

THE GLASGOW SCHOOL OF ART

POSTGRADUATE DEGREE STUDY GUIDE: MASTER OF FINE ART

The Master of Fine Art (MFA) is a two-year Full Time or three-year Part Time* multidisciplinary programme: these fundamental facts are significant. Such a programme of study offers you an opportunity to analyse your creative practice over time and in depth, and therefore enables you to modify, develop and enhance your practice accordingly. The multidisciplinary context also ensures that developments in creative practice are explored and consolidated through critical analysis in a more productive way in relationship to contemporary cultural contexts.

As an MFA student you will learn from, and contribute to, the discussion that arises within the programme, the experiences of your peers, and the wider art community based within the city of Glasgow. Within this situation a premium is placed upon independent learning, self-reliance, originality, initiative, and enterprise. The MFA aims to offer you the opportunity to enhance or acquire the skills necessary for a career in the professional art world, where, as artists you are well-informed, confident, self-reliant, and ambitious.

Whilst there are rolling application deadlines, applicants for the MFA programme are strongly advised to submit their applications before the beginning of February.

*Please note the Part Time mode of study is subject to approval for 2024 entry.

Programme Information

The MFA programme is divided into 3 stages:

Full Time Mode

Year 1

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

Year 2

- Stage 3: MFA (30 weeks)

Part Time Mode

Year 1

- Stage 1: Postgraduate Certificate (30 weeks)

Year 2

- Stage 2: Postgraduate Diploma (30 weeks)

Year 3

- Stage 3: MFA (30 weeks)

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

Full Time Mode

Year 1

- Stage 1: 60 credits
- Stage 2: 60 credits

Year 2

- Stage 3: 120 credits

Part Time Mode

Year 1

- Stage 1 & Stage 2 (Part 1): 80 credits

Year 2

- Stage 2 (Part 2) & Stage 3 (Part 1): 80 credits

Year 3

- Stage 3 (Part 2): 80 credits

Each stage of the programme is focussed upon supporting the development of self-directed creative practice.

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Creative practice is supplemented by additional academic study, as follows:

Stage 1

- Critical Review of Studio Practice (40 credits)
Research Methods and Methodologies in Practice (20 credits)

Stage 2

- Exploring Studio practice (40 credits)
- GSA Postgraduate Elective Course (20 credits)

Stage 3

- Theorising Studio Practice (40 credits)
- Consolidating Studio Practice (80 credits)

As far as creative practice is concerned, you are invited to develop your working practices to explore and advance your own specific interests and academic agendas thus combining formal, technical, thematic, and theoretical concerns. You are also encouraged to explore your practices in relation to wider cultural, theoretical, and historical contexts by means of your own individual research activity.

Formal and informal tutorial support from the MFA core teaching team, and on occasion a range of visiting lecturers, allows you the opportunity to discuss your work with specialists in the field. Critical feedback is also available by means of focussed group critiques from both staff and peers. Towards the end of each Stage the Progress Review (a formative assessment point) is yet another means whereby you will receive feedback and guidance.

As a student operating at postgraduate level, you are expected to demonstrate increasing levels of independence, self-reliance, and 'ownership' of what you are doing in relation to your learning experience. All full time MFA students are allocated studio space onsite. Part time MFA students will be expected to have a workspace of their own externally. The studio in whatever form it takes serves as the focal point of your studies. It is important to understand however that for some artists the studio may be a physical environment for others it may be less fixed. The studio is a creative workspace, in whatever form it takes, a space for thought to go wild. MFA students also have access to a bookable crit space, to test out new ideas and present work for formal and informal group tutorials. It is not only the place where work is installed, but also a place where professional working practices and the discipline of being a practicing artist are learned.

Establishing a sense of studio culture in the peer group by visiting each other's workspaces is important for it is through such interactions you learn how to organize, structure, or enhance your own working patterns to prepare yourselves – both intellectually and practically - for the life of a practicing artist.

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Students on full and part time modes of study will be taught together as much as possible. Wherever possible full-time students are expected to be onsite daily. For part time students the pattern of engagement may vary from stage to stage, but it is anticipated they will be onsite a maximum of two days per week in Year 1. For more information, please contact the Programme Leader.

During your course of study, you are expected to participate in two major public exhibitions of your work: the Interim exhibition (towards the end of Stage 2); the MFA degree show (towards the end of Stage 3). Both exhibitions allow you the opportunity to present work to a high professional standard for the purposes of public display and assessment.

The MFA degree show is normally mounted in one of the city's arts venues. This show is regarded as an important event in the city's annual exhibition calendar and sometimes coincides with GI: Glasgow International Festival.

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.

MFA students are drawn from all corners of the world, and the international dimension of the programme is seen as one of its strengths.