Greetings!

Congratulations on being accepted to Carleton College! As chair of the Art and Art History Department, I am delighted that you are interested in pursuing your interest in art in the coming years and write to welcome you to the college and to the department. We are an active and engaged community of visual artists as well as historians and theorists of art’s rich past. We spend our days thinking sincerely and critically about how the visual arts shape society and how our own contributions as makers can further some of the most crucial conversations that animate our world today. We believe that works of art are lenses that refine our vision of the world around us and remain committed to connecting our practices as makers and scholars to diverse communities both local and global.

Our department is housed in Boliou Memorial Hall, which contains studios for painting and drawing, sculpture, woodworking, metalsmithing, photography, printmaking, ceramics, and interactive robotics. In addition, we have lecture and seminar rooms set up for focused discussions of the broad range of visual arts. Several drawing courses are also taught in the Weitz Center for Creativity, allowing students the opportunity to create synergies with other arts departments on campus. Students have access to state-of-the-art equipment to realize their creative goals, and this is evidenced by the success our graduates have had in crafting deeply meaningful studio practices after graduation, with many of our students entering MFA programs. Our art history students, too, have seen their work published in undergraduate journals and have gone on to a wide array of fields in and outside the arts after graduation. We could not be prouder of our students and their accomplishments.

Every year the Department sponsors off-campus study programs exploring the arts in various contexts. In Winter Term of odd-numbered years, students can further their interests in drawing and printmaking in the South Pacific, with stops in New Zealand, Australia, and other island nations. In Winter Term of even-numbered years, we manage a program that explores the rich architectural history of Western Europe, as students hop from Spain to Italy to France and then to London. We also offer an occasional summer program in Europe called Art Now that focuses on art production of the present day as seen in large-scale exhibitions in Venice and Germany.

You do not need to have any special expertise or experience to major in Studio Art or Art History—just an insatiable desire to learn. If you have questions about our arts offerings, please give me a call at 507-222-5545 or send me an email at relfline@carleton.edu. I look forward to working with you in the very near future.

With best wishes,

Ross K. Elfline
Chair, Department of Art and Art History