

Vermont
College of
Fine Arts
MFA in
Visual Art



VC
FA

Our goals

- **ARTISTIC ACCOMPLISHMENT**, both aesthetic and technical, in mediums chosen by our students.
- **FLUENCY IN CRITICAL DEBATES** on contemporary art based on its relationship to visual culture, art history, and the social context.
- **SUBSTANTIVE KNOWLEDGE** of visual culture and an understanding of methodologies for artistic research.

MFA

in **VISUAL ART**

C. HERBERT
visual art
'13

The structure at VCFA mirrors the ebb and flow of working and gearing up to show one's work, meet deadlines, and articulate what it

is that one is trying to do, all the while gaining insight from the responses to our work that will feed our further efforts.



Vermont College of Fine Arts, on its historic hilltop in Montpelier, ignites transformative experiences for a diverse community of artists and writers. Our unique, progressive graduate study model offers six distinctive masters of fine arts (MFA) 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.

G. Roy Levin, founder of the MFA in Visual Art degree program at Vermont College of Fine Arts, sought a new standard of graduate arts education, one in which students could pursue their MFA degrees “while remaining within the context of the communities in which they live, work, and make art.” The program’s biannual residencies, artistic community, and innovative structure encourage a “focus on the relationship between art and societal values, which



in turn, helps students recognize the inevitable conflicts and contradictions of being an artist/cultural producer in today’s world.” Launched in 1991, it was the first low-residency degree program in visual art in the country. To this day, the pioneering methodology Levin and his collaborators designed endures.

R. COUTURE

visual art

'10

At VCFA, I learned the realities of balancing my studio practice and real-life responsibilities. Writing studio plans taught me to write for grants and residencies. Working alone in my studio taught me discipline. Critiques taught me to critically look at work. The Visual Culture Project honed my research, writing, and presentation skills. I use all of these skills today in my present studio practice and my own teaching. Because of those experiences, I am able to trust myself as an artist.

the program

the students

Our students hail from a wide variety of geographical, social, and cultural locations, both in this country and beyond. We consider diversity as integral to our pedagogical mission. Diversity is crucial for the kinds of critical conversations we seek to establish and builds meaningful alliances among artists and thinkers from different backgrounds.



the faculty

Faculty of the MFA in Visual Art degree program at Vermont College of Fine Arts work simultaneously as critics, art historians, professionals in major art institutions; and as professional artists with substantial, award-winning art practices. Students are challenged with a multi-disciplinary perspective on their work and research, a perspective about art and the place of art in the world that truly distinguishes this program.

FACULTY MFA IN VISUAL ART

Michelle Dizon
Ashley Hunt
Sowon Kwon
Lana Lin
Michael Minelli

Ulrike Müller
Humberto Ramirez
Dont Rhine
Marie Shurkus
Faith Wilding

on campus

the residency

Every student begins the program, and ends each semester, with a ten-day residency. Residencies join faculty, students, and visiting artists on our campus in Montpelier for an intense period of exhibitions, performances, critiques, lectures, research, and dialogue. The residency offers students the time and space away from daily concerns to reflect upon and discuss artistic practice and study progress. The experiences shared during residencies are profound, and the relationships formed during that time last far beyond graduation.



VISUAL

KEN HORNE

visual art

'13

I chose VCFA because of its reputation, unique structure, stellar faculty, and the intimate, community-based atmosphere.

The opportunity to connect with and learn from Artist-Teachers outside the program each semester is a beautiful aspect that adds additional layers of critical feedback, perspective, and the potential to build important relationships that extend into the future.



critiques

In order to achieve a thorough and complex understanding of a student's progress throughout the program, faculty and students engage in numerous critiques during each residency. The exhibition installations provide an arena of constant discussion and dissemination of ideas. Here, one-on-one or in groups, faculty, visiting artists, lecturers, critics, and graduating students conduct formal and informal critique sessions.

learning in collaboration

Research and writing are integral to contemporary art practices, and we encourage our students to engage with a wide range of materials and textual forms. At each residency, returning students present the findings of their Visual Culture Research Projects which they have conducted over the course of a semester with faculty guidance. These presentations take place in sessions modeled on professional public speaking formats, such as panel discussions and artists' talks. All students observe other student presentations and engage in group meetings with faculty members to discuss and receive feedback on ideas for their next Visual Culture Research Project. Students end the residency by submitting a study plan with learning goals and a bibliography for the semester.



exhibitions

All new and returning students participate in a group exhibition during each residency that serves as the focal point for discussions relating to the development of their work. Students are encouraged to consider their installation on campus as a working exhibition, offering the opportunity for a high level of critical and creative discourse through critiques and reviews with both faculty and visiting artists.

