The MFA in Visual and Performing Arts is a terminal degree which prepares students as professional artists and scholars who can work within their specialty and teach at the university level. Creative work and skill building are at the core of the study. The curriculum is designed for serious and talented students who are prepared to examine modes of creative inquiry in an inclusive, unique environment that promotes exploration, analysis, synthesis, and development as artists.

Admissions & Policies

Admissions

Concentration in Dance

The MFA in Visual and Performing Arts, concentration in Dance, is a highly selective 60-credit program of study grounded in the modern dance genre that emphasizes mastery in performance, choreography, and teaching in higher education. Applicants must have significant (5 years or more) professional performance experience in modern or ballet at the national or international level. They must also demonstrate professional competence in choreography as exemplified by a significant body of work, and have experience teaching technique at the advanced level.

All MFA applicants are required to submit the following items:

- Online Application and Fee
- Official transcripts from each institution of higher education attended
- 3 letters of recommendation
- Resume
- Goals Statement

The following should be sent directly to the School of Dance via SlideRoom:

- 15-minute video of original choreography
- Artistic Goals Statement
- Resume
- Applicant must satisfy the following prerequisites: advanced dance technique, improvisation, dance composition, history, anatomy/kinesiology, and dance production. Prerequisite courses are usually fulfilled if the applicant has earned a BA or BFA in Dance.

Qualified students will be invited for an audition after review of application materials.

Concentration in Graphic Design

All MFA applicants are required to submit the following items:

- Online Application and Fee
- Official transcripts from each institution of higher education attended
- 3 letters of recommendation
- Resume
- Goals Statement

Additional requirements for concentration in Graphic Design:

- Portfolio
- Writing Sample: A critical and historical essay or academic paper on a design-related topic.

Portfolio Guidelines

The applicant’s portfolio is a major selection criterion for graduate admission and should represent the applicant’s most accomplished work.

The portfolio and all other application materials should be submitted to the Office of Graduate Admissions. For more information, contact the School of Art office at 703-993-8898.

Portfolios should include 20 samples of design work submitted through SlideRoom. Samples must be labeled with: name of artist, title, and date. Videos and Flash files (no more than 4 minutes for each section) must be playable through SlideRoom. In the case of collaborative work, the applicant’s role should be clearly stated.

Concentration in Theater

Theater MFA students are admitted to a specific emphasis: acting, design & technology, directing, musical theater, or playwriting & dramaturgy. Specific programs of study will be designed for each individual, based on previous experience and expertise.

Admissions Requirements

All MFA applicants are required to submit the following items:

- Online Application and Fee
- Official transcripts from each institution of higher education attended
- 3 letters of recommendation
- Resume
- Goals Statement

Additional requirements for concentration in Theater:

- Portfolio
- Interview or Audition

Diversity among students accepted for study is another consideration. Applicants with degrees in areas other than Theater are welcome, although they may be required to complete undergraduate endorsement core courses. Details available on School of Theater website.

Portfolio Guidelines

The applicant’s portfolio is a major selection criterion for graduate admission and should represent the applicant’s most accomplished work. The portfolio and all other application materials should be submitted to the Office of Graduate Admissions. For more information, contact the School of Theater office at 703-993-1120.

Portfolio requirements are different for each graduate area of emphasis and are listed below. Incomplete portfolios will not be considered. Applicants’ portfolio items are considered part of the application for
admission and, thus, cannot be returned. Please do not send original materials.

**Portfolio Requirements by Area of Emphasis**

**Design & Technology**
One fully documented design in your area of emphasis (i.e. lighting, sound, scenery, costume, etc.). This may include: script analysis, research, renderings, paperwork, drafting, diagrams, sound clips and photographs of the production. Additional examples of design work and artistic vision may also be submitted. Guidelines available on School of Theater website.

**Playwriting & Dramaturgy**
One to three writing samples, totaling no more than 25 pages. Playwrights should submit a one-page synopsis and dialogue sample. Dramaturgs may submit essays, reviews, or articles written for the general public, along with a cover letter addressing key areas of interest in the field. Guidelines available on School of Theater website.

**Acting and Music Theater Performance**
A three page written character analysis of one of the roles to be presented at auditions. Guidelines available on School of Theater website. Please see audition requirements.

**Audition Requirements**

**Acting**
Applicants for the MFA with an emphasis in Acting must complete an audition for the program. Applicants should be prepared with three contrasting monologues. Two monologues will be required for the audition, and a third may be requested should additional material be needed. Please prepare both classical and contemporary work. Auditors will be looking for range, transformational potential, and vocal and physical expressiveness.

