

make
your
mark

department of art and art history

m.a. art history

UAB
THE UNIVERSITY OF
ALABAMA AT BIRMINGHAM
Knowledge that will change your world



opportunities for art history graduates

Art History concerns itself with human history through the study of painting, sculpture, architecture and the graphic and decorative arts. Art History considers these arts as creative processes—as expressions of human ideas, feelings and conditions of life. The study of Art History allows students to immerse themselves in cultural and aesthetic issues.

Through the study of Art History, students gain an awareness of the values and social conditions embodied in great works of art. This knowledge is shaped by a familiarity with the art and architecture produced by world civilizations and an ability to analyze and understand the quality of art from diverse cultures and periods.

A major in Art History emphasizes visual as well as verbal and written literacy, tools that are critically important in a global society. The study of Art History fosters skills that can serve as a foundation for careers in professions as diverse as law, medicine, and business. The skills learned from the study of art history are widely transferable, and highly valued by employers across all business sectors. Alumni work in a variety of professions, including teaching, publishing, arts administration, museums, galleries, historic preservation, art libraries, journalism, advertising, and art conservation.

what can you do with a degree in art history?

Arts Education

A degree in Art History provides an excellent foundation for acquiring specialty graduate training in Art Education or History. At the college level, Art History is a fascinating collection of specializations and the career of a professor means research into your favorite historical periods and ideas as well as teaching at an advanced level.

State Arts Agency Director / Staff Member

State arts agencies strive to increase public access to the arts and work to support and grow their state's arts sector. Most states have a state arts agency, which draws funds from the National Endowment for the Arts (NEA) that was established by Congress in 1965. State arts agencies offer unique combinations of grants and services for artists, arts organizations, schools and community groups. These agencies require directors, art program liaisons, editors, and other staff, whose roles vary depending upon the particular agency's initiatives.

Museum Curator

Gallery or museum curators research, plan, organize and manage exhibitions of art, antiques, fossils and other cultural artifacts in art galleries, museums and other places that celebrate cultural heritage. They acquire and care for the items in their organization's collection, examine them to determine their condition, authenticity and value, arrange them for display in exhibitions and showings, and maintain records about their collections. They also liaise with historians, conservators and other experts about the best way to preserve and maintain the pieces in their care.

Museum Conservation

A background in Art History is very important if you're interested in pursuing art restoration. Museums, collectors and others require the services of art restorers to repair and preserve valuable historical objects. A degree in Art History provides the knowledge of artistic materials and techniques from the past that is critical to maintaining artworks for the future.

Art Crime Investigator

The FBI's Art Theft program coordinates an Art Crime Team consisting of 14 special agents and 3 prosecuting attorneys. These roles require an inquisitive nature, an interest in research, a high level of physical fitness, and investigative skill. Art crime investigators can also expect significant job variety, travel, and excellent benefits.

Auction Houses

Businesses like Sotheby's and Christie's rely on trained Art Historians to provide the research and evaluation of the artworks they sell. Specialists in various periods and cultures help identify and assess the value of historical objects from jewelry to furniture to fine art. A degree in Art History is a requirement for this career.

Art Lawyer

Massive amounts of money, time, and talent flow through the art world, which gives rise to a multitude of legal disputes. Litigation can center around copyright concerns, contract disputes, fraud, and artists' rights concerns. In addition to their art history master's degree, art lawyers will need a Juris Doctor (JD) degree and expertise in contract law.

Art Journalist

Writing about art as a career for newspapers, magazines and art-world internet sites requires an academic background in Art History as a professional qualification. Art journalists write articles in which they interpret and analyze the meaning and quality of an artist's work. This career is usually open only to those who have years of experience teaching art or art history or in working with museums and art galleries; some art critics may also have journalism experience.

Art Galleries

To work in the competitive field of commercial art galleries, it is key to have qualifications in Art History. Understanding the interpretation and historical context of artworks is central to a career in the fast-paced world of art marketing in galleries and international art fairs.

