

CURRICULUM AND COURSE DESCRIPTIONS

New York

	MA IN ART BUSINESS	MA IN CONTEMPORARY ART	MA IN HISTORIC ART AND DESIGN
FALL 2025	Navigating the Art World 1.5 Art Market Research & Valuation 3 Luxury Market Economics 1.5 + Collection Management and Logisitcs 1.5 Art Assets & Finance 3 Art Law: The Legal Life Cycle of Art from the Studio to the Market 3 Field Study 1.5	Navigating the Art World 1.5 The New York Art Scene 3.0 Pop to Postmodernism 3.0 Practices of Art 3.0 Contemporary Art Markets & Management - Part 1 3.0 Field Study 1.5	Navigating The Art World 1.5 Art Market Research & Valuation 3.0 Decorative Arts: Histories & Markets 3.0 Connoisseurship: Part One 3.0 International Art Markets 3.0 Field Study 1.5
SPRING 2026	Methods of Research 1.5 Auctions, Galleries, and Museums 3.0 Art Law: Ethics & Policy 3.0 Digital Strategy & Marketing in the Arts 3.0 Elective 3.0 Field Study 1.5	Methods of Research 1.5 Auctions, Galleries, and Museums 3.0 Global Art 3.0 Contemporary Art Markets & Management - Part 2 3.0 Elective 3.0 Field Study 1.5	Methods of Research 1.5 Auctions, Galleries, and Museums 3.0 Modern Design: Histories and Markets 3.0 Modernism: Histories and Markets 3.0 Elective 3.0 Field Study 1.5
FALL 2026	Capstone 6.0 Optional 3rd semester coursework in New York or London	Capstone 6.0 Optional 3rd semester coursework in New York or London	Capstone 6.0 Optional 3rd semester coursework in New York or London

New York Campus
MA in Art Business
In-Person
2026 Spring Entry

CREDITS

DURATION

SEMESTER

Navigating the Art World	1.5	7 Weeks	Spring 2026
Art Market Research and Valuation	3	15 Weeks	Spring 2026
Art Assets and Finance	3	15 Weeks	Spring 2026
Digital Strategy and Marketing, or Collection Building and Art Advisory	3	15 Weeks	Spring 2026
Art Law: Ethics and Policy	3	15 Weeks	Spring 2026
Field Study	1.5	7 Weeks	Spring 2026
Methods of Research	1.5	7 Weeks	Fall 2026
Auctions, Galleries, and Museums	3	15 Weeks	Fall 2026
Art Law: The Legal Life Cycle of Art from the Studio to the Market	3	15 Weeks	Fall 2026
Luxury Market Economics	1.5	7 Weeks	Fall 2026
Collection Management and Logistics	1.5	7 Weeks	Fall 2026
*Elective	3	15 Weeks	Fall 2026
Field Study	1.5	7 Weeks	Fall 2026
Capstone	6		Spring 2027

Total 36

Course Descriptions

THE NEW YORK ART SCENE

What are the structural frameworks that sustain and also challenge the production, display and trade of contemporary art? This course examines the institutional formation of the contemporary art world and the different forms of art-making, curation and display that are fostered by different institutions, organizations and funding structures in New York, a major location for contemporary art both historically and today. The course is an immersive case study of the place of contemporary art in public and private museums, in the commercial gallery network, and in alternative art spaces. The New York Art Scene provides an in-depth study of the city's contemporary art eco-system, which in turn is the foundation for the examination of global museums, galleries, biennials and art fairs.

POP TO POSTMODERNISM

This course immerses students in the study of key movements in contemporary art from the sixties to the 1990s. Beginning with global postwar movements such as Abstract Expressionism and Indian modernism, the course examines how the rising generation reacted against their aesthetic inheritance, reinventing long-held traditional ideas of what art should be and could do. Pop and postminimalism were key drivers for what would become a paradigm shift from Modernism to Postmodernism, and it is this shift which is the guiding rubric of this course. Key artists and movements from the period are considered together with the approaches and concepts that are used to interpret their work, such as conceptualism, post-memory and relational aesthetics. The course enhances the students' ability to interpret contemporary art confidently and fluently, a key skill for working in the art

world whether in the commercial field, museums or non-profits.

PRACTICES OF ART

The contemporary artwork is no longer medium-specific nor bound to the space of the art gallery or museum: it could be carved out of rocks in the desert, created by the play of light, or exist as virtual reality. How to account for this variety of methods and materials, and how did artistic media evolve in practices of contemporary art? This course examines the significance of process, medium and materiality in the making and interpretation of contemporary art, and provides a technical, historical, and theoretical introduction to artistic media. In addition to classical fine art media such as painting and sculpture, we will be considering the emergence of dematerialized and site-specific artworks, the rise of new media, and the critical discourses that surround the notion of post-medium condition.

