

## **Art MFA**

### **Art MFA Program Mission Statement**

#### **Mission Statement (Full Description):**

The Master of Fine Arts (MFA) program at Southern Methodist University in Dallas, TX, is an intensive, full-time, 2-year residential program designed to cultivate professional artists who create innovative, original, and significant works of art, blending personal expression with imaginative concepts that engage deeply with contemporary cultural and societal issues. The program emphasizes a comprehensive approach to artistic development, combining rigorous studio practice with critical engagement in theoretical and cultural contexts. Additionally, students learn exhibition preparation, teaching, writing, and interdisciplinary research, ensuring that they are well-prepared for long-term success in art career paths including roles as studio artists, art educators, museum and gallery curators, multimedia artists, designers, and arts administrators. The Division of Art offers this program exclusively in an in-person format, ensuring a fully immersive and collaborative artistic experience. Students have access to dedicated exhibition spaces and studio facilities, creating a dynamic environment conducive to artistic experimentation and technical mastery.

#### **Does your program offer courses at an off-campus instructional site (not at SMU Dallas campus)?:**

Yes

#### **Does your program offer courses through distance education technology (e.g., asynchronous, synchronous, or both)?:**

No

#### **During which academic year were students first enrolled in this program?:**

AY2023-2024

#### **Progress:**

Complete

## **Reviews**

### **SLO Step 1A: SLO Number:**

1

**SLO Step 1C: SLO Statement (Full Description):**

Students must adhere to the portfolio submission deadline and participate in scheduled exhibitions, ensuring timely completion and public presentation of their work in the final semester upon graduation. They are required to develop a cohesive and distinguished portfolio that showcases both technical proficiency and conceptual sophistication. This portfolio will contain fully realized artworks, each of which will be presented in a professional exhibition context. The works will be assessed by faculty based on established criteria, including originality, technical mastery, and thematic coherence, ensuring that the portfolio reflects the students growth and ability to contribute meaningfully to contemporary artistic discourse.

**SLO Step 2A: Measure:**

Students are required to present in-progress & completed artworks in mid-term & end-term reviews in ASAG63xx. These reviews are the core formal programmatic moments to display artistic development & to discuss accomplishments & plans with faculty.

**SLO Step 2B: Type of Measure (check all that apply):**

Presentation ,Portfolio ,Written paper/project,Other

**SLO Step 2C: Is Measure direct or indirect?:**

Direct

**SLO Step 3A: Target for Measure:**

Faculty standards, including those set by NASAD provide a critical framework for establishing the MFA program's goals and performance expectations. These recognized benchmarks ensure that the program meets or exceeds the professional competencies required in the contemporary art world ensuring graduates are well prepared to engage professionally with the evolving demands of the fine arts field. By the end of each academic year, MFA student's will achieve an average score of 3.5 or higher in a five-point assessment scale aligned with program learning outcomes.

**SLO Step 4A: Was the target met for this Measure?:**

Met

**SLO Step 4B: Results and Findings for this Measure:**

There are 3 first-year MFA students and 4 second-year MFA students, for a total of 7 MFA students. The average of their weighted scores combined for the academic year is 4.02 which exceeds the stated goal of 3.5 on a five-point scale. Supporting data is attached.

Attached Files

[MFA Planning – measure results & findings AY2024-25 with Data Synopsis.xlsx](#)

**SLO Step 4C: Interpretation of Results:**

First-year student scores averaged 3.94 for the academic year, while second-year student scores averaged 4.11. Primarily through DGS leadership, new faculty participate in Planning quantitative evaluation, despite the rapidly changing composition of faculty through new tenure hires and the continuing revolving door of visiting hires. Art seeks from university and school the support to stabilize faculty with all tenure hires.

Attached Files

[MFA Planning – measure results & findings AY2024-25 with Data Synopsis.xlsx](#)

**SLO Step 5A: Use of Results for Seeking Improvement (Action Plan):**

This evaluation spreadsheet is available in Box for all Division faculty to review, as is the spreadsheet from last year. The faculty cohort prioritized hiring and facilities issues as these profound effect on providing a quality educational experience. Strategic planning will encompass more pedagogical matters once facilities and faculty matters are stable and the self-study is complete. Examples of how faculty and program leadership were or will be involved in the development of an action plan are that the division chair was obliged to oversee two search committees even though the chair also evaluates the work of the committees, because Art has too few tenure faculty. Likewise, the DGS chaired a search committee despite an already significant burden.

