

# Sotheby's Institute of Art—London

## MASTER'S DEGREE CURRICULUM 2018–19

### 30 CREDITS **Navigating the Art World**

### 60 CREDITS **Core MA Courses**

<b>Art Business</b>	<b>Contemporary Art</b>	<b>Fine and Decorative Art and Design</b>	<b>Modern and Contemporary Asian Art</b>
Unit 1: Art Business: Management and Finance	Unit 1: Contemporary Art Histories	Unit 1: Fine and Decorative Art	Unit 1: Modern Asian Art
Unit 2: International Art World	Unit 2: Debates in Contemporary Art	Unit 2: Art and Design	Unit 2: Contemporary Asian Art

### 2 x 15 CREDIT **Electives from any MA**

International Art World: Public Sectors	Curating Contemporary Art	Art and Authentication	East Asian Painting
Market for Western Antiquities and Old Masters	Performance Art	Contemporary Design and its Markets	East Asian Ceramics
Strategic Management for the Art World	Photography: Image and Power	Work Placement (accredited internship) *	Curating Asian Art
Emerging Markets	Photography and its Markets		Contemporary Chinese Art
Ethics, Law and the Art Trade	Work Placement (accredited internship) *		Work Placement (accredited internship) *
Work Placement (accredited internship) *			

### 60 CREDITS **Dissertation or Practice-Based Dissertation**

\*Admission to this elective is subject to application and selection during the academic year.

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## COURSE DESCRIPTIONS

### **Navigating the Art World I**

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This unit brings students from all MAs together for an introduction to the art world. The unit comprises lectures, seminars, visits and workshops that together provide a compelling set of critical understandings and professional skills that equip graduates for successful careers in the art world. These sessions focus on the key organisations, networks and relationships that constitute the international art world. They introduce students to aspects of art business and the art market, and the legal and ethical frameworks that influence their functioning. The unit also considers the different ways in which art objects are displayed, interpreted and mediated. Navigating the Art World introduces students to a variety of postgraduate research skills and methodologies within the disciplines of art history and art business. The unit also references other areas of the program, and is assessed with the creation and management of an art collection, enabling the application of interdisciplinary approaches to an art business scenario.

## **ART BUSINESS**

### **Art Business: Management & Finance**

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This unit introduces students to the fundamentals of art business. The first half of the unit focuses on issues of business management, strategy and marketing by introducing the tools and techniques required to appreciate and undertake strategic business plan-

ning and formulate effective business plans. The second half of the unit will introduce a new way of thinking about art—as an asset and investment opportunity—using the language of the financial services and investment community as well as the commercial market place.

The first semester explores and develops business decision-making and managerial skills. Art is now big business and understanding art market organizations from a strategic, management and marketing perspective is critical for anyone aiming to work both in the commercial and not-for-profit sectors. Students will be introduced to principal theories from the fields of strategic management and marketing as well as elements of organizational behavior, entrepreneurship and the basics of managerial accounting. The unit aims to instill a critical awareness of key discussion and debates in the scholarly literature and will draw on leading theories from a range of management-related disciplines while positioning them in a contemporary context through the use of examples from arts and creative organizations. Students will be encouraged systematically to analyse and assess existing art world organizations as well as to develop entrepreneurial and creative business ideas.

The second half focuses on art as an asset class, art finance and the function of the investor. We will consider how value is constructed in the art world and why the pricing of art objects is so difficult. We will investigate the characteristics of art as an alternative asset in comparison to traditional investments as well

as relative to other, alternative, investment options. We will discuss short and long term performance and its risk reward trade-offs by looking at art market instruments such as art indices and art funds. Given the opportunities provided by art-based investments, we will also consider the role of art advisory services and the role of wealth management.

### **International Art World: Markets, Laws & Ethics**

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As a complement to the material in Navigating the Art World, this unit develops in depth the students' understanding of the national and international frameworks of art business. Both established and emerging commercial art markets are analysed. The structures and functions of private sector institutions are studied, and their influence on the art market is assessed. Additionally, the unit further investigates the ethical and legal issues pertinent to the world of art business, and their relationship to the international art market.

