MASTER OF ARTS IN ART HISTORY
FLORENCE, ITALY
MISSION

SACI’s MA in ART HISTORY PROGRAM provides students with a unique opportunity to complete the first stage of graduate study essential for those seeking careers as art historians and university-level Art History instructors. By exploiting fully the advantages available to scholars only through advanced study in Florence, SACI seeks to develop a critical mass of graduates who, because of the unique nature of their graduate training at SACI, will be highly competitive when seeking admission to doctoral programs in Art History and, upon completion of these programs, will be uniquely qualified to teach at colleges and universities. SACI’s expectation is that students who successfully complete the MA in Art History program will, throughout their lives, pursue scholarly endeavors that are rooted in their direct experience and deep appreciation of Italian and European art and culture.
INTRODUCTION

Students in SACI’s MA in Art History program complete all of their course work in Italy during one year of intensive study at SACI in Florence. They work in an environment of rigorous critical inquiry, both singularly and as part of a community that utilizes the remarkable art-historical and cultural resources of Florence. They benefit as well from interaction with members of SACI’s Artists Council, which include established artists, art historians, theorists, critics, curators, gallery directors, and publishers, many of international renown.

They encounter great art works not only in museums, but in the venues for which they were intended: churches and other public buildings, squares, gardens, and private houses throughout Italy and elsewhere in Europe. They have the rare opportunity to conduct research at the Uffizi Gallery’s Gabinetto Disegni e Stampe, and are able to learn art conservation and diagnostic techniques that they can apply to art-historical study in their selected areas. The program aims to deepen students’ understanding of Italian art and its relationship to arts elsewhere in Europe and throughout the world.

Classes are held on site and in SACI’s two landmark palazzi in Florence’s historic center. These fully renovated Renaissance buildings are a short walk from Florence’s renowned Uffizi, Bargello, Accademia, and Palazzo Pitti museums and a number of the world’s greatest libraries.

Students in the MA in Art History program attend SACI in Florence during one academic year from September through July and earn 36 credits. Under the mentorship of their selected Major Professor, they put together a program that balances supervised independent study with classroom study. They travel to art-historically important sites and major museums throughout Italy and elsewhere in Europe.

In their Graduate Seminars, they study historiography and research methodology and focus on a broad range of art history topics as well as those specific to their own research interests. They expand the breadth and depth of their studies through enrollment in other Art History and Museology courses, the undertaking of Directed Independent Study, and, for those who need to gain a reading knowledge or who seek increased proficiency in Italian, study at the appropriate level of the Italian language.

SACI’s MA in Art History program offers students, including those intending to pursue careers as art historians and educators, the unique opportunity to earn their master’s degree through year-long study in the city in which the Renaissance began and modern art continues to flourish.

Upon completion of the MA in Art History program, students should be able to:

→ Demonstrate an in-depth knowledge of the content and historiography of an extensive body of scholarly material in a major art field defined by historical period, geographic region or regions, or theme (e.g., Women and the Arts in Italy).

→ Demonstrate a general knowledge of the content and historiography of a body of scholarly material in other art fields defined by historical period, geographic region or regions, or theme.

→ Demonstrate an awareness of the role of art historians in the construction of the past and the role of contemporary context in shaping the perspectives of art historians.

→ Demonstrate the ability to formulate an original research project, identify pertinent sources, examine those sources thoroughly, efficiently, and even-handedly within the context of the existing scholarly literature in the field, and construct a well-ordered, well-argued, and well-written paper of substantial length.

PROGRAM OF STUDY

Students in the MA in Art History program must complete 36 credits of course work during four terms within one academic year. 30 credits must be at the graduate level in Art History or Museology. Students enroll for 12 credits in both the Fall and Spring semesters and 6 credits in both the Summer I and Summer II terms. They meet with the Director of the MA in Art History program and/or their Major Professor at the beginning and throughout each term.

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 serves to complement classroom study in their Major Discipline.

To maintain satisfactory academic progress and earn the MA in Art History degree, students must complete all course work in the program at SACI within one academic year 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 except MA Thesis I and MA Thesis II in which the student is graded Pass or Fail. Students in the MA in Art History program must take all other classes for a letter grade.

