

MFA | PHOTOGRAPHY,

VIDEO



AND

RELATED MEDIA



Graduate Programs

For 30 years, the MFA Photography, Video and Related Media Department

at the School of Visual Arts has been the premiere program for the study of Lens and Screen Arts. Our remarkable graduates have flourished as exhibiting artists, journalists, curators, scholars and teachers. All the resources of New York City are utilized as an invaluable network that provides creative and professional support for the students throughout their matriculation and long after graduation as they continue to pursue their goals. There is no other place like it for creative talents.

Mastery of the “vision machines” is the stuff of our professional practice. A new artist is an interlocutor who enables others to create and see. The department continually pushes the boundaries of the techniques, theory and practice of the new technologies. Emphasis is on the fact that the camera is a multidisciplinary tool that encom-

passes science, the arts and the humanities. Today’s students are engaged in the management, creation and understanding of not only how to produce, but how to interpret the image. They are required to read images through the protocols of different disciplines as well as create new means to make them.

Critical thinking is necessary for our students to expand their ideas and make notable contributions to both the social and cultural environments. Our students must rethink their own assumptions and engage an enlightened audience not only visually but also contextually. MFA Photography, Video and Related Media’s celebrated faculty actively works with students to develop contemporary and responsible creative initiatives, including experimental, narrative or documentary video, installation and conceptual art, tableau, and real-world-witness photography.

—Charles H. Traub, chair

About the Program

The MFA in Photography, Video and Related Media program is dedicated to the creative practice of the lens-based arts. We encourage diversity in our student body and welcome applicants from a wide range of educational and professional backgrounds.

The program is designed for full-time study over a two- or three-year period. Candidates for the Master of Fine Arts degree must complete at least 60 credits and all course requirements, maintain a 3.3 grade point average and produce a successful thesis project to be eligible for degree conferral. Students are approved to proceed to each successive level of study based on yearly faculty assessments.

Students personalize their program from a wide variety of electives. Certain courses in other SVA undergraduate or continuing education departments are also available as electives via the audit program. Fulbright, DAAD scholars, and other students on similar scholarships or grants are encouraged to apply.

TWO-YEAR PROGRAM

Applicants accepted to the two-year program have met specific artistic standards and academic prerequisites for graduate study. The focus of the two-year curriculum is a required Master Critique class in each semester. Other first-year requirements include Studio: Imaging I and II as well as at least three other academic courses chosen out of four subject categories (historical perspectives, criticism and theory, studio and contemporary issues). Students in the

two-year program will take Thesis Forms I in the fall of their thesis (final) year, and focus on completing the thesis in the spring during Thesis Project, Thesis Forms II and Thesis Project Presentation classes.

Entry to the second year is based on successful completion of all first-year requirements and a portfolio review.

THREE-YEAR PROGRAM

The unparalleled three-year program is designed to give exceptional students with baccalaureate degrees in fields other than photography or video an opportunity to pursue the lens and screen arts at the graduate level. The first-year course of study allows students to engage in coursework such as history, theory and criticism as well as studio practice, which may not have been included in their undergraduate education. With the successful completion of the first year of the three-year program, students automatically continue on to the two-year MFA Photography, Video and Related Media program. These students are given the time and exposure to develop as fully matured artists and practitioners, and many of our most renowned graduates have matriculated in this manner. The curriculum is tailored particularly to those who have not concentrated on the lens arts during their undergraduate studies, adults interested in pursuing a career change and international students who may need additional support adapting to a new educational environment.

“The MFA Photo program at SVA illuminated my understanding of photography, and it opened the door for me to accomplish works that I’d never thought I could have done before.”

— Yi Hsuan Lai (MFA 2021)

Much of what we know about the culture in which we live in the 21st century is, for good and bad, the result of what is captured through the lens and displayed on the screen. The record of events and the stories we tell are abstractions, but the issues that create those narratives are very real. This MFA program, as a very diverse, multicultural community, embraces the responsibility of image-makers to highlight the need for change in our human relations and to find ways through creative practice toward a common humanity. We stand for freedom of expression, civil liberties and justice.



