



The Florence Academy of Art

Student Handbook



elcome to The Florence Academy of Art for the training of the
realist painter and sculptor



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The Florence Academy of Art was founded in 1990 by Daniel Graves to train students and to provide the highest possible level of instruction in classical drawing, painting and sculpture. We aim for our students to acquire the technical skills needed to develop a visual language, and, ultimately, create a work that is both personal and universally relevant. Our curriculum is based on the major Realist ateliers of 19th century Paris, best exemplified by the systematic training offered by the French Academies. Our philosophy, which underlies the Academy's curriculum and method of instruction, demands skill based discipline, a consideration for canons of beauty, and the direct study of nature and the Old Masters as the foundation for great painting and sculpture.

Mission Statement

To provide the highest level of instruction in classical methods of drawing, painting and sculpture for students wishing to pursue careers as professional artists in the Realist tradition.

Philosophy

The Florence Academy of Art is a small and dynamic center dedicated to the training of young artists through the combination of intense observation with advanced craft skills. The curriculum derives from the classical-realist tradition rooted in the 19th century (most particularly exemplified by the French Academies in the teaching of master painters like Gérôme, Bonnat and Carlos Duran) but also addresses the creative and professional position of the artist in a contemporary environment.

It is the view of this Academy that throughout the 20th century prominent movements of art have steadily drawn attention (and teaching) away from close observation of the material world and the acquisition of strong technical skills, to a position where cohesive artistic thought is inexorably fragmented by the urge towards greater individual expression.

The Academy therefore provides students with the opportunity to explore distinctive aspects of their chosen subject through the development of considerable powers of draftsmanship, direct study of works of the Old Masters and a deep, practical understanding of the materials and methods of the artist. By this means, and through the resulting identification of clear artistic objectives, students acquire creative self-confidence, visual understanding and subtle and precise powers of description.

Study at the Academy centers upon the importance of drawing (particularly drawing from the human figure) as a means to gaining skill in painting or sculpture. Through intense observation students acquire a visual literacy that enables them to interpret humanist values in their work, and, ultimately, create a work of universal relevance.

The program, like that of the French Academies, is based upon systematic progression through the classical disciplines, interpreting the basic elements of composition, form, color harmony and expression. Advancement to each level of study is dependent upon successful completion of the previous level. In this way, the program is carefully matched to each individual and not imposed in a 'study group' context.

Goals

In summary, the Academy aims to train artists to:

- draw to a very high standard
- execute works in painting or sculpture to high levels of professional craftsmanship
- acquire a deep understanding of the works and methods of the Old Masters
- acquire a sound awareness of commercial practices in Fine Art

The Florence Academy of Art continues a tradition of artistic training that descends from Renaissance ateliers, such as our namesake, the Florentine, *Accademia del Disegno*, founded by Vasari in 1563. The atelier method can be traced through the lineages of the greatest masters of Western European art: Leonardo studied in the atelier (or *bottega*) of Verrocchio, Van Dyck with Rubens, and Sargent with Carlos-Duran.

The atelier method was based on a clear progression of art training under the supervision of the master artist. In the 16th century, the young students began by copying master drawings, grinding pigments and preparing canvases. They progressed to drawing antique sculptures then to portraiture, still life, and drapery studies. Finally, they arrived at the core of the training: study of the human figure from life in north daylight, either painted in oil or modeled with clay. Advanced students continued to assist the master with his works until they set up their own ateliers.

The great national Academies of the 17th, 18th and 19th century in Europe evolved from this tradition. In addition to important practical training, the academies added anatomy, perspective, composition, art history, and humanities. The name “academy” was chosen because of its association with Plato’s philosophy. As Leonardo’s Notebooks show, Renaissance artists aspired to be seen as intellectuals as well as craftsmen; they wanted painting and sculpture to take their rightful place within the liberal arts next to poetry, music, mathematics and philosophy. Alberti and Vasari in Florence, the Caracci brothers in Bologna, Zuccaro in Rome, and later the founders of the renowned L’Ecole Des Beaux-Arts in Paris all shared a belief in this humanistic art training. The definitive theory and practice is presented in Joshua Reynolds’s Discourses before the Royal Academy, London in 1769.

