The Department of Visual Arts at Stellenbosch University offers a four-year BA-degree in Fine Arts, Visual Communication Design, and Creative Jewellery and Metal Design. In addition to the expertise provided by full-time staff members, students are continuously exposed to industry professionals, whether through visiting artists and specialists in the department, or field trips to major exhibitions, events or industry fairs.

Through all study streams, emphasis is placed on the theoretical and practical aspects of visual culture related to visual production, and reflecting all aspects of society. The department also offers postgraduate study in Visual Arts, Illustration, Visual Studies and Art Education. Please contact Yumna Williams at +27 (0)21 808 3052 or yumna@sun.ac.za for more information in this regard.

Incorporated into each poster in this brochure is an interactive instruction. Complete each instruction in an innovative and creative way, make it your own, take a picture of your final result, and share it using the hashtag, #visualartsfuture.

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The milieu of Stellenbosch offers a unique perspective to visual arts students: the intimate and supportive environment of a historical university town that is offset to visual arts students: the intimate and supportive environment of central Cape Town, only 45 minutes drive away. The Department of Visual Arts occupies a historic, fully renovated building in oak-lined Victoria Street. We offer custom-designed studio and workshop spaces for our undergraduate study streams in Fine Arts, Visual Communication Design and Jewellery Design, including an industry-standard new media computer laboratory. In keeping with developments in contemporary art including video and digital arts, as well as offering a solid supporting students working in all aspects of new media, lab. In addition to the expertise provided by full-time staff members, students are continuously exposed to industry professionals, whether through visiting artists and specialists in the department, or field trips to major exhibitions, events or industry fairs.

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Enrolment is currently open for undergraduate and postgraduate study in Visual Arts. Use the Department of Visual Arts on Facebook and Instagram to see what we are up to.

Future Possibilities

A BA in Visual Arts provides the core technical and conceptual skills for careers as artists, designers, art educators and teachers, curators, art critics or historians. These skills are also much sought after in the broader creative industries, including film production, art administration, museums and heritage work, publishing and journalism, architecture and interior design, or the design industries, jewellery manufacture, and so on.

The popular presumption that a BA-degree in Visual Arts is not career focused is dismissed by the successes of graduates from this school who have demonstrated that they offer a highly attractive skills-set to potential employers. A BA in Visual Arts graduates is also by nature innovative and flexible, and thus very well suited to entrepreneurial work.

General Enquiries

Yumna Williams
+27 (0)21 808 2508
Yumna@sun.ac.za

Visual Arts Building
Victoria Street
Stellenbosch

Application Information

Information on portfolio requirements is available from: Anneke Moodie
+27 (0)21 808 2000
Anneke@sun.ac.za

Visual Arts Department
Stellenbosch University

Web: http://www.sun.ac.za/visualarts

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Available Facilities

- Home studios for every year group.
- Photography studio with state of the art lighting equipment.
- Drawing studio.
- Jewellery finishing work stations.
- Jewellery finishing and casting equipment.
- Ceramic kilns with large enameled lids.
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- Home studios for every year group.
- Paper making and paper shaping equipment.
- Drawing studio.
- Jewellery finishing equipment.
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FINE ARTS

The Department of Visual Arts at Stellenbosch University offers a four-year BA degree in Fine Arts.

why FINE ARTS?

The course offers an integrated approach to Fine Arts studies, wherein the principle objective is to promote an understanding of the critical Art as a demanding and competitive career choice. It is a vocation not simply a job. It is true that the art industry is a complex, competitive and demanding environment. Where we refer to the ‘art world’, we are actually suggesting something of its special conditions, with it being a unique economy in which ideas about culture, language, style, style, entrepreneurship – knowledge and values are constantly put to the test. A wide range of skills is therefore required to keep things in play. A degree is essentially a degree in the kind of excellence one can bring to any chosen profession. It is not a small step, but in fact, in itself, a great step.

teaching METHODS

The methodology of the programme is self-directed, self-critical practice. It is based on developing critical thinking and problem-solving abilities of each student. Students are free to explore the most appropriate ways of working ideas. You will continue to discover and refine the content of your work through processes, experiment, and openness to facing challenges. You have to be prepared to move outside of your comfort zone and to try out skills that you have maybe not yet considered.

