

UMASSAMHERST DEPARTMENT OF ART

Master of Fine Arts in Studio Arts Handbook 2018

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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 four separate buildings: The Studio Arts Building (SAB), the Fine Arts Center (FAC), and Clark Hall, where a number of graduate studios are located.

GENERAL FACILITIES: The Department provides extensive facilities in Studio Arts: Foundations and Art Education classrooms, Mac and PC computer labs, studios in animation, analog and digital photography, printmaking, painting, drawing, wood, clay, metals and plaster, as well as a new CNC router and laser cutter. Shops and labs are maintained by highly trained technical staff and Environmental

Health and Safety training is offered for all students upon acceptance.

PROGRAM:

The Master of Fine Arts in Studio Art program requires a 60-credit, three-year on-campus residency. Incoming students enroll in the fall; there is no rolling admission. Our program is interdisciplinary and supports and encourages working across all disciplines. The emphasis in the program is developing work through extensive critique, classes in theory and practice, and intensive studio practice. The program can support approximately eighteen students and admits between six and seven students per year.

ADMISSIONS:

The program can support approximately eighteen students and admits between six and seven students per year. The faculty review applications as a whole, not by discipline. The Master of Fine Arts in Studio Art program requires a 60-credit, three-year on-campus residency. Incoming students enroll in the fall; there is no rolling admission. Minimum requirements are a 2.75 cumulative GPA average and a Bachelor's degree from an accredited four-year undergraduate institution. The Bachelor's degree does not have to be in Art. International students are required to hold the equivalent of a baccalaureate degree and need to pass the Test of English as a Foreign Language, (TOEFL), for those students applying from countries whose native language is not English. An additional SPEAK test is required for students whose assistantship is in teaching. Further information about the TOEFL and SPEAK tests may be found at the Office of International Students and Scholars, 467 Hills South, (413) 545 2843

APPLICATIONS:

Applications to the MFA program are two-fold: general application, transcripts and letters of recommendation are submitted to the graduate school and images, cv, artist statement, and personal narrative, are uploaded to Slideroom. The images submitted must

demonstrate a cohesive body of work, independent thought, and diversity of experience. Detailed portfolio instructions and application deadline is provided on our website www.umass.edu/art. Visits to the program can be scheduled through the Graduate Program Director, by calling (413) 545 1903 or via email, ymoon@art.umass.edu

**PROGRAM
REQUIREMENTS:**

MFA students take 60 graduate level credits spread over the three-year period. This includes an 18-credit Masters' Thesis, (during the final year), Graduate Seminar, TA Workshop, Visual Culture, and Art History. Using remaining credit, students are encouraged to devise their own plan of study, maximizing the opportunities of studying at a major Research University. Students are further encouraged to take classes within the four liberal arts colleges located within the area: Amherst, Hampshire, Mt. Holyoke, and Smith.

**REVIEWS AND
ASSESSMENT:**

During the first and second years of study, before approval for beginning the Master's thesis, graduate students are subject to review by the faculty as a whole. These reviews or 'critiques' occur at the mid-point and end of the fall and spring semesters. The duration of the mid-terms is forty-five minutes per student and the final critiques are one hour. Grades and program reviews, ('critiques') determine a graduate student standing and advancement to the thesis year. A student must receive a 'B' or higher in all courses leading towards the completion of the degree. On the basis of two or more 'C' or lower grades, the faculty may recommend withdrawal. On the basis of a poor review, the faculty may recommend, in writing, that the student be placed on probation. On the basis of two semesters of poor reviews, or following a second semester of work following the probation that is not of appropriate quality, volume or substance, the faculty may

recommend withdrawal. If a student is on probation, the faculty may withhold the assistantship during the probationary period. The standards for all recommendations, whether to pass reviews or advance to thesis, are determined by the professional and academic judgements of the faculty as a whole and will be delivered formally in writing.

**MASTERS THESIS
AND EXHIBITION:**

At the culmination of the second year, prior to entering in to the final year, the faculty will determine whether or not a graduate student is 'thesis ready' and the Graduate Program Director will approve this decision, in writing. The Master's Thesis occupies the student's last two semesters and is a three-part process: a solo exhibition, written thesis paper and oral examination. MFA candidates select a thesis committee comprised of one chair and two additional members. The chair of the thesis committee assumes responsibility for directing the written thesis statement and mentoring the student through all stages of installing a one-person thesis exhibition.

GRADUATE STUDIOS:

Graduate studios are located in the Studio Arts Building and Clark Hall. Studios are assigned to students based on material and space needs as well as seniority in the program. Environmental Health and Safety training is required in order to procure a studio in either building. Students must observe all safety standards and procedures in the use of tools, materials, and equipment and must not alter existing architectural elements in the studios or public 'exhibition' spaces. Comprehensive clean-up is required before moving out of a studio. Non-UMass activities are not allowed on the property. Alcoholic beverages are not allowed in the building and UMass is a smoke-free campus.

VISITING ARTISTS:

Each semester, the Visiting Artist Program invited approximately three artists to campus to conduct studio visits with graduate students and lecture about their practice. These visits include

longer term, (3-5 days) and short term, (1-2 days). In addition to the Art Department Visiting Artist series, the University Museum of Contemporary Art, as part of their exhibition programming, also invites artists to campus for lectures and critiques with graduate students.

