

MA/MFA Program in Visual Studies

Norfolk State University's Visual Studies Program provides students from wide-ranging backgrounds and experiences with a unique opportunity for a rich, multi-faceted educational experience, without any of the constraints imposed by traditional media-determined majors. Students are encouraged to develop their work without any barriers, to expand their work and ideas to reflect the diversity of contemporary visual expression and the globally interconnected world of the 21st century. Since its inception twenty years ago, the program has attracted talented artists from southeastern Virginia and across the country as well as Bosnia, Nigeria, Korea and India.

Two degrees in visual studies are offered: The Master of Arts, a thirty-three hour graduate degree, and the Master of Fine Arts, the sixty-hour terminal degree in studio art. The rigorous course of study balances intensive studio work with graduate seminars, art history, directed field experience and internships. Study for MA students culminates in graduate exhibition. Study for MFA candidates culminates in a solo graduate exhibition, written thesis, and oral defense of their work to a committee comprised of the graduate faculty.

Degree requirements for the Master of Fine Arts Degree:

Graduate Studio	27 semester hrs
Related Academics (includes art history)	12 semester hrs
Directed Field Experience	6 semester hrs
Graduate Seminars	9 semester hrs
Thesis and Exhibition	6 semester hrs
TOTAL:	60 semester hrs

Degree requirements for the Master of Arts Degree:

Graduate Studio	18 semester hrs
Related Academics	6 semester hrs
Graduate Seminars	6 semester hrs
Graduate Exhibition	3 semester hrs
TOTAL:	33 semester hrs

The Student's Path to the Degree

General Review:

Near the end of the first semester of study (or its equivalent) a General Review is held. Each student presents a selection of work to the graduate faculty for discussion and critical evaluation. This is the student's introduction to the complete graduate faculty.

Selecting a Graduate Committee:

Following the General Review, the student selects a major advisor and two advisory committee members. From this point on the major advisor and graduate committee are responsible for advising and directing the student through the program.

Continuance and Candidacy:

At the end of the first year of study (or its equivalent), a Continuance and Candidacy Review is conducted by the student's advisory committee. All graduate faculty may also attend Continuance and Candidacy, but the outcome of the review is determined by the three person committee.

This a major milestone in the path to the degree because the results of this review determine candidacy for either the MA or MFA degree program or termination of study at this point.

Directed Field Experience/Internship/Apprenticeship (MFA candidates only):

Working closely with his/her three person advisory committee, the student will select two activities (the equivalent of 6 credit hours) which could include a teaching internship on or off campus; independent study at another institution; an internship in a museum, community art center or other arts program; apprenticeship with a noted artist; professional workshops or training; or other suitable art-related experiences.

Thesis Exhibition:

During the final semester of study, each student presents a solo public exhibition of work done during study in the program in an exhibition space in the Norfolk region of southeastern Virginia. The student's thesis committee (major advisor, two advisory committee members; and two additional graduate faculty members) reviews the exhibition, documentation and conducts an oral examination. This committee determines the outcome of the candidate's exhibition, documentation, and oral defense.

Admissions Procedure:

Applicants must meet general university requirements at the graduate level and must have completed 36 semester hours (or its equivalent) in studio art and 12 semester hours in art history at the undergraduate level. Additionally, applicants must present a slide portfolio, CD, or video tape. If appropriate indicating creative ability, evidence of maturing direction, personal invention, and a capacity for growth. Admission to the program is competitive with a limited number of spaces available. Indication of the ability to work independently is important. The portfolio must be accompanied by three letters of reference and statement relating to background and professional goals.

Application Deadlines and Application Reviews:

Applications deadline: March 1st for matriculation the following fall semester. There are no mid-year admissions to the program.

The admissions committee, composed of graduate faculty, reviews the completed portfolios and application materials of all applicants after the March deadline. The decision of the committee will be communicated to the applicant in writing by the Director of Graduate Studies. Decisions of the committee are final.