

# **CHINA ACADEMY OF ART: INTERNATIONAL MASTER OF FINE ARTS PROGRAM IN CONTEMPORARY ART**

## **INTRODUCTION**

The International MFA (IMFA) program at China Academy of Art has been developed in response to the rapidly increasing globalization of the art world. In the past two decades, the world has seen the rapid expansion of art and ideas beyond old boundaries and obsolete cultural constructs. Today, artists from throughout the world – particularly China – are emerging as the seminal artists of their times. Throughout the 20<sup>th</sup> Century the world's most famous and most highly valued artists have been almost exclusively from Europe and America. In the past 15 years, the East Asian (China, Korea and Japan) art scene has exploded with numerous new major museums of both traditional and contemporary art being built throughout China. The de-decentralization of the art world has already taken place. The advent of digital venues for the dissemination and discussion of new art has also eliminated the nexus between art and nationality. The ascendancy of non-European art and artists has profoundly altered the ways in which young and emerging artists throughout the world must be educated.

The mission of International Master of Fine Arts program (IMFA) at China Academy of Art (CAA) is to introduce the world's most promising young artists to a new world of contemporary art – an art world in which the creative and expressive practices from around the world join together to create art that is as vital and innovative as the contemporary world itself. Faculty and students from around the world bring a new vision to this innovative program.

The IMFA curriculum explores the newly emerging paradigms of relationality, multiculturalism, social practice and extended media that define the world's most exciting contemporary art. Science, economics and technology are also examined in the curriculum as integral to contemporary concepts of art and culture.



*photo: Mahesh Singh.*



The core of our curriculum is the relationship between international students and faculty – the community who *comprise* the IMFA program. We form an active and vital community of artists dedicated to a new vision of world art. The IMFA takes maximum advantage of the re-location of its students into a new cultural identity which explores the realities of life in a world where they suddenly become ‘the

other’. It provides a situation where new forms of communication and exchange re-create identity and the concept of cultural relevance and creativity. Deep interpersonal relationships and increased cultural awareness form a nucleus for robust exploration of important new ideas. The spectacle of culture itself becomes the foundation for innovation and creative life. From that core experience, new ideas about culture and meaning fuel the creative furnace that forges radical new concepts and extensions of ancient traditions into present-day artistic practices. Required courses in Chinese language and culture extend IMFA students’ understanding of new cultural ideas, but also enable first-hand dialogue with Chinese artists as well as CAA faculty and staff. IMFA students demonstrate proficiency in Chinese language by passing the Chinese national HSK3 examination prior to graduation.

### **GENERAL INFORMATION**

The China Academy of Art is one of China’s oldest and most prestigious art colleges. CAA has three campuses – one in Shanghai, and the two main campuses in Hangzhou. All campuses include state of the art facilities – studios, digital access, libraries, museums and galleries as well as comfortable and well appointed student housing. The combined enrollment of CAA campuses is currently around 12,000 including graduate and undergraduate students from all over China, and around the world. The main CAA campuses (Nan Shan and Xiang Shan) are located in Hangzhou, often cited as China’s most beautiful city – famous for art, tea and silk. Hangzhou is located approximately 125 kilometers southwest of Shanghai, putting CAA in easy reach of Shanghai’s world class cultural and technological institutions. Graduates of the China Academy of Art are among China’s leading artists and are currently very active internationally. The China Academy of Art is an affiliate of the US centered Alliance of Independent Colleges of Art and Design (AICAD).

## FACILITIES

IMFA students have access to well equipped studio spaces supporting students' art work in virtually every studio discipline. Lecture, studio and discussion spaces are available 24 hours a day, seven days a week. Students are assigned to individual studio work areas located in the International College at the Xiang Shan campus.



## COMPLETING THE IMFA PROGRAM

The IMFA is a three-year residential program. There are no part-time or limited residency students. At the conclusion of the first year, students' portfolios are expected to show a focused body of advanced art work that demonstrates skill, creativity and conceptual ability. In order to move forward in the IMFA program, portfolios must reflect a technically and conceptually sophisticated body of work that reflects the intensive experimentation, innovation and personal commitment needed to develop a cohesive and relevant body of artwork. In the first year students are encouraged to experiment with new and innovative approaches to art-making working across disciplines and cultural perspectives. New philosophical and conceptual perspectives are introduced and integrated into each student's artistic development. Students receive comprehensive reviews and critiques at the end of each semester. After the first year, each student is reviewed and evaluated by the faculty to determine their suitability for further study – **advancement to candidacy**.



