

PROGRAM PROFILE

Art history is the analysis of visual data in historical context. Art historians investigate works of art and seek to understand how and why they were made, by whom, and for whom. They also seek to read and interpret visual artifacts as records of a culture's imagination within its larger societal concerns. The questions they ask touch on cultural, technological, and economic issues. Because of this, the study of art history is inherently interdisciplinary in nature.

The Department of History and Art History offers a richly interdisciplinary master's degree in art history. It draws on faculty strengths in traditional research and new media and the vast cultural resources of the Washington, D.C. area. Students learn methods of art historical analysis, a variety of art historical interpretations, and practical applications of the field. The program places a special emphasis on the development of skills in new media, museology, and pre-professional internships – program features that are unique to this region.

The program is designed to meet the needs of a student population with diverse interests and career goals. Because of the focus on skill building in traditional research as well as new media, graduates of this program have the tools necessary for independent research, professional work, and the dissemination of knowledge in art history. They are exceptionally well prepared for work in art museums and professional galleries, where a master's in art history is now routinely required. The degree is also a solid foundation for doctoral study in art history. Recent graduates of the master's degree in art history are teaching full or part time, working in Washington museums, and conducting their own independent research.

MASTER'S DEGREE

Students in the 30-credit master's degree program in art history take ten courses and write a comprehensive exam. Students also have to demonstrate a reading ability in one relevant research language. For their five electives, students can choose from a wide range of offerings in art history and history as well as in

anthropology, sociology, and cultural studies. The five required courses cover these areas:

- methods and research in art history
- applied pre-professional learning such as an internship or a course on the museum
- technology and new media
- research seminar
- independent directed readings to prepare for comprehensive exam

FACULTY AND COURSES

The faculty in art history draw on their diverse research interests to offer a wide range of courses in the program. Courses that focus on western art include Ancient, Byzantine, Medieval, Renaissance, Baroque, 18th through 20th century European, Art of the United States, and Contemporary Global Art. There are also courses in the art of South and Southeast Asia, China, and Latin America. Associate faculty from history provide courses in visual studies and film, and in European cultural history as well as new media. History faculty members are conversant with current issues in art history and raise them regularly in their courses.

Each semester there are special topics graduate seminars. Recent offerings include:

- Around 1800: The Rediscovery of the Ancient Mediterranean
- Constantinople and Istanbul
- Research in Prehistory: South Asia
- Gender and the American Artist, 1880 - 1940
- Textiles and Trade
- Painting the Town: The Ashcan Artists and Progressive Era New York

The faculty in art history work closely with many faculty from other programs throughout the university, including the interdisciplinary programs in Cultural Studies, Latin American Studies, and Women and Gender Studies. Through their own work,



and by fostering these relationships outside the department, the faculty demonstrate their commitment to providing students with a solid liberal arts education with up-to-date applications of visual and information technology and access to all the exciting opportunities that the Washington, D.C. area offers.

ART HISTORY STUDENTS

Students in the master's degree program have a rich and varied profile. Some have come directly from undergraduate studies, with degrees in many different disciplines. Others are pursuing careers that range from economics, the military, and public relations to K-12 teaching. The goals of the applicants to this program are equally diverse. To help them achieve their goals, the program provides internships and other work opportunities. Graduates go on to enter the commercial art world of dealers or auction houses, public and private museums, and academic environments from secondary school to post-graduate studies.

HOW TO APPLY

Along with the completed Application for Graduate Admission and application fee, applicants to the master's program in art history should submit:

- Official transcripts from previous institutions of higher education attended
- Goals statement describing background and interest in art history
- Two academic letters of recommendation
- Official test scores for the GRE (general)
- Writing sample
- Departmental form

Prospective students are encouraged to apply for admission in fall or spring semesters. Applications are reviewed on an ongoing, space-available basis.

See chss.gmu.edu/howtoapply for complete details on the application process.

WHY ART HISTORY AT GEORGE MASON?

Graduate students in art history work one-on-one with faculty to create a research and learning path that meets their own interests. Through this personalized relationship, faculty mentors can guide their students through the professional development activities of attending conferences, publishing research, and networking with others in the field. Some also invite exceptionally-talented students to collaborate with them on their research.

Named the #1 national university to watch by *U.S. News & World Report*, George Mason University is an innovative, entrepreneurial institution with global distinction in a range of academic fields. Located in the heart of Northern Virginia's technology corridor near Washington, D.C., Mason prepares its students to succeed in the work force and meet the needs of the region and the world.

See arthistory.gmu.edu for program requirements and courses.

CONTACT INFORMATION

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