Sharpening the Artist's Point of View: Studying the Historic Non-Western Lens-Based Object

One of the distinguishing elements of SVA's MFA Photography, Video and Related Media program is its emphasis on developing critical thinking skills. Underscoring this distinction is the belief that critical thinking is a tool necessary for artists to expand their ideas and make notable contributions to both social and cultural environments. Kunbi Oni, class lecturer in the program's Historical Perspectives: Non-Western Practice course, believes critical thinking is not only a necessity to artists, but it is also essential to equip artists with a wider, sharper personal lens. In order to do so, artists must possess the ability to engage with their audiences in an inclusionary and historical context. ►

OPPOSITE: Kunbi Oni.

“I think history is fundamental. If you’re practicing something that stems from history, it enables you to maintain your veracity with the subject because there’s just so much for you to pull from,” explains Kunbi Oni, who is also one of two collections specialists in the Department of Drawings and Prints at The Museum of Modern Art. “Students are stepping into this long line of history and artists, and it’s really important that they make art history a part of what they produce.”

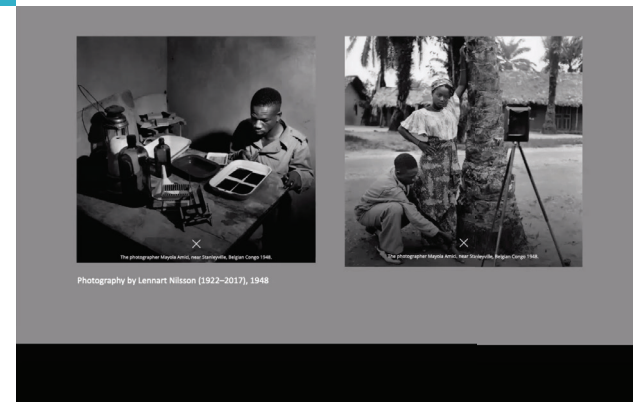
Central to the class is its focus on non-Western artists and their catalog of historic works. The first half of the semester begins with students analyzing the theoretical meaning of perspective, which leads to examining a historic piece of lens-based work (any innovative practice that involves photography or video) from Africa, the West Asia, Latin America, Southeast Asia, China and Japan, in the second half.

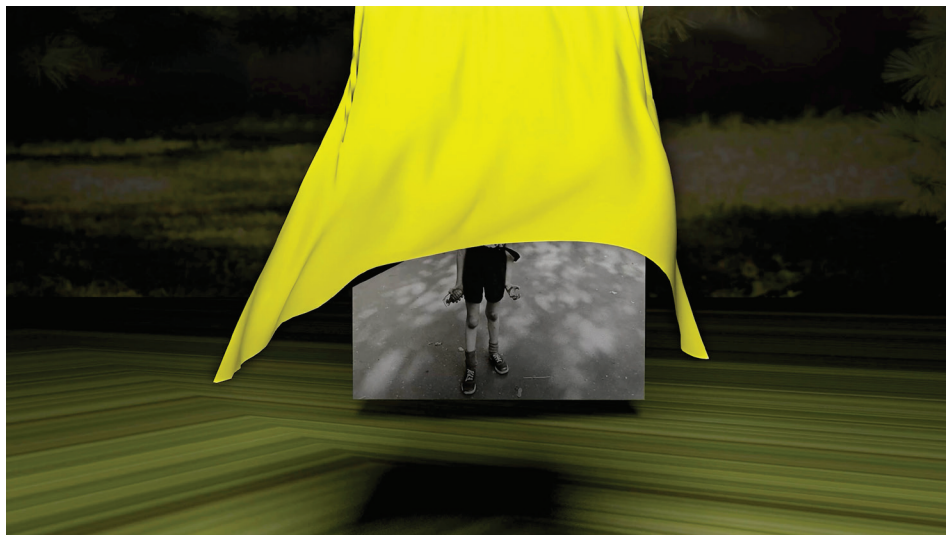
“It’s important to know that it’s not only a Western thing to be an artist,” Kunbi says. “It’s simply important that you know that art is something that has been practiced by everyone through time.”