Contact time with lecturing and tutors varies according to year of study. Junior-year students receive more structured tuition than fourth-year students, who are more experienced and are therefore expected to work independently. On average, lecturers will spend 9–12 hours per week on undergraduate teaching. The number of hours you are expected to work independently is therefore critical, as time must be used effectively.

3. structure

Studio practice will involve structured sessions specific to each year group, as well as self-directed, independent studio time, supported by consultations with lecturing staff, including visiting lecturers, and group crits.

A training Arts Technician/learner programme (SAT) provides an opportunity for professional arts students, gallery and art referees to show their work and experiences, and for you to engage in critical discussions regarding contemporary art.

what will you LEARN?

1. in the first year of study you are expected to produce works that are entirely self-driven. This is a project-based curriculum. Throughout the year you will be required to produce a number of projects in the various disciplines mentioned above. For each of the projects completed you will be awarded a mark, the average of which will constitute a coursework mark.

2. in your second year you keep doing projects in each of the Fine Art disciplines. You are encouraged to find your own particular interest, in terms of conceptual content. The overall aim of the second year is to encourage you to find your own particular interest, in terms of conceptual content as well as material, process and technique. During the second semester teaching is still project-based, even though greater freedom is allowed. In the second semester, students are given the task of producing a major project that is entirely self-initiated. All work is the result of individual consultation between students and assigned tutors. Towards the end of the second semester, students are given the task of producing their own website and a catalogue of the year’s work as a first exercise in professional studio practice.

3. in your third year you are increasingly encouraged to produce studio pieces that are driven by your own particular interests and explorations regarding ideas and conceptual content. The means of instruction includes in-depth understanding of the processes and technique associated with each discipline. The overall aim is to demonstrate the potential of each material, process and technique in order to help develop new ideas and explorations regarding ideas and conceptual content. The overall aim of the third year is to encourage you to explore your particular interests in terms of both concept and medium, on which to focus and expand in your third year. The means of instruction in second year is project-based. Throughout the year you will be asked to complete a number of projects in the various disciplines mentioned above. For each of these projects you will be assessed on the work completed, which will constitute a coursework mark.

4. the fourth year is equivalent to an Honours year in a BA degree. This means that you are expected to work independently, with the support of lecturing staff and consultations and critiques. Independent practice and professional development provide the opportunity for professional development and group discussion. In fourth year students are required to produce a body of work that is mature in terms of both technique and conceptual content. The means of instruction at this level consists of regular individual consultation with members of staff, plus group meetings conducted by members of staff.

In any case, the programme is four-fold:

1. to provide you with a wide range of technical skills that are useful in the production of contemporary artworks (2-dimensional, 3-dimensional and new media, performance, video, sound, installation, digital and interactive arts, etc.).

2. to foster an understanding of the visual relationship between form and conceptual thinking, and how the manipulation of material, process and technique can aid in the development of new insights, ideas and in the production of knowledge.

3. to ensure that you are engaged in establishing – for yourself – the foundations of an independent, critical, and unique voice that you will be able to articulate and defend in the public realm.

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VISUAL COMMUNICATION DESIGN

The Department of Visual Arts at Stellenbosch University offers a four-year BA degree in Visual Communication Design.

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why STELENBOSCH?

Studying Visual Communication Design at Stellenbosch University offers an environment that allows for the exchange of ideas and cross-fertilisation between different fields: disciplines, departments and faculties on campus. As visual communication design is involved in all aspects of our lifeworld, these surroundings create a rich and rewarding learning experience for our students.

what is VCD?

Visual communication design is a broad term encompassing graphic design, information design, instructional design, visual storytelling and various products of cultural and visual information. Featuring the visual language of images, words and design, the visual message is designed with a specific function, purpose and audience in mind.

