2012 - 2013
SURVIVAL HANDBOOK
FOR
MASTER OF ARTS
&
MASTER OF FINE ARTS CANDIDATES

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State University of New York
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POLICIES AND PROCEDURES

INTRODUCTION

The Department of Art offers the 30-credit Master of Arts (MA) and the 60-credit Master of Fine Arts (MFA) degrees with areas of specialization in Painting, Drawing, Sculpture, Printmaking and Combined Media. The programs are designed to shape an independent artistic and intellectual development and are the groundwork for the pursuit of a variety of professional directions. In addition to a strong grounding in one area, students from all areas meet in group critiques and seminars. An active Visiting Artist/Critic Program and Albany’s proximity to New York City add to the curriculum offerings. Approximately 30 candidates are enrolled in the two degree programs. Secure studio space is provided in either the Fine Arts Building or the Boor Sculpture Studio.

FACILITIES

The Fine Arts Building houses the Art Department offices, the University Art Museum, the Visual Resources Library and the main facilities for photography, printmaking, painting and drawing areas.

The Boor Sculpture Studio accommodates sculpture facilities, graduate sculpture studios and additional graduate studios for combined media students.

The VRL (Visual Resources Library) has holdings of 90,000 slides from all periods with a concentration in Modern, and subscribes to approximately 10 art periodicals. This resource is available to all graduate students and is to be used in compliance with the library's policies.

The University Art Museum occupies 11,000 square feet in the Fine Arts Building. The exhibition program includes national, regional, faculty and thesis exhibits.

GRADUATE PROGRAMS

MA PROGRAM: 30 CREDITS

1. Studio art (24 credits, minimum)
   a. Studio concentration (12 credits)—painting, sculpture, printmaking, drawing, photography or combined media.
   b. Art 645 Exhibition (3 credits)
   c. Drawing (6 credits of life drawing—Art 505A and 505B)
   d. Studio electives (3 credits)

2. Art History (3 credits of any 500 level course or above)

3. General Electives (3 credits)
A faculty member is appointed to serve as major professor and mentor, based on the candidate’s area of specialization.

There is a graduate review each semester in which the Graduate Faculty Committee reviews the work of every degree candidate to assess the student’s level of progress. The faculty may recommend passage, probation or withdrawal from the program (see "Graduate Reviews" section). The Thesis Project (Art 645) culminates with an exhibition in the University Art Museum. Readiness for this exhibition is based on the quality of work and not solely on successfully completed course work.

MA SUGGESTED SEQUENCE

<table>
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<th>Course</th>
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<td>Art 505B (Drawing)</td>
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MFA PROGRAM: 60 CREDITS

General Requirements (60 credits required)
1. Studio Art (48 credits required)
   a. Area of specialization (28 credits): Painting, Sculpture, Drawing, Printmaking, Photography or Combined Media.
   b. Studio art (4 credits) in any area other than the area of specialization.
   c. Studio electives (8 credits)
2. Art 700 Departmental Seminar (4 credits); this seminar is taken during the student’s final semester and is offered in the Spring of each year.
3. Art 745 Exhibition Thesis Project (4 credits); to be taken during the final semester. Satisfactory participation in an exhibition in the University Museum is required as a part of the Exhibition Thesis Project. The Graduate Exhibition occurs annually at the end of the spring semester.
4. Art History (7 credits)
   a. ARH 600 Seminar in Contemporary Art (4 credits); taken the first semester.
   b. Three (3) credits of any Art History course on the 500 level or above
5. General electives (5 credits) May be in any area as long as credits are on the graduate level.

A faculty member is appointed to serve as major professor and mentor, based on the candidate’s area of specialization.

There is a graduate review each semester in which the Graduate Committee reviews the work of every degree candidate to assess the student’s level of progress. The reviewers
may recommend passage, probation or withdrawal from the program (see "Graduate Reviews" section). Readiness for the Graduate Exhibition is based on the quality of work and not solely on completed course work.

Image documentation of the work in the exhibition is submitted to the instructor of ART 745 as a final requirement and is kept on file in the VRL.

