

Visual Arts Major (BA)

A Bachelor of Arts degree (120 credits) consists of [Core Curriculum](#) (30 credits) and at least one [major](#) (36–60 credits), as well as [minors](#) and/or elective courses of the student's choosing.

The 36-credit major in Visual Arts includes studio electives in several painting media, calligraphic forms, sculpture, pottery, and photography. Required courses in drawing, world art history, contemplative and studio practice, and professional preparation form the foundation of the degree. Students are mentored in Advanced Studio Practice, Warrior Artist, and Portfolio and Gallery Presentation. The final project includes a digital portfolio, artist's statement, and an exhibition in the Nalanda Art Galleries.

Program Vision

Naropa University's founder, Chögyam Trungpa Rinpoche, an accomplished artist, taught that art joined with meditative practice educates one's whole being, and that when the artist's mind and body synchronize, art expresses a direct and unselfconscious vitality. This is the power and benefit of art to society, and why contemplation and visual art training are interwoven as the foundation of the Visual Arts program at Naropa. Applied to both traditional and contemporary art forms, these two disciplines are reciprocal: contemplation, or awareness practice, becomes the lens that focuses and brightens visual expression; and artistic practice develops the practical means to promote awareness. Beyond endorsing a technique or style, the Visual Arts major trains students to join inner imagination and outer observation. Students develop confidence in creative vision and the technical proficiency and critical thinking to express that vision.

Visual Arts Degree Requirements

Required Courses

Gateway

- [ART101 2-D Design: Art Techniques and Experimentation \(3\)](#)
- [ART125 Introduction to Drawing \(3\)](#)
- [ART200 The Contemplative Artist \(3\)](#)
- [ART301 World Art I: Ancient to Middle Ages \(3\)](#)
- [ART340 Contemporary Art History 1945 to Present \(3\)](#)

Art Genres

Choose 12 Credits

- [ART102 Contemplative Ceramics: Form and Human Contact \(3\)](#)
- [ART105 Art and Consciousness: Mixed Media and Self-Exploration \(3\)](#)
- [ART132 3-D Ephemeral Art \(3\)](#)
- [ART155 Figure Drawing \(3\)](#)
- [ART180 Sculpture \(3\)](#)
- [ART215 Watercolor \(3\)](#)
- [ART245 Introduction to Painting: Realism \(3\)](#)
- [ART311 Mixed Media \(3\)](#)
- [ART325 Drawing II: Precision, Perception, and Form \(3\)](#)

- [ART345 Painter's Laboratory \(3\)](#)
- [ART355 Eco-Art \(3\)](#)
- [ART360 Contemplative Photography \(3\)](#)
- [ART490 Special Topics in Visual Arts \(3\)](#)
- [ART499 Independent Study \(0.5–4\)](#)
- [ATH230 Introduction to Art Therapy \(3\)](#)
- [ATH330 Art Therapy Theory and Applications \(3\)](#)
- [ATH430 Art Therapy Studio Methods \(3\)](#)

Milestone

- [ART385 Advanced Studio Practice \(3\)](#)

Capstone

- [ART440 Warrior Artist: Risk & Revelation in Studio Art \(3\)](#)
- [ART480 Portfolio and Gallery Presentation \(Senior Project\) \(3\)](#)

Total Credits: 36

Course Listings

ART101

2-D Design: Art Techniques and Experimentation (3.0)

2-D Design is an introduction to a variety of technical, conceptual, and experimental methods used to make art. Students explore color theory and design principles using basic drawing, painting, and mixed materials. Intuitive, intellectual, and contemplative modes of inquiry provoke expanded possibilities and approaches to practicing studio art. Materials fee.

ART102

Contemplative Ceramics: Form and Human Contact (3.0)

For millennia, humans have used ceramics both to sustain life and for personal expression. In this hands-on class, students develop their own individual approach to the medium, using methods that include pinching, coiling, slab construction, and wheel throwing. Students find ways to embody their contemplative practice by investigating how ceramics can create meaning with forms intended to connect with others. Students deepen their artistic practice by exploring the use of ceramics in the world. Materials fee.

ART105

Art and Consciousness: Mixed Media and Self-Exploration (3.0)

Students are challenged to listen to and trust their own inner experience as the basis for the creation of authentic artwork. Through material experimentation and investigation into realms of consciousness, we create art. Acrylic painting and mixed media are explored. Students discover that art relies upon its sources in the most profound levels of human consciousness for its ability to inspire and transform. Materials fee.

