

## MA IN FINE AND DECORATIVE ART AND DESIGN

### PROGRAM OVERVIEW

The MA in Fine and Decorative Art and Design established the model for Sotheby's Institute's rigorous and teaching-intensive MA programs. Tracing its origins back to the Works of Art course founded in 1969, it offers an in-depth and integrated study of fine and decorative art and design based on case studies drawn from the late Renaissance to the late twentieth century. Issues examined include style, materials and techniques, copies and revivals, but also investigation of patterns of patronage, collecting, and a consideration of the historical and contemporary art market for a range of fine and decorative art and design objects. The program is aimed at students who seek an immersive object-based approach to the study of a wide range of art works, and who intend to pursue a career within the professional art world whether as an auction house expert, dealer, art advisor, curator or academic.



### AIMS OF THE PROGRAM

MA in Fine and Decorative Art and Design students analyse a range of predominantly European objects dating from the Renaissance to the late twentieth century, examining them from a stylistic point of view, but not neglecting the wider historical, social, economic and cultural factors which have influenced the production of these art works. The program aims to develop critical understanding of the terms 'fine art', 'decorative art' and 'design' and of the synergies and divergences between art objects across a range of media and periods. Through detailed study of objects, students will also gain an understanding of the consumption of art works, examining patterns of patronage and collecting, and the historical and contemporary art market.

Students will spend much of the course looking at objects first-hand in a variety of settings, including museums, art fairs, auction houses and collections, both in the United Kingdom and on visits to Europe. They are encouraged to make judgements about the aesthetic value, and sometimes the commercial value, of what they see. The knowledge and experience gained equips them for employment in many different areas of the international art world and alumni can be found working in auction houses, museums, commercial galleries in many different countries. Others have gone on to complete doctorates.

