



STUDIO  
ARTS  
COLLEGE  
INTERNATIONAL

# MASTER OF FINE ARTS IN COMMUNICATION DESIGN FLORENCE, ITALY



[saci-florence.edu](http://saci-florence.edu)

## MISSION

SACI'S MFA IN COMMUNICATION DESIGN PROGRAM provides students with the knowledge needed to:

- Work across mediums embracing the ever-expanding range of available tools and technologies.
- Interpret data in developing information systems.
- Work with a keen sense of what the social implications of one's design are or could be.
- Understand and use design as a tool for change.
- Work as creative mediators within a multi-disciplinary collaborative environment.
- Contribute to and expand the field of Communication Design through research and pedagogy.

COVER: DESIGN STUDIO IN SACI'S JULES MAIDOFF PALAZZO  
BELOW: DESIGN WORK BY SACI STUDENT ARIA GOODMAN



## INTRODUCTION

In this two-year program, MFA candidates have a unique opportunity to situate their personal design practice in relation to both the design and art legacies of Italy and Europe and the challenges of contemporary urban Florence.

To facilitate a modulated learning experience, each MFA candidate works in dedicated studio space that fosters communal studio experiences. The studios are in a fully renovated 16th-century palazzo in the heart of Florence—the city that during the Renaissance, revolutionized visual culture and has since served as an inspiration for generations of designers

MFA candidates investigate the evolution of Communication Design from its roots in Western visual conventions to current trends and processes. They are encouraged to adopt—and incorporate into their own way of working—practices from both old and new disciplines: Graphic Design, Information Design, and Visualization; Branding and Advertising; Infographics; Typography; Illustration; and Environmental, Interactive, and Web Design.

Ongoing dialogue and critiques with SACI instructors and visiting designers provide MFA candidates with varied perspectives on their creative work. A deeper understanding of the Italian culture of creativity and style is reached through presentations and workshops, visits to the studios of cutting-edge designers, and travel to design fairs throughout Italy and Europe.

Students earn 60 credits. During their first year, they create a customized program that balances independent study, studio design assignments, and course work. In their second year, emphasis is placed upon career options for emerging communication designers. MFA candidates have the option of gaining practical experience as SACI Teaching Assistants, and they can undertake Design Internships in Tuscan design firms and cultural institutions.

After completing their MFA in Communication Design, graduates will be able to demonstrate:

- The ability to approach design work as an integrated system and to solve problems by employing research methodologies and visual communication practices.

→ Advanced professional competence as evinced through a well-developed body of work which demonstrates a depth of knowledge and experience.

→ Knowledge of theory and practices necessary for leadership positions within the design professions.

→ Advanced capabilities with technologies, as evinced through creation, dissemination, presentation, documentation, and preservation of work.

→ Understanding of the significance of Italian, other European, and global Communication Design practices, both historical and contemporary, and the ability to demonstrate this knowledge through creative, innovative, and socially-responsible design projects.

## PROGRAM OF STUDY

Students in the Master of Fine Arts in Communication Design program must complete 60 semester hours of course work within two academic years. They normally enroll each academic year in 4 or 5 courses in both the Fall and Spring semesters. Students meet at the beginning and throughout each semester with the Program Director/Design Area Head.

Programs of study are flexible. They vary from student to student and are geared to meet individual study goals, which are outlined in the Study Proposal. Students are able to pursue their specific areas of interest by undertaking Directed Independent Study that complements classroom study in Design and other areas. To maintain satisfactory academic progress and earn the MFA degree, students must complete all course work in the program at SACI within two academic years with a minimum overall grade point average of 3.0 (based upon a scale in which A = 4.0). A letter grade (A-F) is given in each class. Students in the program are not permitted to take courses Pass/Fail except for Teaching Assistantships.

Students who need additional time to complete all course work are able to enroll, during their two academic years of matriculation in the program, in SACI's Late Spring and/or Summer terms. Students who require more than two academic years to complete the program must receive approval to do so from both the Dean and their Graduate Review Board, which consists of the Program Director/

Design Area Head and two other Design area instructors appointed by the Program Director/Design Area Head. Such requests are normally approved only in the case of documented medical emergencies, and the period of approved extended study does not normally exceed one academic year.

