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**Programme Specification**

**Title of Course: MA Photography**

**Date Specification Produced: June 2012**

**Date Specification Last Revised: October 2020**

This Programme Specification is designed for prospective students, current students, academic staff and employers. It provides a concise summary of the main features of the programme and the intended learning outcomes that a typical student might reasonably be expected to achieve and demonstrate if they take full advantage of the learning opportunities that are provided. More detailed information on the teaching, learning and assessment methods, learning outcomes and content of each module can be found in the Course Handbook on Canvas and in individual Module Descriptors.

**SECTION 1: GENERAL INFORMATION**

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| **Title:** | **MA Photography** |
| **Awarding Institution:** | **Kingston University** |
| **Teaching Institution:** | **Kingston University** |
| **Location:** | **Department of Film & Photography,** **School of Art and Architecture,** **Kingston School of Art, Knights Park** |
| **Programme Accredited by:** | **N/A** |

**SECTION2: THE PROGRAMME**

1. **Programme Introduction**

This course offers a unique opportunity to develop a major body of practical work that engages with the photographic and its expanded definitions within the context of a critical understanding of contemporary photography and visual culture alongside a highly successful and distinctive range of postgraduate courses delivered within the Kingston School of Art.

MA Photography is concerned with a broad range of photographic practices and technologies. The course will provide postgraduates with a thorough understanding of what has become a continuously developing field of inter-related forms of image production and visual culture, recognising that photographers increasingly explore the potential of the medium in unexpected and innovative ways, finding outlets for their work in a variety of forms and organisations.

The course will provide students with a thorough practical and critical understanding of photography through self-initiated research supported by taught modules delivered by an experienced group of research active staff. It will also help develop professional level skills for a range of professional markets.

The course guides students through the key principles, perspectives and practices that inform photography and its expanded technological boundaries supporting students develop an advanced photographic practice. The modules are designed to consolidate and further develop the practical outcomes and knowledge gained from the previous module. Students are supported through individual tutorials, seminar presentations and skills workshops. Students are expected to produce self-initiated work from the outset. Working alongside their colleagues on other courses in the Kingston School of Art, MA Photography students will be encouraged to create interdisciplinary alliances and have the opportunity to work in a variety of environments both individually and collaboratively.

The course will support a broad base of research interests ensuring students are prepared for new and unforeseen challenges throughout their working lives, providing an intellectual and technical breadth that will equip them to take advantage of future opportunities in a range of contexts. The course will enable students to capitalise upon the Department of Film & Photography’s existing and well-established networks and encourage students to develop their own networks and support structures.

The course will support and challenge students to establish a process of professional development and skills acquisition, ensuring they are prepared for new and unforeseen challenges throughout their working lives, providing an intellectual and technical breadth which will equip them to take advantage of future opportunities in a range of contexts.

Staff are research active photographers, artists, curators, writers and theorists. Some are Award Winning. Staff expertise is a vital and integral part of our approach to knowledge sharing and creative production at postgraduate level, introducing students to rigorous approaches to Photography and its expanded definitions.

Staff are engaged with *The Visible Institute (VI)* for research group in film and photography at Kingston School of Art. The institute enables discourse and a range of practices to emerge within our research culture, traversing the two disciplines and with a particular focus on themes including: archive & documentary; expanded genre definitions and the cusp of the still & moving image. The on-campus Stanley Picker Gallery is also a professional gallery space, with opportunities for collaboration and participation on projects with the Stanley Picker Fellow, internships, student-led events and exhibitions.

1. **Aims of the Programme**

The overall aim of this course is to create a supportive learning environment for full-time students committed to developing their photographic practice at postgraduate level. Building upon the ongoing enhancements to the photography resources and facilities within the Department of Film & Photography, the course aims to support committed photographic practitioners to achieve his or her potential through the study and practice of photography within the context of the Faculty resources and the interdisciplinary learning environment within the School.

The course will provide students with a thorough understanding of photography and its expanded definitions and enable them to play a positive role in the continuously emerging field of photography and visual culture alongside a thorough understanding of the critical and historical frameworks within which photography and its expanded definitions work can be understood and conceptualised.

