



**Cornell University**  
**College of Architecture, Art, and Planning**

Department of Art  
224 Olive Tjaden Hall  
Ithaca, New York 14853  
t. 607-255-3558  
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www.aap.cornell.edu

**General Information**

**Q.** How do I apply to the Cornell M.F.A. program?

**A.** *Application for graduate study at Cornell requires first applying for admission to the Cornell University Graduate School and payment of the \$95.00 application fee. This MUST be done online through the Graduate School website. Be sure to thoroughly review the general information on the Graduate School website as well as information specific to the M.F.A. program to determine how various materials are submitted.*

**Q.** I don't have a B.F.A. degree; can I still apply to the Cornell M.F.A. program?

**A.** *Yes. Although all applicants must have a four-year bachelor's degree, it does not have to be related to art.*

**Q.** May I apply to the Cornell M.F.A. program for either the spring or fall semester?

**A.** *No. M.F.A. students are admitted in the fall semester only.*

**Q.** If I have taken graduate-level courses in another program, will I be able to transfer credits?

**A.** *No. The Cornell M.F.A. program does not accept transfer credits from other institutions.*

**Q.** Do all application materials need to be received by the January 7 deadline?

**A.** *Yes. All materials, including transcripts, letters of recommendation, test scores, portfolios, and all other items must be received by the published deadline.*

**Q.** Are M.F.A. applicants required to submit GRE scores with their application?

**A.** *No. GRE scores are not required for admission to the M.F.A. program at Cornell. However, if you have already taken the GRE, you are welcome to submit your scores with your application. If you will be seeking financial assistance other than that offered by the Department of Art or Cornell University, it is recommended that you submit GRE scores.*

**Q.** Must international applicants submit TOEFL scores?

**A.** *Yes. Foreign applicants whose native language is not English, but who have studied full-time for two or more years at a college or university where English is the language of instruction, located in a country where English is the native language, are exempt from this requirement. All other foreign applicants must submit TOEFL scores. The Graduate School does NOT under any circumstances accept IELTS scores.*

**Q.** Are personal interviews required of applicants?

**A.** *Applicant interviews are not required as part of the initial application process. However, shortlisted candidates will be asked to interview either in person or via Skype.*

**Q.** Do M.F.A. applicants submit portfolios of their work?

**A.** *Yes. All applicants must submit a portfolio for review by the department admissions committee along with his or her other application materials. Guidelines for submitting your portfolio are included in the M.F.A. program application instructions. Please follow these instructions exactly!*

### **Transcripts and Recommendations**

**Q.** Should I submit official copies of my transcripts?

**A.** *No. Transcripts submitted online as part of the application will be copies. However, should you be accepted into the program you must submit official copies from each institution you have attended before you will be permitted to matriculate. All transcripts must either be in English or accompanied by a certified English translation if not in English.*

**Q.** How many letters of recommendation should I submit and how?

**A.** *Three recommendation letters from people who are familiar with your work (preferably art professionals) are required. Please do not submit more than three. Letters of recommendation are to be submitted online through the online system. After necessary information is entered into the system your recommenders will receive an email instructing them how to proceed.*

**Q.** What if a recommender does not have email, is it possible to send a hard copy letter?

**A.** *Yes. In this case the recommender should be instructed to send his or her letter to the **AAP Graduate Admissions Office** at the mailing address included in the application instructions which follow. The postmark deadline is January 7 of the year you wish to enter the program. All hard copy letters of recommendation must be accompanied by the required Recommendation Form, which may be downloaded from the Cornell University Graduate School website. Mailed copies of letters will only be accepted if recommenders are unable to submit them electronically!*

### **Notification**

**Q.** If I am accepted into the program how will I be notified?

**A.** *Applicants are notified of acceptance by telephone. This is followed shortly by a hard-copy confirmation sent by U.S. mail. Notification is usually received late-March or early April.*



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Dear potential applicant,

We welcome your interest in the M.F.A. Program at Cornell University. It is useful to describe what the program at Cornell shares with other leading M.F.A. programs nationally and internationally and what is distinctive about graduate studies in the visual arts at Cornell.

