Focused on making, the Department of Visual Arts is one of the many specialized knowledge communities at the University of Chicago, one of the world’s great research institutions. We aim to stimulate and provoke both graduate and undergraduate students, encouraging the development of independent and challenging thought as expressed and inscribed in the visual arts. We propose that art is inquiry. Our faculty, diverse in its pursuits, is critically engaged in dialogue nationally and internationally. Our students benefit from this dialogue, and are also encouraged to pursue areas of overlap with the many other disciplines represented at the university – history, art history, science, philosophy, aesthetics, theater, music, and creative writing to name a few.

Jessica Stockholder, Department Chair

BA Program

The BA program in the Department of Visual Arts is intended for students interested in the practice and study of art. Students who major in visual arts take an individually arranged program of studio, lecture, and seminar courses that may include some courses outside the Humanities Collegiate Division. The program seeks to foster understanding of art from several perspectives: the practice and intention of the creator, the visual conventions employed, and the perception and critical reception of the audience. In addition to work in the studio, these aims may require study of many other subjects, including but not limited to art history, intellectual history, criticism, and aesthetics. Acknowledging the diversity of student interests and the department’s interdisciplinary orientation, requirements for the major are flexible.

Studio Track

Visual arts majors may apply for the studio track at the end of their third year. Places in the studio track are limited. Applicants will be reviewed by a faculty committee at the end of the third year, and studio track decisions will be announced before the start of the Autumn Quarter of fourth year. Studio track students work in consultation with the Director of Undergraduate Studies and the visual arts faculty to mount a thesis exhibition at the end of their senior year. Studio track students may also be awarded shared studio space during the senior year, based on merit and need, and contingent upon space being available.

BA/MFA Mentoring Program

BA Students in their final year have the opportunity to work closely with an MFA student mentor. MFA mentors come to BA student critiques, in addition to having studio visits.
DoVA Faculty

Theaster Gates
Matthew Jesse Jackson, Chair
Carol Jackson
Laura Letinsky
Geof Oppenheimer
Robert Peters, Emeritus
Julia Phillips
William Pope.L
Jason Salavon
David Schutter
Jessica Stockholder
Catherine Sullivan

Lecturers & Faculty Associated with DoVA

Dominique Bluher
Seth Brodsky
Bill Brown
Zachary Cahill
Bethany Collins
Katherine Desjardins
Darby English
Susanne Ghez
Amber Ginsburg
Judy Hoffman
Elisabeth Hogeman
Nicole Mauser
W.J.T. Mitchell
D.N. Rodowick
Yesomi Umolu
Scott Wolniak

Interviews with many of our faculty can be found at https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=l7nJ6teJY4I
DoVA Faculty

Theaster Gates has developed an expanded artistic practice that includes space development, object making, performance and critical engagement with many publics. Gates transforms spaces, institutions, traditions, and perceptions.

Gates’s training as an urban planner and sculptor, and subsequent time spent studying clay, has given him keen awareness of the poetics of production and systems of organizing. Playing with these poetic and systematic interests, Gates has assembled gospel choirs, formed temporary unions, and used systems of mass production as a way of underscoring the need that industry has for the body.

Recent exhibition and performance venues include Locust Projects, Miami, FL; the Seattle Art Museum; Art Basel Miami Beach; Los Angeles Museum of Contemporary Art; Milwaukee Art Museum; Contemporary Arts Museum Houston; and the Whitney Biennial and Armory Show in New York. Gates was a participating artist in dOCUMENTA (13) in Kassel, Germany, with his ‘12 Ballads for Huguenot House’. In Fall 2012, Gates debuted in London with his solo show ‘My Labor is My Protest’ at White Cube Bermondsey.

Gates was recently awarded the inaugural Vera List Center Prize for Art and Politics, honored by the Wall Street Journal as Arts Innovator of the Year 2012, and commissioned as the Armory Show Artist 2012. USA Artists named him as the USA Kippy Fellow 2012. Gates is also a 2012-13 Creative Time Global Resident. A Loeb Fellow at Harvard Graduate School of Design in 2011, Gates has received awards and grants from Creative Capital, the Joyce Foundation, Graham Foundation, Bemis Center For Contemporary Arts, and Artadia. Gates is represented by Kavi Gupta Gallery in Chicago and White Cube in London.

