

MA/MFA Art & Social Action

AD470

PROGRAMME SPECIFICATIONS

Programme title	MA/MFA Art & Social Action	School	School of Fine Art
Resulting awards	MA in Art & Social Action MFA in Art & Social Action	Head of School	Prof Philip Napier
Level	9	ECTS credits¹	MA: 90 credits MFA: 120 credits
University award	Master's Degree (Major Award)	Programme type	Taught Masters programme
Programme Co-ordinator	Dr Fiona Whelan	External Examiner	TBC
Programme team	Dr Fiona Whelan, Brian Hand, Dr Emma Mahony + FA school staff		

1. Programme Aims and Objectives: Purpose, Vision and Values

The MA/MFA Art and Social Action is a new postgraduate programme focused on trans-disciplinary practice and thinking that privileges collaborative approaches to production and creative approaches to social transformation, emphasising the capacity of arts practice to imagine our world differently.

Building on NCAD's long history of socially engaged pedagogical programmes and projects at undergraduate and postgraduate levels, this one year full time/ two year part time postgraduate programme is offered to practitioners and researchers from the fields of art, design, urban studies, theatre, education, community work, youth work, dance, music, architecture, activism and related areas, whose practices respond creatively to social issues, spatial injustices and civic life through community collaboration, public intervention or collective action. This programme places artistic/creative practice centrally, in the firm belief that it can illuminate social issues and relations in distinct and impactful ways, and generate significant and meaningful experiences that can have lasting effects on society and the environments that we share.

Students can register as PT and FT learners and, by negotiation, extend their studies to undertake a 120 credit MFA.

Engaging with theory and practice, and delivered by a diverse team, this programme provides its student cohort with dynamic educational experiences in local and national contexts, and across and beyond academic boundaries, to develop their practices in response to their own research and engagements within diverse contexts, including urban and rural place-based sites, temporary and online communities, and public and cultural settings.

¹ European Credit Transfer and Accumulation System, where 60 ECTS credits equate to the workload of a full-time academic year

As a one-year FT MA programme and a two-year PT MA programme, Art and Social Action has been designed to encourage the progressive development of key skills, confidence and understanding, while ensuring that individual students can focus their practice on themes and issues which concern them.

Students on the programme have considerable autonomy in designing and realising their own projects in 10 credit 'practice' modules in the first phase of the programme (first FT trimester or the PT equivalent thereof), second phase of the programme (second FT trimester or the PT equivalent thereof), and in the capstone project which acts as the culmination of the programme.

These 'practice' modules are supported by other modules offering opportunities to engage with the ethics, history and critical discourses of art and social action.

The aims of the programme are to:

- Advance the practice of socially-engaged art in Ireland and internationally, by providing a rich, highly current and changing set of learning opportunities.
- Offer 'real world' learning opportunities in close partnership with key community and arts organisations in Dublin as well as other practitioners in the field.
- Support students to develop their own practice and careers in the field of art and social action. This may be as an artist, community worker, curator, educator, writer or other
- Provide a rigorous ethical and critical framework for the understanding and practice of diverse approaches to and forms of social-engagement in art.
- Welcome a diverse community of learners by offering flexible modes of study and a deep engagement with cultural differences.

2. Programme Outcomes

On successful completion of the programme, students will be able to:

1. Design, scope and realise advanced forms of socially-engaged art practice in partnership with others including other artists, community groups and arts organisations.
2. Understand and articulate how their own practice relates to the history and current forms of socially-engaged art. Graduates of the programme will be informed and critically-engaged practitioners.
3. Deploy a range of professional skills acquired and tested on the programme to support successful practice after graduation.
4. Operate to high professional standards in a diverse range of settings, understanding the needs and interests of different stakeholders including community groups, art-commissioning organisations and museums.
5. Practice, as artists and/or arts professionals, in ways that recognise current pressing social, economic and/or environmental issues and make a positive contribution to the contexts in which they work.

3. Stage Outcomes

Graduate Certificate in Art & Social Action

On existing the programme after successful completion of trimester 1 of the full-time programme or the first year of the part-time programme (30 credits), students will be able to:

1. Identify and select suitable contexts for socially-engaged practice by means of research.
2. Critically assess and model approaches for socially-engaged practice in fields of their own interest and choosing.
3. Work collaboratively with others to develop a prototype or model of practice.
4. Understand the ethical and critical issues which arise when engaging with different stakeholders.