**Musical Theater**
Applicants for the MFA with an emphasis in Musical Theater must complete an audition for the program. Applicants should be prepared with two songs and two monologues. Contrast between the pieces is essential. Please prepare both classical and contemporary work. Auditors will be looking for musical ability, range, transformational potential, vocal and physical expressiveness, dance and movement skills, and emotional honesty through text and song. An accompanist may be provided and requires a cash fee on the day of audition. This includes a brief rehearsal prior to appointment time. Those auditioning may provide their own accompanist.

**Concentration in Visual Art**
All MFA applicants are required to submit the following items:

- Online Application and Fee
- Official transcripts from each institution of higher education attended
- 3 letters of recommendation
- Resume
- Goals Statement

Additional Requirements for Concentration in Visual Arts:

- Portfolio

**Portfolio Guidelines**
The applicant’s portfolio is a major selection criterion for graduate admission and should represent the applicant’s most accomplished work.

The portfolio and all other application materials should be submitted to the Office of Graduate Admissions. For more information, contact the School of Art office at 703-993-8898.

Portfolio requirements are different for each graduate area of emphasis and are listed below. Incomplete portfolios will not be considered.

**Portfolio Requirements by Area of Emphasis**

**InterArts**
20 images submitted through SlideRoom. Samples must be labeled with: name of artist, title and date. Videos and Flash files (no more than four minutes for each section) must be playable through SlideRoom. In the case of collaborative work, the applicant's role should be clearly stated. If writing-based materials are submitted, they should be submitted in printed form.

**New Media Arts**
20 images submitted through SlideRoom. Samples must be labeled with: name of artist, title and date. Videos and Flash files (no more than four minutes for each section) must be playable through SlideRoom. Only the relevant parts of the video should be marked for viewing, with the applicant's role clearly stated.

**Painting and Drawing**
20 images submitted through SlideRoom. Samples must be labeled with: name of artist, title and date.

**Photography**
20 images submitted through SlideRoom. Samples must be labeled with: name of artist, title and date.

**Printmaking**
20 images submitted through SlideRoom. Samples must be labeled with: name of artist, title and date.

**Sculpture**
20 images submitted through SlideRoom. Samples must be labeled with: name of artist, title and date.

**Policies**

**Program Requirements**
Candidates are required to complete 60 credits, of which 30 are made up from core requirements. An additional 30 credits are based on concentration area and comprehensive experience.

MFA concentrations include:

- Dance
- Graphic Design
- Theater
- Visual Art

While the faculty anticipate that students will work through their coursework as described in this catalog, individuals with extensive professional accomplishment may craft an individualized program that meets curricular requirements. Individualized programs require
the recommendation of the Graduate Committee within the student’s respective school as well as the approval of the CVPA Associate Dean.

Requirements

Degree Requirements

Total credits: 60

Students should complete all requirements within the concentration to which they have been admitted. Candidates are required to complete 60 credits, of which 30 are made up from core requirements. An additional 30 credits are based on concentration area and comprehensive experience.

Concentration in Dance (DANC)

The MFA in Visual and Performing Arts, concentration in Dance, is a highly selective 60-credit program of study grounded in the modern dance genre that emphasizes mastery in performance, choreography, and teaching in higher education.

Core Degree Requirements

Research Methods
AVT 600 Research Methodologies 3
Graduate Seminar
Two credits of
  DANC 501 Graduate Dance Seminar 2
Writing Seminar
AVT 621 Art Writing Seminar 3
Advanced Aesthetics
DANC 598 Philosophy and Aesthetics of Dance 3
Studies in History/Theory/Contemporary Trend
DANC 615 Contemporary Trends 3
Teaching Practicum
DANC 627 Advanced Teaching Seminar 3
Directed Reading
AVT 796 Directed Reading 1
Project
Six credits of
  DANC 798 Directed Choreography/Project 6
Thesis
Six credits of
  DANC 799 Thesis 6
Total Credits 30

Concentration Requirements

DANC 510 Contemporary Movement Theories 3
DANC 560 Advanced Choreography 3
Three credits of
  DANC 570 Advanced Dance Performance 3
DANC 571 Residency Workshop 3
Three credits of
  DANC 790 Internship 3
DANC 672 Dance Production 3
Select 12 credits from the following: 12
  DANC 525 Advanced Modern Dance (must be taken for a minimum 6 credits)
  DANC 545 Advanced Ballet (must be taken for a minimum 3 credits)
Total Credits 30

Concentration in Graphic Design (GD)

The MFA in Visual and Performing Arts, concentration in Graphic Design offers students a comprehensive study and preparation for the graphic design profession. The program includes courses in typography, web design, image making, and brand design, as well as prepares students for an academic career in Graphic Design. The broad range of study is intended to develop professionals prepared for an ever-expanding graphic design field.