Art & Antique Dealer

Successful art dealers have the ability to cultivate a network of artists and simultaneously establish connections with collectors and museums who are interested in the work of their artists. The very best dealers develop reputations for anticipating swings in taste and value. Some seem to be able to create demand for an artist by simply agreeing to represent him or her. Most dealers specialize in a period, style, or type of art, such as eighteenth century painting, works of the New York School, or contemporary sculpture. All dealers must keep up with developments in the art world, particularly in their areas of specialty, so their careers depend upon maintaining a wide range of contacts among critics, curators, auction houses, artists, and collectors.

Art Economist

The purchase of fine art represents a unique combination of acquisition for personal enjoyment and investment for financial gain. This dynamic becomes even more pronounced during periods of economic downturn, such as the current recession. The recent emergence of publications like *The Art Economist* and firms specializing in analysis of the art economy displays the increasing level of interest in the study of the art market through a macroeconomic and microeconomic lens. An academic and practical study of the modern art economy represents an opportunity for art historians to apply research skills in a real-world setting.

Art Insurance Adjustor

An art insurance adjustor works for an insurance company to examine damage to an insured item, decide what work needs to be done to repair, clean, or restore it, and determine how much money the repair work will cost. Art insurance adjustors understand multiple artistic mediums, methods for cleaning, restoring, and otherwise repairing artwork, and must have the ability to creatively problem-solve for each unique case as it occurs. Adjustors may contract cleaning or restoration services, oversee the safe removal and transport of works, interact with artists and artwork owners, and may also work with police, emergency services, government personnel, or the FBI to remove and repair artwork damaged during major emergencies.

careers beyond the art world?

what skills do art history students acquire?

Key transferable skills highly prized by employers include visual and critical awareness, problem solving and time management. As an art history graduate you will have developed effective written and oral communication skills, be adept at analyzing and interpreting information from a range of sources, and be able to work independently.

“Regular readers of our column know that we are unabashed fans and supporters of the humanities and the creative and performing arts.” Thus began David Skorton and Glenn Altschuler’s essay, “Does Your Major Matter?” in the October 29, 2012 issue of Forbes Magazine. They go on to say, “We believe that the world’s thorniest problems will not be solved—nor will our nation be secure—without an understanding of ethics, cultures other than our own, and what it means to be fully human. And we have seen first-hand that students who complete liberal arts degrees have deeply satisfying—and productive—personal and professional lives.”

In fact, art historical training can prepare students for real world investigation. In her 2013 TedTalk, “How Art Can Help You Analyze,” Amy Herman explains that “The study of art can enhance our perception, and our ability to translate to others what we see. Those skills are useful. Those skills can save lives.” She goes on: “Close study of art can train viewers to study thoroughly, analyze the elements observed, articulate them succinctly, and formulate questions to address seeming inconsistencies.” These are critically important skills, she notes, for people looking at X-rays, interrogating suspects, or in a number of other professions.

Skorton and Altschuler also write, “The liberal arts ... serves as a preferred pathway to rewarding and remunerative careers. According to the Association of American Medical Colleges (AAMC), medical schools accepted 43 percent of the biological sciences majors, 47 percent of physical sciences majors, 51 percent of humanities majors, and 45 percent of social sciences majors who applied in 2010.” Writers analyzing other fields have found the same phenomenon to be true. In the August 17, 2015 issues of Forbes Magazine, George Anders remarked, “Throughout the major U.S. tech hubs, whether Silicon Valley or Seattle, Boston or Austin, Tex., software companies are discovering that liberal arts thinking makes them stronger.”

“I think the primary benefit of art in education is that it promotes lateral thinking. I would think that is a benefit to anyone who must try and visualize things that no one can actually see, like particle physics, microbiology, cosmology and astrophysics as well as figuring out how things work out in quantum mechanics to produce the results we see experimentally.”