CAMPUS GALLERIES: The University of Massachusetts campus boasts a total of five on-campus galleries, some of which offer students direct experience in exhibiting their own work and all of which offer opportunities to view contemporary art:

University Museum of Contemporary Art, Director, Loretta Yarlow
 Herter Art Gallery, Interim Director, Procheta Olson
 Student Gallery, Director, in transition, TBA
 Hampden Gallery, Director, Anne LePrade
 August Savage Gallery, Director, Terry Jenoure

ASSISTANTSHIPS: Graduate assistantships in the Studio Arts Program are in the form of teaching, with the exception of one assistantship available in the Student Union Gallery, and one as the Visiting Artist Coordinator. Teaching assistantships augment the Program's pedagogy while providing excellent opportunities for graduate students to gain hands-on college-level teaching experience. An assistantship includes a stipend paid bi-weekly, a tuition waiver, health, dental, and vision insurance coverage.

OTHER FINANCIAL AID: Financial Aid services located at 255 Whitmore (413) 545 0801 can help provide information about further financial aid for graduate students. 'Work Study' is another form of financial aid that students may pursue. Information about this can be found at 243 Whitmore, (413) 545 1503

FELLOWSHIPS: The Research Enhancement and Leadership Program, ('REAL') offer fellowships to historically under-recognized populations and

amount to approximately \$8000 spread over two summer research periods. Students need to be nominated by the Graduate Program Director but may indicate their eligibility to be nominated. More information can be found on the Graduate School website at <https://www.umass.edu/gradschool/> search 'real fellowships.'

TUITION AND FEES:

Tuition and fees for full-time students (9 credits per semester), in-state, out-of-state and New England Regional, may be found at the Bursar website:

<http://www.umass.edu/bursar/tuition/graduate-tuition-rates>

DISCIPLINES:

Although students are not admitted into a discrete discipline, the Art Department is home to the following areas of study:

Animation: The animation discipline is tailored to meet the interest and self-directed needs of the individual student, and by its very nature, is cross-disciplinary. Courses in animation emphasize contemporary production processes and principles of animation that may be applied within traditional 2-D stop frame and digital time-based narrative animation. An emphasis on experimental 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 year. Knowledge of, and expertise in, all areas of traditional and contemporary ceramic concepts is stressed.

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 material forms of art making. The immediacy of drawing, combined with its broader conceptual

definitions, define drawing as an integral part of our graduate curriculum.

Intermedia: This discipline encompasses the overlapping areas of analogue and digital photography, video, performance, and installation engaging the methods and practices of captured image making using both digital and analogue 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 texts are studied in order to frame digital space as a means to an end rather than end in itself. Coursework focuses on strong foundation of technical skills in relation to the history and theory of intermedia. Students are encouraged to investigate concepts of time, space, and narrative within documentary and experimental practices.

Painting: The painting discipline offer students the opportunity to develop their creative skills and visual vocabulary in the painting medium, both traditionally and experimentally. Painting will be investigated on familiar and highly unfamiliar surfaces and in spaces both two and three dimensional. Emphasis on placed on both independent development of the personal, and larger critical frameworks within the discipline.

Printmaking: This discipline encourages experimentation and testing of the limits of both traditional and digital printmaking practices in relation to the realization of individual ideas and interests. Students are exposed to a wide range of techniques and approaches to the multiple with an emphasis on strategies for creating unique, edition, and hybrid prints. Facilities and instruction are available in intaglio, stone, offset, and plate lithography, digital processes, silkscreen, relief, monotype and book arts. Archival

large format pigment printing and over-size scanning facilities are also available.

Sculpture: The sculpture discipline is based on the self-directed needs of the individual student. Every effort is made to provide and provoke inquiry in this field, including traditional media exploration of plaster and wood, as well as branching out into the realms of video and installation. As in most of our disciplines, Sculpture and Intermedia intersect and these confluence points are encouraged and embraced. Facilities in the Sculpture discipline include plaster, wood, mold-making, and metals. Recent additions to the facilities include a CNC router and Laser Cutter.

SAMPLE COURSE SCHEDULE:

1st Year	Course	# of credits
Fall	Graduate Seminar Art 791 C	3
	Teaching Workshop Art 697W	1
	Electives of Students' Choice/Independent Study	6
Spring	Graduate Seminar Art 791 C	3
	Teaching Workshop Art 697W	1
	Visual Culture Art 689 (or Fall)	3
	Electives of Students' Choice/Independent Study	6
	Art History Elective	3
2nd Year		
Fall	Graduate Seminar Art 791 C	3
	New York Professional Outreach Program (NYPOP)	3
	Electives of Students' Choice/Independent Study	3
Spring	Graduate Seminar Art 791 C	3
	Electives of Students' Choice/Independent Study	6
3rd Year		
Spring	Masters' Thesis 799	9
Fall	Masters' Thesis 799	9
	TOTAL CREDITS	62

ADDITIONAL COURSE INFORMATION:

Independent study credits cannot exceed 21. The Art History requirement must be at the graduate level and preferably taken during the first or second year. Outside the Art Department but within the University, courses must be at the 400-level and no more than 6 credits are allowed in other departments. At the four other colleges: Amherst, Hampshire, Mt. Holyoke, and Smith, courses must be at the 300-level and approved by the Graduate Program Director.