However, in the 20th century this tradition very nearly died out. Modernism, two world wars, and massive changes in technology and communication changed the landscape of art education. The formulaic passage of artistic knowledge from generation to generation that had previously formed the foundation of Western art was abandoned, leaving few artists to teach these principles in their private studios. As we begin the 21st century, The Florence Academy of Art is at the center of the recovery of this classical artistic training. Our students follow a curriculum similar to the ateliers and academies described above.

While the curriculum of the The Florence Academy of Art is rooted in classical tradition, we make art for the contemporary world. In this globalized and fast-paced time, many people are returning to the authenticity of fine craftsmanship: slow food, handmade furniture, bespoke clothing, traditional dance and martial arts, and of course, music where academies like Julliard and Curtis Institute continue the classical tradition. Similarly, The Florence Academy of Art seeks to carry forward the best of the Western art tradition with an emphasis on craftsmanship and a humanist perspective.

Subscribing to Policies

The Florence Academy of Art endeavors to provide an educational environment conducive to encouraging the artistic talents of each student. This requires that all students respect the policies of the Academy, its instructors, and the other students in the program.

By enrolling in the Academy, students agree to subscribe to these policies.

General Provision

Students, faculty and other staff, as well as visitors and guests on school property, are prohibited from engaging in, among other things, any action or situation, which recklessly or intentionally endangers mental or physical health or involves the consumption of drugs or abuse of alcohol. Students may not bring drugs or alcohol onto school property. The penalties for violations will include the ejection of the violator from school property and in the case of a student, staff or faculty violator, his or her suspension or expulsion.

Studio Conduct

1. The studio is open from 8:00 am - 9:00 pm. No student is allowed in the building after 9:00 pm. The night security guard walks through the studio and will alert the Director and /or police if any person is found on the premises.
2. Each morning, set up takes place between 8:30 - 8:55 am. Students are expected to keep quiet from 8:55 to 9:00, and begin working at 9:00. If you arrive after 8:55, you must wait until the first break to enter the studio. You may set up in the model room only during the breaks. If you arrive late, and your easel is occupied, the instructor may assign you to another easel for that morning if available. The same policy applies to the afternoon session: set up takes place before 12:55; students are expected to be quiet from 12:55 -1:00, and begin working at 1:00. If you arrive after 12:55, you must wait until the break to enter the studio. Instructors are not required to give you a critique if you arrive after the first break.
3. If you need help, please see the instructor or assistant instructor of the day (consult your class schedule). All decisions, instructional and disciplinary, are made by the instructor of the day.
4. Please wait until break to walk through the model area. No photography or filming of nude or clothed models is allowed at any time. No filming during final critique is allowed.
5. Please keep noise and talking down during class time, including afternoon sessions from 5:00-7:00 pm. Also, although the model finishes at 4:00 pm, some students are still working, so please keep noise and disruptive activities to a minimum.
6. Please leave all public areas clean and free of trash; clean and dry sinks after washing brushes, keep grinding table and areas designated to the preparation of materials clean. Wipe off excess oil from brushes with paper towels before washing; throw glue, gesso and other hard materials in garbage cans. **DO NOT WASH OIL, GESSO OR GLUE DOWN THE DRAINS.**
7. Please leave easels clean for the next person. Sharpen your charcoal over the garbage cans.
8. When not in use, hazardous materials must be stored in containers and clearly marked describing their contents. Unmarked containers will be discarded. Paints and other hazardous materials may be stored in the appropriate refrigerators for non-food items. All hazardous waste must be stored in a sealed container and left in the designated spot in the grinding room or studio for pick up and disposal by Academy staff.