Each graduating student presents an exhibition in the College Hall Gallery on a culminating project. This exhibition testifies to the transformative nature of the program. It launches graduates into full and complex practices that integrate what they have learned in the program with their ongoing post-graduate artistic concerns.

visiting artists and lecturers

Internationally recognized artists and critics visit the residencies to present their own work, methods, and processes. The faculty, as well as visiting art historians, critics, writers, and practitioners, lecture on urgent contemporary topics in fields such as art history, critical theory, cultural studies, philosophy, and sociology of art.

RECENT VISITING ARTISTS & CRITICS

Carol Armstrong
Dalida Maria Benfield
Julia Bryan-Wilson
A.K. Burns
Luis Camnitzer
Francis Cape

David Deitcher
Anoka Faruqee
Andrea Geyer
Leah Gilliam
Carla Herrera-Prats
Luis Jacob

James Luna
Jaleh Mansoor
Carlos Motta
Cauleen Smith
Wu Tsang
B. Wurtz

off campus

visual culture research projects

Students design concurrent, and often interwoven, semester projects, including a three credit Visual Culture Research and Writing Project intended to help each student develop the reference, subject matter, and concerns in his or her own Studio Project.

studio projects

The twelve credit Studio Project is at the heart of the program. It is situated within the students' home studios, using the medium and method of their choosing, and guided by monthly meetings with their local Artist-Teacher. The rigorous exchange between student and Artist-Teacher is one of the highlights of a student's experience. With support from the Artist-Teacher, students are encouraged to take risks and to inquire deeply into their aesthetic choices and subject matter.



artist-teachers

The studio component is at the heart of the program. During the semester, students complete a 12-credit Studio Project in their own studios, using the medium and method of their choosing. The trajectory of this work follows a study plan developed with an Artist-Teacher, who is chosen by the student and approved by the program.

Artist-Teachers:

- Live / teach / work in a locale close to the student's studio.
- Are graduate-level educators and practicing artists.
- Build relationships with students as mentors, critics, and as links to the regional artistic community.

ART



DUDLEY ZOPP

visual art

artist teacher

I see my role as Artist-Teacher as a collaboration with another artist who is already working at an advanced level... I value our working together outside the academic setting—and in many

cases, at some distance from it—which reinforces the program's goal of producing art that is grounded in social context rather than in abstract research.

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 Visual Art 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 art education is one in which they can thrive.

- Applicants must have completed a BFA, BA, or BS degree from an accredited college or university, or hold a diploma from a recognized professional art school, and must have substantial experience in making art.
- An applicant's portfolio must indicate an appropriate quality of creative work and a level of commitment to an artistic practice to demonstrate that the applicant is ready to do graduate work in an MFA in Visual Art degree program.
- The application essay must give evidence of strong potential to undertake critical inquiry of various artistic practices past and present, to engage with a range of intellectual traditions, to pursue self-reflective analysis and independent study, as well as to receive and productively respond to criticism of his or her work.

Application deadline

September 15th for the winter semester
February 15th for the summer semester

**Contact the admissions office
or visit vcfa.edu for more
information, including forms,
application deadline dates,
and current tuition and fees.**

MFA in Visual Art

Vermont College of Fine Arts
36 College Street
Montpelier, VT 05602
802.828.8535 | www.vcfa.edu

MICHAEL
MINELLI
visual art
faculty

This degree program not only looks to challenge the forms and content of contemporary art discourse, but the means and

methodologies by which those concerns are taught. In other words, the MFA in Visual Art approaches arts education as a collaborative project that values the unique knowledge and experiences of its students as necessary features within a shared pedagogical investigation.

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