In the second year, each student selects a **Master Tutor** who works with them closely through the final two years of the IMFA. These years are spent honing and resolving their artwork until it represents a truly innovative and professionally accomplished body of work. During this time, students also work with their Master Tutor to develop and

write their Master's Thesis which requires extensive academic research pertaining to the students' philosophical, historical and technical areas of artistic work. The **Master's Thesis** contextualizes the artist's oeuvre within a cross-cultural and international context. At the end of the second year of study, each IMFA student formally presents a detailed proposal for their thesis topic. The proposal is reviewed and approved by a faculty committee who ensure each proposal indicates preparedness for developing both the scholarly and creative elements of their work in the final year in the IMFA program. Students are awarded the Master of Fine Arts Degree from China Academy of Art, upon the successful completion of all required courses and presentation of final artwork and written thesis. Academic records are maintained in Chinese and English.

## LANGUAGE

All classes required for IMFA students, are conducted in English or are simultaneously translated into English by CAA's professional translation staff. No prior knowledge of Chinese language is required for admission. Fluency in English is required for all entering IMFA students regardless of national origin. All applicants from non-English speaking countries must submit results from either TOEFL (Test of English as a Foreign Language) or IELTS (International English Language Testing System). Since proficiency in English is a prerequisite for acceptance, applicants must attain an acceptable score on either test; IMFA requires a minimum result of 90 on the TOEFL or 6.5 on IELTS.



Chinese Art & Culture class



CAA Alumnus: Qiu Zhijie



Xiang Shan Campus – architecture by Prof. Huang Xu

## LIVING AT CHINA ACADEMY OF ART

The dormitory facilities at CAA are clean and modern. Students receive semi-private accommodation with shared bathroom facilities. Students in the IMFA live in the foreign student dorm but share dining facilities with all CAA students – graduate and undergraduate. Food is generally traditional Chinese fare. Classes are offered on both the



Nan Shan and Xiang Shan campuses – about 20 km apart. The IMFA program is based on the Xiang Shan campus and student dorms and studios are also located there. CAA Provides regular shuttle busses between the two campuses. Convenient and inexpensive public transportation is also available. There are innumerable private restaurants nearby the Hangzhou campuses representing a variety of ethnic tastes – including a variety of International fast food chains. The Nan Shan campus is located near the beautiful West Lake – surrounded by exquisite parks, gardens and restaurants. It is one of China's premier tourist destinations. The Xiang Shan campus is located on a 200-acre park-like campus with numerous ponds and wooded areas as well as three on-campus museums, and numerous studio facilities for all media.

## HEALTH

The China Academy of Art maintains an on-campus dispensary and there are numerous clinics and hospitals nearby both campuses. All students are required to have medical insurance provided by the Academy at a minimal cost. There are exercise facilities and athletic fields available for student use on both campuses. Numerous state certified practitioners of traditional Chinese Medicine and health special health practices are also available to students nearby at marginal cost.



### **AFTER GRADUATION**

The curriculum of the IMFA is intended to train artists of the highest caliber to participate in the cultural dialectic – the world of international contemporary art. Graduating students are prepared first and foremost to be fully functioning contemporary artists. Alumni will exhibit their artwork internationally, participate in dialogues and discussions through print and internet media, to teach in the world's most advanced and prestigious art colleges. CAA actively assists graduates in the marketing and promotion of their artwork internationally including important connections to galleries, publications and museums. By virtue of their affiliation with one of China's leading art colleges, and their familiarity with Chinese language and cultural history, IMFA graduates have unparalleled access to the Chinese art world. Graduates of the IMFA are qualified to teach in professional art colleges anywhere in the world. The China Academy of Art is fully recognized and accredited by the China Ministry of Education and the Ministry of Culture.

### **ADMISSION**

Admission to the CAA IMFA is selective. Emphasis is placed on applicants' artistic achievement, commitment to cross-cultural exploration, and academic potential. The goal of the admissions process is to bring together extraordinary individuals who will form a powerful environment that both challenges and supports new approaches to art and design.



A selection committee of CAA faculty carefully reviews all applicants to the IMFA and selects those whom they believe are most capable of helping to develop the highest levels of innovation and achievement in the IMFA community. Artists and designers working in any media or genre are invited to apply to the program based on their past experience, current level of artwork and their interest in both the technical and conceptual foundations of international art.

