

## MA IN CONTEMPORARY ART

### CORE PROGRAM OVERVIEW AND AIMS

This twelve-month-long taught MA course, validated by the University of Manchester, is unique in combining rigorous academic study of contemporary art with the acquisition of skills of professional practice.

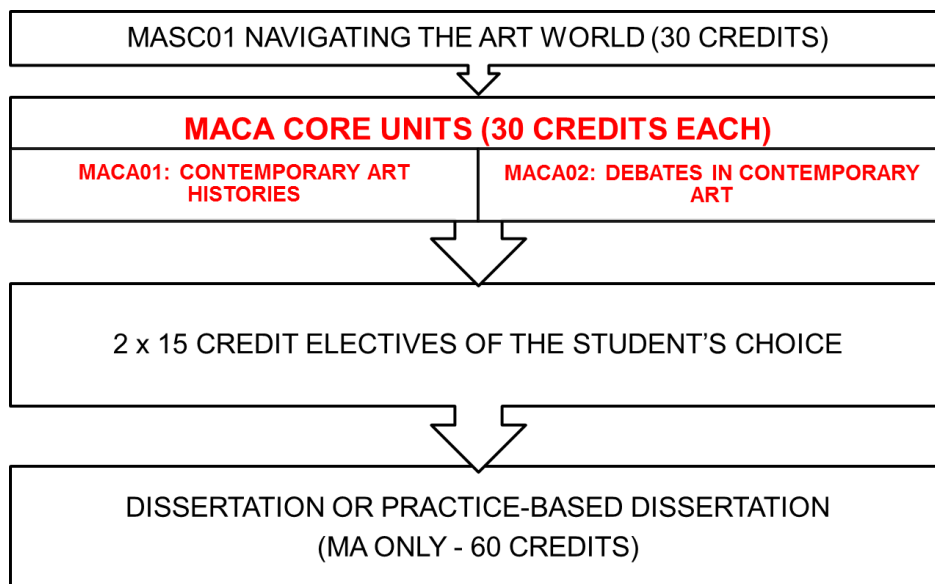


*Chiara Shioto, K21, Dusseldorf, Germany*

The program is designed for students who are fully committed to the study of contemporary art and who intend to pursue careers in the field. Past students have gone on to work at museums, commercial and not-for-profit galleries, auction houses, consultancies, journals, international art fairs and universities, to name but some of the potential career paths.

At the start of the year, students are allocated a personal tutor who supports their academic and personal development throughout the program. The course runs across three semesters (two semesters for Postgraduate Diploma students). The first two semesters are intensively taught on four (occasionally five) days per week. In the second semester, specialist electives can be chosen from across all Institute Master's programs, meaning that a student can build a personalised Master's profile. During the third semester (mid-May to mid-September inclusive) there is no formal teaching. In this semester, students research and write their dissertation with the guidance of an individual supervisor. Lectures are given by both members of the faculty and consultant lecturers, many of whom are active in the art world, thus facilitating networking opportunities. Study visits (both local and international) are an integral part of the program.

## COURSE OVERVIEW



## ASSESSMENT

Students complete a range of assignments during the program that are designed to help them become sophisticated graduates with high calibre academic and vocational skills and knowledge, preparing them for success in the world of work. Object-based assignments foster students' skills of observation, description and attribution. Other assignments, such as essays, are intended to develop skills of research, analysis, contextualisation and criticism, and to promote students' ability to present material in different written and spoken modes. Students are encouraged to consider the networks in which art is created, exhibited and collected. All students will be involved in assignments which simulate 'real world' tasks, projects and scenarios: for example, exhibition reviews, collection/catalogue entries, and planning for a hypothetical exhibition or journal.

For some assignments, students can tailor the task to embrace a topic that particularly interest them. Throughout the program, students are fully supported by tutors as they explore and develop their ideas. They also have a number of 1:1 feedback tutorials to aid their progression.

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## **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.