Core Degree Requirements

Research Methods
Four credits of
  AVT 519 Special Topics in Graphic Design 4
Graduate Seminar
Five credits of
  AVT 611 Graduate Design Seminar 5
Writing Seminar
AVT 617 Advanced Typography 4
Advanced Aesthetics
AVT 613 Experiential Design History 3
Studies in History/Theory/Contemporary Trend
AVT 618 Visual Communication Theories 2
Teaching Practicum
Two credits of
  AVT 670 Teaching Practicum 2
Directed Reading
AVT 796 Directed Reading 1
Project
Six credits of
  AVT 798 Directed Project and Exhibition (6 credits) 6
Thesis
Three credits of
  AVT 799 Thesis 3
Total Credits 30

1 Involves a study of the historical basis for a studio project; an independent creative production suitable for public viewing; and a written thesis documenting the evolution of the creative problem and exploring the intention, purpose, and relative success of the finished project.

Concentration Requirements

Select 10 - 14 credits from the following: 10-14
  AVT 519 Special Topics in Graphic Design
  AVT 614 Brand Identity Design
  AVT 619 Advanced Web Design
Select 0 - 4 credits from the following: 0-4
  AVT 596 Independent Study
AVT 599 Special Topics in Art and Visual Technology
Other graduate studio courses as approved by director
AVT 641 Graduate Graphic Design I 4
AVT 646 Graduate Graphic Design II 4
AVT 647 Advanced Graduate Graphic Design I 4
AVT 648 Advanced Graphic Design II 4
Total Credits 30

Concentration in Theater (THR)
The MFA in Visual and Performing Arts, concentration in Theater, is a terminal degree that prepares students to become professional artists, work in theater or arts-related fields, and teach at the university level.

Core Degree Requirements
Research Methods
AVT 600 Research Methodologies 3
Graduate Seminar
Two credits of 2
THR 591 Graduate Seminar
Writing Seminar
THR 652 Writing Seminar 3
Advanced Aesthetics
AVT 621 Art Writing Seminar 3
Studies in History/Theory/Contemporary Trend
Six credits of 6
THR 651 Advanced Dramatic Theory and Criticism
Teaching Practicum
THR 655 Teaching Practicum 3
Directed Reading
THR 796 Directed Reading 1
Project
THR 797 Project Preparation 6 & THR 798 and Project Practicum
Thesis
THR 799 Thesis (3 credits) 3
Total Credits 30

Concentration Requirements for All Emphases
THR 539 Aesthetics for the Theater 3
THR 551 Advanced Theater Pedagogy 2
THR 560 Advanced Script Analysis 3
THR 691 Professional Development 1
THR 790 Directed Research 3
Total Credits 12

Track Requirements
In each area of emphasis, students must pick either a professional or academic track. Students in the professional track will complete at least three additional credits in practical production experience over and above the core in the following:

Select 3 credits from the following: 3
THR 694 Graduate Field Experience
THR 696 Advanced Acting Practicum

Total Credits 3

Emphasis Requirements
With the approval of their mentor, students will have the flexibility to select courses from Emphasis areas:

Select 15 credits from the following: 15

Acting Emphasis:
THR 525 Advanced Musical Theater Workshop
THR 590 Special Topics for Graduate Study
THR 599 Independent Study
THR 610 Acting Mentorship
THR 620 Acting Techniques
THR 694 Graduate Field Experience
THR 696 Advanced Acting Practicum

Design & Technology Emphasis:
THR 530 Topics in Theater Design
THR 590 Special Topics for Graduate Study
THR 599 Independent Study
THR 630 Design Mentorship
THR 694 Graduate Field Experience
THR 699 Advanced Design Practicum
AMGT 602 Seminar in Arts Management
AMGT 609 Performing Arts Management
AMGT 706 Festivals and Special Events
AMGT 752 Arts Entrepreneurship
GAME 635 Issues in Interactive Entertainment
GAME 650 Advanced Music and Sound for Games
AVT 682 Experimental 2D Animation
AVT 686 Experimental 3D Animation
AVT 687 Advanced Topics: New Media
AVT 688 Hybrid Animation
FAVS 565 Documentary Filmmaking
FAVS 575 Fiction Film Directing
FAVS 599 Special Topics

Directing Emphasis:
THR 540 Directing Techniques
THR 590 Special Topics for Graduate Study
THR 599 Independent Study
THR 640 Directing Mentorship
THR 694 Graduate Field Experience
THR 698 Advanced Directing Practicum
THR 755 Academic Track Practicum
FAVS 565 Documentary Filmmaking
FAVS 575 Fiction Film Directing  
FAVS 599 Special Topics  

**Musical Theater Emphasis:**  
THR 525 Advanced Musical Theater Workshop  
THR 590 Special Topics for Graduate Study  
THR 599 Independent Study  
THR 610 Acting Mentorship  
THR 620 Acting Techniques  
THR 694 Graduate Field Experience  
THR 696 Advanced Acting Practicum  
THR 755 Academic Track Practicum  
MUSI 621 Graduate Applied Music  
MUSI 688 Opera and Musical Theater Ensemble  
MUSI 699 Independent Study  

