The Art Practice program offers an interdisciplinary approach to an MFA degree. Artists in the program are not defined or separated by medium or discipline.

The students in our program engage in research-based practices and are encouraged to converse and collaborate across subject matters using a combination of traditional and non-traditional media, technologies and techniques. We aim to facilitate a global conversation about the arts. Ultimately, the program endeavors to foster an atmosphere of risk-taking and experimentation, and to create a community of artists and culture producers who look beyond a consensus-driven approach to how we define what’s important in contemporary art.

To accomplish this, we bring together a carefully selected, small group of MFA candidates who will devote three successive summers and the two intervening years to a program in which they will engage with artists, theorists, art historians and curators. Faculty members include: Angel Abreu, Gaelyn and Gustavo Aguilar, Suzanne Anker, Beth B, Kathy Brew, Lia Gangitano, Laura F. Gibellini, Johan Grimonprez, Thyrza Nichols Goodeve, Baseera Khan, Steven Henry Madoff, Glendalys Medina, Iviva Olenick, Stefan Saffer, Heather Schatz, Sarah G. Sharp, Jovana Stokic, Jacquelyn Strycker, Nicolas Touron and Robin Winters. Recent visiting artists, mentors and guest lecturers have included: Diana Al-Hadid, Hilton Als, Edgar Arceneaux, Julie Ault, Huma Bhabha, Kalia Brooks, Lauren Cornell, Mel Chin, Ben Davis, Dawn Dedaux, Mark Dion, FAILE, Andrea Fraser, Coco Fusco, Anton Ginzburg, Jesse Greenberg, MacGregor Harp, Chrissie Iles, Kimsooja, Margaret Lee, Shawn Leonardo, Melissa McGill, Tony Oursler, Mike Perry, J. Morgan Puett, Qingsong Wang, Martha Rosler, Tom Sachs, Jeanne Silverthorne, Roberta Smith, Emma Sulkowicz and Risë Wilson.

Like the nature of the work we hope to help students produce, this program is continuously redefined as a function of the experience of all its participants.

—David A. Ross, chair
About the Program

Our program approaches art-making holistically. We view process as a kind of critical thinking.

An underlying thread running through the low-residency program is the ability to situate one’s creative practice within a thoroughly considered social context, and the ability to remain open to the revision of one’s operating premises. Students combine personal narrative with critical theory to be active citizen artists.

As the program makes use of a low-residency framework, students participate in seven weeks of NYC-based course work and studio practice for three successive summers. During the intervening academic semesters, participants engage in rich-media online course work. Additionally, each participant is assigned a mentor for the entirety of the program.

Degree candidates must successfully complete 60 credits, including all required courses. The final summer session includes the presentation of a thesis project and accompanying written thesis document. All candidates must have their thesis proposals approved by the department chair and thesis committee at the conclusion of their second summer residency period.

“Texting, memes, standardized tests, all these things break language into pieces. But it’s the brokenness that allows us to enter, to inhabit and remake knowledge from the inside out.”

—Brandi Yu, MFA 2015
Low-Residency Program Allows Artist to Pursue MFA While Running an Art Space in RI

Providence, Rhode Island, has a thriving art scene, and artist Pippi Zornoza (MFA 2016) is firmly rooted in that community. Zornoza practices in many media and across several disciplines, including performance, sound, installation, drawing and print. In 2000, she and fellow artist Xander Marro founded the Dirt Palace, a feminist art space in the Olneyville section of Providence.
An abandoned library building was transformed into a collective of female-identified artists, including affordable studio space, facilities, a gallery, and much more for up to seven artists at a time, with over 40 total artists in residence to date. “The Dirt Palace, though highly functional and pragmatic, is by design somewhat of an anarchistic space,” Zornoza explains. The project has had a range of influences, from feminist collective galleries of the 70s to utopian communities of the 1800s, and while it has always been open to different directions and outcomes, there has also been a goal of sorts: “to affect the local creative landscape in such a way that power would shift so that women were integrated into formal and informal leadership roles and visible as major artistic forces within every aspect of the local art scene,” explains Zornoza. “This power shift would be built on positive relationships of women working together, near each other, collaborating, and
years. But being paired with Winters allayed those fears. “Robin’s history as an artist and agitator is pretty wild and impressive,” she explains. “He was exceedingly generous in taking time to discuss my work. As a founder of Colab, and the first artist to do a durational performance at the Whitney, working with Robin was totally influential and grounding to my practice.” In fact, there were many people at SVA who were influential on her art practice. “Too many to list! I feel as though I would have to list everyone,” she says.

