



ART AND ART HISTORY

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Introduction to Art and Art History

The Department's work is a joint effort towards building a more comprehensive understanding of the visual arts and contemporary media, as phenomena and communicative tools. The study of art at the university level, embedded in the ideals of a liberal arts education, allows students to develop their creativity, critical faculties and historical understanding through visual media. Visual and Media Arts Practice and Art History have separate curricula, but links between the two, and other disciplines, are encouraged. In addition to these programs, the Department of Art and Art History offers a concentration in arts management in conjunction with University Museums.

Art History

Studying art history allows students to explore the historical, social, political, philosophical, and formal contexts in which art is made and to consider the various theoretical perspectives used to interpret it. The Art History curriculum includes courses in many geographic area and periods, as well as in museum studies. Students are encouraged to take classes in related departments and programs--such as Classical, Film and Africana Studies--that broaden their undergraduate experience. They are encouraged to study abroad, both to experience the cultures in which the art they are studying was created and to develop an understanding of the ways in which different societies value and produce different art forms. Art history majors have a capstone experience — a year-long thesis that they present at the Annual Arts and Sciences Student Symposium.

Internships at museums, auction houses, galleries and other institutions complement course work in art history. Students have interned at the Virginia Museum of Fine Arts, the Metropolitan Museum of Art, the Museum of Modern Art, and the Whitney Museum of American Art, as well as the Capital One Art Program, Sotheby's and Christies auction houses.

Visual and Media Arts Practice

The mission of the Visual and Media Arts Practice program is to educate both non-majors and majors about the importance and vitality that creative artistic practice has in contemporary life and has had historically. The Visual and Media Arts Practice major nurtures students' creative and critical growth through interdisciplinary approaches to traditional and contemporary media. Foundation courses and art history surveys provide the basis for conceptual and creative engagement with a variety of media and prepare students for developing individually conceived projects at the intermediate and advanced level. Our capstone sequence, which consists of the Contextual Practice, Advanced Studio Practice, and Senior Thesis Exhibition, challenges students to independently conceive, propose, and develop a body of work for the Thesis Exhibition while gaining exposure to historical and contemporary art and art theory. In these courses students are also challenged to develop skills and practices that will serve them once they graduate: documentation of work; writing of artists' statements, grants and professional resumes; and networking with other artists and art professionals.

Learning Environment

The Art and Art History programs feature small classes that offer close interaction between faculty and students. In addition to classes there are opportunities to pursue research and creative projects working closely with individual faculty during the academic year, as well as over the summer. The University supports summer research through Summer Research Fellowships.

Students can find part-time employment the Museum, Department, and studio spaces. These opportunities increase the interaction between faculty, staff and students, as well as offer students valuable experience.

The Department and University Museums bring to campus diverse scholars, critics, and artists who engage students in conversations about

contemporary issues in artistic practice and critical approaches to the history of art.

Students who take Visual and Media Arts Practice and Art History classes are fortunate to have access to a variety of excellent art institutions in addition to the University's Museums. The Virginia Museum of Fine Arts is a first-rate, encyclopedic museum where students can study and research art objects. Richmond has a vibrant art gallery scene that is celebrated the first of each month. An annual trip to visit Washington, D.C., gives students the opportunity to see a wide range of art in museums and galleries and to visit selected museum departments.

Facilities and Museums

Recently renovated and expanded in 2018 and 2019, the Department of Art and Art History has one of the best equipped spaces in the country for a University and program of its size. The area spaces for drawing, painting, printmaking, sculpture, photography, film, sound, video, and animation are state of the art, as is the new art history seminar room and auditorium (Booker Hall). Combined with the facilities of the University Museums, the Department provides a fantastic environment for education in the Visual Arts.

The Harnett Museum of Art is both a forum for the visual arts and a catalyst for varied aspects of artistic expression, research, and scholarship within the University and throughout Central Virginia. Its permanent collection, ranging from historical through contemporary art, is a rich resource that is integral to teaching studio art and art history. The Joel and Lila Harnett Print Study Center houses the University Museums' print collections and serves as a research center. The Lora Robins Gallery of Design from Nature is a natural sciences and decorative arts museum where exhibitions are held and lectures programmed throughout the academic year.

