



FINE ARTS LOW RESIDENCY

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MFA PROGRAM COURSES

MFA: FINE ARTS LOW-RESIDENCY - COURSE DESCRIPTIONS

GRAD 680 STUDIO I AND GRAD 780 STUDIO IV - 3 CREDITS - SUMMER I AND II

This once-weekly course begins with a Preview: a formal student presentation of work that indicates a proposed direction for the summer semester. Intensive dialogue and critique with faculty during the Preview provides feedback designed to inform the subsequent studio work. Close dialogue between students and faculty, as well as with visiting artists, is the core of this course. During residencies, students meet with faculty weekly. Visiting artists from multiple disciplines offer presentations on their work and engage in one-on-one studio visits with students.

GRAD 681 STUDIO II, GRAD 682 STUDIO III, AND GRAD 781 STUDIO V: ARTIST-MENTOR - 4 CREDITS - FALL AND SPRING I-III

Working one-on-one with a locally-based artist-mentor, students develop their studio practice over the semester, building on feedback gleaned in the January and summer residencies. Students meet with their mentor 5 times over the semester, for in-depth discussion and critique about the formal and conceptual aspects of their work. Context, site, and audience are considered as students experiment with ways to install and present their work. The course also incorporates two remote check-in and discussion sessions with core faculty and/or program coordinators. Students begin this course by creating a detailed studio study plan, which establishes goals for the work. They conclude the semester with a written studio study reflection that examines the progression of the work and thinking over the semester, noting how the study may have diverted from the original plan.

GRAD 782 STUDIO VI: THESIS I (ARTIST-MENTOR) - 4 CREDITS - SPRING II

In the final spring semester of the program, students focus on developing a body of work in preparation for their Thesis Exhibition. The work is highly focused on the culminating requirements of the program. As in prior semesters, they work closely with an artist-mentor, one carefully chosen for the thesis project. Students meet with their mentors 5 times for intensive discussion, and have 2 meetings with faculty/program coordinators.

GRAD 684 SEMINAR I - 2 CREDITS - SUMMER I

Seminar I introduces students to the culture and expectations of the MFA program in this once-weekly course. Over their two years and final summer in the program, students are asked to absorb and synthesize what they have gleaned from their academic coursework as well as from diverse feedback gained in critique and dialogue with mentors, faculty, and visiting artists.

The first seminar introduces students to a range of creative and conceptual strategies designed to guide them in the process of assimilation as related to the development of their studio work and thinking. In addition, students engage in collaborative processes and projects, forging connections between a multiplicity of ideas and tactics. Professional practice discussions are introduced in the first seminar and sustained throughout the program.

GRAD 784 SEMINAR II - 2 CREDITS - SUMMER II

The second summer seminar brings students back together to examine their discoveries from the year and to begin to map out a trajectory leading toward the thesis work in this once-weekly course. Group dialogue, collaborative projects, and individual and group critique continue as key components of the course structure. Students engage in an in-depth exploration of a diverse range of voices and lenses, exploring cultural theory, curatorial critique, and artists' writings and interviews. The seminar's focus on critical thinking helps students situate their work in contemporary practice and forge connections between new concepts and tactics. Seminars are grounded in empathy and an awareness of the diversity of personal and social realities.

MFA: FINE ARTS LOW-RESIDENCY - COURSE DESCRIPTIONS

GRAD 685 VISUAL AND CRITICAL STUDIES I - 3 CREDITS - FALL I

Students in Visual and Critical Studies 1, examine their studio practice in the context of contemporary art, while also locating art historical and conceptual precedents. Viewing and responding to a diverse range of artistic practices and strategies, as a cohort, is designed to facilitate knowledge of the range of approaches and interpretations that are available to the 21st century artist. Class discussions are designed to contextualize the studio work in terms of history, theory, and/or social and global issues. As the Visual and Critical Studies course series progresses, students increasingly engage in independent research and writing, focusing on the areas of inquiry, and writing voice, that best inform their studio practice. In this first course, students are introduced to a wide range of writing forms and engage in experimental writing exercises.