Matthew Jesse Jackson is an art historian. He is editor and co-translator from the Russian of Ilya Kabakov: On Art (forthcoming, University of Chicago Press, 2017) and the author of The Experimental Group: Ilya Kabakov, Moscow Conceptualism, Soviet Avant-Garde (University of Chicago Press, 2010, paperback 2016), winner of the Robert Motherwell Book Award, as well as the Vucinich Book Prize. He is the co-author of Vision and Communism (New Press, 2011) and his texts appear as the voice of the character “Matthew Jesse Jackson” in Christian Matthiessen’s novel OTMA & LUNL: On Tour Mit Art & Language und Niklas Luhmann/Ein Theorie Roman in the Style of the Jackson Pollock Bar (Kulturverlag Kadmos, 2012). His writing has appeared in Afterall, Artforum, Art Journal, ARTMargins, BlackBook, Bookforum, The Brooklyn Rail, Critical Inquiry, InterReview, Journal of Comparative Literature and Aesthetics, M/E/A/N/I/N/G, Museum International, New Left Review, October, Oxford Art Journal, and Third Text, as well as in volumes such as Art History and Emergency: Theaster Gates: The Black Monastic; Irena Haiduk: Spells; What Did The Artist Mean By That?: Art & Language: Radically Incomplete, Radically Inconclusive; Contemporary Art: 1989 to the Present; Adventures in the Soviet Imaginary; The State of Art Criticism; The Uncertain States of America Reader and An Alternative History of Art. Since 2006, Jackson has been involved with Our Literal Speed, a text & art enterprise located in Selma, Alabama. Among other locales, the project has been invited to appear at the Art Institute of Chicago, Banff Centre, Bergen Triennial, Clark Art Institute, Fondazione Antonio Ratti (Milan); GSD, Harvard University; Institute of Fine Arts (New York); Kölnischer Kunstverein (Cologne); MACBA (Barcelona); MoMA (New York); Performa (New York); Princeton University; REDCAT (Los Angeles), and ZKM (Karlsruhe). The project has participated in the Whitney Independent Study Program as a Studio Fellow, received Graham Foundation, Andy Warhol Foundation, and Creative Capital grants, and was awarded the 2010 Epson Prize for Artistic Research.
Geof Oppenheimer’s practice takes up questions of civic value, the ways in which political and social structures are encoded in images and objects and how meaning is formed in the modern world. Starting from the proposition that formal value is a social value, his projects interrogate the forms and rules of civic discourse as a material, positing art as a space of liberated social dialogue. Trained as a sculptor, Oppenheimer works across multiple mediums including stage set video productions and photography.

His work has been exhibited nationally and internationally at a variety of venues such as Mary and Leigh Block Museum of Art, PS1/MOMA, The Contemporary Museum, Baltimore; The Museum of Contemporary Art, Chicago, SITE Santa Fe, The Indianapolis Museum of Art, The Aspen Art Museum, The 4th Athens Biennale and CAB Art Center, Brussels. His work has been the subject of published writings in Art in America, The Wall Street Journal, The Chicago Tribune and The New Yorker. He studied at the Maryland Institute, College of Art where he received his BFA and received an MFA from the University of California, Berkeley. He also studied at the Academia voor Beeldende Vorming in the Netherlands. Geof Oppenheimer is an Associate Professor of Practice in the Department of Visual Arts at the University of Chicago and lives and works in Chicago, Illinois.