**SLO Step 5B: Type of Action:**

Other

**SLO Step 5C: Dialogue Participants (check all that apply):**

Other

**SLO Step 5D: Evidence of Dialogue:**

F24

10/11 (9am-4:30pm) 1st and 2nd year MFA student mid-term reviews

12/10 (9am-1:10pm) 1st and 2nd year MFA student end-term reviews

12/11 (9am-1:45pm) 1st and 2nd year MFA student end-term reviews

Sp25

3/14 (9am-12pm) 1st and 2nd year MFA student mid-term reviews in individual studios

4/11 (8:30am-1:30pm) 1st and 2nd year MFA student oral exams and individual reviews

5/7 (9am-12:20pm) 1st year MFA student oral exams and reviews

Faculty primarily have a dialogue about facilities problems that should be addressed instead by OFPM and turnover of visiting faculty that should be ended by granting of tenure lines.

**SLO Step 5E: Type of other Improvements (check all that apply):**

Other

**SLO Step 5F: Other Improvements (Full Description):**

Faculty, under leadership of the DGS, updated the thesis production calendar to spread the work more evenly across the final semesters, giving more opportunity for faculty as a whole to review student theses. Studio occupation calendar also updated to ensure ready access for incoming students.

**SLO Step 6A: Status Update on Action(s) Identified in the Previous Assessment Cycle (Full Description):**

The Division of Art continues to struggle, as the consistent implementation of improvements is dependent upon continuity within the faculty cohort. Visiting faculty and adjunct faculty are not sufficiently beneficial to the long-term success of the program. Their contributions are rich but temporary, as the visitors are not with the Division long enough to see projects through to a point of stability or conclusion. Each new individual potentially means an alteration of best practices. Therefore, the Division is perpetually changing but not evolving to its fullest potential.

**SLO Step 6B: Status Update on Previously Identified Action Plan(s):**

Not applicable for this cycle (explain in Step 6A)

**Progress:**

Complete

**MFAQE**

**SLO Step 1A: SLO Number:**

2

**SLO Step 1C: SLO Statement (Full Description):**

During the final semester before graduation, students will have successfully organized, prepared, and mounted a public exhibition of their work that adheres to established professional standards for presentation. Each artwork included, as well as an exhibition as a whole, will be assessed through a faculty and peer review process, evaluating its clarity of concept, technical execution, and coherency with the work's stated objectives. The evaluation will focus on the conceptual framework of the work which must be clearly articulated and demonstrated through the artwork itself, ensuring that the intent and message are effectively communicated to the audience. The technical aspects of the work such as craftsmanship, use of materials, and attention to detail, will be assessed to ensure the highest level of proficiency is evident in the final presentation. The body of work should demonstrate a consistent thematic approach and aesthetic vision, with each piece contributing to the overall cohesion of the exhibition. The alignment of the works with the student's stated artistic objectives will be a key factor in the evaluation.

**SLO Step 2A: Measure:**

Second-year students are required to present Master of Fine Arts Qualifying Exhibition (MFAQE) in the Pollock Gallery.

**SLO Step 2B: Type of Measure (check all that apply):**

Capstone project, Presentation, Portfolio, Written paper/project, Other

**SLO Step 2C: Is Measure direct or indirect?:**

Direct

**SLO Step 3A: Target for Measure:**

Faculty standards, including those set by NASAD provide a critical framework for establishing the MFA program's goals and performance expectations. These recognized benchmarks ensure that the program meets or exceeds the professional competencies required in the contemporary art world ensuring graduates are well prepared to engage professionally with the evolving demands of the fine arts field. By the end of each academic year, MFA students will achieve an average score of 3.5 or higher in a five-point assessment scale aligned with program learning outcomes.

**SLO Step 4A: Was the target met for this Measure?:**

Met

**SLO Step 4B: Results and Findings for this Measure:**

Four second-year MFA students participated in the MFAQE. The average of the second-year student scores is 4.28 which exceeds the stated goal of 3.5 on a five-point scale.

