

JAMES PEARSON DUFFY **DEPARTMENT OF ART AND ART HISTORY**  
WAYNE STATE UNIVERSITY

# **MA // MFA GRADUATE HANDBOOK**

PUBLISHED WINTER 2021

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# INTRODUCTION

This handbook is intended to answer most questions pertaining to the Master of Arts (MA) and Master of Fine Arts (MFA) offered through the James Pearson Duffy Department of Art & Art History. Students can focus on one of 15 distinct studio art disciplines or create an interdisciplinary practice (see list below).

Both the MA and MFA programs allow students a significant degree of flexibility in pursuing research and coursework across these disciplines. Significant differences exist in the MA and MFA programs, so it is essential to consult the specific requirements and procedures for each degree.

**The department supports research and studio work within interdisciplinary practice or concentrated work in the following disciplines:**

- Ceramics
- Digital Art
- Drawing
- Fashion Design
- Fibers
- Graphic Design
- Industrial Design
- Interdisciplinary Practice
- Interior Design
- Metalsmithing
- Painting
- Photography
- Performance
- Printmaking
- Sculpture

## Resources and Contacts

Please consult the University Graduate Bulletin ([www.bulletins.wayne.edu](http://www.bulletins.wayne.edu)) for the general rules and procedures concerning graduate studies at Wayne State University.

Questions should be addressed to the Art Department's Graduate Officer.

### **Graduate Officer**

Department of Art & Art History 150 Art Building Wayne State University  
Detroit, Michigan 48202  
Email: [graduateartanddesign@wayne.edu](mailto:graduateartanddesign@wayne.edu)  
Phone: 313-577-2980  
Fax: 313-577-3491

## **Financial Aid and Scholarships**

For information concerning financial aid and scholarships, please contact the WSU Financial Aid office. Applications for graduate teaching assistantships are available on the department website at <https://art.wayne.edu/>

## **ADMISSIONS**

### **Admissions Resources**

Graduate program admissions for our department are administered through the University's Graduate School, found here: <https://gradschool.wayne.edu/admissions>

### **General Admissions Criteria**

You must have a bachelor's degree from a regionally accredited institution in the United States or a comparable degree from an officially recognized institution outside the United States to apply for graduate admission.

If you are applying to a master's program, your minimum undergraduate GPA must be 2.75 or the equivalent in upper division coursework.

### **Admissions Committee**

Admissions committees are composed of three (3) full-time faculty members from the Department of Art. Students who intend to study within a given discipline will be assigned the area coordinator as one of the committee members or as an advisor. One member from the admissions committee will serve as the student's advisor during their first semester.

### **Advising**

At the time of admission, the student will be assigned an advisor. The advisor will help the student plan the course of study. During their first semester the student should select a faculty member, with agreement from that faculty, to be a permanent advisor.

It is also the student's responsibility to know the program and to maintain close contact with the advisor, in order to keep them informed as to the student's progress. The student must meet with their advisor every semester to review, plan, and approve the student's course of studies. If desired, the Graduate Officer is also available for advising.

# MASTER OF ARTS (M.A.)

The MA program in the James Pearson Duffy Department of Art and Art History is a 30-credit hour program where students pursue a wide range of media in their studio coursework. (Refer to the complete list of disciplines in the introduction.)

## MA Admission Requirements

Admission to the Master of Arts program is based on the following criteria:

- Portfolio
- Academic Record and Experience / Supporting Materials
- Interview

Note: The Graduate Record Examination (GRE) is not required for admission.

## MA Application Materials

In addition to the Graduate School admissions materials, applicants to the MA program also must submit:

- 20 images of recent work and/or 5 min. of video. (*A video submission can include 3 links, totaling no more than 5 minutes of video.*)
- Image list
- Statement of Intent clearly identifying area/s of interest. The statement should also include specific research interests and desired outcomes.
- Curriculum vita (CV)
- 3 letters of recommendation through the online upload process.

These materials are examined by the faculty admissions committee, along with the applicant's academic record. Following this review, applicants may be requested to attend an admissions interview.

## MA Program Requirements

### Degree Plan

The Studio Art MA is offered under the Graduate School Plan C degree plan. Plan C requires coursework only. (No thesis paper, review committee, or exhibition are required to complete this degree.)

