Introduction
Many prominent Northwest artists, designers, and art historians began their professional careers by studying art at Portland State University. An even greater number of successful and productive people have used their training in the Department of Art as the basis for careers in commerce, industry, education, and a variety of fields limited only by imagination. Art, which requires personal initiative and imagination and develops skills in mental and manual dexterity, can provide the student with a background well suited for applications that are wide reaching and greatly rewarding.

The Department of Art at Portland State University consists of artists and designers, educators, and art historians actively engaged in their respective fields and with the extended community. As part of an urban university, the mission of the Department of Art is dedicated to helping students understand and experience ways that artists and their works are involved in a larger social context, both in the contemporary world and in the course of world history.

The foundation of the Department of Art is the development of a visual, verbal, and critical language of the arts for future artists and scholars, as well as for members of the community. Since visual arts are a form of communication related 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, the theories, the terminology and processes specific to the production of the visual arts.

Because learning “to see” is a most crucial component of any art program, the department requires all students to study both the history of art and to have studio experience. The Department of Art supports the full integration of art/design studio practice with art history and theory. Whether in the studio, computer lab, lecture hall, or seminar room, students have the opportunity to forge connections between traditions of visual art and their own developing imagination and expression.

Art programs are designed to develop the student’s creative faculties, a sense of critical judgment, and fundamental skills and techniques. Within the art major, the principal and supporting courses have one general purpose: to instill a mature, professional attitude toward the process of artistic creation and expression.

Students enrolled in the Department of Art 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.

At the same time, the programs seek to permit the student a choice upon graduation. The alternatives are: (1) to undertake formal graduate study; (2) to begin a professional career in the fine or applied arts; or (3) to combine the student’s degree program with the basic teaching norm in order to qualify to teach in Oregon public schools.

As a general rule, the major in art requires a minimum of 88 credits in art courses. Included are extensive experiences in studio work and a comprehensive study of the history of art. Majors in art history require a minimum of 68 credits.
Art Practices—BA, BS degree.
The BA/BS is a liberal arts degree in visual art (88 credits). The studio art program provides a comprehensive view of studio art practices, applications, theories, and history, with an emphasis on trends in contemporary art. The first and second years focus on foundation courses including art history, drawing, art theory and design. During the second year the student is encouraged to begin sampling a variety of studio courses in printmaking, painting, drawing, sculpture, digital art and art and social practices. In the third and fourth years students select a focus, further developing their knowledge of visual language, media skills and the conceptual and expressive aspects of their work. Also, during the third and fourth years critical theory and professional practices in art are investigated, aiding the student in establishing a sense of place within the visual arts community.

Art Practices—BFA degree.
The BFA (108 credits) is a professional degree, providing students with knowledge and skills designed specifically to prepare them for a career as a practicing artists and/or the master of fine art degree. It is a competitive program that provides a comprehensive education in visual art practices, applications, theories, and history, with an emphasis on trends in contemporary art. The BFA differs from the BA/BS in Art, providing greater depth conceptually and technically, as well as emphasizing professional preparation. Students interested in the BFA degree will submit a portfolio for review at the end of spring quarter in their third year of study. (Submission is made only after completing 72 of the required 88 credits and selected art courses in the first three years of the BA/BS degree program.) The BFA degree requires the student to research, develop, assemble and present a strong body of well-conceived and executed work. The culminating body of work is presented in a thesis exhibition and includes an oral defense.

Undergraduate Program Learning Outcomes

01 Acquire/ apply knowledge of formal/ conceptual/ technical design concepts.

02 Understand/ apply cultural, historic & aesthetic art theory.

03 Understand/ apply strategies for creative idea generation.

04 Initiate/ define/ solve visual problems using analysis, synthesis, and evaluation structures.

05 Acquire/ apply formal analysis of works of art.