

Student Profile

Samantha Carter – Visual Studies PhD Program



Your Time at UCI

What made you decide to pursue a graduate degree?

I decided to pursue a graduate degree, because I wanted advanced media and research training. I felt that a graduate degree in Visual Studies would give me a broad knowledge and skillset that I could take in a variety of professional directions. I also thought

it would afford me a productive time and space in which to explore my career options.

Why did you choose to come to UCI?

A PhD program is long, so I really wanted to choose a place where I would feel happy being for a long time and that would provide a space for fruitful exploration in my field. Since I'm from California, and Los Angeles in an important media hub, I knew that southern California would be a great option. I wanted an intimate, dynamic media program. UCI's Visual Studies program was the best place for me given my needs and desires!

If you are conducting research, how would you explain your research and its significance to your grandparent?

I am studying artists from underrepresented communities in the entertainment industry by collaborating with them on a production. My hope is that my research approach will open up new space in the academy and serve as a useful professional platform for my research participants.

What are your hobbies/passions outside of research?

I love to dance. I do improv comedy and enjoy going to performances and other creative events. I am getting into boxing during my time at UCI, which is unexpected and exciting.

Reflections

What are you most proud of accomplishing (so far) in your graduate program?

Visual Studies is created through a collaboration between the Art History and Film & Media departments. My background is more film and media, so I found myself really hesitant and skeptical when it came time to take an art history course. Our core series starts with Art History Theory & Methods and we were assigned Heidegger for week one, so I got really nervous then. It was my first art history course, and I was surprised at how much I enjoyed it! I loved our entire core sequence, but I'm proud to say art history struck me most, because it was new, unexpected, and fun. I'm proud of myself for being open to, not only new things, but things that

I might initially think aren't my thing. You just never know, sometimes you surprise yourself, and that's what graduate school should be like. Now, I'm going to be a TA in Art History, and I never would've imagined that for myself.

What is your most memorable moment/experience at UCI to date?

What advice do you have for a new graduate student in your program?

It can be tough in the academy, but I think it's important to be yourself and bring that to your intellectual work. Even though at times the rules of the institution might resist, I find that's usually when I'm doing the most unique work in which I truly feel invested. Be yourself with faculty, too! They should get to know you, be colleagues to you, and support you on your own particular professional path. Even if you're not quite sure what that is yet!

Career

What do you see yourself doing in five or ten years?

I honestly don't know. I hope that I'm doing something creative, collaborating with artists with all different types of backgrounds and bodies to make fun, innovative, meaningful work. There are many ways to get there, and a lot of positions from which I can do that work. I want to use my time in graduate school to explore and expand my horizons and see what opens up along the way.