

# 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	Modernism and its Markets	Curating Asian Art
Emerging Markets	Photography and its Markets	Work Placement (accredited internship) *	Contemporary Chinese Art
Ethics, Law and the Art Trade	Work Placement (accredited internship) *		Work Placement (accredited internship) *
Art World Logistics and Operations			
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.

# Sotheby's Institute of Art—London

## COURSE DESCRIPTIONS

### **Navigating the Art World**

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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.

## ART BUSINESS

### **Art Business: Management and Finance**

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This unit investigates key issues in the field of Art Business. Half of the unit focuses on management issues – specifically, strategy, marketing and managerial accounting – in which it introduces the tools and techniques required to analyse, appreciate and formulate effective operational strategic business and management plans. The other half of the unit introduces the concept of art as an asset class and investment opportunity, using the language of financial services, the

investment community and the commercial market place to enable students to compare the acquisition and collection of art objects with other investment and financial opportunities. Where relevant, analytical tools and specific research methodologies enabling the empirical investigation and critical analysis of art businesses are incorporated within the taught curriculum.

### **International Art World: Markets, Laws and 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.

## CONTEMPORARY ART

### **Contemporary Art Histories**

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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 milieux. A strong emphasis is placed upon developing an understanding

of how art objects circulate within networks of artistic production and exchange. That is, the focus will be on the following key issues as they relate to artworks: making/production; exhibition/display; trade/market; collecting/collection history; conservation/preservation and scholarship, in relation to both public and private sectors. An over-arching concern here is for students to understand global sites of contemporary artistic practices and the manifold debates around modernism and its legacies.

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 critically examine periods prior to 1968 for context, whilst some of the later lectures will consider 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 ways in which they addressed issues around critical theory, postmodernism, post-colonialism and the effects of globalisation on the institutions and practices of contemporary art.

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### 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 in relation to ongoing developments both within contemporary art practices and the institutions that support it. And third, again building on 'Contemporary Art Histories', it pushes students to sharpen and apply their practical skills as they work on assignments that mirror professional tasks in the art world.

### FINE AND DECORATIVE ART AND DESIGN

#### Fine and Decorative Art

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This unit provides an integrated and in-depth examination of the production and patronage of art based

on case studies drawn from late Renaissance to nineteenth century revivalism. These place-focused case studies, supported by an understanding of the wider cultural and economic imperatives of the period, build multivalent perspectives on the way art was produced in key European centres. They provide a lens through which to analyse and compare style, materials and techniques, and provide a basis for considering issues of copying, workshop production, regionalism, patronage and the phenomenon of revivals.

The unit aims to develop sophisticated object-based skills in the analysis, interpretation and contextualisation of art works, which are fundamental to working in all areas of the professional art world. Together with the 'Art and Design' unit, this unit interrogates this connoisseurial approach, examining and assessing its historiography and contemporary application, and its interface with other theoretical and methodological approaches embedded in the study of art history. This includes a critical examination of the historical Sotheby's Institute of Art object-based pedagogy, how it developed and how it continues to evolve within the context of current research and practice. Further, the case studies are employed as mechanisms for engaging with the historical and contemporary understanding of the terms 'fine' and 'decorative' art, their interrelationships and their divergences. This provides the historical background, or platform, from which these definitions can be further examined in 'Art and Design'.

### Art and Design

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This unit interrogates the connoisseurial approach, critically examining its historiography and contemporary application, and its interface with other theoretical and methodological approaches embedded in the study of twentieth century art and design. The unit scrutinises Sotheby's Institute of Art object-based pedagogy, and how it has evolved within the context of current modern art and twentieth century design research and practice. The unit provides an integrated study of late nineteenth and twentieth century avant-garde art and design, examining critically 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 examined through a series of case studies and within its wider theoretical, social, economic and cultural frameworks. The case studies utilize one or more selected institutions, buildings, interiors or exhibitions as the starting point for a detailed critical investigation into the key movements, individuals, artistic ideas and practice of the period. The unit also considers the historical and contemporary market for the art works under examination. The teaching and learning of this unit aims to develop sophisticated visual and critical skills in the analysis, interpretation and contextualisation of art works from this period that are vital to operating successfully in all areas of the professional art world.

