

## ***Department of Art Focus Statement***

*Mission Statement:* Within a broad intellectual and cultural framework, the Art Department seeks to educate students for an enlightened, responsible life in society and to prepare them as self-sufficient visual arts professionals, as artists, teachers, architects, designers, craftsmen, or museum specialists.

Acknowledging the interdependence of the arts, the humanities, and the sciences, the Department integrates professional preparation for careers in the visual arts into the framework of a general liberal arts education. A strong general education program, innovative arts teaching, and commitment to outreach have made the Department a regional leader in arts education, with seven accredited programs, a Center of Excellence in Egyptian Art and Archaeology, and a Chair of Excellence in Art History. (Accredited by the National Association of Schools of Art and Design and the Foundation of Interior Design Research and Education)

The Department encourages scholarly research and artistic endeavors as an expression of faculty professional growth and achievement within the visual arts. Commitment to scholarly research and the creative endeavors of its faculty is integral to the Department mission and interrelated with teaching and outreach.

Through its teaching, research, and outreach roles, the Art Department responds to the needs of individual students, the larger community, and other intellectual and creative disciplines. As a means of maintaining the vitality and visibility of the program, the Department encourages regional, national and international visibility for faculty research and student achievements.

### **Areas of Focus:**

1. The development of original contributions to the scholarship of Art History. As the university's 2002 report to TBR states, the art history program is an integral part of the university's core educational mission. It is enhanced by a faculty active in research. The Institute of Egyptian Art and Archaeology is a significant internationally important center for scholarly research. A Tennessee Center of Excellence and one of three such institutes in the U.S., the IEAA carries on field research in Egypt and recruits important scholars to collaborate with its programs. The Hohenberg Chair of Excellence in Art History sponsors a year long faculty appointment annually for an recognized international Art History Scholar.

Dr. Fred Albertson, Dr. William Anthes, Dr. Carol Crown, Dr. Earnestine Jenkins, Dr. Melinda Parsons, Dr. Carol Purtle, Dr. Lorelei Corcoran, Dr. Patricia Podzorski, Dr. Mariam Ayad

2. The creation of vital new visual art (Painting, Sculpture, Photography and Printmaking and Ceramics) and its exhibition at the regional, national and International level.

Prof. Beth Edwards, Prof. Jed Jackson, Prof. Larry Jasud, Prof. Robert Lewis, Prof. Larry McPherson, Prof. Greely Myatt, Prof. Wayne Simpkins, Prof. Niles Wallace, Prof. Nancy White, Prof. Cedar Nordbye, Inst. Kim Hindman.

3. The creation of original Graphic, Interior and Architectural Design that are at the forefront of the field in innovation and use of technology.

Prof. Sherry Bryan, Prof. Lucas Charles, Prof. Calvin Foster, Prof. Gary Golightly, Prof. Michael Hagge, Prof. Ken Huang, Inst. Jim Lutz, Prof. Tom Mason, Prof. Nikki Feilner, Prof. Jim Watkins, Prof. Dave Pohl, Prof. Mike Schmidt, prof. Randle Witherington

D. The high quality training of professional Art Educators to serve the K-12 needs of the region in the foreseeable future.

Dr. Paul McKeegan (retiring)

2. *Identify those areas that fit within the university's area of focus and within your college's area of focus.*

The Department of Art strongly asserts that the visual arts and design play an important role in the university intellectual community as well as the greater Memphis arts and education community. Our scholars, artists and designers are visible at the national and international level. The University of Memphis department of Art is larger( 577 total FTE majors and Grads) than the School of Art at the University of Tennessee (413 undergraduate and 36 graduate), while the Memphis college of Art has less than 300 Our graduates are increasingly recognized throughout the United States and Europe. We think the University Area of Focus, presently confined to the Performing Arts, should be expanded to

include the Visual Arts. The Department of Art is the largest art degree granting entity in the region. We offer the widest array of professional and scholarly degrees. Increasingly, the study of the visual arts is at the forefront of innovation in technology, especially in the Graphic and Architectural Design disciplines. The use of Video and Digital technology as well as the performance style of art that is now prevalent create conditions whereby increasing numbers of individuals confront art through performance or performance technology. Art exhibitions are public venues that invite participation and scrutiny in a public or performative forum. The work of our graduates and faculty are regularly covered by the local media, often more prominently than productions in theatre and music. As a University Area of Focus, Performing Arts includes Music and Theater and Dance. One could extend this to include film, radio and TV. As the University not so long ago took steps to eliminate the dance program, there appears to be a serious lack of understanding about what the rubric of Performing Art should include and what the designation Area of Focus includes.

I propose that the Visual and Performing Arts should be included together as a group in the university Area of Focus. This would be much more accurate statement of the university's strength in these areas. I have yet to hear the university make a clearer statement of what this focus area should be.