As a Black student who studied art history in London, Kunbi knows all too well how easily non-Western perspectives can go unacknowledged in an artist’s course of learning: “When I was doing my MA in England, one of the subjects that I researched was African photography. Back then, the subject was basically disregarded. It always fascinated me that African photographs have been in existence as long as any other photographs, but they only really joined the art history conversation in 1990.”

Essentially, the goal of the MFA Photography, Video and Related Media program is to create artists with a strong point of view and to give them space to express it in traditional and nontraditional ways. “I think at the core is a group of instructors invested in people being artists. The program is not a finishing school—it’s really about creating longevity in an artist and tooling those people with what they will need to be able to work as an artist,” Kunbi remarks about the program’s strength. Formulating an informed perspective rooted in diversity and history is essential to that ethos.

OPPOSITE: Kunbi Oni lecturing.





TOP: Zhou Weihang (MFA 2020).
BOTTOM: Lu Song (MFA 2021).

Curriculum/ Sample Program

Degree candidates must successfully complete 60 credits for the two-year program and 72–90 credits for the three-year program.

Two-Year Program

FIRST YEAR/FALL	CREDITS
Criticism and Theory: Critical Reading	3
Critique	3
Studio: Related Media	3
Studio: Imaging I	3
Historical Perspectives: Past Tense, Present Tense	3
FIRST YEAR/SPRING	
Historical Perspectives: Issues in the Moving Image—A History of Hybrids	3
Critique	3
Studio: Imaging II	3
Contemporary Issues: Video Culture	3
Criticism and Theory: Aesthetics of the Machine	3
SECOND YEAR/FALL	
HP: Non-Western Practice	3
Master Critique	6
Studio: Film and Video Installation	3
Thesis Forms I	3
Studio: Photo Books—Past, Present, Future	0
SECOND YEAR/SPRING	
Contemporary Issues: Past and Future Looking	3
Thesis Forms II	3
Thesis Project	6
Thesis Project Presentation	3
Contemporary Issues: Photography and Film—A Practical Relationship	0

Three-Year Program*

FIRST YEAR/FALL

	CREDITS
Bases of Critique	3
The Laws of Light and How to Break Them	3
Modern Art I	3
The Social History of Photography	3
Studio: Imaging I	3
Contemporary Issues: Right Here, Right Now	0

FIRST YEAR/SPRING

The Aesthetic History of Photography	3
Critique	3
Modern Art II	3
Studio: Imaging II	3
Studio: Introduction to Video	3
Criticism and Theory: Global Issues and Strategies	0

*After successful completion of the first year, students in the three-year program continue into the first year of the two-year program.



Chang Wen-Han (MFA 2020).

Course Offerings

This is a sample of our recent course listings. For our full curriculum, visit: sva.edu/mfaphotovideo/curriculum.

THE AESTHETIC HISTORY OF PHOTOGRAPHY

This course examines the history of photography from the perspective of aesthetic theory and networks of crossovers with fine arts, particularly with respect to avant-garde painting of the 19th century and experimental art practices throughout the 20th century. We also consider the historiography of photography, with an eye toward revisionist texts that valorize women's practices and explore colonial usages as well as key exhibitions and collections that facilitate the canonization of photography as bona fide fine art. What criteria apply when photographs function or are designated as fine art? This and other questions that arise will point us to an exploration of present-day issues. A research paper and short in-class presentation will be required.

