

CURRICULUM AND COURSE DESCRIPTIONS

London

**Master's Programs
in London**
FALL 2025

**Subject to change*

	MA IN ART BUSINESS	MA IN CONTEMPORARY ART	MA IN FINE AND DECORATIVE DESIGN	MA IN LUXURY BUSINESS
FALL 2025	Art Futures Professional Practice Art Business: Management and Finance (part 1) International Art World: Markets, Laws and Ethics (part 1)	Art Futures Professional Practice Artworks & Art Worlds (part 1) Global Practices, Theories and Debates (part 1)	Art Futures Professional Practice Fine and Decorative Art: Production and Patronage (part 1) Art and Design: Modernity and Modernisms (part 1)	Luxury in Context The Luxury Market
SPRING 2026	Art Business, Management and Finance (part 2) International Art World: Markets, Laws and Ethics (part 2) Elective Unit 1 Elective Unit 2	Artworks & Art Worlds (part 2) Global Practices, Theories and Debates (part 2) Elective Unit 1 Elective Unit 2	Fine and Decorative Art: Production and Patronage (part 2) Art and Design: Modernity and Modernisms (part 2) Elective Unit 1 Elective Unit 2	Managing a Luxury Business Elective Unit 1 Elective Unit 2
SUMMER 2026	Dissertation or Practice-Based Dissertation	Dissertation or Practice-Based Dissertation	Dissertation or Practice-Based Dissertation	Dissertation or Practice-Based Dissertation

Course Descriptions

London

ART FUTURES

Art Futures provides an introduction to the art world and explores key themes and issues facing the future development of the field. The present iteration of this unit investigates some key aspects of the art world today and challenges students to consider critically the areas of technology, the ethics of cultural property, inclusion and sustainability as they impact, inform and challenge the art worlds of today and of tomorrow. The teaching and learning prepares students for the fast pace of change which will continue to characterise the art world in the 21st Century. By drawing on insights and methodologies from foresight and futures studies and by offering relevant, up-to-date material and case studies from key professionals, students are immersed in the discussions which are shaping the sector and will be equipped to contribute their voices with confidence.

PROFESSIONAL PRACTICE

Professional Practice provides students with the necessary research skills for postgraduate study and a series of key professional skills for deployment in art world careers.

The unit will provide a grounding in specific and relevant workplace skills including writing about art, cataloguing, communication skills and using art price databases. It will also expose students to a variety of strategies and methodologies within the disciplines of both art history and of art business. Teaching of shared components will be taught across MAs, with program-specific themes developed in separate sessions.

Art Business

ART BUSINESS: MANAGEMENT AND FINANCE

This unit investigates key issues in the field of Art Business. Half of the unit focuses on management issues – specifically, strategy, marketing, and managerial accounting – in which it introduces the tools and techniques required to analyze, appreciate and formulate effective operational strategic business and management plans. The other half of the unit introduces the concept of art as an asset class and investment opportunity, using the language of financial services, the investment community and the commercial market place to enable students to compare the acquisition and collection of art objects with other investment and financial opportunities. Where relevant, analytical tools and specific research methodologies enabling the empirical investigation and critical analysis of art businesses are incorporated within the taught curriculum.

INTERNATIONAL ART WORLD: MARKETS, LAWS AND ETHICS

This unit develops in depth the students' understanding of the national and international frameworks of art business. Both established and emerging commercial art markets are analyzed. The structures and functions of private sector institutions are studied, and their influence on the art market is assessed. Additionally, the unit further investigates the ethical and legal issues pertinent to the world of art business, and their relationship to the international art market.

