

# **GUIDELINES FOR PREPARING THE MFA DOCUMENT**

UNIVERSITY OF MIAMI  
DEPARTMENT OF ART AND ART HISTORY  
1540 LEVANTE AVENUE  
REVISED 2021

## The MFA Document

The thesis requirement for a Master of Fine Arts candidate is a solo exhibition and a written support document discussing your artwork in terms of direction, influences, content, and process; it should also include high-quality visual samples of your work and the work of your influences. The document is an in-depth artist statement; your actual *thesis* is your exhibition. Beginning in Fall 2005, ART 699 "Exhibition Preparation" became a required course for all MFA students. The main component for passing ART 699 is to complete a workable draft of your written document. ART 699 is the pre-requisite for ART 810; the other requirement that must be completed before enrolling in ART 810 is admission to candidacy, which can be applied for after the completion of 30 credits.

Your written document should grow out of the artist statements you've been providing to your committee during your reviews: you should continue to provide your committee with your written work as you develop the document in ART 699; the final sign-off will require the approval of your committee, who might request changes after you've completed your work in ART 699. It is understood that you will want to add images of new work and possibly installation shots of your exhibit, and that you may need to rewrite some portions of your text as the work develops for your exhibition.

Your committee will approve your exhibition (and credits for ART 810) by signing the Thesis Defense form. This form and the signed approval page from the document are submitted to the Graduate School for their records. The department Graduate Director also signs off on the document and works with the Graduate School on your clearance for graduation: this involves certifying that you have completed the degree requirements and the approval of any transfer credits. The final step towards graduation involves making sure your file in the Graduate School is complete, as well as a financial clearance (this last part is between you and Student Financial Services).

The document needs to be flawlessly written, as if being prepared for publication, and it may have to go through a few drafts before it is approved. The length of the document needs to be 3,000-4,000 words: the number and size of images will determine the actual page count. Precision and consistency are essential features of any scholarly work or artist statement: what you write about your artwork needs to work in harmony with what the viewer will see in your exhibition.

### FORMAT DETAILS

The format of the final submitted document will be a PDF file but you should work on your drafts in Word in order to take advantage of spelling and grammar check, and the Track Changes options. Once the text has been completely edited, we suggest using a page layout program such as In Design so you can best control the spaces between text and images and establish text boxes for your captions. Larger images improve the look and readability of the document rather than wrapping text around smaller images.

For the document format, use 12-point type and 1-inch margins. The main text should be double spaced: as with all research papers, single spacing should be used for footnotes, indented quotations, image captions and the like. Captions (in a smaller font) should be placed on the same

page as the figure whenever space allows. If the image is too large to allow for a same page caption, place the information on the prior page.

Your document should include, in this order:

Title Page

Copyright page (optional: this can be included on the vita page at the end, instead)

Signature Page

Abstract

Dedication and/or Acknowledgement pages (optional)

Text

Bibliography (optional)

Checklist of the Exhibition (optional)

Vita (optional)

For the Title Page, Signature Page, and Abstract, please follow the format of the samples included at the end of these guidelines. The date of graduation will be “December 2021” for Fall, “May 2022” for Spring, and “August 2022” for Summer. The approval/signature page for your document asks for the name and academic rank of your committee members: double check your information before giving the signature page to your committee.

The first page of the text is numbered “1” at the bottom of the page with subsequent pages numbered in the upper right. The vita page is unnumbered: this should be a biography that includes some career highlights. Your total page count should be noted on the abstract.

An excellent addition to your exhibition (and document) is a checklist with a small image of each work in the show, but this is not required.

Once your committee has signed off on the document, prepare six hard copies: one for the department, one for each member of your committee, and one for your own records. Using a color laser printer is recommended over an ink jet printer. You also need to provide the department with a PDF version of the document.

### **Approval of defense:**

Your chair and committee members should sign two copies of the Thesis Defense form at the time of your successful defense, during your exhibition. Attach a copy of your abstract to each original certificate, and submit these originals to the Graduate Program Director. One stays in the department, the other copy goes to the Graduate School. A blank copy of this certificate is attached.

