As career tracks continue to diversify with new markets and technologies emerging, RIT’s illustration program adapts to meet the demand for new and varied media forms and illustrative content. The major supports the creative development of students and prepares them for numerous careers within the visual communications field.

Illustrators apply traditional and contemporary materials, methods, and technologies to deliver visual content in collaboration with companies and institutions to visually enhance their communication and marketing efforts. Thanks to the internet, social media, and the publishing industry, the work of illustrators is disseminated to a global community.

Coursework emphasizes student authorship using traditional drawing and painting skills, the application of the latest digital media, and the use of dimensional media. Students learn conceptual skills, professional practices, and narrative storytelling techniques while developing an individual style.

Traditional media and the latest digital imaging technologies combine for effective visual communication.

Students consistently go on to become professional illustrators who make original work for book and editorial publishers, advertising and marketing firms, game developers, broadcast entertainment, movie production companies, and more. Alumni enjoy lifelong careers creating editorial illustration, children’s books, comics and graphic novels, storyboards, assets and storylines for video games, and concept art for animations and the entertainment industry.

You’ll study topics including:
- 2D and 3D drawing
- 2D and 3D design
- Composition and color
- Digital illustration
- Dimensional illustration
- Figure drawing
- Advertising illustration
- Animating
- Book illustration
- Caricature illustration
- Digital editorial
- Digital illustration
- Dimensional illustration
- Editorial illustration
- Fantastical illustration
- Political cartooning
- Sketchbook illustration
- Zoological and botanical illustration

Student Work:
(Left) Zac Retz
Medical Illustration

Visually support biomedical science and medical education by combining contemporary media with scientific research through illustrations, motion graphics, and interactive media.

A medical illustrator is an allied health professional who studies both life sciences and visual communication. Collaborating with scientists, physicians, and other allied health professionals, they transform medical and scientific topics into images and animations designed to teach the public, students, health care providers, and researchers.

Perfect for students with a passion for art and science, RIT’s program focuses on visually supporting the health science and medical instruction fields. From traditional carbon dust renderings to three-dimensional, animated digital imagery, medical illustration spans the fullest range of artistic media. Building on a foundation of drawing and design, students learn how to translate biomedical subjects into instructional illustrations, courtroom exhibitions, interactive computer graphics, ads, and more. The program explores all aspects of health care, from the molecular level through the macroscopic and into the theoretical.

After completing Human Biology, Anatomy, Physiology, and Human Gross Anatomy classes, students observe surgeries at Rochester General Hospital while enrolled in Surgical Illustration. This experience challenges students to distill complex procedures into succinct teaching tools, experiences, and skills that they will utilize throughout their professional careers.

Often, medical illustrators focus their work in specific media, such as textbook and journal publications and 2D or 3D computer illustration and animation. These media are employed across a broad spectrum of fields, including education and medical-legal presentations, as well as advertising and editorial applications. They also follow career paths as veterinary and scientific illustrators.

You’ll study topics including:

- 2D, 3D, and 4D design
- 2D and 3D drawing
- 3D animation and modeling
- Anatomical illustration
- Biology + lab
- Composition and color
- Computer applications
- Contemporary media
- Human anatomy and physiology
- Illustrating gross anatomy
- Portfolio and business practices
- Scientific visualization
- Surgical illustration
Student work
(Left) Leah Ruth.
(Right) From top, left to right:
Top row: Surgical Illustration: Knee Replacement by Jack Nelson.

BETTA Fish
Betta Splendens
Betta has a lot more than just good looks and a bad attitude going for it. These fish could be found in rice paddies, slow moving streams, wet muddy ditches and even stagnant ponds. Bettas are vivacious fish that can recognize their owner's face and can even be taught to do tricks, like following your finger around their aquarium, swimming through hoops or even pushing a ball into a hole. The fins of the Betta are not only beautiful, they're useful. Their fins contain nerve cells, scales and even taste buds! Betta is easily referred to as the "fish of the future."
The School of Art offers a BFA degree in studio arts with options in ceramics, expanded forms, furniture design, glass, metals and jewelry design, painting, printmaking, and sculpture. The close alignment of curricular content and scheduling among these eight options fosters a sense of community through shared experiences and facilitated interaction. Through this integration, artists combine traditional skills with contemporary technology and concepts to create art that emphasizes aesthetics, creativity, function, and innovative solutions.

