

BFA in GRD

Application & Portfolio Review

Spring 2017

Portfolio Dropoff

Wednesday, May 3

12:00–4:00pm

AH 468

Portfolio Pickup

Friday, May 12

11:00–2:00pm

AH 468



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BFA Concentration Application Form

This is found on the Ernest G. Welch School of Art & Design section of gsu.edu > Undergraduate > Bachelor of Fine Arts in Studio. The link is within the page content (Application Information for BFA Disciplines).

There is not a specific form for Graphic Design; it is a generic form for all art disciplines. The prompt for the essay is on the form, as well as requests for your grades for all prerequisite and GRD classes.

<http://artdesign.gsu.edu/undergraduate/programs/bachelor-of-fine-arts-in-studio-art/>

Registration for Fall

Register for fall classes according to your backup plan (see page 2) – in other words, register as if you are not going to be accepted (this may seem strange, but we want to be sure that you have classes either way).

If you are accepted to the BFA program, you have a seat reserved for you in the fall. We will email out the cohort list and the course registrations. You can then drop the classes you registered for this spring and add the GRD classes.

I. Purpose

Our goal, as we conduct our 3000-level GRD classes and review student portfolios, is to build a community of graphic design students who demonstrate their readiness and preparation for the rigors of the Bachelor of Fine Arts program. A BFA is a professional degree with rigorous classes, which prepares students for professional careers as artists, and for entry into the M.F.A. graduate programs.

Strong BFA applicants have a:

- Widely-ranging process of research, exploration, iteration, refinement, and presentation
- Willingness to seek out, offer, and apply constructive and meaningful feedback
- Maturity and accountability to both experiment and then readjust when things don't go as anticipated
- Focus on graphic design as problem-solving, not just image-making
- Discipline to dig deeper, away from surface level treatments and expected solutions
- Determination to improve, to be unafraid of difficulty, and to see every challenge as an opportunity
- Skillful management of and sensitivity to the details of composition, color, typography, image-making, and craftsmanship
- Passion for subject matter, processes, and media beyond the computer and graphic design

Students who are most successful in the BFA program graduate to become designers at firms, corporations, and other creative entities all over Atlanta and the world. Some of their personal characteristics include:

- Resourcefulness
- Initiative
- Optimism & can-do attitude
- Respect for themselves and others
- Hardworking & smart working
- Continually asking 'what if...'
- Recognition that they have more to learn
- Leadership
- Team player
- Community-building
- Professionalism (reliability, accountability, preparedness)

2. Portfolio Dropoff

On the day of GRD Portfolio Drop-off, bring the portfolio and all required forms to the designated room (see cover page). On the sign in sheet, choose a number, write your name, Panther ID#, and email address. Then find your corresponding number for your portfolio. Place your forms on top of your portfolio box.

Be on time. Have all forms printed, filled out, and ready to go. Give yourself adequate time to allow for traffic or technical issues. **DO NOT wait until the last minute to bring in your work. We will not accept late submissions.**

3. The Review Process

Over the years, there are typically 40-60 students applying to the major, with 20-40 accepted.

From Wednesday evening after dropoff, until the following Monday morning, all instructors who have taught an Introductory or Intermediate GRD class have the opportunity to review the portfolios. Reviews are conducted individually by each instructor, with each coming to his or her own conclusions about quality and therefore, the ranking, of the work.

All GRD faculty meet the following week to compare notes and discuss selections. BFA majors are chosen based on not only the strength of the portfolio, but also on a student's work ethic, attendance, class participation, and a positive, facilitating attitude in the classroom. All faculty members' voices and votes are heard, and part-time instructors are invited to the review or to submit comments on their students. It is not uncommon for instructors to weigh in on specific students whose merits, potential, or shortcomings may not be clear from their materials (for instance, a strong portfolio countered by low grades needs explaining).

All applicants are notified whether they have been accepted or not via email, typically sent as soon as the faculty review is completed. **Feedback on the portfolios is not provided at this time.** Students who would like specific comments should arrange an appointment with one of the GRD instructors.

4. After the Review

Not being accepted to the GRD BFA does not mean that you are not a designer, or cannot be. It means that, at this time, we do not think that you are sufficiently prepared for the structure, challenges, and intent of our program.

There are generally three options we offer students if they are not accepted into the major. Have a backup plan in mind in case you are not accepted (be positive, but also be prepared). As well as the GRD faculty, Adam Wagner, the Art & Design advisor, is a good resource for you to gain some perspective on these options.

Option 1: Reapply the following year

Some students take another year to re-take Intro classes or simply rework projects that could use improvements. This is not a guarantee that you will be accepted the second time around if you go this route; however, some of our students were accepted the second time, and were glad they had another year to prepare and become a stronger designer.

Option 2: Pursue a BFA in another discipline

You may decide to apply to another discipline. The BFA degree at GSU is "Studio Art with a Concentration in ..." (Ceramics, Graphic Design, Interior Design, Photography, Drawing, Painting, and Printmaking; Sculpture, Textiles, etc.). The BFA is considered the professional degree for artists and designers, so it is more specialized (with far deeper expertise) than a BA degree.

Option 3: Pursue a BA Degree

Some students when not accepted into the major decide they are eager to graduate and start looking for a job, so they choose to finish their time at GSU with a BA (Bachelor of Arts) degree. The intent of the Bachelor of Arts in Studio is to have 4 different types of art-making courses represented in the studio coursework (A BFA has focused study in only one area). A BA will not typically alter your anticipated graduation date, or invalidate any of the GRD coursework you have completed. People can still become designers with a BA, but they are not considered GSU Graphic Design majors in the field.

