

**College:** COTA

**Department:** Graphic Design

**Degrees:** B.F.A.

*The Graphic Design program converted the B.A./B.S. degree to a B.F.A. in the Fall of 2017.*

### The School of Art + Design

Portland State University's School of Art + Design is dedicated to helping students understand and explore the ways that artists, designers, and their works function within a larger social context. With 1,100 undergraduate majors and minors, a vibrant and growing graduate program, a dedicated faculty of internationally recognized artists, designers, scholars, and a dynamic visiting artist program, PSU's School of Art + Design is a place where students from a variety of backgrounds interact, exchange ideas and cross conventional aesthetic boundaries.

Many prominent Northwest artists, designers, and art historians began their professional careers by studying in our programs at Portland State University. Our graduates have used their training in the School of Art + Design as the basis for careers in a wide variety of fields, from the arts to commerce, industry, and education. Art and design, which require personal initiative and imagination, as well as the development of skills in mental and manual dexterity, can provide students with a background well suited for applications that are wide-reaching and greatly rewarding.

The School of Art + Design helps students develop a visual, verbal, and critical language of the arts that has a positive impact on the future and engages with our communities. Since visual arts are a form of to all other forms, understanding the theoretical bases and critical interpretations of this communication is a crucial component of our curriculum. At the same time, because the visual arts are a unique form of communication, students are trained in the necessary technical skills, theories, terminology, and processes specific to the production of the visual arts.

As part of an urban university, the mission of the School of Art + Design is dedicated to helping students understand and experience ways that artists, designers, and their works are involved in a larger social context, both in the contemporary world and in the course of world history. Whether in the studio, computer lab, lecture hall, or working in the community via internships, service projects, exhibitions, and collaborations, our students have the opportunity to forge connections between traditions of visual art and their own developing expression.

Students enrolled in the School of Art + Design at PSU will acquire:

- Knowledge and experience of the creative problem-solving processes.
- Knowledge of discipline-specific skills and vocabulary.
- Knowledge of art history and design.
- Knowledge of critical theories in art.
- Knowledge and experience to formulate a cumulative body of work in their discipline.

## The Graphic Design Program

The Graphic Design program within the School of Art + Design provides a comprehensive undergraduate education in design principles, applications, theories, history, and practice. The degree in Graphic Design places particular emphasis on form, craft, concept, critique, and research skills, as well as the development of effective design processes, the generation of meaningful narratives and storytelling techniques, and engagement with various community partners. Students work with faculty primarily through studio courses that introduce an increasing complexity of design problems and methodologies, combined with opportunities for independent development and interaction with professionals.

The 100-level courses in graphic design introduce basic principles and tools and their specific applications in graphic design. The 200-level courses provide a comprehensive studio experience with an increased emphasis on design thinking. The first two years of study culminate with a required Sophomore Portfolio Review, occurring once each year at the end of the Spring term. All students majoring in graphic design (including students transferring in with lower- or upper-division credits) must pass this Review to enroll in 300-level graphic design courses. Only after successfully passing the Review are graphic design majors allowed to continue progression through the program. In their 300- and 400-level course work, students choose courses of increasing specialization, have opportunities for engaging in professional internships, and work to develop a professional portfolio as the culmination of their design studies. We encourage our upper-division students to engage with the broader design community, through working with community partners in Portland and the Pacific Northwest, volunteering with Design Portland, and via studying abroad, either through the student exchange program with University Arts London, or through summer study programs that have brought our students to the United Kingdom and Japan.

Our program is ranked in the top 5% of undergraduate graphic design programs nationally. We have also been named the #1 public graphic design school on the west coast. These high rankings are a result of the dedication of our faculty and students. Our faculty maintain international research programs, having presented their work in Spain, Thailand, France, Germany, Switzerland, and the United Kingdom. Our faculty also continue to practice as designers, with notable client lists including Google, IBM, The Portland Institute of Contemporary Art, Nike, CNN, The History Channel, AT&T, Gatorade, Emigre, the New York Times, Chipotle, Car2Go, Uniqlo, Hallmark, IDEO, VH1, Girl Scouts of America, OMSI, Bitch Magazine, and the Gap. Our alumni are a powerful force in shaping design. Our graduates work for global firms like Nike, Columbia, Adidas, Wieden+Kennedy, and Instrument, but also work for small studios, as in-house designers, and many have gone on to successfully start and run their own companies.

We pride ourselves on not just having built a program, but also a community. Professional designers are brought in to present on a weekly basis through our Show & Tell lecture series. We also bring in visiting professionals to specific classes to give presentations and critique student work. One of the main strengths of our program is the ongoing involvement of the design and broader community in our courses and curriculum. The participation and

feedback of these professionals ensure we are providing our students with curriculum that will successfully prepare them for careers in the competitive field of design.

**Graphic Design Program Learning Outcomes**

LO #1: Acquire and apply knowledge of formal and technical design

LO #2: Analyze, evaluate and critique design works

LO #3: Understand and apply strategies for creative idea generation and conceptual development

LO #4: Initiate, define, and solve visual problems

LO #5: Understand and apply cultural, historic, and aesthetic design theory

LO #6: Knowledge and application of client-designer or audience-designer strategies