

# **Academic Regulations for the Degree of Master of Fine Arts (MFA) at the Royal Danish Academy of Fine Arts' Schools of Visual Arts**

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### **1. Introduction**

The academic regulations were approved by the Board of the Royal Danish Academy of Fine Arts' Schools of Visual Arts on 16 December 2010 and became effective as of 1 October 2011 for all students undertaking an MFA course program at the Royal Danish Academy of Fine Arts' Schools of Visual Arts.

#### **1.1 Course objectives**

The Master's degree program consists of a course in the theory and practice of the visual arts based upon artistic practice, artistic development and research. The course is a self-contained program leading to an MFA degree. The primary objective of the Master's degree program is to train its graduates for employment within the field of the visual arts. Furthermore, the degree qualifies its holder for entry to PhD programs within the discipline.

## **2. COURSE PRINCIPLES AND ACADEMIC OBJECTIVES**

### **2.1 Course principles**

Central to the Master's course program is the in-depth and specialist development of the student's artistic practice, method and professionalism, including the development of general analytical and artistic skills. Of paramount importance to the course is the development of an independent studio practice and the ability to sustain an artistic practice through time. The course program is designed to optimise the conditions for students to give expression to their own ideas and practice in a studio environment supporting experimentation, research and an open working process.

The Master's program promotes a form of learning rooted in the forms of practice that the student him/herself wishes to develop and to secure the highest level of qualification. At the same time, it is based upon a conviction that experimental artistic practice is grounded in the most solid foundations of knowledge and experience through an educational context in which individual studio practice is combined with a variety of common platforms for discussion, criticism and the sharing of experience between students and lecturers. The development of artistic discipline cannot be accommodated within a predetermined curriculum or defined according to definite practical and technical skills. Throughout the course, therefore, the student is challenged and encouraged to take personal responsibility, not only for their own studio practice, but also, with guidance, for planning the course and identifying his/her own professional development.

### **2.2 Academic objectives**

The academic objectives of the Master's course program are based upon the Ministry of Culture's qualification framework of January 2010.

Upon completion of the Master's degree program, the student will:

- have acquired considerable experience of artistic practice and extensive knowledge within the field of art, based upon international artistic practice and leading research within the discipline;
- have the ability to develop, communicate and reflect upon his/her own artistic practice and to place it within historical and theoretical contexts;
- be able to identify artistic challenges and theoretical problems;
- be capable of mastering relevant methods, tools and forms of practice appropriate to the field of visual art, as well as mastering analytical and general skills required for employment within the field;

- be able to undertake professional evaluations of artistic challenges as well as practical and theoretical problems and, on the basis of these, to reach independent decisions to a high technical standard;
- have the capacity to undertake the promotion and dissemination of art at a high level for both artists and non-artists, including the capacity to discuss professional and relevant theoretical problems with artists and non-artists alike;
- be able to navigate professionally through complex and unpredictable processes;
- be capable of independently instigating and completing collaborative processes, both within the field of art and on an interdisciplinary basis, as well as accepting professional responsibility;
- be able to accept personal responsibility for his/her own professional development and specialisation.

### **3. ADMISSION AND ENTRANCE REQUIREMENTS**

Admission to the Master's program takes place once a year.

A maximum of 5 places will be made available to external applicants each year.

#### **3.1 Entrance requirements**

Applicants holding a Bachelor's Degree from the Royal Danish Academy of Fine Arts' Schools of Visual Arts, and whose graduation took place within two years of their application, are regarded as internal applicants and as such are accepted directly onto the Master's program.

Applicants for the Master's program holding a BFA degree or equivalent from another visual art course and bachelors from the Royal Danish Academy of Fine Arts' Schools of Visual Arts whose degree is more than two years old will be assessed on the basis of a specific evaluation of the applicant's own work. The assessment places considerable weight upon the originality of the work submitted, as well as the applicant's potential for artistic and professional development. Applicants must be able to read, speak and understand English or Danish in order to follow the teaching program at Master's level. If the applicant's first language is Danish, he/she must also have a basic knowledge of English.

A detailed description of the entrance requirements and admission procedure is published every year on the website of the Royal Danish Academy of Fine Arts' Schools of Visual Arts.

#### **4.1 The Schools of Visual Arts: general organisation**

The Royal Danish Academy of Fine Arts' Schools of Visual Arts constitute an institute of Higher Education under the auspices of the Ministry of Culture.