### **TUITION AND SCHOLARSHIPS**

For Fall 2020, ten applicants will be offered a full scholarship (known simply as the Chinese Government Scholarship), offered by the China Ministry of Education. Scholarship recipients receive full tuition and housing at no cost. A living stipend will be paid monthly(3000RMB), directly to the student's Chinese bank account. Scholarships do not include travel to and from China. Applicants from all foreign countries are considered for the Chinese Government Scholarships.

Scholarships may be awarded based on artistic merit and academic achievement of applicants. Each year, a specific number of scholarships are reserved by the Chinese Government for citizens of the United States. Other nations may also be recognized in this manner based on Chinese Government policy and availability of funding. Students are generally responsible for the cost of their own art materials, beyond their living stipend, as well as transportation to and from Hangzhou. Additional scholarships and financial support may be available from a variety of other sources including Zhejiang Provincial Scholarship.

**Annual tuition for full-time study in the IMFA program is RMB 60000 yuan (USD\$8571). Dormitory fee is RMB 500/month, 600/month, or 700/month depending on the type of room students choose. Annual dormitory fee should be paid in full upon the register.**



CAA Alumnus: Zhang Peli

## **CURRICULUM & CALENDAR**

The International MFA is operated through the International College at the China Academy of Art in Hangzhou. Students are admitted from all artistic backgrounds with an emphasis on expanding and enriching studio practice and moving into contemporary genres. The IMFA program requires 72 semester units of degree credit for completion over the course of three academic years. Students are enrolled full-time for two semesters each year: Fall semester from September until mid-January, with a one-week break in October, and Spring Semester which begins in late-February and continues through early July. A detailed schedule of classes and academic calendar is provided to students at the start of each semester. Students work independently in specially assigned individual studios. In the first year, they enroll for **Individual Tutorials** with distinguished working artists from around the world, both regular CAA faculty and a distinguished group of International Advisory Faculty who serve each year as visiting artists for limited periods of time at the Hangzhou Campus and by Internet.

In the second year they select a **Master Tutorial** faculty from among either Chinese or International faculty. This Master Tutorial serves as the focus point for students' work for the next two years on the conceptualization and completion of the **IMFA Thesis**. Students meet individually with their tutors at regular intervals to examine their own artwork in close detail from both a technical and philosophical perspective. These tutorials allow each student to develop their own unique artwork with the guidance and support of a variety of highly experienced faculty from their respective areas of artistic interest.



Artworks created by students are also discussed and strengthened through weekly **Interdisciplinary Studio Seminars** required each semester throughout the IMFA program. These seminars explore the technical, aesthetic and conceptual issues of each student and provide a community of fellow artists who are both supportive and challenging. Students develop critical vocabulary and the ability to respond verbally to each other's artwork. Each Seminar is led by a faculty member – either on site or by Internet 'ZOOM'. Group critiques offer students a diverse and provocative community through which their ideas and images can be fully examined and discussed from a variety of cultural perspectives. Individual Tutorials and Interdisciplinary Critique Seminars are further enhanced through a variety of uniquely designed IMFA courses in **Studio Art Electives**. These courses ranging from one week 'intensives' to full semester classes allow students to explore technical, conceptual historical and philosophical issues in contemporary art as well as their connection to the practical 'hands-on' issues of fabricating objects and spaces which become relevant to contemporary world culture. Resident and Visiting faculty in a broad range of subject areas are available to enhance the academic concepts that form a framework for the creation of relevant and provocative artwork in the contemporary international art world. These special courses may be team-taught by faculty from different academic backgrounds to address the unique issues facing contemporary artists in the world art scene. Studio Elective courses will be supplemented with required courses in **Liberal Arts - Theory and Criticism** – courses which explore the academic issues of art, technology, history, philosophy and sociological theory that are re-defining the art world.

Required courses in **Chinese Language and Culture** offer Chinese language, Studio Art (traditional painting, print and sculpture), Calligraphy, Art History and Cultural Philosophies of China, as well as other topics. All IMFA students are expected to achieve a working knowledge of both written and spoken Chinese language. Students are required to satisfactorily complete the Chinese national HSK3 Examination for Chinese language prior to graduation.