Most advanced programs today encourage a creative and intellectual practice within a pedagogical environment that fosters independent and critical thinking, with the resources to accommodate and encourage an ambitious range of studio practices, taking place in a community of faculty, students, and visiting artists which challenges, supports, questions, and advises the development of creative practice. Recently, too, some M.F.A. programs have, like the one at Cornell, adopted a position that encourages both interdisciplinary medium-specific practices and questions a pedagogy informed solely by Western models and traditions of art.

Beyond this the Cornell M.F.A. program has unique features. Our two-year program is an intensive community with a limited number of students. This small scale might appear overly rarified were it not for the exceptional breadth and integration of its context. The Department of Art is a part of the College of Architecture, Art, and Planning, a resource-rich environment in which to explore the increasing intersections of art with spatial/urban/architectural theories and practices that are emerging through rapid globalization and explosive media and technological innovations.

Beyond AAP, Cornell offers programs and graduate degrees in almost every imaginable established and emerging field. This context offers opportunities for extreme focus within the small contours of the M.F.A. program and possibilities for discursive research in the intellectually diverse dimensions of a leading university. This dialectic of concentration and expansion characterizes the creative potential of independent research imaginatively applied by M.F.A. students at Cornell.

The intellectual resources and connectedness at Cornell are vast, providing the unique combination of pastoral retreat and global integration. To augment this geographic dynamic, students accepted into the M.F.A. program typically receive exceptionally generous scholarships as well as assistantships that encourage both focus without distraction and discovery without limitation.

The M.F.A. at Cornell is challenging opportunity for artists to create relevant, adaptive, and sustainable practices. Accepting the complex, often demanding pleasures of art, research, labor, and experimentation, I hope you will contact us if the M.F.A. at Cornell is a program and place where your ideas, commitment, and passion for an expressive and connective art practice can develop.

*Carl Ostendarp*

A handwritten signature in black ink, appearing to read 'Carl Ostendarp'.

Director of Graduate Studies  
Cornell University Department of Art

## **The Basics**

The M.F.A. program at Cornell offers admission to the fall semester only. An undergraduate degree is required for admission to the program. The degree need not be a BFA, but may be in any discipline. Submission of GRE scores is not a requirement for admission as an M.F.A. However, if you would like to be considered for funding other than what might be awarded by the Department of Art or Cornell University, you should submit GRE general test scores to the Cornell University Graduate School before the January 7 application deadline. For more information regarding the GRE you may write to Graduate Record Examinations, ETS, P.O. Box 6000, Princeton, NJ 08541-6000, call (609) 771-7670, or visit [GRE: Graduate Record Examinations](#). *The Cornell University Graduate School GRE code is 2098. The Department of Art GRE code is 2401.*

Applicants whose native language is not English must take the TOEFL and have the official scores reported to Cornell by the Educational Testing Service (ETS). *Only students who have studied full-time for two or more years at a college or university where English is the language of instruction, located in a country where English is the native language, are exempt from reporting TOEFL scores.* You may submit a copy of your student score report for the purposes of applying, however, if you are accepted you will be required to have your official scores transmitted to the Graduate School. *The Graduate School does not accept IELTS scores, only the TOEFL.*

Educational Testing Service now provides an Internet-based (iBT) version of the TOEFL. This newest version will test all four language skills important for effective communication: writing, listening, reading, and speaking. Each section has its own score and the Graduate School has set the following minimum scores for admissions: Writing: 20; Listening: 15; Reading: 20; Speaking: 22. The Department of Art requires these same minimum scores. *Applicants with TOEFL scores lower than these minimums cannot be accepted under any circumstances. Please do not ask. We are unable to make any exceptions to this rule.*

The Graduate School will continue to accept scores for Computer Based (cBT) (213 minimum) and Paper Based (550 minimum) versions of the TOEFL that were taken within two years of the date the student submitted an application for admission. Please note that the cBT and Paper-based tests are being phased out by Educational Testing Service. ETS will send results directly to the Graduate School so long as the applicant indicates Cornell's institutional code and the Department of Art code on the exam. *Cornell's institutional code for all versions of the TOEFL is 2098. The Department of Art code for the TOEFL is 15.*

TOEFL scores are only valid for two years from the test date. Scores more than two years old cannot be reported or verified by ETS, and are not forwarded to institutions for consideration. If you took the TOEFL test more than two years before the date you apply to Cornell, you will have to take the test again in order to have your scores reported.

