Academy of Transcultural Exchange Leipzig (AtA) at the Hochschule für Grafik und Buchkunst/ Academy of Fine Arts Leipzig

Academy of Fine Arts Leipzig (HGB)

The Academy of Fine Arts Leipzig (HGB) is one of the oldest and most renowned art academies in Europe. For over 250 years, the Leipzig Academy has stood for artistic and creative education at the highest level. It owes its excellent reputation to its numerous graduates, professors and staff, who play a decisive role in shaping the fields of contemporary fine arts and graphic design. Cooperation partners in various fields of art and graphic design, as well as in science and business, form a distinctive international network and stand for the quality and sustainability of our teaching and practice.

Academy for Transcultural Exchange (AtA)

The Academy for Transcultural Exchange (AtA) at the HGB Leipzig is the first study program for refugees in Germany in which participants are enrolled. As part of the program participants can prepare for regular studies at the HGB Leipzig. By enrolling refugees, the HGB Leipzig embraces migration as an essential characteristic of our society and is committed to the participation of people with a history of migration. In doing so, the HGB not only aspires to provide access, but to redefine the place and study of art transversely to the *white* Western canon. This requires working on conditions that create an environment that is critical about discrimination.

Program

The AtA program lasts for a maximum of four semesters. After successful participation, students can apply for admission to the basic study program or one of the specialized classes of the main study program to obtain their diploma degree. The prerequisite for transferring to the regular study program is passing the artistic aptitude examination in the desired diploma degree program. Additionally, students must achieve the required language level through the TestDaF exam. The AtA program itself does not grant a degree. However, achievements made during the AtA program can be credited when transitioning to a diploma program at the HGB, provided the student meets university entrance qualification requirements.

Language teaching

For the linguistic qualification of AtA students, **subject to continued funding of the program**, the HGB offers specialized German language courses. These courses prepare students step by step for acquiring the language skills required for the diploma degree. In addition to traditional language instruction, the courses include subject-specific and academic vocabulary.

Foundation Course Meetings

AtA students participate in shared study sessions within the foundation courses, where they learn the fundamentals of their field of study.

Workshops

Students can familiarize themselves with the graphic arts and audiovisual workshops through weekly courses.

Application for winter term 2026/2027

The application period for the winter semester 2025/26 starts on **March 1, 2026**, and ends on **May 31, 2026**.

The following documents must be submitted in German or English:

1. Short Motivation Letter
   - Indicating the desired field of study

2. Curriculum Vitae (CV)
   - Including personal details (e.g., date of birth, nationality, contact information, address), previous education, and artistic activities
   - Indicating the level of German language proficiency

3. A Selection of Up to Five Artistic and Design Work Samples related to the intended field of study (or a link to a portfolio, e.g., Instagram or personal website)

4. Proof of Residence
   - Positive residence permit from the Federal Office for Migration and Refugees (BAMF), if applicable, a copy of the refugee travel document or residence permit, or
   - Proof of an ongoing asylum procedure, or
   - Proof that temporary protection under § 24 of the German Residence Act (AufenthG) according to EU Directive 2001/55/EC applies to the applicant

5. Proof of University Entrance Qualification such as an Abitur certificate, the latest school certificate, or proof of prior academic achievements (e.g., transcripts from previous studies).
   If any of these documents are missing, please contact us for further guidance.

Application Process
- Please combine all documents into **a single PDF (max. 25 MB)** and name the file as follows: **FirstName_LastName_AtA2026**
- Please send the documents to the following email address: **ata@hgb-leipzig.de** by May 31, 2026. Due to data protection regulations, no further modifications to the email will be possible after sending.
- The application documents will be reviewed formally and for artistic suitability.
- If the application is successful, the applicant will be invited to the artistic entrance examination, which takes place in June.
- Following participation in the artistic examination, applicants will receive written notification of the results.
- If admitted, applicants can enroll in the AtA program at the HGB.

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Contact Information

For questions regarding the application process:
Student Affairs Office: studium@hgb-leipzig.de

For questions about the program content:
Contact Person: Dr. Natascha Frankenberg, Chair of the AtA Commission ata@hgb-leipzig.de

For additional program information in other languages:
www.hgb-leipzig.de/lehre/akademiefuertranskulturellenaustausch/

Social Counseling:
sozialberatung@studentenwerk-leipzig.de

The HGB is co-financed by tax funds based on the budget passed by the members of the Saxon State Parliament.

Diploma programs of the HGB

The HGB Leipzig offers four diploma programs:

- Book Design/ Graphic Design
- Photography
- Painting/ Printmaking
- Media Art

The artistic-practical education takes place in class lessons, in the graphic workshops and in the audiovisual laboratory of the HGB. The program is supplemented by theoretical studies focusing on art history, art theory, media studies, cultural studies and philosophy. The diploma program consists of a basic study period (4 semesters) and a main study period (6 semesters) in all departments. The studies are completed with a theoretical diploma thesis and by the presentation of an artistic/graphic work. The university's own gallery, the Institute of Book Art, and cooperations with partner institutions offer opportunities to bring one's own work to the public. In addition, the support office assists students on their way to professional independence through various offers.

Painting/ Printmaking

The primary goal of study in the Painting/Graphic Design program is to develop students' creative and imaginative potential. In individual and group classes, students continuously explore the traditional and new techniques of painting. Seminars and projects with various theoretical and practical emphases expand the course offerings. The aim is to provide students with thorough prerequisites and competencies to be able to take a meaningful artistic position upon graduation.

Book Design/ Graphic Design

Graphic design has expanded fundamentally in recent decades. Before the era of desktop publishing, the designer was only one of several actors. Today, many work and decision-making processes are concentrated on the desktop. In addition to mastering graphic means, working practices in design must be constantly redefined. The products at the end of a design process are also in a state of flux: away from the printed artifact to the electronically generated image.
The Book Arts/ Graphic Design program looks back on a rich history in design and cultivates historical positions and methods as a living heritage. Students explore artistic expression and deal with various production processes and reproduction techniques. Graphic design at the HGB sees itself as a comprehensive education that thinks beyond the supposed boundaries of its own subject and offers space for qualified and focused work.

Photography

Photography is the most popular visual medium of our time. It is also an important instrument of artistic discourse, as well as historical and cultural achievements, especially in the 20th century.
The teaching of artistic photography conveys the process of image creation in analog and digital form. A spectrum of artistic expression is addressed that extends beyond the original boundaries of the medium: photography as an imaging medium, also in connection with text and books, to the moving image in film and video, and as a spatial installation. The development of one's own artistic attitude and visual language is an essential goal of the course. In this respect, the teaching is clearly distinguished from the courses of study in photo or communication design. The teaching artists structure the studies through their lessons, accompanying excursions and projects.

Media Art

Contemporary visual art stands in relation to the production of images in society, for example in film, the internet or public space. The focus of the program is the teaching and appropriation of visual art. All media are included as artistic material. The freedom of art and its means are used: conceptual, processual, performative, experimental. The development of one's own artistic work is in relation to contemporary social issues. Equally, the acquisition of communication and organizational skills counts towards the formulation of an independent artistic position. Part of the interdisciplinary teaching are group and project work, excursions and exhibitions.

Theory

Theory courses at the HGB are in intensive exchange with the teaching of artistic practice. It enables students to question the meaning of their own artistic production. At the same time, it aims to impart art-related knowledge fanned out according to methodological, historical, technical and philosophical aspects. And finally, the study of theory should enable students to situate artistic activity in a social context and to articulate it linguistically.