Contemporary Art

ARTWORKS & ART WORLDS

On this unit, students are exposed to the aesthetic and intellectual preoccupations driving artistic and studio practices since the 1960s. One major thematic is 'medium'. Conventional definitions of medium (such as sculpture and painting) came under increasing pressure in the 1960s as alternative forms of art-making became features of the global progressive art agenda. The teaching on this unit examines these and other developments by reference to a wide range of traditional and new media, including painting, sculpture, installation, performance, photography, moving image, digital and AI art. Another key thematic is institutional engagement and critique. Some of these artistic gestures constituted powerful challenges to the established institutional art world's hierarchies and complicity with wealth and power. Students attend faculty-led visits to the museum, the auction house, the art fair, high-end commercial galleries and small not-for-profit arts organisations, as part of an intensive study of the local and global eco-systems of contemporary art.

GLOBAL PRACTICES, THEORIES AND DEBATES

This unit ensures that all students can locate key contemporary art movements within their theoretical and philosophical milieux. It comprises a strand of lectures and seminars focusing on theoretical and critical debates, for example postmodernism, postcolonialism, rhizomatics, performativity and post-feminist theory, and the politics of aesthetics. Another overarching concern is for students to gain familiarity with global sites of contemporary art production, the intersections between them and the effects upon them of an uneven globalisation. A key thematic is the rise of context-based art practices since the 1960s. Much installation and performance art, for instance, explicitly engages with an immediate context, be it geographical, institutional or social, whilst multiple collaborative

and participatory practices have exemplified artists' willingness to engage in discourses and situations beyond the tradition perimeters of the gallery walls.

Fine and Decorative Art and Design

ART AND DESIGN: MODERNITY & MODERNISMS

This unit interrogates the connoisseurial approach, critically examining its historiography and contemporary application, and its interface with other theoretical and methodological approaches embedded in the study of modern art and design. The unit provides an integrated study of late nineteenth and twentieth century avant-garde art and design, examining critically the relationships, synergies and divergences between these art forms and thereby interrogating and contextualizing the meaning of "art" and "design" during this period. The teaching and learning of this unit aim to develop sophisticated visual and critical skills in the analysis, interpretation and contextualization of artworks from the modern period that are vital to operating successfully in all areas of the professional art world.

FINE AND DECORATIVE ART: PRODUCTION AND PATRONAGE

This unit provides an integrated and in-depth examination of the production and patronage of art based on case studies drawn from late Renaissance to nineteenth-century revivalism. These place-focused case studies, supported by an understanding of the wider cultural and economic imperatives of the period, build multivalent perspectives on the way art was produced in key European centers. They provide a lens through which to analyze and compare style, materials and techniques, and provide a basis for considering issues of copying, workshop production, regionalism, patronage and the phenomenon of revivals. The unit

aims to develop sophisticated object-based skills in the analysis, interpretation and contextualization of artworks, which are fundamental to working in all areas of the professional art world. Together with the "Art and Design: Modernity and Modernisms" unit, this unit interrogates this connoisseurial approach, examining and assessing its historiography and contemporary application, and its interface with other theoretical and methodological approaches embedded in the study of art history.

Luxury Business

LUXURY IN CONTEXT

This unit introduces the students to the concept of luxury and its historical development. The unit considers luxury across different cultural contexts and examines the different ways in which luxury has been experienced, interpreted, and questioned. The unit delves into the social and economic processes through which luxury became a structured industry, and considers its evolution to the present. This unit also introduces students to the necessary critical and research skills for studying at a postgraduate level. Research principles and data mining methodologies are explored in the context of essay writing and business analysis, with specific focus on luxury. This provides students a solid investigative base, on which MA Luxury Business 02 and MA Luxury Business 03 will further build on.

THE LUXURY MARKET

This unit provides the opportunity for an in-depth study of the luxury market environment, understood here as the intersection between consumption practices and corporate branding/marketing. Consumption behaviour forms the starting point. The unit begins by considering different segmentation areas (geo-cultural markets, psychographic segments, digital communities of taste), as well as the shifting values, habits and patterns of luxury consumption. The unit then moves to interrogate

the principles of branding and how they inform the presentation and communication of luxury products to the market. Different analytical models are presented and applied to specific cases. Students will evaluate the ways marketing practices are effectively implemented in an omnichannel environment, which cater for both customers and wider audiences. All these aspects are then reconsidered from the perspective of the final consumer, through a critical analysis of the customer journey and the study of principles and methods in experience design.