Recently Zornoza and her partner at Dirt Palace have taken on a new project: the Wedding Cake House. With help from a sizable grant from the Rhode Island State Council on the Arts, they will be restoring a historic Providence mansion into a facility with artist-in-residence quarters for 20 to 50 artists a year that will complement the program at Dirt Palace. The mansion will also include a bed-and-breakfast to bring in revenue. The mansion once housed a couture design business run by the Tirocchi sisters, thereby continuing a tradition of a women-owned arts-based business and highlighting Providence’s history in art and design.

Supporting each other’s growth—creatively, intellectually and practically. Because Zornoza is firmly rooted in her community in Providence and has many professional commitments there, she only considered low-residency programs for her MFA. The relative newness of the Art Practice program at SVA appealed to her. She felt there was an air of idealism and vision to the program, and she wanted to be a part of that. “I had a sense that the program wanted to achieve something different in its approach to education and was especially focused on tailoring the program to artists that don’t fit within a traditional gallery system,” she offers. “It was exciting to join a program that was inherently questioning the status quo.”

While in the MFA Art Practice program, each student works under the guidance of an assigned mentor. For Zornoza, that mentor was faculty member Robin Winters. Before starting the program, she had wondered whether the experience of being at SVA would be too “institutional” having been away from academic institutions for almost 20
Baseera Khan is a contemporary conceptual artist whose work spans media including sculpture, photography and performance. Her themes often combine the political and personal and her first solo exhibition, “iamuslima,” showed at Participant Inc Gallery in New York in 2017. It is currently on tour. She first became involved with the MFA Art Practice program in 2017, when she was invited to do studio visits with that summer’s class. There she met a student, Astrid Bai, who she continued to mentor through the year. In 2018, Khan officially joined the faculty.
What are your goals for being part of the graduate seminar?

Establishing trust and openness, working hard to meet the students on their terms and not project my own ideas onto the work too heavily. I also want to push the artists to work and experiment and not think about the market—thinking through object-hood is already a mind teaser, adding thoughts around the object’s future value is just too much. This process of speculation can only add a stifling relationship to your practice. As the great DMX said in 2000, “Do you. Cuz I’mma do me, truly.” Stay true to yourself and you will fly as an artist and a human being.

What advice would you give to artists doing an MFA to get the most out of their experience?

Show up, even if you don’t want to. A lot happens when you are present. Also, witness your peers and other artists that are having shows. Be there, and expect the same from your peers. Witnessing work, discussing work, and staying present are the keys to any creative profession. New York City is a strange place where you can tap into multiple kinds of art-making and that is an incredible opportunity in itself. Definitely build in time to experience this as you make your work and build your practice.

Congratulations on your solo show, “iamuslima.” What did you learn from the experience that you can share with students?

Doing my show “iamuslima” at Participant Inc Gallery gave me an opportunity to lay down a strong foundation for my future self. For me, art-making is anything but a game. It is a place where many of the conflicts in America—around inclusivity, justice, reparations and equality—are getting exposed. The intersection of performance, sculpture and photography lends itself to a living and ongoing dialogue so necessary for issues such as these. I was shaped by art with a capital A and it constantly defines my otherness, but at the same time it provides me with pathways of learning unlike other fields of creative work. What the Participant show gave me was that I went into the work unapologetically as to who I am and what my concerns are as a person. Though I know that art-making is a system, and it requires ways to sustain itself, I stepped out of all that and took risks based on my conscious and lucid sense of being. When you are in school the best thing you can do is take a lot of time getting to know who you are and what you are capable of doing as unfiltered as possible. That is basically what I did during my graduate studies. It definitely made me ready for where I am now, and all the work I have to do ahead of me.
Curriculum/ Sample Program

As the nature of the MFA Art Practice program assumes students are seeking a fully interdisciplinary program, the course of study addresses a wide range of intellectual, aesthetic, technical and practical concerns.

SUMMER I  CREDITS
Beginning Video and Sound Editing Workshop 1
Graduate Seminar I 3
Lunchtime Lecture Series 0
Studio Practice I 6
Studio Workshop: Digital Sculpture 1
Studio Workshop: Nature and Technology Lab 1

FALL I (ONLINE)  CREDITS
Autobiography of Place I 1.5
Foundations of Criticism I 3
Studio Practice Review I 1.5

SPRING I (ONLINE)  CREDITS
Art History I: Exploring the Interdisciplinary 3
Autobiography of Place II 1.5
Studio Practice Review II 1.5

SUMMER II  CREDITS
Graduate Seminar II 6
Participant Symposium 0
Performance Workshop 3
Professional Development 0
Studio Practice II 3

