Overview – B.S. and BFA Programs in Art

The Art Department’s three degree programs provide students with the critical and artistic skills needed to excel in contemporary, multi-disciplinary art and design practices. Degree programs are highly ranked at both the national and the international level, attracting talented students with excellent academic credentials and a passion for art and design.

UW-Madison art graduates are experts in creative problem solving, visual communication, teamwork and collaboration, and project management. These acquired skills and experiences can lead to fascinating and rewarding careers in animation, ceramics, glassblowing, metal fabrication, graphic and multi-media design, illustration, videography, photography, teaching and, of course, as a gallery artist.

Our graduates also work as iPhone and iPad app designers, medical imagists, technical assistants for major film companies, book designers, costume and float designers, jewelry fabricators and more. The Department of Art believes that hard-working students who learn to harness and nurture their creative energies today will be the people influencing progress tomorrow.

The art curriculum fosters positive collaboration and innovative art production while encouraging diverse points-of-view. Students develop unique, creative voices while enjoying the close-knit atmosphere of a department that prides itself on having a very low teacher-to-student ratio, with an average class size of 10–12 students.

Degree programs feature a rigorous foundation program, a set of six courses that students often complete by participating in the popular Contemporary Art & Artists First Year Interest Group (FIG), before branching out into one or more specialized areas such as ceramics, drawing, glass and neon, graphic design, papermaking, performance, photography, etc.

The art department has a remarkable history. UW–Madison was the first university to create a glass-blowing laboratory for art students. The printmaking programs are consistently ranked first in the country and the art metals program is currently ranked third. A large number of undergraduates go on to study in some of the most prestigious MFA programs in the country, and to exhibit their art in regional, national, and also international venues. The school's large faculty of world class artists is committed to the development of their undergraduate students.

The new Art Lofts Building is the home of state-of-the-art ceramics, glass, papermaking and bronze foundry facilities and a large art performance space. The Humanities Building houses a student gallery, and printmaking, painting, drawing, design, comics, photography, multimedia/digital, video/performance, metals, wood, and sculpture facilities, as well as art education classrooms.

The department offers three degree programs: the Bachelor of Science in Art, the Bachelor of Fine Arts, or the Bachelor of Science in Art Education. The Bachelor of Fine Arts (BFA) degree program in Art differs from the B.S.–Art degree by requiring a larger number of studio and aesthetic courses. This degree program is often selected by students wishing to develop a refined visual art portfolio in preparation for a career as a professional artist and/or for graduate study.
The Bachelor of Science in Art Education degree program certifies students to teach in both elementary and secondary schools.