**Playwriting & Dramaturgy Emphasis:**  
THR 571 Advanced Playwriting Workshop  
THR 590 Special Topics for Graduate Study  
THR 599 Independent Study  
THR 694 Graduate Field Experience  
THR 697 Advanced Playwriting and Dramaturgy Practicum  
THR 740 Directors and Dramaturg in Collaboration  

**Total Credits:** 15

**Concentration in Visual Art (VART)**  
The MFA in Visual and Performing Arts, concentration in Visual Arts, is a terminal degree that prepares students to become professional artists, work in technology or arts-related fields, and teach at the university level. Students select an emphasis in one of the following: New Media, Painting and Drawing, Photography, Printmaking, Sculpture, or InterArts. Students have the opportunity to combine art forms in projects that may be installation, performance, publishing, time-based, or writing-based, and combine creative and critical approaches in their work.

### Core Requirements

#### Research Methods

- **AVT 600** Research Methodologies 3  

#### Graduate Seminar

Six credits of 6  
AVT 610 Graduate Seminar  

#### Writing Seminar

- **AVT 621** Art Writing Seminar 3  

#### Advanced Aesthetics

- **AVT 507** Advanced Aesthetics 3  
  or **AVT 599** Special Topics in Art and Visual Technology  

#### Studies in History/Theory/Contemporary Trend

- **AVT 620** Theory, Criticism, and the Arts 3  

#### Teaching Practicum

Two credits of 2  
AVT 670 Teaching Practicum  

#### Directed Reading

- **AVT 796** Directed Reading 1  

#### Project

Six credits of 6  

### AVT 798 Directed Project and Exhibition

**Thesis**

Three credits of 3  
AVT 799 Thesis  

**Total Credits** 30  

**Note:**  
AVT 796 Directed Reading/AVT 798 Directed Project and Exhibition/AVT 799 Thesis involves a study of the historical basis for a studio project; an independent creative production suitable for public viewing; and a written thesis documenting the evolution of the creative problem and exploring the intention, purpose, and relative success of the finished project.

### Concentration Requirements

Select 8 credits from the following: 8  

- **AVT 596** Independent Study  
- **AVT 599** Special Topics in Art and Visual Technology  
- Other courses as approved by director  

Four credits of 4  

- **AVT 599** Special Topics in Art and Visual Technology  
- **AVT 610** Graduate Seminar 2  
- **AVT Emphasis Courses** 4  

**Total Credits** 30

### Areas of Emphasis

**InterArts**  
Select 16 credits of any 500 - 600 level AVT course as approved by the division director. InterArts graduate students may combine courses from studio areas of emphasis (as indicated below) and work with faculty to design an interdisciplinary thesis project. 16

**Total Credits** 16

### New Media Art

Select four from the following courses: 16  

- **AVT 616** Advanced Art and Interactivity  
- **AVT 676** Graduate Sound Art  
- **AVT 682** Experimental 2D Animation  
- **AVT 684** Advanced Image Making  
- **AVT 685** Video Art  
- **AVT 686** Experimental 3D Animation  
- **AVT 687** Advanced Topics: New Media  
- **AVT 688** Hybrid Animation  

**Total Credits** 16

### Painting and Drawing

Select four courses from the following: 16  

- **AVT 522** Drawing V  
- **AVT 523** Drawing VI  
- **AVT 599** Special Topics in Art and Visual Technology (Must be approved by advisor)  
- **AVT 622** Advanced Drawing
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<td>AVT 632</td>
<td>Graduate Painting I</td>
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<td>AVT 633</td>
<td>Graduate Painting II</td>
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<tr>
<td>AVT 634</td>
<td>Advanced Graduate Painting I</td>
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<td>AVT 635</td>
<td>Advanced Graduate Painting II</td>
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**Photography**

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<td>Graduate Photography I</td>
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<tr>
<td>AVT 653</td>
<td>Graduate Photography II</td>
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<tr>
<td>AVT 654</td>
<td>Advanced Graduate Photography I</td>
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<tr>
<td>AVT 655</td>
<td>Advanced Graduate Photography II</td>
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**Printmaking**

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<td>AVT 642</td>
<td>Graduate Printmaking I</td>
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<tr>
<td>AVT 643</td>
<td>Graduate Printmaking II</td>
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<tr>
<td>AVT 644</td>
<td>Advanced Graduate Printmaking I</td>
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</tr>
<tr>
<td>AVT 645</td>
<td>Advanced Graduate Printmaking II</td>
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**Sculpture**

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<td>4</td>
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<td>Total Credits</td>
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Note:

Mason does not guarantee the availability of these courses every semester; some are offered in alternate years.