### Credit Hours

The Master of Arts program is a 30 credits course of study. The 30 credit hours must be taken at the graduate level. Attendance may be either full-time (8 credits per semester) or part-time.

### Time to Completion

The student must complete the degree within 6 academic years.

## **Curriculum**

Graduate Studio ART 8992: 3 credits total  
*(Offered every Winter Semester)*

Art History: 3 credits total  
*5000-level or above*

Studio Electives: 18 credits total  
*7000-level or above studio course in the Department of Art & Art History  
5000-level and above considered with approval from advisor)*

Electives: 6 credits total  
*5000-level or above course in any department or college*

## **Plan of Work**

The Plan of Work is available online at: [www.art.wayne.edu](http://www.art.wayne.edu). Any deviations from this course of study require the approval of the faculty Graduate Committee in Art. Such requests should be addressed in writing to the Graduate Officer.

The applicant will advance to the rank of 'Candidate' upon approval of the Plan of Work by the College Graduate Office. For the plan to be approved, students must be officially admitted to the program and have attained a minimum GPA of 3.0.

Students must submit a Plan of Work BEFORE they complete 12 graduate credits. Candidacy must be authorized by the time 12 graduate credits have been earned or subsequent registration will be denied. A candidacy hold is automatically generated for students who have not attained candidacy by the time they accumulate 12 credits. Once the school/college graduate office receives the Plan of Work, it will remove the hold and will notify the Records Office to advance the student to candidacy.

## **Reviews**

MA students may request an optional review in their final semester of study. They must make this request to the Graduate Officer by the start of that semester. The review committee will be composed of 3 full-time faculty. Each committee will include the student's advisor and two additional faculty members.

### **MA Review Procedures:**

- Reviews are normally one hour in length.
- The student is expected to present all work done during the period under review, as well as answer questions.
- The review will begin with an opening statement prepared by the student in the form of a brief 10-minute presentation about the works under review, focusing on those issues that they wish the committee to address.
- The presentation will be followed by an open discussion of up to 30 minutes. The discussion will be moderated by the student's advisor, addressing the works under review, and focusing on the issues raised by the student during their opening statement.

## **Graduation Requirements**

### **Image Portfolio**

Prior to graduation, the candidate must provide their advisor with a portfolio of 15 images of works executed during graduate studies. Images are due by the end of the student's final semester. (Used for program assessment).

### **Graduate School Degree Application**

When registering for the final semester, the student must submit a degree application to the Graduate School. The deadline is posted on the Graduate School website and usually falls in the 3rd or 4th week of the semester. Once the student has filed for a degree, the student is then a Candidate for Graduation.

## **Role and Responsibilities of the MA Advisor**

- The advisor's responsibilities are to explain the program and help the student plan their course of study. Aspects of the advisor's role include the following points:
- Moderate a student's optional final review
- Approve a student's list of review committee members and send the list to the Graduate Officer.
- Approve a student's plan of work.
- Approve a student's course schedule each semester.

## **Studio Space and Facilities**

The Department is not able to guarantee individual studio space for students in the MA program. However, MA candidates may request studio space on a case-by-case basis. MA students can consult with their advisor and the Graduate Officer to see what space, if any, is available. For safety purposes, students who wish to access classroom facilities should contact their advisor who will then work with the area coordinator to arrange specifics about scheduling and studio use.

## **Transfer of Credits**

No credits can be transferred to the program from any other institution or program at the time of admission. A student may receive up to three (3) credits from another program during their course of study at WSU. The student must submit a request form and provide an official transcript to the Graduate Officer; the student's review committee must agree to accept this work.

## **Spring / Summer Semester**

Master of Arts course work may be done during the Spring/Summer if appropriate courses are offered.

# MASTER OF FINE ARTS (MFA)

The MFA program in the James Pearson Duffy Department of Art and Art History is a 60-credit hour interdisciplinary program where students pursue a wide range of media or an intensive studio discipline. Students can work deeply within one discipline or more broadly across multiple disciplines and media. In the MFA program, students develop critical capacities to advance their practice-based research and situate their work within larger cultural contexts.

**(Refer to the complete list of disciplines in the introduction on page 3.)**

## MFA Admissions

### Methods of Admission

To be eligible for the Master of Fine Arts degree program, applicants must have one of the following:

- BFA degree
- BA with equivalent experience
- MA degree

### Admission Requirements

Admission to the Master of Arts program is based on the following criteria:

- Portfolio
- Academic Record and Experience / Supporting Materials
- Interview

Note: The Graduate Record Examination (GRE) is not required for admission.

