



STUDIO  
ARTS  
COLLEGE  
INTERNATIONAL

**MASTER OF  
FINE ARTS IN  
PHOTOGRAPHY  
FLORENCE, ITALY**

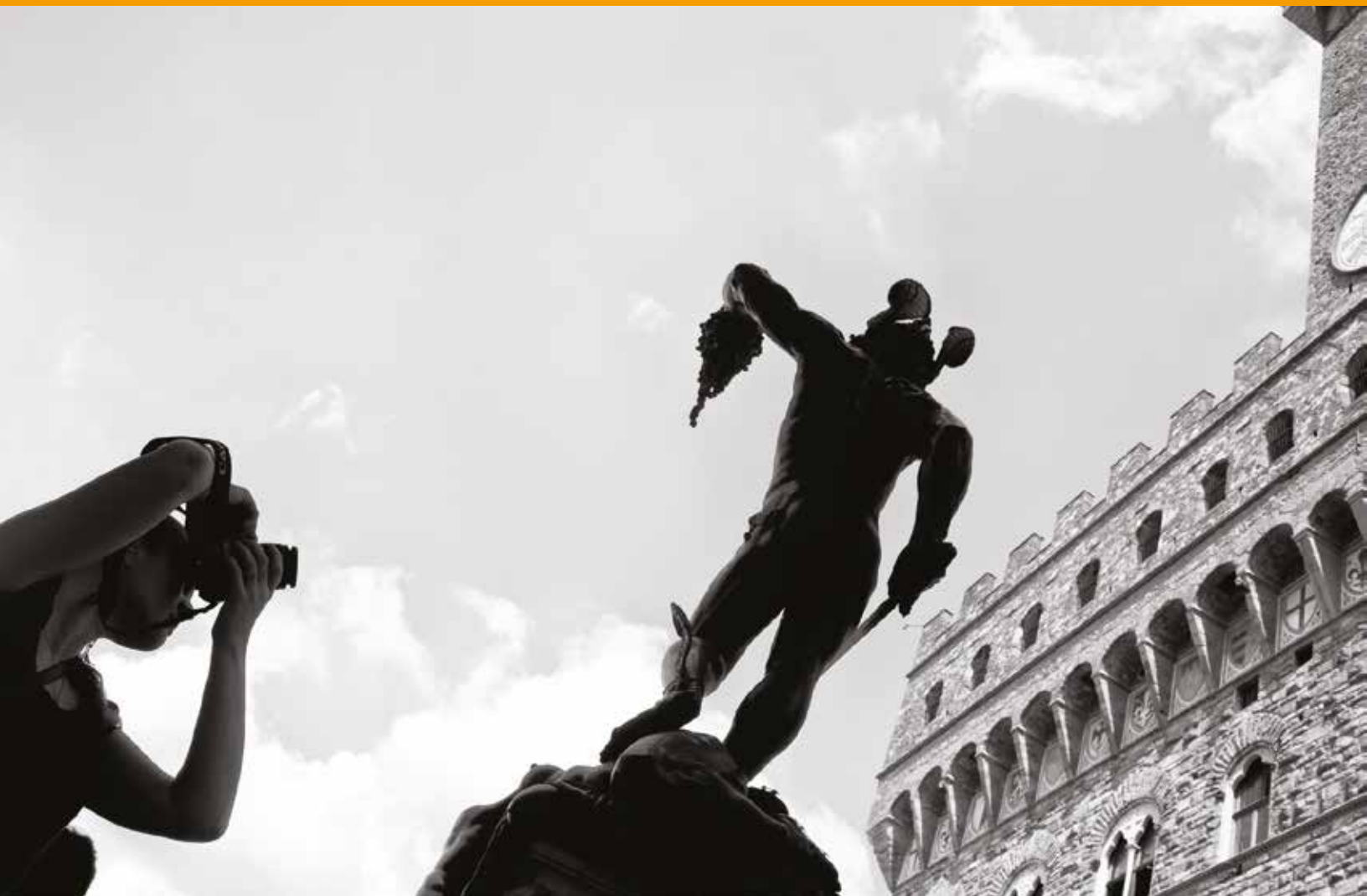


[saci-florence.edu](http://saci-florence.edu)

