



CHIARTS VISUAL ARTS OVERVIEW AND AUDITION GUIDE



This guide is designed to help you prepare for the Visual Arts conservatory auditions and for considering ChiArts as an option for your high school. ChiArts is a wonderfully creative and educational environment, and we take our work seriously.

DECIDING IF CHIARTS VISUAL ARTS IS RIGHT FOR YOU

What can I expect from ChiArts Visual Arts?

Our programs are modeled on college-level Conservatory programs and tailored for high school students. It is a rigorous training program that is taught by professionals in their fields who have high standards of excellence and a commitment to training the next generation of artists. Classroom instruction is supplemented by a variety of performance opportunities in which training is put into practice. Whether or not a student chooses to ultimately pursue a career in the arts, the curriculum will provide a wide variety of learning opportunities and experiences that can benefit them throughout their lives and in whatever field they choose to pursue.

What does ChiArts Visual Arts expect from me?

The school day at ChiArts is from 8 am to 5 pm and includes some evening rehearsals and events. Students must have stamina and focus throughout the entire day and must be committed to both academic and arts education. Students are expected to arrive to each Dance class on time, fully prepared to work with all of their materials and dedicated to their craft and community. Students should be open to practicing sustained focus, taking risks, and providing a safe learning environment for others. Your attendance affects the work of your peers as well as yourself. So you must stay healthy, be organized and have your work completed and bring a positive and supportive attitude to every class, every day.

How do I decide which program(s) to audition for?

You can audition for two ChiArts programs. Select the one(s) that you have the most passion for. Once enrolled, transferring to another program at ChiArts is difficult if not impossible. So give serious consideration which program is going to be your first and second choice.

What is the difference between ChiArts and other high schools?

By coming to ChiArts, you receive fifteen (15) hours per week of free, intensive arts training. What we do, we do well. However, we are not all things to all people. We are different from some traditional high schools in that we do not offer as wide a range of activities as others may. For instance, we do not have a football team or a cheerleading squad or a drill team. Students need to think hard about the type of high school experience that they want. If you do come to ChiArts, you must readily accept that you will get a tremendous amount with regard to the arts but it means that there will not be some things that other high schools have.



AUDITION REQUIREMENTS FOR CHIARTS VISUAL ARTS

First Round Auditions

1. Portfolio review
2. Interview

Callbacks

1. 45-minute art class

Audition Preparation

As with all auditions, your primary responsibility is to be as prepared as possible. Start your preparation NOW. Be confident and believe in yourself! Every time that you audition, the people watching you are on your side and want you to do your best. Be passionate and unafraid to take creative risks.

- Students must bring 7-10 pieces of art (no larger than 36"x36" per piece) that represent their artistic interests. All artwork must be created by the student alone and clearly labeled with the student's name and title of the piece (if titled). Artwork may include, but is not limited to, painting, drawing/sketching, sculpting, photography, and graphic design. No copies or tracings are allowed; in addition, only two pieces may be in the style of anime or manga. Students may bring extra work (beyond the required 7-10 pieces) in a portfolio; if time allows, adjudicators may ask to review this work as well.
- Students who use a sketchbook are strongly encouraged to bring it to the interview.
- Students will be asked about the work they have presented and their artistic interests.

Visual Arts Audition Process

Only students who have submitted a complete application and have met the minimum requirements will be granted an audition for admission to the ChiArts Visual Arts Program. Please visit the application pages on chiarts.org for more information.

Students of all abilities may audition for admission into the Visual Arts Program. ChiArts recognizes the need to provide opportunities for students who have high levels of experience and/or training in visual arts and students who have not had prior training, but demonstrate a strong natural ability and a desire to learn.

In order to place students in a beginning or intermediate/advanced interview group, applicants must complete the arts experience form sent out by the Admissions Department that describes any prior visual arts training or experience. It is important for students to be thorough and accurate when submitting this information.

Visual Arts: FAQ

Should students who have never taken an art class apply?

Yes, ChiArts encourages students of all levels to apply.

Should students with many years of arts training apply?

Yes, students will be challenged no matter the experience they have had prior to attending ChiArts.

How can students prepare for the visual arts interview?

