

Three or Four-Year Degree Program BACHELOR OF FINE ARTS *in* ILLUSTRATION

Students have the option of completing in three or four years depending on the number of terms they take each year.

LOCATION

LOS ANGELES, CALIFORNIA

Location is subject to change.

For start dates and tuition, please visit nyfa.edu



OVERVIEW

Illustrators

are individuals who give expression to our imagination and the world around us through graphical representation. They are visual artists who are both able to bring their own ideas to life, while also visualizing the ideas of filmmakers, architects, fashion designers, authors, and many other creative individuals and professions. Whether it is drawing a children's book or a storyboard for an animated film, it's the illustrator who is responsible for creating the original visual imagery.

At the Academy's BFA in Illustration program, students are immersed in the world of illustration by our renowned faculty of professional illustrators who remain active in the field. Students not only learn the essentials of illustration by training in drawing, painting, and digital imaging techniques, but they also learn how to apply their skills to a variety of genres and industries and develop the entrepreneurial know-how to achieve their professional goals.

As illustration has developed extensively from its roots in drawing and painting, the Academy's curriculum reflects and emphasizes the changing landscape of illustration, with students becoming immersed in the digital hardware and software that are industry standards. The Academy's BFA program in illustration combines in-class instruction in the essential concepts of illustration with instructor-guided workshops and course assignments that challenge each student to push him or herself to become a talented and in-demand illustrator.

Structured over an eight-semester period, students can choose to complete the full-time undergraduate program in three years. However, if a student wishes to take summer breaks, they can opt to take the BFA program over four years.

The program follows the traditional structure of a Bachelor of Fine Arts program by devoting two-thirds of students' time to the intense study of illustration with the remaining third of their time spent learning foundational studies in the Liberal Arts and Sciences.

The BFA in Illustration program is offered exclusively at the Academy's Los Angeles campus. **QUALIFIED STUDENTS HAVE THE OPTION OF COMPLETING COURSE WORK AT THE NEW YORK FILM ACADEMY IN NEW YORK CITY IN A ONE-YEAR NON-DEGREE PROGRAM AND THEN APPLYING THEIR COURSE WORK TO BE ACCEPTED FOR ADVANCED STANDING IN THE BFA ILLUSTRATION DEGREE PROGRAM.**

WHAT YOU WILL LEARN

Once a student has graduated from the BFA in Illustration program at the New York Film Academy, he or she will be able to demonstrate the following skills and know-how:

- Students will demonstrate a thorough understanding of the elements and principles of two-dimensional design and basic color theory and demonstrate an ability to integrate that understanding in the construction of illustrations.
- Students will demonstrate comprehensive knowledge of and critical perspective on the history of art and visual culture, relating their own work to the artistic heritage of western art from ancient to contemporary periods.
- Students will demonstrate proficiency in representational drawing from observation and imagination, and will possess a comprehensive understanding of perspective and human anatomy as they relate to the organization of pictorial space and the construction of visual narratives.
- Students will demonstrate working knowledge of safe studio practices as they relate to environmental health and safety.
- Students will demonstrate the ability to articulate light, form, surface and color in oil painting, and will display a working knowledge of fundamental painting techniques.
- Students will demonstrate comprehensive knowledge of industry standard digital hardware and software applications, including photo, paint, vector, and 3D-based systems of imaging.
- Students will demonstrate applied understanding and proficiency of a broad range of technical processes, materials, mediums, and applications of image-making techniques and stylistic conventions.
- Students will demonstrate a comprehensive knowledge of the numerous professional trajectories in illustration, and will identify professional areas of interest in pursuit of a career.
- Students will demonstrate professional skills and practices appropriate to their area of interest.
- Students will demonstrate their knowledge of and relate their work to the technological, artistic, social, and cultural currents within the history of illustration and contemporary illustration.
- Students will demonstrate a variety of visual and scholarly research methods engaged by illustration, and the ability to synthesize the knowledge gained in the art-making process.
- Students will demonstrate their ability to produce illustrations that are consistent with high professional standards.
- Students will articulate in verbal and written form the key technical, formal, and conceptual issues in their creative work and the work of others.

