BFA Emphasis in Illustration: Portfolio Review Application Process

The Illustration emphasis integrates fine art, mixed media and digital practices with conceptual thinking, research and storytelling in the production of creative work. As a practice, Illustration focuses on skills and concepts in the professional development of a student’s individual vision and approach to illustrative arts. Marketing, business and design practices prepare students to discuss and view their work in a design context and for particular commercial markets and galleries. Courses are taught in state-of-the-art drawing and computer labs using the Adobe software suite alongside hands-on studio facilities. Illustration students gather skills to easily work across multiple artistic media—including design, drawing, painting, printmaking, sculpture, and Inworks prototyping labs for the development of motion and spatial projects.

Students gain the ability to establish freelance illustration studio practice, as well as multi-faceted professional skills and flexibility in working with designers, creative directors, and art directors. Graduates are prepared to write and illustrate concepts and stories in preparation for studios, and the editorial, publishing and advertising markets.

Students in the illustration emphasis receive instruction in conceptual illustration, digital illustration, rendering, perspective, painting, exhibition preparation, professional practices and the use of various artistic and illustration techniques. In preparation for a professional illustration career, the course work allows students to master numerous essential digital and traditional tools and work to successfully bring the two together in ambitious and innovative illustrative work.

Students who are applying for entrance into the illustration emphasis are required to submit a portfolio of ten digital images, a written statement, and unofficial transcript(s) from CU Denver and all previous post-secondary educational institutions. Students who meet the following requirements can apply to the illustration emphasis. Upon acceptance, students will be able to register for upper-division illustration courses.

Eligibility

Students must have completed, or be currently enrolled in the equivalents of the following classes:

- FINE 1100 Drawing I
- FINE 1400 Two-Dimensional Design
- FINE 1500 Three-Dimensional Design
- FINE 2155 Introduction to Digital Photography
- FINE 2405 Introduction to Digital Design
- FINE 2600 Art History Survey I
- FINE 2610 Art History Survey II

- A cumulative fine arts/art history GPA of 2.0 or above.

NOTE: Students accepted by portfolio review who receive lower than a “C” in any of the required courses at the end of the semester within which they are applying, will not be permitted to take upper division Illustration courses the following semester. They must repeat the required course(s) with a grade of C or higher and reapply to the emphasis.
Application & Portfolio Submission Instructions for SlideRoom

Application Deadline
A portfolio is required for admission to the upper division advanced levels of the illustration emphasis. Applications must be uploaded to SlideRoom. There is a fall and spring application deadline. However, it is important to be aware that students graduate in the Spring semester only with their completed BFA thesis work. Students should plan entry into the program accordingly.

Applicants in the Fall semester can begin uploading work to SlideRoom beginning October 1st, and must have all requested items fully submitted by **November 1, 5:00pm** (Mountain Standard Time). Applicants in the Spring semester can begin uploading work to SlideRoom beginning March 1st, and must have all requested items fully submitted by **April 1, 5:00pm** (Mountain Standard Time).

Applications are only accepted online and must be formatted to the specifications listed here. There is a **$30 fee to apply.** It is VERY important to visit the SlideRoom website early and begin your uploads two weeks before the due date. Late submissions due to technical difficulties on the part of the applicant will NOT be accepted.

**Step 1: Registration**
To apply you must register on SlideRoom and set up an account: https://ucdvisualarts.slideroom.com/#/Login

**Step 2: Submission of Application Materials**

**Portfolio: Selecting Work**
The portfolio must include a minimum of 10 digital images of creative work (but no more than 15). Submit 10 images of artworks done in university or college art foundation courses that visually demonstrate skills in observational drawing, linear perspective and life drawing, as well as an understanding and use of design principles. Additional examples (up to five) may be in other areas of art, such as design, drawing, painting, mixed media and/or printmaking. (Fan art is discouraged.)

All images should be formatted as JPEGs. **Limit file size to 1 megabyte.** File names must be numbered, include the student’s last name, and then an underscore, and a brief title.

**File Name Examples:**

1. 1_Lastname_Figure.jpg
2. 2_Lastname_StillLife.jpg

**NOTE:** For each image you upload to SlideRoom you must provide the following information: title, year, media and size, and a brief explanation of each artwork.

**Written Statement**
A written statement must be uploaded as a PDF file with your portfolio on SlideRoom. In your essay, please address the following in no more than one page in length (400-500 words).

- Why do you want to study illustration and what goals and expectations does you have regarding a career as an illustrator?
- What are your creative strengths, and what areas need further development?
- What other accomplishments would you like the committee to know about, such as Dean’s List, GPA, internships, art-related extracurricular activities or relevant professional experience?
Course Transcripts
Official or unofficial transcripts from CU Denver and all previous post-secondary institutions must be uploaded as part of your application.

Technical Issues/Help
If you have technical issues or questions regarding the submission process, you can find detailed information at https://support.slideroom.com. You can also contact SlideRoom email support directly at https://support.slideroom.com/customer/portal/emails/new.

The Evaluation Process
A committee of Illustration, and Painting & Drawing faculty members will review the portfolio applications. Acceptance into the illustration emphasis is based on the portfolio images, written statement and GPA.

If not admitted into the illustration emphasis, a student has the choice of attempting the review process again the following semester (application deadline April 1) or applying to another emphasis. Students are encouraged to apply for more than one emphasis at the time of application. Students are also encouraged to schedule a meeting with the Area Head of Painting & Drawing to learn ways to improve their portfolio for future submissions. Please also note that we now have minors in Illustration and Painting & Drawing. Should you not get into your first choice emphasis area, there is still the possibility of minoring in that area. These minors do not require a portfolio review.

Portfolios are evaluated based on quality of presentation, technical skill, creativity, conceptual development, and overall aptitude for excelling in the illustration emphasis. Additional evaluation is based on the applicant’s written statement and GPA in fine arts/art history courses.

The application is evaluated on the following criteria:

- **Presentation** - The portfolio should be well crafted and well organized in content and presentation.
- **Technical Skill** - The portfolio should demonstrate strong proficiency in drawing, composition, design and color.
- **Creativity** - The portfolio should demonstrate creative choices in content and aesthetics.
- **Conceptual Skills** - The portfolio and written statements should reflect analytical thinking and conceptual exploration of the foundations of drawing and design.
- **Written Statement** - The statement should outline academic and artistic goals, addressing any potential strengths and weaknesses.
- **Academic Performance** - GPA must reflect a commitment to learning and growth.
- **A Complete Application** - All required documentation included (images, written statement and transcripts from ALL institutions).

Questions & Information:
Please contact CAMadvising@ucdenver.edu for portfolio information and application requirements, or contact Melissa Furness, Area Head of Painting/Drawing and Illustration, at (303) 315-1511 or via email at melissa.furness@ucdenver.edu. There are also faculty-led workshops held each fall semester for students to ask questions and work on refining images for portfolio review. Look for posters in September and October regarding this.