

Vermont  
College of  
Fine Arts  
MFA in  
Graphic  
Design



VC  
FA



**Vermont College of Fine Arts** is a national center for education in the arts. Our programs encourage emerging and established artists, writers, musicians, filmmakers, and designers to deepen their personal work while contributing to contemporary conversations in the wider culture. Our unique, progressive graduate study model offers six distinctive masters of fine arts degrees, each designed to develop artistic and literary excellence. Our programs are nationally recognized in their fields, and we are the only educational institution in the country devoted entirely to fine arts education at the graduate level.

# Our goals

- **TO DEVELOP** design skills in form, content, and craft
- **TO DEEPEN** and expand critical ability
- **TO BUILD** fluency in design discourse and visual culture
- **TO EXPAND** the ability of designers to become content producers

# MFA

in **GRAPHIC DESIGN**

**DONALD**

**SUTHARD**

*graphic design*

'14

A major strength of the program is the structure, and the ability to design projects that allow you to delve deeper into your own areas of interest.

The other strength is the faculty, not only because of their talent as designers and teachers, but also because of the type of people they are. I feel very supported, and this allows me to take chances and explore.

# the program

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*The Master of Fine Arts in Graphic Design is one of the nation's first low-residency programs in graphic design that is built around a student's individual design interests and goals.*



SILAS MUNRO  
*graphic design*  
*faculty chair*

Here we craft visual form, generate insightful content, and foster mindful research across media. We encourage freedom from

the constraints of any particular style or approach, and inspire students to forge their own courses of study. Students maintain diverse practices, working side by side with faculty and visiting artists. Together, we see graphic design education as a process of social transformation, aspiring to the realization of our best selves.

Students come from diverse creative backgrounds and can earn a master's degree without leaving their communities. The Master of Fine Arts in Graphic Design can be earned in four, six-month semesters, during which students investigate a range of topics, including design for social change, web design, typography, design history, and book design.

VCFA students are supported by faculty advisors within their areas of interest, and even though no two students are alike, all find surprising and inspiring commonalities. No set pedagogy encompasses the range of topics explored and fostered at VCFA within the field of design.

*on campus*

*the faculty*

The faculty in Graphic Design are an international team of designers and teachers, whose work appears regularly in leading graphic design publications and forums. They are award-winning critics, writers, and artists, who are all socially active and environmentally engaged. They approach design through the lens of ethnography, narrative, identity, and multi-media, while taking a balanced approach to critical theory and professional practice. They design for museums, NGOs, corporations, and organizations for social profit. They work and teach globally; lead their own companies, and their clients range from large corporations to small nonprofits. Their talks, lectures and workshops explore a wide range of aesthetics, offering students the opportunity to study from a variety of ideological vantage points and perspectives.

The relationship of one faculty advisor to one student each semester is at the core of the MFA in Graphic Design. Our very low student-to-faculty ratio assures close attention to every student's design process. Whether face-to-face during residencies or via file-sharing, Skype, or phone conferences during the semester, students work closely with the faculty.

**FACULTY**

**MFA IN GRAPHIC DESIGN**

Silas Munro, Faculty Chair  
Tasheka Arceneaux-Sutton  
Geoff Halber  
Natalia Ilyin  
Nikki Juen  
Bethany Kobay  
Yoon Soo Lee  
Ian Lynam  
Ziddi Msangi  
Matthew Monk  
Dave Peacock

**RECENT GUEST DESIGNERS**

Jeanette Abbink  
Kyle Blue  
Gavin Browning  
Glen Cummings  
Keetra Dean Dixon  
Ely Kim  
Manuel Lima  
Mylinh Trieu Nguyen  
Anne West

*the residency*

Students begin each semester with a weeklong residency where they join faculty, peers, and guest designers on our Montpelier campus for vibrant days of lectures, critiques, workshops, and discussions. The residency allows for reflection, input, and dialogue surrounding creative process and practice. Shared experiences during the residency can be profound, generating and sustaining cross-cultural and multi-disciplinary conversations, while fostering relationships lasting far beyond graduation.

*<<You have to write down what you are going to abandon..you've got to see how it works in the whole thing and then throw it away. throw it away...>>*

*Leonard Cohen*



# off campus

## the semester

During the campus residency, students work in small groups and individually with faculty advisors to create a unique study plan that will guide and inform their work throughout the semester. Special attention is given to developing plans that will broaden and deepen students' design practice, as well as their historical and theoretical competency. Students stay in close contact with faculty and peers during the semester, learning and making, challenging themselves and each other with projects and problems of their own design.



