Graphic Design BFA

Major
Bachelor of Fine Arts
Art & Design
School of Fine Arts

Students in UMD’s B.F.A. in Graphic Design do more than learn how to manipulate type and image. They explore communication, human psychology, and aesthetics in advanced techniques ranging from print to web within commercial, artistic, and academic contexts.

Graphic Design students choose one of these two emphases: a Studio emphasis with upper-level coursework that strengthens their fine art sensibilities in addition to design skills; or a Marketing emphasis that includes an array of business courses that prepare designers to identify, measure, and address consumer needs as part of a creative team.

Why UMD

UMD has something special!

- our deliberate merging of Art and Design in one department stimulates and provokes students as independent thinkers and creators who explore various media and methods
- UMD has nine faculty specifically in the graphic design area who continue to create, exhibit, and publish research regularly, in addition to teaching and providing mentorship and career guidance
- UMD Art and Design is accredited by NASAD, the National Association of Schools of Art and Design
- strong connection with AIGA, the worldwide professional association for design

Acquired Skills

Mentored by dedicated faculty who are active in the field, our students learn multiple platforms and employ industry-standard software to its highest efficiency. Our creative problem solvers are challenged to critically investigate design in terms of cultural relevance, effectiveness, ethics and ecological sustainability. Exploring design topics from Typography and Brand Identity to Motion Graphics and Interactive Design, students in the Graphic Design program learn to solve visual communication problems.

Our program is distinctive in that it also includes studio coursework. Many contemporary designers in the field tap their skillsets in media such as drawing, photography, video and 3-D studies to create dynamic design. Additional upper-level design courses in the major enable students to graduate with an impressive professional portfolio and solid interview training aimed to launch a successful career and stay active in the future of design.

Career Possibilities

Graphic designers combine art and technology to communicate ideas, using computer software or by hand, to inspire, inform, and captivate consumers. Working independently or in a larger firm, graphic designers collaborate with clients to develop overall design for logos, branding, advertising, packaging, and clear communication of information. Graphic designers may also work as art directors, marketing directors, multimedia artists, web developers, user experience designers, animators, professors and more.
Scholarships

Admission to Art & Design programs is based upon standard UMD admission guidelines. No portfolio submission is required upon application to the program; however, freshman and transfer students are admitted in pre-major status before full admission to this major. Pre-Graphic Design students must pass a portfolio review (ART 901) after completing a minimum of 9 art studio credits selected from the required pre-GD core requirements and studio electives. After passing that review, the student continues as a fully-admitted major.

Several departmental scholarships are awarded to returning Art & Design majors after the first year; additionally, any student can submit creative pieces to the Student Exhibition each spring, which does include several small scholarships for outstanding selected artwork and/or research.

Student Clubs

Student clubs in the Department of Art & Design vary each year according to interests but typically include an Art Education Club, Student Photography Cooperative, Mud Guild (Ceramics Club), Art History Symposium, Media Arts Club, and Student Design Organization (SDO).

Requirements

All UMD Art & Design majors are required to bring a 15-inch Apple MacBookPro with Retina display. See specs: sfa.d.umn.edu/about/technology

Graduate Report

Recent UMD Graduates Job Placement Data & Employers

Here's a sampling of positions Graphic Design BFA grads have attained six months to one year after graduation.

- Graphic Technologist - AlphaGraphics, Minneapolis, MN
- Digital Coordinator - Alpha Omega Winery, St. Helena, CA
- Tattoo Artist - Benchmark Tattoo, Duluth, MN
- UX Design Researcher - Best Buy, Richfield, MN
- Graphic Designer - Concept 3D, Eden Prairie, MN
- Lead Graphic Designer - Paper Hog, Duluth, MN
- Graphic Designer - Pearson & Von Elbe Advertising/Footprint Promotional Advertising, Duluth, MN
- Multimedia Designer & Web Assistant - Prime Advertising & Design, Maple Grove, MN
- Freelance Graphic Designer - Self-employed, Duluth, MN

For more data see the Graphic Design BFA Graduate Follow-Up Report.
For ideas about Graphic Design BFA and other majors visit Career & Internship Services.