

Glasgow School of Art Course Specification
Course Title: Curatorial Practice 1



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

Curatorial Practice ((Contemporary Art))

Course Code	HECOS Code	Academic Session
PCUR101	100914	2026-27

Course Title	Curatorial Practice 1
Course Contact	Professor Omar Kholeif and Dr Alexandra Ross

Credits	40
SCQF Level	Level 5, SCQF Level 11
When Taught	Stage 1

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	PACAAG August 2025

Course Introduction

The MLitt Curatorial Practice (Contemporary Art) programme, jointly run by The Glasgow School of Art (where 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 is offered throughout the programme, aligned with the aims of each stage.

This Stage 1 course is designed to provide you with a broad introduction to curatorial practice in context and to outline key areas that define curatorial approaches, platforms, and outcomes. You will be introduced to histories and contextual debates, as well as a range of professional skills, and you will engage with experienced national and international curators and arts professionals to begin identifying and locating your individual area of research and practice.

You will undertake a curatorial project as part of a group, beginning to articulate curatorial approaches, locate resources to support your work, develop contacts, and consider how to engage different publics. The emphasis for project work in Stage 1 is placed on encouraging experimentation, an agile and productive approach to curating, and a peer-supportive working environment. In addition, you will develop individual research in an area of interest and write a Context Review that identifies key references across theory and practice. Through the Context Review, you will begin to articulate either a research focus, a set of questions, or a curatorial approach, which will form the basis of an extended essay in Stage 2.

Independent study and research will underpin the development of your work, both curatorial and written submissions, and you are expected to dedicate substantial time to this throughout the course. You will be supported through tutorial meetings, peer-presentation sessions, and seminar discussions.

Course Aims

This course is designed to enable you to:

- Develop knowledge and understanding of key histories and contexts relevant to curating, through a critical engagement with debates, perspectives, texts and platforms for practice and discussion;
- Develop awareness of the role of the curator within the visual arts infrastructure and the various capacities and skill-sets – critical, production, administrative, budgetary, inter-personal– through which curators work;
- Develop creative and inquiring approaches to curatorial practice through a collaborative project and independent research;
- Develop understanding and awareness of health and safety regulations, ethics and good practice impacting on curatorial research and practice
- Develop and demonstrate a group of skills and attributes, including critical inquiry, research capacity and project planning, to apply to independent work;
- Develop key contacts with artists and other arts professionals, peer networks in the city and elsewhere
- Develop skills relating to the care of materials, media and objects including installation good practice

Course Intended Learning Outcomes

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

- Analyse and evaluate the expansive role of the curator in relation to the visual arts, and their key relationships with artists or audiences;
- Apply and engage with current research and dialogue on contemporary curatorial practice, for application in relation to key texts and debates;
- Evaluate the visual arts sector in Glasgow and Scotland more broadly, in relation to UK-wide and international contexts;
- Apply curatorial project development key skills, such as project-planning, budgeting, communication;
- Apply an awareness of health and safety, ethical good practice and ethical responsibility in relation to curatorial work;
Evaluate and apply research as means to support the development of independent curatorial work.

Indicative Content

This Course gives you the opportunity to develop knowledge and understanding of Curatorial Practice through a lecture/presentation and seminar-based programme as well as guidance to undertake focused research aligned with individual curatorial interests.

Outcomes and in-process materials are presented in writing and through peer presentation, which will provide a framework from which to develop future projects. The course provides a close insight into the specific tasks through which projects are implemented, and how these inform project planning.

The teaching comprises:

- Lectures/presentations supported by Seminars, focusing on current curatorial contexts
- Workshop sessions activating curatorial modes and processes
- Professional Practice sessions, introducing different areas of production and their related

- skillsets;
- Tutorial and Peer Sessions, designed to assist the articulation of curatorial focus or area of enquiry
- A Study Day, focusing on a topic of contemporary relevance.

Teaching is timetabled in blocks and interspersed with formative presentations, alongside the realisation of each Group Project, curated by you and your peers and presented within GSA spaces.

You will have access to a dedicated studio space, and you will be actively encouraged and supported to test and develop projects alongside students from UG and PG courses.

Description of Learning and Teaching Methods

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. The programme is built around four core teaching strategies: the **lecture/presentation** and seminar; professional **skills training**; discussion and presentation of research and practice-based work (through tutorials and peer sessions) and **workshops**. In Stages 1 and 2 These methods are supported and expanded through visits and **study days**, clustered around particular subject areas, practical approaches or critical topics with contributions from visiting local and international guest speakers.

- Lectures and presentations from international practitioners inform critical, historical and theoretical positions alongside seminars focusing on selected curatorial work and texts.
- Professional skills sessions focus on different aspects of production of curatorial and professional work. Workshops often focus on forms, such as publishing.
- Tutorials and peer sessions establish a platform for discussing student work.
- Study Days are gathered around an invited specialist or a specific location where collective ideas and curatorial methodologies can be explored in an expanded form.
- This all sits alongside SoFA's long running and highly successful Friday Event talk series.

You will be supported through briefings to understand how assessment works, alongside sessions to unpack portfolio submissions, with check-ins to enable you navigate your learning and assessment journey.

Indicative Contact Hours	Notional Learning Hours
40	400

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.

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

Group Project

Working in a small group, you will collectively curate and deliver a project that sets out to investigate and share ideas about how curatorial practices can generate new connections between artists, artforms, ideas and environments, based within GSA. This project encourages groups to consider light-touch, event-based or other ephemeral forms, as well as digital or broadcast contexts.

Supported by group tutorials, peer presentation and group preparatory sessions, the Group Project will be assessed via submission of a group project portfolio, which includes proposal development, risk assessment, marketing and documentation, alongside an individual and collectively written reflections on the project, its aims and how these have been achieved.

Context Review

This essay provides a summary of the independent research you have undertaken towards the development of individual curatorial work and proposes a research focus, a set of questions or a curatorial approach for you to carry forward. You will identify 4-6 key references ranging from exhibitions, public events and curatorial practices to specific works by artists, critical theory and other writing.

The grade awarded for the above assessments 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
Group Project Portfolio	50%	Semester 1, Week 10
Context Review Essay	50%	Semester 1, Week 13

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.