GRAD 686 VISUAL AND CRITICAL STUDIES II - 3 CREDITS - SPRING

In Visual and Critical Studies 2, the next online seminar course, students continue the project of examining their work in the context of contemporary practice, while locating art historical and conceptual precedents. The course explores major issues in contemporary art, criticism, and theory that help negotiate the relationships between art making and global art worlds. The course explores critical and historiographical perspectives on major social/aesthetic problems such as expression, abstraction, identity, globalization, relational aesthetics, conceptualism, and the ideology of consumerism. In addition, students consider fields and ideas outside of the art world, further inspiring and contextualizing their work. The course incorporates independent research and writing work, designed to help students claim their personal writing voice and to further define research skills appropriate for their specific method of working.

GRAD 785 VISUAL AND CRITICAL STUDIES 3 - 3 CREDITS - FALL II

The third Visual and Critical Studies online seminar builds on the first two courses in the series, with an intensified focus on preparing students for their thesis project. Over the semester, students claim an individualized research practice and writing voice. These discoveries are made in concert with the student's studio work. This course is designed to empower students in articulating their concepts, intentions, and formal strategies, and in developing the ability to present their images and ideas with facility. Professional practice sessions, focusing both on the culminating thesis projects and on preparing students to meet their future goals, are a central component of the course.

GRAD 786 THESIS COMPOSITION - 2 CREDITS - SPRING II

The online course of Thesis Composition focuses on the preparation of a written thesis document. The document builds on the research and writing practice that each student has developed during their time in the program. The thesis itself emerges out of rigorous dialogue with faculty and student peers. Thesis Composition provides an opportunity for students to think and write extensively about their own studio production, and to articulate the contexts for that work. An initial Thesis Proposal is submitted prior to drafting the thesis, and an examination of related writings and models is a significant feature of this class. A second reader provides additional feedback on the final draft of the thesis.

GRAD 787 THESIS DEFENSE - 2 CREDITS - FINAL SUMMER

In Visual and Critical Studies 2, the next online seminar course, students continue the Thesis Defense meets weekly over 5 weeks and constitutes the final review of the work produced in the MFA: Fine Arts, Low-Residency Program. The purpose of this defense is to evaluate each student's Thesis Exhibition. Students demonstrate their ability to present and discuss their work, provide a context for it, and respond to criticism and questions. At the conclusion of this formal review, a determination is made as to whether the student receives credit. The course includes feedback from external reviewers.

GRAD 688 COLLOQUIUM + REVIEW I AND

GRAD 788 COLLOQUIUM + REVIEW II - 2 CREDITS - TWO WINTERS

Every winter, students gather for 5 days, full-time, to engage in a remote colloquium and review. Each of these winter residencies is organized around a theme (landscape, empathy, identity, etc.) and includes guest speakers and visiting artists. Each theme provides a lens for discussion. Topics are determined in advance by the community, during the summer residency, and may be grounded in art, art history, art theory or from alternate fields. The January residency also includes reviews of student work by program faculty and select mentors. Students present their work, guide the discussion about it, and participate in other student reviews.

WORKSHOPS - 2 CREDITS (1 CREDIT PER WORKSHOP) - SUMMER I AND II

Summer Workshops include skills-based introductions to a range of practices, technologies, and techniques. The workshops are both studio and professional practice focused. Students enroll in two workshops in the first and second summer residencies, and each workshop runs for 2 weeks. Workshop meetings vary in frequency and length depending on the content and format (on campus or remote).

ELECTIVES - 3 CREDITS - FALL AND SPRING

Students take 3 electives during their time in the program. These can be drawn from courses in the program or from other graduate courses at MassArt and may be academic or studio focused. Offerings vary depending on the semester, but they include courses in printmaking and animation, curatorial practice, professional practice, contemporary art and art history, and contemporary pedagogy, which is focused on the theory and practice of art education. Most electives meet once weekly.

