Masters in Art History & Visual Studies

The Master of Arts in Art History & Visual Studies prepares students with the course work, language skills, and research experience needed for further graduate study or work in a museum or educational setting. The curriculum is structured to provide both breadth and depth of inquiry through a variety of approaches to art history and, more broadly, visual studies. We recommend that courses be broadly selected to take full advantage of the multiple approaches, expertise, and insights of the faculty.

The relatively small size of the MA program, the richness of available resources, and the dedication of its faculty enable students to tailor their program of study to particular needs while simultaneously attaining a strong general grounding in the discipline. Campus resources include the Lucille C. Little Fine Arts Library and Learning Center, the Special Collections of the M. I. King Library, the W.T. Young Library, the University Art Museum, the School of Art & Visual Studies’ Visual Resources Office, and the John Tuska Center for Contemporary Art.

Admission

Experience suggests that applicants from a wide variety of educational backgrounds may earn a MA degree in Art History & Visual Studies. It is recommended that those without an undergraduate art history major consult with the art history & visual studies graduate advisor before applying. Depending on one’s prior preparation, some students may be required to take selected preparatory courses that will not count toward the graduate degree requirements.

Application Procedure & Requirements

The Graduate School, which is the administrative unit for all graduate students, and the Art History & Visual Studies graduate program, which is responsible for the academic curriculum, require different application materials. All application materials are to be submitted through the on-line application, which is located on the Graduate School homepage:

http://www.gradschool.uky.edu
Application materials for admission to the Graduate School include:

- Completed application form.

- Copies of transcripts from all higher education institutions attended, which should be uploaded to the appropriate location on the on-line application. Domestic students are to self-report GPA’s for each institution attended. (A tip: convert transcripts on colored paper to white with black ink so as not to exceed the megabit limitation on the on-line form).

- Application fee.

Application materials for the Art History & Visual Studies graduate program are also to be submitted on-line on the graduate admissions application and include:

- Brief résumé.

- Personal statement that explains your experience, plans, and interest in art history graduate study.

- GRE scores (Self-reported or official GRE scores must be reported at the time of application. If self-reported scores have been entered on the application, the official GRE scores must be reported by the Educational Testing Service (www.ets.org) to the University of Kentucky when admitted to the program. The Institution Code for the GRE for UK Graduate School is R1837).

- Sample of research, such as an undergraduate research paper. (A tip: if the research paper is greater than 2.5 megabits, please send a hardcopy directly to the Graduate Advisor in Art History & Visual Studies, School of Art & Visual Studies, 207 Fine Arts Bldg., University of Kentucky, Lexington, KY 40506-0022).

- Contact information in the form of e-mail addresses for two recommenders who will be notified to submit their recommendations electronically to the on-line system.

In addition:

- Those requesting an assistantship must apply for the January 1 deadline and additionally include a brief letter of interest for the assistantship on the online admissions application form.

**Application Deadlines**

Fall semester admission:

- January 1 – for applicants requesting an assistantship.

Art History & Visual Studies traditionally has had two teaching assistantships and occasional research assistantships to award. Please include a letter of interest for an assistantship online with other application materials.
April 1 – deadline for all other applicants for fall semester admission who are not requesting an assistantship.

Spring semester admission: November 1.

Degree Requirements

Plan A - Thesis Option: Candidates who plan to continue study at the doctoral level should select Plan A. This option emphasizes art historical research, problem solving, and communication skills. Specific requirements include:
1) minimum of 30 credit hours of graduate course work.*
2) foreign language reading competency in German and one other language (French often recommended). **
3) satisfactory completion and oral defense of a thesis.

* Six of the minimum 30 required credit hours may be taken in related areas such as anthropology, film studies, historic preservation, history, literature, philosophy, studio art, or women’s studies.

** The foreign language competency requirement may be satisfied by any of the means established by the Graduate School.

Plan B - Non-thesis Option: Plan B emphasizes course work to deepen the candidate’s foundation in art historical knowledge, theory, and methods. Candidates who plan careers in visual arts fields that do not require a Ph.D. – professional placements in galleries, museums, art organizations, arts administration, etc. -- may want to select this option. Specific requirements include:
1) minimum of 30 credit hours of graduate course work.*
2) foreign language reading competency in German and one other language.**
3) satisfactory completion of final comprehensive exam.

* Nine of the minimum 30 required credit hours may be taken in related areas such as anthropology, film studies, historic preservation, history, literature, philosophy, studio art, or women’s studies.

** The foreign language competency requirement may be satisfied by any of the means established by the Graduate School.

Program Faculty

Anna Brzyski is Associate Professor of Art History and Visual Studies and Graduate Advisor for Art History Program. She received her Ph.D. in 1999 from the University of Chicago. Her dissertation "Modern Art and Nationalism in Fin de Siècle Poland" examined the emergence of Polish modernism in the second half of the 19th century. It focused on the role of nationalism in the process of discursive inscription and institutional validation of the first generation of Polish modernist artists.

