



The Basel School of Design | FHNW HGK  
Visual Communication Institute

**UIC** School of  
UNIVERSITY OF ILLINOIS  
AT CHICAGO **Art and Design**

**Information and Application Form 2012**

[www.thebaselschoolofdesign.ch/mfa](http://www.thebaselschoolofdesign.ch/mfa)



### **Key Issues**

The international partnership between UIC and the HGK Basel generates a variety of opportunities for the participants of the program, such as international internships, studying in a foreign cultural environment, and an international group of students and professors.

The unique methodology of the Basel School of Design, its tradition and its focus make the MFA program an extraordinary opportunity to achieve a high level of practical and theoretical design competence.

The MFA program is involved in the current discussions of the internationally oriented design practice and its issues of design research. In combination with the strong practical background of the Basel School of Design, graduate students are given the opportunity to be at the cutting edge of the discourse about image theory and design-oriented research. This can be found through our close collaboration with the Swiss Design Network (SDN) and eikones, The National Centre of Competence in Research (NCCR) “Iconic Criticism - The Power and Meaning of Images”, ([www.eikones.ch](http://www.eikones.ch)).

### **The Professional Field**

Visual Communication, Graphic Design, Communication Design and Media Design exist today in a global market and information-oriented society, operating through digital networks that span different cultures with regional roots. Visual messages for communication provide a common basis of understanding for highly specialized areas of knowledge and content.

As producers of visual messages, designers are among the main contributors to the flood of images unleashed by digitization. This development requires more practical experience in the generation of visual messages through a reflected design process. To achieve this goal the program provides, next to the development of an individual visual vocabulary, more contextual and theoretical knowledge in the area of imagery and greater technical, social, cultural and trans-cultural expertise.

The Masters Program in Visual Communication imparts in-depth knowledge without neglecting the actual making of images, and it qualifies students to contribute to the production of visual messages that shape and reflect our world.

The acquisition of such design related practical expertise, with a theoretical basis, opens the way to a range of employment opportunities in internationally oriented design offices, corporate design agencies, new media agencies, publishing houses, bureaus for exhibition design, architectural firms or starting ones own design studio. Design offices are engaged either in general conception and design of communication products or specialize in the conception and design of publications (newspapers, magazines and books), visual identities (corporate design), exhibition design, advertising media for consumer goods, informational and educational communication products, or communication products using new media (film, video and interactive media). The work in such agencies includes responsibilities in the area of concept development and project management, which require a high degree of theoretical expertise, as well as practical tasks relating directly to the design and formulation of visual messages.

## **Learning Objectives of the MFA Program**

The MFA program offers a practice- and project-oriented education with a high level of reflective competences. It prepares students for a career in international design agencies and for an individual further development in the field of design research and iconic research, with a practical methodology of inquiry through design.

The MFA program is also well suited as a preparation for teaching design at a university level. Apart from the specific professional qualifications in the fields of graphic design and design research, the acquisition of soft skills is an explicit part of the learning outcome. These include writing and verbal expression skills, research methodology, presentational skills, and social and trans-cultural competence.

Students who enter the MFA program with a BA or BFA degree in Graphic Design, Visual Communication, Communication Design or Media Design will primarily be deepening their design skills through a process-led approach to solving visual problems in a complex context. This leads to the ability to conduct a reflected and goal oriented design process and to develop an individual vocabulary applicable in the design practice. The students extend their knowledge not only in design experience, but in the areas of image and design theory, research methodology, communication theory and the planning and analysis of visual products as well. Given the high-level of the work to be performed, the expectation is that a qualified graduate student will make a contribution to the discourse in the area of Visual Communication through her/his Masters Thesis. The thesis project should be of a visual and scholarly quality to the extent that it is qualified for publication or exhibition and made accessible for the international design community.

## **Concentration Areas of the MFA Program**

### **Image Theory**

The recent discussion of image theory is based on the fact that digitization has brought a sharp rise in the number of messages formulated in pictorial ways. Contrary to this prevailing shift of emphasis, the study of language aspects has progressed to a more advanced stage than the study of the impact of images. It is this discrepancy that iconic research seeks to address through a transdisciplinary approach. This research field is of direct significance for a future-oriented development of Visual Communication. Close collaboration between eikones, the National Center of Competence in Iconic Criticism at the University of Basel and the MFA program will guarantee a high level of scientific inquiry.

