

HISTORY OF THE SCHOOL

The study of the visual arts at Yale had its beginning with the opening, in 1832, of the Trumbull Gallery, one of the earliest art museums in the Anglo-Saxon world and the first (and long the only one) connected with a college in this country. It was founded by patriot-artist Colonel John Trumbull, one-time aide-de-camp to General Washington, with the help of Professor Benjamin Silliman, the celebrated scientist. A singularly successful art exhibition held in 1858 under the direction of the College Librarian, Daniel Coit Gilman, led to the establishment of an art school in 1864, through the generosity of Augustus Russell Street, a native of New Haven and graduate of Yale's Class of 1812. This new educational program was placed in the hands of an art council, one of whose members was the painter-inventor Samuel F. B. Morse, a graduate of Yale College. When the Yale School of the Fine Arts opened in 1869, it was the first art school connected with an institution of higher learning in the country, and classes in drawing, painting, sculpture, and art history were inaugurated. The art collections in the old Trumbull Gallery were moved into a building endowed by Augustus Street and so named Street Hall, and were greatly augmented by the acquisition of the Jarves Collection of early Italian paintings in 1871.

Architectural instruction was begun in 1908 and was established as a department in 1916 with Everett Victor Meeks at its head. Drama, under the direction of George Pierce Baker and with its own separate building, was added in 1925 and continued to function as a department of the School until it became an independent school in 1955. In 1928 a new art gallery was opened, built by Egerton Swartwout and funded through the generosity of Edward S. Harkness. It was connected to Street Hall by a bridge above High Street, and Street Hall was used for instruction in art. The program in architecture was moved to Weir Hall, designed by George Douglas Miller. A large addition to the Art Gallery, designed by Louis I. Kahn in collaboration with Douglas Orr, and funded by the family of James Alexander Campbell and other friends of the arts at Yale, was opened in 1953. Several floors were used by the School until the rapidly expanding Art Gallery collections required their use. In 1959 the School of Art and Architecture was made a fully graduate professional school. In 1963 the Art and Architecture Building, designed by Paul Rudolph, was opened, funded by many friends of the arts at Yale under the chairmanship of Ward Cheney. In 1969 the School was constituted as two faculties, each with its own dean; and in 1972 two separate schools were established by the President and Fellows, the School of Art and the School of Architecture, which until 2000 shared the Rudolph building (now Rudolph Hall) for most of their activities. Sculpture was housed at 14 Mansfield Street in Hammond Hall (a large building formerly used for mechanical engineering), graphic design was located at 212 York Street (an old Yale fraternity building), and at 215 Park Street there were classrooms and additional graduate painting studios. Street Hall was assigned to the University Department of the History of Art (it is now part of the Yale University Art Gallery). The arts at Yale—architecture, art, the Art Gallery, the Center for British Art, the history of art, the School of Drama, and the Repertory Theatre—thus occupied a group of buildings stretching along and near Chapel Street for almost three blocks.

It had long been the University's plan to extend the Arts Area schools farther up Chapel Street. The first major new construction under this plan was the renovation of 1156 Chapel Street with the addition of an adjoining building at 353 Crown Street, designed by Deborah Berke, which opened in September 2000. A generous gift by Yale College graduate Holcombe T. Green, Jr., for whom the building is named, and a major contribution by Marion Rand in memory of her husband, Paul Rand, professor of graphic design, made this new complex possible. The new art buildings house an experimental theater for the School of Drama and all departments of the School of Art except sculpture. In 2009 sculpture moved from Hammond Hall, where it was housed from 1973 to 2008, to a new building in the Arts Area at 36 Edgewood Avenue adjacent to a new School of Art gallery at 32 Edgewood Avenue, both designed by Kieran Timberlake.

DEANS OF THE YALE SCHOOL OF ART

1869–1913	John Ferguson Weir
1913–1922	William Sergeant Kendall
1922–1947	Everett Meeks
1947–1957	Charles Sawyer
1957–1958	Boyd Smith
1958–1968	Gibson Danes
1968–1974	Howard Weaver
1974–1975	William Bailey
1975–1983	Andrew Forge
1983–1996	David Pease
1996–2006	Richard Benson
2006–2016	Robert Storr
2016–	Marta Kuzma