CONTEMPORARY ART MARKETS & MANAGEMENT, PART 1

This course immerses students in the professional practices of the contemporary art world by examining the spaces in which it is displayed, acquired and traded along with the workings of its various markets. Students will acquire an in-depth understanding of how contemporary art formations, including blue chip galleries and not-for-profit organizations, are linked in a network that identifies and validates new talent, promotes artists critically and curatorially, secures exhibitions and commissions, and acquisitions by leading collectors and institutions. Students acquire the knowledge and skills needed for working professionally with contemporary art, including art valuation, key legal frameworks, the internal

workings of contemporary art gallery including inventory, insurance and transport logistics, and the important roles played by auctions, art advisors, agents and artists' estates.

LUXURY MARKET ECONOMICS

In light of economic downfalls the luxury market is booming. In this course students learn the luxury market model and characteristics, and examine luxury business models of management, brands, products, and related consumer behavior. Is there a limit on how far this industry will go? How does this economy differ from traditional models of business? How do leading consumer and luxury brands develop partnerships with the fine art community that advance worthy causes and create wide-reaching impact? This class will provide essential knowledge on corporate social responsibility, art patronage, principles of successful brand and art engagements, and brand management and marketing strategies.

COLLECTION MANAGEMENT & LOGISTICS

From art fairs to biennales to a global expansion of leading art galleries, museums, traveling collections, and touring exhibitions, the trade of collection management has grown exponentially. In a post-pandemic world questions of art logistics and responsibility towards environmental sustainability have taken on a new meaning. Through lectures and site visits, students explore how traditional circuits of networks have changed and adapted over time. What are the best practices and key considerations for cataloging, inventorying, conservation, packing, handling, storing, archiving and moving of tangible and intangible works of art? What is our role in object care and management, knowledge creation, and the imprint on art history?

ART ASSETS AND FINANCE

This course provides an understanding of the global art market, economics, finance, and skills necessary to run a business, and to work in a professional capacity in the art world. The course begins with an overview of microeconomics and macroeconomics and how they can influence the art market and collector behavior. Then the course progresses into Finance, where students will explore time value of money, wealth management, and learn in a hands-on fashion how to build, analyze, and present budgets. All concepts are explained in the context of the art industry. While the emphasis is on a broad understanding of financial principles and practices, it uses examples from the global art market to illustrate core concepts and to highlight specific differences between art businesses and other types of commercial enterprises. Successful completion of this course provides students with economic and financial literacy and will culminate in an exploration of emerging markets, and how socioeconomics and geopolitics intermingle with art and finance.

CAPSTONE (THESIS/MASTER'S PROJECT)

The capstone of students' work at Sotheby's Institute is a Master's Project or Thesis, and students may choose which path they take. Master's Projects can take multiple forms and concern various topics, ranging from business plans to curatorial projects to proposals for a new museum or foundation or tech app. Each must demonstrate a serious commitment to exploration, original thinking and organization of materials. The thesis is a more traditional long-form academic research paper. Regardless of which format chosen, all students are assigned an individual expert advisor to guide them. Students can work on both their Master's Project or Thesis remotely. Almost all SIA Library materials are available digitally via databases, e-books, or may be scanned by request from print sources.

FIELD STUDY

This course is an integral part of the Sotheby's Institute of Art teaching philosophy, reinforcing in-class learning with immersive art world experiences online and in-person led by faculty, curators, critics, artists, and industry experts.

The tri-prong course combines preparatory lectures in the classroom followed by a destination field trip and concludes with a critical assignment. Our in-person curated trips are immersive experiences within a global art landscape. All SIA students are required to participate in two field study trips and courses prior to graduation to officially complete the program. One field study is offered each semester, and an additional travel fee will apply along with the 1.5 credit course tuition fee. Please be aware that space on the field study trips is limited each semester. This means students must inquire about enrollment and adhere to deadlines to be considered for participation. Past field studies have included visits to art fairs, biennales cultural institutions and artist studios located in Marrakesh, Madrid, Paris, London, Venice, Beijing, Shanghai, Seoul, Bogota, Sao Paulo, Havana and Miami.

