

Thank you for your interest in the MFA Program in the Department of Art & Art History at SJSU. The faculty of the Department of Art & Art History are justifiably proud of the accomplishments of our MFA graduates.

Through its excellent facilities and diverse and well-recognized faculty, the program encourages and enables students to develop their technical studio skills as well as the ability to think creatively and critically about their work. An important aspect of professional preparation is the opportunity for students to show their work in one of the several student galleries in the Art buildings.

That the MFA program functions within the context of a liberal arts college is perhaps the strongest indicator of the breadth of competence expected of its students. Graduate students in the School's MFA programs are given elective options in philosophy, history, literature, theater, music, anthropology, and more. Within the Department itself, the approach to learning is highly interdisciplinary. Faculty routinely share duties across media and disciplines; and the facilities encompass traditional to digital methods. The faculty is equally broad-based: graduate students are encouraged to develop exposure to as many new approaches as will benefit their progress. All areas share similar admissions processes, curricular structure, advancement, and review processes.

Students must take critical seminars and studio classes where their peers and the faculty critique their work. Assigned studios are guaranteed for 5 semesters; these studios and shared spaces provide for focused independent experimentation as well as build community that facilitates peer to peer discourse.

## Table of Contents

### [Contact Information](#)

[Graduate Coordinator](#)

[Program Area Coordinators](#)

[University Admission Information](#)

### [MFA Graduate Programs Overview & Requirements](#)

### [Application Process](#)

[Start here: SJSU Graduate Application Information](#)

[Step by Step Applications Instructions](#)

[Application Requirements](#)

[Department of Art & Art History Admission Requirements](#)

### [Departmental Application Requirements by Area of Concentration](#)

[Master of Fine Art, Digital Media Art Application Requirements](#)

[Master of Fine Art, Photography Application Requirements](#)

[Master of Fine Art, Pictorial Art Application Requirements](#)

[Master of Fine Art, Spatial Art Application Requirements](#)

### [FAQs](#)

## Contact Information

SJSU is a large university, there are several departments that can help you with questions about the degree and application process:

### Graduate Coordinator

The graduate Coordinator can answer general questions about our MFA program (Application Process, Studios, Facilities, Degree Requirements), and Area-Specific questions within their area.

Graduate Coordinator	Rhonda Holberton, Assistant Professor, Digital Media Arts   <a href="mailto:cadre.sjsu.edu">cadre.sjsu.edu</a>
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### Program Area Coordinators

For more information about Area-Specific classes, portfolio requirements, and area faculty, please reach out to the Area Coordinators.

Digital Media Art	<a href="mailto:gcrain.hobbs@sjsu.edu">Craig Hobbs</a> gcrain.hobbs@sjsu.edu
Pictorial (painting/ printmaking)	<a href="mailto:shaun.odell@sjsu.edu">Shaun O'Dell</a> shaun.odell@sjsu.edu
Photography	<a href="mailto:robin.lasser@sjsu.edu">Robin Lasser</a> robin.lasser@sjsu.edu
Spatial (Sculpture/Ceramics):	<a href="mailto:Shannon.wright@sjsu.edu">Shannon Wright</a> Shannon.wright@sjsu.edu

### University Admission Information

If you have questions about University Requirements (GPA, Transfer Credits, TOEFL, and other Tests) please contact the Office of Graduate Admissions and Program Evaluations (GAPE).

GAPE Admission Inquiries	<a href="mailto:admissions@sjsu.edu">admissions@sjsu.edu</a> , Phone: (408) 283-7500
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## MFA Graduate Programs Overview & Requirements

The MFA program is a 60 unit degree. Most students complete the degree in 5-6 semesters. The coursework consists of graduate seminars, upper division undergraduate studio electives, TAships, and independent studies. There's a lot of flexibility in terms of the elective courses you take for an MFA in Art.

Studios are available for 5 semesters. You are required to install two exhibitions in your 2nd & 3rd years in one of 8 student galleries, but optional exhibition opportunities exist outside of the requirement as well.

If you are interested in teaching, we have Teaching Assistant opportunities, as well as a class dedicated to teaching at the college level. There's also opportunities to teach your own class, but that is dependent on undergraduate enrollment so can't be guaranteed.

More information about each degree program can be found below.

[MFA Digital Media Art](#)

[MFA Photography](#)

[MFA Pictorial Art](#)

[MFA Spatial Art](#)

## Application Process

**Start here:** [SJSU Graduate Application Information](#)

All of the information in this email can be found starting at the above link (though some of the information is easier to find than others). I've copied some of the most pertinent links from our website below (which I know can be hard to navigate).