Credit from other institutions is not transferable to the MFA in Communication Design program, nor is credit earned at SACI prior to matriculation in the MFA in Communication Design program. Students who, prior to matriculation in the MFA in Communication Design program, have completed at SACI courses required in the program may be permitted, subject to approval by the Program Director/Design Area Head, to enroll in other SACI courses, in the appropriate area and at the appropriate level, to substitute for the required course work that had been completed previously at SACI.

## CURRICULUM

The curriculum for the Master of Fine Arts in Communication Design program is founded on the belief that graduate students in Communication Design should concentrate in one area, experiment in others, and complement their studio work with art history, design history, and other academic studies.

Each student in the MFA in Communication Design program is given studio space, and his or her work is critiqued regularly in group sessions led by SACI instructors who are, at times, joined by other design professionals. All students are encouraged to take an active role in these critiques, which are intended to offer constructive evaluation of the student's work and assist the student in sharpening his or her own critical faculties.

Students in the Master of Fine Arts in Communication Design program are required to take the following:

### FALL SEMESTER (FIRST YEAR)

- 3 semester hours: Graduate Seminar in Communication Design: History & Theory I
- 3 semester hours: Graduate Seminar in Communication Design: Studio Co-Requisite I
- 3 semester hours: Graphic Design, Web Design, Typography, or Illustration
- 3 semester hours: Directed Independent Study in Communication Design
- 3 semester hours: Studio Elective

#### SPRING SEMESTER (FIRST YEAR)

- 3 semester hours: Graduate Seminar in Communication Design: History & Theory II
- 3 semester hours: Graduate Seminar in Communication Design: Studio Co-Requisite II
- 3 semester hours: Graphic Design, Web Design, Infographics, or Illustration
- 3 semester hours: Directed Independent Study in Directed Independent Study in Communication Design
- 3 semester hours: Studio Elective

#### FALL SEMESTER (SECOND YEAR)

- 3 semester hours: Graduate Seminar in Communication Design: Professional Practicum I
- 6 semester hours: Directed Independent Study in the Communication Design
- 3 semester hours: Studio Elective
- 3 semester hours: 2D Design Teaching Assistantship or 2D Design Internship

#### SPRING SEMESTER (SECOND YEAR)

- 3 semester hours: Graduate Seminar in Communication Design: Professional Practicum II
- 6 semester hours: Directed Independent Study in Communication Design
- 3 semester hours: Studio Elective
- 3 semester hours: 2D Design Teaching Assistantship or 2D Design Internship

#### STUDIO ELECTIVES

Work in Communication Design is directly supported by work in Studio Electives which can be selected from a full range of offerings including: Photography; Video; Animation; Art, Mind, & Diversity; Digital Multimedia; Body Archives; Drawing; Painting; Etching; Serigraphy; Ceramics; Sculpture; Book Arts; Jewelry Design; Batik; Weaving; Installation & Performance Art; or additional Design courses. Though reviews have work in Communication Design as their main focus, work done in elective areas is also considered with care. In preparing Study Proposals and Final Presentations, students are encouraged to consider anticipated or completed work in elective disciplines as well as any other experiences, whether class-related or extracurricular, relevant to their design, artistic, or scholarly development.

#### 2D DESIGN TEACHING ASSISTANTSHIPS

A number of 2D Design Teaching Assistantships are awarded annually to students who have completed the

first academic year of the MFA in Communication Design program. The awards are made on the basis of teaching potential and academic distinction at both the undergraduate and graduate levels. 2D Design Teaching Assistantships are available in SACI classes, ranging from beginning to advanced levels, in Graphic Design, Web Design, Typography, Infographics, and Illustration. The supervising SACI instructor prepares the Teaching Assistant for teaching by providing an introduction to the pedagogy considered fundamental to curricula for students in the subject matter at the appropriate level of instruction. This preparation begins prior to the start of the course and continues throughout the semester.

The Teaching Assistant is required to attend each class session; assist the instructor both in class and outside class regarding matters related to the course; and, with the approval and under the supervision of the instructor, critique students' work, give demonstrations, and lecture on appropriate subject matter. With the approval of the Program Director/Design Area Head, Teaching Assistantships in classes outside the 2D Design area can be taken as Studio Electives. Teaching Assistantships are unpaid. They are graded on a Pass/Fail basis. Students receive 3 semester hours of credit for each class in which they are Teaching Assistants.