CRITICISM AND THEORY: AESTHETICS OF THE MACHINE

Though we tend only to think of "technology" as relating to tools and advancements, the term is defined as a systematic practice or knowledge of an art. This clarification is the basis of this course in which we will closely examine the range of possibilities that various technical tools afford creativity as well as their often-overlooked limitations and impediments in order to continuously shape and push how we perceive, experience and interpret the world around us through myriad outputs. This course will cover the major historical, theoretical and practical issues of emerging technologies and artistic production that ultimately yield new aesthetics. We will consider the effects of mechanical reproduction, speed and immediacy; conditions of cliché; the influence of database organization and computational thinking; the character of immaterial objects; the promotion of fantasy, subversion, alterity. Weekly readings will frame our discussions and critical analyses. Assignments will be open-ended, allowing for both creative and analytical works and writing that use and/or respond to the techniques and theories studied.

HISTORY OF VIDEO ART: 1985 TO PRESENT

As video art became more widely accepted and the tools became increasingly affordable and available, the medium quickly emerged as a primary site for the global dialogue that characterizes contemporary art practice. Among the topics to be addressed in this screening, lecture and discussion course will be the emergence of Asian, Latin American and European video art; the continued development of sculptural video installation work; and the emergence of the market for video art. The blurring of the lines among video and digital art forms, digital cinema and art made for the Internet will also be addressed. Artists whose works will be viewed and discussed include Nam June Paik, Wolf Vostell, Bruce Nauman, Yoko Ono, Peter Campus, Vito Acconci, Frank Gillette, Juan Downey, Joan Jonas, Chris Burden, Lynda Benglis, Ira Schneider,

MODERN ART I

The emergence of the avant-garde as it develops in Europe and morphs into international modernism is the focus of this course. We begin with the academic tradition, and we work from neoclassicism to Romanticism and realism with an eye to political revolution and tumultuous social change. From impressionism to postimpressionism to fauvism, we take measure of art's engagement with the issues of the day: new urbanism; questions about class, consumerism and mass culture; the rise of entertainment culture; and more. By the end of the 19th century, emphasis on symbolism of personal experience opens new doors concerning art's narrative and expressive capacity. Assigned museum visits and writings will complement in-class work.

HISTORICAL PERSPECTIVES: NON-WESTERN PRACTICE

The significance of non-Western perspectives in the history of photography is the focus of this course. Beginning with an overview of Western history, we will examine how the non-Western perspective is determined, and its contemporary status within the practice of photography. To this end, a range of discourses will be considered, including historical context, politics and identity as well as individual artists and their work.

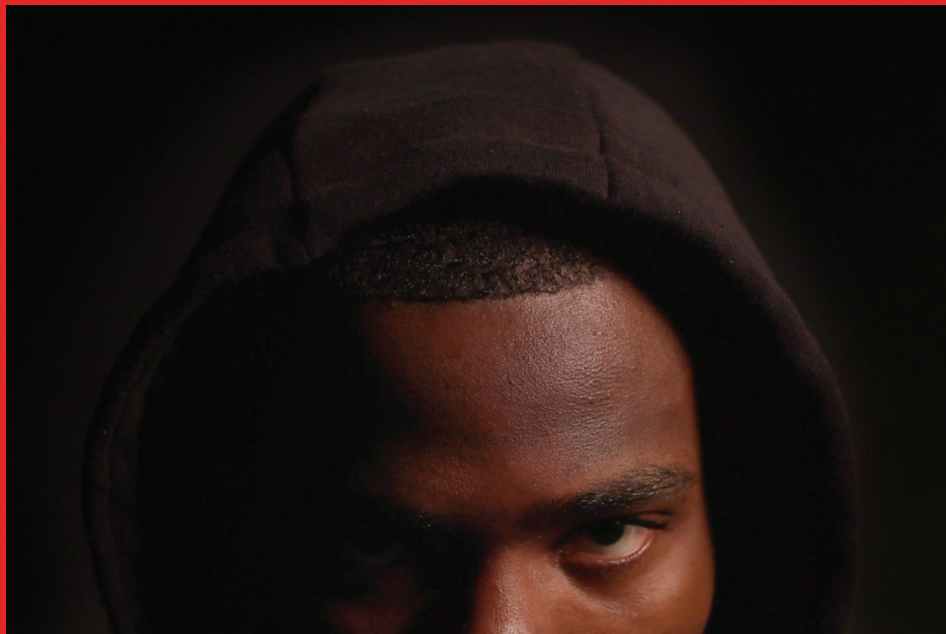
Andy Mann, Martha Rosler, Allan Sekula, Shigeko Kubota, Bill Viola, Gary Hill, Mary Lucier, Steina and Woody Vasulka, Ilene Segalove, William Wegman, Tony Oursler, Antoni Muntadas, Keith Sonnier, Bruce and Norman Yonemoto, Dara Birnbaum, Ant Farm, TVTV, Videofreex, Marcel Odenbach, Dan Graham, Doug Hall, Richard Serra, Terry Fox, Howard Fried, Paul Kos, Paul McCarthy, Mike Kelley and Ernie Kovacs.