You need to apply for graduation (usually around the mid term). Applications are not held over from Fall to Spring, but your Spring application can be held over for the Summer terms.

The Department and the Graduate School do not issue your diploma. For information regarding the mailing of your diploma you must contact the office of Enrollment Services.

UNIVERSITY OF MIAMI

[TITLE IS CENTERED HERE - ALL CAPS]

By

Your Name, Upper and Lower Case

MFA DOCUMENT

Submitted to the Faculty  
of the University of Miami  
in partial fulfillment of the requirements for  
the degree of Master of Fine Arts

Coral Gables, Florida  
June 2021

UNIVERSITY OF MIAMI  
MFA document submitted in partial fulfillment of  
the requirements for the degree of  
Master of Fine Arts

TITLE IS CENTERED HERE--ALL CAPS  
Your Name, Upper and Lower case

Approved:

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Committee Chairperson's Name  
Rank (example: Professor of Art)

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Committee Member's Name  
Rank

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Committee Member's Name  
Rank

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Committee Member's Name  
Rank

# UNIVERSITY OF MIAMI GRADUATE SCHOOL

CERTIFICATE OF APPROVAL FOR  
MASTER OF FINE ARTS THESIS, DEPARTMENT OF ART AND ART HISTORY  
TO BE SIGNED AFTER SUCCESSFUL DEFENSE OF THE EXHIBITION

2 ORIGINALS REQUIRED

TO BE FILLED IN BY STUDENT; (PRINT OR TYPE):

NAME:

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I.D. #

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TITLE OF PROJECT:

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TO BE FILLED IN BY COMMITTEE MEMBERS (BLUE INK PREFERRED):

Certify 1) that this is the final corrected version of the MFA Document 2) that the exhibition and document have been approved by the committee and 3) that credit should be given as follows, with a grade of "S" for **6 credits**  
**ART 810 MASTER'S THESIS**

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CHAIRMAN PRINT YOUR NAME AND SIGN NEXT TO IT DATE

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COMMITTEE MEMBER PRINT YOUR NAME AND SIGN NEXT TO IT DATE

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COMMITTEE MEMBER PRINT YOUR NAME AND SIGN NEXT TO IT DATE

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COMMITTEE MEMBER PRINT YOUR NAME AND SIGN NEXT TO IT DATE

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Department Graduate Program Director

Date

## **Abstract**

Smith, Scott Lermann

M.F.A. Printmaking

Printmaking Explorations of Memories: Materials and Experience

May, 2002

Abstract of a Master's thesis at the University of Miami. Thesis supervised by Lise Drost.

Number of pages in text: 20

A written analysis of my experience and my artwork, tracing my influences through experience and choices of techniques and materials over a three year period of study in the University of Miami Master of Fine Arts program. The content of the work relates to corroding and dilapidating wood and metals, unkempt billboards, and weathered objects. The references relate to my experience growing up in an industrial and agricultural town in the Midwest, where I saw the beauty of corroded and weathered machinery and buildings.

## **Vita**

Scott Lermann Smith was born in Bay Village, Ohio, on March 8, 1970. His parents are John Lermann Smith and Judy Lippus Smith. He received his elementary education at Perkins Public Schools and his secondary education at Perkins High School. In August of 1968 he entered Hillsdale College pursuing a Liberal Arts degree. In January of 1990 he transferred to Ohio University from which he was graduated with the BFA degree in June 1994. During the summer and Fall of 1994, he was a printer's assistant at the Vinalhaven Press in Maine.

In the spring 1995 he became the Head of Production at Island T-shirt Sales in Hilton Head, South Carolina. In the Fall of 1995 he became a Master Printer at Universal Limited Art Editions (ULAE) in Long Island, New York, and Galamander Press in New York City.

In August 1999 he was awarded a full teaching assistantship and tuition scholarship to the Graduate School of the University of Miami where he was a member of Who's Who among Students in American Universities and Colleges and granted the degree of Master of Fine Arts in May 2002.

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