaching workshop (ART 697W), which is geared towards teaching studio classes at the college level. The workshop is required during the first year a student holds a Teaching Assistantship.

REVIEWS: During their first and second years, or before approval for beginning the Master’s thesis, graduate students are subject to review by the entire faculty. These reviews or ‘critiques’ occur at the middle and end of the fall and spring semesters. The duration of the mid-term critiques is forty-five minutes per student, and the final critiques are one hour.

If a graduate student’s Program review is not passed, the student will be notified in writing by the Program and a copy of this notice will be placed in the graduate student’s academic folder.

PROBATION: Both grades and Program reviews determine a graduate student’s standing. A student must receive a B or higher in all courses leading toward the completion of the degree. Twice each semester, prior to registering for the Master’s Thesis, the student will be reviewed by the Program faculty. The Program must determine whether or not a student is in good standing on the basis of the quality of studio work. On the basis of two or more C grades or lower in courses leading to the degree, the Area may recommend withdrawal. On the basis of a poor review, the Program may recommend that the graduate student be placed on probation. On the basis of two semesters of poor
reviews, or one semester of probation, the Program may recommend withdrawal.

The Program may make recommendations for withdrawal or the GPD at any time, however, there is warning both formally and informally. Graduate students who are placed on probation may continue to use their designated workspace. If a student receiving an assistantship is placed on probation, the program will not continue to support the assistantship, and it will be withheld as long as they are on probation.

While grades of C+ and lower cannot count toward the completion of the degree, if a student receives one, it is up to the discretion of the Program and the GPD as to whether or not the grade reflects overall program performance and would lead to a recommendation for withdrawal.

The standards for all recommendations, whether to pass any given step or not, are determined by the professional, artistic and academic judgments of the faculty charged with making such decisions.

MASTER’S THESIS: Prior to entering the third, or ‘thesis’ year, the faculty will determine whether or not the graduate student is thesis ready and the Graduate Program Director will sign a ‘Thesis Readiness Form’. The Master’s thesis (ART 799) occupies the student’s last two semesters. The thesis involves a solo exhibition, a written thesis, and an oral defense; candidates work with a thesis committee consisting of three graduate faculty, selected by the student. The student will further select a ‘chair’ that will serve as the main faculty mentor during the final thesis year. Upon its selection in the first semester of the final year, the thesis committee assumes responsibility for reviewing the student’s work.

The thesis consists of a one-person exhibition, a 20+ page thesis paper, and an hour-long oral examination with all members of the thesis committee present.

THESIS EXHIBITION: The thesis exhibition is the final step necessary for the MFA degree. Each candidate is required to mount a one-person exhibition of his or her work. This exhibition takes place during the student’s last semester and is usually installed at the Herter Art Gallery on campus. With approval of the student's committee, the exhibition may be held in an alternative venue.

Students are responsible for printing and distributing exhibition announcements. The announcement must contain the phrase, “in partial fulfillment of requirements for the MFA degree.”

WRITTEN THESIS: The written thesis is a critical essay that focuses on final
supportive statement in consultation with the thesis committee and distributes it to committee members one week in advance of the thesis exhibition opening.

1. The thesis abstract includes a title page (with signatures of the committee members and the Graduate Program Director), a table of contents, a bibliography, and a copy of the thesis exhibition announcement.

2. The MFA thesis is 20+ pages in length. It includes an analysis of the student's artwork, a summary of research related to the work, and a discussion of new directions in the work. The student's thesis committee resolves the exact content and the structure of the thesis in advance.

3. Upon approval by the thesis committee, the exhibition and the statement are installed for public view. If the exhibition is incomplete or insufficient, the thesis committee may disapprove installation of the thesis exhibition and establish remediation requirements and deadlines.

4. The thesis is uploaded to Scholarworks, and one hard-copy is submitted to the Art Department for archiving. You must still submit an original signature page to the Graduate School.

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**ORALS:**

The oral examination is an hour-long discourse between the MFA candidate and the thesis committee. The form of this examination is a formal discussion about the outcomes of the exhibition, and the ideas, formal constraints, and historical precedents that have gone into the formation of the work during the past three years leading up to the culmination of the thesis show.

After an hour-long conversation, the MFA candidate will leave the gallery while the thesis committee discusses the work of the candidate.

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**GRADUATE STUDIOS:**

Graduate studios are located in the Studio Arts Building and Clark Hall. Graduate students are required to keep a studio in either of these spaces. The Department Chair, in consultation with faculty, makes assignments of studios based on need, seniority, and space limitations.

Environmental Health and Safety training must be completed before commencing work in a studio space. Comprehensive cleanup is required before leaving a studio.