ART125

Introduction to Drawing (3.0)

This studio class focuses on developing skillful use of drawing techniques, paired with an investigation of mind and perception. Drawing is presented here as a method for discovering the beauty and profundity of ordinary things. A graduated series of individual and collaborative exercises is presented for both beginning and experienced drawers. Materials fee.

ART132

3-D Ephemeral Art (3.0)

This studio course explores the fundamental principles of three-dimensional design such as form, space, shape, value, balance, proportion, and movement. Students examine contemplative ways of creating art and experience the symbiotic relationship that occurs when using ephemeral media (natural materials that erode or decay over time) as a primary medium. Materials fee.

ART155

Figure Drawing (3.0)

The structure of this course is established by centering concentration on the figurative motif. Class routine begins with gesture and warm-up drawing, followed by instruction and specific exercises, ending with extended poses or poses relative to a particular figurative study. Figure exercises are derived from an academic tradition to train the eye as well as the hand. Materials fee.

ART180

Sculpture (3.0)

This studio course explores the organizing principles of three-dimensional design as well as the nature of one's creative thoughts. Students learn to use a variety of materials and techniques, including clay, plaster, metals, mold-making, and conceptual approaches. Investigations into the history of sculptural form raise questions pertinent to contemporary art. Materials fee.

ART200

The Contemplative Artist (3.0)

At the very heart of the word "contemplative" is the activity of observing, seeing. "Contemplative," originally a term of divination, meant an open space marked out for observation. "Contemplate" implies attentive and meditative observation. Through mindfulness meditation, studio assignments, and selected readings, students explore a cosmology of art; how art arises; how seeing occurs, literally and poetically; how people navigate and appreciate the world through sense perceptions and how perceptions are affected by culture; and how these two streams of the personal and the public join in an individual's aesthetic sense and artistic statement. Cross-listed as ART500. Materials fee.

ART215

Watercolor (3.0)

This course, open to beginners and experienced artists, is a series of exercises designed to lay the foundation for understanding this famously difficult medium. The methods presented distill the techniques practiced in the Western tradition of the past three

centuries and provide the basis for a lifetime of anxious pleasure. This is a studio class with demonstrations by the instructor and a lot of painting and drawing by the students. Materials fee.

ART245

Introduction to Painting: Realism (3.0)

Students develop technical ability as painters and increase their creative options for art-making. With the still life as subject, the course focuses on color theory, the formal elements of painting, and the various surfaces, tools, techniques, and myriad effects that can be achieved with acrylic paint. Students explore the expressive potential of painting and discuss their process during class critiques. Knowledge gained enables students to be articulate about, and have a better understanding of, the paintings that they encounter in the world. Materials fee.

ART285

New Forms in Ceramics: Advanced Skills in Historical Clay Techniques (3.0)

This course presents an introduction to the art of ceramics with an overview that examines the cultural aspects of ceramics with a focus on anthropological, historical, mythical, and divination practices in clay. We will explore the properties and preparation of clay and methods for forming and firing clay. Aspects of form, design, and decoration will also be examined. Prerequisite: ART102 or by instructor permission. Course fee.

ART301

World Art I: Ancient to Middle Ages (3.0)

An introduction to the visual arts of archaic societies and of the civilizations of the Mediterranean and Middle East, Asia, Central and South America, and Africa. Viewed from a global perspective, we explore the historic and mythic lineages of vision, meaning, and craft. Materials fee.

ART311

Mixed Media (3.0)

Students engage in the creation of art made out of mixing materials and media. Investigations include formal, technical, philosophical, and experiential aspects of art-making. Sources of artistic imagery, from contemporary to traditional art, and the dynamics of aesthetic experience are examined. Students develop insights through the integration of witnessing many forms of art, critical intent, and personal creative experience. Emphasis is placed on making art, artistic evaluation, and the dynamics of group critique. Materials fee.

ART325

Drawing II: Precision, Perception, and Form (3.0)

Beginning with an emphasis on precise observational drawing, the class proceeds through an array of exercises designed to deepen each student's native way of drawing. The working basis for this is the One Hundred Drawings project, a semester-long exploration of an individually chosen theme. Open to anyone with previous drawing experience. Prerequisite: ART125 or permission of instructor. Materials fee.

ART340

Contemporary Art History 1945 to Present (3.0)

An introduction to contemporary artists and movements from around the world. Veering from the traditional European model, we will focus on artists that challenge and inform the contemporary art scene. From major art movements to an emphasis on particular artists of that movement. Covering political, personal, and explorative art in painting, sculpture, performance, installation, video, and other alternative forms of art to later work that has social and political impact, this course will explore all world arts. With a global perspective, we explore the artist as a catalyst for meaning, and expressions through a critical and personal experience. Prerequisite: ART301.

