NCAD DUBLIN

National College of Art and Design
A Recognised College of University College Dublin

MA/MFA Art in the Contemporary World
AD441/AD445

PROGRAMME SPECIFICATIONS

Programme title	MA/MFA Art in the Contemporary World	School	School of Visual Culture
Resulting awards	MA Art in the Contemporary World MFA Art in the Contemporary World Graduate Certificate in Art in the Contemporary World (exit award only) Graduate Diploma in Art in the Contemporary World (exit award only)	Head of School	Professor David Crowley
Level	Level 9	ECTS credits[1]	90/120 credits
University award	Master's degree	Programme type	The MA programme is 90 credits, delivered fulltime over one calendar year (three trimesters). The MFA programme is 120 credits, delivered fulltime over two years (four trimesters).
Programme Co-ordinator	Dr Francis Halsall Dr Declan Long	External Examiner	Prof. Simon O Sullivan, Goldsmiths, University of London
Programme team	School of Visual Culture academic team		

1. Programme Aims and Objectives: Purpose Vision and Values

The MA and MFA in Art and the Contemporary World is a leading postgraduate programme in the field. The majority of students follow the MA path, a critical and theoretical programme of 90 credits delivered over one year (FT). The MFA programme was introduced as a two-year, 120-credit practice-driven based programme to accommodate those students wishing to advanced combine critical study and practice; and (ii) offers an expanded field of practice for students to develop. The first student graduated from the MFA in autumn 2019.

In this case, practice might mean Studio Practice mentored by colleagues in Fine Art. However, this MFA is innovative in extending the options available for the 2-year MFA theory/ practice pathway to include those mentored by Visual Culture, i.e. 50 credits in Year 2 supervised by Visual Culture. These could include: curatorial practice; creative writing; art criticism; publishing; research practice.

As such, the new linked provision offers those wishing to pursue a practice pathway to do so over a two-year MFA programme of study in which a second year of practice-based study and research is entered after

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

successful completion of the one year critical and theoretical MA programme. Students decide in the second trimester of the first year of the MA programme if they wish to proceed to the MFA and submit a portfolio of work as the basis for successful entry to this programme (in addition to successful completion of the MA modules).

Art in the Contemporary World aims to function as a valuable forum for both debate on *and the incubation of* contemporary art theory and practice. As a result, we encourage students to seek opportunities for developing their practice during their studies. A course website and blog at www.acw.ie is available as a resource and publishing outlet for students and we urge all course participants to contribute texts, ideas, questions and references to this online discussion space. In addition, a number of course sessions will have a public dimension, allowing us to invite other interested parties from the fields of contemporary art scholarship and practice to join our conversations, to help build extended networks for students beyond the immediate course community.

From the beginning of the course students are encouraged to consider their own emergent 'practice' (e.g. as artist writer, or curator) and relate the course material to this. Elements of the course are elective and students are expected to engage with the elements of the course most relevant to their own. The course culminates in a major research project (such as a thesis) in which students develop and reflect upon the research interests which inform their practice.

Programme Aims

We aim to:

i. Provide students with an intensive immersion in the conditions of contemporary art discourse.

ii. Survey the most significant contemporary art.

iii. Develop students' critical responses to contemporary art.

iv. Provide the relevant theoretical, historical and social contexts for contemporary art.

v. Assist students in developing their own practice in relation to contemporary art. This may be as a maker, curator, educator, writer or other.

vi. Support students in producing a major deliverable outcome of their practice that articulates key elements of that practice to a wider audience.

2. Programme Outcomes

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

- Demonstrate a good awareness of the relevant co-ordinates and themes in contemporary art discourse.

- Have a good, working knowledge of significant contemporary art.

- Produce in written and spoken form credible critical responses to contemporary art.

- Situate contemporary art practices in relation to the relevant theoretical, historical and social contexts.

- Articulate what their own practice is (e.g. making, writing, curating) and situate it in relation to contemporary art discourse.

- Undertake research using a range of appropriate methods.

- Make informed and articulate critical judgements about the claims and concepts offered by others in the analysis of contemporary art.

- Work collaboratively with others, sharing skills and expertise to create high-quality, public facing work.

- Communicate their ideas in a variety of formats and to a high standard.

2a. Stage Outcomes

On 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:

- conduct high levels of object analysis by identifying and researching appropriate sources and deploying suitable critical concepts.

- synthesise different kinds of sources (primary and secondary).