Graduate Diploma in Art & Social Action

On existing the programme after successful completion of trimester 2 of the full-time programme or four trimesters on the part-time programme (a further 30 credits), students will also be able to:

1. Conduct rigorous research into different social and spatial settings.
2. Undertake forms of engagement and communication which respect the needs and interests of diverse social groups and other stakeholders.
3. Design, scope and realise a 'live project'.
4. Plan an ambitious major project that is capable of full realisation.

MA in Art & Social Action

On existing the programme after successful completion of the final phase of the MA programme (a further 30 credits) which takes the form of a major project, students will also be able to:

1. Realise an ambitious project in ways which meet the intellectual and practical challenges of socially-engaged art practice.
2. Critically appraise the success or otherwise of their practice in ways which draw on and understand the perspectives of stakeholders.
3. Document their work in ways which meet high professional standards.

MFA in Art & Social Action

Students who transfer to the MFA will, on completion of the programme (120 credits), will also have mastered the skills and understandings listed above. In addition, they will be able to manage, complete and document a complex project over a long duration (at least 6 months).

4. Admission Requirements

To be accepted into the programme, applicants must:

- Have completed an honours level 8 undergraduate degree, achieving a grade of at least 2:2, in a relevant and cognate discipline, or have an appropriate level of professional practice in the subject field will also be considered.
- Be assessed on a portfolio documenting relevant art practice and/or community engagement along with a statement of interest in the program.
- Where necessary, successfully complete an interview.

Exceptionally, students can be accepted onto the programme without the academic entry requirements outlined above. In such cases, applicants will need to demonstrate equivalent and relevant experience and/or formal learning.

Garda vetting requirements (delete where not needed)

Garda vetting is not required prior to commencing study on the MA/MFA programme. Nevertheless, the Art and Social Action team may require that students undergo vetting when working with minors or vulnerable adults on any specific project.

5. Further Educational Opportunities

This programme provides a sound and strong basis for further self-directed education at PhD level, both directly in relation to socially-engaged art practice as well as to broader social and critical questions concerning the role of culture in social relations, political action, etc.

Careers and skills

The Art and Social Action programme has been designed to support the professional practice needs of a range of learners. Although not a narrowly vocational programme, it recognises the value and importance of ‘real world’ learning, and so features modules which are offered in formal partnership with external organisations including Create – the National Development Agency for Collaborative Arts. Although students may choose to develop projects which constitute a deep investigation of theories of social-engagement in art, it is expected that the large majority of students on the MA/MFA programme will engage directly with different stakeholders to realise public projects. As such, the programme is committed to supporting the acquisition of skills required for successful professional practice in art as well as in related fields such as education, public programming in museums and galleries and community-based arts.

6. Teaching and Learning

The postgraduate programme in Art and Social Action aims to function as an innovative centre of practice. As such we encourage our students to conceive of their work as a practice and to engage with wider communities of interest beyond the college, particularly in the latter phases of their studies. As such, we value and recognise the public nature of practice. The team recognises that peer learning has a key role to play in the life of the programme and the experience of the students.

It recognises that students joining the programme may have a diverse range of experiences and backgrounds, and welcomes the opportunities for intellectual exchange that this provides. This is reflected in the design of the curriculum as well as in the types of learning and teaching modes which are employed.

The programme employs a range of learning and teaching modes:

Seminars – Focused, tutor-led discussions of important themes and topics, often in relation to examples of practice, key texts, etc.

Tutorials - Students discuss their specific work and development. The aim of tutorials is to help students in the process of making choices and decisions in progressing development of their practical and academic project work. Student initiated projects are shaped, directed and managed through on-going dialogue with the supervisor.

Staff lectures - Staff outline key components of the field of enquiry pertaining to the programme. These broader surveys are complemented by more focused, group-based learning undertaken in seminars.

Visiting Lecturers – Practitioners, curators and representatives of arts organisations are invited to present work, engage in discussions and debate, and to talk about aspects of practice with the student cohort.

Crits – Students presenting proposals, mid-phase projects and completed work to staff and peers, and, importantly, sharing insights and perspectives on the work of others.

Visits – The programme places a strong emphasis on understanding the sites of practice, whether they be understood as places or as deterritorialised settings (e.g. online). It also recognises the importance of understanding the experience of socially-engaged art as an encounter. As such, the programme values the importance of situated learning by means of visits to places such as arts festivals, community settings, etc.

