

SCHOOL OF THE ART INSTITUTE OF CHICAGO

SAIC MASTER OF ARTS IN ART THERAPY AND COUNSELING

PROGRAM GUIDE AND ADMISSIONS APPLICATION INFORMATION

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PHILOSOPHY

MAATC PROGRAM DESCRIPTION

MAATC at SAIC provides comprehensive education in art therapy and counseling for students interested in art therapy practice as citizen-artists, clinicians, and researchers.

During the program, students gain familiarity with the creative process while honing rigorous therapeutic skill, enabling them to work ethically and effectively with diverse clients across practice settings.

The studio, the critique, and the creative community of SAIC are not peripheral to art therapy training; they are constitutive of it.

Central to this mission is the program's unique location within a world-class school of art and design. The MAATC is not simply a clinical training program housed incidentally within an arts institution; it is a program whose identity is fundamentally shaped by that context.

The curriculum makes this relationship explicit by building interdisciplinary exchange into the program's structure through the studio elective requirement.

The program prepares students who can move fluidly between the roles of artist, therapist, and researcher, who understand the studio as both a personal practice and a therapeutic tool, and who bring rigorous analytical and ethical thinking to every dimension of their work.

Graduates are equipped to practice across a range of clinical and community settings, contribute to the growing body of art therapy scholarship, and advocate for the field's place within broader conversations about health, creativity, and human flourishing.

60

CREDITS

2

YEAR CURRICULAR
MODEL

700

SUPERVISED
PRACTICAL HOURS

1 of 3

GRADUATE ART THERAPY PROGRAMS IN A
US SCHOOL OF ART AND DESIGN

FIFTY YEARS OF ART THERAPY AT SAIC

1970s



EARLY COURSES

Art therapy courses have been offered at SAIC since the early 1970s.

1979



CERTIFICATE PROGRAM FOUNDED

Chicago artist, educator, and art therapy pioneer Don Seiden founded a 36-credit post-baccalaureate certificate program.

1985



GRADUATE PROGRAM LAUNCHED

Its success led to the launch of a 60-credit graduate program, making the MAATC the longest-established professional art therapy program in Illinois and the first MA program at SAIC.

1990-2001



RANDY VICK, CHAIR

With Seiden's retirement in 1990, Professor Emeritus Randy Vick served as chair. Vick was a respected educator, clinician, and researcher with a focus in mental health, rehabilitation, and work with disability studios.

2001-2021



CATHY MOON, CHAIR

The author of numerous publications, Professor Emerita Cathy Moon has been a leading figure in contemporary art therapy, with work focused on critical theory, community-based art therapy as emancipatory practice, cross-cultural and international art therapy work, and ethical practices in global collaboration.

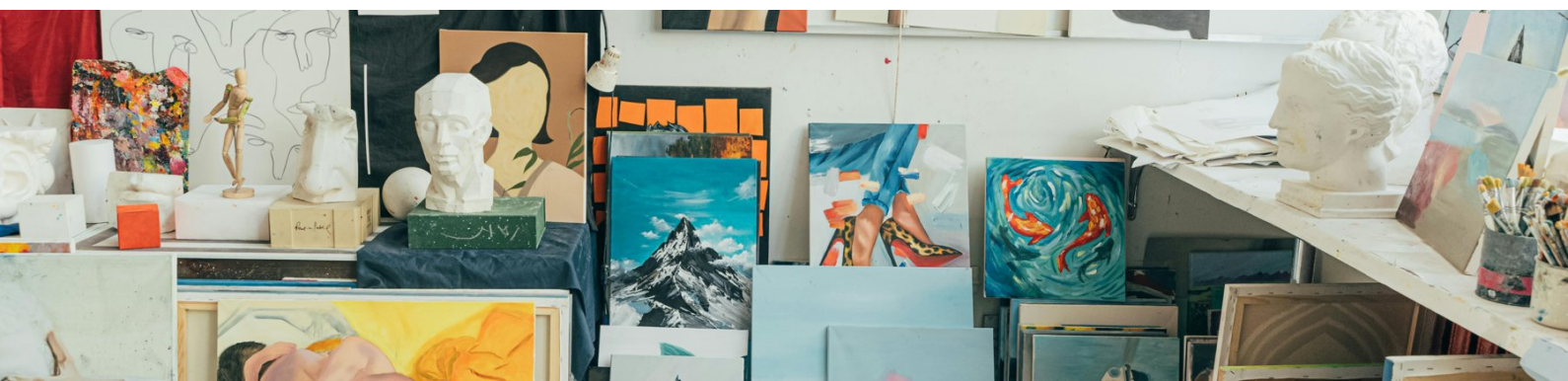
1989-2022



APPROVAL AND ACCREDITATION

Since 1989 the MAATC has been an approved program designated by the Education and Program Approval Board (EPAB) of the American Art Therapy Association. Since the dissolution of EPAB in 2008, the program has been accredited by the Accreditation Council for Art Therapy Education (ACATE) since 2022.

SAIC's 60-credit MAATC program has provided a comprehensive education designed to prepare students for entry-level professional practice as art therapists. A major draw for applicants is the history of the program, its reputation in the field of art therapy, and program faculty who are highly regarded for their scholarship. Prospective students frequently cite faculty research as a key factor in their decision to apply.



