

## MA IN CONTEMPORARY ART

This fourteen-month-long taught MA course, validated by the University of Manchester, is unique in combining rigorous academic work with vocational training in the study of contemporary art. It is designed for students who are fully engaged with and committed to contemporary art and who intend to pursue careers in the field. Past students have gone on to work in museums, private galleries, auction houses, consultancies, magazines, etc.

The course is taught over three semesters. Teaching usually takes place from Monday to Thursday, allowing one to two full days for research.

### SEMESTER I

Semester I is the most heavily taught of the three semesters. The aim is to give students a thorough grounding in the art of the period from 1960 to 1990 and to analyse the debates that attended it. The training received in this semester forms the necessary basis for the development of the student's own historical understanding and critical voice.

#### Course components:

**Lectures:** These form the major component of Semester I and provide a detailed survey of art from 1960 to 1990, focusing on specific periods, regions, tendencies and figures. Necessary background information on the preceding post-war years (1945-59) is provided in the introductory week. Overall, the lectures that are given over the course of this semester give students the knowledge on which to build and develop their own critical positions. Whilst most of the teaching is provided by the core team, approximately 25% of the lectures are given by outside specialists.

**Seminars:** These are held every week, in groups not exceeding twelve. Certain seminars are given over to discussions of critical texts and artists' statements relating to the period under review. Others are more 'professional' in scope, examining, for example, public sculpture projects, or the comparative merits of different gallery exhibitions.

**Visits:** These are treated as seminars, never as guided tours. The course has an object-based and context-based philosophy which holds that an understanding of art must always begin with a direct experience of a specific art object. In order to emphasise this aspect of the course, students visit museums and galleries to study artworks in situ. Students will be given the opportunity to discuss these works, in their contexts and surroundings, with other students and tutors. In Semester I, several days are spent visiting exhibitions in London. Early in the semester, students and tutors go on a three day visit by coach to visit major museums and sculpture parks in the North of England. Later, in early November, students travel to Germany with a group of tutors and visit collections and galleries in Köln, Düsseldorf, Frankfurt and elsewhere during an intensive six day study trip. During Semester I students also visit contemporary art sales at Sotheby's, led by experts from the auction house.

**Research Methods:** In order to assist the student in honing the practical and academic skills that are necessary for a career in the contemporary art world, a series of lectures, seminars and workshops on research methods are also provided during this semester.

**Guest Lecturers:** Guest speakers are regularly invited to talk to the entire group about their work. These guests are drawn from a variety of professions within the contemporary art world; they include artists, curators, gallerists, editors, critics, auctioneers and consultants (see list of previous speakers below). The talks are informal and offer students exceptional opportunities to both meet and question significant figures in the art world.

**Tutorials:** Each student has a personal tutor and has at least five scheduled tutorials during

the semester in which to discuss his or her work and progress. These are an integral part of the course as they provide students with oral feedback on assignments submitted through the semester.

### **Assessed Elements**

At the beginning of the third week of the course, a Research Methods seminar is held to outline the range of assessed elements in Semester I, and how to approach them.

**Essay:** At the beginning of the seventh week students are asked to hand in a 3,000 word essay on some aspect of art between 1960 and 1972 (the first period to be studied in depth). The essay gives tutors the opportunity to assess at an early stage the literary, organisational and expository abilities of their students, and offer appropriate advice.

**Professional Studies:** With help from the research methods seminars, students are asked to write an exhibition review and a catalogue entry in the style of a museum catalogue.

**Project:** This is the major assessed element of the first semester. Students undertake one of three 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. For the project, each student writes an illustrated critical essay of 3,000 words. Students work in groups to learn teamwork skills.

**Slide Identification and Analysis Test (SIAT):** For the SIAT, students are asked to identify, analyse and compare works of art from the period under consideration, that is, 1960-1990 inclusive.

## **SEMESTER II**

The focus in Semester II is on the period from 1990 to the present; and while students attend a series of lectures on developments outside the West during Semester I, the curriculum for Semester II is more emphatically global in scope, taking in the Middle east, Africa, South America, India, China and the Far East.

During Semester II students further develop their own critical perspectives, working with the tutors on the course to enhance their research skills and their ability to present their views in the form of cogent arguments.

### **Course Components:**

**Seminars:** Seminars form the main component of Semester II, students regularly undertaking independent work and then presenting it to their tutors and peers. The presentation of ideas by one student in each seminar is followed by active discussion and constructive criticism from the rest of the group. The semester is organised around two seminar strands. In the first strand, "Network," students present research papers on aspects of the art network such as galleries, collections, museums or magazines. The purpose of the Network strand is to examine how the art world works and how artworks circulate in a broader context. In the second strand, "Art and Its Practices", students present research papers on the interaction between artworks, how they were made and experienced, and the emergence of artistic practices such as site-specificity and collaborative artworks.

**Lectures:** A course of extended lectures entitled "Exhibition as Proposition" is a major component of the semester. The lectures analyse in detail major international exhibitions which have had a significant impact on art and the art world in recent years. They address such issues as why and in what sense the shows were successful, the intentions of the curators, the nature of the events themselves and their critical reception, as well as looking at exhibition making in general. A second series of lectures ("Artist in Focus") looks at key artists in detail. Another aspect of semester II lectures is an overview of art in relation to business

and legal issues.

**Visits:** As in Semester I, several days are given over to visiting galleries, museums, collections or artists' studios. Towards the end of the semester, students and tutors undertake a four or five day study trip, either to the Venice Biennale or to Belgium and the Netherlands.