## MISSION

SACI'S MFA IN PHOTOGRAPHY PROGRAM provides the students with in-depth understanding of the aesthetic and technical aspects of photography. This intensive program offers students an opportunity to learn through academic courses, advanced technical practice, and directed independent studies with leading experts and specialists in various fields of photography, to lay the groundwork for a professional career. Active participation and critical dialogue are fostered through frequent exchanges with SACI faculty members, visiting instructors, and guest lecturers. Students visit the studios of cutting-edge photographers, view exhibitions by emerging and established photographers, and travel to photography fairs in Italy and elsewhere in Europe. Instruction aims at stimulating growth and expanding consciousness by encouraging daily contact with the art of Tuscany, whether through viewing the masterpieces exhibited in its museums or through immersion in Florence's rich and colorful city life—an inspiration for contemporary artists and photographers. Students are encouraged to situate their own practice within this broad cultural panorama in ways that equip them with essential career tools.

COVER AND BELOW: PHOTOGRAPHS BY JACOPO SANTINI, CO-DIRECTOR OF SACI'S MFA IN PHOTOGRAPHY PROGRAM



## INTRODUCTION

SACI's MFA in Photography students work in a creative environment of rigorous critical and technical inquiry; they are part of a community that utilizes the unique photographic, artistic, and cultural resources of Florence, Italy to prepare students for careers as photographers and university instructors. Students live and work in the city that, during the Renaissance, revolutionized art and has since served as an inspiration and catalyst for generations of artists. Beginning with the achievements of the Alinari brothers, who in 1852 established what would become their legendary photography archive in Florence, a tradition of dynamic photographic practice has arisen in Italy and thrives today in conceptual photography, landscape photography, and photojournalism. An international renaissance is being led by Magnum photographer Alex Majoli and his Italian colleagues, including young photographers working in collectives such as the Florence-based *Terra Project*.

Students in the MFA in Photography program pursue a curriculum integrating practical and critical skills that encourages individual innovation, creative collaboration, mentorships, and instruction from SACI's outstanding faculty. They benefit as well from interaction with members of SACI's Artists Council and the Friends of SACI, which include established artists, photographers, critics, theorists, curators, and publishers, many of international renown.

Working in their studios in a fully renovated Renaissance palazzo in the heart of Florence, students are near the Fratelli Alinari Archive, a repository of photographs taken worldwide from the 19th to 21st centuries. Students are also surrounded by great works of art that have drawn artists and photographers past and present to Florence to seek inspiration and develop their own pictorial language. In their graduate seminars, students explore a range of contemporary photographic practices, visit photographers in their studios, and interview museum curators, critics, and other significant figures in the art and photography worlds. Students travel to major art sites, attend international art and photography fairs throughout Italy, and are encouraged, through individual practice and group critiques, to explore their potential to the fullest.

During their first year, students put together a program that balances independent study with classroom study. In their second year, emphasis is placed upon career options for emerging photographers and students are able to gain practical experience as SACI Teaching Assistants. Students' photographic work is featured during both years in exhibitions in Florence.

By exploiting fully the advantages available to emerging photographers through advanced study in Florence, SACI MFA students can become highly competitive when pursuing careers in photography and university-level teaching positions.

Students will be expected to:

- Make technical, conceptual, and aesthetic decisions based on an understanding of how contemporary and historical photography and multi-disciplinary practices relate to the student's intentions and ideas.
- Establish technically-skilled photography practices, rooted in original approaches, which will enable the student to realize works fully and to integrate successfully into the professional field.
- Demonstrate a thorough understanding of contemporary concepts, critical theory, and art-historical contexts, both generally and as they relate to the student's own conceptual practice.
- Develop their ability to speak and write clearly about photographic works and theoretical issues related to photographic works.
- And, for those undertaking Teaching Assistantships, gain an understanding of pedagogical approaches to teaching photography and direct experience of contemporary photography teaching practices.