### Step by Step Applications Instructions

- [Domestic Steps to Admission](#): Learn about the steps you will take as you go through the domestic application process at SJSU.
- [International Steps to Admission](#): Learn about the steps you will take as you go through the international application process at SJSU.

### Application Requirements

There are two independent sets of admission requirements; one set is managed by the University Office of Graduate Admissions and Program Evaluations (GAPE) and required for ALL SJSU graduate applicants. More information on University requirements (including deadlines) can be found here: [SJSU Graduate Application Information](#)

The other set of admission requirements is managed by the Department or School for the Degree Program the student is applying to. For a Graduate Degree granted by the Department of Art & Art History, students submit a single application through the [Cal State Apply](#) website. Once completed, students' applications are first reviewed by GAPE. If the students' applications meet University Admission Requirements, their applications are then sent to the Department of Art & Art History for review to determine eligibility for the Degree Program.

### Department of Art & Art History Admission Requirements

If you have any questions about Department Requirements (portfolio, letters of recommendation, departmental degree requirements) please review the information below and then contact the [Department Graduate Coordinator](#) if you have additional questions.

## Departmental Application Requirements by Area of Concentration

### Master of Fine Art, Digital Media Art Application Requirements

For any additional information regarding this degree program at SJSU, please visit the department website: [https://www.sjsu.edu/art/art\\_programs/graduate/mfa\\_digital\\_media\\_art/](https://www.sjsu.edu/art/art_programs/graduate/mfa_digital_media_art/). Additionally, you may contact the Art Graduate Coordinator by email with specific questions.

The Art Department requires the following items to complete their departmental application:

- **A minimum of three (3) letters of recommendation** are required for your application. These letters should address your academic abilities, art interests, and preparation for graduate work. Letters should show exceptional promise in digital media art.
  - Include in your message to the recommender the name of the program you are applying for at San Jose State University. (e.g. "I am applying to the MFA program in the Department of Art & Art History at San Jose State University with a concentration in Digital Media Art")
  - You should request the letters via Cal State Apply before completing/submitting the application, you will not be able to submit your application until all letters have been requested. If you need to cancel your request, you can cancel it by using the "trash" button. To cancel a request click the "trash" button.
  - Please note, once you submit your Cal State Apply application, you will not be able to request additional/alternate recommendations.
- **[Completed Academic Summary Form](#)**
- **Statement of Purpose/Artist Statement.** Submit a 600-1200 word (one to two page) essay indicating your reasons to pursue graduate studies in Art at SJSU. The essay should also describe the nature and direction of your work, and its relationship to contemporary art issues. You must indicate in the first sentence of your statement the name of the program to which you are applying and the area you wish to study (e.g. MFA in Art & Art History with a concentration in Spatial Art. )
- **Résumé or Curriculum Vitae.** Please include education, exhibition history, publications, grants/awards, bibliography, and any relevant professional experience.
- **Provide a URL to your online Portfolio related to Digital Media Art (DMA)** featuring 10-15 completed digital media art projects. You must provide media, size, date, and your specific role in the case of collaborative projects for each project presented in the website portfolio.
  - Your DMA Portfolio must provide examples of art which demonstrate a strong conceptual orientation and aptitude for digital media art in areas including, but not limited to, computer graphics, web development, programming, physical computing, fabrication, prototyping, digital video, sound, interaction design, and computer games. \*NOTE: Portfolios containing more than fifteen (15) or less than ten (10) projects can jeopardize the review of your application.
  - Still Images. Images should be sized at least 1024 x 768 @ 72 DPI.
  - Audio & Video. Embed Audio & Video in the project pages of your online portfolio. The committee will review a total of 10 minutes of time based work.

## Master of Fine Art, Photography Application Requirements

For any additional information regarding this degree program at SJSU, please visit the department website: [https://www.sjsu.edu/art/art\\_programs/graduate/mfa\\_photography/](https://www.sjsu.edu/art/art_programs/graduate/mfa_photography/). Additionally, you may contact the Art Graduate Coordinator by email with specific questions.