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### MODERN AND CONTEMPORARY ASIAN ART

#### Modern Asian Art

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This unit will begin by considering meanings associated both with 'Asia/Asian' and 'Modern' art. The unit will then examine Asian art in the modern period providing in-depth critical and theoretical understandings of the complex structures of visual modernity in Asian art (painting, sculpture, photography, print and calligraphy) via a series of lectures, visits and seminars. Key areas of study will include analysis and critical evaluation of modern art production in East, South and South-East Asia with a view to providing both academic and practical expertise for students seeking work in the professional art world. Artistic developments and artworks from Asian countries will be examined, debated and analysed to gain an understanding of the complex strands and connections across local, regional and global networks through appropriate theoretical and cultural contexts. The complexity of artistic dynamics within and across the region will be analysed alongside their inter-relationship with dominant and marginal art historical frameworks and problematics. Competencies will be acquired for articulating and presenting the work of modern Asian artists in the contemporary art world at a sophisticated and nuanced level.

#### Contemporary Asian Art

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This unit explores contemporary Asian art from the 1970s to the present, providing an in-depth critical and theoretical understanding of art movements and artists from Asia through a series of lectures, visits talks and seminars. Key areas of study will include analysis and evaluation of the artist-led groups, the emergence of exhibition practice and curating in Asia, interactions of artists with political developments and artists' development of critically-engaged practice through a variety of media. Cultural interactions of the local, regional and global will be examined, debated and analysed to gain a nuanced understanding of the dynamics of contemporary Asian art, enabling students to place these developments within appropriate theoretical contexts. The diversity of artistic output from the region will be studied through an object-based approach within museum collections, private collections and galleries. The engagement with the market will be studied with special attention to the auction world. Competencies will be acquired for articulating and presenting the work of contemporary Asian artists in the contemporary art world at a sophisticated and nuanced level.

### 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.

#### Art World Logistics and Operations

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The logistics and operations systems of the art world have become increasingly significant in the new millennium because of the exponential growth of the art world in terms of both global artistic production and international consumption and trade. This exciting new global framework has also created challenges associated with the social, political and economic shifts brought about by more recent events such as Brexit and US border policy. This unit provides the opportunity to study the operation of the art world in terms of the day to day practical and logistical needs of art businesses, both public and commercial. It will focus

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on the logistics and transportation of art objects of all types of size and material, age and provenance, as well as chain management systems employed at both local, national and international levels. A central theme of the unit is risk management, as related to issues of packaging, conservation, transport, insurance and security. Other key themes include budgeting, in terms of cost effectiveness as balanced against risk; and collections management. A theoretical framework is provided by the established disciplines of logistics and chain management studies, which students will learn to apply to the specific conditions of the art world.

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

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**

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 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**

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**

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

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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.

### **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.

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### **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.

### **Modernism and its Markets**

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As visitor figures to exhibitions and specialist museums attest, modernist art continues to fascinate the public. Dealing in works that are in many cases over a hundred years old, the Impressionist and Modern departments of London's major auction houses remain amongst the most significant in terms of size and sales. This unit traces the development of the market for modern art from the establishment of the dealer-critic model of the late nineteenth century through to the present day, taking full account of the ways in which some modernists often resisted the market

or developed oppositional practices. Many of the methods established in the modern period continue today, whether selling through a dealer with exclusive rights to an artist's production, or establishing artist-run spaces. Modernism and its Markets looks at the historical art market, but also examines the current market for modernist art by drawing on the expertise of auction house experts and dealers in an effort to understand the future of modernism's markets.

### **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 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

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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 be-

comes 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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