9. Students are entitled to studio space at the Academy. Drawing and painting students have a place in a studio cubicle equipped with an easel and stand. Sculpture students have open studio space. None of the school's instructional furniture (easels, drawing tables, stools, modeling stands, etc.) may be taken out of the studios. Students must sign out casts and Bague drawings, and handle these with care. Any person causing damage to the casts or other school property will be held financially and legally responsible.
10. Please keep your assigned studio space clean, and clear of trash and clutter. Students may not set up additional lights or heaters without permission from the office.
11. Do not set anything on top of electric heaters (particularly any flammable substances); keep electrical heaters facing away from model cloths.
12. Throw away painting rags and towels in the metal garbage can and replace lid.
13. No smoking is allowed inside the studio.
14. No cell phone use inside the studio. Use of personal computers allowed between 12:00-1:00 pm and after 4:00 pm only.
15. Bicycles must be parked in the bike racks available in the student courtyard.
16. If you remain in the studio after regular class hours, when administrative or academic staff are not available, you do so at your own risk.
17. Please make sure the studio doors and gate doors are securely shut when you leave the studio.
18. The last person to leave the studio at night should turn off all heaters, spotlights and lights.
19. First aid boxes are located by each studio bathroom.
20. The Academy does not assume responsibility for the loss or damage of personal belongings, artwork or material left anywhere in the studios. Please use lockers provided. Material, artwork and other personal property left in the school by students after end of the year will be disposed.
21. All items of importance to students are posted on the bulletin boards or the doors to the studios. Such postings constitute due notice for official purposes. Students are strongly advised to check these areas periodically, and to ask the office staff for clarification.
22. The Academy reserves the right to use photographs of students and student artwork for publicity purposes.

Medical Issues

The program of study requires long hours standing and periods of intense concentration. If you have a medical condition that may adversely affect your attendance or ability to concentrate, please inform the Registrar, Office Manager of your location or Program Director.

Conduct in the Studio

Student misconduct is defined as disruptive behavior or instigation of disruption of a class or other school activity, creating public annoyance or alarm, or unreasonable noise; tampering with, misusing or vandalizing fire safety equipment or security systems or devices; willful defacing, damaging or destroying of school property or of another's property; unauthorized removal, theft or mutilation of instructional materials; unauthorized entry, unauthorized use of keys to schoolrooms and facilities, unauthorized presence in offices or spaces at times when such presence is prohibited; unauthorized or fraudulent use of services or facilities (such as computers, telephone,

etc.)

Misconduct is subject to review by Academic Director Daniel Graves, and selected members of the teaching and administrative staff. Final disciplinary decisions are made by Daniel Graves. A complete description of the policies and procedures governing student disciplinary action is available in the Registrar's office. Please familiarize yourself with these policies.

Possible penalties for misconduct include: **reprimand**; a verbal or written notice indicating that a recurrence of the misconduct may result in further penalties; **probation**, indicating the student is in official jeopardy and the commission of a serious offense during this period will normally result in suspension or expulsion; **suspension**, a suspended student forfeits all privileges of enrollment and may be required to petition for readmission; **expulsion**, permanent separation from the Academy.

In cases where there has been damage or loss to the school or an individual the student may be required to repair or replace the damage or loss caused. Failure to do so may result in, among other things, the denial of graduation or further enrollment.

In cases where the student shows obvious signs of mental distress in the studio, for example, alcohol on breath or frequent absences, instructors will inform the program director immediately. If the student's behavior in the studio is immediately serious: obvious signs of depression, emotional instability, frequent and prolonged absences (one week or more) and/or performs actions that put him or other students in harm's way, the program director will inform Daniel Graves immediately. Daniel will meet with the student to assess what future action should be taken. This could include: giving the student a second chance to get control of the situation, letting the student go immediately, or calling the student's emergency contact.

If a student must be absent from class for more than two days for whatever reason, he must inform the office via email. If a student goes missing, that is, is absent for more than two weeks, Daniel will try to make contact. If this is not possible, they will inform his emergency contact.

The Academic Director may impose an emergency suspension when in his or her judgment, such action appears necessary (a) for reasons relating to a student's physical or emotional safety and well-being or the safety and well-being of a member of the Academy or its property; or (b) to deal with a continuing disturbance or a forcible interference by students with any Academy activity.

Students have the right to meet with the Academic Director after receiving a reprimand to address the grounds for probation, suspension and/or expulsion. Upon expulsion the student will not be entitled to a refund of tuition or fees already paid, and will turn in keys and vacate the premises immediately.