The Schools of Visual Arts consist of:

- Departments
- Basic Studies
- Professor schools
- Department of Theory and Communication
- Laboratories

As well as premises for the departments, laboratories, workshops, lecture theatres, studios, etc, The Schools of Visual Arts also have exhibition rooms at their disposal, which students are encouraged to use for the exhibition of their own work, to curate their own exhibitions and for other public arrangements.

All active students (including guest students) are allocated studio space at the start of the academic year.

##### **4.1.1 Departments and laboratories**

The profile of each department is determined by the Head of Department, who has artistic, academic and professional responsibility for his/her department. At the Professor Schools, the Professor is the Head of Department. Teaching at the Professor Schools is largely planned in collaboration with the students, and department meetings are central to this planning process. At the start of every semester a study plan is prepared, outlining the Department's main collective academic activities in that semester.

The laboratories represent a method-based approach to the subject and offer workshop facilities with associated academic expertise and individual guidance within a range of subject areas. At the laboratories, work is supported by giving form to artistic intentions, and by bringing about an understanding of the significance of materials in the practice of visual art. Teaching takes as its starting-point the student's own artistic process and results in technical solutions, investigations, work production and professional development/creation. The laboratories are open to all students enrolled at The Schools of Visual Arts.

Collaboration takes place on an ongoing basis between the departments and laboratories, as well as with other art academies, cultural institutions and other organisations both at home and abroad.

#### **4.2 Teaching methods**

Teaching at The Schools of Visual Arts consists of a number of different elements, and provision can often be made for individual tuition as the need arises. Of primary importance is individual or collective supervision which is intended to support, challenge and guide the student through the artistic process. Additionally, tuition consists of a variety of forms, including lectures, workshops, field trips and various kinds of workshop courses. Guest lecturers are regularly invited by individual departments to provide lectures, and to conduct seminars, workshops, group reviews and studio interviews with the students.

At the end of each academic year, the Head of Department, often in collaboration with colleagues or external experts, carries out an in-depth assessment of the students' work and their academic activity. This typically takes place in connection with *Rundgang*.

*Rundgang* is the annual exhibition; participation is obligatory for all students.

#### **4.3 Participation in classes, compulsory attendance etc.**

Because tuition at The Schools of Visual Arts is predominantly based upon the students' own artistic practice, it is expected that the students put considerable effort into precisely this practice. At the start of the academic year, all of the Schools' active students, including guest students, are assigned studio space, which they are expected to make active use of throughout the course of their studies.

In addition, it is compulsory to attend all department meetings. Department heads also regularly review the activities subject to compulsory attendance.

An absence rate of over 20% can lead to the Head of Department declaring the student to be 'inactive' for the semester in question. The Head of Department may provide a dispensation in the event of absence on the grounds of course-related activities or, in special cases, because of illness. In the event of a student being declared 'inactive', he/she cannot obtain the ECTS for that semester (see Section 5.1).

#### **4.4 Leave of Absence**

Leave of Absence on grounds other than childbirth, adoption, documented illness, contractual obligations to the armed forces (see Executive Order no. 691, § 25) can be granted only with the individual approval of the Board of Studies. Any application for Leave of Absence on other grounds must be accompanied by a statement from the Head of Department.

Leave of Absence on other grounds can only be granted in a maximum of 2 of the course program's 6 semesters. In accordance with the regulations, it is not possible to apply for Leave of Absence during the first year of the course.

Any student wishing to apply for leave of absence should, if possible, do so in writing to the Board of Studies so that the Board can consider the application before the start of the requested period of leave. Relevant documentation and/or a statement from the student's Head of Department must accompany the application in order for it to be considered.

#### **4.5 Credits for exchange placements and internships**

Upon written application to the Board of Studies, it is possible to receive credits in respect of one or two full semesters' worth of study, equivalent to 30 or 60 ECTS. Applications for credits must be accompanied by a

written statement from the Head of Department to the Board of Studies. Credits are awarded when a student undertakes an exchange placement at a credit-awarding Danish or foreign educational institution.

Credits for a foreign exchange placement during the 2<sup>nd</sup>, 3<sup>rd</sup>, 4<sup>th</sup> and 5<sup>th</sup> semester of an MFA program can be awarded administratively, providing the placement takes place at a credit-awarding foreign institution.

Parts of the course program may also be replaced by the completion of a practical internship. However, in accordance with regulations, an internship can replace a maximum of 60 ECTS during the combined BFA and MFA course programs.

No credits can be awarded during the 6th and final semester.

