Executive Summary

Graduate Program in Visual Arts
Cyclical review year 2012-2013

Approved by the Graduate Program Evaluation Committee
Faculty of Graduate and Postdoctoral Studies
Meeting of June 18, 2014

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Name of Program Reviewed</th>
<th>Visual Arts</th>
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</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Degrees</td>
<td>Maîtrise en arts visuels (M.A.V.) / Master of Fine Arts Visual Arts (MFA)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Fields</td>
<td>Not applicable</td>
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<tr>
<td>Final Evaluation</td>
<td>Good quality with report (Report due in three years – January 2018)</td>
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Significant Strengths of the Program

The Master of Fine Arts Visual Arts program is an excellent program overall. The program is consistent with the University of Ottawa’s mission, follows clear learning outcomes, and aligns with graduate degree level expectations. The program is also comparable to national standards established by other universities in Canada.

The MFA program is excellent at integrating studio-based learning with academic requirements, and offers teaching assistantships and external internship opportunities to prepare students for professional careers. The attrition rate is very low, with nearly 100% of students graduating, and time-to-completion rates are also excellent.

The MFA program attracts many applicants. The requirements for admission to the program are rigorous and the students who are admitted are exceptional. This is an asset to the University, since many of these students are publicly and professionally visible while they are completing the requirements of the MFA program.

The program is delivered by faculty members whose levels of academic and professional activities are exemplary. The faculty has been exceptionally resourceful in developing professional partnerships outside the University that provide noteworthy opportunities for students to complete the requirements of the MFA degree. These include partnerships with professional art galleries and museums to host the internship and thesis exhibition requirements of the curriculum.

The faculty members and graduate students at the University of Ottawa work effectively within the space and resources currently allocated to the program. At the time of the site visit, renovations to create new graduate studios and meeting spaces were underway, and faculty members and students acknowledged that these renovations would significantly improve the current situation.

Areas for Improvement and Enhancement

Although the curriculum for the MFA degree at the University of Ottawa is highly relevant and maintains a contemporary approach to the graduate study of practice and discourse in the visual arts, the
program’s direction, particularly in terms of the distinction between art history and art theory, needs to be clarified. Moreover, clarifying the program’s direction will facilitate decisions on program/curriculum development and faculty appointments.

The future development of spaces and facilities has raised significant concerns and considerations. Faculty members in the Visual Arts Department have been resourceful in developing partnerships with professional art galleries. Nevertheless, these partnerships have developed out of necessity and represent a substantial public contribution to the success of the visual arts program at the University of Ottawa. A University of Ottawa Art Gallery would be an appropriate solution to this situation, and a welcome addition to the program and the university as a whole.

Although the renovations that were underway during the site visit address some of the concerns that were raised, more needs to be done. At the time of writing, the program was admitting six students per year. Faculty members acknowledged that this number could increase if adequate space and financial support for students were available.

Many resource-related improvements to the MFA program would also benefit undergraduate students.

**Recommendations**

It is recommended that the program:

1. Clarify the program direction, particularly in terms of distinguishing between art history and art theory.
2. Increase studio space for students to increase the number of admissions, and
3. Establish a permanent art exhibition space.

**Implementation Plan**

**Calendar and Deadlines**

All recommendations should be addressed in a report to be submitted in 36 months (January 2018). The next cyclical evaluation will be completed within seven years and no later than 2021.

**Authorities**

The authorities who are responsible for implementing and monitoring the recommendations include the dean and vice-dean of the Faculty of Arts and the director of the graduate program in visual arts.