

Visual Art

A Visual Art education at Brown is a rich experience of conceptual challenge, skill-building, and self-discovery. Our students acquire the intellectual and practical tools to make art, as well as to interpret and critique the world of images. We offer a range of courses: digital media, drawing, painting, photography, printmaking, sculpture, and video. Our students also have opportunities to take classes at the neighboring Rhode Island School of Design.

For additional information, please visit the department's website: <https://www.brown.edu/art> (<https://www.brown.edu/art/>)

Visual Art Concentration Requirements

The Visual Art concentration engages in artistic practice across a wide range of media: painting, sculpture, printmaking, drawing, photography, digital imaging, book arts, and film. Courses in art history combine with these to frame the direction of the concentrator's work and to develop their critical thinking skills. Students are encouraged to cultivate an informed and thoughtful individual perspective. Students in the Department of Visual Art enjoy cutting-edge facilities and a knowledgeable faculty. These two resources inspire creativity and pleasure in our concentrators while they explore the discipline. Students acquire the intellectual and practical tools to make art as well as to interpret and critique the world of images. Students also have the opportunity to take courses at the neighboring Rhode Island School of Design (RISD). All Visual Art (VISA) courses are graded S/NC.

Concentration Program Requirements

Concentration Requirements:

Three Foundation courses are required. One from each of three categories.

Category I: Analog 2D (choose one from the following:)	1
VISA 0100 Studio Foundation	
VISA 0160 Foundation Painting	
Category II: Digital & 4D (choose one from the following)	1
VISA 0120 Foundation Media	
VISA 0140 Photography Foundation	
VISA 0150 Digital 2D Foundation	
Category III: Spatial & 3D (choose one from the following):	1
VISA 0130 Sculpture Foundation	
VISA 0170 Spatial Dynamics Foundations	

Five additional upper level studio courses are required. A minimum of three of these upper level studio courses must be taken within the Brown Visual Art Department. Only one ISP or GISP can be counted towards the concentration. When combined with the three Foundation courses, a total of six studio courses are required to be taken within the department.

3 HIAA courses are required. (3 credits total)

One course on 20th and/or 21st century art, one on non-Western practice, and one HIAA seminar. HIAA courses in Architectural Practice cannot be counted towards the Art History requirement.

Senior Thesis Exhibition: which does not carry academic credit, is required for graduation (usually presented during the seventh or eighth semester).

Total Credits 11

Honors

The project is a two-semester enterprise and counts as two courses taken for graduation credit VISA 1800C (Sem I) and VISA 1990 (Sem II) but will not count as two of the eleven courses needed for the visual art concentration. Students that are planning to complete their degree requirements in December must apply for honors by December 5 of the previous year.

Courses

VISA 0100. Studio Foundation.

Covers the basics of drawing and 2D design while cultivating the capacity for visual thinking.

VISA 0120. Foundation Media.

Foundation media focuses on the production and theory of time-based digital media and introduces the computer as a medium and a tool for art. Students will experiment with the production of video, sound, and interactive media. Students will examine and produce work that is multidisciplinary in nature, combining aspects of critical discourse, art, and technology.

VISA 0130. Sculpture Foundation.

This is an extensive study in form and structure. It is designed to develop spatial understanding and the fundamentals of 3-dimensional design and construction. Students will explore the structural, compositional and conceptual implications of common materials, such as wood, metal, plaster and found objects. Projects are designed as a means for investigating a variety of sculptural processes. Students will learn safe usage of power and hand tools, casting techniques, wood and metal work. In addition, special emphasis will be placed on creativity, critical thinking and the ability to successfully articulate ideas visually.

VISA 0140. Photography Foundation.

This class is a wide ranging technical and conceptual introduction to photography. Through weekly projects, students will be exposed to 19th-21st century photo processes. Topics covered include cameras, lenses, software, darkroom overview, scanning, natural and artificial lighting, alternative processes as well as concepts such as selective focus, color temperature, composition. Short readings and in-class slide presentations on a diverse range of photographers will introduce students to the history of photography. This course will prepare students for upper level Photography classes at Brown and RISD.

VISA 0150. Digital 2D Foundation.

This foundation studio course introduces the basic practices and concepts of two-dimensional digital media production including image acquisition, editing and manipulation, vector illustration, and preparation for online and offline viewing. Through studio exercises, readings, and assignments we will experiment with the production of electronic images. We will be looking at and producing work that is conscious and critical in nature, and which combines aspects of contemporary art, media, and technology. Collaboration and group work will be encouraged to share learning techniques and skill resources.