**MFA Suggested Sequence***

<table>
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<tr>
<th>Semester One</th>
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*This sequence is based on a two-and-a-half to three year course of study, the average length of time it takes a student to graduate. Frequently students have a teaching assistantship and therefore should only enroll for 12 credits per semester. Also, it generally takes a minimum of five semesters for a student’s work to be ready for the culminating Graduate Exhibition.
GRADUATE STUDENT REVIEWS

What follows is an explanation of the Graduate Student Reviews, their purpose and function. Included is an explanation of how students can best prepare for them.

1. The Graduate Review occurs every semester about two-thirds through the semester. It is the key opportunity for the entire studio faculty to view and discuss the work of every student in the program. Faculty members assess the strengths and weaknesses, progress and challenges of each student with whom they work. Discussions often lead to suggestions from the rest of the group as to how best to help the student move forward.

2. How to prepare for a review: Regardless of how a student normally functions in their studio, it should be cleaned (and re-painted, if necessary) and set up as an informal exhibition or studio visit. Only work done in the current semester should be on view. Finished pieces should be prominently displayed, with works-in-progress, relevant experiments, and other evidence of the thinking/working processes available. Consultation with one’s mentor about the selection is strongly encouraged. (Mentors are the faculty in the discipline with whom a student is working most closely.) Mentors may be switched from semester to semester and across disciplines, when appropriate and approved by the Chair.

3. The Day of the Review: Students are asked not to be in or around their studios while the faculty makes their rounds. The faculty discussion is meant to be a private pedagogical dialogue. Relevant criticisms will be conveyed to students in private conversation with their mentors.

4. Review Reports, Mentor Appointments and the Relation to Semester Grades: The review is placed in the semester in order to catch those students who might be failing, before they do. After each review, a simple report details: the student, his/her mentor, the present semester, and indicates a pass or fail. Once the faculty have signed all the review sheets, they are placed in an envelope, which is then placed on the door to the Art Office, FA 216. Each student is expected to view the contents of their report, a copy of which will be placed in the student’s folder, filed in the office. If failure is indicated, the student should seek out his/her mentor later that afternoon or on a following day, when both are available. The student’s mentor will convey the reasons for a failure to pass and give the faculty’s suggestions to overcome the student’s difficulties. If followed, the student should be able to re-coup and pass the semester. When a student fails,
she/he is on probation. Two successive failed reviews may result to the student being asked to leave the program.

5. **First Reviews:** The main objective of first reviews is to determine how well new students have adjusted to being in the program. On those rare occasions when the faculty finds a student who shows evidence of work inhibitions, lack of materials, poor management of time, or negative relations to the other students and faculty, we attempt an intervention, described above. Most often the faculty finds that the student has settled down to work and is developing productive relationships in the program.

6. **Spring Reviews and Their Relation to Teaching Assistantships:** In addition to all that has been said so far, the spring reviews allow the faculty to discuss and evaluate who may receive a teaching assistantship in the fall. This deliberation has a direct relationship to the yearly recruitment of new students too, as there are a finite number of assistantships. This may vary from year-to-year, depending on the College funding environment. Students who do not have a teaching assistantship may petition the graduate director to be considered for one. Assistantship awards are primarily based on the quality of a student’s work. Students are assigned jobs that seem to best fit their abilities. Some students are rotated into new positions, as desired by both the student and the faculty. From time to time a student may petition to withdraw from their assistantship in order to better concentrate on their studio work. Failure to pass a review may result in losing an assistantship. Assistantships not given to current students are set aside for recruitment.

7. **Final Fall Review:** Those students who are scheduled to graduate in May will use this semester’s review to petition the faculty for permission to take Art 745, the Graduate Exhibition in the Museum, and the Oral Exam which precedes the opening of the exhibition. Petition is automatic for those completing four semesters at Albany, transfer students from MA programs are advised to contact the Graduate Director, to avoid any confusion. Students should consult with their mentors on how their graduate show might be best selected. The mentor will convey the student’s intentions to the committee, along with a display of properly selected works, installation sketches, etc. as needed.

8. **Re-Review:** Students who have failed to receive permission to take Art 745 will be re-reviewed in the third or fourth week of the Spring semester.

9. **Final Spring Review:** Permission to take Art 745 releases students from participation in the Spring Review.
GRADUATE SEMINARS

Four graduate seminars (ARH 600, Art 555, Art 700, Art 745), along with an Art History course on a 500 level or above, comprise the academic requirements for the MFA Degree.

