From the Chair

The Visual Arts MFA Program at Columbia University School of the Arts attracts emerging artists of unusual promise from around the world. They comprise a vibrant community studying with an exceptional faculty at a renowned research institution in the global center that is New York City. Upon graduating, our students join a diverse and welcoming circle of distinguished alumni.

Led by a passionate faculty of internationally recognized artists, Columbia University’s Visual Arts Program at the School of the Arts is committed to creative inquiry within an interdisciplinary learning environment. MFA candidates are encouraged to explore a wide range of media while developing advanced skills with which to articulate their singular visions. These media include drawing, installation, painting, performance, photography, printmaking, sculpture and video, each understood in its broadest contemporary terms. Our student/teacher ratio of five-to-one affords each MFA candidate valuable time with full-time faculty and allows the program to respond to individual interests and needs. Students participate in a multifaceted curriculum, meeting with critics and artists, looking at each other’s work, visiting established artists in their studios, working intensely with artist-mentors, and taking elective offerings in other departments across the University. Students gain teaching experience and contribute their own expertise to Columbia’s undergraduate arts program through teaching assistantships.

We foster a strong creative community founded on collaboration, shared experience and dialogue. Our students are committed artists asking challenging questions about the state of art-making in contemporary society. I encourage you to visit us and meet current students at our fall-semester information session and open studios, or by scheduling a tour for prospective students via our website at arts.columbia.edu/tours.

Matthew Buckingham, Chair
Full-time Faculty

Matthew Buckingham, Chair
Gregory Amenoff
Sanford Biggers
Jon Kessler
Nicola López
Miya Masaoka
Leeza Meksin
Aliza Nisenbaum

For a list of adjunct faculty see arts.columbia.edu/visual-arts-brochure.

Artist-Mentor Program

First- and second-year MFA candidates are assigned two artist-mentors with whom they work on- and off-campus for one week each semester of the program. Recent mentors have included:

Gregg Bordowitz
Mark Dion
Keltie Ferris
David Humphrey
Michael Joo
Ralph Lemon

Suzanne McClelland
Josiah McElheny
Judy Pfaff
Matthew Ritchie
A. L. Steiner
Rona Yefman

Recent Visiting Artists and Critics

Marina Abramovic
Hilton Als
Sadie Benning
Huma Bhabha
Kerstin Brätsch
Elinor Carucci
Paul Chan
Trisha Donnelly
Nicole Eisenman
Okwui Enwezor
Omer Fast
Sharon Hayes
Barbara Hammer

Nancy Holt
Pierre Huyghe
Chrissie Iles
Glenn Ligon
Simone Leigh
Tom Kalin
Sharon Lockhart
Yoko Ono
Gabriel Orozco
Clifford Owens
Trevor Paglen
Sheila Pepe
Lari Pittman

Genesis P-Orridge
Cai Quo-Qiang
Yvonne Rainer
Yasmin Raymond
Dr. Oliver Sacks
Dana Schutz
Kaja Silverman
Gayatri Chakravorty Spivak
Wolfgang Tillmans
Charline von Heyl

Georgia Sagri, Fetal, 2014
Performance and installation including fetal performance script, Snout is Wall and Wall is Snout, 2014, photo wallpaper on plaster wall, metal coat hooks, 450 x 900 cm; Copypaste, 2014, overall (print on fabric) 150 x 90 cm.
Curriculum

Course of Study: First Year

Graduate Studio, I and II
Visiting Artist Lecture Series, I and II
Studio Practice and Criticism, I and II
Critical Issues in Art, I and II

First-Year Exhibition

The first year of study culminates in a curated exhibition mounted in the Miriam and Ira D. Wallach Art Gallery.

Course of Study: Second Year

Graduate Studio, III and IV
Visiting Artist Lecture Series, III and IV
Studio Practice and Criticism, III and IV
Critical Issues in Art, III and IV
Thesis Project

Thesis Exhibition

The second year of study culminates in a curated exhibition mounted in the Miriam and Ira D. Wallach Art Gallery.

In collaboration with the Department of Music and the Computer Music Center, the School of the Arts also offers a multidisciplinary program in Sound Arts.

For more information, visit arts.columbia.edu/sound-arts.
Selected Alumni

Derrick Adams         Gandalf Gavan         Aki Sasamoto
Shadi Habib Allah    Josephine Halvorson    Dana Schutz
David Altmejd        Marc Handelman        Dasha Shishkin
Kamrooz Aram         Tim Hyde             Gedi Sibuy
Julietta Aranda      Jamie Iserstein       Gregory Parma
Uri Aran             Iman Issa            Smith
Korakrit             Anya Kielar          Yola Monakhov
                      Matt Keegan           Stockton
                      Fabienne Lasserre      Mika Tajima
                      Liz Magic Laser       Alison Elizabeth
                      Leigh Ledare          Taylor
                      Tom McGrath           Naama Tsabar
                      Elizabeth Neel        Banks Violette
                      Kambui Olujimi         Garth Weiser
                      Alyssa Phebus         Paula Wilson
                      Sondra Perry           Rona Yefman
                      Eileen Quinlan        Kevin Zucker
                      Lisi Raskin

Financial Aid

Visual Arts students with documented financial need receive financial support from the School of the Arts. Offers of support include a combination of tuition scholarships, teaching assistantships and paid service positions. In addition, the School of the Arts works closely with students to explore other options including federal work-study, loans, on- and off-campus employment, and outside scholarships and grants.

Application

The School welcomes applications for the fall semester of each year.

Visit arts.columbia.edu/apply for application information. Please note specific guidelines for international students, including visa information.
About the School

Columbia University School of the Arts awards the Master of Fine Arts degree in Film, Theatre, Visual Arts and Writing and the Master of Arts degree in Film Studies. It also offers an interdisciplinary program in Sound Arts. The School is a thriving, diverse community of talented, visionary and committed artists from around the world with a faculty comprised of acclaimed and internationally renowned artists, film, theatre and television directors, writers of poetry, fiction and nonfiction, playwrights, producers, critics and scholars. In 2015, the School marked the 50th anniversary of its founding. In 2017, the School opens the Lenfest Center for the Arts, a multi-arts venue designed as a hub for the presentation and creation of art across disciplines on the University’s new Manhattanville campus. The Lenfest will host exhibitions, performances, screenings, symposia, readings, and lectures that present new, global voices and perspectives, as well as an exciting, publicly accessible home for Columbia’s Miriam and Ira D. Wallach Art Gallery.

Visit arts.columbia.edu/visual-arts-brochure for application requirements and financial aid information.