Programme Specification

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Awarding Body</th>
<th>University of the Arts London (UAL)</th>
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<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Professional, Statutory or Regulatory Body (PSRB)</td>
<td>None</td>
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<tr>
<td>Teaching Institution</td>
<td>Chelsea College of Arts</td>
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<tr>
<td>Final Award</td>
<td>MA Curating and Collections</td>
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<tr>
<td>Length of Course</td>
<td>1 year full-time</td>
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<tr>
<td>UCAS Code</td>
<td>Not applicable</td>
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<tr>
<td>Date of production/revision</td>
<td>September 2017 – Rev 1, 2017/18 Entry</td>
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Course Introduction

The MA Curating and Collections course sets out curating and collections practices as a way of bringing meaning to art and design materials. Objects are seen as the bearers of cultural significance and aesthetic value. Focus on the arrangement of objects for display is given special emphasis in the context of collections. In such terms, collections are studied on the course alongside more specialist archives. A working distinction between collections and archives is maintained, although you will work with objects drawn from both. Conventionally, archives can be understood as collections of material where the parameters are already set – the order in which material has been placed, as well as the links made between materials is maintained. Collections, more generally, allow the order of objects to be created – collections can be reorganised as well as extended. The significance of curating in allowing the issue of parameters in archives and collections to be reconsidered remain key aspects of the course.

Emerging areas within curatorial, collections and archives study will be addressed within the course. For instance, the impact of the digital will form part of study area. A number of relevant questions help shape this area, such as: the means by which the digital is changing our experience of the ‘live’; the extent to which digital and online collections ask us to re-evaluate the value of non-digital collections; the way in which digital materials alter our perception of the ‘archive’; which critical discourses help us make sense of the role of the digital in contemporary society?
The renowned College Collections, as well as the Chelsea College of Arts Library Special Collections, (http://www.arts.ac.uk/study-at-ual/library-services/collections-and-archives/chelsea), lie at the heart of an approach promoting critical reflection alongside practical experience in the professional environment of Chelsea Space. Learning takes place through hands-on engagement in the generation of a series of ‘interventions’ into displays in the Chelsea Space gallery. Curatorial knowledge is thereby formulated in-situ with an emphasis on problem-solving and practical handling, as well as conceptual development. Exhibition skills sessions centre on such matters as selection and hanging of artworks as well as the various aspects of project management necessary for the successful production of displays. These will include: artist liaison; budgeting; education/mediation; audiences and marketing; collector liaison; health and safety; art handling; transportation and insurance; interpretation; archiving, conservation and documentation. The Exhibitions skills sessions are supplemented by seminars keeping students up-to-date with critical thinking on issues such as: the formation of publics; the status of artists in collections; objects, meaning and subjectivity.

The course promotes an embedded teaching model in which learning takes place through close engagement with the curatorial activity within Chelsea Space. The course will also aim to provide opportunities to engage with other exhibition spaces within UAL colleges, such as Wimbledon Space and Camberwell Space. Library showcases within the colleges will also be explored as possibilities for display. Within the course, individual approaches are promoted so that you develop skills-sets appropriate to the substantiation of your emerging practice. Critical engagement takes place through debate on theories of collection and their impact on curatorial knowledge as well as addressing issues such as digitisation and ephemera. The course aims to support those of you who wish to have a thorough grounding in the handling of collections, as well as those who are interested in developing collections interventions as part of independent practice.