ARH 600—Seminar in Contemporary Art, focuses on art since 1970. The course includes readings and discussions on selected artists and current issues. Students give presentations on a topic of their choice that takes their own work into consideration.

Art 555—Combined Media Studio Seminar, is an intensive group critique forum bringing together students working in any area in the Department of Art MFA program, moderated by the instructor. Frequent, informal discussions of critical texts and the work of contemporary artists also occur in a focused effort to further develop one’s artistic vocabulary. This course is required for Combined Media students but optional for all others.

Art 700—Departmental Seminar, is an examination by students of their past and current art work, focusing on the development of one’s creative work, themes, and related historical and contemporary influence. This course assists in preparing the MFA student for his/her Oral Defense: by the writing of an artist’s statement for the museum brochure, and preparation and delivery of a lecture on the work to be shown in the Thesis Exhibition.

Art 745—Exhibition of work completed for the MFA program. Written thesis and oral defense are course requirements. The grade is recorded when the Department receives images documenting the work in the thesis exhibition.

THESIS REQUIREMENT

The submission of a written thesis is a requirement for the MFA degree. It is an articulation of the candidate’s thoughts and objectives regarding the work and might also include a discussion of the art and ideas of others as they relate to the work and thoughts of the candidate. Length is not a criterion in itself, but it is normally not less that three pages and is completed with the supervision of a graduate mentor and/or the faculty teaching Art 700, Departmental Seminar.

Eight copies of the Thesis Statement are submitted to the Department Secretary five days prior to orals date.

THESIS EXHIBIT (ART 745) AND ORAL DEFENSE
The Graduate Thesis Exhibition is held in the University Art Museum at the end of the spring semester. MFA students present both a written statement and an oral defense of their work to the graduate committee.

Readiness for the thesis exhibition is based on the quality of the work and not on completed course work.

The candidate is expected to meet the Museum’s deadlines for the submission of catalog data, photographs, label text preparation and delivery of work.

**ADVISING**

The candidate should bear in mind that the policies and procedures of the State University of New York and of the Art Department of the University at Albany as noted in the Graduate Bulletin. The student is urged to become familiar with all pertinent information in the Graduate Bulletin and to meet periodically with the Graduate Advisor and his/her area coordinator to review curriculum and thesis requirements.

**RETENTION STANDARDS AND MAINTENANCE OF MATRICULATION**

A grade average of “B” must be maintained. Advancement in the program requires approved ratings at reviews. Probation results when a grade average drops below “B.” Any student placed on probation for two consecutive semesters may be suspended.

Failure to register for two consecutive semesters may result in withdrawal of a student's candidacy unless permission for leave of absence has been granted. A leave of absence can be arranged by notifying the graduate advisor.

**TIME LIMITATIONS, MATRICULATION AND RESIDENCY**

Matriculation in the Master of Fine Arts degree program may not exceed 6 years. At least one year must be spent in full-time residency.

**NON-MATRICULATED STUDENTS**

An individual may present a portfolio to the Art Department to gain permission to take up to 6 credits as a non-degree graduate student.

**TRANSFER CREDIT**

A candidate for the MFA may petition to transfer a maximum of 12 graduate semester-hour credits from another institution and 18 credits from our MA program. Students making petitions for transfer of credit should present a syllabus, course descriptions and graduate bulletins from these institutions to document their requests. This material is submitted with a petition to the Director of Graduate Program upon matriculating at Albany.
SUMMER STUDY

Few graduate level courses are scheduled during Summer Sessions: independent study may be possible with faculty scheduled to teach during the summer (see Studios section).

FINANCIAL AID

Contact Financial Aid Office for complete information on financial aid/student loan opportunities. See www.albany.edu/financialaid/

Graduate Teaching Assistantships

Teaching Assistantships are awarded during the Spring semester for the following Academic Year, based on the quality of the applicant's portfolio and departmental needs. A majority of awards are given to those already enrolled in the program. Teaching Assistants contribute 10 hours per week to fulfill their contractual obligations, and normally require more than four semesters to complete their MFA degree.