#### 2D DESIGN INTERNSHIPS

MFA in Communication Design students are encouraged to gain training and practical experience in the field by undertaking 2D Design Internships in Tuscany with individual designers or firms that specialize in communications, graphic design, or illustration. Interns assist these design professionals in their work. Design Internships entail a minimum of 8 hours of work per week and are unpaid. Students receive grades for the Internship and 3 semester hours of credit for each term in which they successfully complete 2D Design Internships. Although knowledge of Italian is helpful, it is not required. Students intending to undertake a 2D Design Internship should inform the Program Director/Design Area Head as early as possible prior to the beginning of the term to allow ample time for the Internship to be arranged.

#### PROGRAM COMPONENTS

##### The Study Proposal

At the beginning of each semester, students write a Study Proposal. The Study Proposal must include: a clear statement defining the student's focus within Communication Design; proposed goals for the semester; problems that the student is seeking

to resolve and questions he or she is proposing to answer; themes or subjects to investigate; the means and resources that will be used to realize these goals (courses, museums, libraries, materials, techniques, and other resources); and a statement about how all the above relate to prior work the student has done.

The Study Proposal must be typed and submitted for review and approval to the Program Director/Design Area Head by the end of the first week of classes; it may be returned to the student for rewriting and clarification. The four Study Proposals (one each semester) serve to define and redefine the student's goals and provide major points of reference throughout his or her entire course of study. It is a good idea to think about and draft a Study Proposal before arriving at SACI.

##### Directed Independent Study

Each semester students enroll in a Directed Independent Study (DIS) in Communication Design. The DIS is an intensive and individually designed tutorial in which the student meets weekly with the instructor to review design work created by the student for the DIS. With the approval of the Program Director/Design Area Head, students can additionally take as an elective a DIS in a subject other than Communication Design. The DIS format

enables a student to propose a study plan to meet a specific educational need pertinent to individual design, artistic, or scholarly development. At the beginning of the semester, a DIS form in which the project is fully described in detail must be submitted by the student to the instructor supervising the DIS and the appropriate Area Head for his or her signed approval. All DIS arrangements follow the same add/drop schedule as regular classes.

##### MFA Graduate Seminar in Communication Design: History & Theory I and II

##### MFA Graduate Seminar in Communication Design: Professional Practicum I and II

The Graduate Seminar in Communication Design, in which MFA students must enroll during each of their four semesters of study, provides structure and instruction that enables students to develop, refine, and clarify their work. Students are exposed to concepts, issues, designers, and artists, past and present, relevant to the practice and study of Communication Design in a contemporary setting. Visiting lecturers focus on a range of critical issues pertaining to modern and contemporary design. This 3-credit academic course consists of readings and discussions that address a variety of topics. An overarching theme is the role and identity of the communication designer within society, with particular focus on the experience of the communication designer in Italy. Readings provide students with an exposure to particular designers, art and design theories, and art and design institutions within a loose chronological/historical context.

In addition to discussions based on assigned readings, this course includes visits to design events and designers' studios. Field trips include visits to exhibitions at the Palazzo Strozzi in Florence, the Triennale in Milan, and the Children's Book Fair in Bologna; the Tipoteca Italiana typography museum near Treviso; the Bodoni Museum in Parma; museums such as the Uffizi Gallery and Museo Galileo in Florence and the Luigi Pecci Center for Contemporary Art in Prato; and meetings with designers in Milan and other cities whose work revolves around printed and digital media. Field trips vary from day trips of a few hours to excursions of several days, and include travel

throughout Italy and elsewhere in Europe. During the first year, the course focuses on contemporary practices with an emphasis upon the role of the emerging designer within new and established art and design communities. During the second year, the course investigates designers' networks and professional opportunities for the emerging designer.

##### MFA Graduate Seminar in Communication Design: Studio Co-Requisite I and II

The 3-credit studio co-requisites of the MFA Graduate Seminar in Communication Design consist of group critiques and individual critiques/discussions of each student's design work. Each student is required to: produce a body of design work; make presentations about his or her designs; maintain a journal; and participate in an end-of-year group exhibition and other group exhibitions.