Please Note: curriculum and projects are subject to change and may vary depending on location. Students should consult the most recently published campus catalog for the most up to date course information.

COURSE DESCRIPTIONS

YEAR ONE OVERVIEW

In the first year of the BFA Illustration program, students are introduced to the fundamentals of two-dimensional design and color theory and develop visual thinking as the formation of ideas. Technical sensitivity is deepened through practical illustration problems and critical evaluation. **The following courses comprise the illustration portion of a student's curriculum; The required Liberal Arts and Sciences classes are listed at the end of the BFA and BA section of the brochure.**

SEMESTER ONE

2D DESIGN & FUNDAMENTALS OF COLOR

This course provides a foundation for image-making by closely examining the elements and principles of two-dimensional design, as well as fundamental concepts of color and color theory. The two-dimensional plane is considered in terms of formal issues such as shape, space, texture, pattern, direction, movement, unity, variety, balance, hierarchy, scale, proportion and contrast, and is further considered as a vehicle for the expression of ideas. Optics and the critical role of color as a strategizing agent in design are explored, with an emphasis on the perceptual dynamics of color in two-dimensions.

INTRODUCTION TO ILLUSTRATION: VISUAL THINKING

Visual thinking engages eye, mind, and hand in nonverbal thought, using visual language to both develop and communicate ideas. This class encourages visual thinking processes—generative approaches to the use of picture-making, which are integral to problem definition and fruitful conceptual thinking—as vital to Illustration. Exercises will feature a quantitative emphasis on design synectics, diagramming, collecting, inventory, journal-keeping and sketchbooks, verbal/visual interplay, and other expansive thinking processes. An introduction to the basic principles of semiotics in the interpretation of visual information will frame the student's understanding of how images communicate.

DRAWING: FORM, SPACE & PERSPECTIVE

As a fundamental means of articulating visual ideas, the practice of drawing is crucial to illustration. Through direct observation students in this class will develop the ability to coherently represent objects in space, with a particular emphasis on perspective as a means of organizing space, establishing point of view and expressing ideas. Creating convincing illusions of light, depth, surface, volume, and other perceptual attributes will be explored. Weekly in class exercises will be complemented by homework assignments, which encourage continual practice and a deeper comprehension of material covered in class.

SEMESTER TWO

MATERIALS & TECHNIQUES FOR ILLUSTRATORS

Illustrators make use of a vast array of tools and mediums for their work. While the program's more advanced technical workshops afford additional depth of study, this class exposes students to an array of materials, tools and processes common to image-making, which may include acrylics, gouache, casein, watercolor, markers, crayons, colored pencil, pastel, tabletop printing techniques, scratchboard, and ink.

ILLUSTRATION IN CONTEXT AUDIENCE AND APPLICATION

This class contextualizes the ideation process in applied projects by exploring considerations of audience (the intended recipient of visual communication, with demographics in mind) and application (the purpose of illustration within professional categories such as editorial, scientific, or children's book illustration).

ANATOMICAL FIGURE DRAWING

Because the human figure is such an integral component of most narrative art, consideration of the human form in perspectival space is central to the course of study in Illustration. This class introduces the basic study of human anatomy, including skeletal and muscular systems.

PAINTING: LIGHT, COLOR & MATTER

This representational painting course introduces students to the versatile medium of oil painting and to various traditional oil painting techniques. Color, light, form, volume, space, perspective, the figure, and other basic concepts are addressed and explored. Painting from direct observation, students will apply their fundamental knowledge of color, the elements and principles of design, and basic understanding of perspective in pictorial space toward compelling pictorial representation.

HISTORY OF ILLUSTRATION

Illustration has a long and rich history, and this course surveys the history of pictorial communication, from illuminated books through contemporary developments in the field. The class considers the symbiotic relationship between illustration and culture, with particular attention to the way the art form impacts popular opinion, thereby fueling political, social, and cultural developments in society.