NAVIGATING THE ART WORLD

Is designed to introduce students to key concepts, texts, institutions, and professionals that constitute today's art world and to shed light on the many roles and the various art centric career opportunities. This course investigates the inextricable connections between art and business in today's economy and digital era. Featuring lectures by institute faculty and art world professionals and complemented by panel discussions, the overarching purpose of this course is to familiarize students with the various actors and businesses that constitute the ecosystem of today's art world. The world is increasingly focused on technological innovations and during the course students will discover how technology is impacting the art market and the exciting opportunities that lie ahead.

ART LAW: THE LEGAL LIFE CYCLE OF ART FROM THE STUDIO TO THE MARKET

This course introduces students to the legal and ethical issues specific to the art market, including the artist-gallery relationship, private disposition of art, warranties, licensing, auctions, expert opinions, theft and forgery. A significant portion of the course is devoted to copyright, with a focus on appropriation art, moral rights, internet issues, and rights of privacy and publicity. Class discussions, debate and mock contract negotiations aid in understanding and applying legal concepts and principles in a global art world context. Contemporary legal controversies in the United States and abroad inform the discussion. Students are assessed by examinations and class participation.

ART MARKET RESEARCH & ART VALUATION

This course is an investigation into art market research and trends, valuation and pricing processes. Students learn how to navigate both traditional art historical research sources and online art market data bases. Students are introduced to tiers of valuations, concepts of data drivers and related appraisal methodologies. Research skills are tested by examining various categories of fine art and design culled from our in-house study collection. In small group workshops, students assign basic fair market values to a range of artworks, and by the end of the term, students will have assigned monetary values to at least twelve works of art.

DECORATIVE ARTS: HISTORIES AND MARKETS

A comprehensive survey of decorative arts, patterns and design in Europe and America during the 19th century. This class outlines the major artistic movements of this period in England and Europe and their analog as manifested in the United States. Decorative vocabularies articulated through the

language of material culture are the result of socio-economic circumstances, monarchs and civil rulers, the development of industries, mechanization, fashion trends, global trade and the growing importance of World's Fairs. With the intent to familiarize students in recognizing forms, materials and techniques from Neoclassicism to early Modernism a selection of categories including but not limited to interior architecture, furniture, silver, ceramic, glass, textiles will be studied and contextualized.

CONNOISSEURSHIP: PART ONE

Connoisseurship is fundamental to object-based learning and helps guide the responsible stewardship of art objects. This course examines the historical roots of connoisseurship, its relation to contextual modes of art history, and its value in a world of increasing image saturation. Through reading, discussion, and examination of art objects, students learn to identify and evaluate materials, techniques, and stylistic properties. Classroom sessions are supplemented by site visits with professionals in related fields and assignments that demand first-hand analysis of art objects in museums and study rooms. Connoisseurship Part One focuses on painting, printmaking, and photography.

INTERNATIONAL ART MARKETS

"Globalism" has become a catch-phrase in the 21st century, dominating discussions of contemporary art and economics with little attention paid to its long history in art production and consumption. This course aims to correct that, and to dismantle long standing nationalistic biases in art history by focusing on the birth of global art - the early period of globalism that began with the chartering of the VOC (the Dutch East India Company) in 1602. This course aims to provide students with a holistic and art historical understanding of the international art market, which includes a focus on the three largest art markets today- the United States, Europe, and Asia. The course will review the

collecting history and connoisseurship of art in the West and the East. In particular, the course will discuss how the international art trade in the East and the West have influenced each other and at the same time developed their own preferences in art collection. In addition, the course will provide insights on other emerging markets, including Latin America, Africa, and the Middle East. The course will introduce key stakeholders in the global art market, including artists, galleries, auction houses, art fairs, public and private museums, art critics, and the art media.

GLOBAL ART

How can we account for the wide-ranging transformations that occurred in the art world in the wake of globalization? This course offers a critical overview of global contemporary art and explores the artistic strategies and trends, exhibition policies and cultural geographies of global art from the late 1980s to the present. Using a chronological framework, the course examines the emergence of new technologies and cultures of display, the geopolitical expansion of the contemporary art world, and the cultural and critical debates that shaped the practice of contemporary art across continents.

CONTEMPORARY ART MARKETS & MANAGEMENT, PART 2

This course immerses students in the professional practices of the contemporary art world by examining the spaces in which it is displayed, acquired and traded along with the workings of its various markets. Students will acquire an in-depth understanding of how contemporary art formations, including blue chip galleries and not-for-profit organizations, are linked in a network that identifies and validates new talent, promotes artists critically and curatorially, secures exhibitions and commissions, and acquisitions by leading collectors and institutions. Students acquire the knowledge and skills needed for working professionally with contemporary art, including art valuation, key legal

frameworks, the internal workings of contemporary art gallery including inventory, insurance and transport logistics, and the important roles played by auctions, art advisors, agents and artists' estates.