[Backstage Passes](#) will be held this fall to help students prepare for the interview process. Participation in the Backstage Passes is strongly recommended. Registration closes a week before each event.

Will students need to bring art supplies?

No, all materials will be provided.

Visual Arts Conservatory Program Overview

The Visual Arts Program at ChiArts begins with foundational instruction, including an emphasis upon essential art making skills and progresses toward more complex concepts, including critical analysis of visual culture and the fostering of independent work. This program will challenge and empower students to develop their own aesthetic as they mature into innovative artists and critical thinkers.

Upon completion of the program, ChiArts visual arts students will have:

- An intense foundation in multiple visual art media
- A strong portfolio of original artworks exemplifying an engagement with technique, craftsmanship and concept
- Experience in analyzing and making art from many cultures
- An understanding of art history and its numerous styles
- An ability to constructively criticize their own work and the work of others
- An understanding of museum and gallery procedures
- The ability to assemble, organize and maintain a professional art portfolio
- Professional skills that will translate to numerous job fields or areas of advanced study
- Ability to problem solve creatively
- Public speaking skills
- Experience working with Chicago based arts professionals and institutions

Ninth and Tenth Grade - Overview

The first two years of the Visual Arts Program are dedicated to the exploration of the Elements and Principles of Design, as grounded in both traditional and contemporary skills-based methodologies. These are critical years during which students build a strong foundation in the following visual arts disciplines: Drawing, Design, Sculpture, Painting, Visual Communications, Digital Photography and Art History/Theory. Each course will encourage systematic investigation of formal and conceptual issues while assignments will help students develop technical and critical-thinking skills. The course syllabus for each subject will be issued at the beginning of the Fall Semester.

Upon completing the first two years, a ChiArts Visual Arts student is expected to have produced quality works that will serve as the start of their portfolio for AP Studio Art submission and college portfolio reviews. The student will understand the value of individual and group critiques and exhibition/competition protocol. Also, each student will have developed a vital sketchbook practice, fueling their course work through experimentation and creative problem solving.

Above all, students will understand the discipline and accountability required for a successful studio practice, an understanding that will inform any future career path.

A portfolio review conducted by a faculty panel will take place at the end of each academic year. Each student will present a selection of original artwork completed in each conservatory course and discuss what they feel they did well and what they could improve upon utilizing vocabulary specific to each medium. In addition, they will talk about the objectives of the lesson for which each piece was made and include a statement of intent for summer studio work. The sophomore level panel review is a particularly important step in the determination of majors. Each Sophomore will prepare a written and oral statement that explains their goals and defends their interest in a specific major. This defense is an important variable as faculty determines placement of candidates for each major.

Scope & Sequence: 9th - 10th grades

Freshman Year

Course	Schedule	Studio Hours/wk	Credits/year
Drawing I	M/W & F: 2-5pm	4.5	0
Sculpture I	M/W & F: 2-5pm	4.5	0
Drawing by Design	T/TH: 2-5pm	3	1
Digital Photography I	T/TH: 2-5pm	3	0
TOTAL		15	1

Sophomore Year

Course	Schedule	Studio Hours/wk	Credits/year
Painting I	M/W: 2-5pm	3	0
Drawing II	T/TH: 2-5pm	3	0
Sculpture II	M/T: 2-5pm	3	0
Intro to Art History	W/F: 2-5pm	3	1
Intro to Visual Communications	T/F: 2-5pm	3	0
TOTAL		15	1

Eleventh and Twelfth Grades- Overview

The third and fourth years of the visual arts training constitute the AP curriculum specific to each major, as approved by the AP College Board. During this intensive two-year period, students will continue to hone their technical and conceptual skills as they begin to identify areas of personal interest. They will create work that satisfies the critical AP criteria of *quality*, *breadth* and *concentration*. This portfolio, completed Senior year, will be used by students to apply for AP credit and for college applications.

A student's major is determined at the end of the sophomore year, based on student preference, skill level both technically and conceptually, availability and departmental discretion. Students are expected to fully commit to their given majors during their last two years of conservatory; it is rare that changes are made. In addition to Majors, both Junior and Senior students are enrolled in electives. These are determined based on student preference, availability and departmental discretion. Ideally these courses support the student's particular direction/ability. The electives are listed below.

