



1. General Information

Award	Programme Title	Duration	Mode of Study
MA (RCA)	Painting	2 Years	Full-time

Awarding Institution	Royal College of Art
Teaching Institution	Royal College of Art
Professional Accreditation	N/A
Qualifications Framework Level	M
Date of most recent validation	March 2009
Programme Specification Date	2016/17

2. Philosophy of the Programme

Paint is a fluid material, and ideas surrounding what painting is, has been, and can be, are being continually reflected upon and actively explored.

With each new year group the dynamic of the studios and the conversations around painting shift and broaden in their agendas and processes. A walk through the building in Battersea is a journey through all the possibilities of thinking and making, artists working through fleeting successes, hideous but essential wrong moves and hard-won moments of elation.

The Painting Programme approaches the practice of painting as a self-reflexive, critical activity that draws on a wealth of varied historical, material and conceptual accomplishments to provide an expansive and inclusive platform on which to engage with current issues and debates surrounding contemporary art practice.

Our curriculum is designed to develop a student’s individual professional practice, research and orientation in relation to their studio work and how they present that work



and their practice professionally to others. The curriculum aims to ensure, to the greatest degree possible, that this is a sustainable practice, which can find an audience beyond an institutional frame and graduation. The delivery of curricular content takes the form of both individual and group sessions at the level of tutee, tutee group and year group. All seminars involve MA students from both year groups and our research students.

The Painting programme is a world leader in research and practice, with a commitment to broadening the understanding of our discipline in all its forms. Through the many learning and teaching experiences we offer, our students and staff rigorously, critically and supportively engage in personal tutorials, group seminars and presentations. These discussions and critiques take place physically in the painting studios, across the College, in galleries and other partner institutions, and during visits to major exhibitions both in the UK and abroad.

Our students are here to reflect upon and play out what kind of artists they want to be and what their personal agendas are, with the ultimate aim of enabling a sustainable and meaningful practice as professional practitioners.

3. Educational Aims of the Programme

The MA Painting programme aims to enable students to take ownership of their art practice by actively exploring and reflecting upon all the many possibilities of painting. Through teaching, exhibiting, publishing and research to lead in the development of the cultural theory and historical and contemporary practice of painting as a fine art. We are committed to creating an exciting and broad culture from the outset by recruiting highly talented students with the potential and commitment to become practising artists.

By continually fostering a culture of practice supported by reflective and intellectual research we aim to equip students so that they are able to sustain a vital and meaningful practice.



4. Intended Learning Outcomes of the Programme

Able to:	A. Intellectual Engagement
A1.	Develop innovative ideas that challenge the understanding of his or her practice and discipline.
A2.	Critically articulate and debate the intellectual and technical processes involved in the production of his or her work and that of others.
A3.	Demonstrate an advanced understanding of the principles and methods of research and apply them effectively to his or her own practice.
A4.	Demonstrate an advanced understanding of the historical and theoretical context of painting and how it relates to his or her work.

Able to:	B. Practice
B1.	Produce work at an advanced level that integrates thought, creativity and technique.
B2.	Experiment in his or her use of materials, techniques and environments in order to translate ideas into practice.

Able to:	C. Professionalism
C1.	Display a mastery of the execution, exhibition and promotion of his or her work.
C2.	Demonstrate the self-motivation, self-criticism and self-discipline required to sustain his or her development beyond graduation.
C3.	Confidently and effectively deliver artists talks to specialist and non-specialist audiences alike.



5. Programme Structure and Curriculum

Curriculum

The primary aim of the programme is to enable students to take ownership of their artistic practices within a critical and supportive environment. Students set their own agenda, and we pride ourselves on our diversity and pluralism. The Painting programme has a culture where every student is actively supported and is encouraged both to explore all the possibilities and to realise the potential of their ideas. Throughout the two years our programme is geared to foster self-reflection and self-criticism as well as developing the skills to question and be questioned by fellow students and the many practising artists, critics, writers and curators we have visiting the course.

During the course all students are given the opportunity to exhibit twice in the College galleries, once at a Work-in-progress Show at the end of the first term and then towards the end of their second year as part of the final Summer Show. Students are encouraged and actively supported when exhibiting outside the College.