### **Imagery**

Closely related to the theoretical exposition, the methodology of practical inquiry through design aims at acquiring knowledge about the perception and creation of images. Process-oriented projects in this field seek to extend the visual vocabulary of the students and to impart knowledge about the factors influencing the design process. Practical projects with this focus are encouraged.

### **Interaction and Media Design**

The creation of imagery for communication in today's context involves a conscious approach to the medium in which it is produced and disseminated. The study of new media and their influence on imagery is a key issue. Moving images on screen and in digital videos, the relationship between images and the interaction with the viewer, as well as digitization in general, are key issues of this practical field of design.

### **Typography**

The notation of language by means of alphabetical characters and ideograms is one of the outstanding cultural achievements of mankind. Letterform design and typography deal with the formulation, organization and structure of character sets in order to convey information. The Basel School of Design is continuing to build upon its influential tradition in this field.

## **The Basel MFA Program**

The four-semester MFA program consists of four modules with a strong emphasis on project-based work. The students earn 120 ECTS points (60 US Credits) in four semesters to complete the MFA program.

### **First and Second Semester Module**

**Theory I** In the first two semesters, a weekly lecture followed by a seminar addresses diverse aspects of image theory, media theory and the methodology of research work. A second weekly lecture followed by a seminar focuses on the practice of design, design history and current developments in the design field.

**Design Practice I** In this module, the students work on practical design projects in collaboration with a team of faculty advisers. A given project in the first semester covers research, a typical design process and a realization phase. In the second semester, students have the opportunity to define their own work project. Besides studio classes with members of the faculty, there is a series of guest lectures addressing issues directly related to the students' own work.

### **Third and Fourth Semester Module**

**Theory II** This module continues in the second year of study with a lecture and a seminar on specific aspects of image theory. The topic of design reflection focuses on aspects of communication, marketing and management.

**Design Practice II** This module is a direct preparation for the Masters Thesis. It focuses on the subject of practical image research and involves all the theoretical and practical aspects addressed in the first two semesters. Besides the studio classes with mentors, there is a series of guest lectures addressing issues directly related to the practical projects.

### **Masters Thesis**

In the final semester students formulate and propose a relevant topic in the field of Graphic Design, Visual Communication or Image Research. A committee of professors evaluates the proposals for their relevance and feasibility. After approval by the committee, the students begin their thesis project, which consists of both a written and practical component and is accompanied by a mentor or mentors.

### **Core Faculty**

*Philip Burton, Marcia Lausen, Jörg Becker, UIC; Ted Davis, Dr. Invar-Torre Hollus, Mischa Leiner, Michael Renner, Dr. Nicolaj van der Meulen, Gregory Vines, HGK Basel; members of the Graduate College UIC and members of the NCCR Iconic Criticism, University Basel*

### **Extended Faculty**

*Viola Diehl, Leander Eisenmann, Prof. Marion Fink, Fabian Kempter, Dirk Koy, Hansjörg Kunz, Angelo Lüdin, Reinhard Manz, Prof. Philipp Stamm, Annik Troxler, Ludwig Zeller, HGK Basell*

### **Previous Guest Lecturers**

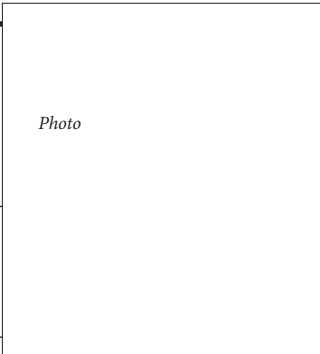
*Ahn Sang Soo, Alain Le Quernec, Andreas Bründler, Anette Lenz, Aubry Bastien, Aude Lehmann, Catherine Zask, Claudia Blank, Dan Graham, David Carsen, Dimitri Broquard, Elektrosmog, François Rappo, Gavillet & Rust, Gerwin Schmidt, Groenland, Hamish Muir, Istvan Orosz, James Goggin, Jean-Benoit Levy, Julia Born, Karel Martens, Lars Müller, Ludovic Balland, Martin Woodtli, Mathias Hefel, Megi Zumstein, Metadesign, Mevis & van Deursen, Niklaus Troxler, Pierre di Scullo, R2 Design, Rayan Abdullah, Stefan Hauser, Stefan Sagmeister, Tanja Prill, Tarik Hayward, tomato, Urs Lehni, Valentin Hindermann, Wendelin Hess, Werner Jeker*