AUCTIONS, GALLERIES, AND MUSEUMS

This course will provide a comprehensive overview of the art ecosystem through an exploration of three important commercial and cultural players: museums, galleries and auction houses. By examining the roles of various art world professionals from curators to specialists, gallerists, business managers and artists, students will gain an understanding of how art is bought, sold and displayed through the lens of the business and institutional framework.

We will look at how museums intersect with the commercial world, how they approach acquisitions, how their mission guides them and how they are navigating the changing demands of audiences. The gallery component of the course will emphasize the fundamentals of the business from shifting revenue models to artist-gallery relationships and new digital strategies. Finally, a significant portion of the course will uncover the complex and dynamic world of auctions, from its infancy in earlier centuries to its rapid expansion that has shaped it into a global art market powerhouse. Faculty lectures are complemented by a range of guest speakers from key departments at Sotheby's auction house as well as galleries and museums.

MODERNISM: HISTORIES AND MARKETS

Fine art from Impressionism to the middle of the twentieth century continues to be one of the strongest sectors of the art market. It also marks the period when New York became central to the art world, from the establishment of world-class museums of modern art to the development of a network of commercial dealers trading in the most advanced European and American Art. This course examines the major movements in both Europe and the United States, such as

post-impressionism, cubism, futurism, surrealism and abstract expressionism. It situates them in the context of how they were received, promoted and eventually canonised and how that process still affects the way the art is viewed in sales rooms, galleries and museums. Students will learn not simply about prominent artists but also how cultural and financial value have been created around their works.

METHODS OF RESEARCH

This seminar will prepare students to organize their Thesis or Master's Project, which typically include business plans or curatorial projects. It will introduce them to the fundamentals of research and writing as well as successful models of past projects and theses. Other curricular components will include reviews, presentations, and workshops on possible topics. During the course, students will submit a formal project or thesis proposal to be developed and completed over the summer and in the third semester.

ART LAW: ETHICS & POLICY

This course focuses on ethics and policy issues that affect the running of an art business in the international art world. Topics include First Amendment and controversial art; trademark; restitution, including Nazi-era art; cultural property; museum acquisition and deaccessioning; taxation; logistics, luxury trade, trusts and estates; moral rights; and artist's resale rights. Comparative and international law are also examined. Contemporary legal controversies in the United States and abroad inform the discussion. Students are assessed by examinations and class participation and may have the option to write a research paper in lieu of a midterm exam.

DIGITAL STRATEGY & MARKETING IN THE ARTS

The art world has pivoted and innovated to utilize digital technologies to engage new audiences, launch new branches of business, and cultivate collectors

and art lovers for their programs. In this new art world ecosystem, digital strategy, marketing and social media, have become critical to the success of art world institutions and business growth. This course will focus on innovative digital strategies in a global art world and beyond. Throughout the semester, students will develop sales and business strategies, explore new developments in online technologies, and develop marketing and social media campaigns. Students workshop a variety of modes of communication, collector cultivation, and audience development- from sales to proposals to press releases to social media campaigns. Guest speakers will include entrepreneurs, business strategy experts, engineers, and marketing practitioners across the industry.

MODERN DESIGN: HISTORY AND MARKETS

Designed to expose students to the major developments in design, this course will trace impactful artistic contributions from the last quarter of the 19th century through to the rise of Pop Design. Students will learn about the principal trends of the period, including Aestheticism, Art Nouveau, Art Deco, Bauhaus, Streamline Design, Scandinavian, Brazilian and Mexican Modern, and other international architectural and design ideologies that inform our visual culture. Focusing on the development of modernism and studying the major figures and their contributions, this course will provide students with the tools for a critical examination of installations in museums, house museums, and sales rooms by exploring the context in which these objects existed. Discussion will be centered on the role of design as it responds to its place in a shifting cultural/technological fabric. Throughout the course, students will develop a methodology for assessing the cultural and economic value of design, which can then be applied to historical examples.