### Faculty Admission Committee

Admissions committees are composed of 3 full-time faculty members from the Department of Art. Students who intend to study within a given discipline will be assigned the area coordinator as one of their admission committee members.

## MFA Application Materials

In addition to the Graduate School admissions materials, applicants to the MFA program also must submit:

- 20 images of recent work and/or 5 min. of video. (A video submission can include 3 links, totaling no more than 5 minutes of video.)
- Image list
- Statement of Intent clearly identifying area/s of interest. The statement should also include specific research interests and desired outcomes.
- Curriculum vita (CV)
- 3 letters of recommendation through the online upload process.

These materials are examined by the faculty admissions committee, along with the applicant's academic record. Following this review, applicants may be requested to attend an admissions interview.

## MFA Program Requirements

### Degree Plan

The Studio Art MFA is offered under the Graduate School Plan A degree plan. Plan A requires a thesis. The thesis requirements are outlined in the Graduation Requirements below.

### Credit Hours

The Master of Fine Arts Degree is a 60-credit hour program, requiring full-time enrollment. All credit hours must be taken at the graduate level.

### Time to Completion

The degree must be completed in four, five or six semesters (2-3 years). No MFA course work is available during Spring/Summer semesters. (Graduate Assistants are exempt from this time limit due to the regulations governing assistantships.)

### Curriculum

Graduate Seminar ART 8990: 9 credits total

- *3 credits offered every Fall*

Graduate Studio ART 8992: 9 credits total

- *3 credits offered every Winter*
- *Counts as studio credit hours*

Art History: 6 credits total

- *5000-level or above critical theory course*
- *5000-level or above elective*

Graduate Hours ART 8994: 20 credit hours (at least 4 per semester)

- *2 credit hours/semester must be with advisor.*
- *Each faculty will have an individual course codes assigned to them for hours.*
- *Limit of 9 hours/faculty/semester for all students.*
- *Minimum 1 credit hour Maximum 3 credits hours between a student faculty pair, unless advisor, which is a minimum of 2.*

MFA Thesis ART 8996: 4 credits total (taken in student's final year taken with advisor)

- *1-2 week solo or group exhibition in Art Department Gallery*
- *8 page (4000 word count) minimum written document, accompanies exhibition,*
- *expanded artist/ research statement.*
- *Image portfolio of 20 images (may include details) of graduate work including thesis exhibition*

Electives: 12 credits total (also could be Graduate Hours)

- *5000-level or above course in any department or college*

MFA Progress Review ART 0890: 0 credit hour gateway

- *Offered every Fall*
- *Students present all work and experiments created for the semester, including written material*
- *Visiting artist invited for this review*

- *Graded by committee as: S Satisfactory (pass/fail), U Unsatisfactory (pass/fail).*
  - *Pass/Fail, attendance and participation is considered Pass (S)*
- MFA Assessment Review ART 0892: 0 credit hour gateway
- *Offered every Winter*
  - *Students present all work and experiments created for the semester, including written material*
  - *500 word artist statement submitted 1 week before reviews*
  - *Formal presentation/display of work*
  - *The Winter reviews will also serve as the Department of Art MFA program assessment.*
  - *Evaluated by committee as: Pass (S) /Pass with Warning (S) /Move to MA*
  - *program (U)/Dismissal from program (U) (S Satisfactory, U Unsatisfactory)*

### **Plan of Work**

The Plan of Work is available online at: [www.art.wayne.edu](http://www.art.wayne.edu). Any deviations from this course of study require the approval of the faculty Graduate Committee in Art. Such requests should be addressed in writing to the Graduate Officer.

The applicant will advance to the rank of 'Candidate' upon approval of the Plan of Work by the College Graduate Office. For the plan to be approved, students must be officially admitted to the program and have attained a minimum GPA of 3.0.

Students must submit a Plan of Work BEFORE they complete 12 graduate credits. Candidacy must be authorized by the time 12 graduate credits have been earned or subsequent registration will be denied. A candidacy hold is automatically generated for students who have not attained candidacy by the time they accumulate 12 credits. Once the school/college graduate office receives the Plan of Work, it will remove the hold and will notify the Records Office to advance the student to candidacy.