Students may appeal a judgment in writing to the Registrar or Office Manager within one week. At that time, a committee will be formed composed of one principal instructor, one student assistant and the Registrar who the student may turn to for support. It will review the action and make a recommendation to the Academic Director for a final decision.

Grievance Issues

If you have a problem that is personal, cultural, medical or logistic, you should speak to the Registrar or Office Manager who is responsible for services to students, and will give you appropriate direction if necessary to obtain support from professionals in specialized fields that fall outside of the Academy's educational program.

If you have a problem that is academic in nature, or if you are experiencing a problem in the studio, please speak to your Program Director. He or she may help you, and may inform the Academic Director.

All matters will be handled with the utmost respect for your privacy and well-being.

Non-Discrimination Policy

The Florence Academy of Art is committed to a policy of non-discrimination on the basis of race, color, ancestry, religious creed, national origin, handicap, disability, medical condition, sex, age, sexual orientation, or marital status in its admissions, educational programs, activities, and employment.

ADVANCEMENT

Attendance

Attendance is fundamental to a student's progress, and ultimately, performance, and is obligatory. Students should also arrive to begin working on time. Poor attendance will impact your final assessment during the End of Term Critique.

Assessment: End of Term Critique

At the end of term each student receives an individual and personalized critique conducted by the course instructors, in which they are graded on a scale of one to three in five areas (attendance, attitude, effort, progress, and performance), and awarded a pass/fail grade for the trimester. The Academy thus monitors the student's progress through the curriculum's established set of exercises. Students who perform adequately through their first two trimesters are guaranteed completion of their first year of study. A student's promotion to the second year of the program is determined by the instructors only after the final critique of the third trimester. Students must attend the end of trimester critique at the end of each term. Failure to attend a scheduled critique once will be grounds for probation. The student will receive a written warning after the first failure to attend a scheduled critique. Failure to attend a scheduled critique twice will be grounds for dismissal.

Studio Advancement: Pecking Order

Groups of first time applicants/new students enter the pecking order in alphabetical order; if a new student has had prior training in a classical atelier, he enters the program at a higher level in the pecking order than the other beginners. If, during the course of a student's study, he must be absent for one or more trimesters for financial reasons, and returns to the program, he returns to the pecking order at his original position. If a student becomes an instructor he or she is first in the order. Alumni returning to the program are given positions just below instructors.

The pecking order is influenced by two variables:

1. when you enter the program
2. how quickly you advance through the curriculum

For example, two students who begin at the same time can advance through the curriculum at different rates, resulting in one person ready to paint before the other. That person moves to a higher position in the pecking order. Advancement of students can also occur as a result of instructor evaluations at the end of term critique. Students should be prepared for adjustments to the pecking order each new trimester.

With regard to studio spaces, when a space becomes free because a student leaves, the next person below him/her in the pecking order is given first choice to occupy the space, and so on until a new person is moved in. If two students occupy the same place in the pecking order, first choice is given to the student ready to move to a higher position.

Guidelines for Exchanges and Transfers between Florence, Mölndal and Jersey City

If you are interested in experiencing life in the other studio, you may do so for a single trimester or year, or transfer permanently. In the case of the permanent transfer the student gives up his spot in one studio to enroll in the other. In the case of an exchange, students at the same level in the

curriculum exchange places for a specific period of time. Please contact your home office for more information.

Graduation Policy

Students who complete successfully all required exercises as listed in the three-year Drawing and Painting curricula receive a Certificate in Painting, and in the three-year Sculpture curriculum receive a Certificate in Sculpture.

Students require a minimum of three years to finish the assigned projects but may require more time. The diploma is conferred when all required projects are completed.

Graduation Policy for Transfer Students

Students from atelier style schools similar to The Florence Academy of Art who are admitted to the intermediate or advanced sections of the Drawing and Painting curriculum must spend enough time in our program to absorb the principles, methods and ideology espoused by The Florence Academy of Art. These students must produce a successfully completed cast in charcoal and white chalk as their first assignment upon entry, and complete all remaining projects.