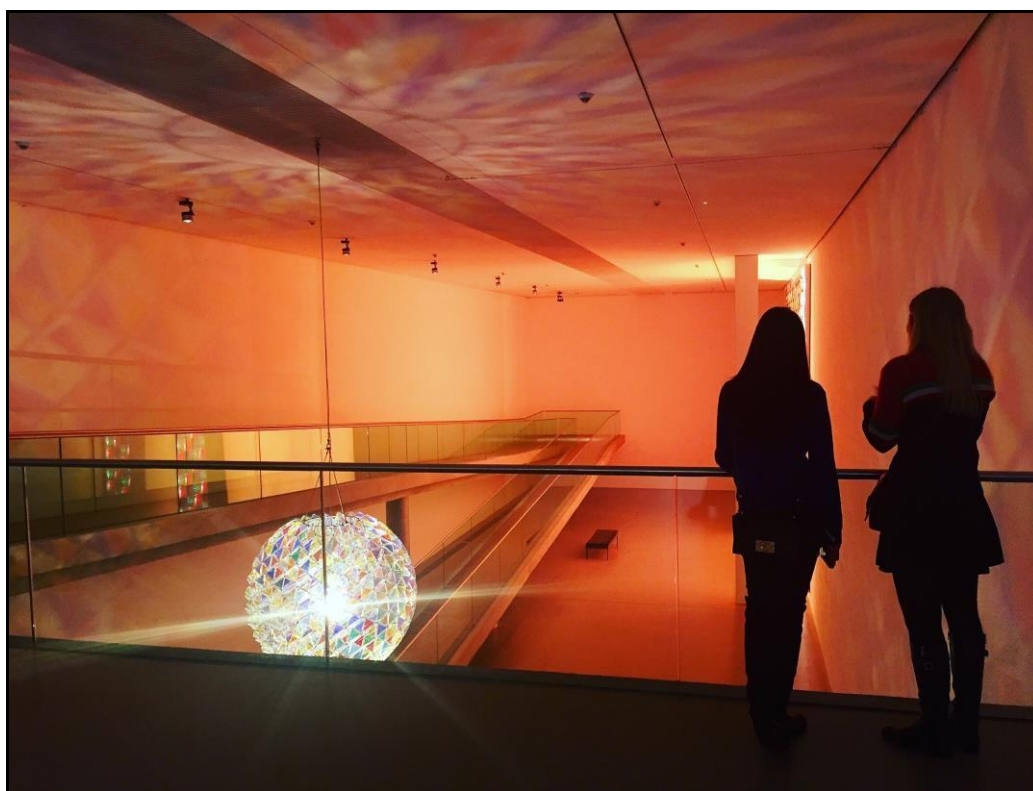
## **DURATION & LOCATION**

Master's programs are 12 months in duration. Those students enrolled for Postgraduate Diploma follow the first two semesters of the Master's program (9 months).

Classroom teaching takes place at Sotheby's Institute of Art-London in 30 Bedford Square and at other locations nearby.

## **SEMESTER I**

The aim in Semester I is to give students a thorough grounding in the art of the period from 1968 to 1995 drawing upon the key philosophical, aesthetic, social and political debates that informed it. The teaching and learning in this semester is intended to develop both the student's historical understanding and their critical voice.



*Olafur Eliasson, Langen Foundation, Neuss, Germany*

## **COURSE COMPONENTS**

### **Core Curriculum:** *Navigating the Art World*

This unit brings students from all MAs together for an introduction to the art world. Taught from the beginning of Semester I, it 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 them. A short essay is undertaken on a related topic.

*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 considers the different ways in which art objects are displayed, interpreted and mediated. A major assignment sees students (working in small groups) apply this knowledge and understanding to a contemporary art project that involves creating (for example), a hypothetical exhibition or a new journal or webzine.

### **MACA01:** *Contemporary Art Histories*

Art has evolved dramatically since 1968 in terms of production, dissemination, reception and modes of exchange. The overall ambition of this unit is to ensure that all students can situate key movements in contemporary art history within appropriate historical, social, economic, and philosophical contexts. The teaching encourages students to develop an understanding of how art objects circulate within networks of production, display and exchange and how these have changed with the increasing globalisation of the art world. The scope of the teaching and learning therefore extends outside Europe and North America.