MODERN ART II

This course surveys modern art of the 20th century, beginning with the influences that underwrite the developments of the historical avant-garde and culminate in cubism, Dada, expressionism, surrealism, suprematism and constructivism, de Stijl and the Bauhaus. Throughout these congruent movements we find scattered the seeds of the present in the form of performance art, installation and social sculpture as well as conceptual practices that include the mobilization of identity as artistic material. We also undertake an examination of art at midcentury, including abstract expressionism, pop, minimalism and conceptual art, which takes us into the 1960s. Assigned museum visits and writings will complement in-class work.



Lai Yi Hsuan (MFA 2020).



STUDIO: FILM AND VIDEO INSTALLATION

This project-based course explores the conceptualization and production of film and video installations. It will examine ways in which video installation exceeds dominant forms of movie consumption, such as screening environments, multichannel and projection mapping. These topics will be studied through a range of moving image works: artists' films, cinema, television, documentaries, animations and the Internet. The course will include student presentations, lectures with screenings, workshops and field trips. Each student will be guided through the different stages of production. Workshops for specialized equipment will be offered, including operating and editing RED cameras, green screen, sound recorders, media players, monitors, digital and film.

CRITIQUE

Critique seminars are a focal point of any given semester. Guided by prominent figures in the visual arts, and assisted by their peers, students will concentrate on producing a coherent body of work that best reflects their individual talents and challenges the current boundaries of their media. The program is designed to expose students to divergent points of view.

Purdy Terrance Jr. (MFA 2020).

THE SOCIAL HISTORY OF PHOTOGRAPHY

Photography manifests a distinct desire to capture and represent the entire world. Through a thematic survey of photography from its invention to the mid-20th century, this course examines its early practitioners and uses of photography as it spreads from private to public spheres. The rapidity with which photography spread will be discussed in relation to nascent consumer culture, myriad applications in the sciences and industry, colonial expansion and snapshots and candid imagery, among other topics. A research paper and short in-class presentation will be required.

STUDIO: MOVING IMAGE—POSTPRODUCTION STRATEGIES

A fundamental issue of time-based works is structure: the temporal shape and flow of a work are major determinants of its impact and meaning. What principles determine a work's shape in time, its temporal architecture? What binds image and sound components into a comprehensible unit? This course will examine in detail specific topics that emerge during the post-production phase of a moving image project. It will focus on the organization of materials and workflow strategies as well as sound, color, special effects and installation issues. Students will use their current projects as material in a series of exercises and assignments addressing macro- and micro-movie structures, including sound-picture relationships, multichannel and installation architectures, and image manipulations and compositing. Student presentations will be balanced by examples drawn from movies, documentaries, television, online sources

and artists' cinema works for the white cube, the black box and public space.

STUDIO: PHOTO BOOKS—PAST, PRESENT AND FUTURE

This course aims to expand each student's sense of the possibilities of the photo book. The history of 20th-century illustrated magazines and photo books will be introduced, as well as recent developments in zines and e-books. Students will research and present historical and current examples and produce new work in traditional and electronic formats.