## PROGRAM OF STUDY

Students must complete 60 semester hours of course work within two academic years. They normally enroll each academic year in 5 courses in both the Fall and Spring semesters. Students in the program meet at the beginning and throughout each semester with the Co-Directors of the MFA in Photography program.

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 Photography 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 can 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 two Co-Directors of the MFA in Photography Program and another faculty member appointed by the Program Directors. Such requests are normally approved only in the case of documented medical emergencies. The period of approved extended study does not normally exceed one academic year.

Credit from other institutions is not transferable to the MFA in Photography program, nor is credit earned at SACI prior to matriculation in the program. Students who have previously completed at SACI courses required in the program may be permitted, subject to approval by the Co-Directors of the program, to enroll in other SACI courses, in the appropriate area and at the appropriate level.

## CURRICULUM

The curriculum is founded on the belief that graduate students should concentrate in one area, experiment in others, and complement their studio work with art-historical and other academic studies.

Each student is given studio space, and his or her work is critiqued regularly in group sessions led by SACI instructors, joined at times by other photography 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 in sharpening his or her critical faculties.

Students are required to take the following:

#### FALL SEMESTER (FIRST YEAR)

- 3 semester hours: Graduate Seminar in Photography: History & Aesthetics I
- 3 semester hours: Graduate Seminar in Photography: Studio Co-Requisite I
- 3 semester hours: Course in Another Visual Media Area (Video, Digital Multimedia, Web Design, Animation, Body Archives, or Art, Mind, & Diversity)
- 3 semester hours: Directed Independent Study in Photography
- 3 semester hours: Studio Elective

#### SPRING SEMESTER (FIRST YEAR)

- 3 semester hours: Graduate Seminar in Photography: History & Aesthetics II
- 3 semester hours: Graduate Seminar in Photography: Studio Co-Requisite II
- 3 semester hours: Course in Another Visual Media Area (Video, Digital Multimedia, Web Design, Animation, Body Archives, or Art, Mind, & Diversity)
- 3 semester hours: Directed Independent Study in Photography
- 3 semester hours: Studio Elective

#### FALL SEMESTER (SECOND YEAR)

- 3 semester hours: Graduate Seminar in Photography: Professional Practicum I
- 6 semester hours: Directed Independent Study in Photography
- 3 semester hours: Studio Elective
- 3 semester hours: Visual Media Area Teaching Assistantship or an Open Studio Elective

#### SPRING SEMESTER (SECOND YEAR)

- 3 semester hours: Graduate Seminar in Photography: Professional Practicum II
- 6 semester hours: Directed Independent Study in Photography
- 3 semester hours: Studio Elective
- 3 semester hours: Visual Media Area Teaching Assistantship or an Open Studio Elective

### STUDIO ELECTIVES

Work in Photography is directly supported by work in Studio Electives selected from a full range of offerings including: Video; Animation; Digital Multimedia; Body Archives; Art, Mind, & Diversity; Drawing; Painting; Etching; Serigraphy; Ceramics;

Sculpture; Illustration; Infographics; Graphic Design; Typography; Web Design; Interior Design; Architectural Drawing; Italian Fashion Design; Book Arts; Jewelry Design; Batik; Weaving; or Installation & Performance Art.

Though reviews have Photography 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 photographic, artistic, or scholarly development.

### VISUAL MEDIA AREA TEACHING ASSISTANTSHIPS

A number of Visual Media Area Teaching Assistantships are awarded annually to students who have completed the first academic year of the MFA in Photography program. The awards are made on the basis of teaching potential and academic distinction at both the undergraduate and graduate levels.

Visual Media Area Teaching Assistantships are available in SACI classes, ranging from beginning to advanced levels, in Photography, Video, Digital Multimedia,

#### MFA IN PHOTOGRAPHY STUDENT IN A SACI DARKROOM



and Animation. The supervising SACI instructor prepares the Teaching Assistant for teaching by providing an introduction to the pedagogy considered fundamental to the curricula for 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 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 Co-Directors of the program, Teaching Assistantships in classes outside the Visual Media area can be taken as Studio Electives.