Design practitioners of the 21st Century are facing a multitude of challenges in a multi-speed and complex social and cultural domain than ever before. Material, environmental and social changes require future designers to enter the field with an open and critical mind and to meet the challenges of the future.

Our approach to design is to tackle attention and real-world problems head-on, learn from, and question them. There are no fixed solutions or ready-made solutions to good design. We will teach you an intensive design process: in-depth exploration, experientiation, research and even play. By asking questions, and trying out different combinations and possibilities, you will learn to design through doing. Such an inductive approach will help you to think and to take a critical approach to content. It will also teach you how to take responsibility for your designs, vision and identity as a designer.

Our course offers extensive opportunities to investigate the various possibilities of expression available to designers, including the full potential of a range of media. The course offers opportunities to develop an image and a focus, and to pursue a vision that is personal yet appropriate to designers working in the studio. A rigorous focus on design will develop a lifelong creative process that could be applied to almost any field.

what will you LEARN?

1. During your first-year study, you will investigate art and design concepts including the basic elements, principles and techniques in drawing, typographic, calligraphic, photography, printing, design and digital production. Sociology and Social and Cultural Theory are included in the programme, Visual Studies, introduce critical concepts in the study of visual culture, providing tools and function in social, cultural and creative visual fields.

2. In your second-year subjects for the intermediate level of the Visual Communication Design course are Graphic Design, Interdisciplinary Visual Studies, Photography, Illustration, Animation, Printmaking, Motion Graphics, Visual Studies, a module in Sociology of Communication, and an advanced course in Industrial Psychology. The aim of Industrial Psychology is to help students acquire a holistic knowledge of consumer behaviour to which they can respond with an appropriate marketing concept.

3. In third year you continue with the same subjects as in the previous year. At the advanced level, you are expected to integrate knowledge across these broad-based subjects (i.e. a community development project in collaboration with Sociology require integrated research and participatory processes towards various design variables, projects to which students can apply their knowledge and skills to contribute to the development of rural communities in and around Stellenbosch. At this level you are also expected to do an internship in a professional studio or creative enterprise of your choice.

4. Subjects in the advanced fourth year are Graphic Design, Industrial Psychology, Visual and Communication Studies, Visual Studies, Sociology and Social and Cultural Theory. At this level, the Visual Communication Design course culminates in the integration of theory and practice, and the various disciplines and subjects. Through an expanded self-motivated research project, you will be able to work independently and answer questions, and to develop a personal design methodology.

the COURSE

Our courses aim to educate designers who can contribute to the advancement of the discipline as well as the development of social and cultural contexts and environments. Taking up a social-critical position empowers students to conduct their design practice within a social and critical framework.

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career OPPORTUNITIES

Our Visual Communication Design course prepares you to graduate in an almost any field imaginable. Most of our graduates find themselves established as professionals such as design studio and the advertising industry. Here they work as graphic designers, web designers, art directors, copywriters, studio managers, etc. Others work as graphic designers, photographers, illustrators, editors or researchers on books or magazines in the publishing industry. It is also not uncommon for our graduates to open their own design studies. Many work as freelance photographers, children’s picture book illustrators, and illustrator-writers of comics and graphic novels.

Some of our graduates pursue careers in education as teachers, or do contract work when they plan exhibitions for museums and galleries, or act as educational officers. Our alumni have also received awards in television, film and animation, working on lighting, sets, costumes, as well as designers or as producers. For more information please visit: https://www.facebook.com/vcd.stellenboschuniversity/
what is JEWELLERY DESIGN?

Creative jewellers and metaltechniques broadly refer to two intersected aspects of jewellery: the visual conceptual design component on the one hand, and the technical execution / representation thereof on the other.

Jewellery as a cultural entity, embodies visual and personal identity, mood, social standing, political viewpoint, cultural practices and group allegiance. Jewellery is private, critical, record and honour, and its many meanings are all around us.