Students are also given the opportunity to participate in and make use of exhibition visits, lectures, short teaching placements and technical workshops both in Painting and in other parts of the College. Students also undertake the mandatory Critical & Historical Studies programme in their first year, in which a series of lectures, seminars and tutorials culminates in the submission of a dissertation at the start of the second year.

Students are encouraged to make overseas trips to visit exhibitions or museums containing work relevant to their own; various travelling awards are designed to assist in this. The programme organises an annual study trip to a city of major cultural significance for all MA and research students. There are places for two students to take up residence for three months in our Paris studio. There are also exchange trips for students to travel to and work in Canada, the United States (Pennsylvania) and Ireland.

During the second year each student is requested to formally present their work to the whole Painting programme and then have the opportunity to give lectures and tutorials in colleges and universities across the country.

The Painting programme supports career development by tailoring professional practice provision for students to the culture of the discipline.

Critical & Historical Studies

The RCA provides a unique environment for postgraduate art and design students to reflect upon their own practice, and to engage with students from their own and other



disciplines. The role of Critical & Historical Studies (CHS) is to support the studio programmes in enabling these critical engagements to take place. The courses offered by CHS to first year studio-based MA students propose an intellectual framework within which they can begin to establish a coherent relationship between theory and practice.

In the autumn and spring terms there are a series of College-wide seminars and lectures. The autumn term series will relate to your particular discipline (though it is possible to elect to join a series being offered to students on other programmes) whereas the spring term series will be more broad-based and cross-disciplinary in nature.

In the spring and summer terms, a CHS tutor will give you individual tutorials to support the development of a dissertation which is submitted at the start of the second year. The dissertation should be between 6,000 – 10,000 words in length – this is a major piece of work and you will not be able to submit for the Final Examination until you have passed this assessment.

6. Learning and Teaching Methods

Individual Tutorials

These occur either by prior appointment or informally between the tutors and their tutees in the studio workspaces. Subjects discussed can be followed up at regular intervals and will normally relate closely to the student’s work in progress, leading to discussion about its development and recommendations for sources of reference and contextualisation.

Seminars

Students are invited to enroll for seminars that are offered by tutors and visiting lecturers who introduce current issues pertaining to painting. These are organised in a number of ways:

Monday Painting Seminars – these small groups will be made up of first and second year students. The purpose of these seminars is to focus upon and discuss the issues and the practicalities of making work.

Tutors’ Seminars – given by a member of the staff team usually for their own tutorial group. So that students are making a more informed choice when requesting a tutorial with a regular member of staff (other than their Personal Tutor).

Group Tutor Seminars – delivered by two or more tutors teaming tutor groups together for larger group critiques of studio work and research.

Visitors’ Seminars – given by a visiting artist on their own work or a critic on a



philosophical/ theoretical topic in discussion with a staff tutor about student work. These seminars may act to introduce prospective new part-time staff to the MA programme. Visiting tutors are appointed for one or more visits in the year to give tutorials or lectures or to take part in seminars. You are encouraged to get together with other students to suggest visitors who you would like to be invited.

Second Year Artists Talks – during their second year students are expected to give an expanded presentation about their work and the ideas that have generated it. The talks serve as preparation for teaching placements that take place at the end of the spring term and in the summer term. These are intended to initiate open debate about current work and relevant issues between students within their peer group. All research students are expected to give at least one lecture about their work during the time spent studying in Painting.

A Question of Painting – reading group, presentations and seminars organised by the research tutors and research students exploring the historical, aesthetical and cultural factors to the seminal developments in Painting.

Lectures

There are two lecture programmes:

- a) Fine Art – organised with the School of Fine Art, and
- b) Painting – organised by the Head of Programme and Senior Tutor.

Painting students also have the chance to attend lectures initiated by other Schools.

Materials Demonstrations

The Painting programme has two highly experience technicians to advice and support in the preparation of stretchers and respond to enquiries regarding working materials and explore ideas concerning exhibitions. As needs arise, appropriate specialists are invited to conduct demonstrations of materials, and in the past we have called upon the expertise of FP Fitzpatrick, John Jones and from 2012/13 we have a working partnership with Windsor and Newton.