SEMESTER THREE

TEXT TO IMAGE I

The visual interpretation of nonfiction texts—from simple verbal prompts such as idioms and quotations to contemporary essays and memoirs—is the focus of this class. Students will renew their exposure to the history of the field in the review of illustrated texts, and will examine the relationships between verbal and visual language, including the use of tropes, grammatical structure, and dramatic tone.

DIGITAL ILLUSTRATION SURVEY

The processes employed by contemporary illustrators inevitably involve the use of technology to some extent, whether bound up in the image-making workflow or in managing the commercial aspects of illustration. This class provides an introduction to the most relevant software applications use by practitioners in the field—Adobe Creative Suite, including Photoshop, Illustrator and InDesign, and Corel Painter.

TECHNICAL WORKSHOP: MIXED MEDIA, COLLAGE & ASSEMBLAGE

Experimentation with the intersection of many mediums, materials, tools, and techniques is the emphasis for this workshop. Exemplary work by influential collage, mixed media, and assemblage artists will be introduced.

Sketches by New York Film Academy student Magdalena Marinova





YEAR TWO OVERVIEW

In the second year, the relationship between picture and word is explored while students reflect on the role of the illustrator as public intellectual and member of society.

SEMESTER FOUR

TEXT TO IMAGE II

Text to Image II continues visual interpretation of written texts begun in Text to Image I, but with an emphasis on works of fiction as source material. Cover and interior illustrations for fables, mythology, classical literature, children's books, short stories, novels, plays, and other written works of fiction will be approached throughout the semester, and students will once again write their own material, preparing them for the possibility of work as author-illustrators.

SERIES ILLUSTRATION

Series Illustration is concerned with the creation of groups of related images arranged in temporal or spatial orders of succession. This class involves students in the development of systems and series of illustrations—projects characterized by multiple different, yet related, pictorial iterations on formal and conceptual themes. Design principles such as unity within variety are key to the experience in this semester, and practical problems addressing series-oriented content will be undertaken.

SKETCHBOOKS & VISUAL JOURNALISM

Visual journalists meaningfully combine text and image to convey information about people, places, and events, often documenting reality as it occurs. This class will broaden student exposure to life beyond their own social and cultural sphere, while reinforcing skills of drawing from observation, visual thinking, and writing. Exhaustive sketch-booking, followed by deliberate synthesis of materials into a coherent journalistic statement, will be at the forefront of course activity.

DIGITAL 3D GRAPHICS FOR ILLUSTRATION

This course offers an introduction to the technical and creative processes associated with digital 3D illustration. Among the topics explored are modeling, texturing, lighting, and composition for illustration and the design of effective low-polygon forms, texturing, and UV mapping. Software used for the class will include Photoshop, Maya, and 3DS Max.

SEMESTER FIVE

INTRODUCTION TO TYPOGRAPHY

Typography—the design of communication using words in space—has long partnered with illustration in the communication of complex ideas and information. Anatomy of letterforms and typographic features, design vocabulary and processes associated with type design, an overview of type fonts and families, the history of the art, and a sequence of exercises involving incorporation of type and image will enhance the Illustrator’s appreciation and understanding of typography as a primary contextualizing element for pictorial communication.

VISUALIZING THE SCIENCES

Building upon the knowledge gained in Social and Natural Sciences coursework, this course is centered on the partnership of visual communication and the sciences, addressing visualization problems for Physical Science, Life Sciences, and Social Sciences. By interpreting and representing data, physiological phenomena associated with scientific inquiry, and discovery, students will be expected to develop eloquent and objective representations of quantitative information, ultimately rendering complex information more readable.

TECHNICAL WORKSHOP: 3D ILLUSTRATION

Illustration need not be limited to two dimensions. This technical workshop presents a series of illustration projects which will introduce materials and methods of illustrating in three-dimensions. The range of conceptual possibilities expand rapidly with the use of materials such as paper clay, plaster, Sculpey, wood, paper, latex, fabric, and plasticine.

