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## MASTER OF FINE ARTS IN STUDIO ARTS

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The M.F.A. is a 60-credit graduate degree in studio art offered by Johnson State in conjunction with the Vermont Studio Center in Johnson, Vermont. Students work with resident and visiting artists from both programs and typically finish their studies in three to four years.

Founded in 1984, the Vermont Studio Center is an ideal creative community embracing serious, advanced artists of different ages, approaches, and levels of development. Sharing a commitment to the creative process, these artists come together at the Vermont Studio Center throughout the year to develop their work through distraction-free, intensive studio work in drawing, painting, sculpture, and mixed media.

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### ADMISSION TO THE PROGRAM

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Applicants to the M.F.A. program must hold a bachelor's degree from an accredited college or university and must apply for acceptance as master's degree students through the Office of Admissions at Johnson State College. The Office of Admissions will review completed application portfolios in collaboration with M.F.A. faculty and Vermont Studio Center staff. Applications should be submitted to the JSC Admissions Office by February 15 for a one month residency that needs to be scheduled between May and November.

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### ADVISING AND EVALUATION

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M.F.A. students work closely with an advisor from the JSC studio arts faculty to plan an overall approach to meeting degree requirements, and to navigate any special challenges that arise. Because of the nature of graduate work in the arts, program session credits at the Vermont Studio Center are offered on a pass/fail basis only.

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### PROGRAM REQUIREMENTS

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Although M.F.A. students have a program structure that differs significantly from traditional Johnson State College programs, it is important and helpful that

students are aware of the College's policies, opportunities, and other general information included here. Also, because much time as an M.F.A. student is spent at the Vermont Studio Center, it is equally important to be familiar with the Studio Center's handbook, available through their office.

### Vermont Studio Center Residency Sessions 36 Credits (Six 6-credit sessions)

During the months of May through November, we run concurrent M.F.A. programs during the Studio Center's seven 4-week sessions. In each session a different group of prominent visiting artists offers individual critiques and group sessions. As part of the M.F.A. program, it is important to see the resident critics once a week to get varied feedback. The Studio Center will provide an annual listing of their visiting artists.

Typically, students complete two sessions per year for three years. These residencies need not be taken consecutively. While some students prefer the eight-week continuity, others like separating their residencies with anywhere from one to five months back home in their studios. Factors influencing a student's choice of residencies include convenience for their home life, job flexibility, the schedule of critics, and scheduled plans of other students. Space at the Studio Center is limited for each session. Students are encouraged to contact the Studio Center as soon as possible to reserve available space. Upon request, students may enroll in more than two program sessions a year if space is available at the Studio Center, and if such a plan is approved by the student's advisors and the academic dean of Johnson State College.

Taking fewer than two program sessions a year also requires special permission.

During these program sessions, Johnson State College art faculty, Professor Susan Calza and Professor Ken Leslie, will visit to confer with students and facilitate M.F.A. critiques. Please check the current Vermont Studio Center brochure for further details and a roster of visiting artists.

## **M.F.A Components During VSC Residencies**

Each month M.F.A students in residence at the Vermont Studio Center participate fully in the scheduled offerings. This is a time for full immersion in that intensive studio experience. Students benefit most from making strong connections to the visiting artists that are special to each program session at the Studio Center. While Johnson State College faculty save their strongest voice for the out-of-residency independent studio component, they do come to Johnson each week to meet with M.F.A. students. Typically faculty visit on Wednesdays, with a version of the following schedule tailored to each month's residency group:

**Week #1** - Meet at 1 p.m. Lounge Area of Studio Center Dining Hall. Introduce new students, share news, concerns, special notices, events in the region, etc. Generally there are no studio visits this week, but visits for the following weeks are scheduled. Meet with returning students to complete out-of-residency requirements either week one or week four.

**Week #2** - Optional. Students must do at least one of the two optional studio visits, in addition to the final critique each program session.