The Art Department requires the following items to complete their departmental application:

- **Three (3) letters of recommendation** are required for your application. These letters should address your academic abilities and preparation for graduate work. Letters should show exceptional promise in Photography.
  - Include in your message to the recommender the name of the program to which you are applying at San Jose State University, (e.g. "I am applying to the MFA program in the Department of Art & Art History at San Jose State University with a concentration in Photography.")
  - You should request the letters via Cal State Apply before completing/submitting the application, you will not be able to submit your application until all letters have been requested. If you need to cancel your request, you can cancel it by using the "trash" button. To cancel a request click the "trash" button.
  - Please note: once you submit your Cal State Apply application, you cannot go back and request more recommendations.
- **Completed [Academic Summary Form](#)**
- **Statement of Purpose/Artist Statement.** Submit a 600-1200 word (one to two page) essay indicating your reasons to pursue graduate studies in Art at SJSU. The essay should also describe the nature and direction of your work and its relationship to contemporary art issues. You must indicate in the first sentence of your statement the name of the program to which you are applying and the area you wish to study (e.g. MFA in Art & Art History with a concentration in Photography.)
- **Résumé or Curriculum Vitae.** Please include education, exhibition history, publications, grants/awards, bibliography, and any relevant professional experience.
- **Portfolio related to Photography** containing fifteen (15) images/files. Portfolios containing more than fifteen (15) images/files can/will jeopardize the review of your application.
  - Cover Page: List each of the images/files in the Portfolio Folder by number, extended title and description with the following information: media, size, date, and circumstances under which work was done (class work, independent or job-related).
  - Images/files should be grouped in the portfolio folder. Images/File Format: High quality/low compression. [JPEG, .PNG or .GIF files not greater than 1280 pixels wide by 1024 pixels high], OR list URL/website
  - For applications with media or methods that are not well represented by still images, QuickTime movies may be uploaded. A maximum of five (5) QuickTime movies of works may be included into the Portfolio Folder in addition to image files.

## Master of Fine Art, Pictorial Art Application Requirements

For any additional information regarding this degree program at SJSU, please visit the department website: [http://www.sjsu.edu/art/art\\_programs/graduate/mfa\\_pictorial\\_art/](http://www.sjsu.edu/art/art_programs/graduate/mfa_pictorial_art/) Additionally, you may contact the Art Graduate Coordinator by email with specific questions.

The Art Department requires the following items to complete their departmental application:

**Three (3) letters of recommendations** are required for your application. These letters should address your academic abilities, art interests and preparation for graduate work. Letters should show exceptional promise in Pictorial Art.

- Include in your message to the recommender the name of the program to which you are applying at San Jose State University, (e.g. "I am applying to the MFA program in the Department of Art & Art History at San Jose State University with a concentration in Pictorial Art")
- You should request the letters via Cal State Apply before completing/submitting the application, you will not be able to submit your application until all letters have been requested. If you need to cancel your request, you can cancel it by using the "trash" button. To cancel a request click the "trash" button.
- Please note, once you submit your Cal State Apply application, you cannot go back and request more recommendations.
- **Completed [Academic Summary Form](#)**
- **Statement of Purpose/Artist Statement.** Submit a 600-1200 word (one to two page) essay indicating your reasons to pursue graduate studies in Art at SJSU. The essay should also describe the nature and direction of your work and its relationship to contemporary art issues. You must indicate in the first sentence of your statement the name of the program to which you are applying and the area you wish to study (e.g. MFA in Art & Art History with a concentration in Pictorial Art.)
- **Résumé or CurriculumVitae.** Please include education, exhibition history, publications, grants/awards, bibliography, and any relevant professional experience.
- **Portfolio related to Pictorial Art** containing fifteen (15) images/files. Portfolios containing more than fifteen (15) images/files can/will jeopardize the review of your application.
  - Cover Page: List each of the images/files in the Portfolio Folder by number, extended title and description with the following information: media, size, date, and circumstances under which work was done (class work, independent or job-related).
  - Images/files should be grouped in the portfolio folder. Image/File Format: High quality/low compression. [JPEG, .PNG or .GIF files not greater than 1280 pixels wide by 1024 pixels high], OR list URL/website
  - For Applications with media or methods that are not well represented by still images, QuickTime movies may be uploaded. A maximum of five (5) QuickTime movies of works may be included into the Portfolio Folder in addition to image files.

### Master of Fine Art, Spatial Art Application Requirements

For any additional information regarding this degree program at SJSU, please visit the department website: [http://www.sjsu.edu/art/art\\_programs/graduate/mfa\\_spatial\\_art/](http://www.sjsu.edu/art/art_programs/graduate/mfa_spatial_art/) Additionally, you may contact the Art Graduate Coordinator by email with specific questions.