THESIS PROJECT

The thesis project represents a unique and original vision that furthers an understanding of creative visual expression. It is the culmination of the student's matriculation, suitable for public viewing, and it is accompanied by written documentation that explains the historical precedents, evolution and generation of the project. Each student works in an integrated set of relationships with the Thesis Forms instructor, fourth-semester Critique class and an outside advisor chosen from the community at large.

STUDIO: RELATED MEDIA

This course will introduce students to a variety of tools and platforms at the forefront of lens-based imaging. It will combine readings and discussions with hands-on tutorials. Beginning with a discussion of technology and its relation to art practice, the class will move on to explore the following topics: coding for artists, 3D capture and printing, computational photography, VR and immersive video technologies. Guest lecturers will supplement the material covered in class.

Notable Alumni

Jacqueline Bates
editor

Joeonna Bellorado-Samuel
director, Jack
Shainman Gallery

Corinne van der Borch
visual artist

Kyung Ah (Jesse) Chun
visual artist

Kevin Cooley
artist/photographer

Renee Cox
artist/photographer

Gerald Cyrus
artist/photographer

Jeremy Dawson
filmmaker

Maureen Drennan
photographer

Jade Doskow
artist/photographer

Erin Gleeson
artist/photographer

Sharon Harper
artist/photographer

Murray Hill
performance artist

Thomas Holton
artist/photographer

Amy Jenkins
artist/photographer

Dinh Quang Lê
artist/photographer

Jeff Chien-Hsing Liao
artist/photographer

Dina Litovsky
photographer

Shiyuan Liu
installation artist

Vera Lutter
artist/photographer

Sara Macel
artist/photographer

Yamini Nayar
visual artist

Thenjiwe Niki Nkosi
artist activist

Brian Palmer
artist/photographer

Rachel Papo
artist/photographer

Jamie Permuth
artist/photographer

Ryan Pfluger
photographer

Matthew Pillsbury
artist/photographer

Aida Ruilova
artist/photographer

Maggie Shannon
artist/photographer

Lynn Shelton
filmmaker

Christian Siekmeier
gallerist

Pacifico Silano
artist/photographer

Quinn Tivey
artist activist

Shen Wei
photographer

Amani Willett
artist/photographer

Faculty

To learn more about the faculty members and to read their biographies visit:
sva.edu/mfaphotovideo/faculty.

Charles H. Traub
chair, MFA Photography,
Video and Related Media;
photographer; fine artist

Shimon Attie
visual artist

Jan Avgikos
art critic, historian, curator

Kiki Bauer
graphic designer; owner,
Kiki Bauer Design

Adam Bell
photographer,
student advisor

Elisabeth Biondi
independent curator, writer

Lucas Blalock
photographer

Robert Bowen
principal, Robert
Bowen Studio

Elinor Carucci
photographer

Natasha Chuk
curator critic, philosopher

Liz Deschenes
fine artist, photographer

Chester Dols
director, Visible Futures Lab,
School of Visual Arts

Simin Farkhondeh
filmmaker, fine artist, activist

Ben Hagari
visual artist

Marvin Heiferman
curator; writer; contributing
editor, *Art in America*

Sarra Idris
editor, filmmaker

Elizabeth Kilroy
interactive designer;
educator; owner,
ElizabethK Studio

Seth Lambert
fine artist, senior
systems administrator

Liz Magic Laser
fine artist

Richard Leslie
art historian, critic,
editor, curator

Andrew Moore
photographer

Kunbi Oni
curator

Laura Parnes
film and multimedia artist

Mary M. Patierno
film and video producer, editor

Gus Powell
editorial photographer,
fine artist

Lyle Rexer
writer; critic;
curator; columnist,
Photograph magazine

David A. Ross
chair, MFA Art Practic, School
of Visual Arts; writer; curator

Accra Shepp
artist/photographer

Steel Stillman
visual artist; writer;
contributing editor,
Art in America

Amy Taubin
filmmaker, curator, performer,
film and cultural critic

Penelope Umbrico
fine artist

Grahame Weinbren
film, video, installation artist;
editor, *Millennium Film Journal*

Randy West
fine artist; director of
operations, MFA Photography,
Video and Related Media

Alex F. Yuan
photographer



Lu Song (MFA 2021).

