

Master of Fine Art

Cambridge School of Art
Faculty of Arts, Law & Social Sciences



Media Services 4405/2.09/DT

Study Route 1: Practice/Theory Modules:

Critical Writing within Contemporary Art Practice

Following on from the examination of Aesthetics in year 1 this module provides the opportunity to develop critical writing skills in the context of a 'live situation' – whether this is an art centre, gallery, artist's studio, or museum. It will examine the nature of critical/art writing, from the artist and curator's perspective, and its scope for constructing both intention and reception.

Curating and Exhibiting: Acts and Discourses

This module looks at the rich field of the contemporary curator, both from an institutional perspective and as an independent (artist-curator). During the 2 semesters it will examine various themes including the archive, relational aesthetics, Immateriality and the relationship and role of spectators, audiences and participants. You will also work as part of a group in initiating and realising a curatorial project developed either as a virtual exhibition or installation.

Study Route 2: Arts Management Modules:

Arts Environment

This lecture-based module provides a reflective, practical, theoretical and methodological framework for investigating institutions, cultural and political processes that inform and frame the arts environment.

Arts Financial Management

This lecture-based module develops the tools and conceptual apparatus to map out the demands and implications of financial management that increasingly impact upon solo creative practitioners as well as institutions and organisations.

Fundraising and Sources of income

How do we raise money for our creative project? What are the implications? This module will look at ways in which we can develop a more focused and complete approach to developing projects that are realistically funded. It is delivered through a varied range of case studies and group seminars.

Event Management

This module aims to equip you with the skills to negotiate event management in today's competitive environment. This module will examine roles of both public sector and corporate events management through a range of case studies, guest speakers and structured taught sessions.

Study Route 3: Education Modules:

Enhancing Learning and Teaching through Reflective Practice

This module introduces the knowledge and skills necessary to plan, deliver, and evaluate learning in various Higher Education contexts. The module encourages the use of effective models of reflective practice to develop and enhance teaching practice in the light of relevant theoretical models of learning. Considerable emphasis is placed on the development of practical teaching skills, including the use of technology, to enhance the student learning experience. Teaching and learning on the module will be delivered through seminars, tutorials, presentations, workshops and on-line activities.

Developing Assessment for Learning

This module provides the opportunity for practitioners to examine the use of assessment through theoretical frameworks, particularly in relation to formative assessment as a means of enhancing the learning experience. You will be given the opportunity to develop skills in the use of feedback and feed-forward as well as helping to develop specific assessment criteria which will be used to help assess your own work. You will develop a range of skills and knowledge to enhance your professional practice as teachers and to establish assessment as an integral part of the learning and teaching process.

Entry Requirements:

Selection for the course is carried out by portfolio and interview and we ask for a 2.1 in a relevant undergraduate subject, although we also welcome applications from a wide range of backgrounds and equivalent experiences. Please contact the pathway leader for the MFA if you wish to discuss your suitability for the course.

The Staff Team:

Nick Devison (MFA Pathway Leader) is a specialist in painting and printmaking, and has exhibited widely in the UK including the Curwen Gallery, Flowers East as well as several international exhibitions.

Professor Anthony Harrild (Ruskin Professor) is a specialist in film and moving image work. His sports and art documentaries and films have been distributed worldwide.

Bruce Russell (Visiting Professor) is a painter of longstanding acclaim having exhibited at numerous national and international exhibitions including The Venice Biennale Aperto, and the X1 international Festival of Painting, France.

David Ryan (Reader in Fine Art) is a painter, video-maker, experimental musician and writer whose work has been represented in the UK and abroad, particularly in the area of interdisciplinary collaborations.

Benet Spencer works with collaged paintings developing fictional spaces; he has also curated and participated in exhibitions at national and international levels.

Tony Benn is both a theoretician and practicing artist who has exhibited widely throughout the UK. He is interested in locating painting and textuality within the gallery space.

Sam Porritt is a sculptor involved in the relationships between singular objects and multi-levelled installations. He has exhibited widely in the UK and abroad.

Kirsten Hacker is a photographer who is interested in the issues around representation and its relationship to photojournalism

Robert Holyhead is a painter, whose minimally lean works have been exhibited in America and Europe.

Other contributing staff include:

Pamela Pfrommer (Arts Management Route)

Henry Lydiat (Arts Management Route)

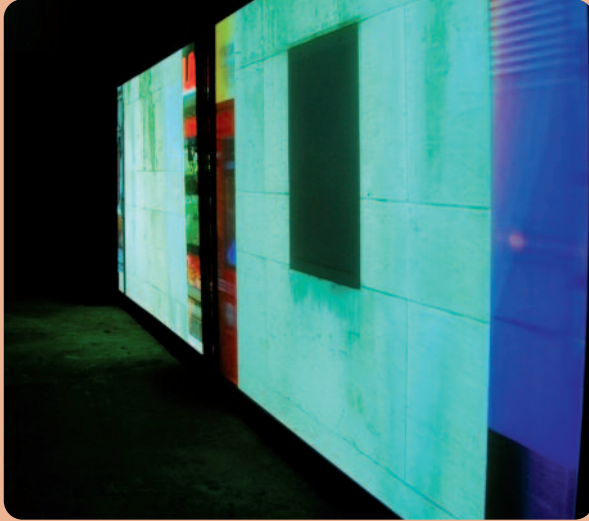
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MFA

Internationally recognised as the highest taught award in the visual arts, the MFA is a guarantee of professional competence.



