

Idaho State University  
Department of Art & Pre-Architecture

MFA at ISU  
Program Guide



## **THE PROGRAM**

The Graduate Faculty of the Department of Art and Pre-Architecture at Idaho State University awards the Master of Fine Arts as the terminal degree in art. Our 60-hour program leading to the M.F.A. is designed to be both comprehensive and flexible. Its central objectives are:

- \*to facilitate the search for a personally relevant and informed expressive methodology;
- \*and to accommodate the pursuit of a professional level of competence in the following areas of concentration:

**Ceramics**  
**Drawing**  
**Fibers**  
**Jewelry/Metal Smithing**  
**Painting**  
**Printmaking**  
**Sculpture**

Students may elect to work toward a major in a single area or two areas in combination.

Broadly, the intent of the M.F.A. program is to enable our students to become capable and informed studio artists. To this end, curriculum requirements allow for intensive and self-directed efforts – enhanced by substantial critical dialogue – in the student’s chosen discipline/s. Beyond their principal area/s of concentration, students should expect to pursue creative investigations toward a minor in a secondary studio area. Additionally, the program involves extensive scholarly investigations of a broad range of historical and contemporary art ideology and provides for exposure to related course work outside of the Art Department.

Equally critical to the successful completion of the M.F.A. program are:

- \*a comprehensive solo exhibition of studio work;
- \*a written thesis statement in support of the work in the exhibition; and
- \*an oral examination.

These interrelated components occur at the conclusion of the M.F.A. program.

# **THE FACULTY**

The Graduate Faculty of the Department of Art is fully committed to the objectives of our M.F.A. program. Highly qualified as artists and as teachers – and diverse in our thinking and our work – we are dedicated to shaping an environment conducive to a rewarding graduate-level art experience. Significantly, we maintain a vigilant sensitivity to the evolving aspirations of our students—especially as regards to their growth toward a personal vision and an independent creative voice.

## **The Faculty:**

<b>Rudy Kovacs, M.F.A</b>	Fibers
<b>Scott Evans, M.F.A.</b>	Printmaking, Drawing
<b>Linda Leeuwrik, PhD.</b>	Art History
<b>Tony Martin, M.F.A.</b>	Ceramics
<b>Doug Warnock, M.F.A.</b>	Sculpture
<b>Angie Zielinski, M.F.A.</b>	Drawing, Painting
<b>TBA, M.F.A.</b>	Jewelry/Metalsmith

All faculty members are readily accessible and welcome dialogue with students working in any media. This expanded interaction is an important and essential component of the M.F.A. experience at I.S.U.

To contact the Department of Art and Pre-Architecture:

**(208) 282-2361**

or

**[www.isu.edu/art](http://www.isu.edu/art)**

## **APPLICATION AND ADMISSION**

Applicants for admission to the M.F.A. program must apply to – and meet all criteria for admission to – the Graduate School. Admission standards and other critical policies of the Graduate School are discussed at length in the “Graduate Catalog.”

**Note: The Graduate School requires submission of Graduate Record Exam scores for applicants applying for a “fee wavier,” since these awards are based on the GRE Scores.**

**The Graduate School no longer requires submission of Graduate Record Exam scores for admission to the Master of Fine Arts program in the Department of Art.**

Application must also be made to the Department of Art. Our departmental evaluation requires the following materials, which should be sent directly to the Department.

- \*a letter of intent stating the applicant’s goals and objectives with regard to graduate study;

- \*a portfolio of 20 digital images or slides of studio work which the applicant feels would most effectively represent his/her involvement, ability, and potential. Digital file portfolios must be formatted for Macintosh computers. Twenty images should be submitted on a single CD. Please submit a duplicate CD as well on the sleeves. Digital images, in RGB color, may be no larger than 5 Megabytes each. We recommend a longest pixel dimension of 1600 at a resolution of

approximately 140 ppi. Save files as TIFF or highest quality JPEG format. We will not accept directions to a web site, or files submitted in presentation software, such as PowerPoint, or PDF files.