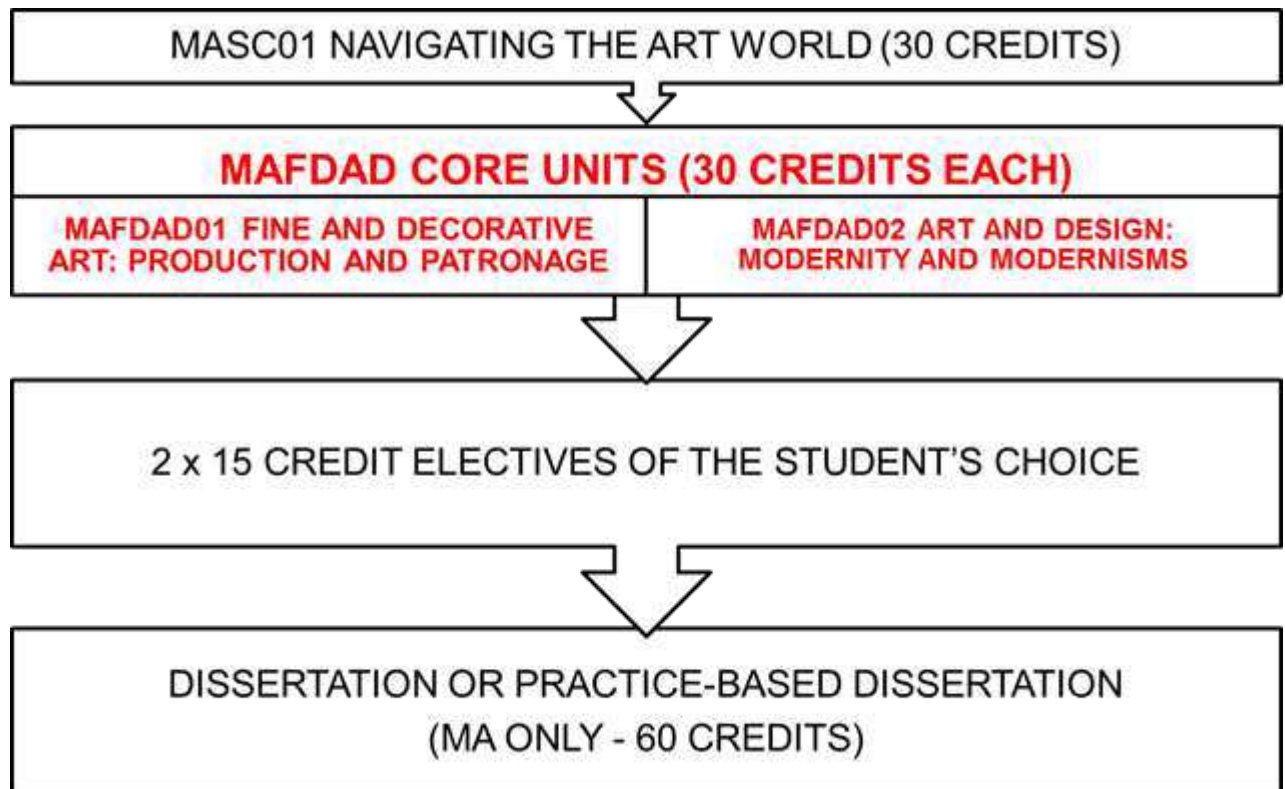
## PROGRAM STRUCTURE

The program comprises three semesters. Students begin studies with the 30 credit shared unit, *Navigating the Art World*, which is delivered across all MA programs. This is followed by two 30 credit core units [*Fine and Decorative Art: Production and Patronage* and *Art and Design: Modernity and Modernisms*] which run concurrently during semesters I and II. In the second half of semester II, students chose two 15-credit electives, drawn from a selection offered across all the MA programs.

An intensive program of lectures given by faculty and by visiting experts is supported and enriched by visits to museums, galleries, historic houses, auction houses, fairs and temporary exhibitions, and by handling sessions which provide first-hand experience of materials and techniques. Regular seminar discussion allows for further consideration of key issues, and encourages peer learning and the development of the individual student's critical voice. There is no formal teaching in semester III when students who are studying for a master's degree complete their dissertation.

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The postgraduate diploma is awarded for 120 taught credits across two semesters. For the MA, students need to take an additional semester and complete the 60 credit dissertation.





## UNITS IN SEMESTERS I & II

### **MASC01: *Navigating the Art World* [Semester I]**

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, institutions, networks and relationships that constitute the international art world (including museums, galleries, dealers, fairs and auction houses), examining their history and evolution, the social, financial and legal frameworks and imperatives which influence their functioning, and their changing nature in the light of globalisation and the growth of the internet. The unit introduces students to aspects of the traditional art market and the strategies and methods used in its analysis and interpretation; it considers the impact of the growth of on-line platforms for the buying and selling of art on the auction houses and private dealers. *Navigating the Art World* also explores the different approaches to the curation and display of art objects, to issues of conservation, and to the ways in which works are interpreted and mediated. It interrogates the meaning of authenticity and methods of authentication relative to a range of art works, both historical and contemporary.

This unit furnishes all MA students across the Institute with guidance on the requirements of postgraduate level research and writing, and on the importance of academic integrity in their studies and for their future professional careers.

The knowledge and understanding gained from this unit is assessed in a 1,500 essay on an art world issue and in a project. The latter is the major assessment of this unit and is based on an art world scenario. This might be the creation of a hypothetical exhibition, the launch of a new print or on-line journal or the formulation of an art collection and its management. The taught sessions of the unit provide students with the necessary tools with which to complete this project in both its academic and its practical aspects and, through imitation of art world practice, furnish them with valuable experience for their future careers.

## MAFDAD01: *Fine and Decorative Art: Production and Patronage* [Semesters I and II]



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 have included Mannerism in Venice and northern Europe, the Baroque Court, the globalised trade in luxury goods, The Grand Tour, the Classical Ideal, 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 a prominent element 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.



## MAFDAD02: *Art and Design: Modernity and Modernisms* [Semesters I and II]



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 take 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 have included Art Nouveau and the notion of the *Gesamtkunstwerk*; Cubism, Futurism and Fauvism; Abstraction in the Netherlands, Russia and Paris; the Bauhaus; Surrealism; 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 both in the academic study and commercial transaction of twentieth-century art and design are explored and assessed.



