

# Sotheby's INSTITUTE OF ART

## **Sotheby's Institute of Art – London: Access and Participation Statement**

### **Introduction**

Sotheby's Institute of Art – London has, is, and will continue to be committed to the development of a study environment that includes and supports all students and staff, where students are recognised as partners in learning and are able to participate equally, with every individual having the opportunity and motivation to fulfil their potential.

### **Overview**

Sotheby's Institute of Art - London is an educational institute which has continually developed since it was founded by Sotheby's Auction House in 1969 and now offers a range of validated programmes at postgraduate and undergraduate level validated, since 1995, by the University of Manchester.

The Institute's philosophy of delivering education that prepares students for the realities of working in the art world has remained a core principle to the present day. It is underpinned by intensive, specialist teaching, active engagement with all aspects of the art world and its professionals, and the principles of object-based and in the case of contemporary art, context-based study.

### **Vision Mission**

The Institute's vision is to be universally acknowledged as the premier provider of advanced object-based art education, with graduates who combine passion for the visual arts with scholarship and market sophistication in order to flourish as art world leaders.

### **Student Body**

The Institute currently recruits its students from across the world. In 2017/18, 19% of its MA/PGDip students were from the UK, 30% of students were from the EU and 51% of students were from countries outside the EU.

The Institute recognises that there is a significant recruitment gap between male and female students. On average female MA and Summer Study students comprise 80% to 85% of the student body, whilst on Semester Courses the figure is usually around 90%. These proportions are reflected in the rates of applications from female and male students. This gender disparity in the rates of application and enrolment is, however, offset by the fact that historically senior leadership roles in the art world have been occupied by men. A key aspect of the Institute's educational mission is to address the long-term issue of female participation and representation in senior leadership roles in the art world.

### **Fair Access and Recruitment**

Sotheby's Institute of Art - London aims to recruit with integrity, transparency and high standards of professionalism. We aim to ensure that places are offered to prospective students whose qualifications, skills and experience match the entry requirements and academic demands of the programme. In recruiting, selecting and admitting students, the Institute aims to:

- provide equality of opportunity to all prospective and admitted students judged to be able to complete their programme of study successfully
- optimise impartial advice and guidance so that students make informed decisions
- recruit students to programmes which best meet their stated career needs and aspirations
- offer all prospective MA students a one to one interview in order fully to understand their needs and optimise their chances of success on their chosen programme.

The Institute's website provides information on what the Institute does to support students with disabilities and mental and other health issues. The Institute's 'Welcome Website', available to accepted students, offers extensive guidance on living in London, including accommodation issues, and the Institute also enables students to use the University of London Housing Service which offers extensive help with locating affordable housing. The site enables students to begin networking and making connections with each other before they join the Institute.

The range of different programmes and courses that the Institute offers enables students to progress at different rates and on differing pathways towards their ambition of working in the art world. The offer from the Institute includes non-accredited professional programmes and on-line courses; accredited shorter Summer Study courses (4 weeks in duration, validated at level 6) and Semester Courses (15 weeks, validated at level 6), as well as the Master's degree programmes (1 year, validated at level 7).

These differing types and lengths of courses enabled students to develop their skills and confidence to progress to higher levels of study. Within the 2017/18 MA cohort:

- 33% of students from the previous Semester Courses had progressed to the MA
- 36% of students who had studied an on-line programme progressed to the MA
- 14% of Summer Study students from London and New York progressed to the MA.

### **Supporting Student Access**

To support potential students with the cost of their tuition fees, the Institute offers its own scholarships for Master's degree students, through three different scholarship schemes. Applicants from anywhere in the world who have already been accepted onto one of the Sotheby's Institute of Art – London MA programmes are eligible to apply.

