Introduction and Special Features

This MA offers students the opportunity to investigate the interrelationships between their own creative practice and questions arising about knowledge, composition and reflection in current fine arts practice. Its particular focus is on providing students with the compositional, reflective and research strategies to develop their portfolio as thinking practitioners.

The MA Fine Arts is located within the School’s MA Creative Practice suite and shares delivery of core curriculum regarding practice-led research methodology in the creative practice. Students taking the programme thus follow both discipline specific and cross-disciplinary modules, with teaching constituted as most appropriate - this allows the possibility of cross-disciplinary, opportunities for new insights, lateral thinking and an in-depth and sustained investigation.

The MA is designed to address dynamic interrelationships between theory and practice, with all modules delivered in seminar, workshop, studio and virtual environments. Theoretical concepts will be explored in relation to practice; practice will inform conceptualisations. The aspirations of the programme are to provide students with the opportunity to develop their own practice, their own thinking and provide them with a platform from which to disseminate their work.

Special features

Key features of provision are:
- opportunities to explore the interrelationships between practice, reflection and knowledge;
- opportunities for students to place their practice within practical and critical frameworks;
- opportunities for students to develop cross-disciplinary awareness;
- opportunities for students to produce artefacts, events or products related to the above;
- a combination of intensive periods of activity and periods of supported independent reflection;
- a platform for students to present their work to a range of audiences.

Specialist Input
The postgraduate programme hosts an active series of lunchtime artists' talks and visiting lecturers, with previous speakers including Andre Stitt, Gary Winters, Adrian Howells, Tim Wheeler and Mat Fraser among others.

**Admissions Criteria**

Candidates for the MA programme are considered on the combination of all elements of their application, including existing arts practice, evidence of critical and reflective engagement and academic qualifications.

For all candidates there will be an interview and consideration of a portfolio of work, consisting of examples of their previous and current theatre and performance practice. The portfolio is a central element of our consideration of applications and also an opportunity for the candidate to find out more about the programme. In interviews, all candidates will be asked to give a presentation. The criteria for this are as follows:

- demonstration of readiness for graduate level practice;
- evidence of engagement with critical thinking.

We are happy to arrange skype interviews for overseas students.

Candidates would normally be considered for interview if they meet the following criteria:

- graduates with an honours degree at 2:1 or above in a related subject or branch of Fine Arts or Visual Arts practice (particularly, but not exclusively, Digital Arts, Drawing, Environmental Art, Media, Painting, Performance Art, Photography, Sculpture, Time-Based Art, Video Arts) as Single or Joint Honours or potentially in a Major/Minor combination will normally register for the MA;

OR

- experience of working in a professional arts environment or substantial on-going arts practice. In these circumstances, the interview process will include consideration of the suitability for Masters level study in accordance with University APEL procedures.

Applicants not meeting the above criteria may be considered for initial registration on the Postgraduate Certificate. If successful in work at postgraduate level, the student may be permitted to enrol for the Masters’ degree. In particular applicants with a 2:2 degree may be considered according to relevant practice based or professional experience.

Admissions tutors will consider all applications on an individual basis. If they are an international student, they will need to demonstrate that they have equivalent experience/qualifications as above. If your first language is not English, you need to take an IELTS test or an equivalent qualification accepted by the University (see [https://www.yorksj.ac.uk/international/how-to-apply/english-language-requirements/](https://www.yorksj.ac.uk/international/how-to-apply/english-language-requirements/)).

Applications from candidates with disabilities are always considered. The programme adheres to York St John University’s disability policy.

**Decisions on Applications**

Decisions on individual applicants will be made by the Head of Programme in consultation with subject specialists, the Admissions Manager and International Office, as appropriate.
Programme Aims

The benchmark aim for the suite of MA awards in Creative Practice is:

- to provide a stimulating environment and appropriate critical interventions that enable students to operate with self-direction, professionalism and originality as reflexive practitioners.

The programme aim for the MA Fine Arts is:

- to develop practitioners able to respond to complex issues within their discipline with criticality, reflexivity and creativity.

Programme Learning Outcomes

Level 7 / FHEQ L7

Students who gain the award specified will have demonstrated the following learning outcomes:

Level 7 (MA / Postgraduate Diploma / Postgraduate Certificate)

On successful completion of the Postgraduate Diploma students will have demonstrated:

Knowledge and Understanding

1. Systematic understanding of the issues of composition, reflection and knowledge as they relate to current fine arts practice.
2. Critical awareness of current issues, agendas and methodologies in fine arts practice and research.
3. Advanced knowledge of creative and reflective strategies in current fine arts practice.