## **Additional Information**

If you are interested in meeting with a member of the art department faculty or with a current M.F.A. student, please see the contact information listings below. ***You must contact the individual(s) directly to schedule meetings.*** After you have made arrangements with the faculty member or student, you are welcome to schedule a tour of Olive Tjaden Hall, the home of the art department. You may contact Maria Brown, Academic Programs Administrator in the Department of Art, at (607) 255-6730. Department facilities are generally open for tours Monday through Friday from 9:00 am to 2:00 pm. Please be aware that if you are selected as a short-list applicant, you may be asked to visit campus for an interview. For those unable to make the trip, accommodations may be made. For information about visiting Cornell and the Ithaca area, go to [Cornell University - The Ithaca Campus](#).

**Current Faculty Members:**

<p>Michael Ashkin Associate Professor Sculpture (607) 255-5234 ma352@cornell.edu</p>	<p>Bill Gaskins Visiting Associate Professor Photography (607) 254-8522 gaskins@cornell.edu</p>	<p>Gregory Page Associate Professor Printmaking (607) 255-6722 gp23@cornell.edu</p>
<p>Jane Benson Visiting Lecturer Drawing (607) 254-8522 jlb583@cornell.edu</p>	<p>Jean Locey Professor Photography (607) 255-6787 jnl2@cornell.edu</p>	<p>Maria Park Assistant Professor Painting (607) 255-6724 myp4@cornell.edu</p>
<p>Roberto Bertoia Associate Professor Sculpture (607) 255-5178 rgb4@cornell.edu</p>	<p>Elisabeth Meyer Associate Professor Printmaking (607) 255-6721 ehm2@cornell.edu</p>	<p>Barry Perlus Associate Professor Photography (607) 255-6720 bap8@cornell.edu</p>
<p>Iftikhar Dadi Associate Professor Art History/Theory (607) 255-6730/3558 mid1@cornell.edu</p>	<p>Carl Ostendarp Director of Graduate Studies Visiting Assistant Professor Painting (607) 255-6726 cao24@cornell.edu</p>	<p>Jolene Rickard Associate Professor Photography/Theory (607) 255-0570 jkr33@cornell.edu</p>
<p>Renate Ferro Visiting Assistant Professor Digital Media (607) 255-9519 rft9@cornell.edu</p>	<p>Stephanie Owens Visiting Assistant Professor Digital Media (607) 254-8927 so272@cornell.edu</p>	<p>Stan Taft Associate Professor Painting (607) 255-6727 wst4@cornell.edu</p>

**Current Graduate Students:**

<p>Piotr Chizinski 2013 graduate pdc55@cornell.edu</p>	<p>Christina Leung 2013 graduate cwl77@cornell.edu</p>	<p>Jerry Birchfield 2014 graduate jeb472@cornell.edu</p>
<p>Elizabeth Corkery 2013 graduate eac264@cornell.edu</p>	<p>Katherine Somody 2013 graduate ks847@cornell.edu</p>	<p>Andre De Leon 2014 graduate ad468@cornell.edu</p>
<p>Brian Dunn 2013 graduate bmd76@cornell.edu</p>	<p>Gaby Wolodarski 2013 graduate gmw77@cornell.edu</p>	<p>Nicholas Foster 2014 graduate njf56@cornell.edu</p>
<p>Raja'a Khalid 2013 graduate rk554@cornell.edu</p>	<p>Sophia Balagamwala 2014 graduate syb6@cornell.edu</p>	<p>Mariam Kambon 2014 graduate mak456@cornell.edu</p>
<p>Francesca Lohmann 2014 graduate fsl6@cornell.edu</p>		

## **The Details**

Application to the M.F.A. program at Cornell requires that online application materials be submitted to the Graduate School and that the art portfolio and *Statement of Purpose* be submitted to the College of AAP Graduate Admissions Office using the SlideRoom online system.