Name and number all files with your

*LastnameFirstname00.jpg* or

*LastnameFirstname00.tif*

(e.g., JohnsonRobert12.jpg). Number your images in the order you wish to have them viewed. Include with your submission a printed, hardcopy image inventory page headed with your name and area/s of study to which you are applying. The inventory page should indicate, by corresponding number, the title, date, dimensions and medium of each work.

\*three letters of recommendation from undergraduate instructors, or other appropriate individuals, indicating the readiness of the applicant to pursue independent and sustained graduate-level work.

**The Department has established February 1st as the application deadline for fall semester admission.**

**Graduate Assistantship applications are also due by February 1st.**

October 15 is the application deadline for spring semester. (Assistantship applications are not considered for spring semester.)

The entire Graduate Faculty of the Department will review all materials submitted by each applicant. We arrive at admission decisions by measuring, as accurately as possible:

- \*the applicant's demonstrated preparedness and potential to be successful in our program;
- \*our sense, as a faculty, that we could contribute, in a meaningful and constructive way, to the student's development as an artist;
- \*available space in the program, as well as faculty and departmental resources.

Other admission requirements include twelve credits of undergraduate Art History course work. Art History deficiencies of up to 6 hours may be compensated for by enrolling in the necessary courses concurrent with graduate work.

# CHRONOLOGY

## **The First Year:**

The Director of Graduate Studies is available, initially, to act as a general program advisor for new students. At some point during the first semester in residence, the student will select – or be assigned – a major professor/ advisor. This faculty member (usually a principal professor in the student’s major area) will serve as a guide through the curriculum and will remain closely aware of the student’s progress and of his/her evolving responsibilities to the program. The Director of Graduate Studies in the Department remains available for similar counsel and advice. Students may elect to change advisors one time during their residency in the program. It should be noted that, while advice and assistance are readily available, it is the sole responsibility of the students to remain aware of their obligations to the program.

All degree-seeking students are, on admission to the M.F.A. program, assigned “Classified” status. This classification is retained through the first year of study. Near the conclusion of that year, a faculty review will be scheduled to evaluate the student’s performance in the program and commitment to his/her work. Following the review, the faculty will vote and render one of the following decisions:

- \*the student will be granted continuation of “Classified” status and will continue in the program;

\*the student's status will be changed to "Conditional," allowing one semester for improvement followed by a second review; or

\*the student will be denied both "Classified" and "Conditional" status and be dismissed from the program. This student may apply for readmission after a one-year waiting period and would, if accepted at that time, restart the program.

It should be noted that, throughout their tenure in the program, students must maintain a grade average of "B" or better. More than 4 hours of "C", or any "D" or "F" grades will precipitate dismissal from the program. Students may repeat one course for an improved grade during their tenure in the program. The student's right to appeal dismissal is outlined in the "Graduate Catalog."

Students who wish to take graduate-level courses in the Department, but who do not care to pursue a degree, are considered "Unclassified." Please refer to the "Graduate Catalog" regarding expanded definitions of "Conditional" and "Classified."

## Candidacy:

During the semester immediately prior to the semester in which the student expects to graduate, he/she will request a faculty review for admission to "Candidacy". This request must be made early in the semester, so that the review can occur near its conclusion. In advance of the review, the student should prepare the following materials:

- \*a **Thesis Proposal** discussing the student's direction and goals with respect to continuing studio work and concept development toward the final Thesis Project;
- \*a **Final Plan of Study**, developed with the student's advisor;
- \*the names of those faculty members whom the student wishes to recommend for inclusion on his/her **Orals Committee**; and
- \*a list of any graduate course work which the student wishes to transfer onto his/her record.

The **Candidacy Review** will be conducted by the Art Graduate Faculty and will involve:

- \*a presentation and discussion of the student's studio work;
- \*discussion of the Thesis Proposal; and
- \*any other materials or information requested by the faculty or deemed relevant by the student.