Geof Oppenheimer, Cvil/Evil (detail), 2015
Steel, cast lead, CMU blocks, magnets, fluorescent lights, plexiglass, and pigment prints. Dimensions variable.
An acclaimed and prolific interdisciplinary artist, William Pope.L is the recipient of many prestigious grants and awards, including the Guggenheim Fellowship, NEA fellowships, and the USA Fellowship in Visual Arts. He shows his work at Mitchell-Innes & Nash in New York and Susanne Vielmetter in Los Angeles, and was included in the 2002 and 2017 Whitney Biennial. He is perhaps best known for his provocative performances, such as ATM Piece, and his decades-long series of crawls across New York City, commemorated in eRacism, a retrospective which showed at several prominent museums and galleries. Baile (2016), his most recent project, was a 72 hour dance through the streets of Sao Paulo, Brazil. Before coming to the University of Chicago, Pope.L was Lecturer of Theater and Rhetoric at Bates College in Lewiston, Maine, and he earned his Master of Fine Arts from the Mason Gross School of the Arts at Rutgers University.
Julia Phillips was born and raised in Hamburg and is the citizen of Germany and the United States. She relocated to New York in 2013 for graduate school, and has been based there since, while attending several international residency programs.

Alongside works on paper and videos, Phillips works primarily with ceramics and metal, creating sculptures reminiscent of functional objects. The "tools" and "apparatuses" suggest a use for the human body and their titles point to physical, social, and psychological relations. Phillips describes her intellectual interests to be framed by psycho-analytical and Black feminist thought, as well as Postcolonial questions and issues of social Belonging.

Her most recent exhibitions are her first institutional solo exhibition ‘Failure Detection’ at MoMA PSI, her participation in the 10th Berlin Biennial ‘We don’t need another hero’, and her participation in the New Museum Triennial ‘Songs for Sabotage’. Phillips’ work has been reviewed in the New Yorker, Frieze, FlashArt International, Contemporary & Magazine, and CURA magazine.

Above: Julia Phillips, Operator II (with Opener, Destabilizer, Distancer, (R)Ejector), 2018, partially glazed ceramics, metal hardware, stainless steel plate, metal wheel table.

Left: Julia Phillips, installation view, Failure Detection, MoMA PSI, 2018. (Extruder [#1], 2017; Expanded X, Treated Twice, 2018; Fixator [#2], 2017)
DoVA Faculty

Using software processes of his own design, Jason Salavon generates and reconfigures masses of communal material in an effort to present new perspectives on the familiar. His projects unearth unexpected patterns while exploring the relationship between the part and the whole or the individual and the group. Reflecting a natural attraction to popular culture and the day-to-day, his work regularly incorporates the use of common references and source material. The final compositions are exhibited as art objects, such as photographic prints and video installations, while others exist in a real-time software context.

Born in Indiana, raised in Texas, and based in Chicago, Salavon earned his MFA at The School of the Art Institute of Chicago and his BA from The University of Texas at Austin. His work has been shown in museums and galleries around the world. Reviews of his exhibitions have been included in such publications as Artforum, Art in America, The New York Times, and The Wall Street Journal. Examples of his artwork are included in numerous prominent public and private collections. He is currently an Assistant Professor of Art, and faculty in the Computation Institute, at the University of Chicago. He was also employed for numerous years as an artist and programmer in the video game industry.