A 60-CREDIT COURSE SEQUENCE

The MAATC program fosters an environment for students to build clinical skills, arts-based inquiry, and scholarly practices that are central to art therapy and mental health counseling professions. The MAATC degree is composed of a rigorously structured, 60-credit course sequence that addresses the educational standards of both the Accreditation of Educational Programs in Art Therapy (ACATE) and the two-tiered Illinois professional counselor license as outlined by the Illinois Department of Financial and Professional Regulation (IDFPR).

The MAATC program meets or exceeds all educational guidelines of the American Art Therapy Association. It also provides the current academic requirements necessary for graduates to apply for the Registered Art Therapist credential (ATR) and the Board-Certified credential (ATR-BC) with the Art Therapy Credentials Board (ATCB), and to apply for the Illinois Licensed Professional Counselor (LPC) and Licensed Clinical Professional Counselor (LCPC) exams.

Extensive practical experience is an integral part of the program and provides students with the opportunity to apply academic concepts to real world experience. Students complete a minimum of 700 practical hours under required supervision prior to graduation.

Field experience (practicum and internship) begins during the first year with observation and builds towards structured interaction with participants at fieldwork sites. This is complemented with focused assignments and supervision on-site at the fieldwork placement and in SAIC art therapy coursework.

SAIC's MAATC program requires a minimum of 700 hours of field experience over the course of four semesters.

In addition to meeting the required clinical and professional content areas, the program provides opportunities for students to integrate studio practice and psychological theory into their studies. During the second year of the MAATC program, students are able to further define their ideas and practices into a culminating project during two capstone experiences.

1 · THESIS OR ARTS-BASED RESEARCH PROJECT

Each student completes a 6-credit thesis or arts-based research project on an art therapy topic of their choosing, under the guidance of a faculty advisor across two semesters.

2 · EXHIBITION

The second capstone experience is an exhibition, through which studio practice and psychological theory are brought together and presented publicly.

INTERNATIONAL STUDENTS · CURRICULAR PRACTICAL TRAINING

International students with F-1 visa status are required to turn in a Curricular Practical Training (CPT) form to the International Affairs Office for each practicum/fieldwork site prior to the start of each semester of practicum/fieldwork experience. Failure to do so jeopardizes the student's visa status.

COURSE SEQUENCE

The following presents the 60-credit course sequence, organized across five semesters. The sequence reflects the program's 2-year model, the two-pronged pairing of arts-based and theory-focused clinical courses each semester, and the scaffolded progression from foundational knowledge through practical skills to synthesis and independent research.

FALL 2027		15 CREDITS
ARTTHER 5001	Art Practice for Exhibitions	3 cr
STUDIO	Studio Elective	3 cr
ARTTHER 6001	Fieldwork I	1.5 cr
ARTTHER 6002	Ethical and Legal Issues I	1.5 cr
ARTTHER 5003	Theory and Practice in Art Therapy and Counseling	3 cr
ARTTHER 5002	Psychopathology	3 cr
WINTER 2027		3 CREDITS
ARTTHER 5025	Counseling Techniques	3 cr
SPRING 2028		15 CREDITS
ARTTHER 5009	Research in Art Therapy	3 cr
STUDIO	Community Art Practice	3 cr
ARTTHER 6008	Social and Cultural Foundations	3 cr
ARTTHER 5010	Human Growth and Development	3 cr
ARTTHER 6003	Ethical and Legal Issues II	1.5 cr
ARTTHER 6001	Fieldwork II	1.5 cr
SUMMER 2028		6 CREDITS
ARTTHER 6006	Prof Development and Career Counseling	3 cr
ARTTHER 6018	Family and Couples Art Therapy	3 cr
FALL 2028		12 CREDITS
ARTTHER 5019	Group Art Therapy	3 cr
ARTTHER 6010	Thesis I	3 cr
ARTTHER 6007	Substance Use and Trauma	3 cr
ARTTHER 6001	Fieldwork III	3 cr
SPRING 2029		12 CREDITS
ARTTHER 5008	Assessment and Evaluation in Art Therapy	3 cr
ARTTHER 6001	Fieldwork III	3 cr
STUDIO	Studio Elective	3 cr
ARTTHER 6010	Thesis II	3 cr
TOTAL		60 CREDITS

THIRTEEN CONTENT AREAS

The MAATC degree requirements are closely monitored to meet ACATE standards and IDFPR application eligibility to enable graduates to pursue Illinois state mental health licensure and art therapy registration. The educational standards of the American Art Therapy Association are mirrored in the content areas outlined in the Illinois Counseling Licensure standards. The IDFPR requires thirteen content areas to represent the knowledge base that has been adapted into core classes within our curriculum. **All required content areas are taught by art therapists or qualified related professionals.**

AREA	REQUIRED CONTENT AREA
A	Human Growth and Development
B	Counseling Theory
C	Counseling Techniques
D	Group Dynamics, Processing and Counseling
E	Appraisal of Individuals
F	Research and Evaluation
G	Professional, Legal and Ethical Responsibilities Relating to Professional Counseling, Including Illinois Law
H	Social and Cultural Foundations
I	Lifestyle and Career Development
J	Practicum / Internship
K	Psychopathology and Maladaptive Behavior
L	Substance Abuse
M	Family Dynamics

COURSE SCHEDULING

The 2-Year MAATC Course Sequence and art therapy course descriptions provide the courses and number of credits offered from each of the above areas. All art therapy graduate students are provided with assistance with course scheduling through graduate academic advising. MAATC courses are offered only once per academic year, and all days and times are subject to change. Students must work with the MAATC Program Director and assigned academic advisor to determine an appropriate course schedule that meets degree requirements.

