

Master of Fine Arts

www.nhia.edu/mfa

VISUAL ARTS CURRICULUM

Our low-residency Visual Arts Program guides students in developing their work both technically and conceptually. A key goal of the program is to promote a vision and plan for a sustainable practice for each of our graduates, and so sustainable practice workshops and seminars are built into the curriculum. In all aspects of the program, faculty take an individualized approach that guides each student toward his or her personal vision, while addressing how that vision fits into the complex and diverse world of contemporary art. The work that is completed within the Visual Arts program is enriched with work done in the Concurrent Curriculum, in which Visual Arts students complete cross-disciplinary workshops with students in our Writing and Photography programs. Through this process, students deepen and fine-tune their creative work while injecting new energy and perspective into their creative process.

THE PROCESS

You will begin the program by presenting for critique the portfolio that you submitted with your application. During the first residency, you will give a five-minute slide presentation to introduce yourself to the collected faculty and students. This presentation allows the faculty and student body to better engage you, as a first residency student, in critique. Critique remains a primary focus during residencies two through four, and the dialogue focuses on work done during the previous semester, between residencies.

Over the course of the program, you will take three graduate seminars that focus on the historical and cultural development of the visual arts. These include readings and discussion of theories and artworks from the historical contexts of Modernism and Post-Modernism. In addition, you will take a Professional Practice seminar and Thesis seminar. These various seminars, lectures and discussions expand your working knowledge of the visual artistic tradition and help to develop your understanding of your work and its place in the contemporary visual world.

Throughout the program, you will be engaged in serious, thoughtful discussion about your professional aspirations and your understanding of where your work fits conceptually, thematically, and/or technically in the current and historical art world. You will write critical papers, supported by research, based on the ideas presented, as well as writing reflections and analysis about your own work. This process culminates with an extensive thesis paper that articulates your work and its position in relation to contemporary art. In the final residency, you will present completed work in a formal professional exhibition.

First Residency - Graduate Seminar I, Visual Arts and Photography

This first residency seminar seeks to place contemporary art in context. Students are given an overview of the primary theoretical and art historical events of the Modernist and Post-modern periods (1900-present). Students are asked to consider that art exists in a social and cultural context. Each student will produce short writing assignments that accompany assigned readings.

Second Residency - Graduate Seminar II, Visual Arts and Photography

The second residency seminar concentrates on students' assimilation and articulation of the primary theoretical concepts explored. Students develop their ability to articulate these concepts and to consider the points of connection and differentiation with their own work. The seminar will examine artist writings, art history, and theory. Each student will produce short writing assignments that accompany assigned readings.

Third Residency - Graduate Seminar III, Visual Arts and Photography

This seminar explores the issue of identity. Identity, since the 1980s has been a central cultural concern. Historically, the idea of a fixed/authentic identity has been called into question by a variety of cultural shifts and critical inquiry. The status, role, and activity of the artist has likewise shifted under ongoing reappraisals, beginning with the Impressionists. Students will participate in writing assignments and class discussions as well as readings, video and film viewing. Each student will produce short written papers that accompany assigned readings.

Fourth Residency - Thesis Research and Writing, Visual Arts and Photography

Pulling from the prior three seminars, as well as each student's individual research, this seminar asks students to critically engage with the big ideas or questions that inform their studio practice, and then learn how to present those ideas in written form. There are critical reading assignments, writing exercises and class discussions about both research tactics and the ideas born from that research. As the thesis essay is seen as a practical, useful document, this seminar helps students find ways to reflect and think deeply about where they have been and where they hope to go.

Fifth Residency - Professional Practices, Visual Arts and Photography

In this seminar students will explore tactics for creating and sustaining their art profession. Students will create a professional portfolio including a CV, artist statements, images of their work, a business card, and other promotional materials, as well as develop a website or blog. Discussion will focus on potential professional opportunities for each individual, now and in the future. Each student will set professional goals and develop skills to succeed in meeting these goals. This course concludes with students giving a 15-minute professional public artist presentation about their work in their final residency.