Attached Files

[MFA Planning – measure results & findings AY2024-25 with Data Synopsis.xlsx](#)

**SLO Step 4C: Interpretation of Results:**

The average of the current cohort's scores is 4.28, compared to 3.99 for the second-year cohort in the 2023-2024 academic year. The previous cohort had three students, while the current

cohort has four. The data shows an increase in average score across similarly sized cohorts. Supporting data is attached.

Attached Files

[MFA Planning – measure results & findings AY2024-25 with Data Synopsis.xlsx](#)

**SLO Step 5A: Use of Results for Seeking Improvement (Action Plan):**

The evaluation spreadsheet is available in Box for all Division faculty to review, as is the spreadsheet from last year. The faculty cohort prioritized hiring and facilities issues as these profound effect on providing a quality educational experience. Strategic planning will encompass more pedagogical matters once facilities and faculty matters are stable and the self-study is complete. Examples of how faculty program leadership were involved in the development of an action plan are that the division chair was obliged to oversee two search committees even though the chair also evaluates the work of the committees, because Art has too few tenure faculty. Likewise, the DGS chaired a search committee despite an already significant service burden.

**SLO Step 5B: Type of Action:**

Other

**SLO Step 5C: Dialogue Participants (check all that apply):**

Other

**SLO Step 5D: Evidence of Dialogue:**

Faculty primarily have a dialogue about facilities problems that should be addressed instead by OFPM and turnover of visiting faculty that should be ended by granting tenure lines.

**SLO Step 5E: Type of other Improvements (check all that apply):**

Other

**SLO Step 5F: Other Improvements (Full Description):**

Faculty, under the leadership of the DGS, revised the Graduate Handbook earlier to ensure that it can be delivered to incoming students earlier in the process of their move to SMU. Faculty are coordinating the entirety of the credit offerings in regular and irregular sessions, a result of which is that there are more options for graduate credit across all sessions.

**SLO Step 6A: Status Update on Action(s) Identified in the Previous Assessment Cycle (Full Description):**

The Division of Art continues to struggle, as the consistent implementation of improvements is dependent upon continuity within the faculty cohort. Visiting faculty and adjunct faculty are not sufficiently beneficial to the long-term success of the program. Their contributions are rich but temporary, as the visitors are not with the Division long enough to see projects through to a point of stability or conclusion. Each new individual potentially means an alteration of best practices. Therefore, the Division is perpetually changing but not evolving to its fullest potential.

**SLO Step 6B: Status Update on Previously Identified Action Plan(s):**

Not applicable for this cycle (explain in Step 6A)

**Progress:**

Complete

**Oral Exams**

**SLO Step 1A: SLO Number:**

3

**SLO Step 1C: SLO Statement (Full Description):**

During the final semester of the program, students will successfully complete an oral examination focused on their research and thesis project, demonstrating an in-depth and comprehensive understanding of the theoretical and cultural contexts surrounding their work, as well as the methodological approaches and artistic processes employed. The examination will be evaluated by faculty members, who will assess the student's ability to clearly present their research findings and artistic vision. Key evaluation criteria will include the student's capacity to engage with critical questions, defend their creative choices, and demonstrate a strong command of both the theoretical underpinnings and the technical aspects of their work.

**SLO Step 2A: Measure:**

Students will present for a 1<sup>st</sup> yr oral exam & for a 2<sup>nd</sup> yr oral exam.

**SLO Step 2B: Type of Measure (check all that apply):**

Presentation ,Written paper/project,Other

**SLO Step 2C: Is Measure direct or indirect?:**

Direct

**SLO Step 3A: Target for Measure:**

Student scores will average at least 3.5 on a five-point scale: 5 Mastery, 4 Accomplished, 3 Proficient, 2 Adequate, 1 Inadequate.

**Commented [SS1]:** Develop criteria for the measures

**SLO Step 4A: Was the target met for this Measure?:**

Met

**SLO Step 4B: Results and Findings for this Measure:**

There are 3 first-year MFA student's and 4 second-year MFA students, for a total of 7 MFA students. The average of their scores for the academic year is 4.01, which exceeds the stated goal of 3.5 on a five-point scale. Supporting data is attached.

Attached Files

[MFA Planning – measure results & findings AY2024-25 with Data Synopsis.xlsx](#)

**SLO Step 4C: Interpretation of Results:**

There has been no appreciable change in operations, but there was likely a change in pedagogical approach. The Division of Art had six tenure faculty in 22-23AY and only four tenure faculty in 24-25AY.