STUDIO CLASSES AND TIME TO DEGREE

Students have the opportunity to complete studio classes within the 2-year course sequence. An elective non-studio course may be substituted for one studio. Students have a maximum of five years to complete the degree, including time off for approved leaves-of-absence.

FINANCIAL AID NOTE

Financial aid award letters indicate how many credits the aid is packaged for. Students who will be taking fewer credits in a given semester than is indicated in their award letter should notify the Student Financial Services Office.

SAMPLE COURSES & PROGRAM HIGHLIGHTS

STUDIO + THEORY

ART PRACTICE FOR EXHIBITIONS

This course bridges the epistemological divide between the clinic and the studio by exploring a dialogue between art therapy and art history, theory, and criticism. It examines approaches to art materials, then builds a case for exhibition as a core practice of the profession — establishing the artist-researcher thread that carries through the full arc of the program.

HISTORY + THEORY

HISTORICAL AND THEORETICAL PERSPECTIVES OF ART THERAPY AND COUNSELING

This course introduces the foundational theories and clinical orientations shaping the field, drawing from psychodynamic, humanistic, developmental, and relational perspectives. Through close reading, reflective writing, and sustained inquiry, students develop a personal theoretical orientation and the scholarly skills that ground their second-year thesis.

01 PRACTICAL EXPERIENCE: PRACTICUM & FIELDWORK

All fieldwork hours are supervised by faculty at the school who are Registered Art Therapists and Board Certified (ATR-BC). Students are also supervised by qualified professionals at their fieldwork site who are licensed/credentialed art therapists and/or registered art therapists.

- A minimum of two distinct fieldwork sites, to ensure experience with diverse populations
- A broad experience is encouraged: one site focused on children or adolescents, one on adults or older adults
- The Associate Director of Clinical Education assists students in selecting sites uniquely suited to the student's educational goals

02 ARTS-BASED RESEARCH PROJECT OR THESIS

As a culminating feature of the curriculum, each student completes a 6-credit thesis or arts-based research project on an art therapy topic of their choosing, considered through the three components of the program's mission statement. A faculty advisor works closely with each student through two semesters, and a formal presentation of the project is required of all students.

03 FACULTY

The professional knowledge and experience of the faculty ensures superior instruction in studio art, art therapy, and counseling. Faculty scholarly and studio interests are evidenced by their publications, research, professional presentations, exhibitions, innovative developments in practice, curatorial projects, involvement in state and national professional associations, service on editorial boards of professional journals, and ongoing involvement in professional practice.

CONTRIBUTIONS OF GRADUATES

PRACTICE, SCHOLARSHIP, AND LEADERSHIP

SAIC graduates have made outstanding contributions in many areas of the arts, health, and human service professions. As active professionals, they have made contributions in the areas of research, exhibitions, conference presentations, publications, organizational leadership, journal editorial review boards, and teaching.

MAATC students, faculty, and alumni have been influential in the development of the art therapy profession in the Midwest, nationally, and internationally.

Read selected interviews with SAIC MAATC alumni at saic.edu/academics/departments/art-therapy/alumni

WHERE GRADUATES WORK AS ART THERAPISTS

- | | |
|------------------------------------|---|
| – Geriatric care facilities | – Psychiatric hospitals |
| – Medical centers | – Community mental health centers |
| – Therapeutic schools | – Correctional institutions |
| – Physical rehabilitation programs | – Community-based studios and other sites |

PROFESSIONAL CONTRIBUTIONS

- | | |
|----------------------------|-----------------------------------|
| – Research | – Organizational leadership |
| – Exhibitions | – Journal editorial review boards |
| – Conference presentations | – Teaching |
| – Publications | |

RYAN GOLDEN KIRKPATRICK, LAC, ATR-P

Assistant Professor, School of Art, Arizona State University

Ryan Golden Kirkpatrick is an artist, musician, Licensed Associate Counselor (LAC), and Board-Certified Art Therapist (ATR-BC) whose practice bridges studio art, music, and therapeutic care. Currently serving as Assistant Professor in the School of Art at Arizona State University, Ryan brings a multidisciplinary lens to art therapy education — weaving together somatic awareness, creative expression, and clinical practice. His work invites students and clients alike to explore identity, resilience, and the transformative potential of the arts in healing contexts.