Beyond studio work, the **Thesis Proposal** is, perhaps, the most significant component of the review process. It is intended, first, to aid students in regard to formalizing their direction and focus as the final semester of work begins. Second, it provides the faculty with a sense for the breadth and depth of the student's involvement and with a measure of the student's conceptual capacity to be a viable M.F.A. candidate. These become the primary evaluation criteria at this juncture in the program. Should a student be denied Candidacy, the faculty will provide a list of deficiencies based on conclusions drawn from the review. That student may apply for Candidacy again after a one-year waiting period.

The **Orals Committee** is the principal entity which advises and, ultimately, evaluates the student in regard to preparation for – and execution of – the final Thesis Project. Nomination of faculty members to participate on this committee is, therefore, an important part of the Candidacy Review process. Normally, the student's advisor/major professor becomes the chairperson of the committee. The student will recommend two additional graduate faculty members – one from the Art Department and one from outside of the Department – whom he/she wishes to include on the committee. These nominations must, however, meet the approval of the Department and the Dean of the Graduate School.

## Thesis Project

On admission to Candidacy, students begin their final semester of course work and involvement with the Thesis Project requirements including:

- \*a written **Thesis Statement** which addresses the content of a
- \*solo exhibition of studio work (this is the **Thesis Exhibition** which will be a culmination of, primarily, the progressively focused studio efforts of the final year); and
- \*an **Oral Examination** related to the content of the exhibition and Thesis Statement – and conducted by the Orals Committee.

Though the **Thesis Statement** will function as a companion to the Thesis Exhibition, efforts should begin on this paper as soon as the student's work begins to suggest specific character and direction. The student's advisor will recommend procedures to follow and will explicate the final form the paper must take. Students must now be in constant communication with their advisor and should initiate dialogue with the other members of the Committee.

The central element of the Thesis Project is the studio work accomplished – and the resulting Thesis Exhibition. This exhibition should demonstrate a professional level of competence and, especially, a unified creative point of view. It should project the student's conceptual and expressive relationship with, particularly, his/her major area/s of studio work. The student's creative direction,

as reflected in the exhibition, may have taken shape through various avenues of exploration and may be the result of significant technical experimentation and application. The demonstration of varied skills – or of technical research – should not, however, be considered to be among the preeminent objectives of the exhibition. It should be noted that, while it is with the assistance of their advisor and Committee that the content of the exhibition is honed, students will remain entirely accountable for decisions made in this regard as well as for all related practical considerations.

The student must make all arrangements with either the Davis Gallery in the Fine Arts Building or, with departmental approval, for an alternative exhibition space. John B. Davis Gallery policy – and additional exhibition information – is outlined in a separate publication available from the student’s advisor or the Department.

At least three days before the conclusion of the exhibition, the Orals Committee will meet with the student in the gallery to evaluate and discuss the exhibition, the Thesis Statement, and input from other faculty members. Students will be expected to articulate their concerns as reflected in the work presented; this constitutes the Oral Examination.

On successful completion of the above requirements, and on the recommendation of the Department and the Dean of the Graduate School, the student will be awarded the Master of Fine Arts degree. Any student denied the degree may petition for reexamination in any subsequent semester – and one time only – within the time limits established by the Graduate School.

# **THE CURRICULUM**

The following distribution of courses/credits is required for the M.F.A. degree:

<b>Credits:</b>	<b>Courses:</b>
3	621 Graduate Seminar
3	601 Independent Study in Drawing
6	Art History
0-6	Related graduate-level course work outside of the Department or
0-6	Art Studio Electives
23	Studio Major
6	Studio Minor
1	649 Thesis Proposal
12	650 Thesis Project

Please see the "Graduate Catalog" for detailed course descriptions.

## **TRANSFER OF CREDITS**

Students, including those transferring from other departments at I.S.U. and departmentally approved unclassified students, may transfer up to 9 hours of graduate-level course work into our M.F.A. program. Transfer of credits is, however, based on a faculty evaluation. In any case, no course work for which the student received a grade of “C” or lower will be considered for transfer.