##### Reviews

Reviews occur at the end of each semester. Over the course of the program, a student has four reviews, including the Final Presentation. These are forums developed to serve the student with constructive criticism and discussion of his or her work. Comments are geared to helping students develop their own critical faculties. Reviews are conducted by the student's Graduate Review Board, which, as has been noted, consists of the Program Director/Design Area Head and two other Design area instructors appointed by the Program Director/Design Area Head. Graduate Review Board members' comments are both spoken and written. A copy of written comments is given to each student for his or her permanent reference.

##### Final Papers/Presentations

At the end of the final semester of study, the student undergoes an hour-long comprehensive review conducted by the student's Graduate Review Board. During the review, the student presents works completed in partial fulfillment of the requirements for the MFA in Communication Design degree and describes how studio and academic research undertaken while at SACI relates to the work being presented. Prior to this Final Presentation, the student prepares and submits to the Graduate Review Board a research paper in which themes, problems, and concepts relevant to the student's visual, conceptual, and

DR. CECILIE HOLLBERG, DIRECTOR OF THE GALLERIA DELL'ACCADEMIA DI FIRENZE, PRESENTING TO SACI MX STUDENTS



historical concerns are explored. The paper must trace strands of connection among individuals, movements, and cultural factors from many of the periods studied and demonstrate how these influenced the student's creative thinking in undertaking and completing the presented body of work. The paper should, where applicable, be typed and double-spaced. It must be 15 to 20 pages in length and incorporate infographics as a central means of communication.

At the Final Presentation, students must additionally submit photo documentation: prints, CDs, DVDs, or videos of work completed in the program. Concentration must be on work in Communication Design. All work must be submitted in a professional format. Prints must be labeled (name, date, title, medium, dimensions), cropped, and mounted. The student must pass the Final Presentation to receive the MFA in Communication Design degree.

### MFA Exhibition

An MFA exhibition of works by graduating students takes place at the end of their final semester of study. To gain experience of professional practice, graduating students are required to take part in all aspects of the exhibition. This includes designing and arranging for the printing of invitations; preparing the works for exhibition; installing the works in the gallery; labeling all of the works; adjusting lighting; preparing for the opening reception; and arranging for the dismantling of the exhibition and the return of all works to exhibition participants. All reasonable assistance is given in this effort by faculty, advisors, and staff.

### Documentation

As part of the MFA in Communication Design program, students are instructed in presentation and documentation methods. Documentation, submitted in a professional manner, must be presented to the student's Graduate Review Board at the end of the final term for retention by SACI. This documentation consists of (1) the student's curriculum vitae; (2) the Study Proposals; (3) the journals; (4) the final research paper; (5) the MFA exhibition invitation; and (6) slides, prints, CDs, DVDs, or videos of work completed in the program.

### Grades, Transcripts, and Degrees

A letter grade (A-F) is given in each course, including Directed Independent Study. Students in the Master of Fine Arts in Communication Design program are not

permitted to take courses Pass/Fail except for Teaching Assistantships. At the end of each semester, an official SACI transcript is issued to all students in the program. For the MFA degree to be awarded, all Master of Fine Arts in Communication Design program requirements must be fulfilled.

### FACULTY

#### The Program Director/Design Area Head

The Program Director/Design Area Head is responsible for reviewing and approving Study Proposals; advising students about registering for their classes; allocating studio space; scheduling reviews and Final Presentations; aiding students in scheduling and planning graduate student exhibitions; and disseminating information pertinent to MFA in Communication Design study. The Program Director/Design Area Head is a member of the Graduate Review Board and is available to advise students on all aspects of their work and life at SACI. In addition, the Program Director/Design Area Head helps students meet and work with faculty who can aid the students in their chosen areas of study.

#### SACI's Faculty

Students in the Master of Fine Arts in Communication Design program are encouraged to view the faculty at large as a resource to further their study goals. Students should therefore feel free to consult any member of the SACI faculty

about areas of special interest. Prospective students can acquaint themselves with SACI's faculty by looking at the Faculty section on SACI's web site:

[www.saci-florence.edu](http://www.saci-florence.edu)

### RESOURCES

Students in the Master of Fine Arts in Communication Design program are allotted studio space in SACI's Jules Maidoff Palazzo for the Visual Arts. The palazzo is a four-floor, 16,000 square foot building located in Florence's historic center at Via Sant'Egidio 14. It is a short distance from such famous sites as the Duomo and Brunelleschi's Ospedale degli Innocenti, and is in close proximity to Florence's four great *piazze*—Piazza Santa Croce, Piazza della Signoria, Piazza della Repubblica, and Piazza della Santissima Annunziata. Named after SACI's founder and director emeritus, the palazzo also includes classrooms, a garden, terraces, audio-visual equipment, and computer facilities that can be used for design, photography, and studio art projects. The Jules Maidoff Palazzo for the Visual Arts is open from 9:00 am to midnight seven days a week.

