

Department of History of Art: MA Options for MA Graduates

For the first time in 2019-20, we are opening up places on our MA options to our MA graduates, in response for demand for further personal enrichment and professional development. We hope you'll find the following offer attractive and stimulating, and we would love to have your feedback.

What to expect

- You will be taking these modules alongside seminar-size groups of current MA students. The overall number will not normally exceed 18. You'll be given access to all preparatory readings and other resources, and will be part of the seminar along with the rest of the group. As you'll remember from your own studies, doing the reading in advance is crucial to your own and everyone else's experience of the seminar, so we ask all participants to commit to coming to class prepared.
- You will be included on any class visits to sites and collections.
- You will have full access to the Birkbeck library and its online resources, as well as to the module's Moodle page, for the duration of the module.
- You won't be asked to do the assessment (final essay) for the module.

How to sign up

- The list of options available in the Autumn term 2019 is available below, with dates and times. You can opt to take one or more, as long as the times don't clash.
- Places on each module are limited, so please rank your choices in order of preference.
- Places will be allocated on a first-come, first-served basis, so send your ranked choices (including an indication of how many you would like to take) to art-history@bbk.ac.uk as soon as possible and no later than **25 September**.

Cost: £650 per option module.

AUTUMN TERM

Art and Devotion in Fifteenth Century Italy

Dr. Robert Maniura

Dates: Tuesdays 1 October – 10 December 2019, 18.00-19.30 (no class on 5 November)

Number of Available Spaces: 2

Fee: £650

Entry Requirements: Department of History of Art Masters Programmes Graduates

Contact Details for Enquirers: art-history@bbk.ac.uk

This module aims to generate a fresh approach to a much-studied period. The fifteenth century in Italy has long been regarded as a turning point in the history of art, and the self-conscious emulation of the art and learning of the classical world has been taken as the defining characteristic of the period. This 'Renaissance' is often paired with the Reformation of the sixteenth century and presented as a comprehensive challenge to received ideas. Yet the culture of the fifteenth century remained rooted in traditional religious observance and one of its most important legacies was its contribution to the transformation of the Christian visual tradition. This module uses the institutions and practices of traditional religion to structure an approach to the art of the period. It covers some of the most celebrated works in the western canon, not as independent aesthetic objects but as integral parts of a rich ritual system.

Art and Photography since the 1960s

Dr Patrizia di Bello

Dates: Fridays, 4 October – 13 December, 18.00-19.30 (no class on 8 November)

Number of Available Spaces: 2

Fee: £650

Entry Requirements: Department of History of Art Masters Programmes Graduates

Contact Details for Enquirers: art-history@bbk.ac.uk

This module focuses on the presence of photography and its uses in artistic practices from the late 60s to the present. We trace different strands in the complex and sometimes tortuous relationships between art-photography and artists using photography; the de-materialisation of the art object and its re-materialisation into a photograph; documents as art and documents of art; the unconscious of the artist and the technological unconscious; and the uses of photography to facilitate politically engaged art practices.

The sessions are arranged in strands rather than in chronological order. As with all MA options, you must come prepared, having read the material set for each week. You are welcome to propose artists, works or artistic practices you would like to discuss. The aim is not to come up with definitive versions of events or evaluations of work, but to open them up for discussion to understand the past and consider its relevance into the present. The impact of digital culture not only on present practices but also on how we look at past ones is going to be one of the themes woven throughout the sessions.

Artists include: Ed Ruscha, Ana Mendieta, Gilbert and George, Gerhard Richter, Annette Messager, Zineb Sadira, Franco Vaccari and Jo Spence.