The backdrop of this unit focuses on the international art market as a global commodities exchange which deals with tens of thousands of unit sales a season, worth in excess of \$50 billion a year. Students will learn that: the global art market is asymmetrical and largely unregulated; the major centres for the dissemination of art and antiques are Beijing, New York, London and Hong Kong with a sizeable market operating out of Paris; the market today is split evenly between dealers and auction houses; the greater part of the art

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market is weakly correlated to the financial market, and this results in particular forms of art funds and portfolios; the art market's many sectors behave in markedly different ways, and each is subject to changes in taste and changing patterns of wealth around the world. The law sessions expose the fundamental legal theory and issues of legal practice relevant to the art world and business. Legal practice is expounded using relevant case studies and students will be introduced to issues concerning law practitioners both nationally and internationally. The ethics sessions provide a broad and rich introduction to the history of ethics as a branch of philosophy and its relation to visual culture and the ownership of art objects. Global ethical issues are discussed in the context of the contemporary art world and issues relevant to ethical business practice and corporate governance are explored.

The ethics and law sessions are deliberately interwoven with the international art market sessions to enable students to: compare and contrast differing ethical/legal systems from a historical perspective and as essential features of contemporary cultures.

## CONTEMPORARY ART

### Contemporary Art Histories

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The contexts and concepts of contemporary art as a practice have developed considerably since 1968 in terms of production, dissemination, reception and modes of exchange. Throughout this unit we trace

these developments and situate them in a period broadly commensurate with 1968-1990. Some lectures will also look at periods prior to 1968 for context, whilst some of the later lectures will look at critical debates from 1990 onwards. A series of themed lectures looking at, for example, abstract expressionism, minimalism, feminism, land art and conceptualism, will be enhanced by a focus on single-artist lectures and other lectures examining seminal exhibitions staged during this period and how they addressed issues around critical theory, postmodernism, post-colonialism and the effects of globalisation on the institutions and practices of contemporary art.

The overall ambition of this unit is to ensure that all students can locate key movements in contemporary art history within their historical, social, economic, theoretical and philosophical milieus. A strong emphasis is placed upon developing an understanding of how art objects circulate within networks of artistic production and exchange. An overarching concern here is for students to understand global sites of contemporary artistic practices and the manifold debates around modernism and its legacies.

### Debates in Contemporary Art

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The last twenty years or so have seen the rise of context-based artistic practices. Much recent installation and performance art, for instance, explicitly engages with an immediate context, be it geographical, institutional or social. Since the 1990s we have also seen a surge of interest in collaborative and participatory

practices. This unit is designed with three objectives in mind.

First, it looks at artistic tendencies in the period from 1990 to the present, focusing in particular on these context-based practices. Second, it examines the debates which have developed around such practices, familiarising students with important critical positions on the issues of site-specificity, medium-specificity and participation; in the process it builds on knowledge gained in Contemporary Art Histories and encourages students to hone their historical acuity. And third, it pushes students to sharpen and apply their practical skills as they work on assignments that mirror professional tasks in the art world.

The aim of this unit is to familiarise students with and develop their critical awareness of crucial debates in the field of contemporary art, and of artistic practices that inform, and are informed by, those debates. This course unit also situates those debates and practices within a historical framework running from 1990 to the present and engages students in discourses around participatory, interactive and collaborative practices. More specifically, we aim to develop students' critical awareness of practices that exemplify or challenge common perceptions that are relative to the idea, medium and process, whilst deepening their perspectives on practices and tendencies that have emerged outside the old (European and North American) centres of contemporary art production.

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### FINE AND DECORATIVE ART AND DESIGN

#### Fine and Decorative Art

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This unit provides an in-depth examination of the production and patronage of fine and decorative art based on case studies drawn from late Renaissance to the later nineteenth century. Case studies may include Mannerism in Venice and northern Europe, the influence of the Hapsburgs, the Baroque Court, the globalised trade in luxury goods, The Grand Tour, the Classical Ideal and the Napoleonic art world, and revivals, re-creations and re-iterations. These case studies enable students, supported by an understanding of the wider cultural and economic imperatives of the period, to analyse significant aspects of art production in major centres at key periods of European history. They provide a lens through which to analyse and compare style, materials and techniques, and a basis for considering issues of copying, workshop production, regionalism, patronage, and the phenomenon of revivals. The case studies are further employed as mechanisms for engaging with the historical and contemporary understanding of the terms 'fine' and 'decorative' art, their interrelationships and their divergences. In addition to lectures, seminars and visits, handling sessions use the teaching collections of the Institute to explore the materials and techniques of the fine and decorative arts.

The teaching is object-based in its approach to the analysis, interpretation and contextualisation of art works. This connoisseurial methodology, which has been at the forefront of teaching at Sotheby's Institute since its inception, is critically considered. Its historiography and development are assessed, and its interface with other theoretical and methodological approaches embedded in the study of art history is examined.

