Bachelor of fine arts  Photography/Digital Media

We live in the midst of a profound and pervasive digital revolution, which makes it both an exciting and challenging time to be an artist. Today’s lens-based media artist has access to more image-capturing options and methods for distributing images and ideas than ever before. The Photography/Digital Media (PDM) curriculum prepares artists to take full advantage of the traditional and contemporary tools to create significant artwork.

Students are expected to develop their own artistic identities supported by a solid grounding in the technical, historical, and critical approaches to studio practice. Classroom instruction includes a thorough study of digital photography and video art, along with curriculum exploring studio lighting, traditional photographic forms and large format photography methods. The history, theory, and current practice of lens-based media are key aspects of the course of study and studio practice. Most importantly, the PDM curriculum and pedagogy are aimed at developing in our students the ability to adapt to an every-changing media environment.

Careers: For our most enthusiastic and committed graduates, the BFA is the beginning of a dynamic career making and exhibiting art. Graduates contribute to the cultural vitality of the Houston community, and to other cultural centers around the world. PDM graduates are well-positioned for acceptance into competitive graduate programs. Specific career options include educator, freelance or staff videographer/photographer, digital technician, photographic editor or video editor. Many students find employment in art related fields in institutions such as galleries, museums and non-profit art spaces; and in support industries such as documentation, archiving and art handling.

Mandated studio art courses

FUNDAMENTALS: 4 COURSES. 2 open selections, plus

ART 1371 Fundamentals of Photography/Digital Media
The course covers technical aspects of digital cameras, their design and functions, as well as the methodological, historical, and critical thinking bases for lens-based media. Special emphasis is placed on seeing critically through the camera lens and developing image editing and presentation strategies and skills.

ART 1372 Fundamentals of Video Art
The course is an exploration of basic technical and perceptual aspects of video in a fine art context.

ART 3372 Intermediate Video Art
Students learn technical skills in video recording and editing, and develop their own creative means of expression in this time-based art form.

ART 3374 Computer Imaging
Students develop skills in digital photography, including scanning, layering, and printing, and the creative use of computer imaging through collage and other techniques. Digitally based cross-media connections with graphics, painting, sculpture and other media are encouraged.

RELATED ARTS: 10 COURSES. 7 open selections, plus

ART 3371 Photography/Digital Media Portfolio Development
Advanced students develop additional conceptual and technical skills, culminating in the creation of a portfolio that will be presented to the faculty for acceptance into the Photography/Digital Media major concentration.

Related Arts Prerequisites
1. ART 1371 Fundamentals of Photography/Digital Media
2. ART 1372 Fundamentals of Video Art
3. Before a 3000-level course can be taken, the corresponding 1000-level course must have been completed.
MAJOR CONCENTRATION

Junior and senior photo/digital media is the Major Concentration of the Photo/Digital Media area degree plan. Students admitted after a competitive process into the major concentration, known as "Block", enroll in three concurrent courses for three consecutive semesters. This intensive course of study requires students to be present from 8:30 - 5:30 on Tuesdays and Thursdays for inter-related courses, which include technical, thematic and individual studio time. The emphasis of this coursework is the technical mastery, experimentation and conceptualization of each student’s individual practice in relation to contemporary photography and video art. The goal of this course of study is to develop self-critical artists who have developed a strong body of work, as well as life-long studio practice skills. In this vein graduating seniors independently organize and exhibit their work publicly.

Major concentration portfolio review

Admission into the Major Concentration is determined by a competitive review of the candidate’s portfolio and academic record. The photo/digital media faculty conducts reviews in April of the spring semester and in November of the fall semester. Students planning to participate in the portfolio review must have either completed or be currently enrolled in ART 3371 Photo-Digital Media Portfolio Development, which is the program’s portfolio preparation course.

Students may apply for the PDM major concentration no more than two times.

Minimum requirements for application to the PDM Major Concentration are completion of, or current enrollment in:

1. ARTH 1380 or ARTH1381, Art & Society; Prehistoric to Medieval or Renaissance to Contemporary;
2. 12 hours of Fundamentals (Art 1000 level) courses to include ART 1371 and ART 1372 (see page 1);
3. 21 hours of Related Arts coursework* to include ART 3374, ART 3371 and ART 3372 (see page 1). Note: Typically more courses strengthen the student's portfolio.
4. 3.0 GPA in all ART 3000/4000-level Related Arts courses;
5. 30 hours of completed CORE courses.

*PDM faculty may decide to grant conditional admission before an individual student has completed BOTH ARTH 1380 and 1381, AND a minimum of 21 HOURS of related arts. However, if such students fail to complete these requirements before the junior major semester starts, these students risk losing their places in the junior major.

Requirements for Portfolio Content

Art work for the portfolio review should include some combination of 15-20 examples of photographic, video or related artworks. Work must be presented in a professional manner and have been completed within the last two years. The portfolio should convey a high level of investigation of material processes and conceptual ideas as well as an articulation of the student's artistic voice. This may be done through a single body of work or several independent projects/works that have a related them or idea. Applicants will also submit an artist statement to accompany the visual pieces.

GENERAL INFORMATION

Studio space

Major concentration students are given 24 hour, 7 day a week access to studio space during the fall and spring semesters. Labs and darkrooms will be closed during the Christmas break and through much of the summer.

Equipment

The photo/digital media area is equipped with state of the art computer labs that cover a range of media, such as digital imaging, printing and video editing, chemical labs that support film-based cameras and techniques, an advanced lighting studio and an equipment checkout system that includes cameras, light kits, laptop computers and video projectors.

In pursuit of technological adaptability and self-reliance, students are strongly encouraged to own and maintain their own equipment, which includes cameras, storage devices and computers. This will ultimately lead to a life-long studio practice that integrates technology.

Photo/digital media students in the concentration classes are required to have their own laptop computer which will be used for both course instruction and individual studio practice. A recommended computer configuration will be supplied each year. Students who are on financial aid are encouraged to check with the Financial Aid office since the cost of the required laptop may be included in the calculation of need.

Internships

Photo/digital media majors with a studio art GPA of 3.5 or higher are eligible for internships in museums, alternative spaces and galleries, including the Houston Center for Photography, DiverseWorks Artspace, Lawndale Art Center, FotoFest International, the Contemporary Arts Museum, Blaffer Art Museum and the Museum of Fine Arts, Houston. These internships can be quite competitive, and must be approved by a photo/digital media faculty member along with the Coordinator of the PDM program. Such internships may be taken for 3 hours of related arts credit when students enroll for an internship class.

Admission information

The School of Art follows the standard UH admission requirements and procedures for freshmen, transfer and post baccalaureate students, which are available at www.uh.edu/admissions. There are no separate admissions requirements for the School of Art bachelor degree programs.

Scholarships

The College of Liberal Arts and Social Sciences has a pool of scholarship funds which are available on a competitive basis, normally in the range of $500-$2000. Students apply for these scholarships in the spring semester. Applications are available at http://www.uh.edu/class/students/undergraduate/financial-support/index.php.

To receive more information or to schedule an appointment, contact: School of Art Undergraduate Advising 713-743-3001 University of Houston 100 Fine Arts Building Houston, Texas 77204-4019 www.uh.edu/class/art