## **RESIDENCY REQUIREMENTS**

Students in the M.F.A. program must complete the equivalent of at least four semesters of graduate study in the Art Department at I.S.U. Two of these semesters must be consecutive and involve full-time study. Please see the “Graduate Catalog” for further description of residency requirements.

## **TIME LIMITATION**

All work for the M.F.A. degree must be completed within six calendar years of the time the student begins graduate study. This also applies to those who began graduate level involvement with I.S.U. as Unclassified students.

## **STUDIO SPACE**

In addition to our excellent and well equipped studios – available for the general use of our students – the Art Department will attempt to provide private studio space for graduate students. Space is limited – and the program

is growing—so a prioritized system for allocating studios has been developed. First, we will accommodate present graduate students according to their seniority in the program. Second, we will apply a first-come-first-served system based on prospective students' letters of intent to attend I.S.U. and the postmark date on those letters. Unclassified, non-degree seeking, students will not be provided space.

## **GRADUATE ASSISTANTSHIPS**

Graduate Assistantships are awarded competitively and based on Department and University needs. Priorities are established by evaluating:

- \*previous teaching experience, if any,
- \*expressed interest and attitude, and the
- \*quality of the student's scholarship and studio work.

Preference will generally be given to graduate students who have been in the program for one full year. Occasionally, first year students – who have demonstrated potential as a teacher – will be awarded assistantships. Teaching Assistants are responsible for up to 20 hours of service per week including their instructional involvement. A coordinator for Teaching Assistants will monitor the T.A./s classroom performance, and meet regularly to discuss related observations. **Applications for Graduate Assistantships are available from the Art Department and must be submitted on or before February 1st.** Please see the "Graduate Catalog" for additional information.

## **ANNUAL GRADUATE EXHIBITION**

A graduate student exhibition will be held annually in the Davis Gallery. Participation is limited to – and is required of – full-time degree-seeking students. Choice of work for the exhibition – as well as the quantity of work exhibited – is arrived at by the student in consultation with his/her advisor.

## **APPLICATION FOR GRADUATION**

Candidates for the M.F.A. degree must make Application for Graduation during the first two weeks of the semester or summer session at the end of which they expect to complete work for the degree. Please refer to the “Graduate Catalog” for additional information.

## **DOCUMENTATION OF EXHIBITION**

Students are required to provide the Department with a portfolio of digital images documenting all work in the Thesis Exhibition. The Department also reserves the right to retain one piece for the University’s Permanent Collection. Should we choose to execute this privilege, the Department will reimburse the student for material costs up to \$100.00.

## **DEPARTMENT PUBLICATIONS**

The Art Department will make every effort to publish – or otherwise provide the student with – all information pertinent to the M.F.A. program in a concise and timely fashion. We would urge all graduate students to read and retain all materials provided them including this

handbook and the “Graduate Catalog”. Any questions regarding interpretation should be directed to the student’s advisor or to the Director of Graduate Studies. Ultimately, the student is entirely responsible for this information and for compliance with all University and Department deadlines.

## **ADDRESSES**

**Department of Art  
921 S 8th Ave, Stop 8004  
Idaho State University  
Pocatello, Idaho 83209-8004**

**Office of Graduate Studies  
921 S 8th Ave, Stop 8075  
Idaho State University  
Pocatello, Idaho 83209-8075**

## Application Checklist:

**Send to:**

**Office of Graduate Studies**

- \_\_\_\_\_ Graduate School Application form
- \_\_\_\_\_ Application Fee
- \_\_\_\_\_ Two official transcripts from each institution previously attended
- \_\_\_\_\_ International students whose native language is not English must submit scores from the Test of English as a Foreign Language

**Send to:**

**Department of Art**

- \_\_\_\_\_ Portfolio of 20 digital images or slides
- \_\_\_\_\_ Three letters of recommendation
- \_\_\_\_\_ Letter of intent
- \_\_\_\_\_ Application for Teaching Assistantship
- \_\_\_\_\_ Please include a self-addressed, stamped envelope for the return of slides