VISA 0160. Foundation Painting.

Painting in acrylics for a variety of interests and aptitudes - basic instruction in media and painting procedure, emphasis on development of the image as a visual statement. Will cover basic color principles, painting techniques and concepts. Assignments cover a wide range of approaches including painting from observation, individual research, and imagination. Images, related books, and articles are discussed. Individual criticism is given; participation in group discussions is required.

VISA 0170. Spatial Dynamics Foundations.

This beginner-level course introduces students to Spatial Dynamics, which is not a medium, but rather an approach to engaging with sculpture in the expanded field. Students will build visual, technical, and critical thinking skills through an exploration of materials in space, with particular interest to the relationship between objects, environments, and people. The course begins with a studio-based inquiry into constructing objects through traditional and non-traditional additive, subtractive, and transformative methods. The inquiry will continue beyond studio production and into alternative and public spaces, with an introduction to installation art, social practice, performance art, and dematerialized practices. The focus of the course is on interdisciplinary experimentation of complex ideas through problem solving, laying the groundwork for advanced courses in the arts.

VISA 1110. Drawing.

This course focuses on drawing from models, observation, and imagination in a variety of media with an emphasis on creative work and classroom participation. A continuing series of outside assignments is emphasized. Visits to galleries, museums and pertinent exhibitions may be undertaken. The later part of this course will introduce ideas of conceptual and political art into the drawing process.

VISA 1140. Monumental Drawing.

Monumental Drawing is an immersive studio art course exploring expansive, experimental approaches to drawing. Large-scale, ambitious projects will engage risk-taking and developing meaning through intensive studio work. Contemporary drawing has become a powerful medium in its own right. From process and experiential beginnings to site-specific and conceptual directions, artists have pushed the medium with ideas and projects that challenge any restrictive definition of the medium. Through innovations in concept, materials, form and location, there are limitless ways of approaching the making of and defining what a drawing can be. Studio projects assigned will explore and expand upon these ideas.

VISA 1150. Illuminated Sculpture.

This immersive summer course is an introduction to light as a sculptural medium. Through a series of projects focused on different aspects of illumination, students will develop visual and spatial literacy, explore different fabrication techniques, and investigate a range of different lighting technologies. Combining studio art practice and design, this course offers students the unique experience of creating objects, installations, and performances that engage spatial reasoning, iterative design practices, and alternative material solutions. Extensive outside work is expected. Enrollment limited. Besides in-class studio time, students should expect to work an additional 17 hours per week. This includes independent studio work, readings, responsive writing and research.

VISA 1160. Drawing with Watercolor.

This course will be a rigorous examination of the possibilities of drawing with watercolor, with an emphasis on unorthodox use of the watercolor medium. Because the basis of watercolor is sound drawing, there will be considerable instruction and practice in drawing fundamentals such as perspective, value, composition, scale, rendering, etc. Required prerequisite: VISA 0100 or by permission.

VISA 1210A. The Big Print.

The Big Print is a course that emphasizes the experimental aspects of printing, and how printmaking methods can be used in unique ways to create large, powerful images. This course utilizes relief printmaking—one of the oldest simplest and most “democratic” printmaking methods—to explore the scale and impact of print. Extensive technical exploration in linocut and woodcut techniques will be complemented by research into and discussion of the history of print workshops, public print installations, and the role of printmaking in grassroots political movements. Students will complete a series of four print projects getting successively larger in size and culminating with a collaborative woodcut composed from four sheets of plywood and printed with a road roller. Prerequisite: VISA 0100.

VISA 1210B. Etching.

Covers all aspects of black and white etching, using zinc plates. Combines an emphasis on traditional skills and craft with a critical and theoretical approach to images. Extensive outside work required. Prerequisite: VISA 0100 or VISA 0110.

VISA 1210C. Investigating Collage.

This course will be an artistic and intellectual investigation of 2 dimensional collage, which is the juxtaposition or arrangement of multiple images or parts of images to create fresh meanings and narratives. We will be working mostly with scissors, paper, printing, painting, and glue, supplemented with slides and reading. Use of the computer to complete some assignments will be optional. Prerequisite: VISA 0100 or VISA 0110.

VISA 1210D. Lithography I & II.

Lithography is the most versatile printmaking process. Working on limestone and aluminum plates, students will learn to produce, process and print their work. Class participation is vital, as students will be aiding each other in this complicated process. This course requires considerable time outside of class. Lithography can be repeated, with experienced students learning multi-plate color processes.