## ELECTIVES

Students choose two elective units from subjects across the specialist MAs at Sotheby's Institute of Art. These are studied in semester two. Students may wish to specialise their study and focus on elective units which are based in their own program, or diversify their experience through pursuing interests based in other programs. Example electives options available to students are listed below. Students may also decide to choose electives which form concentrations in, for example, Contemporary Design and its Markets, Photography or Contemporary Art.

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

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

\*\* Subject to approval of validation by the University of Manchester.

## SEMESTER III

For MA students, the third semester is devoted to the production of a dissertation. This may be either a standard dissertation or a practice-based dissertation. The dissertation is between 12,500 and 15,000 words and involves original research on a topic chosen by the student. The practice-based dissertation comprises a practical and/or creative project alongside a written component of between 8,000 and 10,000 words. Students receive guidance and support throughout the dissertation process via workshops and tutorials. Students need not be resident in London for all of this period. Tutorial assistance will be available throughout.

## STUDY VISITS IN THE UK AND ABROAD



Teaching in the lectures and seminars is reinforced by regular visits to a range of museums and galleries, to historic houses, relevant temporary exhibitions, commercial galleries, fairs and auction houses. A study visit within Europe takes place each semester. Venues have included Venice, Paris, and the Netherlands, which encompasses the TEFAF art fair at Maastricht. These visits are integral to the program, permitting students to study objects at first-hand and to view works in varied contexts. Some venues provide opportunities to consider the market for fine and decorative art. Visits vary from year to year.

## ASSESSMENT

Students complete a range of assignments during the program, aimed to help them become sophisticated graduates with high calibre practical and theoretical skills and knowledge, preparing them for success in the world of work. Some assignments are intended to develop skills connected with research, analysis, contextualisation and criticism, and to promote students' ability to present material in different written and spoken modes. Object-based assignments foster students' skills of observation, description and attribution. Essays invite students to explore themes connected with artistic contexts, art business or the networks in which art is created, bought, collected and exhibited. Much assessment responds directly to the practical demands of employers, so that all students will be involved in assignments which simulate 'real world' tasks, projects and scenarios; for example, reviews, catalogue entries, auction projects and business planning.

For many assignments students can choose their particular focus of interest, so as to develop more specialised knowledge and understanding in areas which particularly interest them. Throughout the program, students are fully supported by tutors to help them reach their potential.

## QUALITY ASSURANCE AND VALIDATION

Sotheby's Institute of Art – London is proud of the high quality of its academic programs. It is an affiliated institution of the University of Manchester, one of the UK's largest civic universities and a member of the prestigious Russell Group of universities. The University of Manchester closely scrutinises the quality of Sotheby's Institute of Art – London programs and validates the MA.

Sotheby's Institute of Art – London is also reviewed by the Quality Assurance Agency for Higher Education (QAA), the independent body entrusted with monitoring and advising on standards and quality in UK higher education.



## **CAREERS AND ALUMNI**

Past students have gone on to work in auction houses and galleries around the world. Some students go on to further study or a doctorate. Many older alumni now occupy senior positions in a wide range of art organisations where art expertise is essential. A selected list of employers of past students includes: Sotheby's (locations worldwide); Christie's (locations worldwide); Phillips; Bonhams; Leslie Hindman auctioneers; MacDougall's Fine Art auctions; Lempertz auction house; Criterion auctioneers and valuers; Dreweatts & Bloomsbury Auctions; Kaplans Auktione; Alex Cooper auctioneers; Paddle 8; Gagosian Gallery; White Cube; Timothy Taylor Gallery; BlainISouthern; Fine Art Society; Didier Aaron; Mallet Antiques; Jorge Welsh; Erskine, Hall and Coe; Collier Webb; Everard Read Gallery, Johannesburg; R 20<sup>th</sup> Century, New York; Lawrie Shabibi, Dubai; Victoria and Albert Museum; Hermitage Museum, St Petersburg; Guggenheim Museum, New York; Isabella Stewart Gardner Museum, Boston; Fine Arts Museums, San Francisco; Museum van Boijmans van Beuningen, Rotterdam; Museum of Modern Art, Warsaw; Vancouver Art Gallery; Geffrye Museum, London; Wallace Collection, London; Crafts Council; Art Loss Register; LAPADA Art & Antiques Fair; Masterpiece London; and *Apollo* magazine.