

**Nottingham Trent University**  
**School of Art & Design**  
**Course Specification**

**Basic Course Information**

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| 1. Awarding Institution:              | Nottingham Trent University |
| 2. School/Campus:                     | School of Art & Design      |
| 3. Final Award and Course Title:      | BA (Hons) Fine Art          |
| 4. Mode of study and normal duration: | FT 3 years<br>SW 4 years    |
| 5. UCAS Code:                         | W100                        |

**6. Overview and general educational aims of the course**

The Fine Art course is concerned with imaginative and inventive making and thinking. It reflects the diversity of contemporary Fine Art practice and the critical discourses surrounding it, incorporating practices from the newest technologies to the most traditional. These may challenge the boundaries of medium and technique, concept or expectation. Within this framework, you will be able to develop a specific focus to your practice and studies according to your individual needs and abilities. Whilst primarily focused upon making, the study of Fine Art also requires participation in critique: the exploration of relevant contexts and theories of art in order to develop and evidence creative analytical thinking within your practice.

The course aims to:

- Provide the necessary critical and practical skills to enable your engagement in the diverse discipline of contemporary Fine Art.
- Encourage sustainable experimentation with different media relevant to the development of your own practice.
- Develop an internationalised, ethical and cross-disciplinary outlook.
- Develop professional skills and knowledge that can be transferred and adapted to suit to a range of contemporary art contexts, both within and beyond the university.
- Engage with a range of media specific skills to suit individual aspirations and practices, which include (but are not limited to): drawing, installation, painting, curating, performance, photography, printmaking, sculpture, web-design, sound, moving image and writing.
- Enable you to formulate your own personal practice and to prepare for professional life in a broad range of cultural and creative industries.
- Work across media and develop appropriate networks and collaborative partnerships that can be sustained beyond your degree.
- Gain important experience of professional practice related to fine and contemporary art industries.

- Develop your contextual, theoretical and critical understanding of fine art contexts and histories, and to develop appropriate research skills.
- Collaborate and cooperate with others to reflect professional expectations and standards beyond university

The Fine Art course is located within an internationalised school of art and design. It offers you many opportunities for collaboration and exchange between disciplines and other institutions. The course curriculum aims to look outwards from the university to engage with the surrounding culture and society, and you will be strongly encouraged to participate in a variety of local, national and international external initiatives.

Through the professional work of the course team, along with the input of graduates and current students, the course is continually responsive to new developments within the discipline and beyond: it aims to remain mobile and flexible in order to address emerging creative, social and critical issues. The course aims to develop the practical and social sustainability of making and exhibiting practices within and beyond the college environment.

You will acquire skills by attending short practical workshops throughout the course and be able to follow up on what you have learnt in these sessions through self-directed studio practice. You will learn how to integrate theory and practice in diverse ways including through lectures, studio critique and making, tutorials and the written elements of the module portfolio.

#### **Sustainability commitment:**

Sustainability is an important aspect of contemporary fine art. The role of art in spotlighting social concerns—including environmental and political issues—has long featured in the curriculum of most fine art courses that acknowledge the rich history of our discipline. Fine Art at NTU not only teaches sustainability as a core element of the subject, through modules that engage with material, social and conceptual appropriation; but we also practice it through an established free-cycle and recycling program, which is managed by our studio technicians and academic staff, all of whom are strongly committed to our responsibility to the planet. Students who wish to investigate sustainability in a creative context more fully can opt to take the Material Encounters module at Level 5.

#### **7. Course outcomes**

Course outcomes describe what you should know and be able to do by the end of your course if you take advantage of the opportunities for learning that we provide.

- Establish a self-initiated practical and professional approach within the field of contemporary Fine Art. (B)

- Research, formulate and defend critical viewpoints of contemporary Fine Art
- Consolidate a relevant critical position through the integration of conceptual and practical skills. (B)
- Identify the relevant context for staging your work appropriately. (B)
- Demonstrate the ability to independently initiate and manage your own learning using the critical judgement of others. (B)
- Communicate clearly, appropriately and effectively through visual and verbal media. (B)
- Evidence your creative contribution as part of a team working towards a shared practical outcome
- Critically reflect upon the skills and attributes that you have developed through your academic study, work and wider university experience
- Provide a synoptic evaluation of your development in a professional fine art context

All outcomes marked (B) are from the Art and Design Subject Benchmark Statements (2017)

#### 8. **Learning and teaching methods**

The Fine Art course teaching, learning and assessment strategy is informed by the principles, policies, practices and regulations detailed in the University's Quality Handbook and uses a range of teaching and learning methods to help facilitate the course learning outcomes. These methods include independent studio practice, feedback tutorials, studio seminars, individual and group presentations, skills workshops, exhibitions and projects, briefings, lectures and presentations, study visits and international exchange, self-directed research, workshop inductions, technical surgeries, self and peer evaluation, e-learning and the NTU Online Workspace (NOW).

