

Studio BFA Handbook

A guide to help you navigate your way through the
Studio Bachelor of Fine Arts Program

Department of Art & Design
Central Michigan University

Revised 11/2016

Congratulations on being accepted into the Studio BFA Program in the Department of Art and Design at CMU. The Bachelor of Fine Arts degree is a pre-professional program designed to prepare students for further development toward professional studio work as artists. Many consider the BFA to be good preparation for entry into MFA programs because of its focus on significant exploration and development of individually directed studio work, the requirement of an exhibition, and the larger number of credit hours in the area concentration required for this degree.

The BFA program is designed to help you recognize and develop your own work in a chosen concentration through regular feedback and support from faculty. It also includes ART 471, the capstone course for BFA students that enables you to prepare for a professional career in the visual arts. This course includes instruction in professional practice that will prepare you to work in the field, such as documenting visual material and writing an artist's statement.

Studio BFA Program Overview

Before Applying

Complete or be currently enrolled in: ART 105-Drawing I or 106-Introduction to Drawing, 115-2D Design & 118-3D Design or 119-Design Foundations, 117-Introduction to Contemporary Issues in Art, ART 122-Color and Composition or ART 125-Digital Design, 6 credits in Art History, and 9 credits in studio courses beyond the above Foundations courses. Any exceptions must be approved by the major advisor and the BFA Committee.

Semester of Application

Meet with prospective faculty advisor or prepare application and portfolio. Submit application with the application statement, recommendation form, visual documentation, and image list by application deadline.

Upon acceptance to the Studio BFA program, meet with faculty advisor to sign BFA major. This faculty member will be your BFA Advisor. Access to the BFA studio space and other facilities may be granted after attending the BFA orientation meeting.

Attendance at full faculty critiques during the last two weeks of the semester is expected.

1st full Semester in program

Attend BFA orientation meeting to be held during the first week of the semester.

Meet with the BFA Advisor to discuss progress.

Participate in Full Faculty Critiques during last two weeks of the semester.

2nd Semester in program

Meet with BFA Advisor and BFA Committee for the Eight Week Critique and present work in progress. The BFA Committee will set the critique schedule and notify students. Failure to attend this critique without prior notification may jeopardize the student's continuation in the program.

Meet with BFA Advisor to discuss progress.

Participate in Full Faculty Critiques during last four weeks of semester.

3rd (final) Semester in program

Enroll in and complete requirements of ART 471.

Meet with BFA Advisor and BFA Committee for the Five Week Critique and present work in progress. The BFA Committee will set the critique schedule and notify students. Failure to attend this critique without prior notification may jeopardize the student's continuation in the program.

Meet with BFA Advisor to discuss progress toward BFA Exhibition.

Install exhibition and conduct a Public Artist's Talk. Document BFA Exhibition and complete BFA Portfolio requirements.

Submit final portfolio to the Director of the University Art Gallery.

Procedures for Completing Requirements for the Studio BFA Program

As part of the requirements for earning a BFA, the student will develop and execute an exhibition of his or her work that shows a focused direction and reflects the philosophical core of the student's artistic and visual goals. The work in the exhibition should be an individualized, self-directed body of work, which goes beyond class assignments.

Overview of Critique Procedures:

You will have half an hour to present your artwork in progress and answer questions from the faculty. For 5 and 8-week critiques, you may invite other faculty, if desired. It is suggested that you take notes on the feedback received during the critique for your reference. Follow up with your BFA Advisor after all BFA critiques.

Expectations/Description of 1st Semester Full Faculty Critique:

Start developing ideas and work toward your BFA Exhibition. Though this work may not end up in the exhibition, it is part of the process of developing your individualized, self-directed work. This will give you the opportunity to get feedback and suggestions from faculty right away.

Expectations/Description of 2nd Semester 8-week Critique:

You will meet with your BFA Advisor and the BFA Committee. By this time you should be in a position where your artwork is becoming clearer in terms of concept, materials and process. This is the last time you will have a full semester to work your artwork for the BFA Exhibition.