- plan, research and write persuasive texts.

- critique the scholarship of others.

On successful completion of trimester 2 of the full-time programme or the second year of the part-time programme (a further 30 credits), students will be able to:

- demonstrate a critical understanding of different situations and contexts of contemporary art practice.

- Further develop competencies in writing about contemporary art, recognizing writing as a form of critical and creative practice.

- Produce a thorough research proposal for a scheme of research, analysis and writing which will demonstrate a clear understanding of appropriate forms, methods and concepts.

- demonstrate competencies in delivering presentations.

3. Admission Requirements

To be accepted into the programme, applicants must:

- Have completed a honours level 8 undergrad degree (achieving at least a 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 sample of writing along with a statement of interest in the programme.

- 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.

Students should apply to the School with evidence of previous successful qualifications, statements of work-related achievement etc.

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4. Further Educational Opportunities

This programme provides a sound and strong basis for further self-directed education at PhD level, both directly in relation to contemporary art and art history, and in related fields such as cultural studies.

A number of postgraduate ACW students have proceeded to (and successfully completed) PhD study at NCAD or elsewhere.

5. Careers and skills

A graduate of the programme should have the critical faculties and intellectual flexibility to be able to work in a number of professional contexts, understanding the needs, differences and potential of different settings of contemporary art practice (the library, the archive, the gallery, the studio, the magazine, etc). They will be well versed in current theories and concepts which have a bearing on contemporary art practice. They will be able to work collaboratively in teams but also to initiate, research and deliver their own projects.

Students on the Art in the Contemporary World postgraduate programme have gone on to receive international awards and residencies, to take up respected curatorial positions and to publish their writings in prominent academic journals and art magazines.

6. Teaching and Learning Methodologies

Programme ethos

The postgraduate programme in the Contemporary World aims to function as a valuable forum for debate on contemporary art theory and practice, and as a result we encourage students to seek publishing, public speaking and curating and exhibiting opportunities during the academic year. A programme website and blog at www.acw.ie is available as a resource and publishing outlet for students and we urge all programme participants to contribute texts, ideas, questions and references to this online discussion space. In addition, a number of programme sessions will have a public dimension, allowing us to invite other interested parties from the fields of contemporary art scholarship and practice to join our conversations, to help build extended networks for students beyond the immediate programme community.

From the beginning of the programme students are encouraged to consider their own emergent *practice* (e.g. as artist writer, or curator) and relate the programme material to this. Elements of the programme are elective and students are expected to engage with the elements of the programme most relevant to their own. The programme culminates in a major research project (such as a thesis) in which students develop and reflect upon the research interests which inform their practice.

The programme provides a broad student-led approach to the study of contemporary art practice and discourse. The following teaching and learning methodologies are used:

- Seminars: Each seminar has a specific focus. They are based around readings and group discussions facilitating the development of peer learning, communication skills, critical analysis and self-reflection.

- Tutorials: In which 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.

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

- Visiting Lectures: Practitioners and scholars are invited to present work, engage in discussions and debate, and to talk about aspects of research practice with the student cohort.

- All of the lecture sessions, visiting and staff, involve cohorts from related Fine Art postgraduate groups in the College, specifically Masters in Fine Art students.

- External Visits and Study Trips: External visits to local and international galleries and exhibitions are a key feature of the programme. These enable students to get a good understanding of the field of contemporary art.

External relationships are also nurtured through the delivery of specific programme components in collaboration with galleries, museums and related relevant institutions. Institutional partners on such programme components include: UCD School of Architecture; UCD School of Art History & Cultural Policy; the Irish Museum of Modern Art; National Gallery of Ireland; Dublin City Gallery: The Hugh Lane; Irish Film Institute.

7. Methods of Assessment

Presentations: Often short presentations feature as part of the modules. For assessment purposes there will normally be a team of two assessors and the class peer group present. As part of the submission the learner is required to make available a copy of their presentation materials to the assessment team. Such presentations allow the student to demonstrate (i) communication skills in discussing contemporary art and its wider contexts, and (ii) the ability to use visual materials appropriately.

Academic Essays: Essays are required to be clearly structured and should include a bibliography. Essay submission should conform to the standard style sheet requirements of research thesis. Essays should be submitted in hard copy. Written assignments demonstrate the acquisition of research techniques, understanding of key movements and key concepts, and skills in object analysis. They also expose the student's skills in writing and structuring assignments, using primary and secondary sources, and articulating an argument which is argued throughout the essay.