Or as Business Insider (Feb. 19, 2014) concisely put it, “Next time you’re looking for an employee, consider an art history major.”

meet our graduates



Bethany Bekane McClellan

MA in Art History, 2013

Thesis: Science of Sleep: Tracing the Visual Language of Dreams from Fuseli to Gondry

Current position: Curatorial Assistant at the Birmingham Museum of Art

Before joining the Birmingham Museum of Art as a full-time staff member, Bethany completed a yearlong UAB/Birmingham Museum of Art Curatorial Fellowship from August 2013 to August 2014. The culmination of her Fellowship was the exhibition she curated, “Vanguard Views,” which focused on international works created from 1900 to 1940. It began to take shape once McClellan began to find objects like the Wassily Kandinsky print “Little Worlds VII” featured in the show.



Michele Forman

MA in Art History, 2009

Thesis: “Voyeurizing the Voyeurs”: An Analysis of the Gaze of the Non-Human Other in Chris Marker’s Sans Soleil

Current position: Director, Media Studies Program/Visual Literacy, UAB AND President of the Board, Sidewalk Film Festival



Kristen Greenwood

MA in Art History, 2006

Thesis: Images Of Inhumanity: George Bellows’s War Series

Current position: Associate Curator of Education for Adult Programs at the Birmingham Museum of Art



Joanna Wilson

MA in Art History, 2014

Thesis: The Bear And The Tiger: Decoding Attitudes And Anxieties Towards Nature Through A.A. Milne’s Winnie-The-Pooh In Post WWI Britain

Current position: Joanna is the a PhD candidate at the University of Wisconsin, Madison and Kohler Foundation Fellow



Angie May

MA in Art History, 2014

Thesis: Sak Yant: The Transition From Indic Yantras To Thai “Magical” Buddhist Tattoos

Current position: Instructor of Art History at Auburn University and Registrar, Singh Collection of World Art, Birmingham, Alabama.



Adrian Smythies

MA in Art History, 2006

Thesis: The Architecture And Iconography Of The Hindu Temple In Eads, Tennessee

Current position: Adrian Smythies has written seven publications on the architecture and iconography of American Hindu temples.



Kathryn Sullivan Kauffman

MA in Art History, 2009

Thesis: Borso D'Este and the Arthurian Legend: A Reconsideration of the Hall of the Months in the Palazzo Schifanoia

Current position: Manager of the Warner Foundation Collection of American Art, Tuscaloosa, AND Instructor of Art History, Samford University, Birmingham Alabama



Lindsay Mouyal

MA in Art Education, 2007

Current position: Teacher of visual art at Adamsville and Brookville Elementary Schools, and Instructor of Methods in the Alternative Master's Program in Visual Arts Education at UAB. Lindsay is the Birmingham Art Education Association Representative and was the AAEA Alabama Art Educator of the Year for 2013.



Harley Acres

MA in Art History, 2007

Thesis: Gender Bending and Comic Books as Art: Issues of Appropriation, Gender, and Sexuality in Japanese Art

Current position: Faculty at Pikes Peak Community College, Colorado Springs, Colorado



Ruoxin Wang

MA in Art History, 2015

Thesis: Aping Nobility: Reinterpreting the MMA "Monkey Cup"

Recent position: UAB Curatorial Fellow at the Birmingham Museum of Art, 2014-2015. Ruoxin will be entering a PhD program in Art History in 2016.

meet our faculty



Heather McPherson

Professor

Modern European Art History (18th-20th century)

hmcphers@uab.edu

My area of specialization is 18th-20th-century European art with a focus on French art and visual culture. I am particularly interested in portraiture and issues of representation, including the role of photography; the intersection of the visual and performing arts in eighteenth-century London; and the artist's studio and the evolving image of the artist in nineteenth-century France. My book on Art and Celebrity in the Age of Reynolds and Siddons will be published by Penn State University Press. My current research project examines the image of the artist in nineteenth-century France through the lens of artist's studio. Through a series of case studies from Corot to Bazille to Picasso, it reframes and contextualizes the image of the artist and reassesses how changing conditions of artistic production and the exhibition and marketing of art helped redefine and shape artistic identity.

Here is a list of the art history courses I teach at UAB. Students interested in enrolling who do not have the prerequisites (including students majoring in other fields such as history, engineering, etc.) should contact me to request an override.