VISA 1210E. Printmaking.

This course covers a range of traditional and digital printmaking processes. The course will explore how traditional and digital techniques can be used together and how they may interact with and influence one another. Work will be in both black and white and color. Prerequisite: VISA 0100 or VISA 0110.

VISA 1210F. Relief Printing.

No description available. Prerequisite: VISA 0100 or VISA 0110.

VISA 1210G. Silkscreen.

This course will provide students with a thorough knowledge of both water-based screen printing techniques and digital imaging. The intersection of digital printing processes and screen printing within the context of contemporary works on paper will be explored through a series of experimental mixed-media projects. Work will be in both black and white and color.

VISA 1210I. Woodcut.

Woodcut, the simplest printmaking method, has been used as a communication device for more than a thousand years. Students will work in both black and white and color to address contemporary issues. The history and aesthetics of the political poster will provide the foundational knowledge for the class. Prerequisite: VISA 0100 or VISA 0110. Enrollment limited to 17. Students who are not admitted during pre-registration or who were unable to pre-register should attend the first class.

VISA 1210J. Making Monotypes: The Painterly Print.

The aim of the course is to understand the variability, sequencing potential and the inherent luminosity of the monotype medium and to use these attributes to discover and advance one's own visual ideas. Monotype refers to the making of a single unique print through press and non-press means. Several rapid projects with themes will precede a longer series culminating in a final epic portfolio of independent content. Individual, peer, and small and large group critiques will occur weekly for feedback.

VISA 1210K. Digital Printmaking.

This studio art course investigates possibilities for using the computer along w/traditional painting and printmaking processes to produce image-based intermedial work. We will explore how computers and computer networks have changed the creation, content, form, distribution, and exhibition of artwork through a series of assignments, readings, discussions, and slide lectures, and how computers and digital media can intersect with a traditional studio practice. Students will produce a portfolio of mixed-media work. Photoshop, Illustrator, the internet, and digital printers, along with traditional painting, drawing, and printing mediums will be used as tools for art-making.

VISA 1210L. Political Constructions.

Arranged as a collective, the class will make art using various media, such as digital printing, silkscreen, woodcut, collagraph, Xerox, on-line blogs and wikis to create and distribute activist political images related to one or more topics (class choice).

The class will research the history and theory of political art and its contribution and power in political movements of the recent past.

VISA 1210M. Collaboration & Community in Print.

Students will be introduced to printmaking through four main techniques: relief, drypoint, collagraph, and paper stencils. Just as each collaborator brings a new voice to a project, each medium affords a different mark-making style to a print. Working within these mediums, students will explore the potential for rich layered imagery, and robust variable editions. Course material will be presented through demos, lectures, in-class workshops, and critiques, and weekly feedback will be provided through individual, peer, small and large group critiques.

VISA 1240. Art of the Book.

Will examine the book, structurally and conceptually, as artist's medium. Students will learn the materials, tools and techniques of making books, as they explore the expressive and narrative possibilities of the book form. Topics and projects may include digital imaging, combining text and image, traditional binding or digital publishing.

VISA 1250. Art of the Book.

We will examine the artist's book from the printer/publisher perspective. Students will learn the basics of book design, traditional typography & letterpress printing. Students will consider the book and its related printed matter in service of its content. The course will be run as a fine press publishing house. Students will produce individual and group projects, including bookplates, broadsides, and books. Studio work will be augmented with field trips, artist visits, and guided exploration of the special collections at the John Hay Library.

VISA 1300. Words in Painting.

Words in painting introduce sound into what is usually a silent experience; they force the viewer to both look and read. Writing is a form of drawing. Words can be poetry, advertising, or labeling. Words can be admired abstractly for their form. For much of history, words and pictures have been used to tell important stories, deliver political content, or sell consumer goods. This course will examine the use of words in contemporary painting through readings, slides, and discussion. A series of painting assignments will address the artistic problems of using words.

VISA 1310. Painting I.

This painting course explores ideas and concepts in contemporary painting and emphasizes individual projects based on prompts. Students will experiment with materials, color and scale strengthening ideas through individual investigations into content and context. Critiques, readings, writing assignments and final projects will be supplemented by research into artists and movements that have developed within the last several decades.

VISA 1320. Painting II.

This course is an in-depth investigation of contemporary painting practices and concepts, with a strong emphasis placed on critique. Experimentation and exploration of individual themes is emphasized. Affords an opportunity for in-depth investigations of painting techniques and ideas and the development of a series of works reflecting an individual creative vision.

