

MASTER OF FINE ART (MFA)

The MFA is a two-year, multidisciplinary programme: both of these fundamental facts are significant. A two-year programme of study offers students an extraordinary opportunity to analyse their studio practice in depth, and to modify, develop and secure it accordingly. The multidisciplinary context also ensures that such developments are protected against narrowly defined ambitions. MFA students learn from, and contribute to, the delivery of the programme curriculum, the experiences of their peers, and the wider art community based within the city of Glasgow. Within this situation a premium is placed upon independence, originality, initiative and enterprise. The MFA aims to produce graduates who are equipped for a career in the professional art world: informed, confident, independent and ambitious.

Applicants for the MFA are strongly advised to submit their applications before 4th February 2011.

PROGRAMME INFORMATION

The MFA programme is divided into 3 stages:

- Stage 1: Postgraduate Certificate (15 weeks)
- Stage 2: Postgraduate Diploma (15 weeks)
- Stage 3: MFA (30 weeks)

Each stage is assessed, and the following credit points are accrued upon successful completion:

- Stage 1: 60 credits
- Stage 2: 60 credits
- Stage 3: 120 credits

The main focus at each stage of the programme is upon self-directed studio practice, but studio practice is supplemented by additional academic study, as follows:

STAGE 1

- Studio practice I (45 credits);
- Core Research Skills for Postgraduate Students (15 credits)

STAGE 2

- Studio practice II (45 credits);
- Postgraduate elective course (15 credits)

stage 3

- Studio practice III (90 credits);
- Dissertation (15 credits);
- MFA elective course (15 credits).

As far as the studio components of the programme are concerned, students develop their own working practices in order to explore and advance their own specific interests and academic agendas. Such interests usually take the form of a combination of formal, technical, thematic and theoretical concerns. Students are also encouraged to explore their practices in relation to wider cultural, theoretical and historical contexts by means of individual research activity. Regular tutorial support from MFA core teaching team and a wide range of visiting lecturers (e.g. artists, critics, curators) allows students the opportunity to discuss their work with experts, and critical feedback is also available by means of regular group critiques. The Student Progress Review, which forms part of the assessment procedure, and which takes place towards the end of each Stage of the programme, is yet another means whereby students receive feedback and guidance.

Students operating at postgraduate level are expected to demonstrate increasing levels of independence and 'ownership' in relation to their learning experience. The overwhelming majority of MFA students are allocated their own private studio space, and this space serves as the focal point of their studies. It is not only the place where work is produced, but it is also the place where professional working practices and operational discipline are learned. In this focused environment of the studio, each MFA student learns how to organize and structure their working patterns in order to prepare themselves – both intellectually and practically – for the life of a practicing artist.

During their course of study, students are expected to participate in two major public exhibitions of their work: the Interim exhibition (end of stage 2); the MFA degree show (end of stage 3). Both exhibitions allow the opportunity to present work to a high professional standard for the purposes not only of public display, but also of assessment. The MFA degree show, for example, is mounted in one of the city's major art venues – such as Tramway, or the Centre for Contemporary Arts (CCA) – and is regarded as an important event within the city's annual exhibition calendar.

Many MFA students are also engaged in other initiatives throughout the city, such as gallery exhibitions, public art projects, curatorial initiatives, performances, independent publishing, and various collaborative ventures with other artists, musicians, writers, performers and institutions. Such extracurricular activity (which is viewed very positively as an aspect of professional practice) contributes significantly to the learning experiences of the students involved, and makes an invaluable contribution to the ongoing cultural life of the MFA programme and the city at large.

Throughout much of its twenty plus year history the MFA has also successfully managed to stage an international exhibition of graduating students' work during the summer vacation. Previous locations for MFA exhibitions have included Beijing, Budapest, Chicago, Brussels, Kyoto, Stockholm, New York City, Mexico City, and Berlin. MFA students are drawn from all corners of the world, and the international dimension of the programme, as demonstrated by the international exhibition, is seen as one of its particular strengths. Whilst the international exhibition cannot be guaranteed to take place every year, all efforts are made – by staff and students alike – to ensure that it remains a goal.

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