Scope & Sequence: 11th – 12th

Junior Year

Course	Schedule	Studio Hours/wk	Credits/year
Studio Major	M&W: 2-5pm	6	1
Studio Elective	F: 2-5pm	3	0
Junior Seminar: Professional Development	T/TH: 3:30-5pm	1	0
Drawing III	T/TH: 2-5pm	3	0
AP Art History	T/TH: 2-3:30pm	2	1
	TOTAL	15	2

Senior Year

Course	Schedule	Studio Hours/wk	Credits/year
Studio Major	M&W: 2-5pm	6	1
Studio Electives	T&TH: 2-5pm	6	0
Senior Seminar: Professional Development	F: 2-5pm	3	0
	TOTAL	15	1

Eleventh Grade

The Junior year is the first year of the AP curriculum. In the junior year, all Visual Arts students will be enrolled in Drawing III- advanced practices in figure drawing, color theory and conceptual investigation along with AP Art History. It is important to note that in the Drawing III course, students will have an entire quarter/unit project dedicated to drawing the nude figure. During this unit project, a nude model (male or female) is hired to come to each of the weekly class meetings and pose for the three-hour session. It is imperative that every student be involved in this unit project, as it is an essential foundational exercise for studio artists to be introduced to and become comfortable with during their arts training. Additionally, students will take part in a weekly Junior Seminar: Professional Development Seminar. This class will offer guidance regarding researching/applying for and financing college, along with portfolio and artist statement development. Junior Seminar will also inform students of various occupations in the field of art via visiting artist/arts administrators/curators, etc and field trips. Finally, students will prepare and apply for several competitions and exhibitions. Twice a week, students will have their major class and once a week their elective class. The major courses offered at ChiArts are: AP Drawing and Painting, AP Sculpture, AP Digital Photography and AP Visual Communications. In addition to their Major, each student is enrolled in one of the following three Junior electives: 3D Materials Studies, Photomechanics and The Mural: History and Practice.

The Junior year AP Major studio course primarily addresses the AP criterion of *Breadth*. The artwork in this first section of the AP portfolio must demonstrate a range of conceptual and technical approaches to their medium. To that end, students will approach a diversity of style, composition, genre, material and concept exemplifying their understanding and engagement with technique, craftsmanship and ability to convey meaning by employing tools which are media specific. Furthermore, students will begin to address the second AP criterion of concentration. Through a series of

assignments, students will seek and hone the area of interest they each wish to explore as a concentration or thesis in their Senior year.

Requirements of the junior AP year will include the creation of their digital *Breadth Portfolio*, a researched, sketched and thoughtful presentation of their concentration idea to be started over the summer and completed senior year. Students are expected to participate in ChiArts Portfolio Day and any exhibitions they are involved in. In addition, juniors are required to submit work to the Scholastic Art & Writing competition as well as the High School Regional Art Exhibition and All-City High School Exhibition competition.

Twelfth Grade

The Senior year is the second and final component of the ChiArts AP curriculum. During the Senior year, students will explore their concentration, the second section of the AP studio portfolio. Students will continue in the same AP Studio Major class they had for Junior year. In addition, all fourth year level students will participate in Senior Seminar: Professional Development and two of the following electives: Sequential Art, Wearable Sculpture, Digital Media and Contemporary Practices: Performance and Installation.

In the fourth year of the AP major course, students are expected to continue the development of their *concentration* (Senior thesis) and further refine their portfolios. Students at the fourth year level are expected to be highly independent, self-motivated and focused. Requirements include the completion of the AP portfolio (due at the end of April), and participation in a senior thesis show (including proposal, written commentary, bio, installation, marketing and press, exhibition and documentation), and submission of their portfolios to Scholastic Arts & Writing Awards Competition, The Illinois High School Regional Art Exhibition and the All-City Competitions.

All students, Juniors and Seniors, will be required to attend National Portfolio Day held at the School of the Art Institute in late October as well as the ChiArts Portfolio Day. These are invaluable opportunities for students to make contact with college representatives, show their portfolio and leave a direct impression. Attendance is mandatory and parents are highly advised to attend.

