Visual Art

Assessment Plan for the MFA Program

Program Learning Outcomes

1. Graduates receiving an MFA will demonstrate an involved engagement with the practice of making artworks.

2. Graduates receiving an MFA will be skilled in the discussion and written analysis of theoretical and historical issues pertinent to their art practice.

3. Graduates receiving an MFA will be introduced to a range of art instruction methods: including in-class critique, written analysis, assignment design, material problem solving, and presentation of works for exhibition.

4. Graduates receiving an MFA will show proficiency in their art making practice when they receive their degree. This includes artist-level material, iconographic, historical and presentation understanding and the ability to demonstrate this in an exhibition of their artwork.

5. Graduates receiving an MFA will exhibit their thesis artwork in a public setting and complete a written thesis explanation of said work, describing the strategies, motivation, and historical grounding of their thesis artwork. This thesis exhibition is the capstone of the Art MFA degree.

Assessment Methods

1. Students are required to take at least three group critique classes taught that require them to present and defend their artwork to the faculty and their peers, critique one another’s work, and discuss the aesthetic and technical issues of said work.

2. Students must engage in at least one seminar on contemporary critical issues, one class on critical theory, and one art history graduate seminar. These classes address varied areas of analysis in writing and discussion on historical and contemporary issues in art.

3. All students serve as Teaching Assistants (TA’s), currently for one class a year, resulting in at least three classes as a teaching assistant. TA performance is assessed through teaching evaluations that are reviewed by faculty and kept on file. Students also enroll in a teaching practicum the quarter of their TA. Students additionally have the opportunity to apply for one Gluck Fellowship, which gives them the opportunity to teach workshops of their own design in their chosen medium to secondary and high-school students.

4. All first and second year students have their work evaluated by a panel of three professors during the spring quarter of each year. Students present work produced during that year and explain/defend their progress. First year student reviews establish a baseline for their aesthetic aptitudes while second year student reviews
articulates their progress towards the thesis year. Each professor produces notes, which are then consolidated by the graduate advisor to form an official letter evaluating the student’s progress. These letters address the progress of the candidates towards the respective yearly learning outcomes and are presented to the student and graduate division as well as being kept on file in the Art department.

5. All first and second year students are encouraged to participate in group or solo exhibitions on campus in the Phyllis Gill Gallery and have traditionally participated collectively in the local municipal art museum, the Riverside Art Museum. These exhibitions are reviewed by the faculty and feedback is given verbally in individual meetings that address their progress towards goals of personal expression and learning outcomes.

6. Students hold a one-on-one class with their thesis advisor in the winter quarter of their third year. This class assesses the progress of their thesis project and written thesis formally.

7. The culmination of the MFA program in Art at UCR is the thesis project. This constitutes an exhibition of original creative artwork that is displayed in the Sweeney Art Gallery, an exhibition venue that displays artwork of national and international merit throughout the year. The thesis of their artwork is accompanied by an artist statement written by the candidate that explains the historical, theoretical, and aesthetic basis of their artwork. During the public exhibition of their thesis work a final review is performed by a panel composed of the student’s thesis advisor and two other selected faculty. The candidate describes the thesis work and their learning achievements. The panel assesses the progress of the candidate over the term of their matriculation and the final thesis artwork.

Faculty discuss the progress of the students individually and the program as a whole yearly, assessing the value of each aspect and making necessary changes to the program. This discussion takes place electronically as well as in faculty meetings and particularly when the faculty as a whole meets three times to evaluate and select new MFA candidates from the yearly applicant pool.