SEMESTER SIX

THE ILLUSTRATOR IN SOCIETY

Illustrators are empowered with considerable talent to influence popular opinion, and the outlets for editorial and political illustration remain vast, particularly with the expansion of the Internet in the transmission of news and information. In this class, students reflect on the role of the illustrator as public intellectual and member of society.

SELF-PUBLISHING: COMICS & ZINES

This class introduces the basic concepts and approaches to self-publishing for comics and zines. After planning, writing, illustrating, and designing a small-circulation project, students will pursue outlets and audiences for publication and distribution and will learn firsthand the processes and practices associated with self-publishing.

HYBRID IMAGING: SCIENCE FICTION & FANTASY ILLUSTRATION

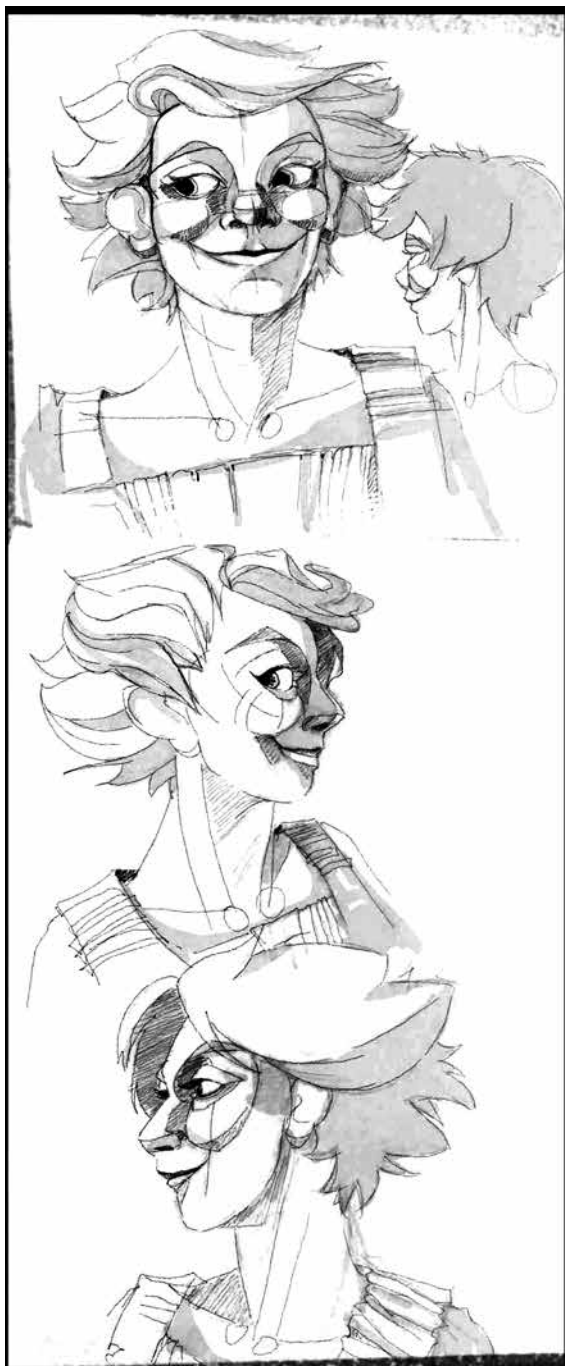
This class encourages the amalgamation of both the real and the unreal, of the living and the “might be living,” of observation and imagination. Drawing and painting from direct observation is combined with fantastic visual musings in this class, serving as a foundation for Science Fiction and Fantasy illustration. Exposure to the leading Sci-Fi and Fantasy artists of today as well as a review of seminal artists of the genre will be featured throughout the semester, and students will create a variety of otherworldly characters, environments, and objects.