FALL II (ONLINE)  CREDITS
Art History II: Challenging the Conventional 2
Artists’ Writings 2
Studio Practice Review III 2

SPRING II (ONLINE)  CREDITS
Foundations of Criticism II 2
Studio Practice Review IV 2
Thesis Preparation 2

SUMMER III  CREDITS
Graduate Seminar III 3
Studio Practice III 6
Thesis 3

I was surprised how much the platform provided a sense of community, despite our distance. You cannot hide online. In a physical classroom you can show up and not participate, yet still get credit for being in the room. If you don’t participate online, no one knows that you were there at all.”
—Pippi Zornoza, MFA 2016
Course Offerings

A sample of our course descriptions follows. All course descriptions can be found online at: artpractice.sva.edu/classes.

**ART HISTORY I: EXPLORING THE INTERDISCIPLINARY**

To better understand the role of art history in preparing and developing one’s own artistic direction, this course will explore and critique the conventional masterpiece-based notion of art history from several perspectives. We will trace the history of modernism in relation to the notion of interdisciplinary art. Starting in the mid-19th century with examples of *gesamtkunstwerk*, the course examines the impact of this kind of thinking through an exploration of key examples of contemporary interdisciplinary art. In response to a wide range of primary source readings, audiotapes, video and film, students will write a series of critical responses to the readings, and participate in online group sessions and discussions.

**ARTISTS’ WRITINGS**

The significant interventions that visual artists have made through their own writing into the art criticism of their time will be the focus of this course. We will also explore a range of artists’ writing forms such as journalism, manifestos, poetry, theoretical writing, letters, artists’ books and artist-run publications. The course will also examine some key artists’ writings from Russian constructivism to the Bauhaus, surrealism, abstract expressionism, minimalism, conceptual art and feminism. Assigned readings, writings and online group discussions are included. The role of social engagement in the production of individual (or collective) practice will be emphasized, and students will acquire an understanding of the influence of artists’ writings on various forms of art criticism. A deeper understanding of one’s own writing in relation to the development of one’s practice will be underscored throughout the semester.

*Art Army, an installation by Marnie Navarro (MFA 2016).*
STUDIO PRACTICE I, II & III
The core of the summer sessions is studio practice. The objective is to produce original, advanced work with instruction and support from faculty and under the guidance of an individual mentor, who will offer ongoing critical evaluation. Reviews will primarily take place from Monday through Friday, with weekly group critiques on Tuesdays. Studio Practice is the central element and primary requirement of the program. As such, it is expected that students will make notable progress in their individual practice. Studios are available 24 hours a day, 7 days a week.

STUDENT WORKSHOP: NATURE AND TECHNOLOGY LAB
Students in this workshop will have the opportunity to explore the biological realm as it relates to art practice. Demonstrations include microscopy, plant tissue engineering, molecular cuisine and the production of micro ecosystems. Students will be encouraged to discuss and explore how biomedical sciences alter social, ethical and cultural values in society. The workshop will take place in the Nature and Technology (NAT) Lab, which houses microscopes for photo and video, skeleton collections, specimen collections, slide collections, an herbarium and an aquarium as well as a library.

AUTOBIOGRAPHY OF PLACE I
Through a series of interviews with artists and other creative professionals, as well as related reading and viewing materials, students explore the notion of place: where and how we live, how we connect to various communities and how we situate creative practice into daily life. Students also complete a series of short production assignments and engage in group critiques via online learning environments.

BEGINNING VIDEO AND SOUND EDITING WORKSHOP
Through various methods, including instructor-led workshops, field experiments, studio production and group critique, students will explore practices for creating audio and video projects, possibilities for installation, multichannel works and performance. Students will learn about high-definition video and proper compression for projection, web and DVD, and become familiar with basic editing software including Apple Final Cut Pro X. The workshop includes screenings of film, video and sound work from modern and contemporary artists. It considers the use of media as both a document and final product.

FOUNDATIONS OF CRITICISM I
Understanding prominent theoretical positions within art criticism—past and present—is the focus of this course. We will begin with theories of the image from cave paintings to advertising, film theory to the comic strip, video to the digital image and current debates in animation studies. Classical writings from philosophy (e.g., Plato), art history (Panofsky, Greenberg, W. J. T. Mitchell) and film theory (Eisenstein, Bazin), as well as writers such as Apollinaire and DeLillo will be examined. We will also cover semiotics, feminist theory and institutional critique, reading key theorists such as Barthes, Benjamin, Baudrillard and Debord, among others.