**Week #3** - Optional. Sign-up during week #1 for half-hour visits.

**Week #4** - Group critique at the Visual Arts Center, JSC campus. This critique is not optional, and students bring three to five pieces. Guests may be invited to these critiques **ONLY** with the permission of faculty and participating students. Occasionally it is necessary for the group critique to move to see a student's installation elsewhere, but for the most part, all students need to take their work out of their studios and install it at the Visual Arts Center.

We do not encourage two-week residencies. We do strongly encourage students to follow the four-week format (i.e. arrive for week one, leave on week four; any deviation requires permission from JSC faculty.)

Up to two residencies can be completed at places other than the Vermont Studio Center, to meet the particular needs of the student's work. The first three residencies must be completed in Johnson, chosen from the May through November sessions. Thereafter, with approval of the student's advisors and the academic dean, students can select programs from around the world that are equivalent in nature or students can

select sessions at the Studio Center from the December through April sessions. To receive credit from non-VSC residencies, or December through April residencies, students need to document work done during the alternative month with 20 images, a one-page narrative, and the name and phone number of a contact reference at the alternative program.

## **Independent Studio Work**

### **Six 2-credit Packets**

Students will complete two independent, out-of-residency terms. All students will be expected to set up a working studio while away from Johnson in their community of residence. Students will mail documentation of new work to the Johnson State College faculty serving as M.F.A. program advisors.

The Independent Studio Work term is designed to accomplish two primary outcomes: a professional, active studio and an articulate, sophisticated skill at documenting the work. Both outcomes are of paramount importance to future career success in the arts. Students are responsible for documenting their work to fulfill the requirements of each of the six, two-credit out-of-residency components. No partial credit for partial fulfillment is possible. As a general rule, there will be no extensions allowed. Under certain circumstances, we will assign an "Incomplete."

Before the start of each out-of-residency term, students "contract" with faculty advisors for deadlines to submit documentation packets. These deadlines are chosen to be well distributed around the year, leaving at least two months after the last VSC session and at least two months between each deadline. It has been our experience that people juggling full-time jobs with M.F.A. requirements will quite likely need more time between deadlines and more than three years to complete the program. A contract is filled out which obligates the student to meet these deadlines. We must receive a contract a minimum of two months before the first chosen deadline. If personal circumstances require a student to change a contracted date, then such change must be requested at least two months prior to the original deadline.

ALL DOCUMENTATION PACKETS MUST BE POST-MARKED OR HAND DELIVERED ON OR BY EACH DUE DATE. MISSED DEADLINES RESULT IN FAILURE. LATE DOCUMENTATION PACKETS WILL BE RETURNED UNOPENED.

To be accepted, documentation packets must include all five of the following items:

#### 1. 20 IMAGES OF NEW WORK

New work means work completed since the last Studio Center residency or documentation packet. The 20 images need not be of 20 newly finished works, but rather document the range and depth of what is happening in the student's studio. Images can include works in progress, preparatory drawings, and no more than five details or multiple views of three-dimensional works. Choose images that will assist in giving the faculty a clear understanding of what is going on. Do not send more than 20 images. Credit during out-of-residency periods is dependent upon the quality and thoroughness of ongoing studio work and creative investigation.

High quality documentation is crucial to the success of the out-of-residency component. Students should always project images before sending them - just holding slides up to a light is insufficient. Images must be in JPEG form.

#### 2. IMAGE IDENTIFICATION SHEET

One page listing the images, numbered 1 through 20, giving title, dimensions (height X width X depth), date and medium. While "untitled" is a popular name for works, it may not make it clear when discussing work which of the many "untitled" students are referring to.

#### 3. ARTIST'S STATEMENT

No more than a one-page description of current, primary studio concerns, as reflected in the images. Address the intention of the work. This should be written to illuminate the work in a professional setting, and not as a personal letter. Think of the statement as what you would write to accompany this work in an exhibition.

#### 4. UPDATED BIO

This should include a list of professional activities, exhibitions entered, books read, lectures or workshops attended... in short, all those out-of-studio activities that contribute to your artistic growth. This can also include progress made, struggles undergone, influences felt and/or plans for the future.