**Guest Lectures:** As in Semester I, talks by visiting speakers are scheduled for most weeks.

**Theoretical Studies:** Theoretical positions that have had a notable influence on the production and reception of art are examined in a series of lectures; each of these lectures is followed by a seminar in which students and tutors discuss the possible applications of a given theoretical perspective in the study of contemporary art.

**Tutorials:** As in Semester I, each student meets his or her tutor at least five times.

#### **Assessed Elements:**

**Extended Research Papers:** Two papers are written as the result of research produced for the two seminar strands, "Network" and "Art and Its Practices". Each paper must be 3000 to 4000 words long. A shorter case-study paper will present findings on art and its present day relation to business and legal issues.

**Professional studies:** Students are also required to submit a second exhibition review and a catalogue entry written in the style of an auction catalogue.

**Dissertation proposal:** Students must put forward a short research proposal for their dissertation topic both as a seminar presentation and in written form in the final weeks of Semester II. Those students not proceeding to Semester III must write an essay.

N.B. Transition to Semester III depends upon the successful completion of Semesters I and II. Students who successfully complete the first two semesters, but who either are considered unlikely to complete a dissertation successfully or who opt not to write a dissertation, will be awarded a Postgraduate Diploma.

### **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 a 12,000-15,000 word dissertation. Students need not be resident in London for all of this period, but tutorial assistance will be available throughout.

#### **Assessed Elements:**

**The Dissertation:** Three copies must be handed in, typed and complete, by the end of October.

### **LECTURERS**

**Dr. Anthony Downey, Programme Director.**

**Dr. Marcus Verhagen**

**Dr. Maxa Zoller**

**Dr. Edgar Schmitz**

**Anna Moszynska**

**Dr. Pierre Saurisse**

**Jennifer Thatcher**

**Dr. Maria Walsh**

**Dr Richard Noble**

**Guest speakers have included the following artists:**

Edward Allington

Janine Antoni

Franko B

Lillian Ball

Breda Beban

Pierre Bismuth

Ian Breakwell

Sophie Calle

Jake & Dinos Chapman

Keith Coventry

Adam Chodzko

Michael Craig-Martin

Gregory Crewdson

Neil Cummings

Jeremy Deller

Ian Davenport

Tacita Dean

Peter Doig

Tracey Emin

Mark Fairington

Stephen Farthing

Anya Gallaccio

Rose Garrard

Liam Gillick

Anthony Gormley

Alexis Harding

Susan Hiller

John Hilliard

Roni Horn

Isaac Julian

Jaroslav Kozlowski

Mark Leakey

Marysia Lewandowska

Brad Lochore

Christina Mackie

Hughie O'Donoghue

Chika Okeke

Ole Oguibe

Melanie Manchot

Ian McKeever

Bruce McLean

Cathy de Monchaux

Marielle Neudecker

Richard Patterson

Cornelia Parker

Michael Porter

James Reilly

Eva Rothschild

Glenn Seator

Yinka Shonibare

Jane Simpson

Simon Starling

Georgina Starr

Sam Taylor-Wood

Estelle Thompson

Mark Wallinger

Richard Wentworth

Jane and Louise Wilson

Cerith Wyn Evans

**Curators and Public Art Administrators:**

Barry Barker

Martin Barnes

Lewis Biggs

Iwona Blazwick

Kate Bush

Lisa Corrin

Stephen Foster

Gerlinde Gabriel

Anne Gallagher

Susan Furleger Brades

Margot Heller

Catherine Lampert

Clementine deLis

Jeremy Lewison

Jenni Lomax

Wojciech Markowski

Frances Morris

Simon Morrissey

Gregor Muir

Judith Nesbitt

Maureen Paley

Julia Peyton-Jones

Sean Rainbird

Andrew Renton

James Roberts

Bryan Robertson

Clarrie Rodrum

Jerry van Noord

Stephen Snoddy

Elizabeth Sussman

Eugene Tan

Ingrid Swenson

Clarrie Wallis

Jonathan Watkins

**Gallerists and Consultants:**

Savita Apte

Bridget Brown

Michael Briggs

Jennifer Flay

Faye Fleming

Matthew Flowers

Stephen Friedman

Nigel Greenwood

Alastair Hicks

Rebecca Hossack

Marjory Jacobsen

Robin Klasnik

Simon Lee

Nicholas Logsdail

Kirsten McDonald-Bennet

Victoria Miro

Andrew Mummery

Pru O'Day

Maureen Paley

Richard Pomeroy

Anthony Reynolds

Benjamin Rhodes

Julien Robson

Tara Sandroni

Karsten Schubert

Annushka Shani

Anthony Stokes

Tim Taylor

Jenny Todd

Edward Totah

**Writers, Critics, Editors and Academics:**

Marjory Allthorpe-Guyton

Michael Archer

Dore Ashton

Oriana Baddely

David Batchelor

Josie Berry

Roger Bevan

Patricia Bickers

Kate Bush

Andrew Causey

Michael Corris

Sasha Craddock

Jean Fisher

Thomas Frangenberg

Jennifer Higgle

Stephen Johnstone

Sotiris Kyriacos

Tim Marlow

Stuart Morgan

Michael Newman

Clement Page

Keith Patrick

Deidre Robson

Jerome Sâns

Alex Seago

Adrian Searle

Matthew Slotover

John Stathatos

Brandon Taylor

Grey Watson

Cheyenne Westphal

Colin Wiggins

Sarah Wilson