All IMFA courses are taught in English, or in Chinese (or another language) with English translators. Course work will be offered on both the Nan Shan and Xiang Shan campuses in Hangzhou, and through the Internet with faculty from around the world. Courses will take advantage of local resources such as exhibitions, historical site visits, Museum and Gallery tours or other activities connected to the contemporary art worlds in and around Hangzhou as well as extended study in other Chinese cities such as Beijing and Shanghai. These courses often involve assigned reading and writing projects in addition to class lectures and discussions and studio art project

## **IMFA COURSE REQUIREMENTS – DEGREE COMPLETION**

### **YEAR 1**

#### **SEMESTER 1**

Interdisciplinary Studio Seminar

Elective Tutorial

Liberal Arts

Studio Elective (All Studio Disciplines)

Chinese Language and Culture (Chinese Language, History and Traditional Arts)

#### **SEMESTER 2**

Interdisciplinary Studio Seminar

Elective Tutorial

Liberal Arts

Studio Elective

Chinese Language and Culture (Chinese Language, History and Traditional Arts)

**First Year Review**

### **YEAR 2**

#### **SEMESTER 1**

Interdisciplinary Studio Seminar

Master Tutorial– Art and Social Structures

Studio Elective

Chinese Language

#### **SEMESTER 2**

Interdisciplinary Studio Seminar

Master Tutorial

Liberal Arts

Chinese Language & Culture

Studio Elective

IMFA Thesis Proposal

### **YEAR 3**

#### **SEMESTER 1**

Interdisciplinary Studio Seminar

Master Tutorial

Thesis Tutorial

#### **SEMESTER 2**

Interdisciplinary Studio Seminar – Preparation for Final Group Exhibition

Master Tutorial

IMFA Thesis

**Final Review - Graduation**

## COURSE CATEGORIES

**Individual Tutorial (1 unit)** Students work independently in individually assigned studio/work spaces. Faculty tutors visit the student's space either in person or by Zoom, Skype or We-Chat, at least once every two weeks, for a total of eight hours over the semester, to discuss and critique art work completed in the intervening period as well offering insights into the creative process and individual conceptual issues central to the student's artwork. The Tutorial validates the individual work spent in the studio. It is expected that each student spends a minimum of 30 hours each week involved in the creation and dissemination of their own art work. The tutorial ensures that this standard is met. Students normally earn 1 unit each semester for each tutorial. Typically work with two or three tutors is expected each semester.

**Master Tutorial (3-5 units) Comprehensive** individual instruction with a master tutor facilitates the integration of technical, formal and conceptual elements leading to a cohesive professional body of original art work. The Master Tutorial supports the student's studio and academic work and forms the foundation for the summative IMFA Thesis submitted as the capstone experience of the IMFA Program.

**Interdisciplinary Studio Critique Seminar (2 units)** The Studio Critique Seminar is limited to 15 students who meet once a week for 2 hours to review and discuss the artwork completed by seminar participants. Special emphasis is placed upon critical analysis and insight of seminar members for each other's artwork. Students are challenged and encouraged by the Seminar to stretch and strengthen the technical and conceptual elements of their work. The group ensures that IMFA students maintain the highest standards of artistic achievement. In addition to the faculty facilitator, an array of distinguished visiting artists from around the world will be invited in as guest facilitators of the seminar. In addition to discussing their own work they will respond to artwork presented by IMFA students in the seminar.

**Liberal Arts/ History and Theory Electives (1-3 units)** This requirement includes a wide variety of courses taught by visiting faculty, guest artists as well as CAA regular staff. Topics include areas related to art and culture, ranging from art history to contemporary sociological, philosophical and political aspects of contemporary culture. Classes may be taught on campus or on-line. Written assignments and independent research are required.

**Studio Electives (1-3 units)** Students work within existing graduate studio areas – Painting, Sculpture, Ceramics, Metals, Glass, Photography, Video and Inter-media. IMFA students develop advanced individual techniques and gain access to facilities needed to develop their own individual art work. Studio electives allow IMFA students access to studios and technical facilities at CAA. Students are expected to spend a minimum of three hours of studio time for each hour spent with faculty. Studio Electives may include formal classes on the CAA campuses or work done independently with CAA faculty. Access to studio areas is offered only with faculty permission in the intended studio area. Units vary depending on faculty availability.

**Chinese Language and Culture Electives (1-3 units)** variety of topics dealing with Chinese language and traditional culture. Courses such as Chinese art history, beginning to Intermediate courses in Chinese language, and traditional Chinese art practices such as calligraphy, bird and flower or landscape painting are offered. Intensive study of Chinese language is available to all IMFA students but is not required. Students are expected to pass the HSK-3 examination for proficiency in Chinese language prior to graduation.