ART345

Painter's Laboratory (3.0)

Like a science lab, the painter's laboratory is a place for practice, observation, and testing. This studio class is suitable for anyone wanting to explore and develop as a painter. The goal is to enhance seeing and to translate that highly personal skill into paint. We study and experiment with how to generate ideas, how to develop subject matter, how to build on and incorporate previous training and experience (including nonvisual), and how to engage the vastness of contemporary and historical arts as a mentor and ally. Lab skills include how to gather and use visual information for painting through collecting, drawing, and notation. This is a hands-on lab; the medium is acrylic paint. Materials fee.

ART355

Eco-Art (3.0)

This class explores ecological and environmentally related art. Studio work emphasizes recycled and natural materials, with a mixed-media emphasis. Students learn how to source art materials directly. Slide lectures; visiting artists; and trips to see, discuss, and reflect on eco-arts are included, as well as an experience with community-based art. Materials fee.

ART360

Contemplative Photography (3.0)

This course guides students to explore mindfulness in photography. Students experience the relationship between the contemplative state of mind of clear and non-conceptual awareness and the creative endeavor through photography. Students consider reality, space, time, and illusion as ways to gain insights into photography and the meditative state. Students develop visual awareness through the use of the photographic medium. Through viewing films, readings, and research, students expand their knowledge of potent imagery. Critiques and discussions foster the advancement of students' art images. Materials fee.

ART385

Advanced Studio Practice (3.0)

Students define and manifest their own artistic voice, incorporating the media and technique of their choice. Students build a body of serious cohesive artwork, with emphasis on technical, formal, and conceptual concerns. Art and thought processes are supported

by research, engaged inquiry, and a highly focused studio practice. Viewing art from contemporary and traditional cultures encourages students to realize a global understanding of what art is. Prerequisites: Open to Visual Arts majors with 60+ credits only. Others with instructor permission. Materials fee.

ART440

Warrior Artist: Risk and Revelation in Studio Art (3.0)

The artist is trained as a scholar to cultivate confidence and dignity. Students engage in the skills of speaking about art, and its concerns, with regard to inner and outer influences. Research and articulation of influences provide students a greater clarity of how their art form relates from themselves to the world. Warrior exams prompt students to talk about their art on the spot and uncover wisdom. Fundamental questions are explored to provide a larger view of the effect art creates for the viewer. Ongoing art studio practice informs the dialogue and encourages progressive art consciousness. In this class, students join their advanced studio art practice with the disciplines of speaking and writing about art. Visual Arts majors graduating seniors only; others by permission of the instructor. Materials fee.

ART455

Making Conscious Media (3.0)

Exploration of creative cinema through short production and post-production projects. The course focuses on tactics and strategies of independent cinema production, leading to the completion of a final project in either documentary, experimental, or narrative genres. Content emphasis will be on material that is socially provocative, artistically bold, or infused with content that reflects a consciously-grounded exploration of the human condition. Materials fee.

ART480

Portfolio and Gallery Presentation (3.0)

This spring course prepares students for the presentation of their senior projects in the Naropa Gallery. The course covers practical elements of designing and assembling a portfolio, marketing, copyrights, presentation of artwork, and installation of exhibitions. BA Visual Arts seniors only; others by permission of instructor. Materials fee.

ART490

Special Topics in Visual Arts (3.0)

The Special Topics seminar investigates the applications of theories and methods of visual arts specific to historical, critical, and theoretical contexts. Specific topics are announced the semester this course is offered. The seminar is open to advanced undergraduate and graduate students. Materials fee.

Spring 2019

Section A: Installation and Ritual This course is intended as a space in which we could build/dream through our materials, sensations and questions to the shrine, the ritual, and the installation. We will look at examples of each from cultures and traditions of many kinds, with a strict vow not to appropriate these forms but rather, as a way to develop our own questions about what these spaces might be

for. What do they need? What do they require? What do they discharge? What kinds of images do they precipitate that were never seen before? How can writing and performance be the places where we develop or retain a memory of these images? Our work together this semester will unfold in the axial space between spirituality and art, with a focus on our own art-making, writing, and performance.

ART499

Independent Study: Visual Arts (0.5-4.0)

This course offering is an opportunity for students to engage in in-depth, concentrated study with a particular faculty member for a semester. The design of study and course work are decided upon by the student and faculty member. Independent Studies will count for a standard 3 credits. If a variable credit (0.5 - 4 credits) Independent Study is desired, a student must receive additional approval. See the Independent Study Application for further details.