GRADUATE SEMINAR I, II & III
In this foundational seminar students develop their own art practice in conjunction with a deeper understanding of contemporary issues in art, theory and politics. Topics of special attention include social engagement, collaboration, transdisciplinary practice and personal narrative. Through class discussions, group critiques and one-on-one studio visits, students will work with both core faculty and a robust roster of visiting artists.

PERFORMANCE WORKSHOP
Formally born in the early 20th century—as a critique of the economic engineering of the art world through the European painting salons for the bourgeoisie—and influenced by cabaret, theater, dance, psychodrama, feminist, queer, civil rights, political and environmental activism, performance practice has many traditions. Until recently, it was an alternative practice that offered few collectibles. Participants in this workshop will explore silence and walking as public performance art following Buddhist notions of mindful presence, engaging the city as laboratory. The group will function like an ephemeral company of soloists and collaborators in which students will perform and discuss a series of daily exercises.

STUDIO PRACTICE I, II & III
The core of the summer sessions is studio practice. The objective is to produce original, advanced work with instruction and support from faculty and under the guidance of an individual mentor, who will offer ongoing critical evaluation. Reviews will primarily take place from Monday through Friday, with weekly group critiques on Tuesdays. Studio Practice is the central element and primary requirement of the program. As such, it is expected that students will make notable progress in their individual practice. Studios are available 24 hours a day, 7 days a week.

PARTICIPANT SYMPOSIUM
Under the guidance of a faculty member, students work to develop and install an exhibition with an accompanying publication. They also develop and participate in skill-share workshops, a panel discussion and engage in guided field trips to artists’ studios and cultural institutions.

STUDENT WORKSHOP: NATURE AND TECHNOLOGY LAB
Students in this workshop will have the opportunity to explore the biological realm as it relates to art practice. Demonstrations include microscopy, plant tissue engineering, molecular cuisine and the production of micro ecosystems. Students will be encouraged to discuss and explore how biomedical sciences alter social, ethical and cultural values in society. The workshop will take place in the Nature and Technology (NAT) Lab, which houses microscopes for photo and video, skeleton collections, specimen collections, slide collections, an herbarium and an aquarium as well as a library.
Where We Are

Our students and alumni have shown at prestigious institutions, including:

- MoMA PS1
- Queens Museum
- Corcoran Gallery of Art, Washington DC
- Palacio de Bellas Artes, Mexico City
- Tate Modern, London
- National Museum of Contemporary Art, Seoul
- Kyoto Municipal Museum of Art
- Gl Holtegaard Museum, Denmark
- The Living Art Museum, Reykjavik
- Moscow Museum of Modern Art
- Museum of Nebraska Art
- Boise Art Museum
- Werkstadt Graz/Graz Kunz
- The Studio Museum in Harlem
- El Museo del Barrio
- Carriage Trade
- Field Projects
- The New Museum’s Festival of Ideas

Faculty

To learn more about the faculty members and to read their biographies visit: artpractice.sva.edu.

David A. Ross  
chair, writer, curator

Angel Abreu  
visual artist

Gaelyn and Gustavo Aguilar  
cofounders, TUG Collective

Suzanne Anker  
chair, BFA Fine Arts Department, School of Visual Arts; visual artist; theorist

Beth B  
visual artist, filmmaker

Kathy Brew  
documentarian, visual artist, theorist

Lia Gangitano  
founder, director, Participant, Inc.

Laura F. Gibellini  
visual artist, theorist

Thyrza Nichols Goodeve  
critic, writer

Johan Grimonprez  
filmmaker, visual artist

Baseera Khan  
visual artist

Steven Henry Madoff  
chair, MA Curatorial Practice, School of Visual Arts; curator; art critic

Glendalys Medina  
visual artist

Iviva Olenick  
textile designer; visual artist

Stefan Saffer  
visual artist

Heather Schatz  
visual artist

Sarah G. Sharp  
visual artist

Jovana Stokic  
art historian, curator

Jacquelyn Strycker  
visual artist

Nicolas Touron  
visual artist

Robin Winters  
visual artist
Here is just a sample of guest lecturers who have spoken to and with our students.

