

NABA

NUOVA ACCADEMIA
DI BELLE ARTI

SUMMMER COURSES

A.Y. 2024-25
SYLLABUS

Digital illustration and AI

1st session: June 30th – July 10th 2026

www.naba.it



Digital illustration and AI

School: Nuova Accademia di Belle Arti Milano (NABA)

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Phone: + 39.02.973.192 *E-mail:* summer@naba.it

Course Structure: 45 hours – 9 lesson days

ECTS: 3 ECTS credits*

Introductory level

*ECTS credits only awarded to university students or participants who are completing or have completed a university or academic study path

COURSE DESCRIPTION

Contemporary illustration practice requires navigating two fundamental dimensions of creative expression: the established tradition of manual drawing and digital techniques, and the emerging possibilities afforded by artificial intelligence. This intensive course is designed for students seeking to maximize their artistic creativity and develop visual narratives through the professional application of advanced digital tools, including Adobe Photoshop and Adobe Illustrator, integrated with emerging technological platforms within a contemporary, interdisciplinary framework. Participants will examine the foundational principles of digital illustration, explore photo manipulation as a narrative instrument, analyze contemporary stylistic movements, and develop competencies in character design, environmental illustration, and typographic illustration.

COURSE OBJECTIVES

- Discover the foundations of digital illustration through both classical and innovative tools.
- Experiment with the relationship between analog sketching, digital drawing, and generative AI prompts.
- Learn to transform ideas and concepts into effective visual narratives (visual storytelling).
- Understand and reinterpret diverse illustration styles, from flat design to digital collage, from typographic to landscape illustration.
- Develop a personal visual culture capable of critically engaging with contemporary trends.

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Digital illustration and AI

- Produce creative works that enrich a student portfolio and facilitate dialogue toward potential university pathways in arts and design.
- Participants will be guided in developing their own creative process, integrating visual research, analog experimentation, and digital tools.

ADMISSION REQUIREMENTS

This course is intended for students who have no background in graphic design and who are attending or will attend their first year of university studies in art and design.

OUTPUT

Each participants will produce a cohesive set of illustrations that reflects their individual artistic identity, stylistic approach, and narrative vision. The outcome will be a curated digital portfolio designed for dissemination through online platforms, including creative networks and social media channels.

LIST OF MATERIALS AND TOOLS

No supplementary materials are required.

ATTENDANCE POLICY

Class attendance is required for successful completion of the course. Attendance will be taken every class period. On the last day of classes, instructors will issue a Certificate of successful attendance only to all students who completed at least 80% of the course.

COURSE POLICY

The Faculty of NABA takes Academic integrity seriously. Instances of academic dishonesty such as plagiarism won't be tolerated. Mobile phones will be kept switched off all the time during class. Use of laptop during classes for personal purposes is forbidden.

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Digital illustration and AI

TEACHING METHODS

Learning by doing: a mix of theoretical lessons and practical workshops.

This course will be held in the Academy's computer laboratory, where students will have access to the software and programs necessary to effectively engage with the course topics.

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Digital illustration and AI

Grading

Total number of ECTS assigned for the successful completion of the course: 3 ECTS

GRADING SYSTEM

GRADING WEIGHTS		GRADING SCALE			
1. Attendance	30%	Excellent = 90-100			
2. Participation and creative process	40%	Good = 80-89			
3. Final work / final presentation	30%	Average = 70-79			
TOTAL	100%	Below Average = 60-69			
		Poor = 59 or below			
	EXCELLENT 90 -100%	GOOD 80 – 89%	AVERAGE 70 – 79%	BELOW AVERAGE 60 – 69%	POOR BELOW 60%
Attendance (30%)	On time, perfect attendance	Seldom late: attended between 95% and 90 % of the course	Occasionally late: attended between 90 % and 85 % of the course	Occasionally late: attended between 85% and 80% of the course	Frequently late, attended less than 80% of the course: FAILED
Participation and Creative Process (40 %)	Demonstrates strong understanding of the topic & thorough, creative research	Shows good grasp of the topic & good research	Exhibits average comprehension of the topic & average research	Shows some awareness of the topic & below average awareness of research	Has shallow insight into the topic & poor grasp of research
Original Project (Final work/ Final presentation) (30%)	Exhibits exceptional analysis of concepts & production of original proposal	Exhibits exceptional analysis of concepts & production of original proposal	Exhibits average analysis of concepts & production of original proposal	Exhibits below average analysis of concepts & production of original proposal	Exhibits poor analysis of concepts & production of original proposal

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Digital illustration and AI

1st week

COURSE SCHEDULE*

DAY		LESSON-SUBJECT
Day 1 - Tuesday	NABA Staff	Welcome and Registration <ul style="list-style-type: none">• Introduction: The World of Digital Illustration.• Course introduction. Ideas, imagination, and visual culture: the genesis of illustrated narratives. AI as a catalyst for exploring new styles, comparing outcomes, and discovering creative horizons.
Day 2 - Wednesday		<ul style="list-style-type: none">• Visual Storytelling.• Narrative communication through imagery: from mood boards to initial digital experiments (sketch to AI illustration).
Day 3 - Thursday		<ul style="list-style-type: none">• Photoshop Essentials.• From photo retouching to photo manipulation as narrative instruments. Pixel-based techniques and creative experimentation: integrating traditional software with AI solutions in a mutually reinforcing workflow.
Day 4 - Friday		<ul style="list-style-type: none">• Illustrator Essentials.• Vector illustration as visual language using Adobe Illustrator. Patterns and dynamic geometries. AI-assisted vector illustration techniques and their integration into digital illustration workflows.

*The Academy reserves the right to:

- amend or cancel courses, change course location or substitute course leaders, professors, guests, visits location;
- make any changes that in our absolute discretion we consider necessary or appropriate for reasons of operational efficiency or due to any other circumstances that are beyond our control.

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2st week

COURSE SCHEDULE*

DAY	LESSON-SUBJECT
Day 5 - Monday	<ul style="list-style-type: none">• Styles and Variations.• Exploration of illustrative styles (flat, collage, painterly, geometric): investigating diverse approaches and reinterpreting them through variations and combinations.
Day 6 - Tuesday	<ul style="list-style-type: none">• Identity Design.• Developing a personal visual identity (palette, symbols, personal patterns). Creating a custom AI style library to generate projects optimized for consistent aesthetic language and visual coherence.
Day 7 - Wednesday	<ul style="list-style-type: none">• Typography as Illustration.• Text as illustration: creative lettering and the transformation of words into visual imagery.
Day 8 - Thursday	<ul style="list-style-type: none">• Characters and Environments.• Designing characters and settings: visual worldbuilding exercises to develop personal narratives with potential for AI-assisted animation.
Day 9 - Friday	<ul style="list-style-type: none">• Final presentation.

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