Teaching Assistantships are unpaid and graded on a Pass/Fail basis. Students receive 3 semester hours of credit for each class in which they are Teaching Assistants.

### PROGRAM COMPONENTS

#### The Study Proposal

At the beginning of each semester, students write a Study Proposal.

This must include: a clear statement defining the student's focus within Photography; 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 the student's prior work.

The Study Proposal must be typed and submitted for review and approval to the Co-Directors of the program 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 Photography. The DIS is an intensive and individually designed tutorial. The student meets weekly with the instructor to review photographic work created for the DIS by the student.

With the approval of the Co-Directors of the program, students can additionally take as an elective a DIS in a subject other than Photography. The DIS format enables a student to propose a study plan to meet a specific educational need pertinent to an individual's photographic, artistic, or scholarly development. At the beginning of the semester, a DIS form describing the project in detail must be submitted by the student to the DIS supervisor and the appropriate Area Head for their signed approval. All DIS arrangements follow the same add/drop schedule as regular classes.

### **MFA Graduate Seminar in Photography: History & Aesthetics I and II**

### **MFA Graduate Seminar in Photography: Professional Practicum I and II**

The MFA Graduate Seminar in Photography, in which MFA students must enroll each semester, provides structure and instruction that enables students to develop, refine, and clarify their work. Students are exposed to concepts, issues, photographers, and artists, past and present, relevant to the practice and study of photography in a contemporary setting. Visiting lecturers focus on a range of critical issues pertaining to modern and contemporary photography.

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 photographer in society, with particular focus on the experience of the photographer in Italy. Readings expose students to particular photographers, art and photography theories, and art and photography institutions within a wide chronological/historical context.

In addition to discussions based on assigned readings, this course includes visits to art sites, photography collections, events, and photographers' studios as well as regular meetings with art and photography historians, gallery owners, curators, artists, and photographers. Field trips include visits to Paris Photo; the Venice Biennale (every other year); the international contemporary art fairs in Florence and Bologna; the Triennale in Milan; exhibitions at the Luigi Pecci Center for Contemporary Art in Prato, the Fratelli Alinari Archive in Florence, the

Forma Foundation in Milan, and significant exhibitions elsewhere; and photography festivals held in cities such as Rome, Reggio Emilia, and Lucca. They vary from day trips of a few hours to excursions of several days.

During the first year, the course focuses on contemporary practices with an emphasis upon the role of the emerging photographer within new and established art and photography communities. During the second year, the course investigates photographers' networks and professional opportunities for the emerging photographer.

### **MFA Graduate Seminar in Photography: Studio Co-Requisite I and II**

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

### **The Journal**

Students in the program are required to keep a journal in which they record what they have absorbed and produced, setbacks and discoveries, problems and solutions, and changes in perception and direction. This journal serves as a means of recording and synthesizing experiences for present and future reference. Students are encouraged to record their thoughts, feelings, ideas, work experiences and processes, and reactions to the various stimuli encountered (photographers, artists, critics, lectures, books, exhibitions, performances, critiques, etc.). It can include images and texts, both one's own and others. The journal, which is submitted to the Graduate Review Board at the end of each semester, can be of value to the student and his or her principal advisors in suggesting directions for future work.

### **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 forums provide the student with constructive criticism and discussion of his or her work. Comments are geared to help students develop their own critical faculties.



Reviews are conducted by the student's Graduate Review Board, which, as noted, consists of the two Co-Directors of the MFA in Photography Program and another faculty member appointed by the Program Directors. Graduate Review Board members' comments are both spoken and written, and a copy of written comments is given to each student for permanent reference.

### Final Papers/Presentations

At the end of the final semester, 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 Photography degree and describes how his or her studio and academic research 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 historical concerns are explored. The paper must trace strands of connection among individuals, movements, and cultural factors from the periods studied and demonstrate how these influenced the student's creative thinking in undertaking and completing the presented body of work. The paper must be typed, double-spaced, and 15 to 20 pages in length.