Other writing and presentation styles: Students are encouraged to respond to different styles of presenting their work, each exploring or testing a different approach. This, typically, includes experimental and creative writing, curatorial projects, and online projects alongside other initiatives.

Studio-based practice – the MFA presents students with an opportunity to develop their intellectual and artistic concerns in a body of practice which might include 'studio-based' outputs such as sound works, artists film, art writing, performances and other forms of art.

Written feedback is supplied for all work which is submitted for assessment. In the early stages of the programme this feedback is formative in character, designed to give students direction about how to improve different aspects of their studies (set against the learning outcomes in the module descriptors). Students also benefit from tutorials at which they are invited to reflect on their own development as postgraduate students. The Major Research Project is broadly defined and provides latitude for the student to shape their own interests and intellectual challenges. On completion, the Major Research Project is double marked and is the subject of written feedback. As the final major work in the programme, the feedback is summative in character.

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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.

Assessment Approaches

- Assessments are undertaken by a team of teachers who are examining the learning outcomes.

- Assessment may occur/be required on or off campus.

- Assessments will be timetabled well in advance. This might require specific negotation of the 'micro' assessment timing in relation to the organisation or very specific timing of assessment evidence.

- Assessments occur in two forms which depend on the year/stage. With the learner present and not present.

8. Programme Review and Evaluation

All programmes are subject to College-wide evaluation tools and events. The annual online student evaluation takes place in May or June, asking all College students to provide feedback. Results are sent to each School to respond to and to report to Programmes Board on what changes or developments will be implemented in response to the evaluations.

Additionally, a student forum for each programme takes place each year. This is an opportunity to discuss any issues with students, staff and an external neutral person.

In addition, informal feedback is gathered from discussions with students, staff and management throughout the year.

Staff report on responses to student feedback, explaining changes and developments at the regular course forum and at School of Visual Culture boards. Moreover, the course team respond to advice and direction from the external examiner in the form of a written response to his or her report. This response is discussed at a College Management Team meeting in the autumn.

The programme also undergoes periodic programme revalidation as part of the College's Quality Assurance System. NCAD has a statutory obligation to undertake periodic Quality Assurance Reviews of all its programmes and is expanding this structure to include a revalidation option. All undergraduate and postgraduate degrees will undergo a quality assessment review every five years. ACW is scheduled for periodic review in 2021.

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9. Modular Provision

The programme has been designed to allow students to develop expertise and to focus their own independent interests over the duration of their studies. For instance, the programme allows students opportunities to develop their interests by selecting classes with different content from a range of choices in the Situations Seminars 1,2,3 and 4 modules or to study modules offered on the History of Design and Material Culture MA programme offered by the School of Visual Culture at NCAD. The assessment tasks have also been designed to allow for student interests to be developed: this pattern of growing independence and focus culminates in the student-determined body of practice in year 2.

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Name	Core/ option	Credits
Trimester 1		
PGVC1001 Introduction to Research Practices	C	5
PGVC1002 Contemporary Art Practices 1: Discourses of Art	C	5
PGVC1003 Situations 1: Elective Seminar Options	C	5
PGVC1004 Situations 2: Elective Seminar Options	C	5
PGVC1005 Key Theories 1: 20th Century Foundations	C	5
PGVC1006 Art and Writing: Varieties of Criticism	C	5
Trimester 2		
PGVC1007 Contemporary Art Practices 2: Mediums of Art	C	5
PGVC1008 Situations 3: Elective Seminar Options	*0*	*5*
PGVC1009 Situations 4: Elective Seminar Options	*0*	*5*
PGVC1010 Design Mediation	*0*	*5*
PGVC1011 Futures	*0*	*5*
PGVC1012 Key Theories 3: Making Publics	C	5
PGVC1013 Key Theories 4: The Politics of Participation	C	5
PGVC1014 Art and Writing 2: The Practice of Writing	C	5
Trimester 3		
PGVC1015 Public Promulgation of Research	C	5
PGVC1016 Making Research Public	C	5
PGVC1017 ACW Major Research Project/Thesis	C	20

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MFA students follow the same programme of study (including range of options) as MA ACW students until the end of trimester 2 in the first year of study when they have an opportunity to join the MFA.

