



Programme Specification

1. General Information

Programme title:	Painting
Award:	Masters
Qualification Framework level:	Level 7
School	Arts and Humanities
Campus location(s):	Battersea
Total UK credits:	180
Date valid from/to:	2022-23

2. Programme Philosophy

The Painting programme at the Royal College of Art is a world-leading, studio-based MA programme with a successful record of turning out artists working at the forefront of the discipline and of international standing. Through our innovative approaches to teaching and learning we foster students to consider painting as a creative, self-reflexive, and critical activity that draws on a wealth of diverse historical, material and conceptual disciplinary resources as it thrives in the 21st century. We explore these values together as we share our practices and research while supporting your own in a collaborative culture comprised not so much by staff and students but as professional artists and peers. These activities take place across an expansive and inclusive platform that engages with current issues and debates around painting as both a medium with a deep and resourceful history and as a vibrant and invigorating contemporary art practice that brings a critical perspective to social and cultural issues that range across global cultures represented by the diversity of the cohort of RCA painting students.

The Painting programme supports the development of your research interests as a foundation for your practice and creating. Staff will foster and advance your ability to reflect critically on your studio work in a context that embraces experimentation, innovation and sustainable technical and conceptual gains expressed in the medium. We support the development of your professional practice, as your skills progress in making and presenting work through different modes, to professional and public audiences, within and beyond the institutional frame. Through our core units, you are supported and challenged to interrogate as well as recast received positions and ideas of what painting might be as evidenced in your practice in our still new century. Assessment will focus on how you engage with the processes of your investigations and the quality and clarity of how you communicate your discoveries to others, through voice, the written word and the art you make.

In Painting you will receive a wide range of inputs from a diversity of positions and voices. Through individual tutorials and group critiques, online group seminars, workshops, artist talks and the presentation of work, you are offered a wealth of opportunities to understand and advance your studio practice informed by the perspectives of your peers, faculty, and invited contributors. The painting studios are an important site for these conversations, as are the artists' studios, commercial galleries and public art institutions that the vibrant, culturally rich city of London offers.

The Painting staff is comprised of full-time working artists and diverse, accomplished visiting artists of international standing, who work across a diverse range of media, each with a specialist research focus within the discipline. Although not seen as an end in itself, the programme continues to respect technical skills, and supports you to find an appropriate technical resolution for your work in order to enhance the materialisation of your ideas, the communication of these ideas, and the clarity of your concepts and images.

As a team, we are committed to support you to refine your research base for your practice, and to enable you to forge a sustainable and engaged professional practice situated in the creative economy and art eco-system.

3. Educational Aims and Outcomes of the Programme

Programme aims

The Painting programme empowers you to explore the conditions and possibilities of painting and its contemporary discourses in a context that embraces speculative approaches, experimentation and interdisciplinary methods to both challenge and enliven a traditional medium. As tutors and practitioners, we are committed to foster and critically support engaged and independent artists able to sustain self-reflective and vibrant professional practices beyond an institutional frame.

The programme aims:

- To support and nourish your research enquiry in and through Painting as a contemporary discipline with a wealth of historical resources and precedents to examine;
- To foster your studio experimentation and on-going self-reflexivity in order to dynamically progress your practice and its sustainability;
- To assist the technical resolution of your painting practice that is aligned with your research enquiry and conceptual interests;
- To provide a rich context of diverse voices on contemporary theory, history and art practices to establish a stimulating and challenging studio and learning environment;
- To interrogate and recast received ideas and positions regarding what painting might be as an expansive and varied practice in the 21st century.

What will I be expected to achieve?

Upon successful completion of the programme, you will be expected to meet the requirements of both the College-wide Learning Outcomes and your programme-specific Learning Outcomes.

College-Wide Learning Outcomes

You should be able to:

- Interrogate and articulate the intentions of your work in relation to the critical and conceptual context of your field(s) of study;
- Independently plan and produce work that is informed by developments at the forefront of your field(s) of study;
- Evaluate and critique the principles and methods of research in your field(s) of study, and apply these principles to your creative, professional and/or scholarly practice;
- Demonstrate originality in how you translate knowledge into practice;
- Communicate your creative, professional and/or scholarly practice to a non-specialist audience;
- Critically reflect on the likely public impact of your creative, professional and/or scholarly practice, and on your responsibilities as a practitioner;
- Define your professional ambitions and identify the challenges involved in meeting them.