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*Wolfgang Tillmans, K21, Dusseldorf, Germany*

**Lectures:** These examine art from 1968 to 1995 (with some anticipating this chronology and some extending beyond it) not as a general survey but instead by focussing on specific periods, regions, tendencies and figures. A series of themed lectures looking at, for example, feminism, land art and conceptualism, will run alongside single-artist lectures and those examining key strands in critical theory. These lectures, together with the related seminar series, provide students with the knowledge and skills with which to develop their own critical positions.

**Seminars:** These are held approximately every week, sometimes more than once, typically with groups of 12-15. Some seminars are intended to help students develop their understanding of the context in which artists of the period were working. Others are given over to discussions of critical theory written in the period under review. Another strand examines specific art world debates and concerns, for example, around institutional critique/engagement.

**Visits:** The course has an object-based philosophy which holds that an understanding of art should always begin with a direct experience of specific art objects. In accordance with this emphasis, students visit London museums and galleries to study artworks in situ. These are conducted as seminars, not as guided tours. There are also visits to smaller arts organisations and a major art college.

**Guest Lecturers:** Guest speakers are drawn from a variety of professions in the contemporary art world including artists, curators, gallerists, editors, critics and auctioneers. The talks range from formal to informal and offer students exceptional opportunities to meet with significant figures in the art world.

**Tutorials:** Tutorials are an integral part of the course as they provide students with the opportunity to discuss assignments they are working on with a member of the teaching team and also to discuss the written feedback on their submitted assignments.

During Semester I students typically visit Sotheby's auction house for a bespoke tour of the contemporary art preview, and have a classroom workshop on the auction process.

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*Langen Foundation, Neuss, Germany*

**International Study Visits:** There is one international study visit in Semester I. This is typically to Germany (based in either Cologne or Dusseldorf) and takes in major public and private collections. Institutions visited on previous trips include the Ludwig Museum, Kolumba Museum, Langen Foundation, Haus Langer und Esters, Museum Abteiberg, K20, K21, Kunsthalle Köln, Kunsthalle Düsseldorf, Julia Stoschek Collection, and commercial galleries.

## **ASSESSED ELEMENTS**

**Review:** each student writes an exhibition review towards the beginning of the semester. This gives tutors an opportunity to assess at an early stage the writing and critical skills of their tutees, and to offer appropriate feedback.

**Museum Collection Entry:** each student writes an entry on a given artwork in accordance with the format for such entries in museum inventories, websites and/or catalogues.

**MACA01 Essay Presentation:** students give an oral presentation outlining the research they have done in preparation for their essay and set out the positions they expect to advance in those essays.

**MACA01 Essay:** each student submits an essay on artistic practices relating to a key debate in the period 1968-1995.

**The Project:** The Project is part of the Core Curriculum; it is the culmination of the student's work on "Navigating the Art World". It is undertaken within the home program and is supervised by MA in Contemporary Art tutors. Organised into groups of 3, 4 or 5 students, each group undertakes one of two projects. They can produce one issue of a hypothetical art magazine — in a print or web-based format — or present a proposal for a hypothetical exhibition in a commercial or publicly funded gallery. The students pitch their project to their tutors and cohort and create written documentation in support of it. In addition to group project materials, each student submits an individual written submission.



*Ugo Rondinone – Vocabulary of Solitude, Museum Boijmans Van Beuningen, Rotterdam, Netherlands*

## **SEMESTER II**

The focus in Semester II is on the period from 1995 to the present. Students further develop their own critical perspectives, working with the tutors to enhance their skills of research and writing, and their ability to present their views in the form of cogent arguments.

### **MACA02: *Critical Debates in Contemporary Art***

This unit is designed to enhance and develop the understanding and skills gained in Semester I. The teaching and learning examines the artistic tendencies in the period and the debates that informed and developed around key practices (with an emphasis on site-specificity, new media and participation). The teaching and learning aims to deepen the students' understanding of practices and tendencies that have emerged outside the more traditional centres of contemporary art production. Students continue to hone their vocational skills as they work on assignments that mirror professional tasks in the art world.



*Barbara Kruger, Museum Ludwig*

**Lectures:** As in Semester 1, a number of lectures are monographic, each looking at a key artist in depth. Students also attend lectures on critical theory and key themes in art practice, not only in Europe and the US but also Africa, Asia and Latin America.