Utilising a broad range of approaches, concepts and media, each of these aspects can be explored, understood and applied to our creative vision. This is the creative domain of our jewellery design students.

the COURSE

We guide our students toward developing a holistic understanding of the critical discourse, role and possibilities of jewellery. Our course in creative jewellery design and metaltechniques focuses on teaching students to create jewellery based on selecting, understanding and organizing various types of conceptual and visual information within specific contexts and concepts.

Knowledge of both historical and contemporary developments in jewellery design and technique, paired with a critical understanding of non-traditional theories, enables students to understand a larger world of ideas, whilst challenging their own assumptions and approaches.

Our course aims to educate creative jewellers who can contribute to the advancement of the discipline, both in terms and disciplines. We encourage students to express their critical and reflective approaches towards their projects. Taking up a critical practice empowers students to conduct their creative practices with the necessary confidence and accountability.

The programme in Creative Jewellery Design and Metaltechniques requires continuous, whilst preserving the core design methodology, critical thinking, theory, technique, end results of the programme in this level, the course culminates in self-reliant integration and coherence in its various forms. Through an expanded self-motivated body of work, students respond to a theme, concept, idea and/or problem of their choice by positioning themselves within an appropriate theoretical framework in relation to their practical work within the scope of a research article.

career OPPORTUNITIES

The course in Creative Jewellery Design and Metaltechniques prepares our graduates to work in an array of fields. Many of our graduates find themselves in established professions, such as jewellery design and arts, the retail jewellery industry, academia or teaching, whilst others work as professional jewellers. Some graduates choose to refine their particular undergraduate interest through postgraduate studies, both nationally and internationally.

Our graduates contribute to the jewellery industry across a broad spectrum, making an impact in shaping and shaping the unique South African jewellery design tradition through their visible, creative and entrepreneurial skills.

For more information, please visit:
http://www.facebook.com/JewelleryDivisionStellenboschUniversity
WHAT IS VISUAL STUDIES?

Visual Studies is a relatively new discipline that brings critical theories from a wide array of fields including Art History, Media Studies, Sociology, Cultural Studies and Philosophy to bear on a host of visual objects. The interdisciplinary nature of the programme allows one to analyse objects originating from a variety of contexts such as fine arts, mass media, film, corporate communications, visual communication design, and architecture.

In a world increasingly mediated by the visual, to understand the production, circulation and meaning-making thereof is essential. Visual Studies will help you to interpret the world as a visual domain and equip you to master the complex languages of visual culture that are fundamental to being an active and engaged citizen of the 21st century.

THE COURSE

Visual Studies courses tend to adopt an overarching critical focus such as Marxist, post-colonialist or gender theory under which umbrella popular cultural (film, advertising, photography, social media) or so-called high art images may be explored.

The highly popular undergraduate offering poses questions that resonate with student’s experience of their complex world:

» How does rapidly changing technology impact human identity?
» How is our embodiment as raced, sexed and gendered persons negotiated by the visual?
» How do otherness, cultural and political persuasions manifest in visual images?
» How can images subvert dominant narratives?

Visual Studies will help you to interpret the world as a visual domain and equip you to master the complex languages of visual culture that are fundamental to being an active and engaged citizen of the 21st century.

ENTRY REQUIREMENTS

Any student admitted to Stellenbosch University can register for Visual Studies. You do not need to have taken art at school and the course comprises only theoretical work (no practical art classes).

ON A POST-GRADUATE LEVEL

Visual Studies offers a comprehensive postgraduate programme all the way through to doctoral level. Our one-year long Honours course attracts students who are interested in pursuing careers in the arts sector as publishers, curators, art critics, journalists and media specialists. As part of the yearly programme we offer special curricula themed around: photography and self-representation, subjectivity, art criticism and curatorship.

THE LECTURERS

The people offering Visual Studies are experienced art historians, media theorists and cultural commentators. They have extensive know-how in terms of the visual sphere and are deeply invested in producing content that is locally relevant but in touch with international trends.

For more information, please visit the website of the Department of Visual Arts: http://www.sun.ac.za/visualarts