Coco Fusco
visual artist, curator

Jesse Greenberg
artist; curator; co-founder 247365

MacGregor Harp
artist; curator; co-founder 247365

Chrissie Iles
curator, The Whitney Museum of American Art

Paddy Johnson
writer; founding editor, Art F City

Kimsooja
visual artist

Shaun Leonardo
visual artist, activist

Lee Mingwei
visual artist

Tony Oursler
visual artist

J. Morgan Puett
visual artist; co-founder Mildred’s Lane

Martha Rosler
visual artist

Tom Sachs
visual artist

Lorna Simpson
visual artist

Robert Smith
critic, The New York Times

Emma Sulikowicz
visual artist

Risë Wilson
community organizer; Director of Philanthropy, Rauschenberg Foundation

APPLICATION REQUIREMENTS
For detailed instructions, visit: sva.edu/grad/howtoapply
- Online Application and $80 Application Fee: sva.edu/apply
- Statement of Intent/Personal Statement
- Résumé
- Letters of Recommendation
- Official College Transcript

Some applicants may be required to submit the following:
- Proof of English Proficiency
- Copy of Permanent Residency Card
- Declaration of Finances
- Verification of Finances
- Foreign Transcript Evaluation

DEPARTMENTAL REQUIREMENTS
For specific guidelines about these requirements, visit: sva.edu/grad/deptreq
- Portfolio—accepted at svagrad.slideroom.com
- Writing Sample
- Interview

DEADLINES
For information on application deadlines, visit: sva.edu/grad/timeline

IMPORTANT LINKS
- FAQ: sva.edu/grad/faq
- International students: sva.edu/grad/intl
- Tuition and fees: sva.edu/tuition
- Visit SVA: sva.edu/grad/visit

Lecturers and Mentors

Diana Al-Hadid
visual artist

Hilton Als
writer, critic

Cory Arcangel
visual artist

Edgar Arceneaux
visual artist

Charles Atlas
visual artist

Julie Ault
visual artist, curator, cofounder Group Material

Alice Aycock
visual artist

Huma Bhabha
visual artist

Kalia Brooks
curator

Holland Cotter
critic, The New York Times

Ben Davis
critic

Mark Dion
visual artist; co-founder, Mildred’s Lane

Andrea Fraser
visual artist

Tony Oursler
visual artist

J. Morgan Puett
visual artist; co-founder Mildred’s Lane

Martha Rosler
visual artist

Tom Sachs
visual artist

Lorna Simpson
visual artist

Emma Sulikowicz
visual artist

Risë Wilson
community organizer; Director of Philanthropy, Rauschenberg Foundation

Application Process
We encourage applicants to visit our department. Contact us directly to schedule a department tour or sign up to attend an Information Session. For more information and to register, go to: sva.edu/grad/visit.

If you have any questions about the application process, contact Graduate Admissions at 212.592.2107 or email: gradadmissions@sva.edu.

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Jacquelyn Strycker, director of operations
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Site: sva.edu/artpractice
Department Site: artpractice.sva.edu

Art is the offspring resulting from unlatching and opening up one’s invisible suitcase, taking out a selection of items that were placed in there, and making-thinking-playing with them for a while.”
—Todd Hainline (MFA 2017)

ACCREDITATION
The School of Visual Arts has been authorized by the New York State Board of Regents (www.highered.nysed.gov) to confer the degree of Bachelor of Fine Arts on graduates of programs in Advertising; Animation; Cartooning; Computer Art, Computer Animation and Visual Effects; Design; Film; Fine Arts; Illustration; Interior Design; Photography and Video; Visual and Critical Studies; and to confer the degree of Master of Arts on graduates of the programs in Critical Theory and the Arts; Curatorial Practice; Design Research, Writing and Criticism; and to confer the degree of Master of Arts in Teaching on graduates of programs in Art Education; and to confer the degree of Master of Fine Arts on graduates of programs in Art Practice; Art Writing; Computer Arts; Design; Design for Social Innovation; Fine Arts; Illustration as Visual Essay; Interaction Design; Photography, Video and Related Media; Products of Design; Social Documentary Film; Visual Narrative; and to confer the degree of Master of Professional Studies on graduates of the programs in Art Therapy; Branding; Digital Photography; Directing; Fashion Photography; Data required by the U.S. Department of Education on “Gainful Employment” for each of the above programs may be found on each individual program page at sva.edu/ge.

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The School of Visual Arts is accredited institutional member of the National Association of Schools of Art and Design (nasad.arts-accredit.org).

The Interior Design program leading to the Bachelor of Fine Arts in Interior Design is accredited by the Council for Interior Design Accreditation (accredit-id.org), 206 Grandville Avenue, Suite 305, Grand Rapids, MI, 49503-4014.

The Master of Arts in Teaching in Art Education program is accredited by the Council for the Accreditation of Educator Preparation (CAEP).

The Master of Professional Studies in Art Therapy degree program is approved by the American Art Therapy Association, Inc., and as such meets the Education Standards of the art therapy profession.

CREDITS
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School of
Visual Arts

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