Writing practice – Students will be required - and supported via workshops in which they will read and comment on each other's work - to write different kinds of texts while on the programme. Assignments include academic essays as well as professional statements of the kind required as part of funding applications and to communicate with different stakeholders. Students will also be required to document their practice.

Engagement workshops – The programme recognises the importance of various facilitation skills when working with different social groups and so training will be provided in these areas.

Technical training – Students on the programme may need to develop specific technical skills to realise their projects. These may involve fabrication skills (such as those involved in making in a workshop setting) and AV skills (required for, say, the documentation of a project). These skills will be provided by means of the usual training and induction methods operating at NCAD. Students will also have access to LinkedIn Learning, a large suite of online training videos.

By practice - The programme places strong emphasis on learning by means of practice. Students will be supported to define their own field of practice by undertaking live projects, a mode of learning which involves setting parameters of various kinds – practical, social, etc. Students will be supported

to develop this skill and understanding by close mentoring / supervision. Live projects also contain risk and uncertainty in the sense that the outcomes may be difficult to predict or even to achieve. Collaboration and co-creation with external communities can be difficult to achieve. Students will be supported to learn from all such live projects, even those that might deem to have been a 'failure'. As such, the programme is committed to the practice of critical self-reflection.

7. Methods of Assessment

Our assessment procedure aims to assist the student to understand a transparent assessment process and enables them to understand their own levels of achievement against explicit grade critical and learning outcomes and how and where they need to improve.

All modules carry assignment tasks and assessment will be undertaken at the end of each module by the lead tutor. These assignments will be described in written briefs supplied to students at the start of each module.

On completion of the assignment, written feedback, referencing the learning outcomes of the module and the NCAD grade descriptors, will be provided.

Crits and work in progress events will provide opportunities for immediate as well as written feedback.

In the early stages of the programme, feedback should be largely formative in character and offered to support students in understanding how to improve their work. Students will have opportunities for individual tutorials at which they will be able to discuss their progress.

Major Project work in the final phase of the programme will be double-marked and the results of that assessment as well as written feedback will be subject to the scrutiny of an external examiner appointed by the School of Fine Art. Feedback for the Major Project will be summative in character.

8. Programme Review and Evaluation

About two-thirds of the way through the year, a student forum will be convened to gather students' comments about their study and the delivery of the programme. In addition, towards the end of final trimester of the academic year, students have the opportunity to complete an online evaluation of their study and experience at NCAD. These evaluation events are important to current and future students, to ensure we can enhance the delivery of programmes at NCAD.

NCAD students also participate in the Irish Survey of Student Engagement, which takes place in the middle of the Spring Trimester. This international project measures students' engagement with their studies.

In addition, students are invited to discuss their experience on the programme with lecturers on the programme team at any point during the year. Students can also relay your comments to the class student representative who will communicate such comments to the staff.

A major review of this programme will be carried out in 2029.

9. Modular Provision

Module	Credits	Core or Option	Trimester
PGCF1005 Situating Practice in Civic Society	10	C	1
PGVC1001 Introduction to Research Methods	5	C	1
PGCF1006 Practice in Public	10	C	1
PGCF1001 Spatial Politics – Spatial Practice	5	O	1
CFA option	5	O	1
PGCF1007 Dublin City Practice Lab	10	C	2
PGCF1002 Critical Discourses of Social Practice	5	C	2
PGCF1008 Project Development	10	C	2
PGCF1003 Critical Pedagogies	5	O	2
CFA option	5	O	2
PGCF1009 Major Project Realisation	30	O	3
PGCF2001 Major Project 2 (MFA)	60	O	3 & 4

10. Programme Structure

The programme is available in full and part-time modes. Part-time students are able to negotiate the pattern of work over the duration of two years (trimesters 1 and 2 in year 1 and trimesters 1, 2 and 3 in year 2).

Students on the MA and MFA programme share a common curriculum (60 credits). On completion of 60 credits, students will have the option to elect to remain on the MA or to transfer to the MFA programme. The MFA allows for a more substantial major project to be undertaken (60 credits) over two full-time trimesters. It cannot be taken in part-time mode.

Successful transfer to the MFA requires that the student makes a formal proposal outlining the nature of the work to be undertaken, the timing of that work, key external relationships / partnerships and any material or technical resources needed. The Art and Social Action team will not agree to a transfer to the MFA if the proposal does not meet the expectations and standards required for successful completion.