Overseas Study Awards

We have a wide and varied schedule of overseas study opportunities. Their destinations and particulars are advertised on the notice board.

Some Overseas Study Awards are exchanges where a swap of your term-time home is expected, others are unilateral such as the Paris studio. Some of these will have predetermined dates, others are flexible. All have in common the need to make yourself



aware of them early during your first term, and if you are interested in any of them, discuss further details with the Head of Programme as soon as possible.

In view of the two-year duration of your studies here, the most suitable period for studying abroad is between November of your first year and the start of your second year the following October. Only in exceptional circumstances can such an award be granted for your second year.

After the initial consultation you will be required to submit a brief written statement of your reasons for wanting to go abroad, giving an indication of what you would plan to do whilst away.

Studying abroad may not be the first thing on your mind when you are trying to settle into a new place but it should be well worthwhile to project the benefits which lie ahead.

Professional Practice

Our Professional Practice Programme runs throughout the whole academic year, enabling students to discuss their work and all the surrounding issues with visiting practising artists, critics, writers, curators, commercial gallery directors and public gallery staff. We also have a series of days organised especially for our graduating students that generally takes place in the third term (June) and involves a panel of speakers, including artists, critics, gallery owners, etc., for a collective question-and-answer forum. We also have a day set aside to discuss all things financial, including tax and issues around self-employment, from a well-established and respected accountant.

Teaching Placements

Each student is expected to conduct at least one teaching placement. These comprise one or two-day non-paid teaching visits to an undergraduate course where the student usually delivers an artists talk and gives some individual tutorials.

7. Assessment

General

Regulations for assessment and progression can be found in the College Regulations.

Student Self-Assessment Form / Tutorial Reports

During the first and second year all students are required to complete a self-assessment form at the end of each term. Your Personal Tutor will also file a report on your tutorials once a term which you will have the opportunity to comment on. The programme also



supports the development of Artist's Statements for every student which are instrumental when applying for residencies, and artist initiatives and essential when exhibiting works professionally.

Interim Examination

The Interim Examination is a formal examination of each student's work that evaluates progress part way through his or her studies. Its purpose is to assess your progress after the first two terms and to evaluate your suitability for continuing into the second year. You will be asked to show all work done to date and will be invited to discuss it. The quality of your work and your approach to studying are considered. Following completion of this examination, the Head of Programme drafts a brief report on the development of each students' work, attendance record, and application to their subject including any other relevant observations.

Each examination takes between 25 and 40 minutes during which time the Board views available work in discussion with the student. Following the completion of this examination the report goes to the Academic Board for Concessions & Discipline, with the recommendation that a student does or does not progress. If a student's Personal Tutor is not present at the Interim Examination, their report contributes to the overall assessment.

If at Interim Examination a student's work is considered to be a borderline fail, a programme of work may be set for further examination to enable progression. For more information, please see the RCA Regulations.

Final Examination

The Final Examination is the culmination of a MA degree. The examination takes place on the last convenient day before the Summer Show opens. The work presented for the Show will be given most consideration but all other work should be made available. Each student's work is assessed by a panel of academics, and a sample of a cohort's work is reviewed by an External Examiner. If your Personal Tutor is not present at the Final Examination, their report contributes to the overall assessment.

The Final Examination is in two parts:

- a) A Viva-Voce, which takes place in the final term of a programme of study
- b) A School Examination Board, chaired by the Dean of School, will be held to recommend results to the Academic Board for Concessions & Discipline for ratification.

Feedback and marks are provided via email. If at Final Examination a student's work is considered to be a borderline fail, the student may be required to retrieve the work within an academic term, or at a referral examination within 12 months.



Royal College of Art

Programme Specification



8. Admissions

Cross-College Requirements

Refer to the College Prospectus for details of cross-College entrance and portfolio requirements for the MA Entrance Examination.

Candidates for all MA courses are assessed on their existing qualities as demonstrated in their work and in their interview, as well as on their potential to benefit from the programme and to achieve MA standards overall. The assessment will consider: creativity, imagination and innovation evident in the work; ability to articulate the intentions of the work; intellectual engagement in relevant areas; appropriate technical skills; overall interview performance, including oral use of English.