At the Final Presentation, students must submit photo documentation: prints, CDs, DVDs, or videos of work completed in the program. Concentration must be on work in Photography. 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 Photography degree.

### MFA Exhibition

An MFA exhibition of works by graduating students takes place at the end of their final semester. To gain experience of professional practice, graduating students are required to take part in all aspects of the exhibition. This includes designing and arranging the printing of invitations; preparing works for exhibition; installing the works in the gallery; labeling all of the works; adjusting lighting; preparing

the opening reception; and arranging the dismantling of the exhibition and return of all works to exhibition participants. Reasonable assistance is given in this effort by faculty, advisors, and staff.

### Documentation

As part of the program, students are instructed in presentation and documentation methods. Work must be submitted in a professional manner when presented to the student's Graduate Review Board at the end of the final term. 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 is given in each course, including Directed Independent Study. Students in this 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 Photography program requirements must be fulfilled.

## FACULTY

### The Co-Directors of the MFA in Photography Program

The Co-Directors review and approve Study Proposals; advise students about registering for their classes; allocate studio space; schedule reviews and Final

Presentations; aid students in scheduling and planning graduate student exhibitions, including the MFA Exhibition; and disseminate information pertinent to MFA study. The Co-Directors are members of the Graduate Review Board and are available to advise students on all aspects of their work and life at SACI. In addition, they help students meet and work with faculty who can aid students in their areas of study.

### The Visual Media Area Head

The Visual Media Area Head plays an important role in the MFA student's educational experience. This instructor is a member of the Graduate Review Board and attends all end-of-semester reviews, including the student's Final Presentation. Currently the Visual Media Area Head is one of the two Co-Directors of the MFA in Photography 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 web site: [www.saci-florence.edu](http://www.saci-florence.edu)

## RESOURCES

Students in the program are allotted studio space in the Jules Maidoff Palazzo for the Visual Arts. This is a four-floor, 16,000 square foot building located in Florence's historic center at Via Sant'Egidio 14.

MFA IN PHOTOGRAPHY FINAL EXHIBITION IN TETHYS GALLERY, FLORENCE





MFA IN PHOTOGRAPHY STUDENT IN A SACI DARKROOM (PHOTO BY SACI ALUMUS NICHOLAS POLYZOIDES)

It is a short distance from such famous sites as the Duomo and Brunelleschi's Ospedale degli Innocenti, and is close 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 photography and studio art projects. The Palazzo is open from 9:00 am to midnight seven days a week.

#### SACI'S LECTURE SERIES

Each semester, lectures are scheduled that are open to all students. These lectures feature visiting painters, sculptors, photographers, filmmakers, art historians, critics, curators, 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 additions to its programs. Students in the

MFA in Photography 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, Bardini, and the Fratelli Alinari Archive. Field trips are usually led by one of the art history, photography, design, or studio art instructors.

SACI field trips outside of Florence 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; Arezzo, Urbino, Monterchi, and San Sepolcro.

SACI also offers optional field trips to Venice and 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, 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 Photography 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 studio art course work if the applicant has had no previous graduate experience is 3.3. The minimum grade point average in previous graduate work in studio art 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. See 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 Photography.
- Artistic promise in Photography as evinced through submission of a portfolio with images of a substantial number of high quality photographs.
- Strong support from instructors or other artists or photographers familiar with the applicant's work as indicated through submission of at least three letters of recommendation that evaluate the applicant's past academic and/or artistic performance; assess the applicant's appropriateness for MFA in Photography study in Florence at SACI and likelihood of success in the program; and appraise the applicant's potential for career distinction as a photographer and educator.

- Clearly articulated educational goals and artistic aspirations that could best be advanced through matriculation in SACI's MFA in Photography 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 MFA in Photography 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**.

Applicants should complete and submit the online application form through the SACI website, including a \$70 non-refundable processing fee. The following materials are also required for submission:

- 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 15-20 images of your strongest and most recent work in Photography 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 *MFA Two-Year Programs* page in the *Admissions* section 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 Photography

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)

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USA  
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##### Studio Arts College International (Florence)

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