Learn to think and talk critically about art and art history

Gain hands-on experience with technical processes and studio practices

Draw inspiration from frequent interaction with Pittsburgh’s vibrant arts scene

Graduate with a degree that complements many non-arts focused industries

why you belong here

Are you passionate about the visual arts? Do you wish you could better analyze what you see and understand the impact it has on viewers? Are you a curious and creative tinkerer who cannot help but make things? If this sounds like you, then the visual arts program at Chatham University is where you belong.

Here, you will learn about the foundation and history of visual media and prepare to work in the arts in a range of capacities, both as critic and creator. You’ll develop a deeper understanding and appreciation of art in all its forms through hands-on experience in the University Art Gallery and local partnership organizations.

If you want to study the arts while developing other academic and intellectual interests, you will find no better place than Chatham University’s visual arts department. It’s an ideal environment for intellectual, creative, and personal academic and artistic growth.

what you can expect

Our visual arts program combines the advantages of a small school, such as personal attention from professors, small classes, and state-of-the-art facilities, with the perks of being in a city that boasts several museums of art, including traditional museums and more experimental spaces.

After choosing a concentration in studio arts or art history, or both, you will be lead through close examinations of works of art that will enable you to analyze art formally, contextually, and theoretically. The art history path will help you become attuned to the impact of visual culture in our society as you learn to talk about art and art history critically. In the studio arts path, you will hone your natural artistic talents and learn technical processes, theory, history, and culture before moving on to more advanced studio practices, such as ceramics, sculpture, painting, drawing, and printmaking.
what you will learn

Chatham University’s visual arts program is ideal for those who are interested in exploring and conversing in the language of visual culture. No matter your concentration, you will work with technical applications, such as design, as well as broader concepts informed by critical theory, history, and self-exploration, all while keeping in mind the artist’s role in a greater social sphere. You will be asked to assume creative, scholarly, and leadership roles that will integrate with and inform other fields of study while developing the creative approach that will allow you to stand out.

where it will take you

Completing one or more internships with the Carnegie Museum of Art, The Mattress Factory, The Andy Warhol Museum, or the Pittsburgh Center for the Arts while still at Chatham can help prepare you for the challenges you will face in your career.

After completing our art history concentration, you can easily be accepted to graduate programs in art history, museum education, and business and art, or you may launch a successful career as a curator and grant writer at a museum, as a manager for a professional artist’s studio, or as an appraiser for auction houses.

As a graduate of our studio arts concentration, you will possess the technical skills, art historical foundation, and theoretical direction to navigate the creative industry in pursuit of such jobs as master printer, art handler, curator, museum professional, art registrar, art critic, or entrepreneur.

learn more

Read faculty bios, browse a complete list of facilities and equipment, and learn more about senior tutorials at chatham.edu/visualarts.

“Chatham prides itself on its close relationship with Pittsburgh art institutions and museum and gallery professionals. The opportunities this provides for our students are immeasurable and includes direct access to important works of art, events, internships, and other pre-professional prospects.”

— Elisabeth Roark, Ph.D., associate professor of art

trending now

- Chatham University’s visual arts program allows you to work extensively with traditional artistic equipment, including a printmaking lab with screen-printing, woodcut, intaglio, etching, monotype, and linocut supplies, a sculpture lab, a woodworking shop, a ceramics lab with potter’s wheels and kilns, and painting studios with natural light. You also have access to the latest professional equipment, including broadcast quality camcorders, tripods, dollies, lighting equipment, audio mixers, digital cameras, digital and analog photography labs, and digital editing and sound labs.

- In 1998, Chatham alumna, Dr. Cheryl Olkes, bequeathed a magnificent collection of more than 600 works of African art to the University. It was her desire that Chatham students have the opportunity to use this collection for study, exhibition, and better understanding of African art and culture by examining, researching, and writing about these tangible “points of contact” between the artists and ourselves.

chatham university

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