VISA 1320A. Painting The Mediated Image.

In this themed painting course we will explore how painting might serve as a lens through which to view and respond to the digital world. An emphasis will be placed on exploration of individual interests; students will choose a subject to research (i.e. digital aesthetics, computer graphics, photography, video, gaming, automation, social media, digital culture, privacy, identity, online shopping, etc) and will work on painting projects related to their chosen topics. The course introduces photo-silkscreen, digital painting and printing, and image transfer techniques into experimental painting-based studio practices. Course is restricted to Visual Art concentrators or by permission of the instructor.

VISA 1330. Drawing with Watercolor.

This course will be a rigorous examination of the possibilities of drawing with watercolor. We will do a lot of work outside and there will be an emphasis on unorthodox use of the watercolor medium. Because the basis of watercolor is sound drawing, there will be considerable instruction and practice in drawing fundamentals such as perspective, value, composition, scale, rendering, etc. Recommended prerequisite: VISA 0100, 0110, or comparable foundation level course is expected, or by permission.

VISA 1340. Accessorizing Painting: The Exalted Surface.

This studio course will examine the crossover between decorative arts and painting. Drawing upon sources such as fashion, textiles, adornments, jewelry, furniture, hair and architecture we will study how design aesthetics demonstrate class, position, lineage or a particular period in the history of painting and embellishment. Students will be encouraged to experiment with a wide variety of media and work on projects based on their selected researched subject areas. Enrollment limited to 14.

VISA 1400. The Artist's Body: Performance Art as Acts of Activism, Communion, Rebellion, Humor and Meditation.

In this course, we will divide our time equally between studying the works/ styles of contemporary performance artists and practicing performance art techniques and various modes of physically engaging in this art form. (Note: Performance art is not to be confused with the term performing arts. This class is not a theater or poetry presentation course, but can be applied to the ways in which both are presented.) This course will focus on the genre of performance art which lies between most other art disciplines and includes raw feelings (not acted emotions), political views and above all else, the embodiment of physical actions as art.

VISA 1410. Sculpture: Material Investigations.

This studio course addresses basic sculptural methods, i.e., additive + subtractive modeling, casting, and assemblage, and common sculptural materials, i.e., wood, metal, plaster, and found objects. Demos + workshops on a number of sculptural tools and materials form the foundation for this studio. Students develop sculptural solutions to a given set of problems. Contemporary issues raised in critiques and readings. Extensive outside work is expected.

VISA 1420. Sculpture II: Conceptual Propositions.

This studio course explores a number of contemporary sculptural theories and practices. Contemporary issues raised in critiques and readings. Completion of VISA 1410 is suggested, but not required. Demos and workshops on a number of tools and materials will be given as needed. Students may take this course more than once, as the problems can be customized for those with more experience. Extensive outside work expected.

VISA 1510. Black and White Photography.

This course offers introduction to traditional black and white 35mm darkroom techniques, including processing film, silver gelatin printing and related techniques. While the class is primarily a studio course, it will be supplemented by weekly slide presentations and discussions of assigned readings. Slide presentations will focus on individual photographers in the history of the medium. Topics of discussion will include photographic genres, the photo essay, editing and sequencing a body of work, personal visions, social and political context, documentary versus art photography.

VISA 1520. Digital Photography.

Over 1.8 billion photographs are uploaded to the Internet each day. Since everyone's a 'photographer', what type are you? While we constantly produce images for ourselves and others in private and public, this course will ask students to critically rethink this tool. Image-making, from "capture" to "color-correction" and beyond will be consciously addressed, as we approach photography from the perspective of contemporary art practice and produce a final portfolio of prints. Class will be discussion, slideshow, studio and critique. Prior experience in photography preferred not required.

VISA 1530. Digital Photo Bookbinding.

Digital Photo bookbinding is an advanced photography class for students with experience with digital or black and white photography. The class will focus on building on editing and sequencing a body of work as well layout, formatting and considerations of text and captioning. Students will come away from class with four bound books. The first three will be early tries at the various techniques and the final one will be a more ambitious project.

VISA 1600. Social Practice: Art in Everyday Life.

This interdisciplinary course explores theoretical and practical ways that art can engage community. We will explore methods for social interventions, collaboration, and the notion of art as activism. Part studio and part seminar, this course examines our role in society as cultural producers. Students will engage in a series of readings and assignments that will help them prepare for a self-directed, socially engaged project of their choosing. They may work in any artistic medium and in communities of their choice. Students will work outside of class on their projects and present documentation of its development for class critique.

