

Glasgow School of Art Course Specification

Course Title: Master's Project in Curatorial Practice (Opt 1,2,3)



Curatorial Practice (( Contemporary Art ))

**Outward  
International  
Destabilising  
Recalibrating  
Distinct  
Hands-on  
Cohesive  
Empowering  
Challenging  
Consistent  
Resilient  
Independent  
Practicing  
Fluid  
Adaptable  
Flexible  
Pliable  
Varied  
Proactive  
Connecting  
Now**

Course Code	HECOS Code	Academic Session
PCUR301	100914	2025-26

Course Title	Master's Project in Curatorial Practice
Course Contact	Dr Karen Di Franco and Dr Alexandra Ross

Credits	60
SCQF Level	Level 5, SCQF Level 11
When Taught	Stage 3

Associated Programmes	Master of Letters in Curatorial Practice (Contemporary Art)
Lead School	School of Fine Art
Other Schools	University of Glasgow (School of Culture and Creative Arts)
Date of Approval	Programme Approval February 2025

### Course Introduction

The MLitt Curatorial Practice (Contemporary Art) Programme jointly run by The Glasgow School of Art (in which its studio is housed) and the University of Glasgow aims to build a creative study culture and environment for a rewarding learning experience. A range of learning opportunities are offered throughout the programme, appropriate to the aims of each Stage. The aims reflect and prepare for, the professional context of Contemporary Art Curatorial Practice.

The MLitt Curatorial Practices (Contemporary Art) programme comprises three core courses, culminating in the Master's Project in Curatorial Practice, which forms the final stage. Building on the practical and theoretical approaches introduced in stages one and two, this final course invites you to deepen your research and extend your practice in one of three formats, which you will select to suit your strengths, interests, and aspirations:

1. **An Individual Curated Project**
2. **A Curatorial Project/proposition and Extended Essay**
3. **A Dissertation**

During Stage 2, you will have proposed a research direction for Stage 3, outlining your chosen format. This final course then supports you in realising your project or dissertation while meeting the programme's learning outcomes. Across all formats, reflective practice and rigorous research underpin your work, ensuring a thoughtful and critical engagement with contemporary curatorial concerns.

The **Individual Curatorial Project** formats (option 1 and 2) allow you to develop a practical project that extends your research while considering how best to engage audiences. Through this process, you will critically engage with contemporary curatorial issues and explore innovative ways to present ideas and research in a curatorial context.

The **Dissertation** (option 3) is a substantial piece of self-directed critical inquiry and research. It enables you to explore a specific area of curatorial practice in depth, focusing on contemporary art. This long-form essay challenges you to develop and refine a thesis, demonstrating the culmination of your research, analytical, and writing skills acquired

throughout the programme. The dissertation process involves in-depth investigation, critical reflection, and iterative honing of your argument and writing.

By the end of the programme, you will have developed a strong foundation in curatorial practice and research, equipping you with the skills, knowledge, and experience to advance in the professional realm or pursue further academic exploration.

#### **Course Aims**

This Course is designed to enable you to:

- Develop and create either a curatorial project or a dissertation, demonstrating advanced research skills and critical thinking.
- Apply knowledge and evaluate the role of the curator or researcher through critical engagement with curatorial practices or scholarly research in its expanded form.
- Apply scholarly, critical, or theoretical arguments relevant to a chosen curatorial or research approach.
- Apply an advanced understanding of ethical good practice and responsibilities, including ethics and Health and Safety regulations where applicable, in curatorial or research practices.
- Critically evaluate and reflect on individual work—whether a curatorial project or dissertation—and situate it within the broader field of contemporary research or curatorial practice.
- Evaluate and apply existing knowledge through a sustained focus on practical or theoretical research methodologies.

#### **Course Intended Learning Outcomes**

By the end of this course, you will be able to:

- Analyse and apply knowledge in a chosen area of curatorial research or practice, demonstrating depth and originality in your engagement.
- Design, create, and evaluate complex methodologies and processes relevant to curatorial practice or theoretical research to formulate solutions to intricate problems in curatorial or research contexts.
- Evaluate and analyse the visual arts infrastructure in local and international contexts, demonstrating an advanced understanding of its impact on curatorial or research practices.
- Create and apply a critically informed range of presentation and communication strategies to support innovative curatorial or research outcomes.
- Evaluate and apply advanced skills in organisation, communication, practice-based expertise, research, academic writing, and the practical application of health and safety principles in curatorial work or research for public dissemination.
- Design, create and evaluate an independent research enquiry, demonstrating initiative, critical thinking, and advanced problem-solving skills in the development of a curatorial project or dissertation.

