

**Glasgow School of Art Programme Specification  
Programme Title: MLitt Contemporary Art Practice**



1. Programme Details	
Programme Title	Master of Letters (MLitt) in Contemporary Art Practice
School	School of Fine Art
Programme Leader	Mick McGraw
Award to be Conferred	Master of Letters
Exit Awards	Stage 1: PG Cert in Contemporary Art Practice Stage2: PG Diploma in Contemporary Art Practice Stage 3: MLitt in Contemporary Art Practice
SCQF Level	11
Credits	180
Mode of Study	Full Time
HECOS Code	100059

Academic Session	2026-27
Date of Approval	Programme Approval February 2025

Awarding Institution	University of Glasgow
Teaching Institutions	The Glasgow School of Art
Campus	Glasgow
Lead School/Board of Studies	School of Fine Art
Other Schools/Board of Studies	N/A
Programme Accredited By (PSRBs)	N/A

2. Entry Qualifications	
Highers	N/A
A Levels	N/A
Other	An undergraduate Degree in Fine Art or equivalent professional practice. Additional entry requirements: Applicants are normally required to submit a portfolio of work, along with satisfactory academic references and a personal statement as part of their applications. Applicants may also be required to attend an interview as part of their admissions assessment.
English Language Requirements	Applicants who are not a national of, nor have obtained a degree in one of the countries on the approved <a href="#">UKVI exemption list</a> or those who require a Student Visa, will need to provide evidence of their English language ability.  GSA's preferred test is the IELTS for UKVI (Academic) test taken at a UKVI approved test centre. GSA require all students, who require a student visa, to meet the following requirements to gain entry: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>IELTS for UKVI Academic with an overall score of 6.0 with a minimum of 5.5 in all components;</li> </ul>

- An alternative Accepted English Language Test which can be found on the Postgraduate '[How to Apply](#)' page of the GSA website.

### 3. Programme Introduction

**MLitt Contemporary Art Practice** is a one-year postgraduate programme designed to both challenge and support you in exploring how your artistic practices can be activated, with the goal of building sustainable careers as an artist or creative practitioner beyond your time on the programme.

Practical enquiry is central to the MLitt Contemporary Art Practice experience, where you will engage with ideas, methods, media, themes, and contexts through the process of making and sharing artworks.

This intensive, studio-based programme is driven by the ethos of thinking through making and making things happen, encouraging you to develop your practice through a critically supportive dialogue with fellow postgraduate artists.

The programme invites you to consider how contemporary art practice might respond to the conditions of today's world. You and the staff will collaborate to envision what contemporary art could become, rather than merely adhering to established norms and conventions. The programme recognises that the definition of 'Contemporary Art' is constantly evolving. As such, it provides opportunities to situate your practice within the diverse landscape of contemporary art, potentially extending or reshaping how these practices are perceived now and in the future.

A key feature of the programme is its emphasis on engaging audiences. Taking full advantage of its location in Glasgow, the programme includes student-led events and activities, such as exhibitions, performances, and presentations, designed to bring art practices to life. These activities not only draw inspiration from Glasgow's vibrant cultural heritage, but also allow you to practically contribute to the artistic life of the city.

The programme is structured around two distinct areas of practice. These pathways are designed to be creative and critical communities of practice where ideas, methods, and approaches are shared and challenged, expanding the possibilities for your artistic development. The two pathways available to you are:

- [Materials](#)
- [Media](#)

[Materials](#) focuses on exploring the practical, philosophical, and ethical dimensions of materially based art practices. This pathway celebrates diverse approaches to making art, such as painting, printmaking, and sculpture, while also seeking to help you define the relevance of these disciplines within contemporary and future practice and research.

[Media](#) brings together artists exploring digital, photographic, filmic, and other time-based media. You will collaborate with staff and peers to explore key questions, such as how technologies like machine learning and artificial intelligence influence the creation and reception of art. This pathway also includes artists with performative and relational

practices, whose work may incorporate elements like sound, movement, projection, broadcasting, and publication.