- The Institute offers up to three academic merit-based scholarships each year, the Vivien Flaxman Scholarship (MA in Art Business applicants), the Gordon Lang Scholarship (MA in Contemporary Art, MA Fine and Decorative Art and MA in Modern and Contemporary Asian Art applicants), and the James Malpas Scholarship (for applicants progressing to Master's degrees from Semester Courses). The Flaxman and Lang Scholarships cover the full MA tuition fee, whilst the Malpas Scholarship covers the Semester course fee.
- Additionally, the Institute offers partial merit-based scholarships of approximately £5,000 of tuition fee payment per year.
- The Institute also awards smaller amounts of financial assistance to Master's students. The Institute offers, on average, partial tuition fee assistance of between £1000 - £5000 to students in need. Applicants are required to demonstrate financial need via an application form and appropriate supporting documentation. Financial assistance is usually arranged before the academic year begins but a small reserve is retained in order to assist students who experience financial difficulties during the academic year.
- In the 2017/18 year, the total value of support for student tuition fees paid by the Institute was £151,600.

- From September 2017 applicants to MA other than the MA in Art Business were also eligible for the Ann Chilton Art History Scholarship, which is offered by the English Speaking Union. This scholarship covers a significant proportion of the tuition fee for a promising applicant who is experiencing financial need.
- Applicants are also encouraged to seek funding from other sources such as organisations offering professional and career development loans, in addition to country-specific funding opportunities, as detailed on the British Council's website.
- The Institute has partnered with a specialist student loan company, Future Finance, to provide loans for tuition and living costs to Sotheby's Institute of Art - London students with a UK domiciled address (assuming they meet appropriate credit checks and are 18 or over), who are enrolled for a Master's programme. Future Finance is regulated by the Financial Conduct Authority in the UK.

### **Supporting Student Success**

Sotheby's Institute of Art – London is committed to principles of teaching and learning that uniquely combine academic and professional practice and expertise, at all levels, and across a wide range of art world subject specialisms. The Institute aims to:

- prepare students for the global art world through innovative, specialised and transferable art world research and knowledge
- promote and support a high quality, personalised student learning experience
- develop and promote excellent professional skills for international art world practice.

The Institute describes its approach to developing students' abilities to engage with their studies and to progress into employment in its Teaching and Learning Principles which are as follows:

#### **1) INNOVATIVE APPROACHES TO ART AND THE INTERNATIONAL ART WORLD**

##### **'Preparing students for the global art world through specialised and transferable art world research and knowledge'**

- We have developed innovative art history and art world programmes that offer unique learning opportunities and skills. Provision is specialised and international in scope, from focused western and Asian art history and theory to the developing field of art business.
- Our academic staff engages in innovative and authentic professional art world research, exploring emerging areas of knowledge through interdisciplinary approaches, thus informing teaching and fostering student excellence in the contexts of academic and professional achievement. We encourage academic and professional criticality, whereby students are encouraged to think and practice reflectively, critically and creatively. This takes place in art and design historical and contemporary market contexts, in curating, art heritage and conservation contexts, and across a wide international landscape of art business approaches.
- We are committed to a highly immersive and participative approach to learning, both in and out of the classroom. Direct access to learning in the field is via gallery, museum and collections site visits; continuous access to a wide range of art world professionals; art object-handling in the fine and decorative arts, design and contemporary art; and

through dynamic exposure to international art world destinations. External art world experts and professionals provide students with feedback on their work.

## 2) PERSONALISED LEARNING

### ‘Promoting and supporting a high quality, personalised student learning experience’

- We provide opportunities to personalise learning for unique specialisations: students choose and combine project and assignment topics, elective units and dissertation subjects. We identify individual students’ academic and research interests. Through individual tutorials, students interact with personal tutors and other academic staff who follow their developing skills and interests.
- To encourage development and deep learning, we offer students continuous support across all assessment, both in one-to-one and in focused group contexts, and through comprehensive and high quality written feedback.
- We have a supportive and inclusive Admissions process. All MA and Semester applicants have an interview with a member of academic staff from the relevant programme, so that the Institute has every opportunity to explore their ability, potential, interests and motivations. At a comprehensive orientation, students are inducted as partners in learning, and at postgraduate level this is continued in *Navigating the Art World*, the shared programme unit which initiates each MA.
- We offer access to a wide range of specialist digital resources that enable students to explore learning and research pathways across visual arts and art business fields.
- Our international student cohorts share ideas and perspectives, fostering peer-to-peer learning and networking in a global context.
- We aim to attain high levels of student engagement. The Institute’s vision is of a partnership between the Institute and its students wherein students have shared ownership of the learning process, contribute to a continuously improving learning experience, and participate in informed decision-making, with every individual student having adequate opportunity to fully engage with their learning and to reflect on their experiences at the Institute.