#### Art and Design

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The unit provides an integrated study of late nineteenth and twentieth century avant-garde art and design, from c.1870 to c.1970, examining the relationships, synergies and divergences between these art forms and thereby interrogating and contextualising the meaning of 'art' and 'design' during this period. The material of this unit is explored through a series of case studies which utilize one or more selected institutions, buildings, interiors, exhibitions or cities as the starting point for a critical investigation into the key movements, individuals, artistic ideas and practice of the period in terms of both the fine arts and the decorative arts and design. In particular, these case studies provide a mechanism with which to explore the concept of modernity and the varied manifestations of this within Europe and America from the late nineteenth century through to the later twentieth century. Case studies may include Art Nouveau and the notion of the Gesamtkunstwerk; Cubism, Futurism and Fauvism; Abstraction in the Netherlands, Russia and Paris; the Bauhaus; Surrealism; post-war

Biomorphism; and Pop art. These interwoven developments within the fine arts and design are considered within their wider theoretical, social, economic and cultural frameworks. The unit also considers issues of patronage, collecting and reception, and the historical and contemporary market for the art works under examination.

While the object-based approach to the analysis, interpretation and contextualisation of these art works remains central to the teaching in this unit, other theoretical perspectives and methodologies embedded in the study of twentieth century art and design are necessarily explored and assessed.

### MODERN AND CONTEMPORARY ASIAN ART

#### Modern Asian Art

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A series of lectures in Semester I provide a range of Asian art from the 1860s to the 1960s, focusing on a period of about one hundred years to give a solid historical and theoretical perspective on its complex and diverse developments against the backdrop of the specific philosophical, social and political circumstances that inform it. The lectures focusing on core material addressing artistic movements are complemented by an engagement with theoretical frameworks throughout the semester to allow students to debate and articulate the specific styles and cultural issues that are crucial to its aesthetic and material

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forms. The lectures delivered over the course of the semester provide students a platform of knowledge from which to develop their reading and research skills further.

### Contemporary Asian Art

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Contemporary Asian Art focuses on Asian art in the period from the 1970s to the present, focusing on key figures, art movements and artistic engagement with the international art world. Following the focus on modernity in Asian art in the first semester, this semester will look at issues of post-colonialism, postmodernism, diasporas and globalisation, further developing their nuanced understanding of the field to prepare them for professional careers. A strong emphasis in this semester is the features and dynamics of the Asian art world and how it has developed over the past few decades and is continuing to develop in the contemporary period. During Semester II students further develop their own critical perspectives, working to enhance their research skills and their ability to present their views in the form of coherent, well-formed arguments.

## ELECTIVES

### Art and Authentication

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This unit examines the complex issue of authentication in art. It interrogates historical and cultural definitions and interpretations of authenticity, and their interface with academic, legal and institutional imperatives. The unit critically analyses issues of authenticity relative to the art market, and the position of copies and reproductions, forgeries and fakes within different sectors of the art world. This theoretical framework provides the context in which to examine the process of authentication and the unit considers the various methods and strategies by which art objects are attributed as a key component of this. The unit addresses, inter alia, the materiality of art (scrutinising techniques, scientific testing, alteration and restoration) balancing these empirical observations with the role of historical documents and contextual evidence in the authentication process. The unit thus provides students with an in-depth understanding of the rich complexity of the concept of authenticity, and of the interwoven approaches and imperatives embedded in the process of attribution and authentication.

### Contemporary Chinese Art: Process, Medium and Critical Practice

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This unit focuses on contemporary Chinese art from the perspective of critical practices in the twenty-first century. Students explore the critical underpinning of contemporary art from China within theoretical and philosophical frameworks via a series of lectures,

seminars, talks and visits. Works by artists such as Qiu Zhijie, Yin Xiuzhen, Song Dong, Xu Bing, Ai Weiwei, He Yunchang and Cao Fei will be analysed and discussed in relation to the relationship between process, medium and criticality, to draw out artistic, political and social conditions that underpin their production. The course will enable students to gain an in depth understanding of socially, intellectually and critically engaged art from China and Chinese societies. It will examine artists' use of certain types of media, such as film, performance, multi-media, technology, objects and documentary to see how their practices inform the critical engagements within the work. Philosophical texts pertinent to the production of works by contemporary artists from China will be studied relating to issues such as collectivity and participation, the body, language, dematerialisation.

### Contemporary Design and its Markets

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Since 1980 design has assumed a high profile in the art market and in contemporary society where it is seen as a crucial indicator of lifestyle and status. This unit interrogates this development, examining the production of design and its consumption in the primary and secondary sectors.

Areas investigated, relative to a range of design objects, include the continuing influence of Modernism; Post Modernism; the rise of DesignArt and conceptual design; appropriation and the recycling of past designs; and sustainability. New materials and processes (such as computer-aided design and digital

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design) are contrasted with contemporary interest in materiality and the handmade. The focus is on Europe and America, but recent global developments are also examined.