##### Research-led teaching

Staff are active practitioners, scholars and/or researchers and the core of the course is heavily informed by an active engagement in contemporary practice. The staff skill-set and knowledge covers a range of fine art disciplines and contemporary critical discourse.

##### Lectures

Lectures provide a contextual, theoretical and material framework for your studio practice. Artists, curators, writers / theory specialists and practitioners from the art world are invited to offer their contemporary and historical perspectives. You will also have the opportunity for 1-1 tutorials with lecturers for a more personalised dialogue. These talks aim to support the development of your own research and critical

thinking.

### The Module Portfolio

The Module Portfolio brings together and structures your study across practice, theory and professional skill. The Module Portfolio is where the students at all levels evidence an on-going engagement with the synthesis of theory, practice and criticality. It includes documentation of completed art works, evidence of on-going research and self-reflection through practice, the articulation of proposed work, attention to project-planning, and critical engagement with the work of other artists/theorists/cultural practitioners. The emphasis of this visual and textual dossier is modified for each stage of study in order to best support and enable the focus appropriate for that level. These staged writing tasks facilitate a robust and intellectually rigorous interrogation of your contextual understanding over 3/4 years of study.

### Optionality

As part of our commitment to develop personalisation in our curricula, you will be offered a choice of modules at level 5, from which you will pick one. The module options presented have been selected by the course team in order to compliment your study, and to give you the opportunity to follow and deepen your interests, and study with students from other courses.

### Collaboration

All first-year students within the School of Art and Design will work together on a joint project. As a learning experience this will support your own knowledge of working practices enable you to work collaboratively in groups in new and unique ways. In the second year, you will have further opportunities to work collaboratively with a wider range of students, partners and industry.

## **9. Assessment methods**

Assessment is a combination of practical and coursework across all years of study. Formative and summative assessment for practical modules involves the presentation of a body of practical work and a module portfolio. Both parts of the submission are graded holistically. For the contextual studies modules, submission for assessment will be based on coursework and other embedded written assignments. Assessment methods can include exhibitions, individual and group presentations, seminars and submission of written/visual material. Assessment methods used throughout the course reflect professional practice in the wider field and are designed to help you meet the course and module learning outcomes.

The course operates a 'spiral curriculum', which means that methods of assessment are echoed across all years of study with incremental elevations that are suited to

each level. There is a formal formative assessment point in each module. This offers you the chance to 'rehearse' your final submission by responding to the written and verbal feedback you receive at that point, and throughout the year up until that point. In addition, formative feedback happens throughout each year of study in the form of tutorials with tutors, seminars, discussion with technical staff, tutorials with guest lecturers and peer led activities. Critical reflection is encouraged and supported through the teaching and learning methods that lead up to final submission and assessment (end of module). As such, much of your development will happen through a reflexive process of making / doing > dialogue / discussion > reflecting > re-making / re-doing. This process of learning by doing is embedded in both practical and critical studies elements of the course.

At level 5 professional practice and collaboration play an important role in your learning through live projects such as 'Public' which happens both within the university and the wider city. Assessment methods may include off-site exhibitions and live projects. The transferable skills you develop in this year will be applied and fully practiced in your final year of study.

#### 10. **Course structure and curriculum**

The course is studied on a full-time (3 years) basis, with the option of a placement year between years two and three (4 years).

<b>Level 4 (Year 1)</b>	Core / Optional	Credits
Curiosity: Introducing Fine Art Practice	Core	100
Writing Contemporary Art: Review	Core	20

<b>Level 5 (Year 2)</b>	Core / Optional	Credits
Speculation: Staging Fine Art Practice	Core	60
Writing Contemporary Art: Analysis	Core	20
Co-Lab: Research, Exploration and Risk-taking	Core	20
Publishing: Experimental Formats*	Optional	20
Experimental Animation*	Optional	20
Critical Histories*	Optional	20
Material Encounters*	Optional	20

\* students must select 1 module (20 credits) from the suite of optional modules

<b>Level 6 (Year 3 / 4)</b>	Core /	Credits
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	Optional	
Resolution: Final Practice and Reflection	Core	100
Writing Contemporary Art: Research	Core	20

### **Year One**

The Level 4 modules listed above introduce you to contemporary fine art in terms of studio practice the wider contexts that sustain it. You will develop an awareness of specialist practical skills and generate a range of appropriate responses to practical problems in a supportive and questioning studio environment. You will learn how to evaluate information and research and use it to plan and develop investigative strategies with an open curiosity. Your practical / creative responses will be platformed across a range of contexts and staging situations to develop your critical judgement. Self-direction, curiosity and developing research skills are core themes and aims of the year.