The Worthington Library, in SACI's Palazzo dei Cartelloni, contains over 13,000 volumes and includes a major section devoted to classic and contemporary design texts. The library's periodical collection, with over 50 subscriptions, is one of the largest English-language art and design periodical collections in Florence. SACI's Blackwell

SACI MX (MUSEUM EXPERIENCE) COLLABORATION WITH FLORENCE'S RENOWNED GALLERIA DELL'ACCADEMIA



SACI STUDENT JONNEA HERMAN PRESENTING WORK FOR SACI MX GALLERIA DELL'ACCADEMIA PROJECT

Design Library, in the Jules Maidoff Palazzo, contains the entire collection of back issues of journals, magazines, and periodicals related to Graphic Design, Illustration, Interior Design, and Architecture. Both the Worthington and Blackwell libraries are open seven days a week. Library users have access to *ARTstor* (an online database of more than 1,500,000 art, design, photography, architecture, humanities, and social science digital images) and *JSTOR* (an online database of articles from thousands of academic journals). *ARTstor* and *JSTOR* can be accessed from any computer in SACI's Palazzo dei Cartelloni or Jules Maidoff Palazzo. SACI also offers online access to the Questia library of over 9,000,000 books and articles.

### SACI'S LECTURE SERIES

Each semester, a number of lectures are scheduled that are open to all students. These lectures feature visiting designers, painters, sculptors, photographers, filmmakers, art historians, critics, curators, and other art and design professionals, as well as speakers who address subjects relevant to Italian culture and politics.

### FIELD TRIPS

SACI emphasizes on-site learning and

sponsors many field trips for its students, both as part of its classes and as optional additions to its programs. Students in the MFA in Communication Design program, in addition to participating in field trips that are part of the Graduate Seminars, are encouraged to take advantage of these field trips. Even when not enrolled in a given class, they are welcome to accompany field trips when space is available. SACI classes regularly visit incomparable collections in museums such as the Uffizi, Bargello, Accademia, Pitti, Marino Marini, Horne, Primo Conti, Specola, San Marco, Stibbert, and Bardini.

Field trips are usually led by one of the art history, photography, design, or studio art instructors. SACI field trips outside of Florence normally include visits to Rome; Milan; Ravenna; Pisa and Lucca; Siena and San Gimignano; Fiesole; Vinci and the Medici Villas; Bologna; the monastery of La Certosa; and Arezzo, Urbino, Monterchi, and San Sepolcro. SACI also offers optional field trips to enrich students' overseas art and cultural experience. Each year there is a trip to Venice and another to Naples, Pompeii, and Herculaneum. These travel opportunities allow students to explore areas outside Florence, and are a wonderful way to become aware of Europe's art, design, history, and culture. Optional trips require modest fees.

### GENERAL INFORMATION

#### Eligibility

US and international students who have earned, or will have earned, a bachelor's degree, or its equivalent, prior to beginning graduate study at SACI may apply for admission to the MFA in Communication Design program. Applicants who attend, or attended, a US college or university must have earned a minimum overall grade point average of 3.0 (based upon a scale in which A = 4.0). The required minimum undergraduate grade point average in Design course work if the applicant has had no previous graduate experience is 3.3. The required minimum grade point average in previous graduate work in Design is also 3.3. Those whose native language is not English who have not demonstrated English-language proficiency through prior study in the English language at an institution of higher learning will be required to demonstrate English-language proficiency through one of the methods indicated in the *Non-US Student Admissions* section of the SACI web site. In addition to the above, to be admitted to the program applicants must demonstrate:

- Academic distinction in prior university-level study as evidenced through submission of transcripts from all schools attended showing courses

completed and grades received. In reviewing applicants' academic records, special attention will be paid to course work undertaken in areas most relevant to Communication Design.