As well as enabling deep exploration within these two arenas, the Contemporary Art Practice programme also facilitates close interaction and sharing of approaches between the pathways. In this way, you can explore how contemporary art may operate as both a broad-based interdisciplinary practice and within the context of deep engagement with a particular approach or set of methods.

The MLitt Contemporary Art Practice programme is made up of five separate courses, which progress across three semesters.

In Semester 1, the *Core Studio 1: Investigation* course focuses on building a community and establishing your studio practice. This runs alongside the Research Methods course, which you study together with postgraduate students from the MFA and MLitt Curatorial Practice (Contemporary Art) programmes in the School of Fine Art. It explores a variety of research approaches and supports you in developing your own research interests.

In Semester 2, *Core Studio 2: Activation* invites you to explore how your work might be activated by proposing and realising an event or publication, working collectively with peers from the programme. This course runs alongside your Elective, a cross-GSA course that enables you to select from a menu of elective options and work with students from across the GSA postgraduate community.

Finally, in Semester 3, *Core Studio 3: Consolidation* invites you to work towards the CAP Exhibition and produce a consolidated portfolio of work, while also exploring opportunities and planning how to develop and sustain your practice beyond the programme.

#### **4. Programme Aims**

The programme aims to:

- Enable the development of knowledge and expertise in the field of contemporary art and understand how art practice might engage with global and/or societal challenges
- Provide the practical and conceptual framework for developing a coherent body of work.
- Create opportunities to critically engage with research providing frameworks for applying ethically informed research methods appropriate to contemporary art.
- Provide opportunities for engaging audiences by deploying effective communication through art practice and building confidence to communicate intentions and ambitions verbally and in writing.
- Empower students with the confidence, intellectual and interpersonal skills, and attributes necessary to function successfully and professionally within the field of contemporary art

#### **5. Programme Intended Learning Outcomes**

After full participation in and successful completion of the programme, you will be able to:

- Analyse and evaluate issues that are fundamental to your work, critically engaging with contemporary issues and contexts within contemporary art practice and the broader social arena.
- Apply relevant technical and intellectual skills to create work that clearly articulates the issues it addresses.
- Critically apply research methods and methodologies appropriate to contemporary art practice supporting deep enquiry and ethical considerations.
- Communicate effectively with peers, staff, and specialists by enhancing your communication skills through sharing your creative practice and research.

- Collaborate constructively with others in various educational, institutional, and professional situations.

## 6. Description of Learning and Teaching Approaches

The Learning and Teaching methods on the programme are focused on activities that build a group dynamic and encourage discourse. Running throughout the programme are sessions designed to bring you into conversation and critical dialogue with your peers. The teaching and learning approaches include:

- **Dialogue Sessions**
- **Practical Consultancies and Workshops**
- **Group Critiques**
- **Tutorials**
- **Independent Studio Practice**

Regular '**Dialogue Sessions**' form the backbone of staff/student interaction on the CAP Programme, facilitate discourse and discussion to help you engage in creative, critical, and supportive group dialogue. The focus of the dialogue sessions will include a range of themes and questions relevant to developing, activating and consolidating your practice and research. They ask you to consider and discuss key concerns that drive a critically informed contemporary art practice.

**Practical Consultancies and Workshops** are sessions that are designed to focus on the practical development of your work. Operating in small groups, these sessions are designed to identify key practical considerations to support you to further your practice. They will range from discussions about the practical considerations of making work, to those associated with exhibiting or presenting, physically or digitally. In stage 2, when you collectivise into groups, workshops will focus on necessary skills of working together. These sessions will explore the differences between working as part of a collective and working collaboratively, where you make work with others.

**Group Critiques.** As well as the Dialogue sessions, group critiques take place throughout the programme. These sessions are designed for other students and staff to give you feedback on finished work, or work in progress, and may include advice on how to develop your ideas further. Participation in group critiques helps you to develop a critical dialogue with you peers as well as identify shared interests and approaches.

**Tutorials:** In addition to group sessions, a series of 1:1 tutorials with your tutor will help track your progress throughout the year. In addition, visiting artists may conduct sign-up small group or 1:1 tutorials, which can be an opportunity to gain a different perspective on the work you are making.