Elective Courses*

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

ART CRITICISM, THE PRESS & THE PUBLIC

Art Criticism, the Press and the Public probes the changing ways in which the press has mediated between art and its public. What should art criticism do? How can critics make themselves heard? Is there any difference between academic criticism and the journalistic profiles that appear in glossy magazines? We begin by examining the emergence of art criticism in response to the Salon exhibitions of 18th century France. We consider how critics negotiated the emergence of the avant-garde in the late 19th century, an event that put artists more at odds with their public. And we consider the role of criticism in today's very different art world, in which collectors and museums have usurped the position critics once had as arbiters of taste, and the web has shattered and dispersed the traditional reading public. Echoing this chronological range, the course will also call upon a wide spectrum of skills: students will put themselves in the position of an editor at a newspaper or magazine - dissecting the contents, the different formats of recent writing, and looking at the problem of balancing advertising and editorial; and they will gain a sensitivity to different kinds of criticism and try to hone their own voice by writing about contemporary exhibitions.

COLLECTION BUILDING & ART ADVISORY

The global nature of the 21st-century art world, aided by online access, has produced an unprecedented increase in the number of individuals, institutions and corporations collecting worldwide. Working from both the perspective of collector and art advisor, students will

learn the principles of today's art market, approaches to building a collection, and the responsibilities associated with proper collection management and stewardship. The course explores the market frameworks in which art is sold and values determined. This includes various exchange points such as auction houses, galleries, private dealers, art fairs and online platforms, and differences in the primary and secondary markets. Students also examine the role of the art advisor and how collections are created and cared for through proper management including cataloguing, insurance, framing, conservation, installation, insurance, shipping and storage. For the course project students will create and catalogue a private collection.

CURATING CONTEMPORARY ART

Curating in a networked world increasingly takes different forms: including a museological work of historical inquiry; critical intervention in current debates; market-driven shows for art fairs; and, increasingly, digitized selections of works that exploit different modes of presentation beyond the confines of the brick and mortar gallery space. This course examines all those approaches and aims to equip students with key practical skills and understanding to enter the field. It addresses issues such as budgets, transport, insurance, museum agendas and commercial pressures, it equips students to work with exhibition design software used in museums, galleries and art fairs. This course will also allow students to mount their own exhibitions virtually and to present and promote the online exhibition to the student community or to the larger online public.

EMERGING ART AND ARTISTS

This elective is designed to develop independence and innovation in the field of art world intermediation. Working with emerging artists, young or old, is one of the most rewarding roles in the art world. Seeking out fresh talent, immersing oneself in new practices and new ideas, and helping to provide a platform for the

Next Big Thing, involves developing many of the skills necessary for working in this dynamic field. This course is designed as an exercise in identifying new talent and in acquiring the skills that enhance an artist's profile such as art criticism, institutional art writing, and digital marketing. Art world professionals, such as curators and digital marketing managers, advise students on critical aspects of contemporary art world practice.

ENTREPRENEURSHIP IN THE ART WORLD

The global nature of the 21st-century art world, aided by online technology, has produced an unprecedented increase in the number of individuals and teams launching their own businesses. This course looks at models of entrepreneurial businesses in the art world and related industries--both successes and failures. The course will include lectures, workshops, and hands-on training for conceptualizing new business, assessing competition and product viability, developing business plans, preparing pitch decks for investors, funders, and sponsors, and how to launch new ventures in the international marketplace. Each student will work alone or on a team exploring an idea (for a business) in a hands-on fashion through the ideation, customer discovery, product development and business model phases culminating in a "demo day" and pitch competition in front of Art Industry experts. The course will also include guest speakers from and site visits to a variety of industries to help inform art world entrepreneurial thinking. This course is designed to foster innovative thinking within existing art world structures helpful to a range of art world professions.

GEMS AND JEWELRY

After a brief survey of jewelry history, the class will explore in detail the qualities and identifying characteristics of the metals and gems used over the millennia, and present the reasons that jewelry is an art form. Focusing on Paris and New York, later classes will explore selected specialist subjects, especially

the innovations and design contributions in the work of prominent collectible jewelers and artist jewelers globally, from the late 19th century to the present. The facts surrounding women's sudden appearance at the top of the profession, starting in the early 20th century, when they assumed prominent and influential roles in jewelry design, will be highlighted. Circumstances permitting, students will handle period jewelry, sample rough and fashioned gem material in class and with dealers. Throughout the semester, there will museum visits lectures by current market professionals.

CONNOISSEURSHIP: PART TWO

Connoisseurship is fundamental to object-based learning and helps guide the responsible stewardship of art objects. This course examines the historical roots of connoisseurship, its relation to contextual modes of art history, and its value in a world of increasing image saturation. Through reading, discussion, and examination of art objects, students learn to identify and evaluate materials, techniques, and stylistic properties. Classroom sessions are supplemented by site visits with professionals in related fields and assignments that demand first-hand analysis of art objects in museums and study rooms. Connoisseurship Part Two addresses sculpture, ceramics, glassware, and textiles.