#### 5. UPDATED RESUME

Add what is new, clean up what is old.

#### OPTIONAL LETTER

All the above are more formal in character, but faculty are always glad to get an additional letter with less formal or more personal information than what is appropriate to the documentation.

Evaluations are conducted in person or as a scheduled conference call to the student's home studio. All conference calls will be scheduled in Eastern Standard Time. Students project a duplicate set of images during the hour-long conference call, so students and faculty are all looking at the same work. Students should be viewing their images during the phone conference. Preparation for these conferences is time consuming. JSC faculty project the images and read all the documentation. Reviews are pre-planned jointly, following extensive discussion until consensus is reached. Reviews discuss any number of issues, including the technique or content of the work, must-see shows or must-read books, slide-taking technique, etc. Between the office mechanics of receiving and processing packets, viewing, and scheduling conferences, students should expect to wait approximately three weeks for reviews.

In-person reviews may be held when students are in residence at the Studio Center, generally during the first or fourth week of the residency. Students will be contacted about a date and time for this appointment with JSC faculty. Students must indicate in the packet documentation whether a phone conference or an in-person review is preferred.

Faculty prepare for an in-person review in the same way that they do for the phone reviews, and then they meet with the student to view the images together.

The discussion is informal, but thorough, regarding progress. Expectations may change in the last packets to reflect focus towards thesis exhibition.

Johnson State keeps a file for each student, with all the images and paperwork that the student sends in as part of their documentation. From time to time, while in residency at the Vermont Studio Center, students have requested to “borrow back” slides or discs kept on file at Johnson to be able to share with visiting critics or fellow students. We have found retrieving and refiling slides to be difficult, time consuming, and uncertain, so we must ask everyone to bring their own copies of images and not ask to borrow back any. After graduation, students may have all images returned to them with the exception of those sent with the original application for admission and those of the M.F.A. exhibition, which will remain on record at the college.

## **Seminar in Contemporary Art Issues**

### **6 Credits**

Students are required to enroll in two art history seminars (each worth 3 credits) during the M.F.A. program. Seminars at Johnson State College include at least one out-of-residency research project, for which students will investigate aspects of contemporary art in consultation with the faculty art historian. Students are expected to attend every class meeting, in its entirety of each seminar; failure to do so will result in no credit. Students should be prepared to discuss any assigned texts. Students accepted into the program whose undergraduate transcripts do not include course work in 20th century art history and contemporary theory, may be asked to show proficiency in these areas before enrolling in the seminars. The out-of-residency project will afford students the opportunity to use cultural institutions in and near their hometowns in order to research their projects.

## **M.F.A. Thesis Exhibition**

### **6 Credits**

At the completion of 36 credits of residency sessions, 12 credits of out-of-residency packets, and 6 credits of contemporary art independent study, students will present an exhibition of new work in Johnson at the Julian Scott Memorial Gallery at JSC or the Red

Mill Gallery at VSC. While a student prepares the exhibition, no documentation packets of progress are required. If requested, JSC faculty will be available for informal conferences. The emphasis of the exhibition will be on independent work completed after the final residency session at the Studio Center. A minimum of six months following the final Studio Center session or out-of-residency packet is required for preparation of the thesis. This six-month rule is strictly followed so that students can work freely through residencies and packets without the pressure of a looming exhibition. The student will produce an announcement and install a comprehensive, professional exhibition. The gallery director will give each M.F.A. candidate advice and guidelines to help in this process. The exhibition is the equivalent of a written thesis and should be treated accordingly with students responsible for completing all tasks associated with mounting the exhibition.

It is the student's responsibility to contact the gallery director to schedule the exhibition. Students may only submit this application when they have no more than two residencies and/or two packets remaining. All thesis exhibitions must take place during JSC's regular school year and not during the summer, so exhibits must be scheduled between the beginning of the fall semester and the end of the spring semester.

Students, with advisors, will schedule a gallery talk to occur during their show, usually just before the opening reception. Students must also produce a set of 20 images of work from their thesis exhibition along with a one-page artist's statement and submit the images within one month after their exhibition. Acceptance by M.F.A. program faculty of this M.F.A. thesis exhibition, artist's statement, images, and a gallery talk will earn the remaining six credits toward graduation.