ARH 204: Early Modern to Contemporary

ARH 430: Eighteenth-Century Art

ARH 440: Nineteenth-Century Art I: Neoclassicism and Romanticism

ARH 441: Nineteenth-Century Art II: Impressionism and Post-Impressionism

ARH 460 Twentieth-Century Art to 1945

ARH: 464 Art Since 1945

Special topics seminars in Modern Art



Cathleen Cummings

Associate Professor

Asian Art History

cathleen@uab.edu

At UAB I teach all areas of Asian art history, but I specialize in the art and architecture of India, especially Hindu temples and illustrated manuscripts.

My work is contextualized within the study of religion, and Indic culture, history, and society more broadly. I am committed to interdisciplinary approaches in education, and enjoyed serving as a mentor to undergraduate and graduate students.

To learn more about me, please visit see my faculty video profile at uab.edu/art

Some of the classes I teach include:

Buddhist & Hindu Art in India to 1200

Arts of Death and the Tomb in East Asia

Post-Partition Identity in South Asian Cinema



Noa Turel

Assistant Professor
Renaissance & Baroque Art History
nturel@uab.edu

I decided to become an art historian while taking a class very similar to Art History 101 as a first-year student at an architecture school in France. Looking at Jan van Eyck's *Arnolfini Double Portrait* in lecture, I realized I am far more excited about advancing our understanding of these paintings than about designing buildings.

Art history has since taken me on some truly exciting adventures; I have traveled and lived in cities around the US and Europe, interned and worked in beautiful museums such as MoMA in New York, the Courtauld Gallery in London, and the Getty Center in Los Angeles, and met many wonderful and interesting artists and scholars. Even more exciting, however, were the imaginary journeys. Traveling with cave painters across the frozen English channel some 30,000 years ago, following Leonardo da Vinci from Rome to Paris in the 1500s, and sitting in 1965 Carnegie Hall as Yoko Ono staged a haunting feminist performance were experiences that no frequent-flyer miles could buy. I take my students on such journeys in the hope that they too would form cherished and deeply personal memories.

Renaissance, Baroque, and medieval artifacts fortuitously survived for hundreds of years, coming down to us as coded messages about the ways people in the past had lived, loved, and understood the world around them. In my courses, I teach how to decode those messages and read them, a skill students can then apply throughout their lives to images encountered in museums, the media, or even the pages of old family albums.

Here is a list of the courses I teach at UAB. I am happy to waive prerequisites for ARH 101 students interested in enrolling; feel free to email me to request an override. You are also welcome to sit in on a lecture of Italian Renaissance Art this semester, just email me a day in advance to let me know you are coming.

- ARH 204: Early Modern to Contemporary
- ARH 419: Arts of Death in the Middle Ages
- ARH 421: Italian Renaissance Art (*open for visits in the fall: TR 12:30-1:45*)
- ARH 422: The Birth of Painting: Portable Pictures Across Renaissance Europe
- ARH 424: Northern Renaissance Art
- ARH 431: Seventeenth-Century Painting
- ARH 435: Arts of Power in Early Modern Europe
- ARH 495: (Seminar) Embodied: Sex, Ethnicity, and Class in an Old Masters Picture Gallery



Jessica Dallow

Associate Professor
Modern & Contemporary American Art
jdallow@uab.edu

My research and teaching areas are modern and contemporary American art with emphases on race and gender, as well as the representation of animals in art. I hold a secondary appointment in African American Studies and serve as the director of the M.A. program in art history.

I never intended to become an art historian. I started college as a history major, intending to go to law school, then decided on computer science (I love math). But once I took the survey (comparable to UAB's ARH 204), I was hooked. So in a way I came back to history. Yet instead of texts I realized I was drawn to objects and images and what they reveal about people and culture. I am especially interested in local and regional arts and artists and how they provide new ways of understanding — and new perspectives on — my own community and surroundings.

ARH 450: American Art to 1900

ARH 464: Art since 1945

ARH 465: Aspects of Contemporary Art

ARH 467: Modern Architecture

ARH 468: Race and Representation

ARH 480: Art Criticism and Theory

ARH 484: Archiving Birmingham Art and Artists

for more information visit: uab.edu/art

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