**Independent Studio Practice:** As well as scheduled teaching time the programme expects you to continue to develop and extend your practice independently. You are encouraged to make full use of the Contemporary Art Practice studios, which are a key resource within the

programme. The studios serve as both creative spaces and hubs of discourse, encouraging you to share works-in-progress and experiment with a range of processes and approaches.

You will also develop a relationship between your work in the studio and the technical workshops, following relevant inductions to investigate and examine your practice. This may involve continuing previous explorations of research and ideas or responding to the programme's environment. The emphasis, in either case, is on developing your studio practice and sharing ideas and discussions with staff and peers.

Beyond the teaching provided by Contemporary Fine Art Programme staff, you will benefit from additional opportunities throughout the year, including the *Friday Event* series of invited speakers open to all students across the School of Fine Art. Additional teaching is provided through the *Practice as Research* course in Stage 1. This course, which runs alongside the *Investigation* core studio course, asks you to consider a range of approaches to research – in, around, and through practice – and to make a proposal for developing your research in Stages 2 and 3. The Postgraduate Electives in Stage 2 offer an opportunity to expand the influences and scope of your practice by selecting from a range of courses spanning cross-disciplinary creative practices, skills, and methodologies. Like the *Practice as Research* course, the electives provide a chance for you to work alongside students from other programmes, further expanding your creative and critical networks.

Stage 3 is your opportunity to consolidate your learning, building on your investigations to create a body of work and plan for its continuation beyond graduation. In Stage 3, you will present your work in the Contemporary Art Practice Exhibition, make a presentation and submit a portfolio, all of which are designed to support your transition from the programme into the professional realm or towards further academic research.

## 7. Description of Assessment Methods

Formative and summative assessment strategies are used throughout the Contemporary Art Practice programme. Formative and summative assessment operates to guide students in the development of all aspects of work and studies.

### Formative:

Formative assessment takes place midway through each course. It provides an opportunity to review progress against the Intended Learning Outcomes and identify areas for development. No grades are awarded; instead, feedback offers guidance to help you reflect on your progress and prepare for summative assessment

### Summative:

Summative Assessment is designed to support you to review, collate and communicate work, and to provide evidence that you have met the Intended Learning Outcomes. Submissions will be assessed and moderated in line with the Code of Assessment, with grades and feedback provided, based on the level at which you have met the Intended Learning Outcomes.

## 8. Programme Structure

MLitt Contemporary Art Practice is a one-year Programme, structured into 3 Stages, over three 15-week semesters, leading to the accumulation of 180 credits. The programme runs from September to September.

### Stage 1

Course	Credits	SCQF Level	Semester	Course Code
Studio Core One: Investigation	40	11	1	PLIT102
Practice as Research	20	11	1	PCXS101
<b>Total Stage Credits</b>	<b>60</b>			

### Stage 2

Course	Credits	SCQF Level	Semester	Course Code
Studio Core Two: Activation	40	11	2	PLIT103
GSA PGT Elective course	20	11	2	
<b>Total Stage Credits</b>	<b>60</b>			

### Stage 3

Course	Credits	SCQF Level	Semester	Course Code
Studio Core Three: Consolidation	60	11	3	PLIT323
<b>Total Stage Credits</b>	<b>60</b>			

## 10. Relevant QAA Subject Benchmark Statements and Other External Reference Points

Subject Benchmark Statements describe the nature of study and the academic standards expected of graduates in specific subject areas. For further information relevant to this programme see:

<https://www.qaa.ac.uk/the-quality-code/subject-benchmark-statements/>

QAA Subject Benchmark Statements on Art and Design (2016), History of Art, Architecture and Design (2019). See also QAA Characteristics Statement for Master's Degrees (2020)

## 11. Programme Regulations and Requirements for Progression

All GSA Degree programmes are validated by the University of Glasgow and the GSA's Programme Regulations are published in the [University of Glasgow University Regulations](#).

These regulations include the requirements in relation to:

- (a) Award of the degree
- (b) Progression requirements
- (c) Early exit awards

In referring to regulations for degree programmes, students should consult the University Regulations which were in force in the academic session in which they first registered for the degree programme in question.