Students may not alter the existing architectural elements in the studios or facilities. Students must observe all safety standards in the use of tools and equipment.
Non-UMass activities are not allowed on the property. Alcoholic beverages are not allowed in the building and UMass is a smoke-free campus-wide zone.

VISITING ARTISTS: Each semester, the Visiting Artists Program brings to campus prominent and emerging artists from around the country. This includes both long-term (3-5 days) and short-term (1-2 days) visits. Visiting artists present a public lecture and meet with students for individual critiques. Please check the website for a list of past visiting artists.

GRADUATE SCHOOL: Please visit the comprehensive Graduate School website:
http://www.umass.edu/gradschool/

CAMPUS GALLERIES: A number of galleries on the UMass campus offer opportunities for students to exhibit their work and to view contemporary work:

Herter Art Gallery, Trevor Richardson, Director
University Gallery, Loretta Yarlow, Director
Student Union Art Gallery, Brendan McCauley, Manager
Hamden and Central Galleries, Anne LaPrade, Director
August Savage Gallery, Terry Jenoure, Curator

TRANSFER CREDIT: FROM ANOTHER INSTITUTION: Up to 6 credits may be transferred from another school. Courses must be graduate level, cannot substitute for any program requirements, and cannot have been taken more than three years before enrollment in the graduate program here. Courses already counted towards a degree cannot be used as transfer credit.

NON-DEGREE GRADUATE: Up to 6 credits of work from this University may also be transferred, subject to the University and Department restrictions noted above. Transfer of credit should be initiated by the student and must be approved by both the Graduate Program Director for Studio Arts and the Graduate School.

FINANCIAL AID The types of financial aid available to graduate students include loans, work-study, and assistantships. Awards are based on economic need, and the FAFSA must be filed to determine eligibility.

FAFSA packets are available from Financial Aid Services, 255 Whitmore (413-545-0801), and from most colleges and universities. The recommended filing deadline is March 1st.
WORK-STUDY

We urge all applicants to file the FAFSA, which helps to determine work-study eligibility. You cannot use work-study money towards an assistantship, but it can be a valuable tool in gaining other employment on campus. Questions may be directed to Student Employment, 243 Whitmore (413-545-1530).

ASSISTANTSHIPS:

Graduate assistantships in the Studio Arts Program are almost always in the form of teaching assistantships (TAs). They augment the Program’s teaching capacity and provide graduate students opportunities for college-level teaching experience. An assistantship includes a stipend plus waivers of tuition and most curriculum and health fees. The average stipend for TAs in Studio Arts is approximately $9,284 per year.

Several factors determine the awarding of TAs: the Department’s overall teaching needs, seniority (returning students are given priority), the student’s qualifications and abilities, and the availability of funding. A graduate student must also be in good academic standing and complete the teaching workshops in order to hold an assistantship.

FELLOWSHIPS:

The University offers Diversity Fellowships on a competitive, campus-wide basis. Students are nominated by the Graduate Program Director for this award that carries a stipend of approximately $18,000 for one academic year. Minority and LGBT students are eligible for nomination.

OTHER FUNDING:

Opportunities for assistantships may exist in campus galleries and other departments and offices on campus. Teaching through the Division of Continuing & Professional Education is yet another option; the Department assigns instructors for several courses during summer sessions.

FOREIGN STUDENTS:

The Office of International Students and Scholars, 467 Hills South (413-545-2843) can provide information on financial assistance and tuition waivers for international students.

TUITION AND FEES:

Tuition (academic year) and mandatory fees for full-time students (9+ credits per semester) is: out-of-state approximately $29,000; New England Regional approximately, $24,000; and Massachusetts resident approximately, $15,000. These figures do not include expenditures for housing, books and supplies, transportation, supplemental health insurance, or the one-time Graduate Entering Fee of approximately $357. Applicants should check with the Graduate School for updates on tuition and fees at http://www.umass.edu/bursar

AREAS:

ANIMATION: The Animation discipline is tailored to meet
the interest and self-directed needs of the individual student, and by its very nature are cross-disciplinary. Courses in animation emphasize contemporary production processes and principles of animation that may be applied within classical 2D, stop frame, and digital time-based animation and narrative. An emphasis on experimental, non-commercial applications is central to the pursuit of animation at the graduate level.

CERAMICS: The Ceramics discipline is structured so that students participate in seminars and work independently in consultation with faculty until they enter thesis. Knowledge of, and expertise in, all areas of traditional and contemporary ceramic concepts is stressed.

NEW MEDIA: This discipline engages the methods and practices of captured image making using digital platforms and formats. With the understanding that the computer itself is a meta-medium, students in more advanced courses are encouraged to incorporate different media into their projects.