The Teaching Assistant is assigned at least one of the following responsibilities:

- Assisting faculty in classroom instruction
- Monitoring and supervising use of shop equipment
- Maintaining classroom and shop facilities
- Teaching a lower division studio course (under the supervision of a faculty member)
- Assisting in other Departmental duties

The Teaching Assistant, while working under the direct supervision of a member of the faculty, bears the responsibility for fulfilling the requirements of the Department's course description and syllabus. Teaching Assistants may be required to perform functions in addition to their main duties in order to fulfill the requisite number of hours obligated by the assistantship.

Awards, Scholarships, Fellowships

Various State University of New York and external prizes, awards, fellowships and scholarships are available to the MA/MFA student. All of these are posted on the MA/MFA Bulletin Board next to the Art Office. The main awards are:

- Benevolent Grant for research. Award amount: up to $500, offered each semester through the University at Albany Office of Research
- University at Albany Graduate Student Organization Grant for research and travel. Award amount: up to $600, offered each semester through the Graduate Student Organization
Outstanding Graduate Award by nomination of the faculty

SUNY Thayer Fellowship for research. Award amount: up to $7,000 offered once a year through SUNY Central Programs in the Arts to graduates of all SUNY campuses. One award given each year in all the Arts.

GSO – Graduate Student Organization Grant for completion of a project. Grants awarded up to $500.
NEW YORK STATE RESIDENCY

When applicable, the student should consider applying for New York State residency as soon as possible after arriving in New York. Requirements for residency are relatively uncomplicated, may reduce tuition and, depending on the individual's status and changing tax laws, may reduce taxes. A full description can be found at http://www.albany.edu/studentaccounts/media/app.pdf

Factors Relevant to Establishing New York State Residency

Proof of a New York State domicile is demonstrated by documents which support an applicant’s contention that his or her permanent home is located in New York:
1. New York State driver’s license (or non-driver ID card) and vehicle registration
2. New York State voter registration
3. New York State and Federal income tax returns
4. Duration of the student’s physical presence
5. State of residency of the student’s family
6. Proof of ownership of New York State real property or rental
7. New York State bank accounts.

STUDIOS

Graduate studio assignments are made in the Fall semester. Occupant is responsible for all damage to the studio.

Studio space is assigned on the basis of availability and need; no studio space is guaranteed to those taking fewer than 9 credits. Studios are accessible 24 hours a day during the academic school year. Students must comply with all fire safety and health standards set by the University. All studios must be cleaned and vacated within three weeks after the thesis exhibition is closed.

SECURITY AND SAFETY

Only authorized students and faculty are permitted access to the Boor Sculpture Building after business hours. Doors must be kept locked when working evenings, nights or weekends. A swipe card is required for access after hours.

Keys are neither to be duplicated nor lent out.

GENERAL MAINTENANCE AND SAFETY

All candidates should familiarize themselves with the safe handling of art materials which could pose health hazards for themselves and others.

To dispose of paint, waste oil, alcohol, lacquer and other solvents, use the waste containers kept in the yellow fire-proof paint cabinets.
We are under contract for cotton rags to be delivered, cleaned, and returned on a regular basis. Paper towels are not permitted for cleaning solvents, wiping plates, etc. We only receive new, clean rags when we send back the dirty ones. All painters in the FA building need to get their rags from David Carbone. There is a finite amount of rags in circulation, so please be as efficient as possible with your rag usage.

No pets are permitted on the premises at any time.

Fire extinguishers are located throughout the buildings. Familiarize yourself with their location.

Students are expected to respect the privacy and work habits of others and follow all safety procedures as instructed.

Smoking is prohibited.

No alcohol or drugs are permitted on premises at any time.

No equipment should be operated without using eye protection

**GRADUATE STUDENTS AT BOOR SCULPTURE STUDIO**

There is no regular janitorial service for graduate studios. Everyone is responsible for sweeping and cleaning out the rubbish in his/her studio regularly. Oil and paint rags must be disposed of nightly in the labeled containers or dumpster to avoid danger of spontaneous combustion. Solvents must not be flushed down drains.

Corridors, general work areas, and shop areas must be kept free of debris. Trash should be emptied nightly into the dumpster at the loading dock. Dumpster pickup is Tuesday and Thursday mornings.

The building is accessible Monday thru Thursday from 8:00 a.m. until 9:00 p.m. (regular class hours). Only authorized students (those with studio assignments) are permitted in the Sculpture Studio outside of class hours.

