

Art History Fact Sheet



Why Major in Art History?

Art history provides critical tools for navigating our image-saturated lives and preparing for many sectors of the professional world. By training you how to analyze the visual arts, material culture, and architecture from different historical periods and geographical regions, art history prepares you for a society that demands articulate interpreters of the visible world. Art history is about vision in the broadest sense, how people saw themselves in the past, and how we see ourselves in the present and future. Art historians understand art as an instrument of power and recognize its potential for influencing contemporary social issues. We examine how art reflects and shapes its surroundings and how artists use their work for political agency, social justice, racial justice, and community action. Aligned with Boston College's commitment to *cura personalis* (care for the whole individual) and "being women and men for others," Art History helps students to develop their unique interests and prepares them for being engaged global citizens with the potential to improve our society.

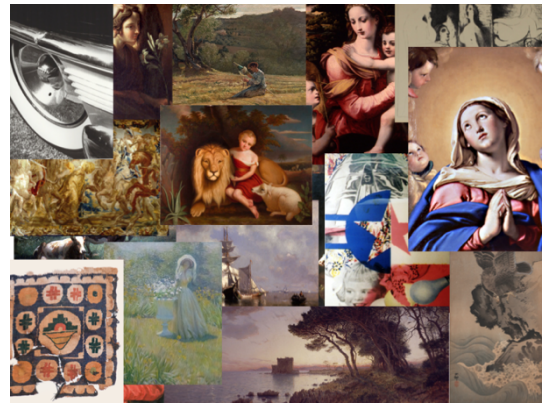
What do Art History Students Study?

The art history major (11 courses) and minor (6 courses) are designed for flexibility to match student interests. Introductory courses include African and African Diasporic, American, Asian, European, and Islamic art. Based on interest, students choose electives from a wide array of fields, including African and African Diasporic Art, Architecture, Baroque Art, Chinese Art, Contemporary Art, Egyptian Art, Greek Art, Islamic Art, Japanese Art, Medieval Art, Modern Art, Nineteenth-Century Art, Photography, and Renaissance Art. Seniors enroll in the capstone seminar in art historical research and have the option to write a thesis. Art history majors can concentrate in museum studies (12 courses total), which includes courses on museums, the materials of art and conservation.

How Does Art History Prepare You for Your Future?

Art history students develop the [skills that employers across industries seek most](#), including:

- critical analysis and interpretation of empirical evidence
- visual analysis of forms, images, and material objects
- writing and oral communication skills
- global knowledge



Works of art in the McMullen Museum

What Opportunities Do Art History Students Have?

- Apply for the McMullen Museum of Art's Student Ambassadors Program and internships at museums, galleries, auction houses, and more.
- Apply to be Undergraduate Research Fellows with professors.
- Encouraged to study abroad (many courses count for major/minor credit).
- Benefit from our supportive undergraduate program and professors who work closely with our students in academic pursuits and planning for the future.
- Pursue BC's Pre-Health Program by supplementing the major coursework with the pre-medical or pre-dental course requirements. Competencies learned in art history, such as critical analysis, visual analysis, and writing skills, can be useful for health profession careers, such as Radiology, Pathology, Surgery, Dentistry and Dental Surgery.
- Prepare for law school by learning research, writing, and critical thinking skills. Consider a career in Art Law, such as art history major (Williams College) and BC Law alumni, [Nicholas M. O'Donnell](#), an expert on the legal issues of Nazi-looted art.
- For more information, see the [resources](#) on our website.

Are there Careers in Art History?

Yes. Alumni of the department have gone on to work in academia, art criticism, architecture, museums, art conservation, cultural preservation, law, commercial galleries and auction houses. To assist students with finding careers in the arts, we work with the Career Center and the Arts Career Coach, Salome Miclette (miclette@bc.edu). We participate in the annual Career Week for the Arts.

What if I Love Art History but Am Uncertain about an Arts Career?

Not to worry! Our students have successfully pursued all kinds of careers outside the arts, including marketing, law, and medicine. For instance, "increasingly, medical educators integrate art-viewing into curricular interventions that teach clinical observation...."¹ Because art history contributes to the intellectual foundation of a liberal arts education, the skills acquired are transferable to other areas.

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<https://www.bc.edu/content/bc-web/schools/mcas/departments/art.html>

¹ A. Miller, M. Grohe, S. Khoshbin, and J.T. Katz, "From the Galleries to the Clinic: Applying Art Museum Lessons to Patient Care," *Journal of Medical Humanities* (2013) 34: 433-38, DOI: 10.1007/s10912-013-9250-8.