Theoretical and historical information is studied in order to consider digital space as a means to an end rather than an end in itself. Coursework focuses on a strong foundation of technical skills in relation to the history and theory of film, video, and performance. Students will be encouraged to investigate concepts of time, (duration, speed, rhythm) in relation to narrative, documentary, and experimental practices.

DRAWING: In the 21st century, drawing has taken center stage as a means of communication and mode of expression, no longer second citizen to other formal means of art making. The immediacy of drawing, combined with its broader definitions, makes it an ideal method for artistic expression and experimentation. The drawing studio courses provide exposure to the wide variety of approaches to drawing, including line, form, analysis, and idea. Explored are both objective and subjective visual representations and experiments with a variety of mark-making media. The objective of the drawing curriculum is to have students broaden their visual vocabulary while expanding their method of operation within their individual practices.

PAINTING: The Painting discipline offers students the opportunity to develop their creative skills in the painting medium while working with professional artists. Emphasis is placed upon the independent development of the personal, expressive needs of each student.

PHOTOGRAPHY: The Photography discipline is designed to meet the needs of students who are self-directed and emphasizes the link between photography (in all its applications)
and the critical issues of contemporary visual practice. Students are encouraged to develop technical expertise through work on projects that are cross-disciplinary, drawing on the wide resources of the University.

PRINTMAKING: Students are encouraged to experiment and test the limits of both conventional and digital printmaking practices in relation to the realization of their individual ideas and interests. Students are exposed to a wide range of techniques and approaches to the multiple with the emphasis on strategies for creating unique prints, hybrid prints, and editions. Facilities and instruction are available in intaglio, stone and plate lithography, offset lithography, photographic processes, silkscreen, relief, archival large format pigment printing, monotype, and book arts.

SCULPTURE: The Sculpture discipline is based on the self-directed needs of the individual student. Every effort is made to provide and provoke inquiry into the field of sculpture and to bring about artistic excellence. Facilities include plaster, wood, metals and digital fabrication including a CNC Router and Laser Cutter.
Courses for the MFA in Studio Arts

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<th>1st Year</th>
<th>Courses</th>
<th># of Credits</th>
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<tr>
<td>Fall</td>
<td>Grad Block Seminar: Art 791C (required)</td>
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<td></td>
<td>Teaching Workshop Art 697W (Required)</td>
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<td></td>
<td>Grad Drawing Art 601 (recommended)</td>
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<td></td>
<td>NYPOP Art 691A (required)</td>
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<td></td>
<td>Contemporary Art Critique with Tom Friedman Art 697 (recommended)</td>
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<td>Spring</td>
<td>Grad Block Seminar: Art 791C (required)</td>
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<td></td>
<td>Teaching Workshop Art 697W (Required)</td>
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<td></td>
<td>Intro to Visual Culture ART 689 (required)</td>
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<td></td>
<td>Electives</td>
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<td>Electives</td>
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<td>Spring</td>
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<td></td>
<td>Graduate Forum Art 670 (recommended)</td>
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<th>Courses</th>
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<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Fall</td>
<td>Thesis: 799 A, B, C, D, G, P</td>
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**TOTAL ESTIMATED CREDITS** 60

- **Independent Study Limit**: 21 credits (does not include 799/thesis).
- **Thesis**: 18 credits, generally split 9 credits each over final two semesters.
- **Art History requirement**: Minimum of one 3 credit graduate-level course, preferably taken during first or second year.
- **Introduction to Visual Culture**: Requirement, 3 credit graduate level course.
- **Teaching Workshop**: 1 credit course required each semester for one year for new TAs unless specifically exempted for prior teaching experience.
• Grad Block Seminar: Required each semester for first two years.

• Remaining coursework generally consists of recommended courses, independent study (in or out of major area), and electives.

General Reminders

Courses that can be taken more than once for credit: Advanced Drawing, Advanced Drawing Problems, Grad Drawing, Grad Forum, NYPOP, Independent Study (even the same alpha-coding).

Outside the Department, at this University and the other Five Colleges, graduate credit may be awarded for the following coursework:

• 400-level in other UMass departments (but not the Studio Arts or Art History programs): no more than 6 credits allowed (approval of the Graduate Program Director for Studio Arts is required).

• 300-level and above at Smith, Hampshire, Mount Holyoke, and Amherst colleges (approval of the Graduate Program Director for Studio Arts is required).

To register in Five College courses, all students fill out the form available through their SPIRE account and follow the instructions given there for submission of the form.

To secure graduate credit for Five College courses, the student must ask the instructor to email Lisa Furtel at lfurtel@art.umass.edu confirming that arrangements have been made for graduate credit. Further, the student must ask the instructor to send an email again at the end of the semester, stating that the student did do graduate level work, a brief statement about what the student did to earn the graduate level credit, and the final grade.