AWARDS

- Millie Manlove Rea Scholarship Recipient, 2022–23
- Chicago Makers Fund Grant Recipient, 2021–22
- Dedalus Foundation Fellowship Nominee, 2020–21

SOLO EXHIBITIONS

- *Under an Avalanche* (solo performance), Schafer Gallery, San Francisco, CA · 2020
- *We Are All Born Diamonds*, Schafer Gallery, San Francisco, CA · 2019
- *Forever, Forever*, Paul Sack Gallery, San Francisco, CA · 2019

SELECTED WORK & RECOGNITION

ASSISTANT PROFESSOR OF ART THERAPY

School of Art, Arizona State University · Tempe, AZ

- Building a comprehensive, inclusive, and generative undergraduate art therapy program
- Researching the convergence of art therapy, contemporary art, social linguistics, art education, and critical response process
- Researching the therapeutic possibilities of sound art therapy
- Teaching Expanded Arts and Art Therapy undergraduate courses (Spring '25)

ART THERAPIST & CLINICAL COUNSELOR

Thresholds · Chicago, IL · 2022–current

- Provides mental healthcare for adults with Serious Mental Illness in 1:1 and group formats
- Designs, builds, and facilitates community art therapy groups
- Co-facilitates art therapy open studio access
- Provides community mental health outreach and support
- Documents, charts, and outreach SMI populations for services



Separation Information 5

Acrylic and Flashe on canvas, 12" × 12"

ANNA SEO, ATR-P

Anna Seo is an Asian art therapist, artist, and researcher graduating from the Art Therapy and Counseling program at the School of the Art Institute of Chicago. Her work explores trauma, loss, and mourning, with a focus on symbolic expression as a pathway to healing. She is passionate about creating spaces where personal stories and cultural memories can be shared and expressed through art.



Connection, 2024

Wire, paper and fabric mâché, with integrated LED light fixtures

SELECTED WORK & RECOGNITION

2025 ART THERAPY: JOURNAL OF THE AMERICAN ART THERAPY ASSOCIATION

Vol. 42, Issue 1, p. 24

Challenges of Art Therapists Implementing Art Therapy for Achievement Gaps in Korean School

ABSTRACT

This collaborative autoethnography explores the experiences of two art therapists who designed and implemented art therapy programs for achievement gaps in schools in Korea. Four discussion points emerged: (1) the inherent societal and cultural values of school art therapists and their impact in the therapy room; (2) the reconceptualization of the role of art therapy within the school; (3) the necessity for art therapists to demonstrate flexibility and creativity; and (4) the recognition of establishing a support system for school-based art therapists. This experiential research provides a multifaceted understanding of art therapy within the Korean school context and offers practical insights based on our experiences.

AREAS OF FOCUS

- Trauma and loss
- Symbolic expression
- Mourning
- Cultural memory
- Art-based research

WINNIE WONG, LCPC, ATR-BC

An EMDR-trained clinician and SAIC MAATC graduate (2021), Winnie works at the YWCA providing long-term trauma therapy to survivors of sexual violence using anti-oppressive, feminist frameworks. She supervises therapists, oversees clinical internship programming, and delivers professional training on crisis intervention. An elected Council Member on ACATE, she shapes art therapy education nationally. She is also the founder of Dialogue in Art — a community art studio in Hong Kong serving underserved youth during sociopolitical unrest — and contributes to the field as a journal reviewer and international conference presenter.

AREAS OF PRACTICE

- Trauma therapy
- EMDR
- Anti-oppressive practice
- ACATE Council
- Community arts

SELECTED PUBLICATIONS

2025 INTERNATIONAL JOURNAL OF ART THERAPY

Identity and Belongingness of Asian Art Therapy Educators: Critical Art-Based Collaborative Autoethnography

2025 ART THERAPY JOURNAL

Reinforcing the Neurobiological Foundation of Art Therapy Assessment and Treatment: Integrating ETC and SIBAM

2024 ART THERAPY JOURNAL

Emergent Well-Being: A Qualitative Study on Cultural Identity and Belonging of Emigrated Hong Kongers Post-2019



Walk Me Home (2021) · Saugatuck, MI

Hydrocol, hydro-printed images, mixed media · Installation

CREDENTIALS, LICENSURE, AND PROFESSIONAL ETHICS

PROFESSIONAL DEVELOPMENT

The Department of Art Therapy and Counseling offers MAATC students and alumni the opportunity to work with a Credentialing Specialist, available to assist with questions related to obtaining professional credentials or licensure, including researching international credentials.

Completing the MAATC is the first step toward obtaining professional credentials. Students should anticipate additional post-graduate requirements including application fees and processes, documentation of hours of supervised professional experience, and examination(s). Professional Licensed Counseling Disclosures are routinely updated on the SAIC art therapy website.

Applicants are encouraged to research licensure standards in the state or country in which they plan to practice, because requirements and availability vary by jurisdiction. **SAIC cannot guarantee that graduates of the MAATC program will be eligible to apply for professional practice licenses in other states or countries.**

RECORDS AND EXAMINATIONS

It is the responsibility of the student to maintain careful records of all syllabi and applicable fieldwork and professional hours. The rules in these areas can change at any time and vary state by state, and reconstructing a complete professional dossier years later may be difficult if not impossible.

Graduates who choose to apply for the Licensed Professional Counselor exam in Illinois, or a similar exam in other states, are strongly advised to do so immediately following completion of the degree, as requirements are periodically revised. Study manuals and test-preparation courses are widely available, and the MAATC program covers the content areas required by the licensure board.

PROFESSIONAL ETHICS

Students and faculty in the SAIC art therapy program abide by following the professional ethical codes of the following organizations.