Above: Jason Salavon. One Week Skin (ESPN-Vs), 2012, archival inkjet print. Right: Jason Salavon. All the Ways (Couch Bag), 2016, archival inkjet on paper.
David Schutter's practice is a form of phenomenological study that discusses the distances and problems encountered when making a painting. His works are as much performative re-enactments of specific canonical sources as they are discreet paintings and drawings, and as such form a painter's repertory of extended rehearsals. These investigations are not homage, but instead a way toward understanding continued expectations that paintings function along historical values. In his approach to his subjects, Schutter locates his practice within the traditions of philosophical inquiry by beginning with the surfaces of things. His questions elicit responses to how we re-stratify our knowledge of the past while developing representations of the present, how we can uncover circumscribed categories and make new knowledge from the experience, and how repeated questions come to be ultimately forms of description in a world where the past is often a difficult and arguable antiquity. David Schutter has had solo exhibitions at the Gemäldegalerie, Berlin; the National Gallery of Modern Art, Edinburgh; the Istituto Centrale per la Grafica, Palazzo Poli, Rome; the Museum of Contemporary Art, Chicago; with Aurel Scheibler, Berlin; Sikkema Jenkins & Co., New York; and Rhona Hoffman Gallery, Chicago. His work has been included in group exhibitions at Le Magasin, Centre National Art d’Contemporain, Grenoble; the David Roberts Art Foundation, London; Fondazione Memmo, Rome; the American Academy in Rome; The Goma, Madrid; the Frans Hals Museum, Haarlem; the Museum of Contemporary Art, Chicago; the 5th Glasgow International Biennial; and documenta 14. Schutter is the recipient of a Rome Prize from the American Academy in Rome, is a German Chancellor Fellow of the Alexander von Humboldt Foundation, and is a Fulbright Scholar.
Stockholder works at the intersection of painting with sculpture. Her work sometimes incorporates the architecture in which it has been conceived, blanketing the floor, scaling walls and ceiling, and spilling out of windows, through doors, and into the surrounding landscape. Her work is energetic, cacophonous, idiosyncratic, and formal – tempering chaos with control. She orchestrates an intersection of pictorial and physical experience, probing how meaning derives from physicality.

Stockholder assumed a position on DoVA’s faculty as Chair in 2011. She brings with her twelve years of experience as Director of the Sculpture Department at the Yale School of Art. Ms. Stockholder received her B.F.A. from the University of Victoria in Canada in 1982, her M.F.A. from Yale University in 1985, an honorary Doctor of Fine Arts degree from the Emily Carr College of Art in 2010, and an honorary Doctor of Fine Arts degree from Columbia college in 2013.

Stockholder has exhibited widely in North America and Europe, at such venues as the Dia Center for the Arts, the Centre Pompidou in Paris, the Open Air Museum in Belgium, the Power Plant in Toronto, Canada, the Whitney Museum of American Art; P.S.1, New York; SITE Santa Fe; the Venice Biennale; Kunstmuseum St. Gallen; I3O1PE Gallery in Los Angeles and Mitchell-Innes & Nash Gallery in New York.

Her work is represented in various collections including the Art Institute of Chicago, the Albright-Knox Art Gallery, the Corcoran Gallery of Art, the Whitney Museum of American Art, LACMA, the Vancouver Art Gallery, and the Stedelijk Museum in Amsterdam. She has received numerous grants including the Lucelia Artist Award from the Smithsonian American Art Museum, a Guggenheim Fellowship, and Anonymous Was A Woman in 2012.
Catherine Sullivan has created film, theater and installation work with numerous collaborators and ensembles nationally and internationally. The performers in her works are often coping with written texts, stylistic economies, re-enactments of historic performances, gestural and choreographic regimes, and conceptual orthodoxies. Her true medium is the ensemble itself. Solo exhibitions, collaborations, performances and films have been presented at venues such as UCLA Armand Hammer Museum, Los Angeles; Walker Art Center, Minneapolis; The Renaissance Society at the University of Chicago; Museum of Contemporary Art, Chicago; Whitney Museum of American Art, New York; Metro Pictures, New York; Galerie Catherine Bastide, Brussels; Galerie Christian Nagel, Cologne; Secession, Vienna; Tate Modern, London; Opéra de Lyon, Lyon; Volksbühne, Berlin; Cricoteka, Krakow; Trapdoor Theatre, Chicago; the Whitney, Moscow and Gwangju biennials; Berlin International Film Festival and International Film Festival Rotterdam. Her work is held in public and private collections including Museum of Contemporary Art, Los Angeles; Whitney Museum of American Art, New York; Tate Modern, London; Thyssen-Bornemisza Art Contemporary, Vienna; Rubell Family Foundation, Miami and Geotz Collection, Munich. Notable awards include The Louis Comfort Tiffany Foundation, Herb Alpert Award in the Arts, Deutscher Akademischer Austausch Dienst, United States Artists Walker Fellowship and a Chicago Dancemaker's Forum Lab Artist Award. She holds a BFA in acting from California Institute of the Arts and an MFA in post-studio art from Art Center College of Design. She is an associate professor in the Department of Visual Arts at the University of Chicago.

https://sites.google.com/site/csworks
Open Practice Committee: Visiting Artist Program

The Department of Visual Arts invites visiting artists through the Open Practice Committee (OPC), in conversation with DoVA faculty and students. OPC explores the atmospheres and attitudes that make art contemporary. From the conventional departmental presentation to the unconventional institutional event, OPC aims to advance our collective understanding of theory and practice within the visual arts.