**The College and Wider Networks**

The course approaches curating from a creative, practical and experimental perspective, benefitting from a close relationship to other MA courses at Chelsea College of Arts. Chelsea Space acts as an ‘exhibition hub’, allowing students from across the Postgraduate networks in the college to engage with your work. You will also be encouraged to engage with MA practitioners, through studio visits and, where possible, participation in crits, especially where the practice relates to your designated research area. MA practitioners are thereby regarded as a site of emerging practice in the fields of Fine Art, Graphic Design Communication, Textile Design as well as Interior and Spatial Design.
MA Curating and Collections is aimed at graduates from a range of undergraduate degrees, encompassing both practice and theory. Courses of particular relevance are those related to the following: Fine Art practice; Design practice; Photography; Textiles; Art History; Arts Management; Cultural Studies; Curatorial Studies; Spatial Design; Theatre Design; Printmaking; Conservation; Exhibition Design; Furniture Design; Digital and Moving Image. The main emphasis is on practitioners, historians and theoreticians who wish to develop their work to a professional level within a research-orientated art school context. Such an approach enables students to proceed to MPhil/PhD level research degrees and to work in a variety of fields within the arts (publishing, broadcasting, education, management, curating and collections practice).

Course Aims

This course aims to:

- Engage with and interpret knowledge at the forefront of the discipline through the development of your critical, conceptual and practical abilities, achieved through: (a) the investigation of collections and archives; (b) the analysis of methodologies applied to their exhibition and display.
- Generate a self-directed programme of curatorial practice and related collections research, supporting the development of your professional practice.
- Contextualise and theorise your own practice through a critical evaluation of: (a) the work of contemporary practitioners and leading researchers within the discipline; (b) historic collections practices, evidenced in public and/or private collections and archives. This will support the consolidation of transferable and professional skills relevant to employment and further study.
- Develop a comprehensive understanding of methodologies applicable to your own research while demonstrating high-level skills and competencies as a preparation for professional curatorial practice using collections and archives.

Course Outcomes

The outcomes that you will have demonstrated upon completion of the course, are:

- Articulate a systematic knowledge and understanding of the contemporary and historical context for your practice and related research.
- Analyse complex issues and communicate your conceptual understanding to a range of audiences
- Engage with contemporary critical and theoretical debate in curatorial practice specifically in collection and archive scholarship.
- Evaluate research methodologies, apply methods and propose new hypotheses applicable to your research intentions.
- Demonstrate an independent and creative approach to problem solving and research, including planning and implementation of tasks at a professional level.
- Demonstrate self-direction and inventiveness in your work and discourse, and act independently in planning and implementing your practice to a professional standard.
- Exercise the initiative, responsibility and decision-making necessary to support continued professional development.

### Learning and Teaching Methods

The learning and teaching methods for this course may include:

Collaborative work with peers; Gallery/other visits; Group/individual presentations and critiques; Group/individual tutorials; Research topic groups; Self-directed study and research; Seminars; Visiting artist and practitioner talks and tutorials.

### Scheduled Learning and Teaching

Scheduled learning and teaching is the percentage of your time spent in timetabled learning and teaching. In each Level (Year) you are expected to study for 1200 hours over 30 weeks; below is the amount of time which is timetabled activity. The rest of your learning time will be self-directed, independent study.

FHEQ Level 7 (Year 1) – 26%

### Assessment Methods

The relevant assessment methods for this course may include:

- Critical writing; presentations; project portfolios.

### Reference Points

The following reference points were used in designing the course:

- The University of the Arts London Credit and Course Structures Framework.
- The University of the Arts London Learning and Teaching policies.
CCW (Camberwell, Chelsea and Wimbledon) policies and initiatives.

The UK Quality Code for Higher Education Subject Benchmark Statements


The UK Quality Assurance Agency’s relevant HE framework, subject benchmarks, and academic infrastructure (www.qaa.ac.uk).

Programme Summary

Programme structures, features, units, credit and award requirements:

Your course is made up of units and each unit has a credit value. Units are the building blocks of the course and can be described as self-contained packages of learning over specified periods of time. Upon successful completion of the units, you will accumulate credits. One credit is equivalent to 10 learning hours, and 60 credits, for example, are equivalent to 600 learning hours, including independent study as well as tutorials. However, credit does not provide a measure of the quality of your work; it simply indicates that the elements of each unit or level have been successfully completed.

The structure of all higher education courses must follow a national framework of credits and levels. In the case of your MA course, this is called The Framework for higher education qualifications in England, Wales and Northern Ireland (FHEQ). Within this framework, all study at MA level must be credited at Level 7.