Students who need additional time to complete all course work must receive approval to do so from both the Dean and their Graduate Review Board, which consists of the Major Professor, the Director of the MA in Art History program, and an additional faculty member selected by the student. When the Director of the MA in Art History program is the same as the Major Professor, the Director selects another academic area faculty member to serve with the Director and the instructor selected by the student on the review board. 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 MA in Art History program, nor is credit earned at SACI prior to matriculation in the MA in Art History program. Students who, prior to matriculation in the MA in Art History program, have completed at SACI courses required in the program may be permitted, subject to approval by the Director of the MA in Art History program, to enroll in other SACI courses, in an appropriate area and at an appropriate level, to substitute for the required course work that had been completed previously at SACI.

Students in the MA in Art History program must demonstrate reading proficiency in the Italian language before the start of the Summer I term. This can be done in one of three ways: (1) by presenting satisfactory passing results (above the 50th percentile) on the standardized, national Graduate School Foreign Language Test (GSFLT) or the equivalent; (2) by providing an official
transcript which shows a grade of B or above (or its equivalent) in at least two different-level Italian language courses; or (3) by completing at SACI with a grade of B or above at least two different-level Italian language courses. All students who take Italian language courses at SACI are able to participate in SACI’s Italian Language Exchange Partner program. In this program, students are introduced to a selected group of Italian students and professionals who are interested in exchanging language and are willing to introduce their SACI partner to mutually interesting events or activities.

At the end of each term, an official SACI transcript is issued to all students in the MA in Art History program. Students who successfully complete the one year of study and fulfill all program requirements are awarded the Master of Arts in Art History degree.

Descriptions and syllabi for all SACI courses can be found on the SACI website: www.saci-florence.edu

THE MAJOR DISCIPLINE

The Major Discipline is the area in which the student chooses to concentrate and is at the heart of the program of study. It can be selected from the following:

- Italian Late Medieval and Early Renaissance Art
- Italian High Renaissance, Mannerist, and Early Baroque Art
- Baroque and Rococo European and Italian Art
- 19th-Century European and Italian Art
- Modern European and Italian Art
- Contemporary European and Italian Art
- Women and the Arts in Italy
- Contemporary Art Theory and Criticism
- History of Italian Cinema
- History of Photography
- Conservation Law, Business, and Management
- Museology

CURRICULUM

The curriculum for the MA in Art History is founded on the belief that advanced Art History students should gain a thorough understanding of the history of Italian and European art and expertise in their area of concentration (Major Discipline).

While satisfying general program requirements, students pursue an individualized plan of study tailored to their personal interests. Students who wish to enrich their study of Art History by taking elective courses from related disciplines are encouraged to do so.

Students in the MA in Art History program are required to take the following courses:

**FALL SEMESTER**
- Graduate Seminar in Art History I (3 credits)
- A course in the Major Discipline. Either: Women and the Arts in Italy; 19th-Century European and Italian Art History; Modern European and Italian Art; Contemporary Art Theory and Criticism; History of Italian Cinema; Museology; or Directed Independent Study in Art History (for 3 credits) OR Italian Late Medieval and Early Renaissance Art History* or Italian High Renaissance, Mannerist, and Early Baroque Art History* (for 6 credits)
- An Art History Elective (3 credits)
- Italian Language or an Open Elective (Academic or Studio) (3 credits)

**SPRING SEMESTER**
- Graduate Seminar in Art History II (3 credits)
- A course in the Major Discipline. Either: Women and the Arts in Italy; High Baroque and Rococo European and Italian Art; Contemporary European and Italian Art; Contemporary Art Theory and Criticism; History of Italian Cinema; Museology; Museology Internship; or Directed Independent Study in Art History (for 3 credits) OR Italian Late Medieval and Early Renaissance Art History* or Italian High Renaissance, Mannerist, and Early Baroque Art History* (for 6 credits)
- An Art History Elective (3 credits)
- Italian Language or an Open Elective (Academic or Studio) (3 credits)

*Students enrolling in either of these classes receive 6 semester hours of Art History credit and satisfy the Major Discipline and Art History Elective requirements.

**SUMMER I**
- MA Thesis I (3 credits)*
- Directed Independent Study in Art History (3 credits)

*By the end of Summer I, the Graduate Review Board will determine admission to the July thesis presentation. Only admitted students will participate in the Graduation Ceremony.