The programme has been designed to take advantage of the opportunities to undertake relevant modules offered by the Creative Futures Academy. CFA modules may include modules on communication techniques (e.g. video making, publishing workshops) as well as classes on research ethics, critical theory, etc. Prior to the start of each academic year, the Art and Social Action team will review the available CFA modules and designate those which may be 'CFA options' for students on the MA/MFA Art and Social Action programme.

Full-time Study

MA and MFA Full-time: Autumn Trimester			
PGCF AF1005 Situating Practice in Civic Society 10 credits	PGVC1001 Introduction to Research Methods 5 credits	PGCF AF1006 Practice in Public 10 credits	PGCF AV1001 Spatial Politics - Spatial Practice OR CFA Option 5 credits
MA and MFA Full-time: Spring Trimester			
PGCF AF1007 Dublin City Practice Lab 10 credits	PGCF AV1002 Critical Discourses of Social Practice 5 credits	PGCF AF1008 Project Development 10 credits	PGCF AV1003 Critical Pedagogies OR CFA Option 5 credits
MA Full-time: Summer Trimester			
PGCF AF1009 Major Project Realisation 30 credits			
MFA Full-time: Summer and Autumn Trimesters			
PGCF AF2001 Major Project 2 (MFA) 60 credits			

Part-time study

MA Part-time: Year 1 Autumn Trimester	
PGCF AF1005 Situating Practice in Civic Society 10 credits	PGVC1001 Introduction to Research Methods 5 credits
MA Part-time: Year 1 Spring Trimester	
PGCF AF1007 Dublin City Practice Lab 10 credits	PGCF AV1002 Critical Discourses of Social Practice 5 credits
MA Part-time: Year 1 Summer Trimester	
Opportunity to take one or two CFA options 5 credits or two 5 credits	
MA Part-time: Year 2 Autumn Trimester	
PGCF AF1006 Practice in Public 10 credits	PGCF AV1001 Spatial Politics - Spatial Practice OR CFA Option 5 credits

MA Part-time: Year 2 Spring Trimester	
PGCFAF1008 Project Development 10 credits	PGCFAV1003 Critical Pedagogies OR CFA Option 5 credits
MA Part-time: Year 2 Summer Trimester	
PGCFAF1009 Major Project Realisation (carried out full-time over one trimester) 30 credits	
MA Part-time Year 2 Summer and Year 3 Autumn Trimester	
PGCFAF1009 Major Project Realisation (carried out part-time over two trimesters) 30 credits	

11. Exit Points and Credit Requirements

Students can exit the programme at three points after successfully completing the work demanded by particular modules. These exit points are as follows:

Graduate Certificate in Art & Social Action

Students registered on the full-time programme, who successfully complete all modules in trimester 1 (30 credits), or students registered in the part-time programme who successfully complete their first two trimesters (30 credits) can submit for the award of **Graduate Certificate in Art and Social Action**.

Graduate Diploma in Art & Social Action

Students registered on the full-time programme, who successfully complete all modules in trimesters 1 and 2 (60 credits), or students registered in the part-time programme who successfully complete four trimesters (60 credits) can submit for the award of **Graduate Diploma in Art and Social Action**.

MA in Art & Social Action

Students who successfully complete all modules to accumulate 90 credits as specified above can submit for the award of **Master of Art in Art and Social Action**.

MFA in Art & Social Action

Students registered on the full-time programme, who successfully complete all modules to accumulate 120 credits as specified above can submit for the award of **Master of Fine Arts in Art and Social Action**.

Final Award Calculation

All modules contribute to the calculation of the final award.

12.Resources

Staffing

Name	Title/Role
Teaching Staff	
Dr Fiona Whelan	Programme Leader and Tutor
Brian Hand	Head of Department of Sculpture and Expanded Practice and Tutor
Prof Philip Napier	Head of School of Fine Art and Tutor
Dr Emma Mahony	Tutor
School staff	Tutors
Administrative Staff	
School of Fine Art administration team	
Technical Support Staff	
School of Fine Art Technical Officers	

Space

The programme is based in a dedicated, shared hub in which workshops and seminars can take place and students can collaborate with each other and with external stakeholders. This will be equipped with IT equipment (computers with key software programmes). Access to this space and other resources will be on a pro rata basis (i.e. PT students will have PT access).

Facilities

Students will have access to specialist facilities for the fabrication of work (workshops and studios) by negotiation. Similarly, when students require access to AV equipment (cameras, audio recorders), these will be booked from the workshops operated by the School of Fine Art.

For further information on this programme contact TBC