01 AMERICAN ART THERAPY ASSOCIATION

Ethical Principles for Art Therapists
arttherapy.org/aata-ethics.html

02 ART THERAPY CREDENTIALS BOARD

Code of Ethics, Conduct and Disciplinary Procedures
atcb.org/ethics/

03 AMERICAN COUNSELING ASSOCIATION

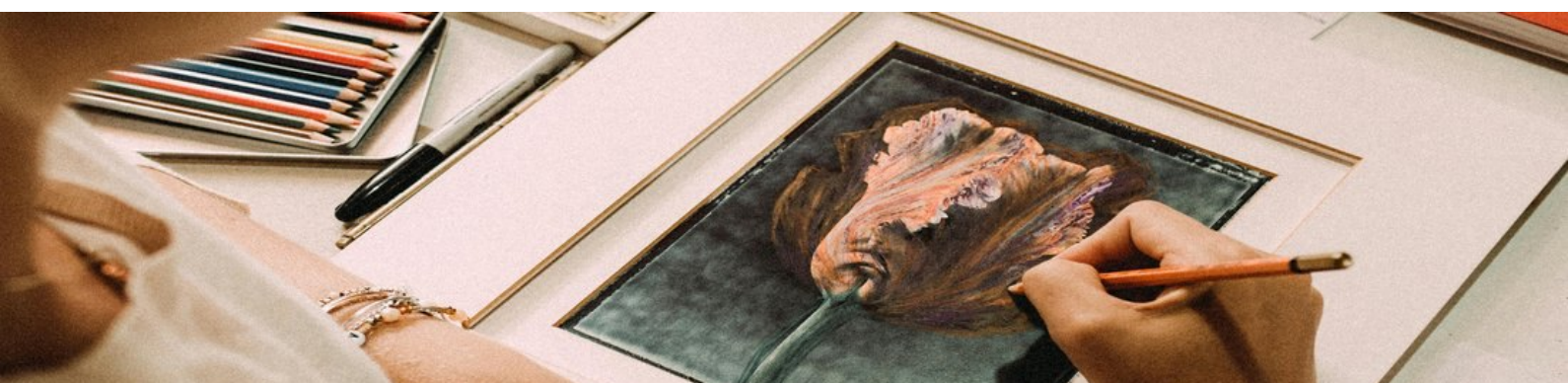
Code of Ethics
counseling.org/Resources/CodeOfEthics/TP/Home/CT2.aspx

04 ART THERAPY MULTICULTURAL / DIVERSITY COMPETENCIES

Revisions 2015
arttherapy.org/upload/Multicultural/

PERFORMANCE STANDARDS

Academic Good Standing and Academic Dismissal are determined by the SAIC Policies and apply to all graduate students.



SCHOLARS, ARTISTS, CLINICIANS

MAATC faculty are internationally recognized practitioners whose scholarship, artistic practice, and clinical expertise actively shape the field of art therapy. Prospective students consistently cite faculty research as a defining factor in their decision to apply.

Leah Ra'chel Gipson, LCPC, ATR-BC

Associate Professor / Art Therapist

Gipson's research bridges community and clinical practice, examining the historical and civic impact of art therapy. Drawing on training in both art therapy (MAAT, SAIC) and theology (MTS, McCormick), her work explores how cultural traditions inform practices of care. Recent publications include chapters in *Modernism, Art, Therapy* (Yale, 2024) and *Confabulations* (Bloomsbury, 2026).

COMMUNITY PRACTICE · ART THERAPY HISTORY · THEOLOGY & CARE

Elia Khalaf, PhD, LMHC, ATR-BC

Counselor Educator / Art Therapist

Dr. Khalaf's practice bridges Eastern wisdom and Western science, applying art therapy, mindfulness, somatic practices, and EMDR to support BIPOC and LGBTQIA+ communities. Their 2025 publication in the *International Journal of Art Therapy* explored nature-based art therapy honoring Black lives. They have presented at the International School of Analytic Psychology in Zurich.

QUEER THEORY · BIPOC COMMUNITIES · NATURE-BASED THERAPY

Savneet Talwar, PhD, ATR-BC

Interdisciplinary Fiber Artist / Art Therapist

With over 35 years in the field, Dr. Talwar's work sits at the intersection of archives, memory, feminist politics, and resistance. Her book *Art Therapy for Social Justice: Radical Intersection* (2019) is widely used in programs nationally and internationally. She is currently co-authoring *Ecologies of Care: Home and Public Practices in the Creative Arts Therapies*.

CRITICAL CULTURAL STUDIES · SOCIAL JUSTICE · FEMINIST POLITICS

Sandie Yi, PhD, ATR-BC

Assistant Professor

An SAIC MAATC alumna (2005) with an MFA from UC Berkeley and PhD from UIC, Dr. Yi's research centers on disability studies, access pedagogy, and disability culture-informed art therapy. She is Co-Director of Bodies of Work: Network of Disability Art and Culture, and a recipient of the 3Arts and Wynn Newhouse Awards.

DISABILITY STUDIES · ACCESS PEDAGOGY · DISABILITY CULTURE



PREPARATION FOR GRADUATE EDUCATION IN ART THERAPY

The MAATC program is based on a two-year curricular model. Application is open to any person who has received a bachelor's degree from an accredited institution and has the required prerequisite courses. Students enter the program in the fall semester only. The final deadline for application for enrollment during the 2026–2027 academic year is January 10, 2027. Select applicants may be invited for an interview; however, an interview is not necessarily required for an admission decision.