**REQUIRED:** This gallery talk is not a critique with JSC faculty; it is a discourse on the conceptual, ideological, and formal issues as evidenced by your M.F.A. exhibition. Gallery talks will be scheduled to accommodate undergraduate attendance. Exhibition opening receptions are optional. The best attendance has proved to be Thursdays between 3-5 p.m. While faculty may be present at the openings, this is not the optimal time for discussing work. Gallery talks are much more conducive to in-depth dialogue. Faculty are also happy

to meet with the students for an informal review of the exhibition. The student should contact faculty if such a meeting is desired.

We have a collection of videos of some thesis talks. You may view them in the JSC library; simply ask for them at the front desk.

## COMMUNICATION, ADVISING, AND EVALUATION

M.F.A. students work closely with JSC faculty to plan an overall approach to meeting degree requirements, and to navigate any special challenges that arise. An actual "Plan of Study" will be developed and approved. All credits will be evaluated on a pass/fail basis, with attention paid to focus, risk-taking, resourcefulness, and effort.

E-mail has proven to be the best venue for speedy communication—for quick questions or setting up appointments. We strongly encourage students to get online if they are not there yet.

## CONNECTIONS WITH OTHER M.F.A. STUDENTS

Informal meetings between M.F.A. students, as well as regular correspondence between students during the out-of-residency periods, is encouraged, as it is beneficial to all. It has been found to be very vital to students to have an ongoing dynamic with other Studio Center participants as well.

## GRADUATION

Prior to registering for the last six credits (M.F.A. Thesis Exhibition), students must file an Application for Degree with the Registrar's Office. A degree audit will be conducted using the approved plan of study for the M.F.A. degree as the basis of the audit. The student will be contacted directly if any discrepancies during the audit are discovered. Students are allowed a maximum of five years from beginning the program to finishing the degree requirements.

## LEAVE OF ABSENCE

Students in good academic standing who wish to interrupt their studies, for a period not to exceed one

year, may request a leave of absence. Students on a leave of absence will not need to reapply for admission. Students may apply for a leave of absence by submitting an Exit Notification/Leave of Absence form or by writing a letter stating reasons for the request and submitting it to the registrar. The leave is not official until the request is approved by the academic dean. If a student takes more than the allotted time for a leave of absence, he/she must reapply to the program.

## PART-TIME FACULTY POSITION

During the fall and spring semesters, the Fine and Performing Arts department reserves at least one section of foundation classes for an M.F.A. candidate to teach. This is a three-credit undergraduate class. All interested M.F.A. candidates are encouraged to apply for the part-time faculty position.

## REGISTRATION

Registration forms are sent to students from the Graduate Office before the start of the studio sessions and at the beginning of the fall and spring semesters at the college. Full payment or deferred payment forms must accompany the registration form. Johnson faculty will work only with students whose registrations are current.

## HEALTH AND ACCIDENT INSURANCE

Health insurance is mandatory for all full-time undergraduate and graduate students not otherwise covered. A student, or his or her parents in the case of minors, must present written proof certifying that he or she is covered by insurance to be exempted from the college insurance. The appropriate forms may be obtained from the Business Office and must be submitted one month before the first day of classes.

## IDENTIFICATION CARDS

Each student is initially issued an identification card free of charge. There is a fee of \$25 to replace a lost identification card. The card is used as a library card for borrowing books, as well as entrance to the SHAPE

facility and to entertainment on-campus. Cards are obtained at the Office of Public Safety in the Dewey building.

## PARKING ON CAMPUS

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In order to park legally on JSC premises, students must obtain a commuting student parking permit (\$50 charge) from the Office of Public Safety. It is best to do this while arranging for a student I.D.