5. Portfolio Formats

The goal of the format for your work is to showcase your work, not distract from it. While divider pages (between classes, for instance) or headers/footers on each page might be a useful/helpful, manage the hierarchy of your information on each page, and be consistent.

Book Format (new)

- We will now accept work presented in book format, at 11x17 or 12x18 size.
- All work should be bound into a single book with a cover page which includes your logo, name, and contact info. Binding should allow the book to open flat. Consider dividing the book into sections by class.
- There are no other stipulations for the book format beyond the content requirements; however, consider how you might present your process or a project brief/overview in context of the project itself.

Mounted/Box Portfolio Format (existing)

- Mounting prints to matboard is no longer required. If mounted, however, prints should be flush mounted, without bubbles or ridges. Be sure the prints do not peel up. Boards should all be the same color (usually black, but other neutrals may be used; chipboard may also be used).
- Place your personal logo label on back of each board. Also include your name, class name, instructor name, and semester on back of each project board. Please be sure labels are straight, adhered well, and cut neatly.
- You may wish to include a project brief on back of certain projects; include it in a sleeve on the back or adhere it directly to the board.
- Your portfolio case can be a simple, clean store-bought case or box from Sam Flax or Binders; it does not need to be custom-made. When in doubt, opt for functional, organized, and clean. The job of the case or box is to contain, protect, and showcase your work, not detract from it.
- Affix your personal branding to your case, sketchbook (if any), and prototype box.
- Do not use separator sheets between your boards/prints.
- Packing materials (foam, peanuts, etc.) are not necessary, but do consider how your work presents itself when you open the box.

Video or Animation Work

If you have digital work to present, include a print which contains key stills from the piece as well as a thumbdrive containing the file(s). Brand the thumbdrive, name it for the desktop, and name your files appropriately – all digital files will be pooled for review on one computer. Test your file formats and make sure they do not need to open in the original software (should be .mov, or other player format).

Prototypes

Include your constructed prototypes in their own container. Some (3200's stationery and mailer, and perhaps the specialty item) might simply be tucked into a pocket for the book format. Consider presentation and ease of access for the reviewers. Do not include actual food in your prototypes, or anything that might leak or spill.

6. General Portfolio Content

The portfolio must include all work completed in the three 3000-level Graphic Design courses:

- GRD 3000 (Intro to Graphic Design)
- GRD 3150 (Intro to Typography)
- GRD 3200 (Intermediate Graphic Design).

You should have about 20-25 prints. Prints can be either ink-jet or color laser, but evaluate how clearly they reflect your intended colors and small details (esp. typography).

There may be variation between the projects completed for each class, depending upon the instructor. Typically, the format in which your work was presented for the critique is suitable for the portfolio. Adjust artwork size to fit the space as needed, but do not minimize work such that details or typography is lost. (In 3150, for instance, the hand-drawn letters from Project 1 should still be hand-drawn, but scanned in and scaled down slightly to fit all on one page. For Project 2, scale the three panels should similarly be scaled down to fit on one page.)

Additional Projects

You may include up to 3 examples of other work in addition to your core graphic design projects, such as extra assignments, client work, or work from such classes as book-making, illustration, photography, painting, printmaking, drawings, as well as graphic design completed at other institutions. Be critical in evaluating whether additional pieces add to, rather than duplicate, the skills and potential already demonstrated in your portfolio.

Application to Major Form

See page 1 for the link information. Have both pages printed and NEATLY filled out before you come to drop off your work. We especially need to see your name, Panther ID, and GSU email address, since that is how we will contact you. For grades, you may not know your final grades for GRD 3200 (or 3150 if you are taking it this spring). Leave them blank; however, indicate your instructor on the form. Enter your grades accurately, as we will know (or will find out) if they're wrong.

Essay

As noted on the Application to Major Form, write a one-page statement about your work and discuss why you have chosen your intended discipline. Use a 12 pt. font, double-spaced. Staple your statement to the form. We do read these, so give them serious thought. Be sure also to proofread – proofread everything you submit so typos do not distract from your work.

7. Portfolio Content Checklist

Items marked with an asterisk* may be presented (alone or in addition to a print) as a mockup or dummy in a separate container.

GENERAL

- Application to Major Form (2 pages filled out)
- Essay (printed, include your name)
- Process examples for 3-4 projects in some format – sketchbook(s), process sheets or books, etc., either in direct context to the project itself or separately. Be organized.

GRD 3000

- 1. Personal Logo(s) 1-2 prints
- 2. Event Poster 1-2 prints
- * 3. Book Cover (or set of 3) 1-2 prints
- * 4. Packaging Prototype 1 print

GRD 3000 Alternatives from Nida Abdullah's classes:

- 1. Non-Profit Logo & Guidelines 1-2 prints
- 2. Campaign System 1-3 prints

GRD 3150

- 4. Hand-drawn Letters 1 print
- 5. Type Progression Panels 1 print
- 6. Expressive Type Poster 1 print
- 7. Flyer (2 versions) 1 print
- * 8. Type Specimen Booklet Mockup

GRD 3200

- 11. Logo Redesign 1-2 prints
- 12. Stationery Layout (actual size) 1-2 prints
- * Stationery Prototypes
- 13. Ad Campaign 1-2 prints
- 14. Mailer 1 print
- * Mailer Prototype
- * 15. Specialty Item Prototype 1 print

GRD 3200 Alternatives from Nida Abdullah's classes:

- 11. Process Book (or section)
- 12. Visual Identity Manual
- 13. System & map (essay is optional) 2-3 prints