

GREAT PLACES TO LEARN

Art & Design

Picture a student of art and design, and what comes to mind? A starving artist, toiling in a dark and cluttered studio? Romantic, perhaps. But reality? Not quite. >>> Today's artists and designers are tres chic, working on the cutting edge in industries such as film-making, advertising, animation, visual effects, graphic design and photography. For some, easels and palettes have given way to keyboards and desktops. For others, the tools and techniques of centuries past provide the foundation for revolutions to come. Art and design careers are more popular than ever, and professionals are in high demand. So the real question is not what defines an artist, but where an artist becomes defined.



New York Film Academy

Pratt: When you're

Petal
The winning ceiling fan design in the recent competition sponsored by Emerson Electric's Builders Product Division

Marian Hayes Gravel, Pratt '94

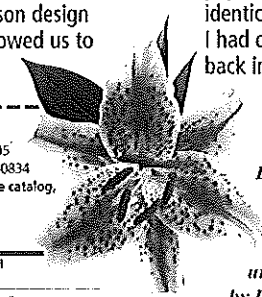
"I started playing with little pieces of paper ... letting them twirl towards the ground."

"Ever since I can remember, I wanted to fix things, to make them look and function better. I really didn't even know what industrial design was, and I certainly didn't know people actually made a living doing it.

At Pratt, they never said, 'This is the way it's done.' They led us on a search to define our own way of doing things, so that, in a sense, we owned that way. The Emerson design competition allowed us to

explore our own paths to a creative solution that in theory could actually be produced.

I knew I had something with the Petal. And I was encouraged to push it as far as it would go. When I won, I never dreamed they'd actually make it. But there it was, in the stores, while I was still a student at Pratt. And the thing I'm most proud of is that the *Petal* fan, which you pay real money for, is virtually identical to the original concept I had on my dog-eared little pad back in school."



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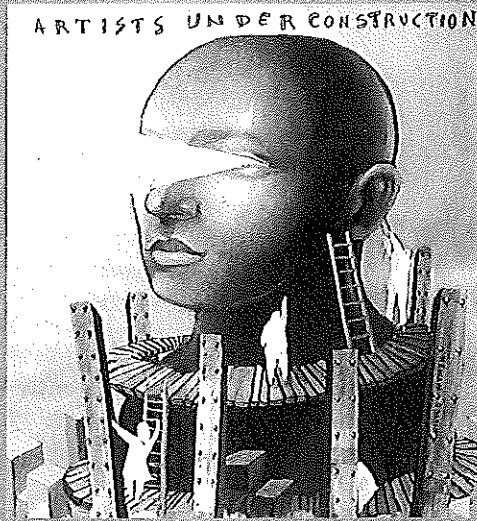
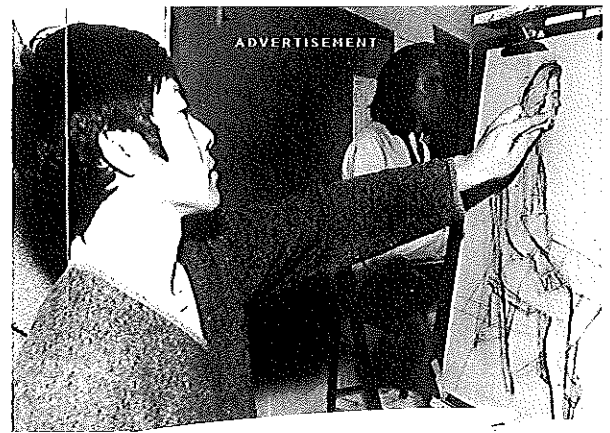


Illustration © 2005 Bruce Wynne/Illustration House/Clarke & Co.



National Academy School of Fine Arts

The biggest draw

New York: the art and design capital of the world, where designers pursue their art and artists have their designs on fame, where passion for fashion is always in fashion. To folks in these fields, New York is it.

Students at the National Academy School of Fine Arts certainly concur. Located along Manhattan's "Museum Mile," the school offers a wide range of programs for people of all ages and skill levels. "We have enough variety for anyone to feel comfortable," said Nancy Little, director of the school.

