

Letter from the Director

It's a privilege to serve as the director of Houston's chief laboratory in the visual arts—the University of Houston School of Art. I write to you today to share some of the school's successes and our vision for the future.

Our students, alumni and faculty are central to the cultural and intellectual life in this region and are an important part of what has led to the university's Tier One ranking among America's research universities. We are proud of our accomplishments thus far, but are eager to show the country and the world what many Houstonians already know: a key motor of the burgeoning creative scene in the country's fourth largest city is found at UH, in the School of Art.

Faculty excellence is paramount to that effort. Open any important national art publication or stroll through Texas' finest galleries and you will see our faculty's work in print and on view.

A commitment to teaching and mentoring by our accomplished faculty forms the foundation of our MFA program. Our MFA students form a graduate community that continues to be the locus of sophisticated art making in the region. Our MA in Art History attracts emerging scholars who desire an excellent grounding in art history coupled with significant opportunities in the city's museums and galleries.

While an excellent faculty is essential to our students' artistic development, so are other experiences that encourage them to challenge and expand their creative boundaries. Our emerging artists have the resources of a significant urban research institution at their disposal, where experts in fields as disparate as computer science, theater, optics, history, music, engineering, and many other fields can be brought into the student's creative process.

We also know that having a taste of working in the "real world" can give students an important perspective on their own work. The School of Art is increasingly using the city as its classroom. Partnerships with museums and other arts organizations give students great professional development opportunities and support the work of the community. Our students are working as interns and staff at the Museum of Fine Arts, Houston, the Menil Collection, the Museum of Printing History, the Blaffer Museum, and others. They are also helping with major public projects, such as the award-winning redesign of Japhet Creek Park.

With more than 750 art students—larger than many freestanding fine art colleges—it's challenging to encapsulate all that we do in a single letter, and this one merely scratches the surface.

The vision for the UH School of Art is to harness and focus the resources necessary to make us a national destination for art students and scholars and one that sustains and grows Houston's vibrant visual arts scene. I invite you to be a part of it!

Sincerely,
Rex Koontz
Director