

Joint MA/MFA Program in Visual Studies with Old Dominion University

MA Master of Arts

MFA Master of Fine Arts

Begun in 1981 as a partnership between Norfolk State University and Old Dominion University, The Joint Program in Visual Studies is a unique degree program which utilizes the resources and facilities of both institutions. It is one of the few graduate art programs in the nation with a graduate faculty composed of members from two autonomous universities. The aim of the Joint Program is to provide students from wide-ranging backgrounds and experiences with a unique opportunity for a multifaceted educational experience, one which draws on the best resources of both urban institutions.

Two degree programs are offered: the Master of Arts, a thirty-three hour graduate degree; and the Master of Fine Arts, a sixty-hour terminal degree in studio art. Since its inception the program has attracted talented artists from southeastern Virginia and across the country as well as international students from as far away as Bosnia, Nigeria, Korea, and India. 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 a graduate exhibition. Study for MFA candidates culminates in a solo graduate thesis exhibition, written thesis, and oral defense of their work to a graduate committees composed of members from both universities.

The Joint Graduate Program in Visual Studies is accredited by NASAD, the National Association of Schools of Art and Design.

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
	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

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, attended by graduate faculty from both campuses. Each student presents a selection of work to the 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, one from each campus. 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 plus two other graduate faculty members, one from each campus. These additional committee members are appointed through consultation with the Graduate Program Directors and the student's three person advisory committee. Graduate faculty from both campuses may also attend Continuance and Candidacy, but the outcome of the review is determined by the five 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.

Documentation (MFA candidates only):

The advisory committee, chaired by the major advisor, determines the nature and manner of the required documentation. In most cases this takes the form of a written thesis.

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 committees (major advisor, two advisory committee members; and two additional graduate faculty, one from each campus) reviews the exhibition, documentation and conducts an oral examination. This committee determines the outcome of the candidate's exhibition, documentation, and oral defense.

Graduation:

Diplomas for the Joint Program carry the seals and appropriate signatures of both institutions. MA and MFA graduates may attend graduation ceremonies at either or both institutions.

Norfolk State University is school of record for this degree program.

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.

Graduate Studio Facilities:

In the fall of 1999, the Joint Program opened graduate studio space adjacent to Old Dominion's University Gallery on 21st Street in the historic Ghent section of Norfolk. The facility offers large track lit spaces, and expansive wall surfaces for up to twelve students. It is conveniently located halfway between both university campuses. There is also very limited studio in the Hamm Fine Arts Building on the Norfolk State campus. Students have round-the-clock access to these secured spaces.

Submitted by Robert Sites, GPD Visual Studies