Prof. Brzyski joined the faculty of the Art Department at the University of Kentucky in 2003. She teaches courses in the 18th and 19th century European art and visual culture, as well as theory, art theory, and art
criticism. Before arriving at University of Kentucky, she taught art history at Southern Illinois University in Carbondale.

Her research interests focus problematic of cultural and economic value, impact of nationalism on art and art history, and dynamics of artists’ groups and networks. She has published broadly on Central/Eastern European, in particular Polish, art and art discourse. Her work has been supported by grants from the Whiting, Luce, Terra and IREX foundations and she is a recipient of the Fulbright and Fulbright-Hays Fellowships. Her translation work has been supported by the Erste Foundation (Austria). She is the editor of *Partisan Canons* (Duke University Press 2007), and three special issues of the journal *Centropa: Modernism and Nationalism, Postmodernism and Postnationalism?* (with Peter Chametzky, September 2001), *Parallel Narratives: Construction of National Art Histories in Central Europe* (with Adrianne Kochman, September 2008), and *Central European Art Groups, 1880-1914* (January 2011). Her articles have appeared in *Art Criticism, Centropa, 19th Century Art Worldwide, RES, n-Media*, and a number of anthologies. She is currently serving as the project editor for Central and Eastern Europe at *Grove Art On-Line* (Oxford University Press), completing work on her book *National Modernism: Polish Artists on the National and International Stage, 1870-1914*, and serving as the Chair of the International Academic Advisory Committee of the Tsinghua World Art History Institute.

**Alice Christ** received her Ph.D. from the University of Chicago in a field called "Early Medieval Art: 44 B.C.-A.D. 1000." She teaches courses in the arts of those periods in Europe, with interests extending backward to prehistory and the ancient near east. Her approach to studying art before the Art Museum is anthropological and social, emphasizing the role of art in constructing value and the power of art history as a tool for the diagnosis of social values sometimes very different from our own. Her special field of research is Late Roman and Early Christian art. She has also published on Russian Icon-painting, both of the Muscovite period and in the nineteenth century.

**Robert Jensen** is an Associate Professor of Art History and Director for the School of Art & Visual Studies. His field of research emphasizes the history of modernism and the economics of art. Since joining the University of Kentucky faculty in 1994, Dr. Jensen has taught numerous undergraduate and graduate courses on a wide range of subjects, ranging from contemporary art to colonial American art. Dr. Jensen’s book *Marketing Modernism in Fin-de-siècle Europe* (Princeton: Princeton University Press, 1994) extends the analysis found in his dissertation, “The Marketing of an Avant-Garde. Dealers, Ideology and the Trade in Modernism Between France and Germany”. Dr. Jensen has also long been interested in theoretical issues related to photography and mechanical reproduction, and has published essays on such diverse topics as “The Photographic Grotesque” and “Against Photography: Reading Barthes on the Photograph.” More recently, Dr. Jensen has been working in close collaboration with the University of Chicago economist, David Galenson, on the econometric study of artistic importance, especially in regard to the varied life cycles of artists’ careers. Dr. Jensen’s most recent essay on this subject is “Anticipating Artistic Behavior: New Research Tools for Art Historians,” *Historical Methods*, vol. 37, no. 3 (Summer 2004). This work has led Dr. Jensen
to explore the technical examination of paintings as a means of reconstructing the creative behavior of artists. He has done an extensive reconstruction of the first Paul Cézanne show at the Galerie Vollard in Paris in 1895, based on an analysis of rolled canvases. The essay was published as "Cezanne and Vollard: An Anatomy of a Relationship," in *Cezanne to Picasso: Ambroise Vollard, Patron of the Avant-Garde* (New York: Metropolitan Museum of Art, 2006): 28-47.

**Andrew Maske** specializes in the arts of Asia, focusing especially on ceramic art in Japan from the sixteenth century to the present. He is also interested in artistic connections between East Asian nations, both historical and contemporary. An added interest is the cultural context of artworks in Asia, including connoisseurship, collecting, display, performance, and use.

Dr. Maske received his doctorate in Japanese Art History from Oxford University. He teaches courses concentrating on the art of East Asia (China, Korea, and Japan). As a curator of Japanese art between 1999 and 2005, he developed the exhibition Geisha: Beyond the Painted Smile, and served as editor and primary author of the critically-acclaimed volume by the same name. This exhibition explored Japanese geisha both as the subject of artworks and as performing artists themselves from the eighteenth century to the present day. Dr. Maske also played a major role in the Metropolitan Museum of Art’s 2003 catalogue, Turning Point: Oribe and the Arts of Sixteenth Century Japan, which examined the revolution in Japanese aesthetics that began in the late sixteenth century. He has published articles and reviews in Archaeometry, Journal of Japanese Studies, Orientations, and Transactions of the Asiatic Society of Japan.