## 3) EMPLOYABILITY and PROGRESSION

### ‘Developing and promoting excellent professional skills for international art world practice’

- A key feature of SIAL’s teaching and learning approach is the unique access to art world professionals and art objects in their various contexts, thereby producing student work that articulates a deep understanding of professional art world processes.
- We are proud of our reputational excellence at all levels. This includes the connectedness of the Institute; the staff research and professional profile; the work readiness of graduates and the success of alumni.
- Our range and variety of assessment are designed to embed rigorous and highly professional student responses. These include a variety of writing and speaking briefs to different audiences; for example, exhibition reviews, cataloguing and curating exercises, art world and art business professional presentations and reflective portfolios.
- We design curricula that develop excellent presentational skills, a critical and informed art world vocabulary and conceptual understandings. An important aspect of our provision is innovative and reflective work placement opportunities. Across all Institute programmes and courses, students are supported and encouraged to be assured performers in a range of professional contexts.

- Our globally linked network of art world professionals, academics, alumni and dedicated careers support, nurture and promote opportunities for employment and progression, including continued academic study. Students receive focused exposure to potential employment and other career opportunities, and gain confidence in where and how they might situate themselves within the art world.

### **Supporting Students' Needs**

The Institute's Disability Access Policy enables students with identified disabilities or chronic health problems to access the full range of necessary adjustments and support with their studies. The Institute has a dedicated Student Support and Counselling Service, which supports students with a range of challenges which may impact on their ability to complete their studies successfully. This includes a dedicated on-site counsellor who is a fully qualified psychotherapist. In the academic year 2016-17, 175 hours of counselling were delivered in house. The number of hours for 2017-18 as of May 2018 was 104. The Institute also offers a significant level of tutorial support throughout a student's studies.

### **Student Achievement and Progression**

Students studying at the Institute are supported and motivated to achieve very high levels of success. Student data records a consistently high level of student retention and achievement. Over the last six years:

- The average retention rate on MA programmes (the number of students who enrolled against the number that completed) is 97%.
- The average achievement rate on MA programmes (the number of students who enrolled against the number that passed their qualification) is 95%.
- The average proportion of MA students achieving high grades (Merit or Distinction) is 80%.
- Over the last six intakes, the average rate of Semester Course students achieving their qualification on time is 92% (the number of students who enrolled against the number that passed their qualification on time).
- Over the last six intakes, the average rate of Summer Study students achieving their qualification on time is 89% (the number of students who enrolled against the number that passed their qualification on time).

The Institute has a dedicated Careers Service which supports student employability in a wide range of ways. Students report high and improving levels of employment after graduation. Over the last 3 years, the MA Graduation Survey, conducted 5 months after the students have completed their programmes, demonstrates the following:

- In 2017 responding graduates reported that 77.7% were in full time or part time employment, had set up their own company or were involved in an internship, and 5% were in further study. 86.9% of respondents answered positively to the question 'My degree from Sotheby's Institute of Art was instrumental in launching my art world career.'
- In 2016 responding graduates reported that 77.1% were in full time or part time employment, had set up their own company or were involved in an internship, and 3.4% were in further study. 85.6% of respondents answered positively to the question 'My degree from Sotheby's Institute of Art was instrumental in launching my art world career'.
- In 2015 responding graduates reported that 68.9% were in full time or part time employment, had set up their own company or were involved in an internship, and 3.7% were in further study. 86.7% of respondents answered positively to the question

'My degree from Sotheby's Institute of Art was instrumental in launching my art world career'.

- In the 2017 Graduate Survey, 92.9% of graduates who were working, identified that they had found work within an art world or creative industries context, whilst in 2016 the figure was 88.4%