To achieve an MA you must acquire a total of 180 credits at Level 7: 60 credits for Unit 1, 60 credits for Unit 2 and 60 credits for Unit 3.

This MA programme is composed of a total of 180 credits which is divided up into three 60 credit units which are called:

- Unit 1: Analysis of Curatorial Practices.
- Unit 2: Methods of Curatorial Display.
- Unit 3: Enacting Curatorial Strategies.
Distinctive features of the course:

- This MA is less concerned in immersing students in broader questions of culture and criticism. Rather its focus will be the specialities attending the formation of collections and the specificities of their organisation along with the exploration of collections and archival display.
- Learning takes place through close engagement with Chelsea Space where a distinctive and renowned practice is based on a deep knowledge of Chelsea College of Arts Library Special Collections. This daily contact with the local collection is complemented by organised visits and structured engagement with archives and collections across the University as a whole.
- The course provides access to knowledge of collections formulated in-situ with an emphasis on problem-solving and practical handling, for mounting displays and exhibitions: attention to objects; spatial awareness; working with artists and designing displays. In situ sessions also address matters as selection and hanging of artworks, as well as the various aspects of project management necessary for the successful production of displays.
- Attention to the latest critical thinking on issues such as: participation; artist curators; the formation of publics; and spectatorship and will be driven by the particular museological expertise of the Course Leader.
- An important aspect of the course will be the access it provides to archives and collections from across the University. This will enable students to address a variety of collections and the specificities that inform their organisation. This will take place both through onsite introductions and negotiated access to Collections and Archives across the University. There are possibilities for:
  - An annual visit and introduction to the renowned Camberwell Handling Collection followed by the option of negotiated access for individual research projects.
  - An Archives and Special Collections Centre session, followed by the option of negotiated access for individual research projects.
- The close proximity to Chelsea Special Collections will provide the possibility of sustained contact enabling an ongoing investigation into the various scenarios by which Collections evolve.
- Access to the CCW Graduate School (whose program is developed in close consultation with course and college gallery teams) will provide lectures and events and research days offering opportunities for cross-disciplinary (and college) collaboration to emerge.
**Additional Course Costs**

Please note that additional costs may be incurred on this course, for such things as printing and photocopying, some materials, optional trips within the UK and overseas and final degree shows.

**Recruitment and Admissions**

**Selection Criteria**

1. The ambition and commitment to challenge, intensify and develop their work in curation and collections to Master level.
2. The potential to devise and develop a self-directed programme of curatorial practice and related research.
3. An awareness of current debates and practices in curation and collections.
4. The ability to analyse and evaluate in both visual and oral terms and to develop and contextualise their work in written form.
5. An eagerness to engage in the critical debate surrounding contemporary and historical practices as well as to develop a critical framework for their practice.
6. The potential to develop a range of skills and competencies within their practice to a professional level.

**Portfolio Advice**

No portfolio needed.

**Entry Requirements**

- BA (Hons) degree in a related subject or equivalent academic qualifications.
- Personal statement.
- Study plan.

**If English is not your first language**

All classes are taught in English. If English is not your first language you must provide evidence at enrolment of the following:

IELTS level 6.5 or above, with at least 5.5 in reading, writing, listening and speaking (please check our English Language requirements).
# Course Diagram

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<thead>
<tr>
<th>Weeks 1-15</th>
<th>Weeks 16-30</th>
<th>Weeks 31-45</th>
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<tr>
<td><strong>Unit 1: Analysis of Curatorial Practices</strong> (60 credits)</td>
<td><strong>Unit 2: Methods of Curatorial Display</strong> (60 credits)</td>
<td><strong>Unit 3: Enacting Curatorial Strategies</strong> (60 credits)</td>
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<tr>
<td>Summative Assessment</td>
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<td>Postgraduate Certificate Exit Point</td>
<td>Postgraduate Diploma Exit Point</td>
<td>Masters Exit Point</td>
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