



## Art Education Mission Vision, Values, and History

### Mission Statement

Graduate and undergraduate programs in art education at Syracuse University are geared to accomplish the following purposes:

- To immerse learners in the making and design of the simple symbols, meaningful artifacts, cultural interfaces, and complex information systems that have become critical in the 21st century;
- To develop arts-based and purpose-driven curriculum strategies promoting practical outcomes, inclusive learning, and social responsibility;
- To facilitate interdisciplinary and collaborative creative practices, problem-solving across disciplines, community-engaged learning experiences, and opportunities for real-world solutions to personally important, real-world challenges.

### Vision Statement

The vision of the art education programs at Syracuse University is to rethink the relevance of the arts in society in the wake of the Information Age and thus to better facilitate the refinement of insight, discernment, innovation, and imagination that stems from a rich education through the arts. Our students learn to cultivate a personal agency as global citizens through acts of arts-based and critical self-refinement. This work empowers our students to be effective participants in the shared challenge of navigating a world of competing visual meanings and ideas.

The arts are more than a collection of images, artifacts, designs, and events. The arts are a practical means to better inform ourselves about the things that matter the most to us as a network of societies. The arts enhance human information, refining the cargoes of meaning our collected data carries in tow. Arts-based methodologies effectively inform not because they are beautiful, but are beautiful because they carry a berth for our emotions and enthrall our attention—making them altogether effective at delivering their special cargoes. Beauty, wherever it is attributed, lies in the re-cognition of the data that most directly informs and

validates the story of one's life. The arts are intrinsically memorable, ever renewing our mindfulness of what we hope for, need, feed upon, and desire.

Together, the arts work to tell the human story. We have always understood this: it is why we paint ourselves in visual narratives, sing ourselves in lyric and verse, dramatize ourselves in the round, glorify ourselves in marble and clay, write ourselves into histories and her-stories, dance ourselves into states of oblivion, and dream ourselves in abstracts through the night. As an arts educator, you will learn to open up safe spaces for this ongoing work—collaborating with your students to communicate new tellings in the collective story of diverse and manifold individuals, families, nations, civilizations and the life we share together.

## Core Values

Graduate and undergraduate programs in art education at Syracuse University are operated in accord with the following core values. Arts practices are:

- **Formational.**  
Visual and arts-based methods for conveying the experiences and meanings we hold most dear are inherently formative; they are processes for rendering all that we know and wish to share into handmade artifacts, manufactured or mediated forms, cultural motifs, and/or critical lenses. The visual arts and design practices give concrete shape to our ideas about who we are, where we come from, what our purpose is, and where we are going. (Rolling, 2008)
- **Informational.**  
Because the arts are formative, they are also inherently informative—the building blocks of our best individual ideas and the greater social imagination. The visual arts and design practices aid overall academic achievement, basic- to higher-thinking skills, social networking, multiple literacies, and the motivation to learn. The arts present a natural arena for the integration of knowledge, the inclusion of all learners, and the asset-development of learners in their schools and communities. (Arts Ed Partnership, 2006)
- **Transformational.**  
Because the arts are informative, they are also inherently transformative, interrogating and contesting social norms while allowing persistent arts and design practitioners to develop personal habits of innovation. This is a capacity suggested by the great educational philosopher John Dewey as that

which enables a student to learn from experience in a constructivist process of “trying and discovering, modifying and adapting” (Cuffaro, 1995, p. 19).

## **Syracuse University Art Education and Its History of Community Engagement**

Syracuse University’s graduate and undergraduate degree programs in art education focus on three distinct emphases:

- arts and design practices as a means for personal agency and social responsibility,
- developing arts and design curricula for teaching and learning in multiple contexts,
- and interdisciplinary research promoting creative leadership and entrepreneurship

In addition to coursework, students are encouraged to actively participate in the local and national arts and design education communities in order to exchange ideas and cultivate their own professional development. Students in our degree programs are dually affiliated with the University’s School of Education and its College of Visual and Performing Arts. Master of science (M.S.) degree programs are available for students with no education background seeking teacher certification (preparation program) or for students provisionally certified in art education who are seeking permanent certification or others not seeking certification (professional certification program). Doctoral programs in teaching and curriculum with a specialization in art education are also available.

In 1873 Syracuse University became the first degree granting College of Fine Arts in the United States. George Fisk Comfort, the founder and first dean of the college, was influential in this era of art education. He made significant contributions to the development of the Metropolitan Museum of Art in New York City and The Everson Museum, here in Syracuse. Although Comfort began to offer preparation courses to art teachers as early as 1876, the University did not officially recognize this function until 1900.

Around 1897, New York State expanded its art teacher certification requirements. By the spring of 1900, Syracuse University’s painting department instituted a two-year Normal Art school specifically designed to train teachers and superintendents of drawing in schools. Methods courses and practicum expanded in the 1930s. Syracuse University pre-service art teachers aligned with area youth groups and clubs to teach and observe art lessons a few hours a week off campus.

Following World War II, the College of Fine Arts and the art education area underwent restructuring throughout the 1940s. Its leadership, structure and direction were uncertain and changed several times. After taking the helm of Syracuse University's art education area in 1955, Dr. Michael Andrews began to offer Saturday morning art workshops then called "The Creative Arts in Education Clinic" in Smith Hall. At its height, the clinic served more than 300 children in the Syracuse area community. Dr. Andrew's research and interest was in teaching methods that engaged children in multi-sensory learning and he led the art education area, known at the time as the Department of Synaesthetic Education, to its new home on South Campus in 1970. Andrews chaired the department until his retirement in the late 1970s. In 1982 the Department of Art Education was established under the leadership of Dr. Hope Irvine. Saturday Art Workshops continued under the branding of Skytop Art Workshops for Young People. Both the Department of Art Education and Skytop Art Workshops for Young People continued in building M-17 on South Campus until Fall 2011.

Currently under the leadership of Dr. James Rolling, along with his colleague Dr. Sharif Bey, Syracuse University art education has orchestrated its most recent transition, now based within the Comstock Art Facility, where it is realigned with the major studio arts programs and facilities on campus. We have since renamed our in-house arts & design learning initiative the SU Saturday Art Workshops for Young People. Thanks to recent relocation, Syracuse University art education is now positioned to capacitate the number of workshop participants it once did decades ago. Not only have we been able to increase the number of students we serve, each age group now has its own classroom. The program currently serves nearly 200 children between the ages of 5 to 15 years old and we are growing each semester.