The initial step in applying to the M.F.A. program is to submit an application to the Cornell University Graduate School using the online application system CollegNet, by going to [Cornell University Graduate School -- Admissions](#). *All applicants are required to use this system. Paper applications are no longer accepted!* The non-refundable application fee (\$95.00) is paid online at the time of application. (Requests for waiver of application fee payment are made through the Cornell University Graduate School.) *When completing the online portion of the application please use standard English spelling, punctuation, and capitalization to the best of your ability.*

**Important:** The online application for admission serves also as the application for financial assistance. *No other application is required to apply for financial aid from the Department of Art or the university.* If you wish to apply for student loans, foundation grants or fellowships, or other external assistance, you are responsible for determining and complying with all paperwork requirements. The Cornell University Graduate School can supply information about non-university forms of assistance available to graduate students.

Please follow all Graduate School application instructions outlined on their website as well as those of the Department of Art which are specified below.

**Note:** *Your application will not be considered complete and ready for review until all materials requested have been received. All materials must be received no later than January 7.*

### **Completing your application**

- Provide all requested information
- Pay the application fee
- Submit a *Statement of Purpose* (via SlideRoom)
- Submit a resume/CV (via CollegeNet)
- Submit the three required recommendations (via CollegeNet)
- Upload scans of transcripts (via CollegeNet)
- Submit the online application (via CollegeNet)
- Submit the online art portfolio (via SlideRoom)

*All recommendations must be submitted using the online system.* After you enter the requested information regarding recommenders, they will automatically receive an email with instructions on how to complete the recommendation process on your behalf.

In addition to the online application, the Department of Art requires all M.F.A. applicants to submit a resume or CV, copies of transcripts from every college or university previously attended, and a portfolio of his or her creative work.

The resume or CV, transcript copies, and letters of recommendation are submitted with the online application (CollegeNet). Portfolio materials are submitted to the AAP Graduate Admissions Office using the SlideRoom system, a link to which is given in the Portfolio Guidelines section below.

**Important:** DO NOT SEND ANY MATERIALS TO THE CORNELL UNIVERSITY GRADUATE SCHOOL IN CALDWELL HALL! DO NOT SEND ANY MATERIALS TO THE DEPARTMENT OF ART IN TJADEN HALL!

Copies of transcripts are to be uploaded for the purposes of applying, however, if you are accepted you will be required to submit hard copy *official* transcripts before being admitted. Please note: You MUST submit copies of separate transcripts from EVERY college or university at which you have studied. ***Transfer credits from a previous institution that are listed on later transcripts from a different institution are not acceptable!***

**Important:** *Do not submit materials not requested!* Papers, essays, publications, award or honors certificates, magazine or newspaper articles or clippings, exhibition notices, proposals etc. will not be accepted if included in your application materials. Do not submit more than three letters of recommendation and do not submit more than twenty images in your portfolio. *Failure to follow these guidelines may result in disqualification of your application before review!*

Please title each component of your application as referred to in this document. For example, the *Statement of Purpose* must be titled “*Statement of Purpose*,” not “*Letter of Intent*” or “*Personal Statement*.” Applicants applying for Diversity Fellowships are required to submit an essay which must be titled “*Diversity Essay*.” (Note: Diversity Fellowships are available to American citizens and permanent U.S. residents only.)

After application materials have been submitted we cannot accept updated or revised materials or allow any changes to be made with the exception of TOEFL scores. If you re-take the TOEFL and wish to submit scores from the second test, you may do so as long as this is done BEFORE the January 7 deadline.

**Important:** Cornell University expects all applicants to complete their application materials ***without the use of paid agents, credentials services, or other paid professional assistance.*** The use of such services violates university policy, and may lead to the rejection of application materials, revocation of an admissions offer, cancellation of admission, or involuntary withdrawal from the University.

### **Portfolio Guidelines**

Every applicant is required to submit a portfolio of no more than twenty (20) electronic files documenting his or her work. These may include any combination of still images, videos, URLs, sound-based work, web-based work, or other work. Directions for properly preparing these materials follow. *Please follow these instructions exactly as given!* Submitted portfolios that do not conform to the instructions below will not be reviewed. Portfolios are to be submitted by way of SlideRoom at <http://cornellaap.slideroom.com>

**Still Images:** Still images must be in JPEG or TIFF format with maximum dimensions of 1280 x 1024 at 72 dpi. No image may exceed 1024 pixels in height (including portrait images) or 1280 in width (including panoramic images). File sizes larger than 4 MB will neither be opened nor reviewed.