The course aims to:

* Support committed photography practitioners in developing their careers.
* Develop a professional and authoritative knowledge of a critical, historical and contemporary context of photographic practice.
* Develop independent research, critical self-awareness and personally focused learning strategies to further the development of practical and theoretical work.
* Provide a structure that will enable students to develop collaborative and interdisciplinary working strategies to extend and encourage the exchange of ideas with International practitioners, institutions and organizations.
* Develop professional skills necessary to make work public and support employment through exhibition, documentation, virtual environments and publishing.
* Give students the knowledge to prepare a portfolio and documentation that supports employment, residencies and exhibition proposals and further research
* Develop a professional and authoritative knowledge of a critical, historical and contemporary context for their practice.
* Enable students to work within and alongside a growing practice-based research culture within the Film & Photography Department and the wider Kingston School of Art.
1. **Intended Learning Outcomes**

The programme outcomes are referenced to the UK Quality Code for Higher Education, including the Frameworks for Higher Education Qualifications of UK Degree-Awarding Bodies (2014), the QAA Master’s Degree Characteristics 2015, an awareness of the undergraduate subject benchmarks for Art & Design, and relate to the typical student. The programme provides opportunities for students to develop and demonstrate knowledge and understanding specific to the subject, key skills and graduate attributes in the following areas.

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| **Programme Learning Outcomes** |
|  | **Knowledge and Understanding****On completion of the course, students will be able to:** |  | **Intellectual skills** **On completion of the course, students will be able to:** |  | **Subject Practical skills** **On completion of the course, students will be able to:** |
| A1 | Demonstrate an in-depth understanding of the practical, theoretical, and critical issues involved in contemporary photography practice and its expanded definitions. | B1 | Research and identify the range of professional opportunities available to them, including work opportunities, exhibitions and events within a growing national and international network. | C1 | Show self-confidence and skill in presenting their work and ideas alongside those of others.  |
| A2 | Demonstrate professional photographic practice in terms of exhibition, projects, documentation, outreach and promotion.  | B2 | Demonstrate further knowledge using a wide range of photography resources, including (but not limited to) current journal articles; published books; organizations engaged in developing new roles and strategies for photography; photography archives and collections.  | C2 | Undertake library searches using both manual and electronic means.  |
| A3 | Show an in-depth understanding of the relationship between audience and artwork.  | B3 | Make their work and research public through exhibition, publication or presentation.  | C3 | Use a range of fine art resources and processes including: Photography, Film and Video, Printmaking, Animation Sound and 3D lab resources. |
| A4 | Demonstrate skills necessary for further research in theoretical and practical fields.  |  |  | C4 | Demonstrate knowledge of fundraising requirements and processes towards the realisation of projects.  |
| A5 | Show an in-depth knowledge of a wide range of professional and emergent International organisations engaged in developing new roles and strategies for contemporary photography and its expanded definitions. |  |  | C5 | Understand the importance of, and apply, health and safety through the risk assessment of their own projects and the work of their peers.  |

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| A6 | Demonstrate an understanding of research culture within academic institutions.  |  |  | C6 | Utilise the full functionality of a virtual learning environment and blended learning resources ( e.g. Canvas ) and exploit other learning technologies (e.g portable digital devices). |
| A7 | Identify, promote and negotiate collaborations, partnerships and support from outside bodies and institutions.  |  |  |  |  |

In addition to the programme learning outcomes identified overleaf, the programme of study defined in this programme specification will allow

students to develop a range of Key Skills as follows:

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| **Key Skills** |
| **Self Awareness Skills** | **Communication Skills** | **Interpersonal Skills** | **Research and information Literacy Skills** | **Numeracy Skills** | **Management & Leadership Skills** | **Creativity and Problem Solving Skills** |
| Take responsibility for own learning and plan for and record own personal development | Express ideas clearly and unambiguously in writing and the spoken work | Work well with others in a group or team | Search for and select relevant sources of information | Collect data from primary and secondary sources and use appropriate methods to manipulate and analyse this data | Determine the scope of a task (or project) | Apply scientific and other knowledge to analyse and evaluate information and data and to find solutions to problems |
| Recognise own academic strengths and weaknesses, reflect on performance and progress and respond to feedback | Present, challenge and defend ideas and results effectively orally and in writing | Work flexibly and respond to change | Critically evaluate information and use it appropriately | Present and record data in appropriate formats | Identify resources needed to undertake the task (or project) and to schedule and manage the resources | Work with complex ideas and justify judgements made through effective use of evidence |
| Organise self effectively, agreeing and setting realistic targets, accessing support where appropriate and managing time to achieve targets | Actively listen and respond appropriately to ideas of others | Discuss and debate with others and make concession to reach agreement | Apply the ethical and legal requirements in both the access and use of information | Interpret and evaluate data to inform and justify arguments | Evidence ability to successfully complete and evaluate a task (or project), revising the plan where necessary |  |
| Work effectively with limited supervision in unfamiliar contexts |  | Give, accept and respond to constructive feedback | Accurately cite and reference information sources | Be aware of issues of selection, accuracy and uncertainty in the collection and analysis of data | Motivate and direct others to enable an effective contribution from all participants |  |
|  |  | Show sensitivity and respect for diverse values and beliefs | Use software and IT technology as appropriate |  |  |  |

1. **Entry Requirements**

The minimum entry qualifications for the programme are:

BA (Hons) degree (or its equivalent) in a related or appropriate subject. However, each application is considered on its own merits and therefore previous experience and qualifications may be taken into account this requirement. Each student will be interviewed with a portfolio of work.

A minimum IELTS score of 6.5, TOEFL 88 or equivalent is required for those for whom English is not their first language.

1. **Programme Structure**

This programme is offered as a full field in full-time mode, and leads to the award of MA Photography. Entry is at level 7 with Degree or equivalent qualifications (See section D). Intake is normally in September.

**E1. Professional and Statutory Regulatory Bodies**

N/A.

**E2. Work-based learning**

Work placements are actively encouraged, although it is the responsibility of individual students to source and secure such placements. This allows students to reflect upon their own personal experience of working in an applied setting, to focus on aspects of this experience that they can clearly relate to theoretical concepts and to evaluate the relationship between theory and practice.

**E3. Outline Programme Structure**

The programme runs over 17 months from September year 1 to February year 2. Teaching will take place in TBs 1 & 2 in year 1, with a period of independent study in TB3 year 1, returning for final teaching block in TB1 year 2.

The programme is made of up 3 modules, one 30 credit, one 60 credit and one 90 credit. A student must complete 180 credits over the duration of the course. The MA Photography is part of the University’s Postgraduate Regulation (PR), and all students will be provided with the regulations and the Course Handbook. Full details of each module will be provided in module descriptors and student module guides.

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| **Level 7 Full-time** |
| **Compulsory modules** | **Module code** | **Credit****value** | **Level** | **Teaching Block** |
| Critical Theory in Photography and Visual Culture | FP7001 | 30 | 7 | 1 & 2 |
| Photographic Practices | FP7002 | 60 | 7 | 1 & 2 |
| Advanced Photographic Practices | FP7003 | 90 | 7 | 2 (Yr1) through to 1 (Yr 2) |

1. **Principles of Teaching Learning and Assessment**

MA Photography employs a range of approaches to teaching and learning. A combination of seminars, tutorials, virtual or physical study visits, student presentations, workshops and presentation assessments engage the student in a range of teaching and learning strategies. These diverse strategies recognise and take account of the different ways students learn, and, as they progress through the programme, give students the opportunity to take more responsibility for their own learning.

The course builds on the distinctive ethos of student self-management and peer review, creating a learning atmosphere changing from year to year, and where dialogue is seen as the core creative and intellectual engine for the production of work. This makes for a distinctively shared learning experience, which encourages collaborative and group activity alongside the more traditional individualistic research, mirroring much leading edge contemporary practice in photography and its expanded definitions.

MA Photography aims to recruit students from a wide range of backgrounds who are encouraged to bring their own specific experiences to bear in discussion presentations and the development of individual work. The programme promotes equal opportunities and good relations within its structure of group activities and peer learning.

