



**Curating Contemporary Art MA
Specification 2018–19**

1. General Information

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

Awarding Institution	Royal College of Art
Teaching Institution	Royal College of Art
Professional Accreditation	N/A
Qualifications Framework Level	7 (240 credits)
Date of most recent validation	2014/15
Programme Specification Date	2018/19

2. Philosophy of the Programme

The ethos of the CCA Programme is defined by an emphasis on collaborative and situated, practice-based learning. Encouraging intellectual and creative engagement with the theories and practices of curating and the expanded field of the 'curatorial', the programme approaches its field critically, theoretically and through best practice in commissioning, curating, and programming. Acknowledging the changing role of curating

as an interdisciplinary practice located at the intersection of creative and cultural practices, as much as in relation to the convergence of media, the programme is committed to ensuring student knowledge and practice is grounded in the context of public audiences, urbanisation and the digital. In the increasingly complex cultural environment in which curating takes place, our research-led and practice-led teaching by staff and visiting tutors ensures the curatorial and artistic significance, intellectual value and critical vitality of the MA programme. The partnership-based aspect of the programme, and in particular the graduate partnership project, provides students with unique training in terms of professional development and proven employability.

3. Educational Aims of the Programme

The educational aim of the programme is to enable you to emerge as a competent and responsible professional, equipped with the knowledge and the intellectual and practical skills you will need to make an innovative and effective contribution to the field of curating and the curatorial. Specifically, the curriculum is designed:

- to develop your skills of observation, interpretation and critical analysis, based on detailed examination and discussion of collection and exhibition displays of contemporary art, commissions and projects in the public domain and public programming
- to develop your knowledge and understanding of a range of research tools and methods, theoretical models and conceptual frameworks which may be applied to the study of contemporary art and its public presentation
- to develop your ability to communicate ideas clearly both verbally and in writing in a structured and appropriate manner
- to enable you to become familiar with a range of working practices and curatorial approaches in galleries, museums, urban space, online networked cultures, and commissioning / event-based organisations
- to develop your practical, managerial and administrative competence and skills in relation to exhibition-making, project development and installation / realisation
- to develop your understanding of professional ethics and of a curator's responsibilities to and relationships with works of art, artists, audiences, institutions, lenders and funders both within analogue and digital culture

4. Intended Learning Outcomes of the Programme

Able to:	A. Intellectual Engagement
A1.	Develop innovative ideas that challenge the understanding and practice of curating and the curatorial.
A2.	Demonstrate an advanced understanding of the critical and curatorial context of

	contemporary debates about curating and the field of the curatorial and identify your practice within it.
A3.	Demonstrate an advanced understanding of the principles and methods of research and apply them effectively to your own curatorial practice.
A4.	Effectively integrate and articulate the relationship between theory and practice in your writings, presentations, and curatorial projects.

Able to:	B. Technical Skills
B1.	Display a mastery of the technical skills required to operate as both an independent and organisation-based curator and to take risks to innovate as and when the opportunity arises.
B2.	Initiate and realise curatorial work at an advanced level that integrates thought, practice and innovation within the conventions and ethics of best practice.
B3.	Demonstrate an ability to work collaboratively and effectively communicate across different media, disciplines, platforms, sectors and audiences to identify and realise the potential of every opportunity.

Able to:	C. Professional Development
C1.	Adopt a pro-active approach to expanding your learning, knowledge and experience by taking full advantage of the opportunities, context and networks presented and managing your time appropriately.
C2.	Approach your practice with a sense of responsibility and with due consideration of its impact on the community and environment in which you work.
C3.	Define your academic authority and professional identity through critical self-reflexivity, active participation in and contribution to your field.

5. Programme Structure and Curriculum

Programme Units and Credit Ratings
<p><i>240 Credit Masters:</i></p> <p>Unit SOAH: 20 credits College-wide: Unit 20 credits CCA Unit 1: Curatorial Thinking (30 credits) CCA Unit 2: Curatorial Practice (50 credits)</p>

CCA Unit 3: Research in Practice (20 credits)
CCA Unit 4: Graduate Project (50 credits)
CCA Unit 5: Independent Research Project (Dissertation) (50 credits)

6. Learning and Teaching Methods

e.g. Tutorials

Throughout the programme there will be individual tutorials which are used:

- to discuss essays and other writing assignments and to offer advice on the development of research and writing skills
- to discuss the choice of subject for the dissertation, to suggest research sources and reading material, to advise on structure and approach and to discuss any problems you may encounter
- to discuss any problems you may have with the programme or with coursework

First and Second Year

First Year CCA Units 1-3

In addition to regular core unit lectures and seminars by tutors, the teaching programme of the first year includes a wide range of talks by visiting curators, critics, artists, gallerists, and academics providing students with knowledge of specific case studies, exhibition histories, curatorial positions and artist perspectives of a wide range of national and international visiting practitioners. In addition, offsite visits to practitioner studios, museums, galleries and areas of urban development will be included to ensure situated, grounded and spatial knowledge acquisition.