Expectations/Description of 2nd Semester Full Faculty Critique:

Be prepared to present and discuss your artwork in progress.

Expectations/Description of 3rd (final) Semester 5-week Critiques:

During this meeting with your BFA Advisor and the BFA Committee, you will present your artwork in progress and discuss ideas on exhibiting.

1st and 2nd Semester Evaluation and Assessments:

If the BFA Committee, in consultation with the student's BFA Advisor, determines that the student is not making sufficient progress toward completing the BFA degree, the BFA Committee will place the student on probation. The student will be notified in writing by the BFA Committee of probationary status. If the student is placed on probation, they will have one semester to show significant progress. If the BFA committee does not feel that significant progress has been made, the student will be removed from the BFA program.

Violations of the CMU Academic Integrity Policy will result in immediate removal from the BFA program. Students removed from the program will have the right to appeal this decision by contacting the Chair of the Department of Art and Design in writing.

Role of Advisor:

The BFA Advisor will supervise the student's progress through the BFA program and will assist in preparation for Full Faculty critiques and BFA Committee critiques. For the students who are interested in graduate programs in art, the beginning of your third (final) semester would be a good time to discuss this with you BFA advisor.

Procedure for Changing Advisors:

The student may change a BFA Advisor once the selection has been made by stating reasons for a change in a letter to the BFA Committee. BFA Advisors can elect to remove themselves from the position of a student's BFA Advisor. In this case, it is the responsibility of the student to find a replacement or withdrawal from the program.

Requirements/Description of ART 471:

- a. **The student must register for ART 471 ‘BFA Exhibition’ during the semester of his/her exhibition.**

This class offers guidance for the BFA Requirements: BFA portfolio consisting of artist statement, bio, resume, and visual documentation, as well as an artist’s paper, artist’s talk, and the BFA exhibition.

- b. **The BFA advisor and Gallery Director will review her/his work with the student prior to installation.**

Each student is responsible for completing all of the requirements outlined in ART 471 and for completing the BFA exhibition.

- c. **At time of the installation, each BFA candidate is required to submit to the Gallery Director the following:**

An artist’s statement, bio and resume

A complete list of works in the exhibition for labels

- d. **BFA candidate will give a 20 – 30 minute artist talk about their BFA Exhibition at the opening reception for the exhibition. The following is a suggested outline. The specific order of the outline may be altered, but all of the content listed in the suggested outline must be included in your Public Artist’s Talk.**

A. Introduction

1. Your name, degree and major, advisor
2. Abstract – what do you do as an artist

B. Historical and Contemporary influences

(Art, Artist, Art theory that influenced this body of work or individual components within the body of work. There should be 3 minimum)

C. Process and Medium

1. What process is used to create work
2. How is the process important to the work, how is it perceived, etc.
3. What medium is used
4. Why is the medium essential to communicate your conceptual ideas to the viewer

D. The work Itself

1. Description of the Physical and Inherent Qualities of the Work
2. External Qualities of the Work that Inform on its Meaning (social, political, historical, economic, philosophical, biological)
3. The Intention of the Work (what is meant to communicate)
4. Formal Analysis

E. Conclusion (bring all of the above together in a cohesive closure)

1. Acknowledgements

- e. **Before graduation the BFA candidate will submit to the Gallery Director/ART471 Instructor:**
BFA Portfolio which will include: artist statement, bio, letter of application, resume, and 10 – 20 images of their work including works from the BFA Exhibition, and an image list.

Should the student fail to meet the requirements outlined above, he/she will return to the previously declared degree and major program.

Comments and Questions

This program, like any other, is open to revision and change to allow it to best serve the needs of students. Suggestions are welcome. Your BFA Committee, in particular BFA Advisor, is your prime resource for help and direction through the program. In addition, questions and concerns can be addressed to the Chairperson of the Studio BFA Committee for help and clarification.

We are here to help support and guide you toward your objectives.