Attached Files

[MFA Planning – measure results & findings AY2024-25 with Data Synopsis.xlsx](#)

**SLO Step 5A: Use of Results for Seeking Improvement (Action Plan):**

The evaluation spreadsheet is available in Box for all Division faculty to review, as is the spreadsheet from last year. The faculty cohort prioritized hiring and facilities issues as these profound effect on providing a quality educational experience. Strategic planning will encompass more pedagogical matters once facilities and faculty matters are stable and the self-study is complete. Examples of how faculty and program leadership were or will be involved in the development of an action plan are that the division chair was obliged to oversee two search committees even though the chair also evaluates the work of the committees, because Art has too few tenure faculty. Likewise, the DGS chaired a search committee despite an already significant service burden.

**SLO Step 5B: Type of Action:**

Other

**SLO Step 5C: Dialogue Participants (check all that apply):**

Other

**SLO Step 5D: Evidence of Dialogue:**

Faculty primarily have dialogue about facilities problems that should be addressed instead by OFPM and turnover of visiting faculty that should be ended by granting tenure lines.

**SLO Step 5E: Type of other Improvements (check all that apply):**

Other

**SLO Step 5F: Other Improvements (Full Description):**

Faculty, under the leadership of the DGS, revised the Graduate Handbook earlier to ensure that it can be delivered to incoming students earlier in the process of their move to SMU. Faculty are

coordinating the entirety of the credit offerings in regular and irregular sessions, a result which is that there are more options for graduate credit across all sessions.

**SLO Step 6A: Status Update on Action(s) Identified in the Previous Assessment Cycle (Full Description):**

The Division of Art continues to struggle, as the consistent implementation of improvements is dependent upon continuity within the faculty cohort. Visiting faculty are not sufficiently beneficial to the long term success of the program. Their contributions are rich but temporary, as the visitors are not with the Division long enough to see projects through to a point of stability or conclusion. Each new individual potentially means an alteration of best practices. Therefore, the Division is perpetually changing but not evolving to its fullest potential.

**SLO Step 6B: Status Update on Previously Identified Action Plan(s):**

Not applicable for this cycle (explain in Step 6A)

**Progress:**

Complete

**Documentation**

**SLO Step 1A: SLO Number:**

4

**SLO Step 1C: SLO Statement (Full Description):**

In the final semester before graduation, students will have produced comprehensive, high-quality documentation of their work that meets both professional art industry standards and academic publication requirements, which is deposited in a digital repository, SMU Scholar. This documentation will include clear and concise format, visual representation, and thorough contextualization within relevant theoretical and cultural frameworks. It will be assessed by faculty based on several key criteria which includes the presentation of the work aligning with industry standards, demonstrating attention to detail and a polished, refined approach in both visual and written components. The content should reflect a deep engagement with the theoretical and cultural context of the work, showcasing the students ability to critically analyze and interpret their creative process and artistic objectives. The documentation must conform to the specific guidelines for academic and professional publications, ensuring clarity, consistency, and accuracy in its presentation. Through this process, students will demonstrate their ability to effectively

communicate the significance of their work in both artistic and academic contexts, preparing them for professional opportunities and scholarly contributions within the art world.

**SLO Step 2A: Measure:**

Students will submit electronic documentation of their portfolio creative thesis & extended artist statement on SMU Scholar.

**SLO Step 2B: Type of Measure (check all that apply):**

Written paper/project,Other

**SLO Step 2C: Is Measure direct or indirect?:**

Direct

**SLO Step 3A: Target for Measure:**

Student scores will average at least 3.5 on a five-point scale: 5 Mastery, 4 Accomplished, 3 Proficient, 2 Adequate, 1 Inadequate.

**SLO Step 4A: Was the target met for this Measure?:**

Met

**SLO Step 4B: Results and Findings for this Measure:**

Four second-year MFA students participated in the MFAQE. The average of the second-year student scores is 4.00, which exceeds the stated goal of 3.5 on a five-point scale.

Attached Files

[MFA Planning – measure results & findings AY2024-25 with Data Synopsis.xlsx](#)

**SLO Step 4C: Interpretation of Results:**

The average of the current cohort's scores is 4.00, and the 2023-24 academic year, second-year cohort's average was 4.06. The data shows that the average continues to remain above the target of 3.5. Supporting data is attached.