Post interim exam students move into their elective curatorial graduate project groups (max 6 students) within CCA Unit 2 and with external partners begin the development stage of the graduate project. Each 'elective' project group is defined by the mode of curatorial practice & partner focused through the curatorial brief on exhibitions and programming, urban and digital / online curating.

The First Year also includes the School-wide core course (SoH Unit 1) taught over the first two terms.

Second Year CCA Units 4 & 5

The second year of the programme is comparatively more self-directed and with a greater focus on peer-led learning and builds on the skills and knowledge that have been developed throughout the first two terms of the first year and via the transition of the third

term.

Unit CCA4 (Graduate partner project) will be taught through occasional lectures based on core production skills, while elective project groups will develop their projects through bi-weekly meetings with project tutor and partners, and alternate week self-directed group workshops.

Unit CCA5 (Dissertation) will be taught through lectures, writing workshops and one to one tutorials.

7. Assessment

General

Regulations for assessment and progression can be found in the College Regulations, sections 2.7 – 2.10.

United Based Assessment

In alignment with the Academic Framework, the programme distinguishes between continuous and summative assessment, both of which take place within the units of study.

Continuous Assessment

Continuous assessment enables the student's performance and progress to be understood and accounted for through a wide variety of academic contact points, recognising that students are able to perform in different ways and through different means and aspects of the curriculum while still achieving the requisite performance standards. This assessment is validated through a structure that ensures that student performance is evaluated from a range of perspectives and by a range of different tutors who are able to triangulate their experience of the student and enable parity of assessment across the cohort.

Final Examination

Final Examination examines the students' ability to synthesise their learning and to express it in a formal exam context, either through their performance in a live event, such as the viva voce examinations (previously interim and final exams) at the conclusion of Units 1B and 2B, or through the submission of a formal assessed element such as a dissertation or portfolio at the conclusion of the SoAH School Unit and CHS.

CCA Unit 1 Curatorial Thinking (30 Credits): 3-4000 word essay

CCA Unit 2 Curatorial Practice (50 Credits): 500 critical review; Speculative Project and 1500 critical reflection; field trip organization and project proposal presentation; 500 word Graduate Project Brief selection proposal and oral examination on proposal selection.

CCA Unit 3 Research in Practice (20 Credits): dissertation proposal and oral examination

on proposal

CCA Unit 4 Graduate Project (50 credits): project planning realisation, interpretation and documentation; critical reflection report (1500-2000 words) and oral examination

CCA Unit 5 – Independent Research Project (Dissertation) (50 credits) 10-12,000 word dissertation and oral examination

SoAH School Unit -- Collaborative Group project, integrated cross-programme within SoAH. Assessed Portfolio at 2B/School Unit Joint Panel. (summative assessment). (20 Credits) Assessment on: a record of participation in school crits (500 words per crit); an additional 500-1000 words on contextualised practice in economic and social context, referencing work in MA school group and what's next series.

- School Exam Board then reviews marks from all units and recommends pass or fail.
- Learning Outcomes: B2. C2. C3.
- This is delivered to all 10 SoAH MA programmes.

SoAH College-20 Unit -- This unit is delivered as a college-wide unit. Assessed Portfolio with HoP panel feedback (Final Examination). (20 Credits) 200-500 word response to a selected 'thing' that is relevant to your current research interests; 500 word response to one of the 10 texts distributed in class; 2x 300 word responses to selected images.

- Learning Outcomes: A1. B1. B2.

To graduate, the student must accumulate 240 credits and pass each assessment.

8. Admissions

Cross-College Requirements

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

Programme-Specific Requirements

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.

- You should have a good undergraduate degree – which may include humanities, but can also include visual arts, architecture, design, cultural studies and some social sciences
- You must demonstrate a strong interest in and engagement with contemporary art and its public manifestation / presentation
- You will most likely have some relevant practical experience having worked in a paid or unpaid capacity within the visual arts, creative and cultural industries and can demonstrate an existing commitment to curating through having already organised one or more exhibitions.

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 School and Programme 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.