The curriculum is organised through a progression of specific modules, each focusing on and accumulating aspects of the learning outcomes: developing and discussing work within the context of photography and its expanded definitions, placing work in the public domain through exhibitions, publications and digital technology, awareness of the mechanisms of the contemporary field of photography, research skills. Each module is designed to interact with the next in a logical progression – students are encouraged to thread work across from one module moving into the next. All modules provide formative feedback and opportunities for practice-based output in the form of presentation, publication, and formal discussion designed to help students reach their full potential in summative assessment

**Photography Practices** will introduce and develop students’ individual photographic practice through self-initiated research supported by tutorials, group seminars, critiques and informal presentations that deepen students understanding of how their work can be situated within contemporary and historical frameworks, and expanded definitions of photography. **Critical Theory in Photography and Visual Culture** enables students to develop an independent and critical approach to the expanded boundaries and definitions of photography and their own practice taking into account different critical theories and contexts. Culminating in a 5,000 word illustrated essay students consider the convergence of theory and practice, covering different theoretical approaches to photography and its inter-related media as well as engaging with a diverse range of approaches to producing, thinking and viewing photography and its relation to the visual arts. **Advanced** **Photography Practices** enables students to advance their practice by building on their research enquiries that were developed in the previous modules enabling students to build a strong and sustainable artistic practice and body of work that is coherent, innovative, conceptually resolved and technically well executed for presentation and publication. Along side all the modules runs research methodologies and professional practice seminars.

The overall assessment requirements are consistent with the specification on assessment loading. There are clear connections and accumulative aspects to each module culminating in the ‘capstone’ final Advanced Photography module (FP7003), which enables students to synthesise and apply the knowledge and skills that they have acquired throughout the course, and constitutes the presentation of a body of practical work. Students are introduced to Advanced Photography in TB2. There are no scheduled learning hours during TB3, however students are expected to be engaged in independent study and will have access to the Faculty facilities (e.g. library and workshops). Teaching of Advanced Photography resumes in TB1 of Year 2 with a final teaching block and presentation of a final body of art-work, along with a record of research methodology that underpins the work.

Through the various modules, the programme offers opportunities to develop and demonstrate independent learning and thought in the form of research presentations, reflective writing and publication (digital and print). These opportunities are enabled through a combination of tutorials, seminars, visiting lectures and peer-to-peer learning.

Through each module, the students are expected to present research and connect their own work to current contemporary strategies in the photography field. The curriculum is delivered by academics who are practitioners and their professional experience and position feeds directly into the student experience developed with the module structure i.e. presentation of art works, print and digital publication, presentation of individual student work.

The studentscan take advantage of internships offered though the courses networks with professional bodies and within the University at the Stanley Picker Gallery. Through the each specific modules they gain skills; digital publication, presentation and organisation of ideas, putting their work in the public realm that are also directly related to the professional photography field.

Through their own personal research, the students are encouraged during Photographic Practices FP7002 and throughout the continuing modules to explore current issues of particular interest to them and connect these to the expanding field of contemporary photography practices within the public and private sector.

Throughout the course there is a focus on student engagement. Through an emphasis on the importance of peer learning and review at Master’s level, each student is encouraged to engage with their peer group. Through the course they learn the importance of peer support, critique and identifying common interests and approaches. This is achieved through a combination of teaching strategies and independent study culminating in the final Advanced Photography module where they deliver with a large degree of independence a presentation of final body of work and publication.

The programme uses the virtual learning environment (VLE) Canvas, which acts as the main online location and portal for course and School information and news. Course materials such as handbooks, module guides, timetables and information on talks programmes, lectures and events are all accessible through the VLE.

The Department of Film and Photography has a research group ‘*The Visible Institute (VI)* for research in film and photography’. The institute’s stand-alone website gives detailed information on staff research, PhD student research, thematics, staff profiles, features and partnerships. The website can be found here: [www.thevisibleinstitute.org](http://www.thevisibleinstitute.org).