MANAGING A LUXURY BUSINESS

The unit promotes a critical understanding of the principles and practices implemented in the management of a luxury business. The central focus of the unit concerns the structural, strategic and managerial elements of business management. Around this focus orbit the analysis and strategic evaluation of a company's competitive ecosystem; the financial principles that guide sound business planning; and the professional attitudes and human qualities that inform and shape innovative business practices, fostering an innovative and participative corporate culture. These aspects will be considered as applied within specific sectors of the luxury industry, from hospitality to beauty, from fashion to hard luxury (jewellery and watches). Understanding of recent developments in sustainability and corporate social responsibility and their impact on the corporate structure, culture, and processes will form an integral part of the unit.

Electives

**Electives are subject to change and/or cancellation due to under enrollment and/or environmental circumstances.*

ART AND AUTHENTICATION

This unit examines the complex issue of authentication in art. It interrogates historical and cultural definitions and interpretations of authenticity, and their interface with academic, legal and institutional imperatives. The unit critically analyzes issues of authenticity relative to the art market, and the position of copies and reproductions, forgeries and fakes within different sectors of the art world. This theoretical framework provides the context in which to examine the process of authentication and the unit considers the various methods and strategies by which art objects are attributed as a key component of this.

ART AND LUXURY

The unit examines the nature and variety of the crossovers between the art world and the luxury industry. The unit starts by interrogating the ontological connections between art and luxury, questioning the notions of art and luxury as socially created constructs. As the unit progresses, students will consider the blurring boundaries between the world of fine art consumption and luxury, and analyse the various ways in which art fairs, auction houses, and galleries are traversing these lines. In parallel, they will analyse how luxury brands incorporate the semiotics and the language of art in their aesthetics, marketing, and space narratives. The unit maps the typologies and significance of the synergies between art and luxury, looking at organisations on both sides of the consumer equation, and considering the implications, both for luxury and for art, of economic and cultural value production.

ART AND PATRONAGE TODAY

The aim of the unit is to enable students to develop a comprehensive understanding of the public sector and its intertwinement with the private sector and the art market. The unit will adopt a global perspective that moves beyond Europe and North America. Key areas of

study are models of public and private support for the arts, governance and legal status of art organisations, sponsorship and funding, and collecting and programming. In addition, we will expand the exploration to the growing instrumental value of art in areas such as soft power and cultural regeneration. The elective will also reflect on current debates and developments such as contested histories, decolonisation, and restitution, the future role of museums between collection and community, environmental sustainability, public art, new models of funding such as impact investment, and income generation through digitalisation. The investigation will be undertaken at four levels of analysis: national, urban/regional, institutional, and individual.

ART WORLD LOGISTICS AND OPERATIONS

The logistics and operational systems of the global art market is a vibrant and ever-changing field of study. The exponential growth of the art world in terms of global artistic production, international consumption, and transnational trade has rendered logistics and operations a vital component of the contemporary global art market. This unit provides the opportunity to develop a rich understanding of these logistical, operational, and technological practices from a theoretical and applied perspective. Crucially, recent geo-political, socio-economic, and ecological challenges, from global conflicts to climate crises, have challenged the traditional logistical and operational practices of the art world.

The resulting state-of-the-art solutions and technological innovations in contemporary art world logistics and operations represent the central subject of this unit. Further areas of study include risk management and sustainability in relation to chain management, transportation, conservation, insurance, and regulatory systems. A broad theoretical framework will be provided by the established disciplines of logistics and chain management studies which students will apply to the specific conditions of the contemporary global a

art market.

