The Arts at Middlebury

PROMOTING CREATIVITY, INNOVATION, AND SELF-EXPRESSION

Learning to practice and appreciate the arts opens students’ eyes and minds to different ways of seeing the world and sharing their observations and ideas. The lessons learned through studying the arts are invaluable in any professional pursuit.

The visual and performing arts are fundamentally important to the life and culture of Middlebury College. Our students engage with the arts as both creators and viewers. They are painters and sculptors, actors, musicians, and songwriters. They attend gallery openings, dance recitals, plays, and rock concerts. The arts are all over campus and are central to every student’s education.

The College offers courses for majors and non-majors in seven arts programs: architectural studies, art history, dance, film and media culture, music, studio art, and theatre. An engaged and accomplished faculty, complemented by a broad spectrum of visiting artists and lecturers, creates an exciting and challenging environment where students can discover their potential as artists and develop the skills of self-discipline, responsibility, and creative problem solving.

EXPERIENCING THE ARTS
The arts are part of daily life on campus. Students are constantly making art—paintings, sculptures, pottery, and other forms—and displaying it in formal and informal exhibitions. They make films and videos, often recruiting other students as actors. They form dance groups, do improvisational comedy, write and produce plays, compose and perform music of all kinds. Some two-dozen theatre productions are staged each year, designed and directed by students, faculty members, alumni, or visiting artists.

The Mahaney Center for the Arts is the hub for artistic experiences. Its concert hall, dance and studio theatres, and art museum showcase student and faculty performances.

“The ability to think creatively, to recognize links where none were obvious at first sight, is appreciated more and more nowadays. Our students try out that kind of thinking in the arts, and then they can apply it in any endeavor they pursue.”

—PIETER BROUCKE | Director of the Arts and Professor of History of Art & Architecture
faculty productions and host many established artists. Built in 1992, the center has had significant upgrades, including the construction of art history classrooms and faculty offices, a new box office and balcony, the addition of three public pianos in the lobbies and a new grand piano in the concert hall, and more public sculpture and art.

The concert hall is a 375-seat venue that is acoustically impeccable—one of the most in-demand locations on campus for musical performances, lectures, and symposia. The hall features a Steinway model D concert grand piano—a recent gift—which is available for use by students, faculty, and the world-renowned pianists who appear as part of the College’s Performing Arts Series.

OTHER FACILITIES FOR THE ARTS

- Wright Memorial Theatre, a versatile 350-seat space with a proscenium stage.
- Hepburn Zoo, an informal performing space where students mount their own productions.
- The Christian A. Johnson Memorial Building, which houses the studio-art and architectural-studies programs and a student art gallery.
- The Donald E. Axinn Center, home to the program in film and media culture, with state-of-the-art classrooms, screening rooms, and a large media-editing suite.

The College also has a distinguished collection of art in public places, including more than 20 works—mostly sculptures—many by nationally or internationally known artists. Each piece in the collection is installed, maintained, and interpreted by the Committee on Art in Public Places. Learn more at go.middlebury.edu/capp

MUSEUM OF ART

Middlebury’s nationally accredited Museum of Art, also located at the Mahaney Center, has a permanent collection of several thousand objects ranging from classical and Asian antiques to contemporary art and photography. Galleries are dedicated to specific periods and cultures, but also to temporary exhibitions, such as paintings from the Smithsonian American Art Museum, environmental photography, and contemporary African art. These special exhibitions are on display throughout the year, and the museum regularly hosts lectures, gallery talks, films, school programs, and workshops.

This is a teaching museum that works closely with the College’s academic programs to expand educational opportunities year-round. For example:

- The Art History Program is located near the museum, giving majors greater access to the College’s collection.
- A new Museum Studies track opens new doors for Middlebury students.
- Through its Museum Assistants Program, the museum trains future arts educators and reaches out to schools in the community.
- Lecture programs tie the exhibitions to the broader intellectual life of the College and the region. Learn more at go.middlebury.edu/museum

THE ARTS BEYOND THE CAMPUS

Opportunities to appreciate art extend well beyond the campus, even to other countries. Students can explore the arts in an international context through Middlebury’s programs abroad: art history in Paris, Madrid, and Florence; film in Hangzhou; architecture in Paris and Ferrara.

The Dance Company of Middlebury has toured recently to Cuba, New York, Los Angeles, and Europe. Theatre productions are regularly chosen for the Kennedy Center’s American College Theatre Festival. Pentecost, which was performed in 2014 in the New England Region competition, is the ninth College production to earn honors. Also in 2014, the college choir toured Germany, Austria, and the Czech Republic.

The Performing Arts Series brings celebrated artists in music, dance, and theatre to campus to perform, inspire, and conduct residencies. This not only enhances Middlebury’s curriculum, but also enables the local community to enjoy levels of artistry usually available only in major cities.

