

Applying to Visual and Performing Arts Programs



Types of Institutions



- Four-Year Colleges/Universities (UC/CSU)
- Four-Year Performing and Visual Art Schools (CalArts)
- Conservatories (San Francisco Conservatory of Music)
- Vocational/Technical Colleges (Expressions)

Types of Degrees



- Bachelor of Arts (BA): 50 % liberal arts & sciences; 50% coursework in the arts.
- Bachelor of Fine Arts (BFA): 30% liberal arts; 70 % coursework in the arts.
- Bachelor of Architecture (BArch): 30% liberal arts; 70% coursework in the arts.
- Bachelor of Music (BM): Designed to train graduates to be professionals in their field.

Important Questions to Ask



- Location
- Student-to-faculty ratio
- Facilities
- Reputation and retention rates
- Admissions Qualifications/Criteria
- Are internships supported? Does the school promote their graduates? Who are their alumni?
- Are career development services offered to help students become successfully employed?

Selecting a Program



- Learn the requirements: Portfolio? Audition? Writing Sample?
- Consider the student's artistic needs, location, financial situation and long term goals.
- Compare departments/programs, not schools.
- Use social media sites and student blogs.
- Visual and Performing Arts College Fair in San Francisco October 23, 2011

Make an Impression



- Attend presentations from admissions directors.
- Email the department and ask about their program.
- Ask for a person to contact; either a professor or a current student.
- Visit the campus, read the campus newspaper.
- Sit in on a class.
- Attend a National Portfolio Day event:
www.portfolioday.net

Application and Essay



- Begin the application process as early as possible.
- Early decision, early action, rolling admissions
- Make a personal connection through an interview.
- Schools look for the student's ability to intelligently talk about their work, their goals and their passion for the arts.
- The essay “fills in the blanks” of their application.
- How many applications? One reach, one “safety” and 3 – 4 target schools.

Theater & Film Applications



- Resume including projects, credits and awards for creative work
- Writing Samples i.e. personal essay, critical essay on film; screenplay or character profile
- Film/video samples
- Interview – be prepared to state your goals and how their program can help you to reach them
- Letters of Recommendation

Portfolio Guidelines



- In addition to your essay, this is your chance to communicate who you are.
- Observational art: the image should be taken from real life.
- Personal art: work done outside the classroom; drawing, painting, photography, mixed media, film/video, etc.
- Specific work required by a particular institution.
- Recent work: colleges usually only want to see work done in the past year or two.

Audition Guidelines



- For dance auditions, prepare a solo piece of 1 – 3 minutes in length.
- For music auditions, some institutions recommend knowing the audition repertoire requirements a year before the audition.
- For theater programs, two contrasting monologues; find out requirements, most are limited to two minutes/piece.
- For musical theater, also be prepared for a group dance audition and a singing audition with two musical theater songs.

Summer Opportunities



- Build your portfolio or practice auditioning.
- Consider a pre-college program.
- UCLA Summer Institutes - 2 and 6 week programs in theater performance, studio art and creative writing.
- San Francisco Art Institute – Summer pre-college 5 week program with supplemental portfolio workshop.
- California College of the Arts (CCA) – 4 week pre-college program.

Think About Volunteering



- Theater majors: look for local drama groups that could use your help.
- Dance majors: volunteer to choreograph for younger dancers or teach senior citizens how to dance.
- Art majors: look for programs that need volunteers with your skills such as childcare centers.
- Art and technology majors: look for organizations that can use your skills; start a club at your high school.
- **volunteermatch.org; dosomething.org**



- **www.collegeconfidential.com**
- **www.petersons.com**
- **www.studentsreview.com**
- **www.collegeprowler.com**

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