Programme-Specific Requirements

Applications are assessed through Part 1 and Part 2 of the Entrance Examinations by a panel of tutors and students as well as the Head of Programme and the Senior Tutor.

For Part 1 the panel views the initial portfolio of images to select and invite candidates for Part 2, which is the interview, where applicants are invited to bring physical works, supportive material, and film/video works.

Following the interviews the panel makes their selection for the following year's cohort, including a reserve list. Applicants are selected on the strength of their portfolio, their interview, the potential of their work and the nature of their work, to ensure a dynamic range of tendencies and agendas in any one year group.

The applications procedure is presented in full during Open Days, outlining how the applications are seen and assessed.

- The application procedure focuses on searching out those candidates that are highly motivated, independent and demonstrate they have the critical skills necessary to develop and further their existing ideas. In short, those artists that – given the opportunity to join the Painting programme – would utilise their time with us to the full, and have the generosity to support their fellow students.
- Students apply from all kinds of backgrounds, but generally having completed a BA degree. In recent years, people have come from fine art, printmaking, painting, sculpture, photo media, conservation, illustration, design, textiles, architecture, art history and interactive arts courses.
- While many students enter the course after years of independent work, we also accept students directly from undergraduate courses.



- Ultimately we want to attract to the course those artists that want to work in a supportive environment and have the drive and ambition to realise the full potential of their studio practice, in turn energising their peer group.

Portfolio:

Portfolio submissions will be accepted in the following format only:

- Ten digital images in .jpg format with the following dimensions: width: no larger than 36cm (1024 pixels). height: no larger than 27cm (768 pixels).
- All images must be of 72 dpi (dots per inch) resolution – please re-size all images appropriately. All image files must be saved as .jpg format.
- No actual paintings, portfolios, photographs, slides, DVDs/videos should be submitted at this stage. For the portfolio submission, only still images of time-based works will be considered. If invited to interview then these works will be viewed.
- Submission of any material in any other format than the requested .jpgs will invalidate your application.
- The ten images of your work should include, if possible, a few examples of earlier as well as recent works.
- Each image should have all the relevant information (i.e. date, size, medium, title) on the image list. Please note that we will only accept ten images.
- We do not consider any late applications.

If you are invited for an interview:

- You will be asked to bring up to four works with dimensions not exceeding 2 metres by 2.5 metres, or up to six works if their average size is considerably less.
- In addition, you should bring a portfolio to the interview containing an edited selection of work, which may include drawings in any media, any other work on paper and photographs. Sketchbooks and notebooks may also be included, but should be limited to those that are relevant to recent work.
- If you would like to bring any time-based works please notify us of the format in advance of the interview.
- All work must be taken away after the interview.

Candidates who do speak English as their first language are required to produce evidence that within the previous two years they have achieved at least 93 in the TOEFL internet test with an additional writing test score of TWE 24 or an IELTS exam score of 6.5 with 6 in writing.



9. Quality Indicators

Refer to the RCA Quality Handbook for more details of the College's quality and standards procedures.

- All academic programmes at the Royal College of Art are revalidated on a six-yearly cycle. Revalidations involve external subject experts and internal panel members appointed by the College's Academic Standards Committee (ASC).
- Programmes are required to submit an annual Review, the primary purpose of which is to evaluate the experience of students enrolled on both its MA and MPhil / PhD courses.
- External Examiners are appointed for a maximum of three years to ensure that:
 - the academic standard for each award is set and maintained at an appropriate level and that student performance is properly judged against this;
 - the standards of awards are comparable with those of other UK higher education institutions;
 - the process of assessment and examination is fair and has been fairly conducted.
- An Internal Moderator is appointed by the Senate on the recommendation of ASC to ensure that there are appropriate mechanisms in place for the objective assessment of student work and to ensure comparability of examination practices between programmes within the College.
- Students have the opportunity to provide feedback through regular programme-level meetings (at least one each year considers the delivery of the MA programme and the External Examiner report); and through an annual College-wide MA student survey. A Student Representative Council brings forward issues from Course Forums and programme-level meetings to the President and Vice-President of the Students' Union who then, where appropriate, present these issues at College committees or to the Senior Management of the College.