The Country House Experience

Prof. Kate Retford

Dates: Wednesdays, 2 October – 11 December, 18.00-19.30 (no class on 6 November)

Number of Available Spaces: 2

Fee: £650

Entry Requirements: Department of History of Art Masters Programmes Graduates

Contact Details for Enquirers: art-history@bbk.ac.uk

Country houses are a dominant presence in British culture. A couple of years ago, the National Trust, which maintains more than 350 historic houses, gardens and ancient monuments, made the news when its membership hit 5 million. The last report published by Historic Houses (the Association concerned with privately and charitably owned properties) declared that 24 million visits had been made to its members' properties in 2017. Yet these are well established as fraught sites: the homes of the gentry and aristocracy; the ideal long established as descent through the male line; some built with the proceeds of empire, even slavery. The country house is hotly debated within the field of Heritage Studies, from those who continue to lament sales and demolitions, to those famously dubbed 'heritage-baiters' by Raphael Samuel, who both slam the country house industry as propping up the upper classes, and the national fondness for these sites as evidence of persistent snobbery.

In this module, we will explore such issues and place them in historical context. We will consider the functions and purposes of these properties, and their place in our understanding of gender, class and national identities, from the eighteenth century to the present day. The course will not provide a history of architectural styles in the British country house, nor an overview of the art collections to be found in these buildings. Instead, it will focus on what the country house means, and has meant, to various stakeholders over the last three hundred years. In addition to a day's field trip to Audley End, hosted by the Curator there (*NB. booked for Friday 1 November*), the final class will take Chatsworth, voted 'the nation's favourite stately home', as a case study - but most sessions will draw on examples of houses, gardens and collections in the service of thematic discussions.

This is Tomorrow – Architecture and Modernity in Britain and its Empire, 1930-1960

Prof. Mark Crinson

Dates: Tuesdays 1 October – 10 December 2019, 18.00-19.30 (no class on 5 November)

Number of Available Spaces: 2

Fee: £650

Entry Requirements: Department of History of Art Masters Programmes Graduates

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The module is concerned with the entanglements of architecture with ideas of modernity and the home in mid-twentieth century Britain, as well as how these issues related to Britain's place in the world and especially its relation to its empire. The idea of modernity, whether through the arrival of modernism or the development of various forms of state modernisation, has long structured accounts of modern architecture in Britain. Similar accounts have begun to be written of architecture in Britain's empire (and after empire - the post-colonial or neo-colonial). However, the two have hardly been brought together - that is the task of this module. How did the empire penetrate the home? How was housing influenced by new conceptions and inventions in technology (including the technology of war)? Was the architectural avant-garde critical of imperialism? How did architectural ideas travel between empire and metropolis? There are field trips to relevant architecture in London, including visits to archival material.

Violence and Visual Culture in the Long Nineteenth Century

Dr Sean Willcock

Dates: Mondays 30 September – 9 December 2019, 18.00-19.30 (no class on 4 November)

Number of Available Spaces: 2

Fee: £650

Entry Requirements: Department of History of Art Masters Programmes Graduates

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This course examines the aesthetics of violence during the long nineteenth century. It considers the conventions that emerged across photography, illustrated journalism, and the fine arts for depicting wide-ranging forms of violence, from the criminal to the geopolitical. How did the emergence of mass media shape perceptions of warfare and violent crime? Did such visual practices enable new, distinctly modern forms of violence to emerge? What role did images play in the development of humanitarian ideals? And what role did violence play in the development of modern artistic ideals? We will have in-depth discussions about the ethical and aesthetic issues at stake in modern representations of violence, from the early war photographs of Roger Fenton to the aggressive aesthetics of Modernist movements such as Vorticism.

Art Museums in a Global Age

Dr Sarah Thomas

Dates: Wednesdays 2 October – 11 December 2019, 18.00-19.30 (no class on 6 November)

Number of Available Spaces: 2

Fee: £650

Entry Requirements: Department of History of Art Masters Programmes Graduates

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This module offers a critical analysis of the ways in which art museums continue to negotiate their relationship with globalisation. It asks what some of the consequences of globalisation might be for both art and its institutions? Can art history ever be global, and if so, how? What might a 'world art' look like and who would be its gatekeepers?

In the last few years major exhibitions have focused on a wide range of subjects, including global pop art, art from the Black Atlantic, Latin American Post-minimalism and Moscow Conceptualism. This module considers the future of art's institutions, traditions, objects, and canons in a global world.