### **Reviews**

The MFA student must meet with a faculty review committee each semester of study. By the 8<sup>th</sup> week prior to each semester's review, the student must have had a studio visit with each member of their committee (i.e., the student meets with committee members individually to discuss their work). Reviews are usually held in the 12th or 13th week of each semester with the dates varying each term.

### **MFA Review Procedures**

- Reviews are normally one hour in length.
- The student may choose to have an open review with other MFA students attending.
- The schedule is prepared by the Graduate Officer and distributed and posted several weeks in advance.
- The student is expected to present all work done during the period under review, as well as answer questions.

- The review will begin with an opening statement prepared by the student in the form of a brief 10-minute presentation about the works under review, focusing on those issues that they wish the committee to address.
- The presentation will be followed by an open discussion of up to 30 minutes. The discussion will be moderated by the student's advisor, addressing the works under review, and focusing on the issues raised by the student during their opening statement.
- Following the discussion, the student will be requested to leave the room briefly so that the committee can discuss and vote on a formal action. This discussion is about 10 minutes.
- The student is then invited to rejoin the review and will be apprised of the action taken. This step also takes about 10 minutes.

### **MFA Review Appeals**

The decisions of a review committee and/or faculty member may be appealed in writing to the Graduate Committee in Art. This committee will discuss the appeal with the Department Chair and the student's MFA Review Committee and/or other faculty involved. A new grade may be offered. The student will receive a digital copy of the committee's review summary. The student can then follow up with committee members for further discussion or clarification. The student has the right of access to their graduate files, including 8000-level grades and the written summary of their reviews.

### **MFA Review Committee**

For the student's first semester, the MFA Review Committee will be comprised of the members of the student's Admission Committee and their first semester advisor will be selected from that committee.

The student should select a permanent committee by the 14th week of their first semester, with agreement from the newly selected faculty and formal approval from the student's current advisor and Graduate Officer.

MFA Review Committees are composed of 3 full-time faculty at a minimum. Students who intend to study within a given discipline will be assigned the area coordinator as one of their ongoing committee members. Committee membership may also be adjusted according to faculty schedules and assignment.

### **Changes to the MFA Committee**

Any changes in the MFA Review Committee must be approved by the student's advisor, who then notifies the Graduate Officer of any changes. Students may request to add or replace one full-time faculty member per term. A student must request a change in the composition of the committee by the third week of the semester.

### **Visiting Artist / Critic**

Each semester, a visiting artist/critic will be invited to be a part of the graduate review process. The visiting artist/critic attends all MFA reviews and serves without a vote. Recommendations for visiting artist/critic can be made to the committee by faculty and graduate students.

### **Graduation Requirements**

When registering for the final semester, the student must submit a degree application with the Graduate School. The deadline is posted on the Graduate School website and usually falls in the 3rd or 4th week of the semester. Once the student has filed for a degree, the student is then a Candidate for Graduation.

#### **Thesis Exhibition (Designate Plan A on the Plan of Work)**

As a degree requirement, the MFA student must present a final thesis exhibition prior to graduation. All MFA exhibitions are to be held in the WSU Community Art Gallery during the Winter term. The design, presentation, and publicity for the show is done in conjunction with other graduating candidates. The Graduate Officer and the Exhibitions Curator are available to assist with the exhibition. The MFA student must write an artist's statement, in consultation with the advisor. The statement will accompany the thesis show. The student will document the exhibition with digital images and submit these to the Graduate Officer.

#### **Written Thesis Document**

The student will produce a thesis, essay, book, or other writing to accompany their thesis exhibition in consultation with their advisor. The writing should be a minimum of 8 pages (4000 words) in length. The writing is due by the end of the student's final semester.

#### **Image Portfolio**

Prior to graduation, the candidate must provide their advisor with a portfolio of 20 images of works executed during graduate studies including images of the thesis exhibition. Images are due by the end of the student's final semester.

#### **Final Review**

The student must receive a satisfactory review (S, passing) for the review in their final semester. This review will be held at the student's thesis exhibition.

### **Studio Space and Facilities**

The Department ordinarily provides individual studio spaces to all MFA students. These are assigned on the basis of seniority, area concentration, and space availability.