The wider social and cultural background provides the context for understanding these varied approaches and also underpins an investigation into the markets for design of this period. This market analysis is considered relative to the Design Network, the system of institutions, organisations and roles that define and influence the professional design world.

### Curating Asian Art

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This unit focuses on curating Asian art, exploring different methods and issues in relation to curating via the examination of a wide range of exhibitions and displays. Key sites will be used for study such as the V&A and the British Museum displays of Asian art and current temporary exhibitions in galleries or museums. The course will enable students to analyse, critique and debate specific cultural issues of curating across Asian and Western frameworks of curatorial development and practice through the focus on Asian art within the global circulation of art production and representation. Certain exhibitions will be examined that are considered landmarks in Asian art discourse within the West, such as Hou Hanru's *Cities on the Move*, Hayward Gallery (1999), or *The Real Thing*, Tate Liverpool (2007) and also key large-scale exhibitions such as the Guangzhou Triennial or the Asia Pacific Triennial, that have made significant contributions to the development of Asian art discourse within Asia.

Students will develop an exhibition project as the main assessment of the course.

### Curating Contemporary Art

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This option is intended for students who want to hone their curatorial skills and their understanding of current trends and debates in curating. It will build on relevant components in *Navigating the Art World*, including the project, in seminars and lectures on the networks of the contemporary art world and the place of the curator within them, supplementing these with lectures and workshops both on practical aspects of curating in both the private and public sectors and on landmark exhibitions, shows that have marked the history of curating. The emphasis will be on recent developments in curatorial practice, including the artist-curated show and, above all, the rise of the biennial. In the process, we will consider the rewards and potential pitfalls of trans-cultural curating.

### East Asian Ceramics: Court, Domestic and Trade

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The teaching in this unit focuses on Chinese ceramics and includes an examination of related East Asian ceramic traditions. After a discussion of technical aspects of ceramic production, the development of the major Chinese ceramic wares for the court and domestic markets are discussed from the point of view of design, production and consumption as vernacular and/or luxury items. The unit examines the transfer of ceramic traditions via the export trade establishing a

global influence which is embedded in the collections of palaces and country houses of both Europe and the American East Coast. Trade ceramics are examined through excavated material from shipwrecks as well as inventoried collections in European collections. The unit establishes the concept of repeated historical themes, trends and philosophies which are a central feature of the art history of East Asia and essential to the understanding of the East Asian ceramic traditions of the modern and contemporary periods.

### East Asian Painting: Court and Literati Traditions

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Exploring aspects of court and literati painting in East Asia as a means of understanding the foundations of the modern traditions of East Asian painting, this unit focuses on China including related themes in Korea and Japan. Beginning with an examination of materials, formats and technical production, the unit examines the key structures, functions and significance of court and literati painting in East Asia and reviews the range of visual themes represented together with their context and meaning. Core texts in the production and understanding of court and literati painting are discussed, and individual paintings are examined in case studies and comparisons are made with paintings of the modern and contemporary period. The unit establishes the concept of repeated historical themes, trends and philosophies which continue to be a central feature of East Asian culture.

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### Emerging Markets

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The unit will examine the nature, mechanisms and constituents of art from the developing and transitional world economies. The premise of the unit is the current art market status quo. It seeks to establish the lessons that an emerging art market might learn from or teach to the core developed markets (in the West). As the unit progresses students will examine the conditions and ambitions of the various components of the nation or region. These will be set against history, indigenous traditions and the broader impact of late capitalism. The hypothesis enshrined in modernisation theory shall be tested against the contrasting or conforming ambitions of emerging markets. The unit sets out to show that fundamental economic and political forces have combined with a revival in ancient beliefs to change our world and drive a paradigm shift in cultural perception and value.

### Ethics, Laws and the Art Trade

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This elective addresses the ethical and legal issues of the art trade focusing on antiquities, Nazi loot and contemporary art. Students will study those areas of national and international legal systems which are relevant to art trade situations, as well as the more aspirational regulatory systems suggested by UNESCO in the 1970s. The concept of 'due diligence' which developed out of the UNESCO agreements and is in general use by dealers and auction houses will be discussed, as will the effectiveness of stolen art databases such as the Art Loss Register and Art Recovery. Issues of

authenticity concerning fakes, forgeries and misattributions will also be studied in the light of legal/ethical case studies, and other instances of art crime will be included. Finally, the triangular relationship between artist, dealer and collector will be analysed in terms of the ethical and legal problems which regularly arise in everyday art business.