The major starts with a foundation that provides an essential base for all of the program’s students. Whichever option a student chooses, they’ll be in a studio intensive environment with plenty of time, space, and faculty support to develop as a professional artist. The breadth and depth of the facilities and studios are unmatched by peer institutions. The school is led by award-winning faculty who exhibit their work nationally and internationally.

The curriculum engages students in comprehensive inquiry and exposes them to a wide scope of visual arts as they study their cultural relevance through visiting artists, trips to museums, and attendance at professional conferences. During their senior year, students often exhibit their final body of work in one of the college’s galleries. Guidance and experiential projects focusing on presentation of work, self-promotion, business practice, and issues of professional engagement within the field help students thrive as creative professionals after graduation.

Upon completion of the program, students may choose to continue their education at the graduate level or begin careers by starting independent studios and exhibiting their work. They also find employment in the fields of art therapy, art criticism, art restoration, gallery and museum management, set and display design, education, marketing and advertising, and in auction houses for their knowledge of contemporary and historical art and material culture.
Ceramics

The ceramics option provides a dynamic environment where intellectual discourse and craftsmanship thrive. Students focus on intellectual development, technical skill, and practical knowledge. The curriculum supports a range of fundamental topics within ceramics, such as sculpture, pottery, mold-making, glazing, firing, and material science. Individual critiques and group discussions develop students’ personal aesthetic and enhance their critical thinking skills. Students selecting this option are equipped with the professional and practical skills necessary to operate a studio business.

Expanded Forms

Artists have always challenged the definition of art. These challenges have pushed art into new realms of expression and the public into new ways of seeing. The expanded forms option, like the wider art world, extends beyond the traditional forms of painting, printmaking, and sculpture. Artists have expanded the possibilities for expression. Object-making goes hand-in-hand with performance, installation, computer art, and multimedia displays. Students in this option are encouraged to explore the full spectrum of experimental and non-traditional artistic expression.
The furniture design option engages students in the pursuit of their creative interests while providing a comprehensive technical background in contemporary woodworking. The option focuses on technical expertise, allowing students to investigate a full range of creative expression and professional interests. A carefully sequenced curriculum begins with a firm foundation in the use and maintenance of hand tools, proceeding on to more advanced tools and topics in construction and design.

Through a rigorous and diversified curriculum, the glass option cultivates artists who are as versatile in their making as they are in their thinking. Studio instruction in glassblowing, flame-working, hot and kiln casting, cold-working, kiln-forming, glass imaging processes, and three-dimensional digital technologies help inform each student’s creative potential with glass. An emphasis on research, idea development, material exploration, execution, and presentation equip students with the skills needed to succeed as professionals.
Painting

Students selecting the painting option engage in contemporary visual art practice through a personal exploration of painting techniques. The comprehensive curriculum covers traditional methodologies as well as contemporary visual art practices. Rigorous studio practice and critical discourse encourage the development of a strong personal language that allows for effective individual expression.

Printmaking

Printmaking focuses on concepts and techniques. Organized to offer a flexible experience, this option targets the development of problem-solving and skill-building within the context of printmaking. The curriculum addresses a wide variety of media, tools, and both traditional and technological techniques, as well as theoretical concepts to facilitate skill development and experimentation processes.
Metals and Jewelry Design

The metals and jewelry design option provides a stimulating space for students to learn metalsmithing and design techniques. With focuses on design and aesthetics, as well as material and process mastery, self-discovery is at the heart of student assignments, projects, and group discussions. This option develops students’ creative potential through a broad introduction to materials and production techniques before moving on to advanced techniques in various metals. Metals and jewelry design expands imagination and problem-solving skills to prepare students for an exciting and fulfilling career.

Sculpture

The sculpture option engages students in the exploration of three-dimensional art-making. Traditional sculptural processes are introduced — such as bronze casting, stone carving, steel fabrication, and mold-making — within a curriculum that focuses on both formal and conceptual development. Working with a broad variety of materials, ideas, and practices, students are prepared to engage in the dialogue of contemporary sculpture. Over the course of the major, students develop the technical, visual, and intellectual skills required to develop a sophisticated body of work.

Student work: (Left) Hung Ji Jin (Right) Kerina Mangiaracina

Student work: Levi Cooper
School of Art
College of Art and Design
Rochester Institute of Technology
73 Lomb Memorial Drive
Rochester, New York 14623
585-475-7811
art@rit.edu
rit.edu/art

Photography generously provided by RIT Marketing and Communications including Elizabeth Lamark and A. Sue Weisler.