Students who enroll in Sculpture are not admitted to the intermediate or advanced sections of that program, and are required to complete the full three-year curriculum in order to graduate.

End of Year Graduation and Awards Ceremony

The End of Year Ceremony is held in June to celebrate a year of achievements: graduating students receive certificates of completion designed from a 19th century Russian ruble note. The next academic year's teaching staff is formally announced, as are recipients of work-study funds and private scholarships. Prizes are awarded to the best drawings, paintings and sculptures of the year, as well as to the best students in the Anatomy and Ecorché Sculpture courses. Highlights of last year's ceremony, including pictures with new graduates and prize winners, are available for view on the Academy's website, (Select FAA Locations, and click on Awards.)

Alumni Association

Upon graduation, all of you are considered part of the Alumni Association and will be invited to participate in future events and exhibitions. We will keep you updated with the opportunities that come to our attention: group exhibitions, international competitions, and artist residencies. We will also offer you an individual page in the Alumni Gallery on the Florence Academy website that features your art work and contact information (email, website and/or social media addresses.)

GRADING

Grading is based on points. Instructors will award up to 3 points in five categories (attendance, attitude, effort, progress, performance.) Students must total 10.5 or above to pass.

We are not, however, grading art. Art cannot be graded. We are grading your performance based on the expectations we have for students at your same level. Grading at The Florence Academy of Art is meant to be a positive experience, where your instructors identify your strengths, and set a path for you to improve where you are weak. Our experience has shown us that if a student attends regularly, works hard, and keeps a good attitude, he is likely to make progress that will positively affect performance.

Contribute to your own development by listening to your teachers in a sincere way. They understand what you are doing or how you should be doing it better than anyone,

Grading Scale	Letter Grade	Descriptive Evaluation	Percentage	GPA
15	A+	Excellent	100%	4.0
14.75	A			4.0
14.5	A	Excellent	97%	4.0
14.25	A			4.0
14	A	Excellent	93%	4.0
13.75	A-			3.7
13.5	A-	Very Good	90%	3.7
13.25	B+			3.3
13	B+	Very Good	87%	3.3
12.75	B			3.0
12.5	B	Good	83%	3.0
12.25	B			3.0
12	B	Good	80%	3.0
11.75	B-			2.7
11.5	B-	Needs work	77%	2.7
11.25	C+			2.3
11	C+	Needs work	73%	2.3
10.75	C			2.0
10.5	C	Barely passing	70%	2.0
10.25	C-			1.7
10	C-	Probation	67%	1.7
Below 10	F	Unacceptable	0	0

GRADING CRITERIA

14-15 points: Excellent

Student clearly demonstrates an outstanding grasp of concepts, procedures, and techniques. Attendance, effort and attitude are exemplary. The outcome of his or her projects shows technical skill and creativity, and few errors.

12-13.5 points: Good

Student demonstrates a good understanding of concepts, procedures, and techniques. May need to improve in attendance, effort or attitude, but generally projects show technical skill and creativity, and few errors.

11-11.5 points: Needs work

Students must improve in attendance, effort or attitude in order to make progress. Projects reflect some skill and a general understanding of concepts, but also show minor errors. Student must spend more time and focus on developing skill base.

10-10.5 points: Barely passing

Student's attendance is poor, reflecting little effort and poor attitude. All projects need substantial work. The majority may be incomplete, and show only a basic understanding of the ideas presented, with numerous errors. The student has not spent enough time or attention learning basic concepts.

Below 10: Probation/Failing

Student has not fulfilled the minimum requirements. All assigned exercises are incomplete. Little if any time or care has been given to learning the basic concepts. (Probation means students must obtain a score of 10 or more at their next end of term critique to be able to continue their studies in their program.)

COURSE GRADING REQUIREMENTS

Attendance is very important. Regular absences will impede your progress, potentially delay completing the curriculum on time, and impact your final evaluation negatively.

You should inform the office if you will be absent for more than one day due to sickness or unforeseen emergencies.

Arrive to class on time. Punctuality shows common courtesy to your instructor and fellow students. Chronic lateness, or, leaving class early will result in a lower final grade.

