

ITEM 140-2005-R0908

**Master of Arts in Art History, MSU-Bozeman**

**THAT:**

The Board of Regents of Higher Education authorizes Montana State University-Bozeman to establish a Master of Arts in Art History.

**EXPLANATION:**

The Master of Arts in Art History is a natural expansion of graduate studies within the School of Art, and is intended to balance and complement the thriving M.F.A. program in Studio Art. This program would contribute significantly to the presence of the liberal arts on a campus traditionally known for science, business, and nursing. Over the last five years, the department has accommodated increased enrollments in art history in response to the growth of the Gallatin Valley as a living community and the growth of art history as a discipline nationally. It is the department's objective both to provide MSU students with the high quality, accessible educational opportunities mandated by the Board of Regents and to reach out to students within the Northern Rockies with the opportunity to acquire visual and critical thinking skills that will make them more competitive in a global environment. This program would allow the School of Art to utilize its full range of educational resources by enabling the art history faculty to share their considerable expertise in post-graduate teaching, research, writing, publication, and service work with students who would otherwise seek an advanced degree and employment outside the Montana University System.

What will distinguish this program from others will be a commitment to: 1. establishing Montana's students as a vibrant presence within the national scholarly community via seminar presentations, teaching experiences, and campus and national colloquia and 2. building the School of Art's teaching and visual media infrastructure to accommodate outreach to distance learners and resource sharing with the nation's preeminent museums, archives, and universities. Additionally, the presence of art history graduate students at MSU will contribute richly to the development of graduate education in the humanities, facilitating a robust exchange about the nature, intent, and history of art creation and interpretation—a scholarly dialogue which in turn will foster collegiality and professionalism among students as they prepare to enter the professional world. A final overarching goal will be to provide the Gallatin Valley and Yellowstone regions with a much-needed in-state resource for the analysis, preservation, and discussion of a unique artistic legacy. Art history faculty will encourage graduate projects that incorporate Montana's richly diverse material culture, from the indigenous art of American Indians to the imported artifacts of European homesteaders, within a broader thematic approach to North American culture. By providing the institutional structure for facilitating contact with and discussion among academics, artists, collectors, and business people, the School of Art will affirm the Board of Regents' call to create "an environment of ideas and excellence that nurtures social, economic, and cultural development."

**ATTACHMENTS:**