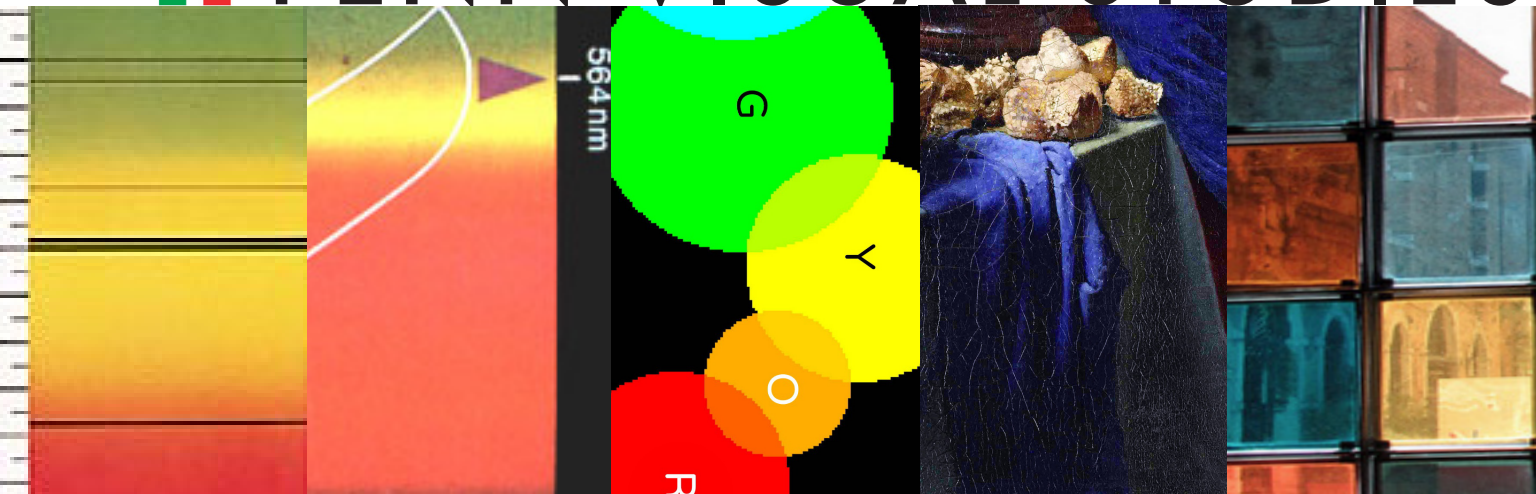
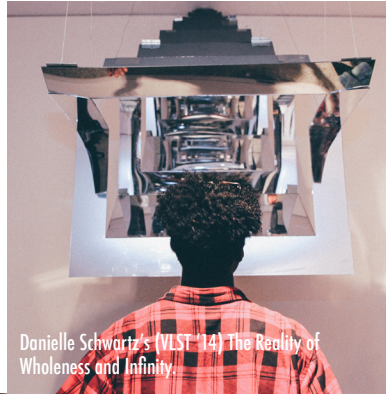


PENN VISUAL STUDIES



Images on the Cover (left to right):

1. Spectrum of visible light.
2. Spectral sensitivity of the rods and cones.
3. The relative color domains corresponding to the basic color terms by Berlin and Kay's test results (1969).
4. *The Milkmaid* (1660) by Johannes Vermeer, oil on canvas, Rijksmuseum, Amsterdam.
5. *Moonlight* (2009) by Spencer Finch, Filters and tape, dimensions variable, installed for Fare Mondi/Making Worlds, Venice Biennale.



Danielle Schwartz's (VLST '14) *The Reality of Wholeness and Infinity*.



Lauren Robie (VLST '14) demonstrating her senior project, *Mind the Motion*.

University College London neuroscientist Hugo Spiers presents within the Visual Studies Lecture Series.



What is Visual Studies?

“Visual Studies is an exploration of the interactions among eye, mind and image. It includes scientific and philosophical approaches to vision, the history of art, visual art-making, and interactions among these. It is intrinsically interdisciplinary, and a lot of fun.”

— Professor Gary Hatfield

We live in an increasingly visual culture. New technologies and philosophies of vision influence how we see ourselves and our world and how we think about seeing itself. The Visual Studies major was created in 2003 to allow students to directly engage these developments through a multidisciplinary course of study connecting the theory, practice, and culture of seeing.

What do art and design look like when they are informed by understanding of the neurobiology of vision?

How can theories and philosophies of vision enrich design, architecture, and communications?

What if research into visual perception were shaped by the histories and cultures of seeing available in world art?

These are just a few of the challenges taken up by the University of Pennsylvania's Visual Studies majors as they remake design, vision science, philosophy, and art history for the 21st century.

Fundamentally interdisciplinary, the Visual Studies Program partners with the Departments of Philosophy, Psychology, History of Art, and the Departments of Fine Arts and Architecture.

The VLST Program

Visual Studies (VLST) prepares students to forge innovative connections across the disciplines that study vision and art. Students acquire a critical awareness of seeing and of the problems and possibilities for investigating, thinking, and writing about seeing in the 21st century.