Cognitive/Thinking Skills

1. Ability to reflect critically and creatively both in and on practice and to use appropriate strategies for reflection.
2. Ability to apply new knowledge and skills to develop new practices.
3. Ability to engage critically and creatively in the development of current fine arts knowledge and practice.

Practical/Professional Skills

1. Originality in the application of knowledge as appropriate to their own fine arts practice.
2. Application of relevant knowledge and strategies to their own practice.
3. Ability to communicate effectively and clearly in appropriate contexts about their own artistic practices and knowledge.

Key Transferable Skills

1. Ability to critically evaluate their own achievements and that of others.
2. Self-direction and effective decision making in creative situations.
3. Independent learning and the ability to work in a way which ensures continuing professional development.
4. Ability to apply a reflective approach to professional relationships.

These outcomes also apply to students exiting with a PgCert, who will have completed 60 credits rather than the 120 required for PgDip.

On successful completion of the MA, student will in addition to the above be able to:

1. Formulate a systematic research trajectory of practice, from inception to completion.
2. Demonstrate originality in the application of an independent body of practice-based research.
3. Articulate with complexity and clarity the knowledge generated through their own practice and research activity.
Programme Structure

This degree is structured to enable students who already have some experience of fine arts practice to expand their artistic horizons, develop their reflective abilities and expand their portfolio as thinking practitioners. Students follow two strands of modules through the programme: one concerned with 'Creativity and Knowledge'; the other 'Practice, Reflection, Dissemination'. These are designed to enhance students’ abilities, knowledge and understanding of issues of creative practice, reflection on and in practice and arts research. Together they lead MA students into the final ‘Independent Project’ module, where students undertake an extended period of supervised practice-based research where they are expected to draw together and implement the resources provided to them earlier in the programme.

Creativity and Knowledge
This element of the MA award consists of two 20-credit modules which are shared by all MAs in the Creative Practice suite.

The first of these modules, ‘Creativity and Knowledge 1’, is designed to invite students to explore a range of key themes relating to the relationship between art and the wider cultural, social, economic circumstances of its production and reception. For MA Fine Arts students this module will enable them to place their own practice and disciplines within wider frameworks and debates.

The second module, ‘Creativity and Knowledge 2’, is located prior to the final practice-based Independent Project (MPR140). This module provides students with a structured investigation of ideas and methodologies of practice-based research.

Through a combination of lectures, discussion and reflective practice, students will explore, test and model approaches to the theory/practice nexus. It will interrogate the possibilities for the generation and communication of knowledge in and through practice and by doing so will deepen and broaden students’ understanding of the interrelationship between arts practice, knowledge and research.

Practice, Reflection, Dissemination
This strand, consisting of two 40 credit modules is designed to enhance students’ abilities as self-reflective practitioners. It recognises the deep interrelationship between reflection, documentation, dissemination and production, in terms of the development of an artist’s work and practice in terms of its function and operation within critical and public domains. Students will be introduced to the variety of ways in which composition, creation and dissemination in the production of fine arts practice has evolved into its present media and forms. This will be accompanied by investigation into the potential of strategies concerning documentation as useful modes of reflection and realisation. This module strand will be primarily focused around students’ own practice, contextualised by examination of various key practitioners, modes or epistemologies.

‘Questions of Practice’ is a practice-based module that encourages students to think and reflect through development of studio practice and discovery of related questions of practice. It recognises critical and creative reflection on studio practice as an active and essential aspect of working processes. It aims also to guide students in development and enhancement of their conceptual, intellectual, practical and technical range of abilities, skills and knowledge in relation to models and strategies of making and reflecting upon current fine arts practice.

‘Practice in Context’ encourages students to develop a nascent body of practice-based work in response to issues of context. Where work in ‘Questions of Practice’ encourages speculative approaches to studio practice, this module asks students to identify and respond to any of a range of historical, social and cultural contexts. This could range from re-examining approaches to site-specific practice, the ‘white cube’ gallery space, or networked, online spaces. The module allows time and opportunity for students to develop and enhance their conceptual,
intellectual, practical and technical range of abilities, skills and knowledge in relation to issues and opportunities of making/disseminating practice-based research in fine arts practice.

**Independent Project**

The final element of this MA is a practice-based’ Independent Project’ of 60 credits. This is intended to synthesise the practical, reflective and conceptual developments in students’ work over the course of the programme.