**SUMMER II**
- MA Thesis II (3 credits)
- Directed Independent Study in Art History (3 credits)

20TH-CENTURY ARTWORKS AT THE MUSEO NOVECENTO IN FLORENCE
**The Study Proposal**

At the beginning of each Fall and Spring semester, each student in the program writes a Study Proposal. The Study Proposal must include: a clear statement defining the student’s focus within his or her Major Discipline; 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 (research methodology, courses, museums, libraries, 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 Director of the MA in Art History program by the end of the first week of classes; it may be returned to the student for rewriting and clarification. Once approved, the Study Proposal must be submitted by the student to the Major Professor for further suggestions and comments. The two Study Proposals (one each semester) serve to define and redefine the student’s goals and as major points of reference throughout the student’s entire course of study. Students are encouraged to think about and draft a Study Proposal before arriving at SACI.

**Major Discipline and Supervised Research (Directed Independent Study)**

All students in the MA in Art History program work intensively in their selected Major Discipline. Major Discipline study is overseen by the Major Professor, who is selected by the student from SACI’s faculty at the beginning of each term. The Major Professor serves as advisor to the student and is a member of the student’s Graduate Review Board. This relationship must be formalized by completing a written agreement signed by the student and the Major Professor. A form for this purpose is distributed at the outset of each term.

Students also work at an advanced level with the Major Professor and/or other SACI instructors in Directed Independent Study (DIS) courses. The DIS format enables a student to propose a study plan to meet a specific educational need pertinent to individual scholarly development. The DIS is an intensive and individually designed tutorial in which the student meets regularly with the instructor to examine and discuss the student’s academic work. At the beginning of the term, 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 Major Professor (if different from the supervising instructor) for their signed approval. All DIS courses are graded and follow the same add/drop schedule as regular classes.

**Graduate Seminar in Art History I and II**

The Graduate Seminars in Art History focus on critical approaches to the visual arts that go beyond purely chronologically-based analysis. Emphasis is placed upon historiography—how the discipline of art history began and how it has evolved. Diverse research methodologies are reviewed and research tools explicated. Students proceed to explore the main aesthetic ideas from the 18th to 21st centuries with a focus upon the relationship between aesthetic concerns and both art movements and the methodologies of art historians.

During each class session, different components of the period being examined are discussed in order to offer as full as possible an overview of the factors influencing that time’s art practice and art studies. The aim of the seminar is to provide a range of methodological tools that can be used to expand and enhance the understanding of art and art history. Each student presents an oral report on his or her research and completes a paper on an art-historical topic selected by the student and approved by the instructor. Normally, research undertaken and papers written in the Graduate Seminars serve as the basis for the student’s thesis work.

In addition to discussions based on assigned readings, the Graduate Seminar in Art History includes many visits to museums and collections as well as meetings with art historians, theorists, critics, gallery owners, curators, and artists. Field trips include visits to events such as the Venice Biennale (every other year); the international contemporary art fairs in Florence and Bologna; exhibitions at the Luigi Pecci Center for Contemporary Art in Prato; and other major exhibitions in Italy and elsewhere in Europe. They vary from day trips of a few hours to excursions of several days.

Enrollment in the Graduate Seminar in Art History is required in both the Fall and Spring terms for students in the MA in Art History program.

**Reviews**

Reviews occur during the last week of the Fall and Spring semesters and in the Summer II term after the presentation of the student’s thesis. These are forums with members of the faculty developed to serve the student with constructive criticism and discussion of his or her work. Criticism is geared to helping students develop their own critical faculties.

Reviews are attended by the Graduate Review Board, which, as has been noted, consists of the Major Professor, the Director of the MA in Art History program, and an additional faculty member selected by the student. When the Director of the MA in Art History program is the same as the Major Professor, the Director selects another academic area faculty member to serve with the Director and the instructor selected by the student on the review board. Graduate Review Board members’ comments are both spoken and written.