Name	Core/ Option	Credits
Trimester 1, Year 1		
PGVC1001 Introduction to Research Methods	C	5
PGVC1002 Contemporary Art Practices 1: Discourses of Art	C	5
PGVC1003 Situations 1: Elective Seminar Options	C	5
PGVC1004 Situations 2: Elective Seminar Options	C	5
PGVC1005 Key Theories: 20th Century Foundations	C	5
PGVC1006 Art and Writing: Varieties of Criticism	C	5
Trimester 2, Year 1		
PGVC1007 Contemporary Art Practices: Mediums of Art	C	5
PGVC1008 Situations 3: Elective Seminar Options	*O*	*5*
PGVC1009 Situations 4: Elective Seminar Options	*O*	*5*
PGVC1010 Design Mediation	*O*	*5*
PGVC1011 Futures	*O*	*5*
PGVC1012 Key Theories 3: Making Publics	C	5
PGVC1013 Key Theories 4: Politics of Participation	C	5
PGVC1014 Art and Writing 2: The Practice of Writing	C	5
Trimester 1, Year 2		
PGVC2001 Contexts for Contemporary Practice	C	15
PGVC2002 Experimenting and Designing Practice	C	15
Trimester 2, Year 2		
PGVC2003 Professional Development	C	5
PGVC2004 Major Practice Project	C	25

10. Programme Structure

The programme is available in full and part-time modes. Students are able to negotiate the pattern of work over the duration of two years (trimester 1 and 2 in year 1 and 1,2 and 3 in trimester 2). Typically a student would take modules adding up to 15 credits in each semester. In the case of the third trimester (as indicated below), the teaching, student work and deadlines for the PGACW-14 Final Project, PGACW-13, Public Promulgation of Research and PGACW-15 Making Research Public modules would be scheduled to allow part time study – again, by negotiation.

Presently the MFA can only be taken at a full-time mode.

Year 1 Autumn Trimester					
PGVC1001 Introduction to Research Practices 5 credits	PGVC1002 Contemporary Art Practices 1: Discourses of Art 5 credits	PGVC1003 Situations 1: Elective Seminar Options 5 credits	PGVC1004 Situations 2: Elective Seminar Options 5 credits	PGVC1005 Key Theories 1: 20th Century Foundations 5 credits	PGVC1006 Art and Writing 1: Varieties of Criticism 5 credits

Year 1 Spring Trimester					
PGVC1007 Contemporary Art Practices 2: Mediums of Art 5 credits	PGVC1008 Situations 3: Elective Seminar Options 5 credits / PGVC1010 Design Mediation 5 credits	PGVC1009 Situations 4: Elective Seminar Options 5 credits / PGVC1011 Futures 5 credits	PGVC1012 Key Theories 3: Making Publics 5 credits	PGVC1013 Key Theories 4: The Politics of Participation 5 credits	PGVC1014 Art and Writing 2: The Practice of Writing 5 credits

MA Summer Trimester		
PGVC1017 ACW Major Research Project/Thesis 20 credits	PGVC1015 Public Promulgation of Research 5 credits	PGVC1016 Making Research Public 5 credits

MFA Year 2 Autumn Trimester	
PGVC2001 Contexts for Contemporary Practice 15 credits	PGVC2002 Experimenting and Designing Practice 15 credits

MFA Year 2 Spring Trimester	
PGVC2004 Major Practice Project 25 credits	PGVC2003 Professional Development 5 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:

If the student is registered full-time, a **Graduate Certificate in Art in the Contemporary World** can be awarded on successful completion of the 30 credits offered by modules in trimester 1.

If the student is registered full-time, a **Graduate Diploma in Art in the Contemporary World** can be awarded on successful completion of the 60 credits offered by modules in trimester 1 and trimester 2.

After trimester 1 & 2 (and the completion of 60 credits) students on the MA ACW have the option to transfer to MFA Art in the Contemporary World (120 credits extended study course).

12. Final Award Calculation

All modules contribute to the calculation of the final award.

13. Resources

Staffing

	Name	Role
Teaching Staff	Dr Francis Halsall Dr Declan Long Dr Rachel O'Dwyer Dr Sarah Pierce David Crowley	Programme co-ordinator Programme co-ordinator Module co-ordinator Module co-ordinator Head of School of Visual Culture
Administrative Staff	None	
Technical Support Staff	None	

Space

The programme is taught in seminar rooms and lecture theatres on the NCAD campus. As students of the School of Visual Culture, access to a study room is available.

Facilities

No specialist facilities are attached to the programme.

For further information on this programme contact David Crowley, Head of School: crowleyd@staff.ncad.ie

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