- Artistic promise in Communication Design as evinced through submission of a portfolio with images of a substantial number of high quality design works.
- Strong support from instructors or other artists or designers familiar with the applicant's work as indicated through submission of at least three letters of recommendation that evaluate the applicant's past performance in academic and/or design subjects; assess the applicant's appropriateness for MFA in Communication Design study in Florence at SACI and likelihood of success in the program; and appraise the applicant's potential for career distinction as a designer and educator.
- Clearly articulated educational goals and design aspirations that could best be advanced through matriculation in SACI's MFA in Communication Design program.

All proficiencies required for entrance to the program must be achieved prior to admittance. No credit toward the degree is permitted for study directed toward completion of these proficiencies.

### Application Process

Students may begin study in the Master of Fine Arts in Communication Design program in the Fall semester only.

Completed applications should be received no later than **March 15**. Applications received after March 15 will be considered only if space is available.

Applicants for scholarships must apply by **March 15**.

Applicants should complete and submit the online application form through the SACI web site, including a \$70 non-refundable processing fee.

In addition, the following materials should be sent directly to the **New York Admissions office of Studio Arts College International** (see address below):

- Short essay describing the applicant's area of specialization, objectives, and reasons for wishing to enter the program.
- **One** set of official transcripts from all post-secondary institutions attended.
- **Three** letters of recommendation from instructors or other designers or artists familiar with the applicant's work.
- Curriculum vitae (required of those who have been out of school for 3 or more years).

### Submitting Your ePortfolio

For admission, an ePortfolio of 10-15 images of your strongest and most recent work in Communication Design must be submitted. This ePortfolio must be posted online via SACI's electronic

portfolio provider. SACI does not require a payment for submitting an ePortfolio. Upon submission of your SACI application, you will receive an email with a link for your ePortfolio submission. Acceptable file formats and sizes for ePortfolios are: *Images*: JPEG at a resolution of 72 dpi which must be no larger than 600 pixels in the longest direction. *Videos*: .flv, .wmv, .mov— up to 60 MB each and no longer than five minutes. *Text documents*: PDF format up to 10 MB each. All submissions must include an inventory list with title, medium, size, date, and description.

### Scheduling a Conversation with a SACI Faculty Member

Applicants who submit all required documents and materials will receive via e-mail an invitation and instructions from the New York SACI Admissions Office to schedule a phone or Skype conversation with a SACI faculty member to discuss their application and interest in the program.

Please see the SACI web site for full details on the application procedure.

### Notification

Decisions are rolling beginning in January and students are notified as soon as possible.

### Financial Information, Tuition, Fees & Scholarships

For full information, please see the *Dates and Fees* and *Scholarships* sections on the SACI web site. As noted above, applicants for scholarships must apply by **March 15**.

#### SACI IS

A United States non-profit 501(c)(3) educational entity incorporated in 1976

A directly accredited institutional member of the National Association of Schools of Art and Design (NASAD)

Affiliated with Bowling Green State University (BGSU) in Ohio, which is accredited by NASAD and by the North Central Association of Colleges and Secondary Schools

Authorized by the Delaware Department of Education to confer the Master of Fine Arts (MFA) in Communication Design

Recognized by the Italian Ministry of Foreign Affairs and the Italian Ministry of Universities as a foreign non-profit university-level program

*Students who would like to receive a copy of SACI's accreditation, licensure, and/or approval should send a signed request for such material to SACI's Dean.*

#### ANTI-DISCRIMINATION POLICY

It is the policy of Studio Arts College International (SACI) and Bowling Green State University (BGSU) that no person shall be subject to discrimination in whatever relationship with SACI or BGSU because of disability, age, race, religion, creed, color, sex, sexual orientation, or national origin.

#### FOR FURTHER INFORMATION CONTACT Studio Arts College International (New York)

25 Broadway, 9th Floor  
New York, NY 10004-1058  
USA  
T: (212) 248-7225  
F: (212) 248-7222  
E: admissions@saci-florence.edu

#### Studio Arts College International (Florence)

Palazzo dei Cartelloni  
Via Sant'Antonino 11  
50123 Florence, Italy  
T: (39) 055-289948  
F: (39) 055-2776408  
E: info@saci-florence.edu