Come to class with all necessary materials, fully prepared to work throughout the entire class.

An outstanding work ethic and positive attitude are essential for a good grade. Give attention to the craftsmanship and presentation of your projects. You must care about the quality of your work.

Students are graded on individual progress in the following areas: attendance, effort, attitude, progress and performance.

You must attend your final critique. Failure to attend a scheduled critique once is grounds for probation. You will receive a written warning from the Director of your program after the first failure to attend a scheduled critique. Failure to attend a scheduled critique twice is grounds for dismissal.

Your grade is greatly influenced by:

- Attendance and punctuality
- Effort, motivation
- Improvement, progress
- A positive attitude in the studio and helpfulness to your peers

On the following pages are the assessment sheets used for the End of Term Critique. Please ask your Program Directors if you have any questions about grading at The Florence Academy of Art.

CREDITS

Students may earn academic credit for course work done at The Florence Academy of Art. We operate on a quarter system. Units correspond to *quarter hours*. One quarter hour of credit represents 22 hours of class instruction each week. You are awarded credit when you successfully complete a course, that is, only when curricular, competency, and all other requirements are met, and the Final Term Critique is passed.

The Florence Academy of Art does not accept transfer of credit from other institutions.

For tuition fees and payment deadlines, and all policies pertaining to these, please see the website, specifically the page “Admissions & Aid”.

You will receive an invoice in a timely fashion in order to pay your fees, approximately one month before the beginning of each term. Should there be an increase in the next year's fees, we will advise you of this at least one month before you are required to confirm your attendance and two months before invoices are issued.

With regard to payment, if your tuition is late, you, or the person paying your bill, will be notified at the billing address provided, and the payment period will be extended by five days. If payment is subsequently not received, you will be advised and we shall be forced to replace your position on the program with a new student.

DEPOSIT

A non-refundable deposit in the amount of \$ 1,000.00 is due June 15 for returning students. This deposit will be deducted from the Fall tuition fee.

REFUNDS

Students may request refunds in their first trimester of study of their first year of study, within the first week of the trimester. Any period of absence during the term, whatever the motive or duration, will not be refunded.

Student Financial Assistance

The Academy is committed to helping deserving students in financial need complete their full program of study through work-study and merit-based financial assistance. Through donations and fundraising, we are able to offer limited financial assistance to second and third year students. Although we do our best to help as many students in financial need as possible, it may not be possible to help everyone.

There are currently 30 work-study positions, including: teaching assistant, studio cleaning, library staff, and Friday lecture assistant. These provide the most financial help. There are also a limited number of merit-based awards. Both types of awards provide only partial tuition scholarships. The awards rarely cover tuition in full, so you must be prepared to cover the majority of your fees.

How is financial aid awarded at The Florence Academy of Art: each spring, in April, students are invited to sign up via email for financial aid for the following year.

With so many instructors over the course of a year or two, we understand that you may have gotten to know certain faculty or staff better than others. For this reason, we make sure to involve all teachers and staff in the decisions regarding financial aid awards. For each student on the list, we discuss his or her level of a dedication to their studies, overall performance, attitude in the studio, and willingness to contribute to the Florence Academy community in a positive way. We are also concerned to allocate the right amount of aid to each individual, so this year we ask you to provide the following information:

- 1) Name, phone number and email address of the person responsible for paying your fees; if you are solely responsible, please indicate that?
- 2) Do you work at jobs outside of school during the academic year or during the summer? Please describe.
- 3) Would you be unlikely to return next year without financial assistance?

ADMINISTRATION

Daniel Graves, Founder and Director

Susan Tintori, Executive Director

Andreas Birath, Academic Director, Sweden

Jordan Sokol, Academic Director, US

Rosemary Galli, Registrar & Summer Director, Florence

Suzy Fiddy, Finance and Administrative Manager, Florence

Michael DeVore, Administrative Manager, Sweden

Genevieve Outwater, Office Manager, US

Sara Rinaldi, Administrative Assistant, Florence

Lorenzo Sbisà, Model Coordinator, Florence