Painting and Its Humors, day-long symposium
Pictured: Zachary Cahill (moderator), David Leggett, Laura Owens, Scott Wolniak, and Jan Verwoert. Partners: Infrastructures for the Comedic, a Neubauer Collegium for Culture and Society project.

Unsuspending Disbelief: the Subject of Pictures, day-long symposium
Pictured: Martin Jay, Matthew Connors, Thomas Struth, and Laura Letinsky (event creator). Partners: Gray Center for Arts and Inquiry, the Franke Institute for the Humanities, Logan Center Exhibitions, the Humanities Visiting Committee at The University of Chicago and the Office of the Provost for the Arts.
Arts + Public Life
https://arts.uchicago.edu/artsandpubliclife
Directed by DoVA professor Theaster Gates, Arts + Public Life, an initiative of UChicago Arts, builds creative connections on Chicago’s South Side through artist residencies, arts education, and artist-led projects and events. Art + Public Life also manages the Arts Incubator.

The Smart Museum of Art
https://smartmuseum.uchicago.edu
As the fine arts museum of the University of Chicago, the Smart is home to thought-provoking exhibitions and an exquisite collection of more than 15,000 objects, including modern masterpieces, millennia-old Chinese ritual objects, rich examples of Renaissance painting, and provocative works of contemporary art.

Logan Center Exhibitions
https://arts.uchicago.edu/logan-center/upcoming
Working closely with artists, students, scholars, and community members, Logan Center Exhibitions presents innovative exhibitions by emerging and established artists in the Logan Center Gallery.

Gray Center for Arts and Inquiry
https://graycenter.uchicago.edu
The Richard and Mary L. Gray Center for Arts and Inquiry is a new forum at the University of Chicago for experimental collaborations between artists and scholars. In fall 2013, the Gray Center moved into its permanent home, the Gray Center Lab in Midway Studios, which features a flexible 1000 square foot work space that can be configured as a studio, lab, or classroom, as well as an installation, exhibition and performance space. The Center also offers office space to project collaborators.

Special Collections Research Center at the Regenstein Library
https://www.lib.uchicago.edu/scrc

The Neubauer Collegium for Culture and Society
http://neubauercollegium.uchicago.edu

The Franke Institute for the Humanities
http://franke.uchicago.edu

The Film Studies Center
https://filmstudiescenter.uchicago.edu

Doc Films
http://docfilms.uchicago.edu/dev

There was a whole collection made, exhibition curated by Laura Letinsky and Jessica Moss, the Smart Museum of Art.
Facilities for Making Work

Logan Media Center
Located in the Lower Level of the Logan Center, the Logan Media Center (LMC) provides AV equipment, production space, software, and technical training to the UChicago and DoVA community. Its resources include a digital media classroom with digital printers and flatbed scanners, individual editing suites, and a video production room with an infinity wall. The LMC is also a possible source of student employment for MFA and BA students in DoVA, as well as students interested in art and technology across campus.

Logan Center Shop
The shop houses equipment for woodworking, hot and cold metal working, vacuum forming, spray painting and resin casting. Hand and portable tools can be borrowed by authorized users at an equipment check-out center located in the shop at the south entrance. In addition, the Logan Center Shop sells supplies for wood, metal, and thermoforming plastics.

Visual Resource Center
The Visual Resource Center helps instructors and their students find, create, and use images. The Visual Resource Center can offer trained students access to both flatbed scanners and an Imacon Flexight scanner for slides and film.