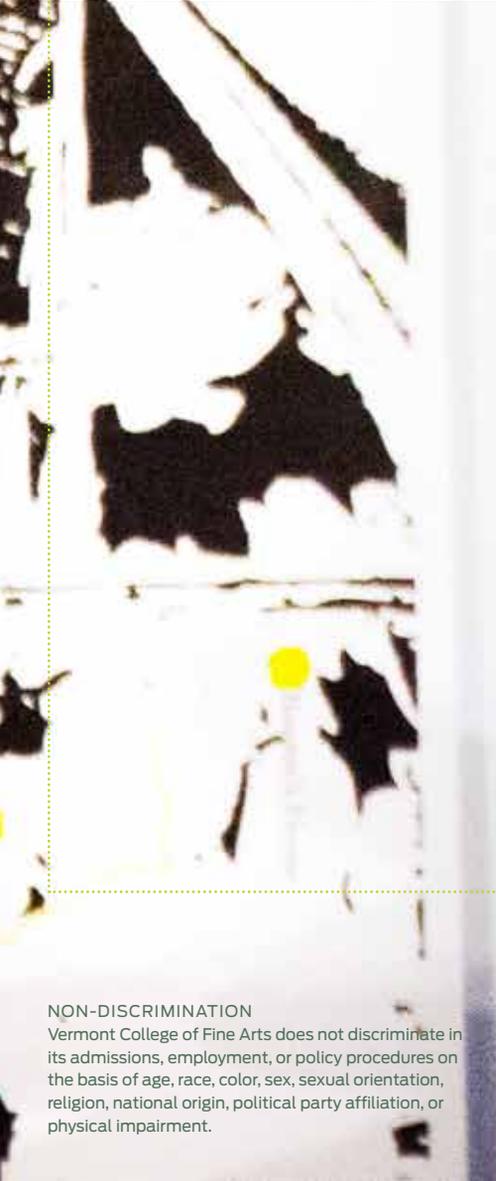
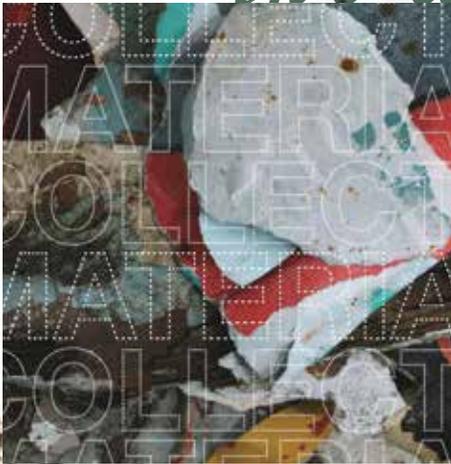
<<Understand the importance of the sketch. That is not knowing quite where you are when you begin.>>

**Richard Sennett**

<<You start by sketching, then you do a drawing, then you build a model, and then you go to reality—you go to the site, then you go back to the drawing. You build up a sort of dialogue between drawing and reality, and then back again.>>

**Renzo Piano**

# *the work*



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*Students learn design history and criticism related to their personal objectives, but their primary goal is designing—developing a body of work that will encourage a new or enhanced professional or academic path.*

Over the course of four semesters, students create a portfolio of design work and research, concluding the program with a thesis project consisting of a body of creative work and a critical text.

#### NON-DISCRIMINATION

Vermont College of Fine Arts does not discriminate in its admissions, employment, or policy procedures on the basis of age, race, color, sex, sexual orientation, religion, national origin, political party affiliation, or physical impairment.

# admission

Admission to The MFA in Graphic Design at Vermont College of Fine Arts is highly selective. We seek candidates with distinctive voices and abilities, applicants who believe that a model of student-centered design education is one in which they can thrive.

## Candidate Requirements:

- Applicants must have completed a Bachelor's degree from an accredited college or university and have a basic proficiency in both current hardware and software used in the field of graphic design.
- Applicant portfolios should highlight visual strengths and could be a chronicle of development as a designer over time. Images should show a variety and range of artistic experience. The faculty will look for candidates who bring context and richness to the form and content of their design endeavors.
- Applicant statements of purpose should evidence potential to engage with a range of intellectual traditions and to receive and productively respond to criticism. Applicants should demonstrate knowledge of contemporary visual culture, as the program requires significant emphasis on critical and conceptual content in creative work.

Contact the admissions office or visit [vcfa.edu](http://vcfa.edu) for more information, including forms, application deadline dates, current tuition and fees.

**MFA in Graphic Design**  
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