During the seven years he lived in Japan, Dr. Maske studied numerous aspects of Japanese art and culture, practicing chanoyu (tea ceremony), Japanese dance, and the instrument shamisen. He is currently completing a monograph on Japanese tea ceramics, Takatori Ware: Potters and Patrons in Edo Japan (2011). In 2006-2007 he held a Fulbright research fellowship in China to study the development of contemporary ceramic art there.

**Jane Peters** (Associate Professor; Ph.D., University of Wisconsin-Madison, 1974) teaches courses primarily on the western tradition in the early modern period (c. 1400-1700). Her courses increasingly emphasize the experience of the early modern viewer and consider art more broadly as an aspect of material culture. Her seminars often focus on the art production of early modern artists such Pieter Bruegel, Albrecht Dürer, or Vermeer in the context of the cultures in which they worked. In addition to topics on art production in the early modern period, she offers courses on Christian iconography and prints in the Western tradition. “Reframing Renaissance art” is a course she teaches on a regular basis. As graduate advisor in Art History & Visual Studies, she serves as advisor for all graduates who select the non-thesis option. For those opting to write a thesis, she has recently directed such thesis projects as “From the Assumption to the Last Judgment: the Role of the Virgin Mary in the Sistine Chapel” (2011), and “Softening the Brows of Dread Renown: Rossetti’s Revision of Dantean Portraiture” (2012). She has taught with study abroad programs in Florence, Verona, Vienna, Innsbruck, and Paris.

Her research focuses on 16th C. German prints and drawings. She has edited a number of volumes on later 16th C. German prints for The Illustrated Bartsch project, a reference tool dedicated to making a comprehensive survey of early modern prints available in hardcopy and, in some instances, in digital form.
to a broader public. She has also published on German drawings and contributed entries to an exhibition catalogue of master prints in the Cincinnati Art Museum.

Monica Blackmun Visonà came to the University of Kentucky from Metropolitan State College of Denver, where she headed the art history program. She teaches a wide variety of courses on African Art, and has supervised a master’s thesis on the arts of the Sotho people of southern Africa. In addition to a survey of the arts of the African continent, she teaches “Egyptology” and “Five Thousand Years of Egyptian Art.” One new course, “Twelve Artists, Twelve Cultures,” compares artistic practices around the world. Her seminars introduce graduate and undergraduate students to “Arts of the Akan,” “Installation Art,” “Art of Contemporary Africa” and “Modernism and Modernity in African Art.” She shares responsibilities for a capstone course on “Art History Methods” with Dr. Bryzski, and her seminars on African architecture are cross-listed with the College of Design.

Dr. Visonà has published numerous articles based upon her fieldwork in the Lagoons region of Côte d’Ivoire, including “Redefining Twentieth Century African Art: The View from the Lagoons of Côte d’Ivoire,” appearing in a special issue of the journal African Arts in 2006. Her reflections upon this multidisciplinary research were published by Ashgate in November, 2010 as Constructing African Art Histories for the Lagoon Region of Côte d’Ivoire. The book examines the methodologies and theoretical paradigms of art historical practice in Africa. In addition to probing the intersections between art history, archaeology, anthropology, and art criticism in the study of Lagoon arts, it compares an Africanist’s use of provenance, archival documentation, and connoisseurship to those of scholars in other fields of art history.

Dr. Visonà is particularly interested in modernism and modernity in the arts of the African continent. Two visits to Ghana in 2009 and 2007 allowed her to research recent art in a broad variety of urban and rural settings. Her interviews with two prominent artists during a 2008 trip to Cairo have resulted in an article published in Africa e Mediterraneo. She is currently co-editing a Companion to the Modern Art of Africa for Blackwell, whose invited essays will analyze historical developments in art across the continent.

Monica Blackmun Visonà is best known as the lead author and project coordinator of a prize-winning survey, A History of Art in Africa. In 2007 she directed the production of a new edition of this influential text, and she continues to be passionately involved with pedagogical issues in the field.

Kate Wheeler’s research focuses on Roman Imperial art history. Her Master’s thesis, Augustan Ideologies of Greek and Roman: Vitruvius on Theater Buildings, addresses Vitruvian labels of “Greek” and “Roman” in relation to theater types and their place in the larger Augustan Age cultural renewal. Kate has taught art history at the University of Kentucky since 1999 as a teaching assistant, part-time instructor, and currently as a full-time lecturer. She teaches both the Ancient to Medieval and the Renaissance to Modern art history survey courses.