Hack Arts Lab
Also managed by the LMC, and located one block away from the Logan Center, the Edelstone Darkroom is home to a BW and Color darkroom, as well as and photography classroom. Select analogue photographic and filmmaking equipment is available at the LMC.

Edelstone Darkroom
Managed by the LMC, the Hack Arts Lab (HAL) provides an open-access laboratory for creative digital fabrication and visualization. This makerspace-styled workshop is designed to support a breadth of activity ranging from undergraduate projects to faculty-led exploration.

The Logan Center for the Arts is also home to 16 individual MFA studios, a cluster of BA studios, the Logan Center Gallery, a Performance Penthouse, a larger central courtyard and one of the best screening rooms in the city, run by the Film Studies Center.
Resources for Funding Artistic Work

Points of Departure, part of the 2016 BA Thesis Exhibition, funded in part by a Student Creativity Grant. Lorenzo Conte, Angela Zhang, Cambria Whitcomb, and Alison Titus. Photo Credit: Nabiha Khan-Giordano.

UChicago Arts Grants & Funding
https://arts.uchicago.edu/uchicago-arts-grants-funding

UChicago Arts grants foster the creation and presentation of arts across the University in an effort to make the arts part of the life of every member of the campus community. Under the leadership of the Arts Council from 2001-2015, UChicago Arts has provided more than half a million dollars in support for campus arts activities through six grant programs.

Student Creativity Grants

University-based Recognized Student Organizations (RSOs) and individual students can submit grant requests between $1,500 and $7,500 for the support the creation and presentation of original projects in the arts. This grant focuses particularly on collaborations between the arts and other disciplines.

Student Fine Arts Fund

The Fund offers grants up to $1,500 to support student-initiated projects that would not typically receive support from another organization. Priority is given to original ideas for the creation of all sorts of visual and performing arts and might take the form of funding materials, artist master classes, or other ideas that support the “making” process.

UChicago Arts Student Summer Fellowships

The UChicago Arts Student Summer Fellowships are designed to fund original student projects undertaken during the summer break and/or students’ participation in summer arts training programs. Projects might involve (but are not limited to) original reporting, choreography, sculpture, painting, multi-media, music composition, script-writing, acting workshops, and translation. Generally, projects should be intended for production, performance, or publication during the following academic year.
Founded in 1915, the Renaissance Society is one of the leading North American venues for international contemporary art, with changing public exhibitions in its galleries throughout the year. The Renaissance Society also offers employment opportunities for undergraduate and graduate students with work study.

The Hyde Park Art Center has been bringing artists and communities together to support creativity at every level in Chicago since 1939. The Hyde Park Art Center also curates Ground Floor, a biennial exhibition of work from recent alumni from the top-rated art schools offering Master of Fine Art degrees in Chicago, including the University of Chicago.
Nicki Cherry, BA 2014

Current Position: MFA Candidate, Yale School of Art, Sculpure

Recent Activity:
2015-2017 Artist at Autotelic Studios
2016 ArtSlant Prize Showcase, Sculpure
2014 Summer Painting and Sculpture Intensive, Tyler School of Art, Philadelphia

“I produce colorful sculptures that grapple abstract forms with a confidently gendered politic. The sculptures exist halfway between complete abstraction and figuration; they are bodily without being anthropomorphic. I exploit the resulting uncanniness to broaden our imagination of what it means to be a body. Sculpture notably allows me to recreate the physical and social actions that define our relationships to our own forms. I employ similar processes to how humans construct their bodies to match an internal image—from carving and binding shape to brushing and grafting hair. Bodies are visceral, vulnerable, and amorphous—examining the body through a three dimensional medium seems necessary.”

Nicki Cherry, Assessing my shape: tying a shoe; Hydrocal over carved foam, plaster, cement, plastic replica of human spine, & shoe; 66” x 35” x 29”; 2017.
Jurrell Lewis, BA 2017.
The Map that Maps the Regions must be as Large as the Region Itself, Mixed-media, 2017.
Photo Credit: Nabiha Khan-Giordano.