As the name suggests, the school is part of the National Academy, an honorary association of about 400 leading artists, many of whom teach here. Not surprisingly, students flock to the school from across the country and around the world to study with them. Just ask Eun-nye Yang.

Yang hails from South Korea, where she earned a college degree in painting. She came to New York, however, to pursue a career in dance, but when an injury derailed her plans, she returned to her original passion: art. Now six years into a part-time certificate program in sculpture, Yang credits the school for giving her a second chance at her first love. She also doesn't think dance and sculpture are all that dissimilar. "My dance background helps me understand how to move and pose the body," said Yang, who continues to carve out a career niche in figurative art. "I feel very lucky to have been able to pursue my passion over the past few years."

Similar sentiments can be found across the river at Pratt Institute, which, despite its urban location, features a bucolic setting on 26 tree-lined acres. This Brooklyn school boasts a traditional campus complete with a sculpture garden displaying

"If you have the passion, Pratt lets you go anywhere you want with it."

Larissa Penson, student, Pratt Institute

40 modern masterpieces. Pratt thus offers a residential, collegiate atmosphere with all the advantages inherent in the city.

It didn't take long for Larissa Penson to discover this. The senior, a fashion design major from Yarmouth, Me., came to Pratt for its broad curriculum, its outstanding reputation in the arts and its vibrant campus life. Penson landed a plum internship in New York with a leading brand of performance athletics apparel. So when she's not in the classroom, she's designing extreme sports gear for future "X Games" participants. The "work hard, play hard" mantra evidently resonates with her. "Pratt doesn't let you squeak by," Penson said. "This place tends to breed workaholics who get pushed to the limit. But if you have the passion, Pratt lets you go anywhere you want with it."

Illustration: Janet Hamlin

PAST

Founded in San Francisco in 1929 by Artists for Artists the Academy of Art University began with two basic principles: 1) training people with a natural talent to become professional artists, and 2) art should be taught by people who make their living as artists. All the arts are based in fine art, as a result, we teach the classics—figure drawing, painting, etching, watercolor, sculpture, carving, bronze casting, and metal arts. Even though the areas of architecture, fashion, photography and illustration are part of the modern world, we teach them in the classic manner as well.



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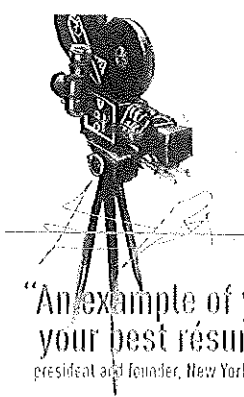
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"An example of your work is your best résumé." Jerry Sherlock, president and founder, New York Film Academy

Pratt is also distinguished by its sheer size. It enrolls about 4,600 undergraduates and graduate students, and with 900 faculty members at their disposal, Pratt students are never at a loss for expertise. "Part of the Pratt culture is that our faculty linger," said Thomas Schutte, president of the school. "They don't simply disappear when they're done teaching."

Schutte noted the success of a relatively new undergraduate major in

creative writing. Now in its fifth year, this highly competitive program embeds creative writing in a visual arts context, producing graduates who find happy homes in advertising and other artistic industries.

The film network

Of course, no art form is more visual than film, the *raison d'être* of the New York Film Academy. The academy occupies the historic Tammany Hall building in

Manhattan and features campus locations across the country and in Europe. Only 14 years old, it's already the world's largest independent film school.

"All we do is filmmaking," said Jerry Sherlock, president and founder of the academy, "so we can devote our resources to instruction in film production and acting."

To ensure close interaction between students and instructors, the academy limits class size; there are no large lectures here. What's more, students are encouraged to meet faculty for one-on-one consultations on their work.

The academy's curriculum features workshops lasting anywhere from a month to a year, though typically they run four or eight weeks. Designed for students with little or no related experience, workshops concentrate on the elements of visual storytelling. The goal is for students to write, direct and edit their own films, and then to screen them and engage in constructive discussions and critiques with peers. "An example of your work is your best résumé," Sherlock said. "That's why people come here — to produce work."