PICTORIAL PERSONAE: MODES OF CHARACTERIZATION

This class explores different modes of characterization in the representation of personae—from caricatures of political personalities to flattering portraits of the famous and incisively critical depictions of the infamous. The tradition of illustrating personae is as old as storytelling itself, and developing a character whose visual characterization is a convincing companion to the author’s conception is often a rewarding challenge. This course will have students creating unique visual personifications of well-known characters from history, literature and popular culture.

YEAR THREE OVERVIEW

During the final year, students focus primarily on their thesis projects in the genre of their choice, beginning with a clearly stated objective and a well-articulated research strategy. The thesis project is begun in semester seven and represents the culmination of abilities and insights gained during the program.



*Character concept art by
New York Film Academy
student Magdalena Marinova*

SEMESTER SEVEN

ILLUSTRATING FOR INTERACTIVITY

E-Books and the pervasive migration of content to the web have revolutionized the way we interact with information—both written and visual—introducing motion, sound, time, and new forms of sequencing for an unprecedented level of engagement between author, medium, and audience. This class enables the development of E-Book and Web-based projects, while examining the social and cultural impact of interactive visual communication.

CHARACTER & CONCEPT ART FOR ENTERTAINMENT

The broadening scope of opportunities for illustrators in the entertainment business—from visualizing the atmosphere, assets, and characters who populate games to concept art for animated and live action films—provides fertile ground for this class. Students will pursue a series of assignments which encourage a closer look at creative possibilities and design decisions in narrative games and time-based art, producing a large volume of visual ideas from blue-line sketch to finished illustrations. Relevant issues such as color design, presentation methods, storyboarding, and communicating narratives will be addressed, and an overview of important developments in the profession will be included in the course.

THESIS DEVELOPMENT

Preparation for the student's culminating studio project, scholarly research, and final exhibition are the focus of this course, which is instrumental in defining the theoretical and practical parameters of a sizable project and starting work which will be completed in semester eight. Pursuit of a manageable, yet challenging, set of creative goals will begin as students submit a 10-20 page written plan, launching research into creative precedents related to their goals and objectives, and outlining an approach to successfully complete the work for Thesis and Exhibition.