Programme-Specific Learning Outcomes

You should be able to:

- Evaluate, articulate and debate the intellectual and technical processes of your work and those of others in light of the critical and conceptual contexts of contemporary painting practices;
- Demonstrate an advanced understanding of the principles and methods of research and apply these effectively in the development of your own work and practice;
- Communicate clearly and appropriately your practice in a variety of contexts, demonstrating versatility and inclusivity with an awareness of the politics of knowledge production and discourse;
- Define your professional identity and position your relationship to the creative economy and art eco-system;
- Produce work at an advanced level that integrates thought, creativity and appropriate technical application;
- Demonstrate an advanced understanding of the collaborative demands of exhibiting, documenting and promoting your work and practice to diverse publics.

4. What will I learn?

Curriculum Map

Term 1	Term 2	Term 3
Establishing a Painting Practice (45 credits)	Urgency of the Arts (15 credits)	Independent Research Project (60 credits)
	Painting in the Expanded Field: Experimental Positions (30 credits)	
AcrossRCA (30 credits)		

Programme Structure

Unit Title	Term	Credit Value	Core or Elective?
Establishing a Painting Practice	1	45	Core
Painting in the Expanded Field: Experimental Positions	2	30	Core
Urgency of the Arts (School-wide unit)	2	15	Core
AcrossRCA (College-wide unit)	1&2	30	Core
Independent Research Project	3	60	Core

Establishing a Painting Practice (45 credits)

In this unit, you will gain an understanding of what informs the content, subject matter, form and execution of your work as well as establish the audio, visual and material research that feeds your work and practice. This unit will begin with a series of technical inductions, artist lectures and seminars presented by painting faculty to help you establish and orient your practice within the broader painting field. *Establishing a Painting Practice* supports you as you produce work, locate their work within a critical context while reflecting on historical and contemporary approaches to painting, ultimately leading to the development of an innovative individual practice. Additionally, you achieve this through curricular content in the form of seminars, workshops, individual tutorials, group critiques and off-site visits.

Painting in the Expanded Field: Experimental Positions (30 credits)

In this unit, you further examine and challenge the conceptual, aesthetic and material approaches to making that they developed in unit 1. The goal of this unit is to encourage you to deepen your understanding of the future direction of your practice with an interdisciplinary focus on experimentation, execution and critical reflection. You will produce finished work at an advanced level and explore various modes of presenting. The end of this unit will culminate in a presentation and a written proposal for your IRP in preparation for the degree show presentation of your work in

unit 3.

AcrossRCA (College-wide unit, 30 credits)

Across **Terms 1 and 2**, you will participate in **AcrossRCA**. This unit aims to support students to meet the challenges of a complex, uncertain and changing world by bringing them together to work collaboratively on a series of themed projects informed by expertise within and beyond the College. These projects will challenge you to use your intellect and imagination to address key cultural, social, environmental and economic challenges. In doing so, you will develop and reflect on the abilities required to translate knowledge into action, and help demonstrate the contribution that the creative arts can make to our understanding and experience of the world.

Urgency of the Arts (School-wide unit, 15 credits)

In term 2 all School of Arts & Humanities students will participate in the **Urgency of the Arts**, School-wide unit. Through this unit we ask: what does arts and humanities research and practice have to offer in our current socio-political climate? The unit introduces students to a diverse range of perspectives, approaches and practices relevant to contemporary practice and thought in the Arts & Humanities. The delivery is devised to help you identify and query your own practices and disciplinary assumptions through encounters with others and within the various practices undertaken by students in the School, and to raise awareness around contemporary concerns. You will be supported in understanding the ramifications of your own work and practice within a broad cultural context, and to recognise its many potentially unintended readings and consequences.

Independent Research Project - IRP (60 credits)

The IRP follows two studio-based units: unit 1 establishes the breadth of studio practice and explores critical and contemporary painting contexts, and unit 2 focuses on interdisciplinarity and experimentation within the studio practice towards concerns of public engagement and exhibition, specific to painting. Units 1 and 2 are platforms for preparing you for the IRP: unit 1 supports critical reflection and analysis of contexts for the future development of a painting practice; unit 2 addresses the temporal, material, technical and logistical demands of exhibiting and disseminating work and developing a professional practice.

The programme approaches the IRP as self-directed study centred on an assessed presentation of your work as an exhibition, a publication and a research essay. The IRP is held and supported from within the programme; staff will support your learning and approaches to critical reflection across the stages. The IRP operates as a robust teaching object to develop independent research, critical thinking and reflection on the specific conceptual, material and presentational demands of a contemporary painting practice. It is an integral component in supporting you to develop a professional orientation and sustainable painting practice beyond an institutional frame.