## Application Form page 1

### International Masters Program HGK/UIC

*Application Deadline: February 15, 2012*

<b>Last Name</b>		<b>First Name</b>	
<b>Ms.</b>	<b>Mr.</b>		
<b>Date of Birth</b>		<b>Nationality</b>	
<b>Day</b>	<b>Month</b>	<b>Year</b>	



**Present Mailing Address**

<b>Telephone Number</b>	<b>Current E-mail Address</b>
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**Academic Background**

College/University	Major/Degree	Dates

**Employment**

Company	Position	Dates

**Application Procedure**

Submit the following application materials by February 15, 2012.  
 Electronically: A letter of intent and statement of personal strengths and skills in the design field, a portfolio, 3 letters of recommendation and CV.  
 Post/Email/Fax: This application form, university transcripts and application fee of US\$ 50.--.  
**Portfolio** See next page for details.  
**Notification** of acceptance into the program will be sent by E-mail no later than February 24, 2012.  
**Confirmation** of your participation in the MFA Program must be received no later than March 23, 2012.  
**Applicants** who are on the waiting list will be notified by March 30, 2012 regarding an opening in the program.

**Semester Begin** Monday September 17, 2012

**Language** English

**Tuition** US\$ 25,000. – Per year

**Dual Degree**

Internationally accredited  
**Master of Fine Arts in Graphic Design**  
 from the University of Illinois at Chicago  
 and  
**Master of Advanced Studies**  
 from the FHNW HGK Basel

## Application Form page 2

### International Masters Program HGK/UIC

#### Portfolio

The following materials are to be submitted via Slideroom: A letter of intent and statement of personal strengths and skills in the design field, a portfolio consisting of up to 20 examples of your work, a resume/CV, and three letters of recommendation.

With the exception of recommendation letters, all written documents listed above are to be placed at the beginning of a multipage PDF, followed by a portfolio of up to 20 examples of your work. To begin visit <http://uic.slideroom.com> and select "Graphic Design 2012: Delivered in Basel Switzerland".

Please keep images under 1280x1280 @ 72dpi and export as the smallest file size preset. If your document is larger than 10Mb a second PDF may be uploaded. For all media and interactive works, please provide documentation and links for viewing. Do not send portfolios by E-mail!

#### Application Fee

The Application Fee is US\$ 50.--

Paying the Application Fee by credit card. You can send the information below along with your application information, or via E-mail: <a href="mailto:yolande.terraon@fhnw.ch">yolande.terraon@fhnw.ch</a> or Fax it to the Visual Communication Institute at (the Country Code for Switzerland from your Country) then 61 695 67 51		
Your Name		
Master Card <input type="checkbox"/> Visa <input type="checkbox"/>		
Name of Credit Card Holder		
Credit Card Number		
Expiration Date		
Verification Number		(The Verification Code is the three-digit number on the back of the credit card.)
Paying the Application Fee by Bank Transfer	Basler Kantonalbank, 4002 Basel	Clearing-Nr. 770
	Konto-nr. 165.416.347.10	IBAN: CH7100770016541634710

Send your application materials by:

Post  
 FHNW / HGK  
 c/o Yolande Terraon  
 Visual Communication Institute  
 Vogelsangstrasse 15  
 CH-4058 Basel  
 Switzerland

Email  
 Subject: MFA Application  
 To: [yolande.terraon@fhnw.ch](mailto:yolande.terraon@fhnw.ch)

Fax  
 (Country Code for Switzerland  
 from your Country) then 61 695 67 51

If you need to write, call or Fax us at the  
 Visual Communication Institute,  
 write to [yolande.terraon@fhnw.ch](mailto:yolande.terraon@fhnw.ch)  
 or dial the Country Code for Switzerland  
 from your Country, then  
 61 695 67 51  
 or to Prof. Michael Renner  
[michael.renner@fhnw.ch](mailto:michael.renner@fhnw.ch)  
 61 695 67 55