Visual Arts Major (BA)

A Bachelor of Arts Degree consists of 30 credits of Core Curriculum and at least one Major (36–60 credits), for a total of 120 credits.

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. The Visual Arts program offers a Bachelor of Arts in Visual Arts, as well as a minor in Visual Arts, a minor in Film and Media Studies, and a minor in Art Therapy.

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]
- ART351 World Art II: Medieval and Modern Transformations [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]

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.

**ART181**  
**Traditional Chinese Brushstroke I (3.0)**  
Brushstroke class focuses on learning how to cultivate the inner qi, or energy, through the practice of brush calligraphy. The history of Oriental calligraphy and culture is studied. We focus on the process of meditation with a brush. Emphasis is placed on regular, running style and grass style, Caoshu, with some exposure to seal script and brush painting as well. Students learn how Asian paper and brushes are used, and how to place a chop or red seal on Chinese calligraphy and painting. We study how the Asian brush is designed and how it differs from Western brushes. Every student has artwork at the end of this course. Workshops begin with a light qigong standing meditation every week. Materials fee. Cross-listed as ART581.

**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.

**ART281**  
**Traditional Chinese Brushstroke II (3.0)**  
Based on skills learned in Traditional Chinese Brushstroke I, students continue their exploration of the history, origin, and construction of the Chinese characters. Students delve further into the five calligraphy writing styles as a method to enhance their Chinese writing skills. To gain a better understanding of the aesthetic standard, Oriental philosophy, and Oriental painting, students examine ways Chinese poetic artistry—i.e. poetry, calligraphy, and painting—are interrelated in the Asian traditions. We look at modern Chinese and Japanese brush artwork and the interaction between the West and the East. Workshops begin with a light qigong standing meditation every week. Prerequisite: ART181. Materials fee. Cross-listed as ART582.

**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.

ART333
Thangka Painting II: Appreciation of Himalayan Buddhist Art (3.0)
This class is a continuation of ART233/533. Students learn to stretch and prime cloth for painting. Each student begins by painting the eight auspicious symbols, then advances to a complete thangka painting. Skills focused on include dry-technique shading, color mixing and application, and making gold paint. Detailed study of classic thangkas, both past and contemporary, complement the skills practiced. Prerequisite: ART233/533. Crosslisted as ART543. Materials fee.

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.

ART351
World Art II: Medieval and Modern Transformations (3.0)
An introduction to the visual arts of cultures that flowered under the influence of Buddhism, Christianity, and Islam, as well as the art of Western Europe from the thirteenth century to the present. No prerequisite required for this class. Includes art making. 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.

ART381
Traditional Chinese Brushstroke III (3.0)
Based on skills learned in Traditional Chinese Brushstroke II, students continue their exploration of the history, origin, and construction of the Chinese characters. Students delve further into the five calligraphy writing styles as a method to enhance their Chinese writing skills. To gain a better understanding of the aesthetic standard, Oriental philosophy, and Oriental painting, students examine ways Chinese poetic artistry, i.e. poetry, calligraphy and painting, are interrelated in the Asian traditions. We look at modern Chinese and Japanese brushwork and the interaction between the West and the East. Workshops begin with a light qigong standing meditation. Materials fee. Prerequisite: ART281. Crosslisted as ART583.

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. Cross-listed as ART690. Fall 2017: Word and Image Students develop multiple ways of integrating text into their works of art, beginning with techniques for altering their own handwriting. Exploration includes the spectrum of lettering from barely legible marks, to formal hand lettering in historic and contemporary styles of traditional calligraphy, to type. Students are exposed to the work of a wide range of contemporary visual artists, including aerosol and graffiti artists. Students explore the expressive potential of language in art making and discuss their processes during class critiques. Students learn design principles and work with a wide variety of tools and materials.

**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.