### International Art World: The Public Sectors

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The unit will examine the relationship between the art world and art market and to this end look at three fundamentally different approaches to public sector support for the arts: the state-centred French model, free-market American model and hybrid British system. It will also investigate the institutional approach to culture in East Asia. There will be essentially three layers to the enquiries: supra government, national government and institutional. The unit will look at the subject from an analytical and qualitative perspective, shining a light on the cultural experience as well as its material support for the broader culture. The unit aims to offer a particular perspective on the various issues and areas of art world experience, such as museums, exhibitions in Kunsthallen and government subsidy and political support for art and culture.

### Performance Art

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This elective explores the developments of performance in the field of visual arts, from its emergence in the 1960s to the present. Following a chronological

perspective, lectures highlight key moments of the history of performance, such as its recognition as an art in its own right in the 1970s. Curatorial issues in relation to performance art are also addressed. In seminars, students develop a grasp of the changes in the relationship between performance and museums through the study of artworks, exhibitions and commissioning programs. Other sessions take a theoretical approach by focusing on key notions such as 'performativity'. Students develop their knowledge and understanding of visual material via a series of visits to public museums and galleries in London. Through visits to archives they are also exposed to the range of primary source material that is appropriate to research on performance. The unit also examines the legal and contractual issues surrounding performance art and its development over the last two to three decades. Performance art will also be considered in relation to the art market and the ways in which it may 'resist' or respond to this market.

### Photography: Image and Power (1968-now)

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Beginning in the late 1960s, photography has occupied a privileged position as a medium for contemporary artistic production both in the industrialised and the industrialising worlds. This privileged position is, in part, derived from its uses as both an evidential (documentary) and as an expressive medium. This unit begins with cultural theories of power and its operation, and images of state power, theories of resistance and images of protest, and interrogates

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the idea of documentary photography (in an art world setting) as a liberal practice. Other key themes are the politics of representation and the idea that popular forms of digital photography, such as citizen journalism, are reinvigorating the connection between documentary photography and democracy. Framing this unit is the decline of traditional photojournalism and the rise of the art world as a locus for engaged photographic imagery, and a consideration of platform, distribution and audience on signification and affect.

### **Photography and its Markets**

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This unit examines how a new art, and a new art market sector, emerged and developed in the period 1839 until the present. The historical component to this unit is conceptualised in terms of network studies: i.e. the teaching and learning examines the role of key structural factors (e.g. exhibitions, collecting, scholarship, museums, dealing) in the development of art photography and its markets. Students develop their knowledge and understanding of the visual material via a series of visits to important public and private collections in London. This teaching and learning provides the foundation for the empirical analysis of the markets for classic, contemporary and vernacular photography, and of the pros and cons of art photography in toto as investment. In this unit students learn how to analyse the market for a given art object and consider the relationship between a given market sector and shifting art world formations.

### **Strategic Management for the Art World**

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This unit furthers the inquiry introduced in Navigating the Art World to key areas of strategic management relevant for the successful organisation, development, growth and ultimately survival of any art world organisation operating in a competitive landscape with limited resources. Students will explore and critique key theories, findings and empirical research in the broad field of strategic management and will be asked to consider, critique and contribute to current discourses and debates in the field, exploring the applicability of such material to the art world. They will be required to analyse and assess the strategy and structure of existing organisations and provided with relevant tools and techniques enabling them to develop effective strategic plans of their own.

### **The Market for Western Antiquities and Old Masters**

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This unit provides the opportunity for in-depth study of the market for antiquities and old masters. It will focus on classical and near eastern antiquities as well as western old masters. It will also include study of old master works on paper (paintings, sketches and prints). A central theme of the unit will be the relationship between cultural and financial value systems. The importance of factors such as provenance, authenticity and condition will also be studied. Students will learn how to analyse and interpret art market data, as well as how to organize it in spreadsheets and communicate it in graphic form.

### **Work Placement (accredited internship)**

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This elective unit offers students experiential learning in an art-related work environment in London. Practical experiential outcomes are supported by teaching that will provide students with the reflective tools to analyse and to enact employment opportunities successfully. The unit is also intended to relate practically to earlier or concurrent learning on PGDip/MA program units, and may also offer an appropriate context for dissertation research. A key aspect of the Institute's teaching and learning strategy is to foster informed and professional student participation in the art world sector wherein students reflect on the outcomes of their program learning and on their developing skills. The principle of this approach is that employability is enhanced if work experience becomes a reflective practice by being embedded within a rigorous, assessed academic curriculum. Admission to this elective is subject to application and selection during the academic year.

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