VISA 1710. Site and Sound.

This studio course provides an overview of contemporary sound art, facilitates the development of site-based sonic artwork, and encourages a critical approach to sound and audio practice. Work will be developed for and from specific sites with special emphasis placed on modes of listening and the physical characteristics of sound itself. Examples of site-specific sound work in a variety of formats including performance, installation, sculpture, literature, and radio are presented and analyzed.

VISA 1720. Physical Computing.

This studio course is an intensive introduction to electronic devices for use in artmaking and includes hands-on experience working with sensors, motors, switches, gears, lights, simple circuits, microprocessors and hardware-store devices to create kinetic and interactive works of art. Demonstrations, lectures and critical discussion of work will be given to develop concepts and technical skills. Demonstrations, lectures and critical discussion of work will be given to develop concepts and technical skills.

VISA 1730. Exploration in Video Art.

This studio course provides an overview of contemporary video art and video installation practices, facilitates the development of video work in expanded space, and encourages a critical approach to interactive moving image practice. Students will develop a set of video installation pieces for particular spaces and situations beyond the standard single-screen video format. Basic video production and post-production techniques will be covered and complimented by readings and screenings.

VISA 1740. Time Deformations.

This studio course explores modes of electronic media by focusing on time as a primary material. Students will develop projects for specific sites and situations in response to assigned topics individually and in groups. Selected works in video, sound, performance, and online media that make innovative use of temporal strategies will be examined. Production work will be complimented by technical lectures, readings and discussions, and screenings.

VISA 1750. Sonic Practice Studio.

This studio course provides an exploration of current practices in sonic arts and facilitates the development of sound-based creative work. Through production and critiques we will examine a number of overlapping areas of sonic practice and audio culture including phonography, sound installation, field recording and environmental audio, sonic narratives in language and other forms, mobile audio and soundwalks, and the materiality of noise. Students will develop sound-based pieces by working individually and in groups. The pieces will be developed for specific sites and situations and will function as creative research into the subjects areas of the course.

VISA 1800C. Honors Seminar.

Required for students who have been accepted as candidates for honors. The seminar meets weekly to discuss readings and for group critiques. Includes group trips to New York and Boston, to visit galleries, museums, and artists' studios. Instructor permission required. Must be accepted into Honors Program.

VISA 1800E. Installation of Mixed Media.

No description available.

VISA 1800G. Junior Seminar in Visual Art.

Contemporary artists are makers, researchers, writers, curators. This is a hybrid seminar/ studio course on the global practice of contemporary art and how we can apply those lessons to our own artmaking. We will focus on questions such as "How do artists run their studios", "What is the place of history and identity?" and "How does art function as a commodity?" Class projects will include short writings and making objects. We will visit artists studios and have artists come to talk to us. Department trips to New York will be a part of the curriculum.

VISA 1800P. Art/Work: Professional Practice for Visual Artists.

Unlike other creative professionals, visual artists don't have agents or managers—you handle the business yourself, with the support of your community. This class covers business basics including tracking inventory and preparing invoices; taking legal precautions such as registering a copyright and drafting consignment forms; using promotional tools; diversifying income; and making career decisions such as choosing the right venues to show your work. We will discuss grants, residencies, budgets, do-it-yourself strategies, financial health, and professional relationships. Discussion and assignments will emphasize community, the sharing of resources, and the practical, hands-on skills necessary to thrive as a visual artist.

VISA 1900. Other Lives of Time.

Other Lives of Time takes a decidedly poetic approach to moving image and cinema. Part studio, screening, discussion and critique, we will watch, discuss and dissect works by artists and filmmakers from across the globe that use personal form and distinct techniques to communicate idiosyncratically. Readings will explore contemporary notions of time and cinema while screenings prioritize nonfiction and fiction works that have mainstream audience potential. Assignments will expand student's filmic language as they work over the semester toward the completion of a short film that employs a singular structure.

VISA 1910. Individual Study Project in the Practice of Art.

Work on an approved project leading to the presentation of a portfolio, under supervision of an individual member of the staff. Project proposals must be filed with the department no later than the first week of the semester. Section numbers vary by instructor.

VISA 1990. Honors.

Section numbers vary by instructor.

VISA 2450. Exchange Scholar Program.**VISA XLIST. Courses of Interest to Visual Arts Concentrators.**