All courses based in the Kingston School of Art offer students free access to the online video tutorial platform LinkedIn Learning. This provides a wide range of subjects to choose from, many with downloadable exercise files, including software tutorials covering photography, graphics, web design, audio and music, CAD and Microsoft Office software, as well as courses on Business and Management skills. Some of these are embedded in the curriculum and offer additional self-paced learning, others may be taken at will by students wishing to broaden their employability skills in other areas.

The School actively encourages and supports individuals from diverse backgrounds to apply and gain places through our interview processes. Regular open days and events which showcase student work are designed to remove barriers and provide easy access for prospective applicants to staff and students and give them confidence to apply and provide a greater understanding of the aims and learning outcomes of the course.

1. **Support for Students and their Learning**

*Teaching Structure*

The teaching structure of the School is built around the principle of individual or teams of tutors who engage directly with a student or small group of students, meeting them twice a week and offering both group and individual 1:1 tutorial opportunities, as appropriate.

The course has a number of events and projects, built into the academic year, which encourage engagement between students and staff across levels:

* The Department runs a fortnightly guest lecturer programme, which is shared with BA Photography and brings together all students working with the photographic to engage with contemporary practitioners in the form of a lecture and seminar. In parallel the course runs a number of Professional Practice seminars and workshop shared with Level 6 BA Photography students. The School of Art & Architecture also offers an opportunity for students and staff to engage in talks and dialogue through The Stanley Picker Public Lecture series where high profile practitoners and theorists present their work.
* At the end of the course students present their work in the form of a presentation of a final body of work and publication.

The Course Director has a student-facing role and is a senior staff member within the Department of Film & Photography and within the School Management Structure. The role provides a visible point of contact for students from their initial application, through the years of their postgraduate degree, to their ongoing contact with the School as Alumni. The Course Director is responsible for the coordinated delivery and management of all aspects of student experience beyond the academic course. These include:

* Up to date knowledge of relevant University systems and procedures
* Mentoring Scheme
* Recognition of Prior Certificated Learning (RPCL) / Recognition of Prior Experiential Learning (RPEL) processes
* Student Staff Consultative Committee
* Information on Scholarships and Bursaries
* Alumni and Graduate Experience
* Coordinating Personal Tutor Scheme

**The Personal Tutor Scheme**

Each student is allocated a personal tutor who will maintain regular contact and encourage students to keep in touch and alert students to future contacts from the University. Tutors will act as the default referee for their tutees (although students may ask other members of staff).

Students are further supported by a variety of means:

* A Module Leader for each module;
* A Student Achievement Officer who provides pastoral support;
* A student administration team including a dedicated Course Administrator
* An induction programme and study skills sessions at the start of every academic year;
* An Academic Success Centre that provides academic skills support for UG and PG students;
* The VLE – a versatile online interactive intranet and learning environment accessible both on and off-site;
* Staff Student Consultative Committees and regular open meetings at School and Faculty levels;
* A University Careers and Employability Services with responsibility for employability and employer liaison;
* Comprehensive University support systems including the provision of advice on finance, regulations, legal matters, accommodation, international student support, disability and equality support;
* English Language support for international students;
* The Union of Kingston Students
* Course Handbook;
* An academic team who seek to maintain as far as practicable an open door policy in the spirit of supporting students;
* The Visible Institute (IV) for Research in Film and Photography
1. **Ensuring and Enhancing the Quality of the Course**

The University has several methods for evaluating and improving the quality and standards of its provision. These include:

* External Examiners
* Boards of Study with student representation
* Annual Monitoring and Enhancement
* Periodic review undertaken at the subject level
* Student evaluation including MEQs (Module Evaluation Questionnaires) and a Postgraduate Survey
* Moderation policies
* Feedback from employers

A clear strand of research and practice-led teaching across the department is embedded within all programmes through The Visible Institute for research in film and photography, one of the University’s areas of research excellence. The VI is a critical mass of senior research staff, established and emerging researchers from the department and a substantial body of research students engaged in cross-disciplinary, individual and collaborative research within contemporary film and photography. This represents a guarantee of subject authority to support and give credibility to the backbone of formative, summative and diagnostic assessment, and the analytical and speculative learning and teaching strategies within the course.