**Thesis**

The thesis is based upon substantive research undertaken throughout the academic year by the student on a topic related to the Major Discipline and approved by the Director of the MA in Art History program. The student
begins planning, researching, and writing the thesis during the Fall semester in the Graduate Seminar in Art History I, continues to work on the thesis during the Spring semester in the Graduate Seminar in Art History II, completes researching and writing the thesis during the Summer I and Summer II terms while enrolled, respectively, in MA Thesis I and II, and presents the thesis at the end of the Summer II term. Directed Independent Study undertaken during the Summer I and Summer II terms normally is used to explore topics related to the research and writing of the thesis.

Students are required to submit 3 copies of a thesis of at least 50 pages in length. The thesis must be typed, double-spaced, and formatted in accordance with the SACI Guidelines for Preparation of a Master’s Thesis in Art History, which is distributed to all students in the program. At the end of the Summer II term, the thesis is presented to the Graduate Review Board and the student meets with the review board to give an oral presentation on the thesis and answer board members’ questions about the thesis. The thesis and oral presentation must be approved by the Graduate Review Board prior to conferral of the MA in Art History degree. A copy of the approved thesis is retained by SACI.

**The Director of the MA in Art History Program**

The Director of the program is responsible for reviewing and approving Study Proposals; advising students about registering for their classes; scheduling reviews, including the final thesis presentation; and disseminating information pertinent to MA in Art History study. The Director 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 Director helps students meet and work with other faculty members who can aid the students in their chosen areas of study.

**The Major Professor**

Early in the Fall term, students select a Major Professor. The Major Professor is normally chosen from SACI’s faculty and must have expertise in the Major Discipline. Scholars not on SACI’s faculty may serve as the Major Professor with the approval of the Director of the MA in Art History Program.

**SACI’s Faculty**

Students in the 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 website: [www.saci-florence.edu](http://www.saci-florence.edu)

**RESOURCES**

Students in the MA in Art History program are allotted study space down the hall from the SACI Worthington Library in SACI’s main building, the Palazzo dei Cartelloni, a landmark Renaissance palazzo located in Florence’s historic center at Via Sant’Antonino 11. The palazzo is just steps away from Piazza Santa Maria Novella and the Medici Chapel and a short distance from such famous sites as the Duomo and Brunelleschi’s Ospedale degli Innocenti, and in close proximity to Florence’s four other great piazze—Piazza Santa Croce, Piazza della Signoria, Piazza della Repubblica, and Piazza della Santissima Annunziata. It includes, in addition to the library, a lecture hall, classrooms, a student lounge with computers, administrative offices, and a large garden. The palazzo is open seven days a week: Monday through Thursday from 8:30 am to 10:00 pm; Friday from 8:30 am 7:00 pm; and Saturdays and Sundays from 1:00 pm to 7:00 pm.

The SACI Worthington Library’s Art History section extensively covers Ancient Art; Medieval Art; Humanism; Renaissance Art; Mannerism; 17th-Century Art; Baroque Art; Rococo Art; 18th-Century Art; 19th-Century Art; Neoclassicism; Romanticism; Impressionism; Puristi, Macchiaioli, and Divisionisti/Artists; Post-Impressionism; Art Nouveau; 20th-Century Art; Metaphysical Painters; Expressionism; Fauvism; Cubism; Futurism; Bauhaus; *Neue Sachlichkeit*; Dadaism; Surrealism; Pop Art; Contemporary Art; Art Theory and Criticism; Art and Mythology; Symbolology; Iconology; Iconography; Installation Art; Digital Art; and Multimedia. In addition to numerous volumes on individual artists, there are subsections on Women Artists; American Artists; World Artists; the Art Market; and Artists on Art.

The library’s Museology, Museums, and Galleries section contains books on collecting; forming national collections; reviving historic collections; the ethics of collecting cultural property; curatorship;...
the history of curating; museum management; storing; archiving; the transportation of art works; and collections in specific museums and galleries. Reference materials include bibliographies (which make special note of books and articles available in the SACI Worthington Library) for SACI’s courses in Italian Late Medieval and Early Renaissance Art History and Italian High Renaissance, Mannerist, and Early Baroque Art History.