### **Year Two**

Level 5 will give you the skills, knowledge and confidence to collaborate and stage your practice in a variety of situations, on campus and in the wider city. The combined modules (including a menu of optional modules) are designed to help you generate ideas and apply a range of skills to your practice, through a personalised curriculum. You will learn how to work with a team of peers on different projects with a focus on professional practice and identifying your own direction and approach to making. You will accumulate a range of specialised making and conceptual skills through a playful, speculative and open-ended approach to making. Professional practice and collective cooperation are key themes that run through this level.

### **Year Three**

At level 6 you will gain enough skills and knowledge to formulate your own critical position and identify the professional context in which it sits. You will be invited to apply to exhibit your work with others in the wider city and internationally, using the confidence gained through collaborative practice at level 5, to create your own networks that can be sustained beyond your degree. Through level 6 modules you will also critique the relevant cultural context(s) for your work by taking an outward approach to practice; understanding how your work is received by an audience. Your research skills will mature enabling you to communicate and share your methods and develop your portfolio, with an eye on post-graduate opportunity.

### **Placement awards**

Students undertaking the sandwich placement may achieve a Placement Diploma in Professional Practice, and students undertaking placements of shorter duration may be eligible for a Placement Certificate in Professional Practice.

**Interim awards**

Students who do not progress to the final stage may be eligible for an interim award of Certificate of Higher Education, Diploma of Higher Education or Ordinary Degree.

**11. Admission to the course****Entry requirements.**

For current information regarding all entry requirements for this course, please see the 'Applying' tab on the NTU course information web page.

**12. Support for learning**

The School is committed to assisting you to achieve the best results possible during your studies, providing a wide range of academic and pastoral help and advice. In addition to the course leader, module leaders and course administrator, a member of staff will also be assigned to you at the start of the course as your academic tutor. You will also be assigned a personal tutor for the duration of your studies.

As part of your Induction, you will be introduced to the Student Handbook which includes information on how to access Employability Services, Disability Services, Fees and Student Finance Services, the Student Union, Health and Wellbeing Services, International Students Support, Study Support and Individual Support.

- Induction - induction with group activities to foster community and build confidence
- Year tutors –liaise with the Course Leader and Module Leaders to provide academic and personal support to all students
- Module Leaders–liaise with the Course Leader and Year Tutors to provide academic support relevant to the module
- Visiting artists / theorists / arts professionals – provide relevant and current professional practice
- NTU's Online Workspace (NOW) – encourages you to take responsibility for the management of your own learning through directed module activities. All course and module information is uploaded for ease of access when working on or off site.

**13. Graduate destinations/employability**

The course is continually responsive to changes in employment opportunities. You will be prepared for work in a broad range of cultural and creative industries, through the range of opportunities within the course for you to engage with a range of relevant professional activities.

Our graduates work as artists, designers and curators, within journalism, media and education, often combining different working practices into a portfolio of employment. Graduates from the Fine Art course also have a well-deserved reputation for self-motivation, independent thought and initiative as evidenced by the relationships with galleries, institutions, companies and other collaborations with which students engage upon graduation: such skills are highly sought within diverse professions and self-employment. Graduates frequently progress to Postgraduate study in Fine Art and a variety of related disciplines within high profile institutions and courses.

#### Work Experience /Placement

As part of the course you may be able to undertake short professional experience opportunities that may occur during term time to allow you to translate theory into practice.

### **14. Course standards and quality**

There are well-established systems for managing the quality of the curriculum within the School.

Module feedback questionnaires and annual surveys are used to gather feedback from students on their learning experiences.

Termly course committee meetings, attended by student representatives and academic staff, provide opportunities to raise and discuss matters contributing to the quality, standards and continuing development of the course.

The outcomes of the above inform an annual report highlighting positive features and areas to address which are further included in a course development plan. The plan is monitored through course committees and students have the opportunity to talk through the impact of any changes made.

Informally, course and individual tutorials additionally provide a means of gathering student feedback and enable staff to address matters as soon as they arise.

Externally, the School consult with industry representatives as part of the course review and development process to ensure continued relevance of the curriculum to the creative and cultural industries. An external examiner is appointed to provide advice and monitor the academic standards of the course and student achievement in relation to those standards.

### **15. Assessment regulations**



This course is subject to the University's Common Assessment Regulations (located in Section 16A of the Quality Handbook).

16. **Additional information**

Collaborative partner(s):

Course referenced to national (QAA)

Art and Design (2017)

Benchmark Statements:

Course recognised by:

NTIC progression route(s):

Foundation Certificate in Art, Design  
and Media

Date this course specification approved:

DAG 11/11/19

Any additional information: