

MFA Visual Art Curriculum:

The Master of Fine Art (MFA) in Visual Art at the Institute of Art and Design at New England College (IADNEC) is a two-year Pass/Fail low-residency art program offering concentrations in Drawing/Painting/Printmaking, Sculpture/Installation Practices/Ceramics, and Photography/Time-Based Media. The program is designed to offer maximum flexibility in addressing your individual creative needs. Following admission to your concentration of choice, we will help you design your two-year plan of study based on optimizing the offerings and opportunities available throughout NEC and its affiliations. You are encouraged to seek out curricular advising as needed from a variety of available sources including the director, dean, graduate dean, department faculty, academic advising, the graduate admissions office, and peers.

Year 1			
Summer (Residency beginning)	Fall	Winter (Residency beginning)	Spring
MFV 851 Studio Comp: Visual Arts I (5 cr.) MFV 891 Elective I (2 cr.)	MFV 851 Studio Comp: Visual Arts I (3 cr.) MFV 801 Graduate Seminar (4 cr.)	MFV 852 Studio Comp: Visual Arts II (5 cr.) MFV 892 Elective II (2 cr.)	MFV 852 Studio Comp: Visual Arts II (3 cr.) MFV 802 Graduate Seminar II (4 cr.)
Total Credits: 7	Total Credits: 7	Total Credits: 7	Total Credits: 7
Year 2			
Summer (Residency beginning)	Fall	Winter (Residency beginning)	Spring
MFV 853 Studio Comp: Visual Arts III (6 cr.) MFV 893 Elective III (2 cr.)	MFV 853 Studio Comp: Visual Arts III (2 cr.) MFV 803 Graduate Seminar III (4 cr.) MFV 827 Professional Practices, Visual Art (2 cr.)	MFV 854 Studio Comp: Visual Arts IV (6 cr.) MFV 826 Thesis Research and Writing, Visual Art (2 cr.)	MFV 854 Studio Comp: Visual Arts IV (2 cr.) MFV 804 Graduate Seminar IV (4 cr.) MFV 894 Visual Arts Thesis Project (2 cr.)
Total Credits: 8	Total Credits: 8	Total Credits: 8	Total Credits: 8
Year 3			

Summer (Residency beginning)	Fall	Winter (Residency beginning)	Spring
MFV 894 Final Residency: Exhibition			
Total Credits: 0			

*Students who wish to use an alternative venue or presentation outside of these options must receive permission from the Dean of Graduate Studies. The Department encourages students in their MFA design programs to participate in all graduate exhibitions and events.

The low-residency Visual Arts Program at the Institute of Art and Design at New England College challenges and supports students in developing their art both technically and conceptually. Each area of study—Drawing/Painting/Printmaking, Photography/Time-Based Media, or Sculpture/Installation/Ceramics—is constructed with the aim for the student to either immerse themselves in a specific discipline or to explore a range of different creative avenues. Incorporating both studio practice and critical theory, the primary concern of the MFA Program is that the student develops a critical awareness about their work to better understand the current social, intellectual, and aesthetic conditions that inform their individual creative practice and effectively situate it within a contemporary context.

Each student will begin the program by presenting for critique the work that they submitted for their application. During the first residency, the student will give a five-minute slide presentation to introduce themselves to the collected faculty and students attending the residency. This presentation allows the faculty and student body to better engage the first residency student in critique. Critique is a key component of each residency, and during residencies two through four, the student presents each semester’s work for dialogue and critique. At the final and fifth residency, the student mounts their thesis exhibition in consultation with their faculty advisor and the gallery director.

Throughout the program, the student will be engaged in serious, thoughtful discussion about their professional aspirations, their understanding of where their production is situated conceptually and thematically within the contemporary creative discourse. In addition, they will engage in critiques, workshops, and discussions with faculty, students, and visiting artists and writers across the MFA programs, working from a range of different perspectives. During each semester, the student will write critical papers based on the themes and concepts presented during the residency and work on their independent research and creative production. The



educational experience culminates in an extensive thesis paper that will serve to articulate the student's creative work and its position within the broader contemporary context. In the final residency, the student works with the Gallery Director to present a completed body of work in a formal professional curated exhibition.

MFV 801 Graduate Seminar I

This first graduate 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 Postmodern periods (1950-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.

MFV 802 Graduate Seminar II

The second graduate seminar will concentrate on helping students to develop a voice for articulating the relationship of their own practice to key artists and theorists from the 20th century to the present. Students will learn to articulate an understanding that art exists in a sociocultural and political context. In addition to group discussion, students submit short writing assignments as a response to assigned readings.

MFV 803 Graduate Seminar III

The third seminar explores the role of the artist in contemporary society. Since the beginning of the last century, identity as an artist 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 have likewise shifted under ongoing reappraisals. Students participate in writing assignments and class discussions as well as readings, and video and film viewing. Each student will produce written papers that accompany assigned readings.

MFV 804 Graduate Seminar IV

The fourth seminar consists of comprehensive student and faculty led discussions comprising of topics and/or readings that are important to the student's individual studio work and that will assist in the writing of their thesis. In addition, the central ideas regarding the student's practice are solidified from analysis and reflective commentary of peers, mentors, visiting artists, and faculty. Students are required to thoroughly research the work of other artists, movements, or other areas of creative enterprise that have made a substantial impact on their own work. They are also urged to develop a competent response to the critical questions regarding both context and content in their own practice in advance of their thesis defense.



MFV 826 Thesis Research and Writing

Students learn to apply the critical understanding of the integration of theory and practice within their own studio practice. Content for this class is driven by student work and research; each student's thesis paper is guided by their interests and work. The thesis is seen as an extended artist statement, a useful document that articulates who they are as artists and an understanding of what context their work strives to operate within.

MFV 827 Professional Practices

In this seminar, students will explore tactics for creating and sustaining their art profession. Students will finalize a professional portfolio of CV, artist statement, résumé, images of their work, and business card as well as the development of 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.

MFV 894 Visual Art Thesis Project

In their final residency, the graduating student will install their thesis exhibition in an appropriate and professional manner and verbally defend their written thesis and thesis exhibition. The student will also have the opportunity to give a 15-minute public artist presentation on their creative practice.

Mission, Degree requirements, and Specifications:

The mission for the Master of Fine Arts curriculum is to offer the students the study, development, and creative understanding required for life as a practicing artist and professional. The program is designed to develop and enhance the student's capabilities for making, creative thinking, and concept development within the multiplicity of traditional and innovative creative disciplines. The primary objective is to engage with the distinct concepts of the student's individual practice, and through comprehensive communal dialogue and critique, endeavor to find the best possible ways in which the student solves the inherent problem of conversion of concept into practice.

The studio class structure combined with interdisciplinary freedom is a fundamental part of the departmental philosophy and provides opportunities for a variety of creative explorations and choices.

Students may choose one of three concentrations, which include:

1) Drawing/Painting/Printmaking, 2) Photography/Time-Based Art, 3) Sculptural Practices/Installation Practices/Ceramics. The students conduct research through continued art practice that explores potentials for image-making, and so establish and articulate a preliminary platform for an ongoing creative investigation. Seminars in contemporary art history and theory

from the perspective of contemporary studio-based practices, plus the studies of art criticism, research, and ideation are integral parts of the student's educational experience.

In an effort to provide an environment that stimulates creative thinking, experimentation, and artistic production, the MFA department offers frequent faculty critiques, visiting artist critiques, thesis committee reviews, and positively encourages student interaction and collaboration. Faculty continuously assist the students with their conceptual, professional, and technical skills and offer strategies to strengthen their creative research, production, and development.

The low-residency MFA program is presently limited to 24 participants. Students are chosen on the basis of portfolio review, interview, creative potential, and evidence of persistent work habits. The program is housed in Manchester, NH, and during the residencies will include spacious individual studios with 24-hour access in designated art buildings. In addition, the students have access to workshops, extensive art and design library, and media-specific work areas.

Transfer credits:

You must complete a minimum of 52 credit hours in residence at IAD at NEC. You can request up to 8 transfer credits at the time of application for admissions, which are subject to approval at that time and in accordance with the college policies. No transfer credits are permitted after a student is admitted.

Academic structure:

An ongoing studio-based practice with the support of a wide range of faculty advisors and visiting artists and critics is at the heart of the low-residency MFA program at IAD at NEC.

Five 10-day winter and summer residencies and following semesters of supported independent work defines the program over a two-year period. During the 10-day residency that both start and end the students' educational experience, students have direct access to and are advised by highly qualified faculty, critics, and visiting artists. During the semesters, students are in mentorship relationships with designated individual professional artists and with a faculty advisor. Students work with faculty and mentors to create individual plans of study that accompany organized and linear history, theory, criticism, seminars, lectures, and discussions. Study during the residency periods includes the student's active studio practice; participation in seminars and tutorials; and consultation with faculty and visiting artists/critics about the development of content, concept, and creation of their body of work. Study during non-residency time focuses on the student's independent creation, reading and writing, regular structured formal contact with the artist mentor, and formal feedback from the student's

faculty advisor. The low-residency MFA in Visual Arts is designed to advance the career of artists as well as professionals in other art-related fields.

During the residency:

- Students work in designated studios/labs.
- Students present a selected group of work created during the semester.
- Faculty present lectures and syllabi on history, professional practices, and theories related to arts that advance the students understanding of the development of concepts in art from the past to the present.
- Students are required to participate in small-group and individual critiques with faculty and visiting artists to review accomplishments, discuss concepts, and make plans for further development of work for following semesters and beyond graduate school.
- Each residency, visiting artists will lecture of a variety of topics including their own work, professional practices, and theory. Students are required to attend all lectures in each residency and will have opportunity for individual critiques with visiting artists.
- With faculty assistance, students choose an approved artist mentor for the coming semester.
- In discussion with their faculty advisor, students make a detailed and comprehensive plan for the coming semester. This plan is the basis for reading, writing, and creative, work goals and guides student/mentor discussion during the semester.

During the semester:

- Students meet with their chosen artist mentor for critique at least five times (two in person) to discuss the students' creative output and develop a plan for continued growth.
- Students will write a summary of the residency they have just attended.
- In discussion with their faculty advisor and artist mentor, students create and complete an individual reading list which supports their creative work.
- Students are given reading assignments by their advisor, which prepare them for and complement the history, theory, and criticism seminars, lectures, and discussions.

- Students are required to participate in art history, theory, and criticism seminars, lectures, and critiques that develop and expand their knowledge about art and culture, as well as their understanding of their own work and the place it fits in the contemporary art world.
- Students write reviews and criticism of the ideas presented as well as on their own ideas and work. These writings culminate in an extensive thesis paper which not only proves their comprehension of art theory but also places their work within the context of contemporary art practice.
- During the semester students write three papers that they submit to their faculty advisor. The topics of these papers are based on reading, theory, and creative work goals, stated during the residency. The papers are intended to connect critical theory with students work and lead to structuring the final thesis.
- Students are in written and/or verbal contact with their faculty advisor throughout the semester to discuss goals completed, written assignments, and review the mentor relationship.
- Beside the amount of work completed during residency students are expected to devote 25 hours a week to their work. When they return to the next residency, students present a select group of work (four to six recent pieces) completed during the semester.
- Students write an artist statement and biography that they bring with them to the next residency.
- Students write a semester summary highlighting their achievements as well as detailing challenges and experiences over the semester.
- After discussion with the Dean of Division of Art and Design and the MFA Director students may use existing facilities and resources at the IAD at NEC Manchester campus (such as the library's special collections, ceramic kilns, photo labs, digital labs and other resources).