5. How will I learn?

The blended delivery of the Programme takes place through, but is not limited to:

- Orientations;
- Briefings;

- Personal Tutorials and Group Tutorials;
- Critiques;
- Seminars;
- Off-site study;
- Studio practice;
- Workshops;
- Practicums;
- Symposia
- Technical inductions;
- Exhibition of student work.

6. Assessment and feedback

Regulations

Regulations for assessment and progression can be found here. Please note that College regulations are subject to annual updates and amendments.

Unit assessment

Assessment on the programme will include, but will not be limited to:

- Continuous assessment (including informal evaluation and feedback from peers and tutors);
- Written self-reflection;
- Group and/or individual presentation;
- Artist statements;
- Group critique;
- Produced work;
- Research portfolio;
- Public exhibition of work;
- Long-form written submissions (e.g. essays);
- Viva Voce examination;

7. What award can I get?

To be awarded an RCA MA degree you need to gain 180 credits at level 7 of the Framework for Higher Education Qualifications (FHEQ). This will involve successfully completing all units.

If you fail a unit at the first attempt, you will be offered an opportunity to resit the unit. If you are successful at resit you will be awarded the credits for that unit. If you are unsuccessful, you cannot progress further in your programme.

Exit awards:

If you have gained at least 120 credits at level 7 of the FHEQ, you may be eligible for the exit award of Postgraduate Diploma. An exit award is a final award from the College and cannot be rescinded.

For more detailed information about the College's assessment, progression and awards policies see the Regulations.

8. Admissions

Cross-College requirements

Academic Entry Requirements

Candidates must normally have obtained a good relevant undergraduate degree or an equivalent qualification. The College recognises as an equivalent qualification any degree, diploma, certificate or other evidence of formal qualification awarded by a university or other higher education establishment where the award is made following the successful completion of a programme of at least three years' study, the programme of study being open, as a general rule, only to persons holding a certificate awarded on the successful completion of a full programme of upper secondary education.

Other qualifications may be approved, providing that the College's Academic Board for Concessions and Discipline (ABCD) is satisfied that the applicant has the ability to pursue the programme of study successfully. The ABCD is empowered to make judgements about the extent to which qualifications or experience gained elsewhere may be accepted in partial fulfilment of its requirements.

Portfolio

All applicants are required to submit a portfolio as part of the application process. A portfolio is a showcase of an applicant's work as an artist or designer and can be made up of images, videos or writing examples. The portfolio helps us to better understand the applicant and allows them to show evidence of their ability and motivation to undertake a given programme.

Each programme is looking for different things in a portfolio; each Head of Programme provides specific advice on portfolio requirements in the online application system. We advise prospective students to consider these requirements carefully before submitting their application.

Applicant Qualities

Generally, we are looking for applicants to demonstrate their:

- creativity, imagination and innovation;
- ability to articulate the intentions of the work;
- intellectual engagement in areas relevant to the work;

- technical skills appropriate to the work;
- potential to benefit from the programme and achieve MA standards overall.

English Language

Applicants who are not a national of a majority English-speaking country will need to demonstrate their English language proficiency. The College accepts a range of English language qualifications. The full list can be seen at <https://www.rca.ac.uk/studying-at-the-rca/apply/entrance-requirements/english-language-requirements/>

Applicants are exempt from this requirement if they have received a 2.1 degree or above from a university in a majority English-speaking nation within the last two years.

If a student would need a Tier 4 visa to study at the RCA, they will also need to meet the Home Office's minimum requirements for entry clearance.

Admission Process

Applications must be made directly to the College through our online application portal:

<https://www.rca.ac.uk/studying-at-the-rca/apply/application-process/ma-application-process/>

Upon completion of that first stage of the application process, candidates will be invited to submit a portfolio of their work, a 300-word statement of intent and a video communicating clearly their motivations, personal interests and why they are pursuing a Masters degree at the Royal College of Art. These materials are reviewed by members of the programme team who will communicate an academic decision to the College Registry, who manage the process of offer-making in line with the College's recruitment targets. In some cases, where the programme team is not able to make an admission decision based solely upon the work submitted by the applicant, we may invite the candidate to undertake an interview with us.

Applications are considered chronologically by date and time of final portfolio submission. Whilst a programme still has vacancies, successful candidates will be made an offer of a place. Once a programme becomes full, subsequent successful applicants will be placed on a waiting list, and may be made a firm offer should a place become available for them.

Programme-Specific requirements

Specific advice on programme portfolio requirements is provided by the Head of Programme in the online application system. Please consult the College website for further information on programme-specific admission and portfolio requirements:

<https://www.rca.ac.uk/study/programme-finder/painting-ma/#requirements>