Graduation provides a regular turnover of studios. Therefore, anyone desiring to upgrade their assigned studio may do so by submitting a written request for an upgrade. These requests should be addressed to the Graduate Officer.

If, in the opinion of the faculty, a student is not sufficiently utilizing their studio, a request to

vacate may be made. Such a request can be appealed to the Department's Graduate Committee in Art.

Students who choose to work in a classroom studio facility must consult with the area coordinator through their advisor regarding availability, scheduling studio use, and clearance of safety protocols within the distinct facility. The student's advisor can help direct them to the appropriate area coordinators that oversee the workspace.

## **Transfer of Credits**

No credits can be transferred to the MFA program at the time of admission from any MA program outside of WSU.

A maximum of 15 credits can be transferred from the WSU MA program to the MFA program. However, the number of transfer credits accepted, up to 15, is at the discretion of the applicant's admissions committee.

Once enrolled in the MFA program, a student may petition the Department's Graduate Committee in Art to accept up to three (3) credits from educational institutions outside of WSU. The student must submit a formal request, signed by their advisor, and a copy of the transcripts for the coursework credits requested to the Graduate Committee in Art.

## **Role and Responsibilities of the MFA Advisor**

The advisor's responsibilities are to explain the program and help the student plan their course of study. Aspects of the advisor's role include the following points. It is the student's responsibility to know the program and to maintain close contact with the advisor, in order to keep them informed as to the student's progress.

### **Aspects of the advisor's role include the following points:**

- Be appointed by the student's admissions committee.
- Approve a student's list of review committee members each semester (student must submit a list to the advisor, who sends the list on to the Graduate Officer).
- Moderate a student's reviews (including time-keeping for each section of the review).
- Approve a student's plan of work.
- Approve a student's course schedule each semester.
- The student must meet with their advisor every semester to review, plan, and approve the student's course of studies. If desired, the Graduate Officer is also available for advising.

## **Spring/Summer Semester**

No MFA coursework is formally offered during the Spring/Summer semester. However, some courses with graduate level credit are occasionally available in the Spring/Summer term. Any MFA student who might consider enrolling in such courses should first check with their advisor.

## **Extensions**

The Master of Fine Arts program must be completed in 3 academic years. Any MFA student wishing to extend their program beyond this limit must obtain permission from the Graduate Committee in Art.

If a student should drop out for a period longer than one semester, they must seek reinstatement, also from the Graduate Committee in Art. That committee may require a special admissions meeting with the student prior to the resumption of work.

## **Financial Aid**

For information concerning all available financial aid and scholarships, please consult the WSU Financial Aid office. Applications for graduate teaching assistantships (GTAs) are available through the Department office.

# **Applying to the Graduate Programs**

## **Deadlines**

All components of your application must be uploaded and received by the application deadlines for consideration of admission to the Graduate School and the Department Program you wish to study. The Department graduate application deadlines are October 1 (for Winter) and January 15 (for Fall).

These deadlines supersede any other published deadlines and differ from the Graduate School which has a rolling deadline for application. There is no Departmental Graduate Program beginning in the Spring/Summer semester.

Any applications completed after the October 1 or January 15 deadline will not be considered. If the applicant would like to apply for the next admission round, they must complete a new application.

## **What to Include in Your Application**

### **Submit the WSU Graduate Application to the Office of Graduate Admissions with:**

- Application form online: <http://wayne.edu/admissions/graduate/>
- Application fee
- Official transcripts

### **Department application must materials include:**

- Application forms
- Letter of intent
- Curriculum Vita (CV)
- Letters of recommendation

- Digital image portfolio
- Writing sample for Art History applicants

## **Transcripts**

Applicants are responsible for ordering their own transcripts. Allow ample time for the University to receive official transcripts from other institutions. Failure to receive these may result in delayed consideration for admission.

## **Notification**

For applications completed by the deadline, the applicant will receive an email notification letter stating the department's admission decision. The notification letter will be sent within 4 to 6 weeks from the application deadline.

## **Contact**

Office of Graduate Admissions  
The Welcome Center  
42 W. Warren Ave  
Wayne State University  
Detroit, MI 48202  
Email: [graduateartanddesign@wayne.edu](mailto:graduateartanddesign@wayne.edu)  
Phone: 313.577.3577  
Fax: 313.577.7536