The library’s Reference section contains as well a complete 34-volume Dictionary of Art, edited by Jane Turner, and volumes on art terms; art techniques; women in religious art; and the depiction of saints, gods, and heroes in art. The library also contains sections on the Italian Language (including Italian-English dictionaries); Architecture; Art Conservation; Ceramics; Crafts and Textiles; Fresco Painting; Printmaking; Illustration; Ornament; Theater; Film; Video; Graphic and Interior Design; Jewelry; the History of Photography; Photographic Techniques; and Sculpture.

The SACI Worthington Library periodical collection is one of the largest English-language art periodical collections in Florence. Library users also have access to ARTstor (an online database of more than 1,500,000 art, architecture, humanities, and social science digital images) and JSTOR (an online database of articles from more than 1,500 academic journals). ARTstor and JSTOR can be accessed from any computer in SACI’s Palazzo dei Cartelloni or Jules Maidoff Palazzo for the Visual Arts. SACI also offers online access to the Questia library of over 9,000,000 books and articles. Online access is also available to numerous art magazines and journals.

MA in Art History program students also have access to a remarkable range of unique libraries in or near Florence, including: Academy of Fine Arts Library; Alfonso Spadoni Library; British Institute Harold Acton Library; City of Florence Historical Archive; Dutch Institute Library; French Institute Library; Gabinetto Viesseux Library; Galileo Museum Library; Kunsthistorisches Institut in Florenz Library; Luigi Pecchi Contemporary Art Center Library; Marucelliana Library; Mediceo-Laurenziana Library; National Institute for Renaissance Studies; National Library; Oblate Library; Opificio delle Pietre Dure Library; Roberto Longhi Foundation Library; Stibbert Museum Library; Uffizi Gallery Library; University of Florence Department of Art History Library; University of Florence Humanities Library; and University of Florence North American History and Literature Library.

SACI’S LECTURE SERIES

Each term, a number of lectures are scheduled that are open to all students. These lectures feature visiting artists, art historians, critics, theorists, conservators, gallery owners, and other art 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 trips open to all students. In addition to participating in field trips that are part of the Graduate Seminars and other classes in which they are enrolled, MA in Art History students are encouraged to participate in optional field trips to Rome; Venice; Naples, Pompeii, and Herculaneum; Pisa and Lucca; Siena and San Gimignano; Sansepolcro, Monterchi and Arezzo; and Fiesole. Some optional trips require modest fees.

Even when not enrolled in a given class, MA in Art History students are welcome to accompany field trips when space is available. Such field trips normally include visits outside Florence to Rome; 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 classes also regularly visit within Florence incomparable collections in museums such as the Uffizi, Bargello, Accademia, Pitti, Marino Marini, Horne, Primo Conti, Specola, San Marco, Stibbert, Bardini, and the Novecento, Florence’s newest museum, which features a collection of modern Italian art.

Field trips are usually led by a SACI instructor. These travel opportunities offer students direct exposure to Europe’s art, history, and culture.

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 MA in Art History 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 Art History 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 Art History 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 website.

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 Art History.

→ Academic promise in Art History as evinced through submission of two papers on art-historical themes.

→ Strong support from instructors or others familiar with the applicant’s work

as indicated through submission of at least three letters of recommendation that evaluate the applicant’s past academic performance; assess the applicant’s appropriateness for MA in Art History study in Florence at SACI and likelihood of success in the program; and appraise the applicant’s potential for career distinction as an art historian and educator.

→ A background suggesting sufficient maturity to be able to take full advantage of the unique opportunities available through studying Art History at the graduate level in Florence.

→ Clearly articulated educational goals and academic aspirations that could best be advanced through matriculation in SACI’s MA in Art History 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 MA in Art History program in the Fall semester only.

Completed applications should be received no later than May 1. Applications received after May 1 will be considered only if space is available.

Applicants for scholarships must apply by March 15.

The following materials are required:

→ The completed online application form and a $70 non-refundable processing fee

→ 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 others familiar with the applicant’s work.

→ Two examples of original papers demonstrating the applicant’s scholarship on art-historical themes. Submit in PDF format, up to 10 MB each, to admissions@saci-florence.edu

→ Curriculum vitae (required of those who have been out of school for 3 or more years).

Notification
Decisions will be emailed to students between April and June.

Financial Information, Tuition, Fees, & Scholarships
For full information, please see the Dates and Fees and Scholarships sections on the SACI website. As noted above, applicants for scholarships must apply by March 15.