

VISUAL ARTS

The Visual Arts major was introduced in 2024 as a revised version of the former Studio Art major. Students who matriculated prior to the Fall of 2024 may choose to graduate with a Studio Art degree. Any Studio Art major who matriculated prior to Fall of 2024 must work closely with the department to ensure that they are meeting all requirements appropriately.

Departmental Guidelines

In Visual Arts we foster independent and creative thought, emphasizing art-making as a means of thinking about not only oneself, but our relationship to the world of ideas from multiple perspectives. We offer two degree programs in Visual Arts, a bachelor of arts (BA) and a bachelor of fine arts (BFA). Both degree programs emphasize technical skills and critical thinking, interdisciplinary work, collaboration and community. We encourage the fluidity of learning and see art as a bridge to all areas of study and research. The BA and the BFA prepare students in different ways for a variety of post-graduate pursuits, be it graduate school or professional endeavors in art and related fields. Students who plan to major in Visual Arts are strongly advised to seek an advisor in Visual Arts at the time of their decision to major. Visual Arts majors are required to take a series of core courses and students need to work closely with advisors to complete these core courses by end of the first semester in their junior year. Students should expect to work two hours per week outside of class for each credit hour of a course. For students to whom off campus study is an option, we transfer up to 4 courses from an off-campus study experience towards the major, pending approval from the Chair.

Mission Statement

Denison Visual Arts students develop an artistic language by acquiring technical and critical capabilities that allow them to appreciate and contextualize their own art practice within a contemporary artistic, social, historical and cultural environment. The curricular structure of our program requires our students to develop a knowledge of multiple disciplines; photography, printmaking, sculpture, ceramics, painting and digital technologies. The program emphasizes the need for agility of thinking and making, while also allowing for a depth of exploration in areas that are of interest to the student or their practice. In emphasizing a commitment to thinking and making in plurality of material and thought, we seek to remove the silo mentality of separate spheres. Our students are taught to consider art-making as a means to not only think within and of themselves, but also to contextualize themselves and their work – to place themselves in a historical and contemporary trajectory and take responsibility for being a part of a complex world of ideas and perspectives.

Creative Process: Students are exposed to contemporary and historical visual practices through a combination of foundation and higher level courses that demonstrate the fluidity of learning Visual Arts in a liberal arts context. Demonstrating the breadth and depth of our curriculum, students are expected to initiate and bring to realization creative works in a variety of mediums.

Thinking as an Artist: In classes across the curriculum, students are encouraged to see art making as an education in risk-taking, problem solving, collaboration, with the ability to embrace ambiguity with a critical awareness of the world at large. A central learning goal in all our classes is to establish independent artistic thinkers. This goal is addressed in introductory classes, which include both research and final projects for

students to realize by working independently. This speaks to the goal of establishing independent creative work.

Critical Inquiry: Students become creative thinkers who are able to engage in understanding of critical trends and contemporary artistic discourse in their own work, and as participants in the community of the classroom or program.

Visual Literacy: Our students are expected to articulate and understand complex ideas through art and art-making as well as through critique settings, written artist statements and oral presentations. Students develop a body of work through a process of self-actualization that includes critiques, exhibitions, written and oral defense. Our program seeks to ground students' creative development in larger social, cultural or political discourse.

Active Citizen: We strive to create a learning community to not only nurture creative artistic growth but also foster collaborative spirit, awareness of our diverse complex world and ultimately, encourage empathy for others within our students.