

Why Major in Art History?

The art history major at Villanova is an interdisciplinary program that exposes students to works of art and other visual productions, both past and present, and helps to prepare students for rewarding careers.

The study of art history fosters an understanding of how art communicates to viewers. Art History faculty members are dedicated to creating a stimulating academic experience, and to helping our students prepare for future challenges. Art history courses at Villanova contain a strong theoretical component that emphasizes the philosophical, social, political and economic contexts that shaped the production of art in different times and places. The major also provides opportunities for travel and study abroad, and fosters cross-cultural understanding.



A graduate who has obtained the necessary skills to become a sophisticated viewer of visual culture will have a distinct advantage in today's world, where the relentless proliferation of images (from art to advertising, and from film to fashion) has an ever-increasing influence on our cultural, economic, and social lives. By learning how to read and assess images through analysis and interpretation, students will leave Villanova as discerning members of contemporary society. In the process, they will have learned skills such as research, writing, presentation, and critical thinking, skills that will serve them well wherever they may go later in life.

Art history provides students with career opportunities in a wide range of fields and occupations connected to art, including journalism, law, education, and exhibition design. Careers available to art history majors also include: museum curator, professor of art history, gallery director, appraiser, auctioneer, conservationist or restoration expert, librarian, archivist, and art critic. Our graduates have gone on to work in auction houses such as Sotheby's and Christie's; to work as writers or editors for such publications as Arts Magazine; to continue their art historical studies in graduate programs of repute; and to work for museums such as the Renwick Gallery, the Metropolitan Museum of Art, and the Pennsylvania Academy of Fine arts, the Seattle Art Museum, and the Bowers Museum. Other graduates have gone on to teach at the Community College of Philadelphia and at Kutztown University.