Faculty/Student Collaborative Projects

- “Power & Desire: The Art of Collecting,” Spring 2016. ARTH 319 course examined the art of collecting objects from ancient times to the present. Students created their own virtual collections and produced “catalog” entries and an essay that articulated their conceptual frameworks. Co-taught by art history faculty members Elena Calvillo and Margaret Denton
- “Artist Book,” Spring 2016. Cross listed ARTS 276, ARTS 372 AND ENGL 397. Taught by Visual Media and Arts Practice faculty Tanja Softic and Creative Writing Professor Brian Henry.
- “20 Years after Srebrenica: Bosnia and Herzegovina Today,” Fall 2015. Series of events marking the anniversaries of both the Srebrenica Massacre and the Dayton Peace Accords and explores the state of Bosnian culture and society today. Co-hosted between by the Departments of Art and Art History, Religious Studies, Political Science, English, and the Office of International Education.
- “Parking Lot Project,” 2014-15. ARTS 279 interdisciplinary, creative project addressing conventional and alternative values surrounding the activity of parking while exploring topics of environmental sustainability, cultural discourse, and artistic invention. Co-taught by Erling Sjovold, Visual Media and Arts Practice Professor, Elizabeth Schlatter, University Museums curator, and Mary Finley-Brook, Professor Geography and the Environment.

Graduate School Acceptances — Art History

American University
Bryn Mawr College
City University of New York
Columbia University
Courtauld Institute of Art
George Washington University
Harvard Graduate School of Design
Hunter College
Institute of Fine Arts, NYU
University of Pennsylvania
University of Texas
University of Toronto
University of Virginia

Graduate School Acceptances — Visual and Media Arts Practice

American University
Art Institute of Chicago
Harvard Graduate School of Design
Mason Gross School of the Arts, Rutgers University
University Pacific Northwest College of Art
Pennsylvania State University
Pratt Institute of the Arts
School of Visual Arts
Tisch School of the Arts, NYU Goldsmiths,
University of London University of California, Davis
University of Massachusetts, Amherst
University of Pennsylvania
Virginia Commonwealth University Virginia Tech

Firms and Institutions Employing Visual and Media Arts Practice and Art History

Majors

Apple
Blue State Digital
Brooklyn Museum of Art
California Institute of the Arts
Christies Auction Group
George Washington University
Hearst Design Group
Legion of Honor Museum, San Francisco
Metropolitan Museum of Art
Museum of Fine Arts, Boston
Museum of Modern Art
The New Yorker Magazine
Solomon R. Guggenheim Museum
Soulforce
Sotheby's Auction Group
Virginia Historical Society
Virginia Museum of Fine Arts
Whitney Museum of American Art
Zach Feuer Gallery, New York

Faculty

Elena Calvillo
Department Chair
Associate Professor of Art History
Ph.D. and M.A., Johns Hopkins University
Areas of specialty: Early Modern European Art and Art Theory

Margaret Fields Denton

Associate Professor of Art History, Emerita
Ph.D., Institute of Fine Arts, NYU
Areas of specialty: 18th-, 19th- and 20thcentury Art, History of Photography

Megan Driscoll

Assistant Professor of Art History
Ph.D., University of California, Los Angeles
Areas of speciality: Modern & Contemporary Art, Discourses of Blackness in Contemporary Art, the Internet and Art

Jeremy Drummond

Associate Professor of Art
M.F.A., Syracuse University
Outstanding Mentor Award, 2017
Areas of specialty: Alternative Media, Experimental Film, Sound and Video Art

Brittany Nelson

Assistant Professor
M.F.A., Cranbrook Academy of Art
Areas of specialty: Photography, Contemporary Art Theory

Erling Sjovold

Professor of Art
Distinguished Educator Award, 2016
M.F.A. School of the Art Institute of Chicago
Areas of Specialty: Drawing and Painting

Tanja Softic

Tucker-Boatwright Professor of Art
M.F.A., Old Dominion University
Areas of specialty: Printmaking, Drawing, & Book Arts, Works on Paper

Agnieszka Szymanska

Assistant Professor of Art History
Ph.D. and M.A., Temple University
Areas of specialty: Medieval art, Architecture, and Archaeology

Sandy Williams, IV

Assistant Professor of Art
M.F.A., Virginia Commonwealth University
Areas of specialty: Sculpture, Experimental Film, Contemporary Art Theory

Elizabeth Schlatter

Deputy Director of University Museums and Curator of Exhibits
M.A., George Washington University
Areas of specialty: Museum Studies, Contemporary Art

Richard Waller

Executive Director of University Museums
M.F.A., Yale University
Outstanding Mentor Award, 2002
Areas of specialty: Museum Studies, Color and Design, Contemporary Art



OFFICE OF ADMISSION

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