Whereas the undergraduate experience tends to be broad and exploratory, the focus of a graduate education is specific to professional development in a particular discipline. Persons interested in the MAATC program are encouraged to think beyond mere application to the program and concentrate on their active preparation for professional education in art therapy. This preparation includes building a background of excellence in the classroom, studio, and workplace.

RECOMMENDATIONS FOR PREPARING TO PURSUE A GRADUATE DEGREE IN ART THERAPY

- Complete all prerequisite coursework.
- Read art therapy literature to become familiar with the field.
- Engage in ongoing artistic practice through courses or independent work.
- Gain substantial volunteer or paid experience with special populations in human service settings.
- Talk with professionals in art therapy to gain a better understanding of the nature of the field.
- Attend a Graduate SAIC Days session hosted by the Admissions Office at SAIC.
- Read available information about a variety of art therapy graduate programs to better understand the philosophical, theoretical, and practical differences among them.
- Engage in life experiences that expand cultural awareness, sensitivity, and knowledge.
- Participate in personal psychotherapy/counseling – with an art therapist if possible.
- Attend educational and organizational activities of state and national art therapy associations and related fields.

These and other activities not only strengthen a candidate's application, but also lay the foundation for an enriching graduate education experience. They enable the candidate to:

- Expand knowledge about the art therapy field.
- Develop a better understanding of work in human service settings.
- Gain first-hand experience of the profession.
- Enhance academic and arts-based preparedness for graduate school.
- Make an informed decision about pursuing graduate education in art therapy, based on awareness of personal interests, abilities, strengths, and weaknesses.

PREREQUISITES

THIRTY CREDITS BEFORE THE FIRST SEMESTER

Program admission prerequisite courses may be taken as part of a bachelor's degree or independent of a degree program, as long as they are taken for undergraduate credit through an accredited college or university. The minimum program course prerequisites consist of 30 semester-hour (or equivalent) credits in the subject areas listed. These courses must be successfully completed prior to the start of the first MAATC semester.

While candidates may be enrolled in some of this coursework at the time of application, all prerequisites must be successfully completed prior to entering the program. Candidates are asked to document any missing or in-process prerequisites as part of their online application.

18

**STUDIO ART
PROFICIENCY CREDITS**

12

**FOUNDATIONAL THEORIES
OF PSYCHOLOGY CREDITS**

Psychology prerequisites require Developmental Psychology and Abnormal Psychology courses.

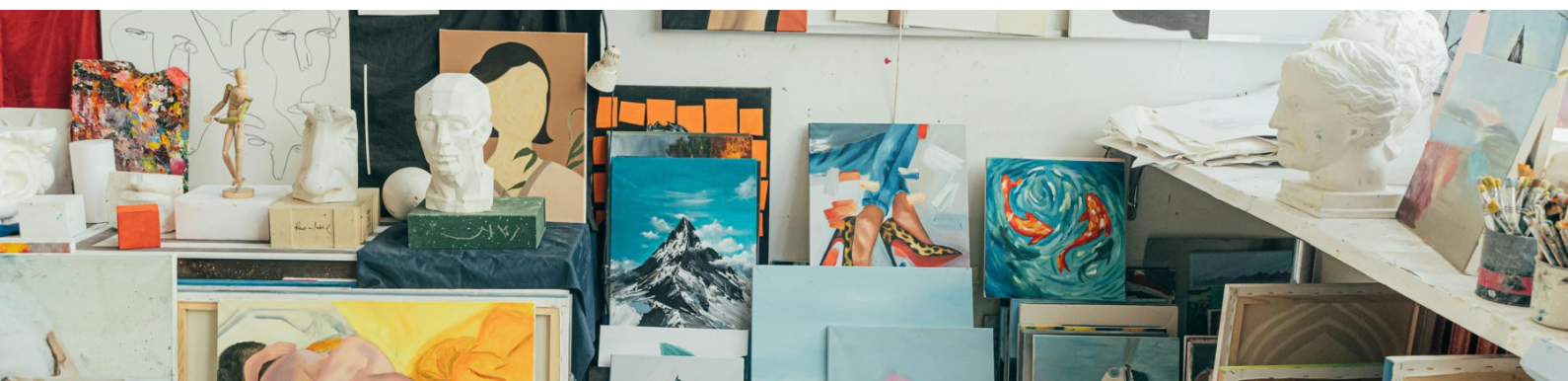
Candidates with nine or more outstanding credits at the time of application should consider postponing their application in order to complete the missing courses.

EVALUATION OF APPLICANTS

THE BEST POSSIBLE MATCH

The primary goal of the MAATC application and admission process is to ensure the best possible match between the program's requirements and offerings, and the candidate's strengths, professional interests, and educational needs. In order to achieve this match, candidates are carefully evaluated in the following areas: studio prerequisites and portfolio, academic performance, relevant human service experience, interpersonal skills, professionalism, and overall readiness for graduate education in art therapy.

It is the responsibility of the applicant to ensure that each of these areas is directly and adequately addressed in the application materials submitted. Given the competitive nature of the admission process, significant deficiencies in one or more of these areas is likely to undermine an applicant's chances for acceptance into the MAATC program.