Application Process

APPLICATION REQUIREMENTS

For a full list of application requirements and detailed instructions, visit:

sva.edu/grad/howtoapply

- Online Application and \$80 Application Fee: sva.edu/apply

DEADLINES

For information on application deadlines, visit: sva.edu/grad/timeline

IMPORTANT LINKS

- FAQ: sva.edu/grad/faq
- International students: sva.edu/grad/intl
- Tuition and fees: sva.edu/tuition
- Visit SVA: sva.edu/grad/visit

Contact Us

We encourage applicants to visit our department. Contact us directly to schedule a department tour or sign up to attend an Information Session. For more information and to register, go to: sva.edu/grad/visit.

If you have any questions about the application process, contact Graduate Admissions at 212.592.2107 or email: gradadmissions@sva.edu.

If you would like to watch any video project excerpts go to: mfaphoto.sva.edu/videos.

Charles H. Traub, chair

Randy West, director of operations

Alice Lee, assistant to the chair

Adam Bell, academic advisor

Seth Lambert, senior systems support administrator

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 vimeo.com/mfaphotovideo

 youtube.com/SVAMFAPhotoVideo

“Before the end of my first semester, it was clear I was part of a family hailing from all over the world with a common desire to grow professionally, creatively and personally.”

— Jonathan Ellis (MFA 2019)

ACCREDITATION

The School of Visual Arts has been authorized by the New York State Board of Regents (www.highered.nysed.gov) to confer the degree of Bachelor of Fine Arts on graduates of programs in Advertising; Animation; Comics; Computer Art, Computer Animation and Visual Effects; Design; Film; Fine Arts; Illustration; Interior Design; Photography and Video; Visual and Critical Studies; and to confer the degree of Master of Arts on graduates of programs in Art Education; Curatorial Practice; Design Research, Writing and Criticism; and to confer the degree of Master of Arts in Teaching on graduates of the program in Art Education; and to confer the degree of Master of Fine Arts on graduates of programs in Art Practice; Computer Arts; Design; Design for Social Innovation; Fine Arts; Illustration as Visual Essay; Interaction Design; Photography, Video and Related Media; Products of Design; Social Documentary Film; Visual Narrative; and to confer the degree of Master of Professional Studies on graduates of programs in Art Therapy; Branding; Digital Photography; Directing; Fashion Photography.

The School of Visual Arts is accredited by the Middle States Commission on Higher Education (msche.org), 1007 North Orange Street, 4th Floor, MB #166, Wilmington, DE 19801, 267-284-5011. The Commission on Higher Education is an institutional accrediting agency recognized by the U.S. Secretary of Education and the Council on Higher Education Accreditation.

The Interior Design program leading to the Bachelor of Fine Arts in Interior Design is accredited by the Council for Interior Design Accreditation (accredit-id.org), 206 Grandville Avenue, Suite 305, Grand Rapids, MI, 49503-4014.

The School of Visual Arts' Department of Art Education is a member in good standing of the Association for Advancing Quality in Educator Preparation (AAQEP), a national accrediting organization recognized by the Council for Higher Education Accreditation (CHEA). The School of Visual Arts' Department of Art Education is currently pursuing accreditation of its educator preparation programs under the AAQEP standards with an anticipated quality assurance review in fall 2023. Pursuant to Section 52.21 of the

Regulations of the Commissioner of Education, the educator preparation programs offered by the School of Visual Arts are therefore considered to be continuously accredited for purposes of meeting the New York State requirement that all such programs maintain continuous accreditation. The School of Visual Arts' Master of Arts in Teaching in Art Education program was previously accredited by the Council for the Accreditation of Educator Preparation (CAEP).

The Master of Professional Studies in Art Therapy degree program is approved by the American Art Therapy Association, Inc., and as such meets the Education Standards of the art therapy profession.

CREDITS

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COVER: Chongdao Ma (MFA 2019).

School of Visual Arts

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