ABOUT THE PROGRAM
The Department of Fine Arts invites students to experience art both as scholarship and as a process of creation. By uniting artistic excellence with intellectual inquiry, we affirm the importance of a broad education in preparing our students for creative participation in a changing society. The department offers programs in studio art and the history of art for undergraduates, and our postbaccalaureate program in studio art is recognized as one of the finest in the country. Founded in 1951 by social realist painter Mitchell Siporin, the Department of Fine Arts features a distinguished faculty of acclaimed artists and noted art historians.

What makes the program distinctive?
The fine arts department offers students a program with strengths in the areas of art history, studio practice and theory. Each student, whether pursuing proficiency in making art or studying art history, will have the opportunity to work within a small integrated community of artists and scholars. Students enjoy unique opportunities to work at the Rose Art Museum, participate in the museum’s endowed curatorial internship program or train as educators to be gallery guides.

FAST FACTS

Current number of majors and minors: 35 studio art majors; 36 art history majors and minors

Number of faculty: 16

Can you minor in this program? Students can minor in art history, sculpture or architectural studies.

Emphasis within the department: The department encourages a well-rounded understanding of art ranging from a more hands-on perspective to comprehending art’s history, social and political culture, and stylistic innovation.

Popular second majors: anthropology, business, East Asian studies, psychology

Website: brandeis.edu/departments/finearts
ACADEMICS AND RESEARCH

Two tracks
The department hosts two separate majors. Students who concentrate in studio art are expected to take art history courses and are encouraged to extend their intellectual and creative involvement through summer art programs and participation in full studio faculty reviews of their work. The program in the history of art includes a required studio experience and offers a variety of courses in ancient to contemporary Western art and Islamic, Middle Eastern and Asian art. The department also offers minors in sculpture and in architectural studies.

On-campus art museum
The Rose Art Museum on the Brandeis campus houses what is widely recognized as the finest collection of modern and contemporary art in New England. The Rose collection has particular strengths in European and American modernism, American social realism of the 1920s and ‘30s, surrealism, abstract expressionism, Pop, minimalism and encyclopedic coverage post-1970. Some of the top artists working today, Dana Schutz, Mark Bradford and Lisa Yuskavage, received major mid-career retrospectives at the Rose and visited campus to engage with our students.

AWARDS AND RECOGNITION

Faculty accomplishments
Brandeis studio faculty are esteemed professional painters, sculptors and media artists. They have exhibited at major galleries and museums in New York, New England, elsewhere throughout the United States and internationally, both in solo and group shows. Brandeis art historians are world experts in their fields and publish widely. Among their notable books are the standard works on contemporary art, Palestinian art, and early medieval architecture, and monographs on Nicolas Poussin, Georgia O’Keeffe, Frida Kahlo and Kang Youwei. They have contributed to exhibition catalogues at the Musée du Louvre, the Metropolitan Museum of Art and Tate Modern, London.

AFTER BRANDEIS

Diverse career fields
Among our fine arts alumni there are architects and art historians, art conservators and graphic designers, museum curators and directors, and practicing artists who exhibit regularly. Indeed, the current directors of three of the nation’s top art museums (Whitney in New York, MFA in Houston and Seattle Art Museum) are Brandeis art history alumni. Other recent graduates have found work in the design department at the Metropolitan Museum of Art, at an auction house in the contemporary department and at a public art nonprofit group. Popular paths outside of the arts include Teach for America as well as graduate school in architecture, law or medicine.

“Professor Kalb is one of the most incredible teachers I have ever had in all my years of formal education. He will ask us provocative questions that push our understanding to higher levels. No student will leave his class without having expressed her opinion and having it respectfully considered, and then been challenged to develop that opinion. He is endlessly patient and always willing to help us improve. His office door is always open.”

A former student on Professor Peter Kalb, recipient of the 2009 Walzer Award for Teaching at Brandeis