Critiques:

As one of the primary means of critique, you will be required to participate in critiques at the residencies at the beginning of each semester. Critique panels include faculty, visiting artists, critics, and fellow graduate students and will vary semester to semester.

Critiques are generally organized with panels constructed of artists/art historians/critics and students representing an individual discipline. This provides you with an opportunity to better understand the intellectual, conceptual, and creative expectations of graduate study and to have your work reviewed from a disciplinary point of view. However, some critiques are interdisciplinary, with panel members and students from across IAD at NEC disciplines. Interdisciplinary assessments allow for a broader range of responses to your work from a highly observant and competent panel and are intended to assess the success of your work for a more general audience.

At the final residency, you will defend your MFA graduate thesis in front of a three-member panel comprised of faculty as well as professional artists and critics.

Graduate Exhibition or Equivalent:

At the conclusion of your MFA studies at IAD at NEC, you will work closely with the Gallery Director to present your thesis work in the thesis exhibition at Roger Williams Gallery in Manchester or receive permission from the Graduate Dean or the Director of the MFA Visual Art for an alternative thesis or event of equal professional quality.

Completion schedule:

The student has a maximum of three years to complete your MFA in Studio degree. This includes time off for leaves of absence. Students will have access to studios and workshops for six semesters only.

Program Learning Outcomes:

Graduate Students in Visual Art will:

- Produce original and influential work that is rigorous, conceptual, and tailored to the 21st-century creative discourse.
- Apply technical skills as appropriate to a student's medium, subject, and conceptual concerns. To this end, demonstrate committed, disciplined studio practice and full engagement in the intentional formal presentation of one's creative work, as relevant to the discipline.
- Demonstrate an ability to actively and fully engage in individual and group discussions, including thoughtful participation, intentional listening, and receptiveness to constructive dialog and critique.

- Demonstrate an understanding of creative work relative to historical and contemporary practice and demonstrate an awareness that the work exists within a broader social context.
- Develop an inventive, individualized, flexible, and entrepreneurial plan for maintaining a sustained practice.
- Demonstrate an awareness of the artist's role as one of local and global citizen. Social and global awareness includes an understanding that power structures operate through all forms of communication—in the creation of meaning and therefore in the making and interpretation of works.
- Demonstrate expanded formal and conceptual exploration, applying those connections to one's own practice by drawing inspiration and/or differentiation from a wide range of formal strategies and ways of constructing meaning.

In Conclusion:

Studying a low-residency MFA at the Institute of Art and Design at New England College will provide you with the time, space, critical faculty, and peer support to gain confidence and mastery in an individually chosen art form. It offers the constant challenge to produce original and influential work that is rigorous, conceptual, and tailored for the 21st century, and it helps you advance your creative practice and develop all the necessary skills for a long and successful career in the arts.

Describe the plan of assessment for courses:**Written Requirements**

A written document or thesis that demonstrates a student's ability to think critically and contextualize their work historically and/or theoretically and within the landscape of contemporary practices is a requirement of the overall assessment. However, while such written work is often deemed valuable and consistent with the educational objectives of the program, it is not a substitute for the body of creative and visual work. A written document in itself may not constitute the final body of work.



Graduate Exhibition

Each MFA candidate is required to present a final body of work showing professional competence in studio art. Since art making in the contemporary context demands the ability to produce creative work, institutional and public review of the final product is essential. Accordingly, students exhibit a sufficient number of works such that artistic development and ability to produce a cohesive, professional body of work can be assessed.

Comprehensive Examinations

A comprehensive oral examination of both the written thesis and of the thesis exhibition is required for the discipline.

Prerequisite for the Low-Residency Master of Fine Art Program:

BFA or BA in Visual Art or in a closely related field with proof of consistent high-quality studio-based practice