**Seminars:** As in Semester I, seminars are a core element of the teaching in Semester II with the critical theory strand continuing across the semester. In other (text-based) seminars, students are invited to consider site-specific, new media and participatory practices and their theorisation.

**Visits:** As in Semester I, visits are typically made to London galleries, museums, collections and artists' studios.

**International Study Visits:** There are two international study visits in Semester II. Students and tutors typically visit Paris; past trips have included visits to the Centre Pompidou, Musée d'art Moderne, Palais de Tokyo, Jeu de Paume, Cartier Foundation, and commercial galleries. The second study visit is typically to Belgium and the Netherlands. Whereas the previous two trips are intended to ground the student's understanding of key institutions, artworks and practices, this visit has the additional objective of introducing them to organisations spearheading new developments in curating, such as BAK and Casco in Utrecht. Every two years one of the second semester trips is to the Venice Biennale.

**Guest Lectures:** As in Semester I, Students also attend one-off talks and lectures by artists, gallerists, critics, auction house experts and other art world professionals.

**Tutorials:** Tutorials remain a key element of the teaching and learning. For MA students, some tutorials are dedicated to the development of possible topics for the dissertation.



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## ASSESSED ELEMENTS

**Review II:** a review of a show currently viewable in London.

**Critical Debates presentation:** a presentation outlining what the student intends to work on in his or her Critical Debates essay and research done to date.

**Critical Debates essay:** each student writes a long research paper on one of three topics— new media, site-specificity or participation in contemporary art.

N.B. Transition to Semester III depends upon the successful completion of Semesters I and II.

## ELECTIVES

Students will choose two elective units from subjects across the specialist MAs at Sotheby's Institute of Art. These will be 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.

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	Performance Art
Curating Contemporary Art	Photography: Image and Power
Contemporary Chinese Art	Work Placement Unit (accredited internship)*

*Not all electives are offered each year and are contingent upon sufficient enrolment*

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

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## **SEMESTER III**

In this semester students develop a more specialised area of study and show their ability to engage in sustained research, weigh evidence and present a complex argument. They will spend the semester preparing and writing either a 12,500-15,000-word dissertation, or a Practice-based Dissertation consisting of a creative and/or practical component plus a reflection/analysis of the above of 8,000-10,000 words. The Practice-based Dissertations are on topics that are chosen by the students in conversation with their tutors.

Students need not be resident in London for all of this period (subject to the agreement of the Program Director).

## **ASSESSED ELEMENTS**

**The Dissertation:** Three copies must be handed in, typed and complete, in mid-September.

## **FACULTY**

Dr Juliet Hacking, Program Director

Dr Marcus Verhagen

Dr Pierre Saurisse

Plus regular and occasional consultants, and guest speakers

## **Careers in the art world following the successful completion of the Masters in Contemporary Art**

Since its inception in 1991, MACA alumni have assumed positions of note across the international art world, in both the private and public sector. Whilst a majority of students chose to work in private sectors — commercial galleries, auction house, art fairs, and consultancies — a significant number also work in private foundations, public museums and not-for-profit organisations. Alumni have also acquired positions in academe as lecturers, researchers and professors and a significant number have gone into online arts publishing, another area of growth in the art world today.

A select list of institutions currently employing our students at entry-and director-level would include: Gagosian Gallery, London and New York, Houldsworth Gallery, London, MOMA, New York, Tate Modern, London, The New Museum, New York, Marianne Boesky Gallery, New York, Phillips de Pury, London, Grosvenor Gallery, London, Christie's London, Timothy Taylor Gallery, London, White Cube, London, Creative Time, New York, Sotheby's London and New York, Haines Gallery, San Francisco, Hauser & Wirth, London, GALERIE8, London, Gyeonggi MOMA, South Korea, Kukje Gallery, Seoul, South Korea, Whitechapel Gallery, London, Serpentine, London, Karsten Schubert, London, Stephen Friedman, London, Sies and Hoke, Dusseldorf, Bloomberg Projects, London, Urs Fischer Studio, New York, Damien Hirst Studio, London, and Josh Lilley Gallery, London