## **5. MFA PROGRAM: STRUCTURE**

### **5.1 ECTS**

The Master's Degree course is a complete program of study consisting of 3 years of full-time study, equivalent to 180 ECTS.

An academic year consists of two semesters – the Autumn semester, from 20 September to 31 January, and the Spring semester from 1 February to 30 June. Students are expected to make use of studios and laboratories outside term times.

The satisfactory completion of a semester results in the award of 30 ECTS. The satisfactory completion of a semester requires that the active participation of the student is formally confirmed (see Section 4.3) and that any assessments for that semester are completed. It is the responsibility of the Head of Department to approve the student's performance for each semester.

In the event that a student fails to receive approval for a semester, he/she is not awarded the 30 ECTS. In such a circumstance, the Head of Department will set the student a compulsory assignment to be submitted, assessed and approved prior to the end of the following semester. The Head of Department will determine the nature and scope of the assignment and the Head of Department, or a suitably qualified nominated professor, will set and assess the assignment with the assistance of an examiner. If the assessment consists of course work, an examiner will not be involved.

If a student does not receive approval for a semester, he/she will have the possibility of handing in a revised submission or of submitting a new assignment for assessment. The student will not be permitted to continue the course in the event that the assignment is not approved following the second assessment. Upon successful completion of the assignment, the student will be awarded 30 ECTS.

The length of the 3-year course program cannot be extended.

### **5.2 Structure**

The Master's teaching program is based in one of the Professor Schools, supplemented by tuition and supervision at the laboratories and academic activities in the form of interdisciplinary modules, projects and workshops.

During the first two years of the Master's program the student, together with his/her professor draws up a general outline of an individual study plan. Participation in courses at other educational institutions and foreign exchange programs may form part of this study plan.

Upon completion of the first year of the master's program, the student and his/her professor discuss the relationship between the student's knowledge- and proficiency-oriented activities and his/her artistic practice.

Plans are made to determine which theoretical and technical disciplines could be of benefit to the student's work in order to aid the development of his/her own artistic practice, and to put this into perspective.

The evaluation at the end of the second year of the course includes a discussion with the professor of the student's final year graduation program and graduation project.

The completion of the graduation project is the most important element of the third and final year of the course.

It is possible to participate in an exchange program with a credit-awarding Danish or foreign educational institution and/or a practical internship during the Master's program's 4 middle semesters (i.e. the 2nd, 3rd, 4th and 5th semesters),

## **6. MFA ASSESSMENTS**

### **6.1 Preparation of graduation project**

The Master's course concludes with participation in a graduation exhibition, arranged by the Academy of Fine Arts' Schools of Visual Arts. At the graduation exhibition, the student's graduation project is presented to the public.

An outline or plan of the graduation project is presented by the student during a preparatory meeting with a professor. During this preparatory meeting, the main outlines of the student's oral defence are also discussed. Following the discussion, the student provides a written summary of the meeting. The preparatory meeting and the professor's approval of the project's outline takes place during the 5th semester of the course. On this basis, the professor puts the student forward for the graduation assessment.

### **6.2 Graduation assessment**

Two examiners, at least one of whom must be an external examiner, are present at the graduation assessment. This consists of two parts:

- Presentation of course activities: the student provides a description of his/her activities and the most important elements of the course. This description is followed by questions and a discussion with the professor and examiners.
- Oral defence and discussion of graduation project: As part of the oral defence, the student describes the project's artistic concerns and the context in which it is located. The student must explain the tradition to which his/her work relates itself, provide an account of the working process and clarify the expressive possibilities of the chosen medium. The presentation may be supported through the use of visual aids. The student may also write a text to be used alongside the visual work.

Following the discussion and examination, the professor and examiners agree upon a general assessment providing an illustrative impression of the relationship between the oral presentation and the graduation project, as well as the standard of the student's artistic work. This assessment is then put into writing and accompanies the Degree certificate.

The student's presentation, graduation project and the subsequent meeting with the professor and examiners combine to document the student's ability to:

- maintain and develop an independent practice through one or more projects;
- discuss and analyse an artistic process and a completed artistic work as well as to present this visually and orally;
- make professional use of artistic methods, tools and presentational skills;
- place his/her own artistic work within relevant historical, theoretical and cultural contexts;

The MFA assessment is concluded on a pass/fail basis. In the event that a fail is received, the student may, with the agreement of the professor, submit a new graduation project by 30 September of the same year at the latest.

Having achieved a pass in the final assessment, the student will be awarded the title of Billedkunstner MFA (Master of Fine Arts in Visual Arts).