The curriculum invites students to develop skills in the making of art ranging from the two- and three-dimensional to the digital and time-based media. Students explore the status of images as representations or models of visual experience and as bearers of information, and they develop skills in interpreting artifacts visually.

In addition to a sequence of introductory classes, Visual Studies majors take courses in three broad areas:

- Sector A | Philosophy and the Science of Seeing
- Sector B | Art and the Culture of Seeing
- Sector C | Art Practice and Technology or
Architecture Practice and Technology

The sectors ensure both sufficient breadth and specialized depth of study. Students develop a specialization in one of these areas, which serves as the foundation for original work in a year-long senior thesis.

Faculty Advisers in two different fields work with each senior to encourage thinking across boundaries. A final exhibition of thesis projects in all fields is the highlight of the Visual Studies academic year.

Each year the program hosts a Visual Studies Lecture Series designed to encourage student interactions with Penn Faculty and internationally acclaimed artists, designers, historians, engineers, philosophers, and psychologists committed to interdisciplinary practice. The lecture series also provides Visual Studies Seniors with invaluable opportunities to have in-progress thesis critiques with a visiting artist.

In addition to the VLST curriculum, majors enjoy activities organized by the Visual Studies Undergraduate Advisory Board. The UAB organizes film screenings, museum and gallery visits in Philadelphia and New York City, as well as social dinners or teas. These events provide the opportunity for majors to continue the conversations that begin in the classroom and to inspire new ones, as well as to see old and new art and design first hand.



Student in VLST 101, "Eye, Mind, and Image" examines a cow's lens.



Professor Brent Wahl and Professor Sharka Hyland with students in VLST 102, "2-Dimensions: Forms and Meaning"

Why Major in Visual Studies?

"The two sides of my brain have always been at war. Art and science have been two subjects I've been pursuing since I was very young... What attracted me to [Penn], above everything else, was that they had this major called 'Visual Studies'....I could take drawing classes and art history classes and art theory classes, while still being able to talk about neuroscience and how our brain sees, and how our eyes see. In the end, that was exactly what visual studies was. It was a way to connect two passions that I was not able to do at any other school."

— Sasha Igdalova (Class of 2014)

"I came to Penn for the unique Visual Studies Program, which stimulates my interest in visual culture and the arts. Since my first Visual Studies class, I have done varied and exciting work: advertising, mobile tech, and small business branding internships; making posters; laying out magazines; and creating digital art projects. I even initiated Trail of Silence, an investigation into the killings of unarmed civilians by police, documented and visualized through graphic design. Visual Studies' multidisciplinary approach to problem solving has influenced all of these projects. This program opened my eyes to a new way of interacting with the world, using academic discourse in tandem with a heightened sensitivity to the visual world."

— Shakeil Greeley (Class of 2015)

"Coming into Penn 'undeclared', the Visual Studies major appealed to me because, like me, it refuses to stay in one discipline. This major values integration over specialization, ultimately encouraging undergraduates to explore and discover the topics they are intuitively drawn to (and can embody via the senior thesis capstone project for the major). In addition to enjoying the vast customization this major offers, I also appreciate how fluidly things I learn in my courses overlap one another and within my daily life and environment."

— Dyana So (Class of 2016)

What do Visual Studies Students Do?

"I want to express my pride for Penn's Visual Studies program. I've found a satisfying, creative job that appreciates my unique undergrad experience. I'm elated and satisfied with the work I'm doing - an opportunity directly made available thanks to my time with Visual Studies and specifically my senior thesis. My colleagues are impressed with the many considerations for human experience in terms of the environment, other people, psychology, and artistic practice."

— Lauren Robie (Class of 2014)

The Visual Studies major serves as a liberal arts preparation that develops visual literacy, studio skills, and knowledge of visual science and visual theory. It provides strong and distinctive preparation for continuing on to graduate or professional training in several fields, including philosophy, perceptual psychology, history of art, fine arts, and architecture.

Sector A students (Philosophy and Science of Seeing) have attended medical school, and can compete for philosophy or

psychology graduate programs. Similarly, Sector B students (Art and Culture of Seeing) have pursued graduate work in art history, and Sector C students (Art, Practice and Technology) have gone on in architecture, fine arts, public relations, marketing, advertising, design, and media production. In short, Visual Studies prepares students for a variety of careers, and alumni have found their skills valuable across a breadth of professional opportunities.

For more information on the Visual Studies Major, please contact:

www.sas.upenn.edu/visual-studies/

Visual Studies Program
3405 Woodland Walk
Jaffe History of Art Building
University of Pennsylvania
Philadelphia, PA 19104-6208

Office: Room 105
Phone: 215-746-2066

Professor Gary Hatfield, hatfield@sas.upenn.edu
Visual Studies Program Director

Dr. Ian Verstegen, verstegen@sas.upenn.edu
Visual Studies Associate Director

“In the beginning there was the eye, not the word.”

— Otto Pächt, Viennese Art Historian