To supplement these workshops, the academy is instituting a master's degree in filmmaking, based in Los Angeles, and will introduce a bachelor's degree program in New York next fall. Graduates of these programs may follow the well-trodden

path to Hollywood blazed by alumni. Others will direct commercials or music videos, seek employment with major studios, or even produce independent films. Whatever they choose, graduates remain mindful of one overriding maxim: The film industry is a tough business with no guarantees.

"We can't teach talent," Sherlock said. "Filmmaking at best is a very difficult profession, but if you do have talent and tenacity, you can rise to the top."

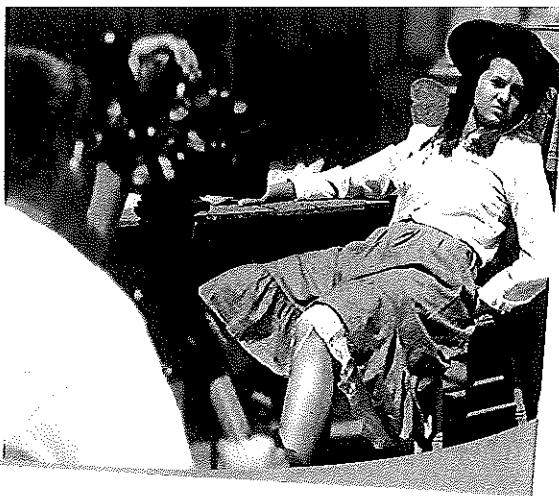
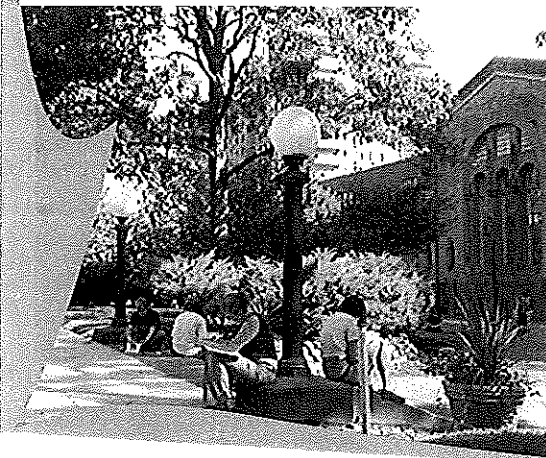
Omar Shakir agrees. The Hawthorne, N.J., native is currently immersed in the year-long filmmaking program and hopes to become a cinematographer or perhaps a director. "The academy teaches you that there's no golden key," he said. "You have to work hard, and it helps to mingle with the right people."

Coast to coast

Those who prefer designing in the sunshine should consider the Ringling School of Art and Design in Sarasota, Fla., which attracts students from 46 states and 33 foreign countries. While

Pratt Institute

New York Film Academy



PRESENT

The Academy of Art University in San Francisco places emphasis on visual literacy, whether it be in commerce, industry, or culture. Visual language is the conveyor belt that moves information in our world today. We teach this in the disciplines of graphic design, advertising, computer arts & new media, animation & visual effects, illustration, photography, motion pictures & television, and interior architecture & design. Whether it's a website, brand identification, or special effects for a film, we teach what's needed today.



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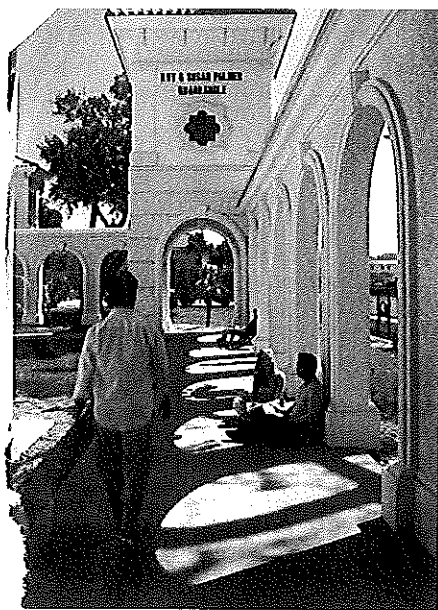
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Ringling School of Art and Design



Academy of Art University

not on the beach, they're pursuing B.F.A.'s in computer animation, fine arts, graphic and interactive communication, illustration, interior design, and photography and digital imaging.