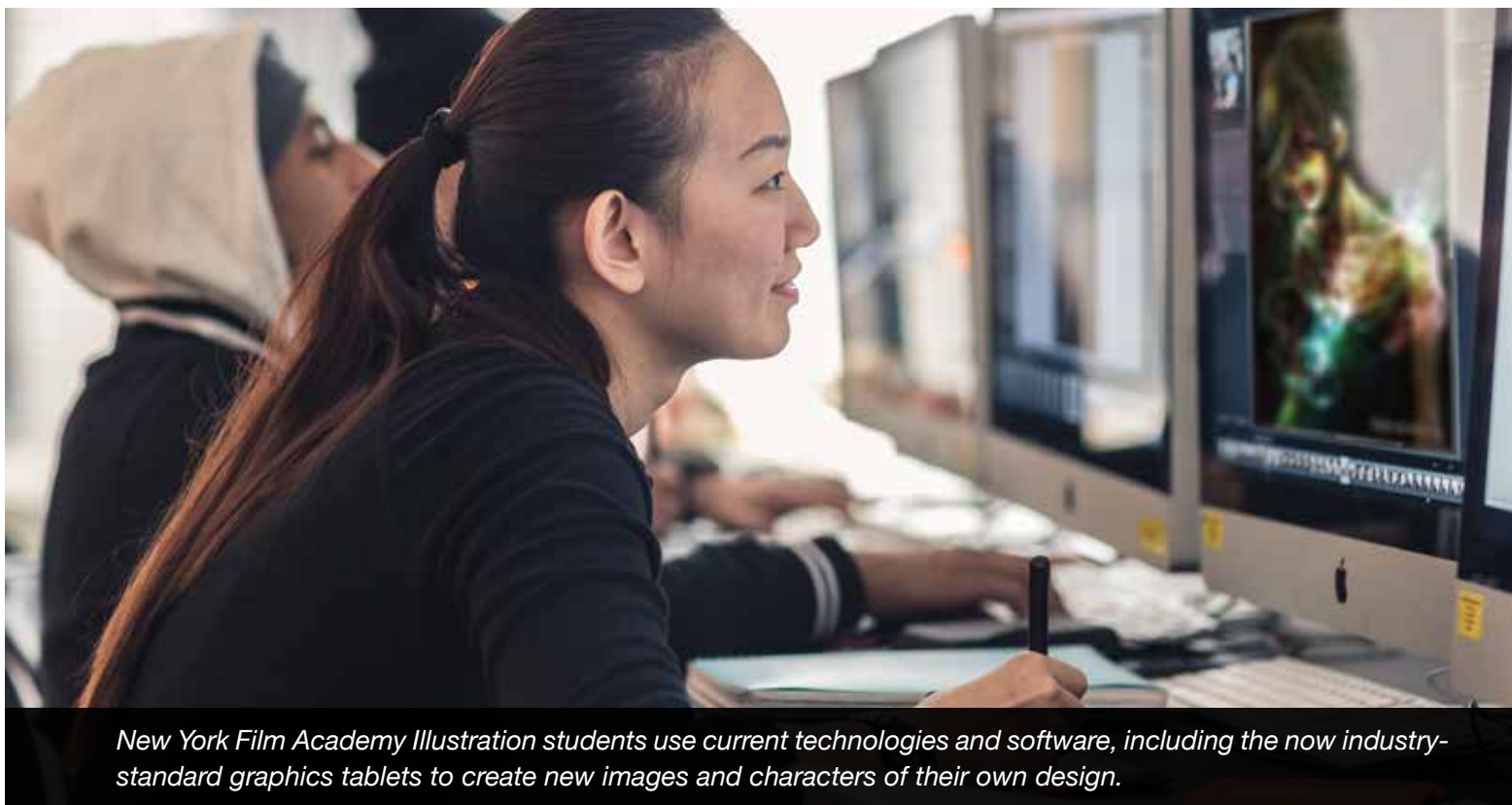
SEMESTER EIGHT

BUILDING A PORTFOLIO

The ideal illustrator's portfolio represents an excellent body of work, which presents a cohesive statement about creative potential and professional aspirations. An illustrator's prospects are only as good as the evidence of accomplishment provided. The portfolio must be a dynamic means of defining creative identity. Emphasis on developing a unified statement through professional quality work—both formally and conceptually—will be the goal.

ENTREPRENEURIAL BUSINESS PRACTICES FOR ILLUSTRATORS

This class examines legal, business, and entrepreneurial dimensions of an Illustration career, featuring expertise from visiting illustrators, art directors, publishers, and other industry creatives, and provides case studies that inspire and propel ideas. Students will engage in the development of a business plan for their own practice, seek genuine outlets for their work, and begin to cultivate a professional network of peers and clients.



New York Film Academy Illustration students use current technologies and software, including the now industry-standard graphics tablets to create new images and characters of their own design.

THESIS & EXHIBITION

During the final semester, illustration majors complete thesis projects begun in semester seven, and a group exhibition at the end of the term will feature work from the entire cohort of students. Having developed a clearly articulated set of thesis objectives and an outline for the thesis paper in semester seven, students submit to ongoing critical feedback from peers and faculty, engage in critical dialogue about their work as it nears completion, plan all aspects of their final exhibition, and complete a comprehensive, thoroughly documented, well-researched thesis paper of 10-20 pages in length.

PROFESSIONAL PROJECT

This practicum involves identifying and pursuing one or more illustration projects in a group studio setting. Teams of students are guided toward professional interaction with clients, engaging in meetings to receive client briefs, developing working relationships with clients, art directors, and other student collaborators, defining goals, establishing calendars and deadlines, presenting ideas from sketch to finish, and completing projects to professional standards. Having finished professional, “real-world” assignments, students will have taken the first steps toward emergence in the professional arena, and will complete their education with the added dimension of true professional experience.