WORKSHOPS - SUMMER 2021

GRAD 640 PRINTMAKING WORKSHOP A: TRADITIONAL AND ALTERNATIVE INTAGLIO PROCESSES

In this workshop graduate students are introduced to a variety of intaglio techniques –copper etching, collagraphy, silk aquatint, and other experimental methods. The workshop is structured by a series of tutorials on printing methodologies, layering strategies, permutations between analog and digital imagery, and discussion of individual projects. Emphasis is put on experimentation, and the intersection between printmaking and other media is fostered.

GRAD 641 PRINTMAKING WORKSHOP B: SCREENPRINTING AND RELIEF PROCESSES

In this workshop graduate students are introduced to screenprinting and relief techniques. Students experiment with screenprint monotype, stencil, and photo stencil. Relief techniques include wood, linoleum, and other substrates. This workshop is structured by a series of tutorials on printing methodologies and combination methods, layering strategies, permutations between analog and digital imagery, and discussion of individual projects. Emphasis is put on experimentation, and the intersection between printmaking and other media is fostered.

GRAD 642 VIBGYOR: COLOR FOR THE STUDIO

This is a hybrid seminar and studio workshop designed to provide graduate students with an in-depth exploration of color. The formal and conceptual characteristics of color will be investigated through the lens of Science, History, and Studio Techniques. With respect to these themes, subjects will include the optics of color, culture and color, and materiality of color. Students will engage in color mixing exercises, making pigments and paints, and the creation of work in response to the topics presented.

GRAD 643 EXPERIMENTAL ANIMATION: INTEGRATED MOVING IMAGE PRACTICE

In this workshop, students will begin to explore the methodological and conceptual possibilities of motion media for their current creative practices.

The workshop will consist of technical demos, screenings, reading(s), and discussions. Each class begins with screenings of international, BIPOC, and LGBTQ+ artists whose works relate to the technical and/or conceptual topics covered in the session.

Technical demos will include stop motion animation, compositing, 2D digital animation, editing, and sound - though demos may be adjusted and expanded based on the needs and desires of the students. Access to a computer, Adobe Creative Suite, Cell phone/Camera is necessary.

This workshop is designed for all kinds of artists, regardless of media or technical proficiency. Animation or video experience may be helpful, but is absolutely not necessary.

GRAD 644 DIGITAL LITERACY FOR ADULTS

This workshop provides graduate students with the foundational skill set required for practicing artists in a contemporary digital space. Topics include managing and optimizing digital image files, presenting work online and on virtual platforms, and general digital best practices. Focus is placed on the Adobe Suite and Google Workspace, with the goal of increased fluency and agility in these mainstream software environments.

GRAD 645 DIGITAL TOOLS AND TECHNIQUES

This graduate-level workshop focuses on expanding and honing students' digital art-making skills. Ideal for artists who wish to incorporate digital techniques into a primarily tactile practice, and those seeking to refine existing tech skills for the purpose of a specific project or body of work. Topics include digital collage and creating vector files for laser cutting or digital illustration. In addition to technical demos, students view and discuss examples of contemporary artists who employ digital practices and new technologies in their work.

GRAD 646 BASIC CASTING STRATEGIES

In this course, we will use elementary mold making strategies to cast objects and parts. We will use silicone, alginate molds, and casting materials (such as plaster or foam) to create multiples. To compliment the rigor of this craft, we will also examine the potential implications of reproducing a three-dimensional form. To reproduce the likeness of an object or person calls to perspectives on authorship, counterfeit, and the valuation of mechanically produced imagery. Reading, lectures, and discussions will center around these topics as students grow their object casting skill sets in this four-day workshop.

GRAD 647 TABLEWARE

This workshop will introduce a variety of primary fabricating and surface finishing methods with which to create ceramic tableware and related forms for utility and personal expression. As time permits we will make every effort to fire and finish some pieces.

GRAD 648 FELTING AND WEAVING IN THE EXPANDED FIELD

This graduate-level workshop provides an introduction to weaving and felting as methodologies for conceptual art practice. Students will learn basic wet felting, needle felting, and weaving techniques to employ in the creation of site-specific, time-based, wearable, and/or collaborative artwork. Experimentation with materials and processes will be emphasized and encouraged. No prior experience in fibers or new genres is required.