## HOW TO APPLY

All application material must be submitted on-line. Application forms must be filled out on the CAA Admissions web site. Academic transcripts, statements, recommendations, portfolios and necessary forms may be uploaded to the admissions application site. The Admissions process is two-tiered. The first application package is required for preliminary admission to the IMFA program – The second tier of requirements is required for final admission and consideration for China-US Culture Scholarship, and immigration material. All material must be submitted prior to April 10, 2020.



To apply for 2020 IMFA go to: <http://admission.caa.edu.cn/>

## REQUIREMENTS

### **DEADLINE: April 1, 2020 - FIRST TIER MATERIAL**

- **Completed CAA IMFA Application Form.** Forms should be printed, signed and sent as pdf files. No handwritten application forms will be accepted.
- **Application fee of \$125** – sent directly by bank transfer detailed instructions are on the Financial Remittance form which is part of the CAA admissions packet
- **Statement of Intent** – Three to five pages, written in English, stating the nature of the applicant's artwork (conceptual technical formal and material content) and their interest in the International MFA program in Contemporary Art. Include a discussion of the biographical and educational background that has led you into the field of art and specifically into the IMFA program. (.doc or .docx files – less than 1MB)
- **Portfolio of original artwork** – 12 images – submitted as a single MS PowerPoint (.ppt, or other similar) file with annotation for each image – title, date, medium and dimensions clearly indicated with each slide. Each image (jpeg or tif) used for the portfolio should be less than 500KB – total ppt file is not to exceed 5 MB. If video images are submitted (to [CAAIMFA@caa.edu.cn](mailto:CAAIMFA@caa.edu.cn)), each file should be less than 5 minutes in length and less than 3 MB in size. All submitted art works should have been completed within the prior two years and reflect the student's current artistic interests and achievements. Work submitted may be in any media, style or genre.

- **Copies of all academic transcripts from any post-secondary institution attended** (official stamps and sealed copies from the institution are required prior to final admission and visa material) of all classes completed at the post-secondary level as well as appropriate diplomas and leaving certificates. Preliminary student copies of transcripts should be uploaded to the CAA Admissions site as .pdf files.
- **Two letters of recommendation** from faculty or art-related individuals who are familiar with you and your artwork. Letters of recommendation should address the applicant's potential for multi-media approaches to contemporary art and capacity for incorporating cultural diversity into their overall creative oeuvre. Uploaded to the CAA site as pdf files
- **Official results of TOEFL or IELTS Examinations** - for all applicants from non-English speaking countries. Scores must indicate preparedness for study in English at the graduate level – TOEFL 90; IELTS 6.5

**Final Deadline APRIL 10, 2020 - SECOND TIER IMFA MATERIALS – all material to be directly uploaded to CAA web site as pdf files**

- **China State Health Form** – must be completed by a qualified health care practitioner in the applicant's home country.
- **Chinese Government Scholarship Application Form**
- **Photographs of the applicant** – full front face and profile view suitable for passport
- **Copies of passport information page**
- **Certification of Finances Form**
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- **Final official academic transcripts from all colleges attended**

**For more information about CAA:**

<http://en.caa.edu.cn/>

## **ADVISORY TEAM OF INTERNATIONAL GUEST PROFESSORS**

**Timothy Berry**, Professor, San Francisco Art Institute  
**Claire L. Daigle**, PhD, Professor of Art History, San Francisco Art Institute  
**Jane Dickson**, Professor, Pace University  
**Wendy Edwards**, Professor, Brown University  
**David Frazer**, Professor, Chair of Painting Dept., Rhode Island School of Design  
**Jackie Gendel**, Professor, Rhode Island School of Design  
**Michael Grady**, **IMFA Co-Director**, Professor, Appalachian State University  
**Ken Horii**, Professor, Rhode Island School of Design  
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**Craig Taylor**, Professor, Rhode Island School of Design  
**Hansong Zhang**, Ph.D. Vice President of Engineering, Wearality Corporation



## **ADVISORY TEAM OF CHINESE PROFESSORS**

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**Gao Shiming**, PhD Professor, Vice President of China Academy of Art  
**Huang Jiancheng**, PhD Professor, Deputy Dean of City Design, Central Academy of Art  
**Ma Gang**, PhD Professor, Central Academy of Art  
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**MORE QUESTIONS? – CONTACT US - [CAAIMFA@caa.edu.cn](mailto:CAAIMFA@caa.edu.cn)**

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Photo: Mahesh Singh