



## MFA ART CRITICISM AND WRITING DEPARTMENT FACT SHEET

The MFA Art Criticism and Writing Department offers students a rigorous and practice-based exploration of the diverse and ever-changing world of criticism. The department encourages students to engage with contemporary culture, aesthetics, art history and theory, while they develop a professional body of written work and explore various forms of review. From its inception, the program has placed a special emphasis on the history and current transformations of the image, as we live in an age when images have inordinate power.

In the first year, students are trained in contemporary critical practices, and develop a solid foundation in cultural histories and both ancient and modern philosophies. The second year concentrates on the refinement of critique and writing skills to enable each student to achieve a personal style of commentary, demonstrated in the thesis written in the final semester. In addition to the foundation seminar Bases of Criticism, three levels of writing practicum and the thesis seminar, the department offers a broad array of continually changing electives, dealing with everything from Adorno's aesthetic theory to the art of the interview.

### 2009 - 2010 student population

18 matriculated students

### Department chair

David Levi Strauss, writer, scholar and critic (*Between the Eyes: Essays on Photography & Politics*; *Between Dog & Wolf: Essays on Art & Politics*; *The Fighting Is a Dance, Too: Leon Golub and Nancy Spero*; *Abu Ghraib: The Politics of Torture*)

### Some notable faculty members

Suzanne Anker (*The Molecular Gaze: Art in the Genetic Age*), William Beckley (*Uncontrollable Beauty*), Susan Bee (*M/E/A/N/I/N/G: A Journal of Contemporary Art Issues*), Thyrza Nichols Goodeve (*How Like a Leaf: An Interview with Donna Haraway*), Robert Hullot-Kentor (*Things Beyond Resemblance: Collected Essays on Theodor W. Adorno*), Tom Huhn (*The Wake of Art: Criticism, Philosophy, and the Ends of Taste*), Ken Johnson (*The New York Times*), Jeffrey Kastner (*Cabinet*), Raphael Rubinstein (*Polychrome Profusion: Selected Art Criticism 1990-2002*)

### Some notable guest lecturers

Bill Berkson, Michael Brenson, Susan Buck-Morss, Phong Bui, Arthur Danto, Ann Lauterbach, W.J.T. Mitchell, Nancy Princenthal, Carter Ratcliff, Avital Ronell, Carolee Schneemann, Leo Steinberg

### Departmental publication

Student writings are published in *Degree Critical*, an online art magazine reviewing contemporary exhibitions.

For further information, please visit our Web site at [www.sva.edu](http://www.sva.edu) and the department page at <http://artcriticism.sva.edu>.