- **Three (3) letters of recommendation** are required for your application. These letters should address your academic abilities, art interests and preparation for graduate work. Letters should show exceptional promise in Spatial Art (sculpture).
  - Include in your message to the recommender the name of the program to which you are applying at San Jose State University. (e.g. "I am applying to the MFA program in the Department of Art & Art History at San Jose State University with a concentration in Spatial Art.")

- You should request the letters via Cal State Apply before completing/submitting the application, you will not be able to submit your application until all letters have been requested. If you need to cancel your request, you can cancel it by using the “trash” button. To cancel a request click the “trash” button.
- Please note, once you submit your Cal State Apply application, you cannot go back and request more recommendations.
- [Completed Academic Summary Form](#)
- **Statement of Purpose/Artist Statement.** Submit a 600-1200 word (one to two page) essay indicating your reasons to pursue graduate studies in Art at SJSU. The essay should also describe the nature and direction of your work and its relationship to contemporary art issues. You must indicate in the first sentence of your statement the name of the program to which you are applying and the area you wish to study (e.g. MFA in Art & Art History with a concentration in Spatial Art.)
- **Résumé or curriculum vitae.** Please include education, exhibition history, publications, grants/awards, bibliography, and any relevant professional experience.
- **Portfolio related to Spatial Art** containing a maximum of fifteen (15) images/files. Portfolios containing more than fifteen (15) images/files can/will jeopardize the review of your application
  - Cover Page: List each of the images/files in the Portfolio Folder by number, extended title and description with the following information: media, size, date, and circumstances under which work was done (class work, independent or job-related).
  - Images/files should be grouped in the portfolio folder. Image/File Format: High quality/low compression. [JPEG, .PNG or .GIF files not greater than 1280 pixels wide by 1024 pixels high], OR list URL/website
  - For applications with media or methods that are not well represented by still images, QuickTime movies may be uploaded. A maximum of five (5) QuickTime movies of works may be included into the Portfolio Folder in addition to image files.

## FAQs

### **1) I am an international student, I graduated with a BA from a University in the United States, do I still need to do TOEFL, or can it be waived?**

If you have completed your undergraduate degree at SJSU (or any institution within an English Speaking Country) then you are exempt from the TOEFL requirement (for more info see link below). The TOEFL is a University requirement, not a departmental one, so you should follow up with an advisor for University Admissions in our [GAPE office](#) to confirm your Universities Eligibility.

### **2) Will some of my classes from my previous degree transfer?**

Course credits for classes taken as an undergraduate can not count toward a graduate degree if they counted toward the undergraduate degree. More info [here](#).

**3) Can my recommendation letters be from my former employers, co-workers, or people I've done projects with?**

Ideally your Three (3) Letters of Recommendation would come from Art faculty, Artists, Curators, or Institutional Art Administrators you've worked with recently. But if former employers would have insight into your artistic/creative process then those letters could be acceptable.

**4) I have a BA, would this degree allow me to apply to the MFA program?**

The equivalent to a Bachelor of Fine Art (BFA) degree in the applicant's designated area of graduate emphasis is **recommended**. At least 6 upper-division units in art history are **required**.

**5) I graduated from SJSU do I need to send my Official transcripts?**

SJSU students do not have to submit SJSU transcripts with your application. See step-by-step required documents for admission at [Want to Apply](#).

**6) For the portfolio, what is the maximum and minimum number of images we can submit? Do we put this images in a zip file or separate files?**

Portfolio requirements will vary for each program. Please view the requirements here: [Portfolio Requirements: Master of Fine \(MFA\) Art and Art History-CalApply](#).

**7) For Portfolio, are you looking for skill or more like style/expression or both? My area of expertise? Should all images have the same theme and be cohesive or are you just looking for the breadth of my work?**

Portfolios are reviewed by program area. Please view the requirements here: [Departmental Application Requirements by Area of Concentration](#). The Area Coordinator for the program you are applying to (linked above) will be able to answer this question with more detail.

**8) What is the format for the letters of recommendation?**

Your letters should be submitted in PDF file format. If you ask your previous professors (I recommend that you do), they will likely be very familiar with the format. For recommenders who might be less familiar with formats for academic letters of recommendation, please suggest that they use [this format](#). You should request the letter 4 weeks before the application due date. Here are some pointers for asking for letters of recommendation:

- [How to Ask a Professor for a Letter of Recommendation](#)
- [Daily Serving, Help Desk: Recommendations for References](#)

**9) How should I format my resume?**

For you resume (usually called a Curriculum Vitae, or CV, in academic & artistic contexts), follow the College Art Association Guidelines: [VISUAL ARTIST CURRICULUM VITAE: RECOMMENDED CONVENTIONS](#)