CONTEMPORARY AFRICAN ART

This unit offers a critical perspective on the notion of an 'African' category of contemporary art, raising questions around identity, belonging and the material and imaginative possibilities of 'contemporary African art'. The lectures set out the conceptual and methodological frameworks through which to understand this nebulous categorisation, which loosely comprises work from the postcolonial era produced in any of the fifty-four individual countries on the continent or by artists across the African Diaspora and forms an ascending, vibrant art market. The course builds knowledge of theoretical frameworks such as postcolonial, transnational and sociocultural through detailed case studies of established and emerging artists. Group seminars will encourage debates around the framing of contemporary African art within global artworld structures, talks by creatives will inspire student engagement with this lively art scene, and object focussed group work will examine contemporary African artists' varied use of media and draw out the conceptual, political and social conditions that underpin artistic production. The unit traces the historical trade links which connect African traders with blue chip New York galleries, to better understand this complex, international and culturally hybrid art market, drawing attention to the cosmopolitan spaces where contemporary African art is validated.

CROSS-COLLECTING: THE MARKET FOR WESTERN ANTIQUITIES AND OLD MASTERS

This unit provides the opportunity for in-depth study of the market for antiquities and old masters within the context of cross-collecting. It will focus on classical and near eastern antiquities as well as western old masters. It will also include study of old master works on paper (paintings, sketches and prints). A central theme of the unit will be the relationship between cultural and

financial value systems and how antiquities and old masters are increasingly sold and displayed alongside modern and contemporary masters. The importance of factors such as provenance, authenticity and condition will also be studied. Students will learn how to analyse and interpret art market data, as well as how to organise it in spreadsheets and communicate it in graphic form.

CONTEMPORARY CHINESE ART

This unit focuses on contemporary Chinese art from the perspective of critical practices in the twenty-first century. Students explore the critical underpinning of contemporary art from China within theoretical and philosophical frameworks through a series of lectures, seminars, talks and visits. Works by artists such as Qiu Zhijie, Yin Xiuzhen, Song Dong, Xu Bing, Ai Weiwei, He Yunchang and Cao Fei will be analysed and discussed in relation to the relationship between process, medium and criticality, to draw out artistic, political and social conditions that underpin their production. The course will enable students to gain an in depth understanding of socially, intellectually and critically engaged art from China and Chinese societies, examining artists' use of certain types of media, such as film, performance, multi-media, technology, objects and documentary to see how their practices inform the critical engagements within the work. Philosophical texts pertinent to the production of works by contemporary artists from China will be studied relating to issues such as collectivity and participation, the body, language, dematerialisation.

CURATING CONTEMPORARY ART

This elective is intended for students who want to hone their curatorial skills and their understanding of current trends and debates in curating. It will build on relevant components of the Art Futures unit in seminars and lectures on the networks of the contemporary art world and the place of the curator within them, supplementing these with sessions on curating in the private and public sectors and on

landmark exhibitions in the history of curating. Students will carry out practical exercises in seminars and on visits. The emphasis will be on the imaginative and conceptual dimensions of curating and on recent developments in curatorial practice.

DIGITAL TECHNOLOGY: ART MARKETS AND ORGANIZATION

This unit explores the impact of digital technologies on art businesses, the art market, and the wider art world. The unit seeks to stimulate vital and critical thinking in this area and to equip students with an awareness of, and the skills to apply digital technologies to their own art business careers and entrepreneurial opportunities.

ETHICS, LAW AND THE ART TRADE

This elective addresses key ethical and legal issues in the commercial art world with a focus on the topics of cultural heritage in conflict; Nazi-looted art; and the creation of, and transactions involving, contemporary art. Students will study those areas of national and international legal systems which are relevant to the production, trade, collection and display of cultural heritage. The important practice of due diligence critical to the operation of galleries, auction houses and other art market stakeholders will be discussed. Issues of attribution and provenance research will also be studied in the light of legal/ethical case studies, alongside instances of cultural heritage and art crime. Finally, relationships between artist, dealer and collector will be analysed in terms of the ethical and legal contexts which exists in art business. In summary, this unit studies the art trade through the lens of law and ethics, focusing especially on the illegal trade in cultural property, patrimony and restitution issues, the legal and ethical positions of art institutions, both commercial and not-for-profit, and issues affecting contemporary artistic production and consumption.