AREAS OF EVALUATION

01 STUDIO PREREQUISITES AND PORTFOLIO

The applicant must have a minimum of 18 semester credits in studio art courses — those focused on experiential learning in the media, tools, and methods of art. Equivalency of non-academic studio art experience is considered only in exceptional circumstances. The applicant must submit an electronic portfolio of 10 images that documents focused artistic practice in one or two areas of studio work. Evaluation of this portfolio includes consideration of technical skills, conceptual and expressive abilities, and the development of a cohesive body of work. Artwork concentrated in a single medium or with a particular thematic focus is often the best way to demonstrate these abilities.

02 ACADEMIC PERFORMANCE

The applicant's transcripts are reviewed for completion of prerequisite course work, as well as for overall academic achievement, with special attention paid to success in studio art and psychology courses. Letters of reference from college or university faculty are also taken into consideration relative to accomplishments in the academic realm. For students who have been out of school for some time, workplace references may be more relevant. **Candidates missing and not currently enrolled in three or more prerequisite courses at the time of application should consider delaying application until the following year in order to allow for sufficient time to complete undergraduate coursework.**

03 HUMAN SERVICE EXPERIENCE

Sustained employment or volunteer experience working directly with participants in one or more human service settings greatly helps to assess an applicant's temperament for this type of vocation, solidify the intent to pursue art therapy as a profession, and enhance readiness for graduate level education. Experience in working with people in counseling, social service, recreation, or education programs is considered essential to preparation for graduate study in art therapy. The candidate's resume, human service statement, statement of purpose, and letters of recommendation are the primary means of assessing the human service dimension.

04 INTERPERSONAL SKILLS

The ability to interact productively with others, to express oneself, and to listen are essential capacities for a therapist. The applicant's interpersonal skills are evaluated through review of the letters of recommendation, with consideration given to maturity, relational skills, experience in personal counseling, self-awareness, emotional stability, and readiness for the personal demands of graduate education, professional practice in art therapy, and making therapeutic connections with others.

05 OVERALL READINESS FOR GRADUATE EDUCATION IN ART THERAPY

The applicant's overall readiness is evaluated in terms of each of the areas noted above. In addition, enriching life experiences that do not fall under these categories and diverse experiences reflect favorably on the applicant's readiness for graduate school, and engagement in one's own personal therapy is viewed as valuable experience. The statement of purpose and human service statement are appropriate vehicles for the applicant to highlight factors relating to overall preparedness.

TRANSFER CREDITS, AID, HOUSING, AND VISAS

TRANSFER CREDITS

A minimum of 48 credit hours must be completed in residence at the school. Up to 12 graduate transfer credits, from a previous master's degree in a related area, may be requested at the time of application for admission and are subject to approval at that time. No transfer credit will be permitted after a student is admitted. Approved transfer credits replace coursework within the MAATC degree coursework; this is distinct from prerequisite coursework, which constitutes an admission requirement.

Students receiving transfer credits toward the MAATC from previous graduate coursework are advised to make sure that the licensure board in the state or country in which they plan to practice will count the transfer credits toward the total number of credits needed to fulfill requirements for licensure application.

FINANCIAL AID

Additional financial information may be obtained by contacting the Student Financial Services Office at (312) 629-6600.

saic.edu/life/financial/financial_aid/index.html

American Art Therapy Association scholarships, open to AATA student members only: arttherapy.org/aata-awards/

RESIDENCE LIFE

Most MAATC students find off-campus accommodations in the city; however, dormitory space also may be available. For information on housing options contact the Residence Life Office at (312) 629-6870. Another useful resource for housing options is *The Chicago Reader* newspaper, which lists rental properties throughout the metropolitan area.

saic.edu/life/housing/index.html

INTERNATIONAL STUDENT SERVICES

Questions relating to immigration, visa status, and other international student concerns should be directed to the International Student Services Office at (312) 629-6830.

Undergraduate prerequisite courses are not considered part of the MAATC degree. International applicants who intend to take these courses in the U.S. must apply for a separate visa for that purpose. Please allow enough time to complete this entire process.

saic.edu/admissions/int_admiss/index.html

ENGLISH LANGUAGE REQUIREMENT

If English is not your native language, and if you do not have a degree conferred by a college where English was the language of instruction — whether you live abroad or reside in the United States — you must take the Test of English as a Foreign Language (TOEFL) or International English Language Testing System (IELTS). You must achieve a minimum score of 600 (250 on the computer version or 100 on the Internet-based version) on the TOEFL, and 7 on the IELTS, prior to full admission.

WHAT TO SUBMIT

For specific details on the entire application process please visit saic.edu/admissions/grad.

- ☐ Submit the online application and all supplemental materials by 11:59pm (CST) on January 10.
- ☐ Submit official college transcripts to verify degrees awarded and prerequisite coursework.
- ☐ Submit two letters of reference.
- ☐ Submit your SlideRoom ePortfolio by 11:59pm (CST) on January 10, including items A–E below.

