





# Is an MFA with graphic design mentorship right for you?

Graduate studies in graphic design leading to an MFA should be undertaken for one or more of the following reasons:

-  **to not only expand the range of your personal work, but to expand the discipline itself.**
-  **to challenge preconceptions about what graphic design is and its purpose.**
-  **to deepen inquiry into areas of design that are fundamental rather than commercial**
-  **to conduct research that investigates deep visual communication problems**

After concluding an undergraduate education, graphic designers sometimes seek to continue their education in order to sharpen technical skills and improve their chances of success in the very competitive job market. *However reasonable, such motivations are precisely opposite to the purpose of graduate studies.* Each of the items above is a fundamental question about the discipline itself; none of them is likely to lead directly to job positions, commercial results, or other immediate practical gains. *Rather than grad school, a continuing studies program is the route to go if your priority is to improve your job market prospects in graphic design.*

In order to ensure that applicants are pursuing an MFA in design for the right reasons, we generally like to see that the applicant has successfully completed two or three years of employment in the profession post graduation. Also, as a further demonstration of their proficiency and success, we prefer the applicant to have won competitive design awards.

A final consideration: successful MFA programs match the student's interests to the strengths of the faculty who are their mentors. At the present time at UofL, these strengths are experimental design, graphic design theory and semiotics. So we encourage MFA applicants who wish to mentor primarily with Meena Khalili and Steven Skaggs to meet the standards noted above and then become familiar with Meena's and Steven's work: Meena has worked for several years with kinetic typography and experimental design, while Steven has worked in design theory and semiotics and is author of *FireSigns: a Semiotic Theory for Graphic Design* (MIT Press 2017).

If you feel that you are a good match for our program, we encourage you to get in touch with us:

**Steven Skaggs (sxskag01@louisville.edu)**

**Meena Khalili (meena.khalili@louisville.edu)**

For more general information on applying for the Hite MFA, contact Theresa Berbet (theresa.berbet@louisville.edu).