Studio monitor assignments will be made at the start of each semester; monitors will be responsible for enforcing safety and cleanup policies, and undergraduate outside-of-class work time schedules.

Exterior doors must be kept closed when working evenings, nights or weekends.

**VISITING ARTIST PROGRAM**
The Visiting Artist Program brings artists and critics representative of many different disciplines and points of view into direct and informal contact with the MFA student. The University Art Museum also has a lively visiting lecture series entitled the Act Program. See the website for a list of recent and past visitors.

**GRADUATE STUDENT ORGANIZATION (GSO)**

This is an organization which is capable of sponsoring many types of activities, including visiting artist series, trips, and panel discussions. There is a GSO office on campus which provides guidelines.

**THE FACULTY**

**Roger Bisbing**—Sculpture; BFA, Columbus College of Art and Design, MFA Syracuse University. Instructional Support Technician.

**Amy Bloch**—Art History; PhD Rutgers University, Italian Renaissance art and architecture.

**David Carbone**—Painting and Drawing; MFA, Brooklyn College.

**JoAnne Carson**—Painting and Drawing; MFA University of Chicago.

**Leona Christie**—Printmaking/Digital; MFA the University of Washington.

**Sarah Cohen**—Art History; Ph.D. from Yale University. Specializes in 17th and 18th century art as well as Rococo and Baroque art.

**Rachel Dressler**—Art History; Ph.D. from Columbia University. Specializes in Medieval Art and Architecture (including Islamic), as well as French 19th Century Painting and Visual Theory.

**Adam Frelin**—Sculpture; MFA University of California, San Diego

**Phyllis Galembo**—Photography; MFA, University of Wisconsin-Madison.

**Daniel Goodwin**—Department Chair, Photography, Digital Imaging; MFA, Hunter College, City University of New York.

**Melissa Thorne**—Painting and Drawing; MFA,

**Audrey Kupferberg**—Film Studies

**Edward Mayer**—Sculpture; MFA University of Wisconsin, Madison.
Michael Werner—Classical Archaeology; PhD Stanford University. Research interests include Roman Provincial Archaeology.

ADJUNCT FACULTY

Robert Edelman—Film Studies
William Jaeger—Photography, Criticism
Nathan Meltz—Printmaking
Mariah Doren—Contemporary Art Theory/History
Scott Grodesky—Painting and Drawing
Justin Baker—Photography
James Van Duyne—Sculpture

EXHIBITIONS

The Capital District and surrounding region offer a rich array of changing exhibitions, permanent collections and competitive exhibition opportunities. Candidates should involve themselves as viewers and participants whenever possible.

Regional Competitions and Exhibition Opportunities

Berkshire Regional, Pittsfield Museum, Pittsfield, Massachusetts
Munson-Williams-Proctor Regional, Utica, New York
Albany Center Galleries, Albany, New York
New York State Biennial, Everson Art Museum
Norman H. Rice Gallery, Albany Institute of History & Art, Albany, New York
Art Center of the Capital Region, Troy, New York
Artists of the Mohawk-Hudson Region (annual exhibition)
Outdoor Sculpture at Chesterwood, Stockbridge, Massachusetts

Public Art Collections and Exhibition Programs in the Albany Vicinity

Art at the Empire State Plaza and New York State Museum, Albany, New York
Williams College Museum, Williamstown, Massachusetts
The Clark Institute, Williamstown, Massachusetts
Hyde Collection, Glens Falls, New York
Albany Institute of History & Art, Albany, New York
Olana (Frederick Church's home and studio), Hudson, New York
Chesterwood (Daniel Chester French's home and studio), Stockbridge, Massachusetts
Tang Teaching Museum, Skidmore College Art Gallery, Saratoga Springs, New York
Esther Massry Gallery, College of St. Rose Art Gallery, Albany, New York
Mass MoCA, North Adams, MA
EMPAC (Experimental Media & Performing Arts Center), Troy,
The Albany Airport Art and Culture Program
Mandeville Gallery at the Nott Memorial, Union College, Schenectady, NY
Woodside Contemporary Arts Center and Residency, Troy, NY
Troy Night Out: Last Friday of the month
www.troynightout.org/
First Friday Albany / www.1stfridayalbany.org/
Bard College Hessel Art Museum, Annandale-on Hudson
Omi Sculpture Fields and Residency, Ghent, NY