The ‘Independent Project’ module provides a structure shared by students on all the Creative Practice MAs and is undertaken by both full and part time students. Within this structure the form and timetable for each individual project is negotiated. This process of negotiation starts with individual students beginning to formulate a research-proposal, assisted by the exploration of research methodologies contained within taught modules. These proposals are submitted to appropriate tutors for consideration.

To recognise the different work loads of full and part time student there will be slightly different schedules and supervisory periods. Part time students and Full time students will be briefed on the Independent Project module after semester 2 of their first year of study and will be expected to submit a proposal. Except in cases of mitigating circumstances, full time students will submit their Independent Project in September and part time students will submit their Independent Project in September of their second year of study.

The exact nature of the ‘Independent Project’ is open to negotiation, which will take place between each student and the supervisor, but it is anticipated it will take the form of a performance, event, workshop series, installation or artefact, which will be supported by a reflective document. When a student is developing a topic of study the negotiation process will refer to the programme content, student’s areas of interest and staff expertise. When the proposal is agreed, a supervisor is appointed. The work is carried out as an independent piece of research, with the guidance of the supervisor.

### Modules for the Programme

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Code</th>
<th>Level</th>
<th>Term</th>
<th>Title</th>
<th>Credits</th>
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<td>MPR220</td>
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<td>3 or 3 &amp;1part time</td>
<td>Independent Project</td>
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*C: Compulsory, CP: Compulsory for progression to the next level, CA: Compulsory for award, O: option or E: elective.
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<tr>
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<th>SEM 1 16/17</th>
<th>SEM 2 16/17</th>
<th>SUMMER 16/17</th>
<th>SEM 1 17/18</th>
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<td>MPR140</td>
<td>MPR080</td>
<td>MPR090</td>
<td>MPR140</td>
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<td>MPR140 Independent Project (60)</td>
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**Teaching, Learning and Assessment**

The programme has been designed to meet the needs of both students who have just finished undergraduate programmes, and returners to learning who may have already developed their own arts practice. Programme delivery will utilise a blended approach incorporating contact hours, group work, individual tutorials, SOL and learning supported by VLEs.

The programme is concerned with ensuring that students have the opportunity to experience a wide range of teaching and learning strategies across the modules offered within its programme of study. These are structured to facilitate successful achievements of the learning outcomes of each module.

Students will be provided with a range of teaching and learning strategies across the modules, including:

- reflective learning;
- independent learning;
- facilitated learning;
- collaborative learning.
This process will be achieved through the use of a wide and varied range of teaching and learning methods, including workshop and studio sessions, seminar discussions, supervised projects and supported VLE learning. It is anticipated that semesters will be divided between periods of intense activity (extended weekends and a series of weekly sessions) and periods of independent reflection, supported by specific tasks, reading and proactive use of VLE (including forums, discussion groups and web publication).

Formative assessment of generic skills will be maintained throughout the programme through a range of tasks, projects and presentations. Summative assessment will take a variety of forms, including presentations of art works, reports, essays, catalogue documents, case studies and annotated documentations.

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<th>ASSESSMENT STRATEGY</th>
<th>MODULE</th>
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<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Essay</td>
<td>MPR080</td>
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<tr>
<td>Presentation</td>
<td>MPR090</td>
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<tr>
<td>Exhibition of work + online journal</td>
<td>MPR230</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Portfolio of creative work + viva</td>
<td>MPR220</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Portfolio (practical work and documentation incorporating reflective and contextual analysis)</td>
<td>MPR140</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

**Progression and Graduation Requirements**

The University’s general regulations for postgraduate awards apply to this programme.

Any modules that must be passed for progression or award are indicated in the Programme Structure section.

In addition, the following programme-specific regulations apply in respect of progression and graduation:

- 180 credits must be passed at M Level in order to gain the award of Master of Arts.

**Internal and External Reference Points**

This programme specification was formulated with reference to:

- University Mission Statement [see page two]
- School of Art, Design and Computer Studies strategic aims
- Strategic Plan 2015-20 [see page four]
- QAA subject benchmark statement
- Framework for Higher Education Qualifications
- MA Creative Practice review report

**Further Information**

Further information on the programme of study may be obtained from:

- Admissions entry profile (Admissions)
- Programme validation document (Registry – Academic Quality Support)
- Regulations (Registry – Academic Quality Support)
- Student programme handbook (school)
- Module handbooks (school)

Date written / revised: 03/13. Reviewed: October 2014 (no change) revised: May 17