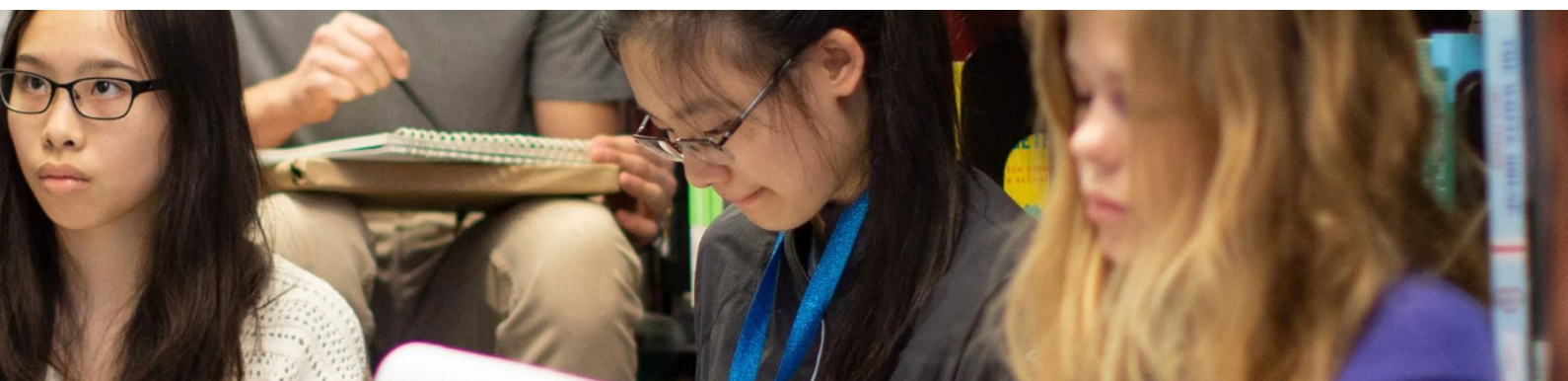
THE EPORTFOLIO INCLUDES

- A** Portfolio of 10 images or eight minutes of time-based work, or a combination of the two, documenting current studio work
- B** Statement of purpose, 500–700 words
- C** Current résumé
- D** Human Service Statement
- E** Documentation of in-process prerequisite courses in which the applicant is enrolled at the time of application, or a plan for how missing courses will be completed prior to beginning the MAATC

D · HUMAN SERVICE STATEMENT

- ☐ 700–1,000 words
- ☐ A few experiences in depth
- ☐ Work is in counseling / social services / recreation / education / community
- ☐ **Populations** named specifically, with setting (e.g. adolescents in an after-school arts program)
- ☐ **Service** — what you actually did, and what it asked of you
- ☐ **Framework** — what made it therapeutic, what made it creative, what you learned about the population, the setting, and your own capacities and limits

Please contact Graduate Admissions at 800-232-7242 / 312-629-6100 or gradmiss@saic.edu with any questions.



FREQUENTLY ASKED QUESTIONS

FAQ

HOW LONG IS THE PROGRAM?

The Master of Arts in Art Therapy and Counseling is a comprehensive two-year, 60-credit full-time program integrating academic coursework, clinical fieldwork, and studio practice.

HOW SHOULD I PREPARE MY APPLICATION?

Focus on curating a strong visual arts portfolio that demonstrates both technical proficiency and emotional expression. Ensure you have completed prerequisite coursework in psychology and studio art. Volunteer or professional experience in human services, education, or community organizations will significantly strengthen your application.

WILL I HAVE ACCESS TO AN ART STUDIO?

Students enrolled in MA programs are not assigned a dedicated studio space, but will have access to studio equipment through their courses. Students may exhibit their work in the final year of the program, and may apply for a studio space if one becomes available.



CONTACTS

PROGRAM INQUIRIES AND INFORMATIONAL MEETINGS

GRADUATE ART THERAPY AND COUNSELING PROGRAM

The School of the Art Institute of Chicago
37 South Wabash Ave., Suite 713
Chicago, Illinois 60603-3103

(312) 899-7481 · Fax (312) 899-1477
arttherapy@saic.edu · saic.edu

PUBLISHED ONLINE

Course descriptions · saic.edu/academics/departments/art-therapy/courses

Faculty profiles and bios · saic.edu/academics/departments/art-therapy/faculty

Alumni interviews · saic.edu/academics/departments/art-therapy/alumni

Graduate admissions · saic.edu/admissions/grad

FOR GENERAL INFORMATION ABOUT THE ART THERAPY FIELD

American Art Therapy Association (AATA)

4875 Eisenhower Avenue, Suite 240
Alexandria, VA 22304
(888) 290-0878 (toll-free) · (703) 548-5860
Fax (703) 783-8468
arttherapy.org · info@arttherapy.org

Art Therapy Credentials Board (ATCB)

3 Terrace Way, Suite B
Greensboro, NC 27403-3660
(877) 213-2822 or (336) 482-2856
Fax (336) 482-2852
atcb.org · atcbinfo@atcb.org

For affiliate chapters of the American Art Therapy Association in your area, see arttherapy.org/aata-chaptersmain/

TO LEARN MORE ABOUT THE PROFESSION, CHECK OUT THESE JOURNALS

- **Art Therapy: Journal of the American Art Therapy Association** · tandfonline.com/loi/uart20
- **International Journal of Art Therapy** (formerly *Inscape*) · tandfonline.com/loi/rart20
- **Canadian Art Therapy Association Journal** · tandfonline.com/loi/ucat20