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1. **Employability Statement**

The School has an established reputation within the international community and graduates go on to careers in many areas of the industry from Exhibitions and Curation through film and photography to publishing and assisting established practitioners to teaching and further study at Postgraduate Research level.

Photography postgraduates will be well placed to be effective in all sectors of a knowledge based society through their capacity for creativity and through the courses emphasis on learning to be independent, creative thinkers. Through the course experience they will be well equipped to become professional artists contributing to the wider Photography sector.

Graduates will be well placed to get a job in most fields that involve some form of creativity. They may work part time as a practitioner whilst simultaneously fulfilling management and academic roles. Commonly graduates will become self-employed and/or be in occupations involving project work and short-term contracts. They are typically found in fine art, media, arts administration or arts education.

Postgraduate Photography students have gone on to further study and taken up teaching opportunities elsewhere. They have established themselves professionally with the wider field of photography transferrring the skills gained through the programme.

1. **Approved Variants from the Postgradute Regulations**

None.

1. **Other sources of information that you may wish to consult**

QAA Master’s Degree Characteristics 2015

[http://www.qaa.ac.uk/docs/qaa/quality-code/master's-degree-characteristics-statement.pdf?sfvrsn=6ca2f981\_10](http://www.qaa.ac.uk/docs/qaa/quality-code/master%27s-degree-characteristics-statement.pdf?sfvrsn=6ca2f981_10)

Course Page

<http://www.kingston.ac.uk/postgraduate-course/photography-ma/>

**Development of Programme Learning Outcomes in Modules**

This map identifies where the programme learning outcomes are summatively assessed across the modules for this programme. It provides an aid to academic staff in understanding how individual modules contribute to the programme aims, a means to help students monitor their own learning, personal and professional development as the programme progresses and a checklist for quality assurance purposes.

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| --- | --- |
|  | **Level 7** |
|  | **Module Code** | FP7001 | FP7002 | FP7003 |
| **Programme Learning Outcomes** | **Knowledge & Understanding** | A1 | S | S | S |
| A2 |  | S | S |
| A3 |  |  | S |
| A4 | S |  |  |
| A5 |  |  | S |
| A6 | S | S |  |
| A7 |  |  | S |
| **Intellectual Skills** | B1 | S | S |  |
| B2 | S |  |  |
| B3 |  |  | S |
| **Practical Skills** | C1 | S |  |  |
| C2 | S |  |  |
| C3 |  | S | S |
| C4 |  | S | S |
| C5 |  | S | S |
| C6 | S |  |  |

 **Students will be provided with formative assessment opportunities throughout the course to practise and develop their proficiency in the range of assessment methods utilised.**

**MA Photography – Course Diagram**

**FULL TIME**:

Teaching Block 1 Yr1: Sept – Dec

Teaching Block 2 Yr1: Jan – April

Teaching Block 3 Yr1: May – August

Teaching Block 1 Yr2: Sep – Feb

**FULL TIME**

**YEAR 1**

**TB1** -Sept/Dec **TB2** -Jan/April **TB3** May/August

FP7001 – Critical Theory in Photography and Visual Culture

30 credits

FP7002 – Photography Practices

60 credits

FP7003 – Advanced Photography Practices

*(continues in TB1 in Yr 2)*

90 credits

**YEAR 2**

**TB1** -Sept/Feb

FP7003 – Advanced Photography Practices

90 credits

**Technical Annex**

|  |  |
| --- | --- |
| **Final Award(s):** | MA Photography |
| **Intermediate Award(s):** | PG Cert. Photography PG Dip. Photography |
| **Minimum period of registration:** | Full-time – 17 months |
|  |  |
| **FHEQ Level for the Final Award:** | Masters |
| **QAA Subject Benchmark:** | N/A |
| **Modes of Delivery:** | Full-time  |
| **Language of Delivery:** | English |
| **Faculty:** | Kingston School of Art |
| **School:** | Art and Architecture |
| **Department:** | Film & Photography |
| **Course/Route Code:** | Full-time: PFPHO1PHO02 |