## ACCESS TO FACILITIES

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M.F.A. students are encouraged to make use of the Library and Learning Center, the Academic Computing Center, and the College Bookstore; and to visit the Dibden Center for the Arts, including the Julian Scott Memorial Gallery. Public hours at the S.H.A.P.E. facility are also a time when students may use the indoor, Olympic-sized pool, and the health and fitness equipment.

## OUTCOME EXPECTATIONS FOR STUDENTS GRADUATING WITH A MASTER OF FINE ARTS IN STUDIO ARTS:

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We expect graduating students to:

- Articulate informed and ideologically sound ideas about art, both historic and contemporary, and connect those ideas to the wider world.
- Create artwork that is technically proficient and imbued with meaningful content.
- Demonstrate a general understanding, ability and resourcefulness with a wide range of art media, as well as a deeper understanding of at least one medium such as drawing, painting, sculpture, photography, printmaking, ceramics, digital media, etc.
- Have an openness to ideas other than their own, and a willingness to take risks with their own work.
- Have established regular studio practice, which will hopefully be lifelong. Students will be aware of developing issues in their own work, and know how to continue on their own in the pursuit of that vision, with strategies for maintaining self-awareness.
- Be familiar with the professional art world, from the perspective of career options, including exhibition venues, graduate and grant opportunities.

- Know how to assemble a professional portfolio.
- Understand the mechanics of setting up a safe and functioning professional studio.
- Know how to do a professional exhibition of their art, write about their art and speak about their art at a public event.

## M.F.A IN STUDIO ARTS

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### Required Courses

ART 5211 Studio Center Residency I	6 credits
ART 5212 Studio Center Residency II	6 credits
ART 5213 Studio Center Residency III	6 credits
ART 5214 Studio Center Residency IV	6 credits
ART 5215 Studio Center Residency V	6 credits
ART 5216 Studio Center Residency VI	6 credits
ART 5311 Contemporary Arts Seminar I	3 credits
ART 5312 Contemporary Arts Seminar II	3 credits
ART 5831 Independent Studio Work I	2 credits
ART 5832 Independent Studio Work II	2 credits
ART 5833 Independent Studio Work III	2 credits
ART 5834 Independent Studio Work IV	2 credits
ART 5835 Independent Studio Work V	2 credits
ART 5836 Independent Studio Work VI	2 credits
ART 5911 M.F.A. Thesis Preparation	3 credits
ART 5912 M.F.A. Thesis Exhibition	3 credits
ART 5900 M.F.A. Continuous Registration	0***
<b>TOTAL</b>	<b>60 credits</b>

\*\*\*Students not registering for any credits in a given semester must pay a \$150 Continuous Registration Fee, or apply for an official leave of absence. Students not registered by the semester deadline will automatically be charged the non-refundable Continuous Registration Fee.

MASTER OF FINE ARTS IN STUDIO ARTS ESTIMATED PROGRAM COSTS  
2008-2009 Graduate Tuition

Per credit rates:

Vermont Resident: \$390/cr

Non-Resident: \$842/cr

NEBHE\*: \$584/cr

Estimated Costs based on 2008-2009 rates

	Vermont Resident	Out-of-State	NEBHE	
Year 1	\$7,500	7,500	7,500	Two month studio sessions at \$3,750 each (comprehensive charge, including room and board).
	4,416	6,612	6,612	JSC studio session tuition 12 credits
	2,340	5,052	3,504	Independent Study - 6 credits
	1,170	2,526	1,752	Contemporary Art Seminar -3 credits
	15,426	21,690	19,368	Total Year 1
Year 2	15,426	21,690	19,368	Total Year 2 Same as Year 1, 21 credits. Studio sessions and JSC tuition
Year 3	14,256	19,164	17,616	Total Year 3 18 credits studio sessions and JSC tuition, same as year 1 and 2. Independent study replaced by 6 credit Master's Exhibition tuition. No seminar.
	45,108	62,544	56,352	Total Estimated program costs to student for 60 credit degree program over three years

\* Eligible non-residents receive a tuition discount (\$198/cr discount for eligible graduate students).

Additional costs for program completion not included on this schedule, include travel and art supply expenses, postage, shipping, etc.