#### **Indicative Content**

The programme integrates theory and practice, where methods of teaching and assessment explore these inter-relationships, led by staff from the University of Glasgow and Glasgow School of Art. In Stage 3 the course is structured around the core of independent practice supported by tutorials and workshops, supported by tutorials and drop-ins to support project and dissertation work.

At the end of stage 2 students will have selected one from three choices for their final project, either:

- 1) Master's Project in Curatorial Practice 1 (a fully realised individual curatorial project),
- 2) Master's Project in Curatorial Practice 2 (a curatorial project/proposition and 7,500-word extended essay)
- 3) Master's Project in Curatorial Practice 3 (a dissertation: 15,000-word research/practice document).

Throughout this Stage students receive individual tutorials alongside other briefing and workshop sessions to develop to completion their Master's Project in Curatorial Practice.

#### **Description of Learning and Teaching Methods**

Whether you pursue a Curatorial Project or a Dissertation, it is expected that your work will contribute to the field of curating. The core of your learning is focused on the growth of an independent curatorial practice, and this is supported throughout the term with the development of knowledge and independence gained through the different aspects of teaching activities.

Critical discourse in the School of Fine Art and the School of Culture and Creative Arts is highly valued as a key learning and teaching tool and is embedded in the activities above. This is crucial for the transfer of knowledge, contextualising your individual practice, and fostering a culture of reciprocal learning within your cohort.

Professional practice is an integral part of studying at the School of Fine Art and is embedded within the course curriculum at all stages of the programme. It provides you with opportunities, experience, and skills to engage professionally within local, national, and international art worlds and curatorial contexts.

#### **Indicative Contact Hours**

**20**

#### **Notional Learning Hours**

**600**

#### **Description of Formative Assessment and Feedback Methods**

You are supported in your learning through a range of formative activities with staff and peers, such as workshops, reviews and tutorials offering ongoing formative feedback as you progress through the course.

Feedback will be presented through tutorial appointments and peer sessions and will include assessment of draft writing and presentation content as well as discussion of Masters Project/Dissertation plans and review of draft proposals.

A Formative review which includes a presentation (group or individual) provides a formative feedback point. This involves verbal feedback and notes from peers.

**Description of Summative Assessment arrangements**

The Summative Assessment within the Master's Project in Curatorial Practice 1,2,3 has one submission and Summative Assessment point, which occurs at the end of the course with submission of a project portfolio, extended essay or dissertation based on the selected option.

The grade awarded results from a diagnostic breakdown of learning achievements, strengths and weaknesses and is accompanied by a written commentary on a designated assessment and feedback document, with a breakdown of marks and description.

Submissions will be assessed and moderated in line with the Code of Assessment.

Description of Summative Assessment Method	Weight %	Submission week
<p><b>Option 1: A Curatorial Project (100%).</b> The Project will be fully resolved and professionally presented, demonstrating a maturity in your curatorial practice and a clear direction for future work. This submission will be assessed through a <b>Portfolio</b> of evidence and documentation pertaining to the project's development and realisation.</p> <p><b>Option 2: A Curatorial Project (50%)</b> and 7,500-word <b>Extended Essay (50%).</b> This option is intended to accommodate research and smaller-scale curatorial work aimed at prototyping or establishing the viability of a future curatorial project and/or position. For the Project component, you will curate one or more Projects/Events/Activations and submit a written Project Summary of this work for assessment.</p> <p>The 7,500-word Extended Essay component will situate your developing work within an appropriate critical framework and discourse.</p> <p><b>Option 3: Dissertation (100%).</b> 15,000-word academic essay, illustrated and formatted accordingly.</p>	<p>100%</p> <p>50%</p> <p>50%</p> <p>100%</p>	<p>Week 11</p>

**Exchange/Study Abroad**

**Can this course be taken by Exchange/Study Abroad students?**

No

**Are all the students on the course taught wholly by distance learning?**

No

**Does this course represent a work placement or a year of study abroad?**

No

**Is this course collaborative with any other institutions?**

Yes

**If yes, then please provide the names of the other teaching institutions**

University of Glasgow  
(School of Culture and Creative Arts)

**Reading and On-line Resources**

The course indicative reading and online resource list is accessible via [Resource Lists](#). This list will be reviewed and updated annually to reflect course content and subject developments.