Attached Files

[MFA Planning – measure results & findings AY2024-25 with Data Synopsis.xlsx](#)

**SLO Step 5A: Use of Results for Seeking Improvement (Action Plan):**

This evaluation spreadsheet is available in Box for all Division faculty to review, as is the spreadsheet from last year. The faculty cohort prioritized hiring and facilities issues as these profound effect on providing a quality educational experience. Strategic planning will encompass more pedagogical matters once facilities and faculty matters are stable and the self-study is complete. Examples of how faculty and program leadership were or will be involved in the development of an action plan are that the division chair was obliged to oversee two search committees, because Art has too few tenure faculty. Likewise, the DGS chaired a search committee despite an already significant burden.

**SLO Step 5B: Type of Action:**

Other

**SLO Step 5C: Dialogue Participants (check all that apply):**

Other

**SLO Step 5D: Evidence of Dialogue:**

Faculty primarily have dialogue about facilities problems that should be addressed instead by OFPM and turnover of visiting faculty that should be ended by granting of tenure lines.

**SLO Step 5E: Type of other Improvements (check all that apply):**

Other

**SLO Step 5F: Other Improvements (Full Description):**

Faculty, under the leadership of the DGS, revised the Graduate Handbook earlier to ensure that it can be delivered to incoming students earlier in the process of their move to SMU. Faculty are coordinating the entirety of the credit offerings in regular and irregular sessions, a result of which is that there are more options for graduate credit across all sessions.

**SLO Step 6A: Status Update on Action(s) Identified in the Previous Assessment Cycle (Full Description):**

The Division of Art continues to struggle, as the consistent implementation of improvements is dependent upon continuity within the faculty cohort. Visiting faculty are not sufficiently beneficial to the long-term success of the program. Their contributions are rich but temporary, as the visitors are not with the Division long enough to see projects through to a point of stability or conclusion. Each new individual potentially means an alteration of best practices. Therefore, the Division is perpetually changing but not evolving to its fullest potential.

**SLO Step 6B: Status Update on Previously Identified Action Plan(s):**

Not applicable for this cycle (explain in Step 6A)

**Progress:**

Complete

**East Campus**

**PG Step 1A: PG Number:**

1

**PG Step 1C: PG Statement (Full Description):**

The MFA program will expand enrollment consistent with SMU Vision and Strategies for SMU East Campus (2018) and with Goals One, Two, Three, and Five of SMU Strategic Plan (2016).

**PG Step 2A: Measure:**

By the conclusion of the academic year, the program will aim to obtain new physical spaces specifically designated for student studio to accommodate the growing student enrollment. The space

will undergo an annual evaluation to ensure it meets the evolving needs of student enrollment and provides adequate support for refining their work.

**PG Step 2B: Is Measure direct or indirect?:**

Direct

**PG Step 3A: Target for Measure:**

Students will reclaim 30% more studio space from administrative or otherwise unproductive occupancy year upon year to reach enrollment of 16.

**PG Step 4A: Was the target met for this Measure?:**

Not Met

**PG Step 4B: Results and Findings for this Measure:**

Art continues to pursue with Meadows, and Meadows with the University, for effective, active use of fallow functional rooms on East Campus. Meadows indicated in SP24 some favorable response from the University and other schools. Therefore, Art hopes to progress on providing students with what they need, space on East Campus in F24, barring any impediments from the university or other schools. The documents are slim because Meadows & the University don't provide any. These are verbal conversations between division and school leaders.

**PG Step 4C: Interpretation of Results:**

n/a

**PG Step 5A: Use of Results for Seeking Improvement (Action Plan):**

Art hopes to progress on providing students with what they need, space on East Campus in F25, barring any impediments from the university or other schools.

**PG Step 5B: Dialogue Participants (check all that apply):**

Other

**PG Step 5C: Evidence of Dialogue:**

The documents are slim because Meadows and the University don't provide any. These are verbal conversations between division and school leaders.

**PG Step 5D: Type of other Improvements (check all that apply):**

Other

**PG Step 5E: Other Improvements (Full Description):**

n/a

**PG Step 6A: Status Update on Action(s) Identified in the Previous Assessment Cycle (Full Description):**

n/a

**PG Step 6B: Status Update on Previously Identified Action Plan(s):**

Not applicable for this cycle (explain in Step 6A)

**Progress:**

Complete