The Master of Fine Art course is an exciting new development at Cambridge School of Art that aims to provide a specialist and in-depth postgraduate course of study incorporating built-in flexible study routes in order to cater for individual students' needs and career trajectories. It is a practice-based course, which embraces a variety of creative attitudes and established practices ranging from painting, sculpture, printmaking, installation, photography, film, sound, experimental music and intermedia.

The course will allow you the opportunity to focus on your given practice through core practice modules as well as interconnected critical theory and exhibition practice modules. The interplay of this provision will enable you to locate your practices at the forefront of contemporary fine art practice developing both critical and creative dialogues with staff and fellow students, and allowing you the opportunity to test out ideas within a professional environment and context.

Fine Art at Cambridge has strong links with external arts organisations such as the Arts Picturehouse, Kettle's Yard, Wysing Arts, The Junction, The Fitzwilliam Museum and other institutions. The Ruskin Gallery is also housed in the Cambridge School of Art and provides a focus for both representation of student work and professional touring exhibitions, making it an exciting new artistic focal point within Cambridge itself.



How the MFA is Organised:

The MFA is a two-year course and consists of five semesters (two in year 1 and three in year 2), which are defined by a spine of core practice modules of 60 credits that run through them. In the first year the intensive and investigative core module is complemented and offset by two 30 credit strands exploring, respectively, critical theory in relation to practice, and the development of various approaches to contemporary exhibition practices for various media. In year 2 (semesters 3–5) you will have a choice of 3 study routes relevant to the practices you have initiated in semester 1 and 2 and informed by your choice of career: a practice/theory route; an Arts Management route; and an Education route. Each of these inflects and complements the core practice-based 60-credit module in Semester 3 and 4. In semester 5 all students embark on an MFA Major Final Project, the summation of your studies.

Teaching:

Teaching takes place in seminars, individual tutorials and lecture-based sessions. There is a balance between various modes of discourse, interaction and instruction on the course, as well as between both the larger and smaller modules and the available study routes.

Modules

Establishing Postgraduate Practice

An outline of intended study (Personal Development Plan) is the starting point for this core practice module, where you will be expected to initiate a practice-based research programme articulating your concerns within a critical and cultural context. This programme will be discussed and analysed as you progress by the staff team and specialist visitors. Various methodologies will be engaged on this module within a working context while engaging with the work: including formal, contextual, philosophical and conceptual frameworks that are necessary in addressing the work. You will have the opportunity to present work on a one-to-one or group tutorial basis and develop a context for the work applicable to MFA level.

Aesthetics and Critical Writing

This module delivers a critical framework that will feed into the core research module. It aims to develop both critical thinking and the skills to articulate that thinking, as well as the investigation of key thinkers of aesthetics that continue to inform discourses around contemporary practice: from Kant, Hegel, and Nietzsche through to Adorno and Benjamin; from French phenomenology to American Pragmatism and Post-structuralism. The module will create an ongoing discursive connection – through group analysis and debate – between critical reflection, written practice and studio practice.

Approaches to Exhibiting

Responsive to the changing nature of exhibition practices in all areas of activity, this module will critically examine certain approaches that inform our current understanding of objects, processes, contexts and receptions. It will examine these aspects historically, theoretically and practically by looking at thematic clusters, which will include issues of space, neutrality, social context and the politics of representation. Each of these themes will provide scope for the examination of texts, events and case studies leading to the development and implementation of your own small-scale curatorial projects.

Extending Postgraduate Practice

This module follows on from the first year Core Research Practice in that you will further develop self-initiated practice based research. It may well be inflected or informed by the choice of study route you have chosen, but will in all cases endeavour to deepen the chosen research within a professional context. You will be expected to be articulate and evaluate a contemporary context for your activities and display an innovative approach to all aspects of your chosen project. Specialist staff will provide a lively discursive arena for the potential expansion, progression and development of your work.

Final Major Project

The Final Major Project represents the culmination of learning on the programme and provides an opportunity for you to develop and resolve a major area of fine art research. At the outset you will forward a research proposal to be approved by the module supervisor, which is informed by the practical and theoretical research carried out in the previous semester. Learning within the module is acquired through direct experimental autonomous studio research in which you test and develop the ideas outlined in your proposal.