As the name implies, the school was founded by the circus impresario John Ringling, a noted art collector. Now, 75 years later, the school boasts 69 buildings and is constructing a five-story, 80,000-square-foot facility that will commingle classroom space with a dance studio, fitness center and student union. It'll also house career services, providing pleasant surroundings when representatives from DreamWorks, Sony Pictures and Disney come calling.

"If you're serious about what you want to do, they'll give you the tools you need to succeed."

— Guillermo Careaga, senior, Academy of Art University.

Ringling emphasizes the pursuit of artistic study within a liberal arts framework. "This school stresses a balance of art training with an academic backbone and career mindedness," said Christine Meeker Lange, director of marketing and communication. "We also blend the traditional with new and emerging technologies. As a result, people learn a new visual language."

Guillermo Careaga came all the way from Paraguay to learn this language. The senior will soon complete his degree in computer animation, and hopes to work on feature films before returning home to teach. "Ringling has exceeded all my expectations," he said. "Here you are in a community of creative, hard-working people who are always pushing themselves to be better."

Mariana Escabi Vidal also left South America — Colombia, to be exact — to pursue an arts education, though her journey took her to the West Coast. Vidal enrolled in an M.F.A. program at Academy of Art University in San Francisco, where she studied fashion and textile design. Signature programs such as fashion, acting for television and film, and automotive design are nationally and even internationally renowned. "People at the academy expect a lot from you," said Vidal, who now works for a famous fashion designer in New York City. "If you're serious about what you want to do and are willing to work really hard, they'll give you all the tools you need to succeed."

Fellow graduates have pursued careers as illustrators, editors, designers, painters,

printers, photographers or animators. Many have taken jobs with nearby studios such as Disney and Pixar.

Academy students, it seems, are in high demand.

"Visual literacy is the language of business and culture," said academy president Elisa Stephens. "A student leaving this school will be well-versed in any form of visual language."

Simon Ungless speaks the visual language of fashion. Ungless is director of graduate fashion in the academy's School of Fashion, which features programs in merchandising, textiles and knitwear, among other concentrations. "Many students come in thinking they know what fashion is," Ungless said,

"but they quickly learn it's more than just looking at a magazine." Ungless and his colleagues are busy creating new programs in response to student and industry demand. It's all about staying on that cutting edge.

"Many aspects of these disciplines literally change weekly or monthly," Stephens said. "This

is knowledge that cannot be learned in an outdated curriculum or a book printed 10 years ago."

Forty-five minutes to the north, high school juniors and seniors are busy prepping for the rigors of artistic work they'll face in college. Each fall and spring, 48 students from around the country gather at the Oxbow School in Napa, Calif., to study visual arts for 16 weeks. Founded in 1997, Oxbow offers instruction in painting, sculpture, printmaking, photography and digital media — all grounded in disciplines such as English, history and science.

Oxbow students earn a semester's worth of academic credit and position themselves for admission to top colleges.

"We give students critical thinking skills," said Stephen Thomas, the school's director. "They learn to gather information and use it in a creative way. They also gain a conceptual awareness of art-making and find their own voice or eye."

Experiment, create, express. Discover potential and develop talent. Then translate these skills into a career. Students at America's best art and design schools live this credo. Care to join them? □

Illustration: Janet Hamlin

FUTURE

We don't know what the future is, but when we find out, (and we will) we will teach it. Since 1929 the Academy of Art University in San Francisco has always been on the forefront of culture and technology. Teachers who are professional working artists help keep us in the lead rather than following. We were the first art school in the country to fully embrace computer technology, web design, and the digital arts. Our School of Industrial Design is creating automobiles, products, furniture and toys today that will become the classics of tomorrow.



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