

# Contexts for Contemporary Practice

## PGVC2001

### MODULE DESCRIPTOR

<b>ECTS credits<sup>1</sup></b>	15	<b>Programme</b>	MFA in Art in the Contemporary World
<b>NQF level</b>	9	<b>School</b>	School of Visual Culture
<b>Stage</b>	2	<b>Module Co-ordinator</b>	Dr Francis Halsall, Dr Declan Long
<b>Trimester</b>	Trimester 1 of Final Year	<b>Module Team</b>	Dr Francis Halsall, Dr Declan Long, and other members of NCAD staff as appropriate
<b>Contact</b>	Neasa Travers, School Secretary: <a href="mailto:visualculture@staff.ncad.ie">visualculture@staff.ncad.ie</a>		
<b>Responsibility</b>	The NCAD Academic Council and the School of Visual Culture Board have responsibility for this module.		

## 1. Introduction

This module is offered to support a student in establishing the intellectual context for his or her practice. It requires that a student looks out from their practice to the wider contexts of art practice, visual culture, critical theory and/or philosophy. It supports the development of a critical and informed understanding of a current critical debate or issue that has been identified by the student. For instance, an ACW MFA student developing a photographic practice exploring the conditions of the Anthropocene will research key articulations of the concept as it has been developed in, say, geology or critical theory. They will reflect critically on the uses of this concept.

Each student will share their understanding of the concept by leading a seminar discussion. At the same time, each student will be required to support their peers by participating in discussion of texts or other material selected by others. This material will be circulated by the students one week in advance of the seminar.

By the end of the module, the student will have acquired a fluent understanding of key concepts and issues as well as a well-informed understanding of their relevance to contemporary art. The student will have also led a seminar with their peers which will support the development of their articulacy and critical thinking. In this way, the module is designed to support greater independence and peer learning. The task of structuring a seminar will also support those who wish to develop a teaching practice or undertake higher level research.

The aims of this module are to support students in:

- Situating their practice within wider intellectual, discursive and artistic contexts.
- Assessing and critically applying theoretical and discursive resources to analyse their own practice.
- Developing autonomy and confidence in their thought and practice.

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

- Exploring the best means of communicating their ideas and practice.

## 2. What will I learn?

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On successful completion of this module students will be able to:

1. RESEARCH: Place their practice as an MFA student in wider intellectual, discursive and artistic contexts.
2. ANALYSIS: Demonstrate a good analytic awareness of the theoretical and discursive situatedness of their research and practice.
3. ANALYSIS: Demonstrate high levels of independent thought and practice.
4. COMMUNICATION: Communicate the core ideas and methods of their practice with sophistication.

### Module content

This module involves a regular seminar which, in the first phase, is taught by ACW tutors and/or guests and in the second phase is student-led. The seminar participants will include MFA ACW students and also MFA FA students who have chosen the 'thesis route'. (For the latter, this event will provide a useful opportunity to test ideas which will feature in the 'thesis').

Each seminar class involves the entire group reading a significant essay/s or chapter of a book, or viewing key material such as artists' films in preparation for the class. The seminar discussion will be led by different students each week, each of whom will have selected this material. The material might have been selected for the ideas that it contains or its form or voice. Each student is required to structure the seminar discussion by introducing the material and then inviting critical reflections on the part of the group. This approach will be introduced in phase one by tutors not only leading such a seminar but also sharing their reflections on seminar technique.

Following the presentation, students will submit their notes and some critical reflections on the seminar itself for assessment.

## 3. How will I learn?

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Students will learn by preparing material for discussion in class as well as participation in classes prepared by other students and members of staff. As such this module combines opportunities to engage with current concepts and theories as well as approaches to communication.

Learning tool	Hours
Seminars	14
Specified Learning Activities	28
Autonomous Student Learning	258
<b>Total Workload</b>	<b>300</b>

#### 4. What learning supports are provided?

In the early phase of the seminar there will be significant attention given to the form of the seminar, to encourage students to develop a critical understanding of its potential for debate and dissemination of ideas.

The main learning support is the expertise of the tutorial team provided in teaching scenarios.

This module is supported by a dedicated VLE (Canvas or Google Classroom) in which bibliographic material, set readings, assignments and other supporting material is shared. Key materials in the NCAD library have been identified to support learning on this module. Support for technical training in key skills such as sound recording and editing is provided through LinkedIn Learning online tutorials.

#### 5. Am I eligible to take this module?

##### Module Requisites and Incompatibles

<b>Pre-requisites</b>	Before students can register in this module, they must have successfully completed all Trimester 1 and Trimester 2 modules of the MA ACW.
<b>Co-requisites</b>	None
<b>Incompatibles</b>	None
<b>Prior learning</b>	Where a student can demonstrate that they have achieved at least 80% of the learning outcomes of this module, by academic certified achievement, or through quantifiable and documented experience, they can apply to the School for that prior learning to be recognised. Applications must be received prior to the commencement of delivery of the module.
<b>Recommended</b>	None

#### 6. How will I be assessed?

Following the presentation, students will submit their notes and critical reflections on the seminar itself for assessment.

Assessment tool	% of final grade	Timing
Presentation	50%	Throughout the 2 <sup>nd</sup> half or the trimester
Notes that are critical reflections on the presentation	50%	Throughout the 2 <sup>nd</sup> half or the trimester
<b>Total</b>	<b>100%</b>	

Assessment tool	Learning outcomes assessed
Presentation and accompanying critical reflection	All learning outcomes

## 7. Feedback, results and grading

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### Grading

There are two elements for the assessments in this module each of which are 50% of the overall mark:

1. Presentation
2. Notes and critical reflection on the presentation and seminar discussion

Students' assessments will be graded by a single tutor using the [NCAD Grade Descriptors](#).

## 8. What happens if I fail?

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Opportunities will be provided to students who do not complete all assessments in that trimester.

## 9. When and where is this module offered?

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Various sites at NCAD including the studios in the Annex in trimester 1 (final year)

## 10. How will I have the chance to evaluate the module?

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It is important to NCAD that students inform the development of teaching and learning at NCAD. We encourage all students to communicate their concerns and their observations about their study to members of staff so that any changes can be made in a timely manner.

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, at the end of Trimester 2, students have the opportunity to complete an online evaluation of their study and experience at NCAD. Students are also encouraged to complete the Irish Student Survey of Engagement. These evaluation events are important to current and future students, to ensure we can enhance the delivery of programmes at NCAD.

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

**For further details on the content of your module and teaching arrangements,  
consult your Programme or Module Handbook**