



# **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) - 3 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 783 STUDIO IV: THESIS II - 3 CREDITS - 3 CREDITS - FINAL SUMMER**

Students return to campus for their concluding, third residency. Though the thesis work will have found its form and direction in the spring semester, students are able, in consultation with advisors, faculty, and visiting artists, to make final decisions about the refinement and installation of their thesis work. Intensive

critique and discussion with faculty, visiting artists, and the thesis exhibition curator, offers students abundant feedback and support for their culminating body of work.

#### **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.

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

Students in Visual and Critical Studies I, 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 I**

In Visual and Critical Studies II, 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 III - 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 - 3 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 - 3 CREDITS - FINAL SUMMER**

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 I AND II AND SPRING I**

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 2023**

#### **GRAD 616 INSTALLATION**

This workshop provides students with the tools for thinking about contemporary art installation practices through a combination of visual explorations, site research, written and oral communication, material documentation, and art making. By visiting artists, gallerists, and curators at art institutions in the greater Boston area, students will gain a comprehensive view of how to create installations from conception to realization.

#### **GRAD 635 GRAD MAKERSPACE INTENSIVE**

This workshop provides an introduction to the concepts and skill sets required to apply digital tools to the creation of physical artworks. Students learn the fundamentals of design for laser cutting, plasma cutting and 3D printing, and are trained in a range of on-campus tools and facilities. The class focuses on computer-based and hands-on problem solving. Students gain practical knowledge that enables them to work in a range of media: paper, acrylic, wood, canvas, steel, plastics and more. Feedback sessions focus on technique, ideas and the relationship of projects to students' broader body of work. Artists, designers, tinkerers and makers of all skill levels are welcome; no specific previous experience required.

#### **GRAD 637 PRINTMAKING: MONOTYPE**

This advanced course in printmaking enables students to invent and explore a theme through the creation of multiple images linked by a conceptual

thread. Experimentation in the practices of intaglio, screen printing, plate lithography, relief print through a combination of traditional and digital print processes guide students through an expanding range of visual possibilities. Students propose, plan, and execute a series of prints which are formatted into either a custom-made portfolio or a bound book. Debate of contemporary practices and discussion of the particular characteristics of print media, separately or in combination, is of paramount importance in this course. Experience with printmaking is helpful but not required.

#### **GRAD 638 ARTIST BOOKS**

This workshop focuses on the artist book as a narrative, experimental, and sculptural object. Students explore various sewing and binding techniques, and experiment with different kinds of papers, to make new, experimental pieces. Techniques include the creation of tactile surfaces on photos, prints, and paintings using embroidery and other stitching techniques. The workshop includes demonstrations and work sessions, viewing of contemporary artist book examples, and feedback on student work-in-progress.