Buses take students of opera and theatre to performances in New York City and students of art history to museums in Boston. Seniors in art history explore the New York art world through meetings with dealers, curators, and gallery owners. Seniors in architectural studies visit Montreal, Boston, and New York to meet professionals in the field.

INTERNSHIPS IN THE ARTS

Internships give students opportunities to make connections in the professional art world and fine-tune their career aspirations. They might begin to create networks that could lead to jobs, or they might discover that they want to go in a different direction in their careers. Students find internships locally and in major cities and art centers around the globe, benefitting from a faculty and alumni network of world-class artists. Whether they are helping to mount
PTP/NYC is an off-Broadway theatre company operating in association with Middlebury College. This is the only collaboration in the country between a professional theatre company and an undergraduate liberal arts college, giving theatre students opportunities to hone their skills in a rigorous, professional environment.

The company was founded in 1987 by Middlebury professors Richard Romagnoli and Cheryl Faraone, along with Boston University’s Jim Petosa. Each year it offers a month of repertory performances at Atlantic Stage 2 in New York City, staging two or three plays as well as readings and other events. The 2014 season’s line-up included the U.S. premiere of Howard Barker’s *Gertrude: The Cry*, directed by Romagnoli, and a revival of David Edgar’s *Pentecost*, directed by Faraone.

The PTP/NYC company included 12 Middlebury students and 13 graduates in 2014. It was the first foray into New York’s professional theatre world for most of the students, providing opportunities for hands-on experience in acting, technical theatre, and arts administration. “PTP is incredible for the student members of the company because we have the opportunity to work and act alongside professional actors,” said Mari Vial-Golden ’14. “We also served as the crew for both shows, which let us see behind the scenes and gain the technical skills necessary for putting on a full production.”

Prior to taking residence at Atlantic Stage 2 each year, the company spends three weeks in preparation at Middlebury. That pays off when the company arrives in New York, according to Faraone. “The actors and crew all get to know each other very well, which is invaluable for creating the onstage chemistry that makes for exciting acting,” she explains.

Learn more at http://ptpnyc.org
SUPPORT THE ARTS AT MIDDLEBURY

Gifts to arts enrichment funds expand life-changing opportunities for students. They can underwrite the cost of theatre and musical productions that the College might not otherwise be able to present. They make it possible for students and faculty to experiment with new musical forms and to showcase their compositions. They cover the cost of sets, costumes, musical instruments, and studio supplies. Gifts also offset the cost of technical assistance, such as a technician to help students in film and media culture with complex equipment and editing software.

Here are some specific fundraising priorities for the arts programs:

- **Travel and research:** Students need opportunities to travel to museums, concert halls, theatres, and urban centers. Thesis-assistance funds enable students to do original research around the world.

- **Stipends for art internships:** Internships in the arts are expensive, but students benefit immeasurably from the chance to discover what a career in the arts entails.

- **Spaces for artistic endeavors:** There are opportunities for donors to endow, enhance, and name existing art spaces on campus. Support for arts facilities means support for making art.

- **Visiting artists:** Middlebury’s location is attractive to visiting artists, but travel costs and booking fees have increased dramatically. Financial support can help the performance and film series to maintain their current high level. Gifts can also support residencies by guest artists, who work side by side with students.

- **Traveling exhibitions:** Mounting art exhibitions is costly, but it is vital to bring them to Middlebury to keep students current with the arts scene beyond the Green Mountains.

- **Acquiring art:** Gifts can add to the acquisitions of the Museum of Art or the collection of art in public places.

- **New technology:** Up-to-date technology will help the visual resources collection to digitize its material and will keep production and editing facilities for film and media studies current.

- **Innovation and Creativity:** Middlebury’s faculty and students need funding to help cover the expense of creating, performing, and displaying innovative works of art.

**TOWN-GOWN COLLABORATIONS**

In 2007, the College and Town Hall Theatre in Middlebury formed a partnership to renovate a remarkable historic building in the heart of town for a wide range of productions. It offers a place for student groups to perform in town, makes college performances more accessible to the public, and strengthens the town’s civic culture. College students, faculty, and staff are able to use Town Hall Theatre facilities; students have internship opportunities there; and the Language Schools have some use of the facilities during the summer.

Each spring, Middlebury’s annual Bach Festival celebrates the music and life of Johann Sebastian Bach. Musicians and singers from the College and community offer three days of performances and interest sessions. The festival culminates in a concert in Mead Chapel, and local congregations join in by presenting music by J. S. Bach in their Sunday services.

- Timothy Rub ’74, director and CEO, Philadelphia Museum of Art.
- Shawn Ryan ’88, television executive producer, *The Shield, Lie to Me, Last Resort*.
- Anaïs Mitchell ’04, singer-songwriter and musician, who was nominated for best album and won the award for best traditional song at the 2014 BBC Radio 2 Folk Awards.