**Videos:** Video, video installation, performance, kinetic sculpture, and/or gaming/interactive work are also to be submitted through SlideRoom, which accommodates links from YouTube, Vimeo, and SoundCloud. Each video should be no longer than five minutes in length. Please note that each video is to be considered as one file within the twenty-file requirement.

**Web-based Work:** Web-based work submitted for consideration must be uploaded and operative on the World Wide Web for the duration of the application process (until you are notified of acceptance or rejection). Please note that each URL is to be considered as one file within the twenty-file requirement.

**Sound-based Work:** Sound-based work should be submitted in AIFF or MP3 format. Each selection should be restricted to five minutes. Please note that each sound file is to be considered as one file within the twenty-file requirement.

**Other (if applicable):** For any work you may wish to submit that does not fall into the above categories, please contact Maria Brown in the Department of Art at (607) 255-6730 or [mpb7@cornell.edu](mailto:mpb7@cornell.edu) for instructions.

### **Summary**

The process of applying to the Cornell M.F.A. program consists of these steps:

1. Apply to the Cornell University Graduate School online and pay \$95.00 application fee
2. Submit *Statement of Purpose* to the Graduate School (SlideRoom)
3. Submit a CV/resume (CollegeNet)
4. Submit three (3) letters of recommendation (CollegeNet) with required recommendation form.
5. Submit copies of all transcripts to the Graduate School (CollegeNet).
6. Applicants required to submit TOEFL scores should have them sent directly to the Cornell University Graduate School.
7. Applicants who wish to submit GRE test scores should have them sent directly to the Cornell University Graduate School.
8. All applicants must submit a portfolio of their work (SlideRoom)

We are not able to confirm that your application is complete. We will, however, contact you by email should any item(s) be missing from your application.

If you have questions regarding your M.F.A. *application*, please contact the AAP Graduate Admissions Office at (607) 255-4367. For questions about the M.F.A. *program*, please contact Maria Brown at (607) 255-6730.

***Please remember: Your graduate application will not be considered complete and ready for review until all application materials are received. All materials must be received no later than January 7!***

## **Tips and Suggestions for Applicants**

The single most important thing to remember in completing your application successfully is to *get an early start*. Waiting until the last minute to begin almost always results in a hastily done application, one that will most likely not present you in the most favorable light.

It is also very important that you review and understand all of the information presented in this document and on the various websites mentioned. While we are more than happy to answer questions regarding the MFA program and the application process, most of the questions applicants or prospective applicants ask are answered in one or more of these places.

The online application period normally opens in August. Individuals who are considering applying are encouraged to make the decision to apply long before that time and begin making all the necessary arrangements well in advance of beginning the online portion of the application. It is also important to assess your financial resources before submitting your application.

Getting transcripts and test scores and arranging for letters of recommendation can be especially time consuming. Again, start early! Give your three recommenders enough advance notice to enable them to write and submit their letters on time. The same goes for transcripts. (Many colleges and universities now make unofficial copies of transcripts available online. Remember that unofficial transcripts are acceptable for the purposes of applying. Official transcripts are required only after an applicant has been accepted.)

If you are an international applicant and are required to submit TOEFL scores, *please plan to take the test well in advance of making your application*. It will take several weeks after you take the test for your scores to be received. If you wish to submit GRE scores (not required), the same applies.

In some areas of the world, the TOEFL and GRE are offered on a very limited basis, so please review test schedule information on the ETS website and be certain you know when the test you need to take will be available in your area.

The electronic online application process requires uploading of several documents such as statements of purpose and resumes or CVs. It is important that you keep the length of all uploaded documents as short as possible while still presenting the requested information fully and clearly. File size limits are indicated on various pages of the online websites. Please remember to keep uploaded documents within the indicated limits. If you experience problems uploading any of the documents required, please contact the AAP Graduate Admissions Office for instructions.

One of the most important aspects of your application is the portfolio. As previously stressed, it is critical that portfolios be assembled following the instructions given. This reduces the amount of time it takes to process your application and review your portfolio. Be certain to present your best work in the portfolio.

Thank you for your interest in the M.F.A. art program at Cornell University!