EXPERIENCE MANAGEMENT: LUXURY AND CULTURAL SECTORS

The unit examines experience management through an interdisciplinary approach, by adopting business, user, technology and culture-focused perspectives. In this unit, experience is analysed in the evolving landscape of different spaces, such as luxury retail, hospitality, museums, and galleries. These spaces are witnessing significant change and reimagining themselves to create and curate memorable experiences. For example, luxury stores and museums are evolving into leisure spaces where consumers, visitors, audiences, and communities can connect, shop, enjoy events, and dine. Moreover, the boundaries between physical and digital spaces are blurring into seamless and disruptive experiences supported by technological advances.

Experiences are analysed from a design perspective: the unit maps the process of experience design by providing students with the tools to design, manage, and critically analyse experiences in luxury and cultural spaces that blend to create value. The full experience management process is presented, starting from user requirement elicitation (focus groups, interviews, URL) to the final design of experiences.

MODERNISM AND ITS MARKETS

As visitor figures to exhibitions and specialist museums attest, modernist art continues to fascinate the public. Dealing in works that are in many cases over a hundred years old, the Impressionist and Modern departments of London's major auction houses remain amongst the most significant in terms of size and sales. This unit traces the development of the market for modern art from the establishment of the dealer-critic model of the late nineteenth century through to the present day, taking full account of the ways in which some modernists often resisted the market or developed oppositional practices.

PHOTOGRAPHY: ART AND THE MARKET

How and when did photography become accepted as a significant art form? How do we speak of photography in our transmedia age? This unit examines how a new medium, and a new art market sector, emerged, and developed in the period 1839 until the present. The historical component to this unit is conceptualized in terms of network studies: i.e. the teaching and learning examines the role of key structural factors (e.g. exhibitions, collecting, scholarship, museums, dealing) in the development of art photography and its markets. Guest lectures and specially tailored visits enhance students' understanding of current debates, market issues, curatorial and arts management practices pertaining to photography's expanded field. In addition, students examine the relationship between a given market sector and shifting art world formations and learn how to analyze the market for particular photographic art objects.

SUSTAINABLE ART BUSINESS: INNOVATION, ENTREPRENEURSHIP AND MANAGEMENT

Sustainability is no longer optional. In the past few years, it has fast transitioned from a buzzword into an imperative. As awareness of climate change, resource scarcity, pollution, and social inequality rises, the key art players all over the world declare climate emergency, make pledges to revise their principles of operations and form groups and coalitions to share the knowledge and resources. Yet many art organisations still lack an in-depth understanding of what sustainable development entails or how it might be achieved. The answer to it requires not only the understanding of sustainability as a technical problem, but also a broader multidimensional perspective that incorporates a deeper appreciation for the economics, politics, and social dynamics. This unit takes a problem-based learning approach to equip the students with the theoretical knowledge and practical skills which would

allow them to play an important role in sustainable art world transformation.

WORK PLACEMENT (ACCREDITED INTERNSHIP)

This elective unit offers students experiential learning in an art-related work environment in London. Practical experiential outcomes are supported by teaching that will provide students with the reflective tools to analyze and to enact employment opportunities successfully. The unit is also intended to relate practically to earlier or concurrent learning on MA program units, and may also offer an appropriate context for dissertation research. A key aspect of the Institute's teaching and learning strategy is to foster informed and professional student participation in the art world sector, wherein students reflect on the outcomes of their program learning and on their developing skills. The principle of this approach is that employability is enhanced if work experience becomes a reflective practice by being embedded within a rigorous, assessed academic curriculum. Placement opportunities are both brokered by the Institute and sourced by students, subject to approval.

**Not all elective units are offered each semester and are contingent upon sufficient enrollment.*