

**SCHOOL  
OF  
MA/MFA  
CONTEMPORARY  
CURATING**



**MANCHESTER  
SCHOOL OF ART**

# WELCOME

**I am sure that you all have some form of idea about what “curating” is and what “curatorial practice” means, but let’s start with the obvious. Let me begin by simply looking at an expanded notion of curating that reflects the overarching shifts in curatorial practices and the deeper implications connected with the current curatorial production and approaches that we can note today.**

Curating increasingly describes the practice of situated learning as a site for research to bring together a constellation of ideas. This suggests a certain shift. This is related to reflexive analyses that challenge and introduce an experimental dynamic that offers a model for thinking about how to make connections between different subjects. So curatorial knowledge production, which means in my understanding a complex offering of visual, spatial, theoretical, context-related production within a situated context.

This course combines the study of diverse areas of knowledge, focusing on curating as a subject, with the essential practical skills and critical perspectives needed by contemporary curatorial practice in exploring existing relational models and curatorial alternatives.

On this course, you will explore a range of disciplines that encourage interdisciplinary study and collaboration. This covers the issues of exploring the diverse methods and processes through balancing academic and professionally oriented study. You will learn key theories and issues relating to contemporary curating and then develop these into more complex approaches to gain a real-world perspective with our experts supporting.

As a student of Contemporary Curating at Manchester School of Art, you'll explore the essential practical skills and critical perspectives needed by contemporary curatorial practice while engaging in creative and critical dialogue and benefiting from a rich program of events that includes Curator talks, field study trips, and seminars to understand various curatorial models there are and give you a wider understanding of the curatorial thinking.

You will have opportunities to work collaboratively with peer students on other courses as well as engage with the University's exhibition spaces and museum partners on a local and international scale. These practices are integral to the development of student-led projects with our integrated research and practice-led approach.

You will also be encouraged to extend your experience in the professional sphere through exchange and joint projects. Our Postgraduate Curating Platform is designed to provide a distinctive, vibrant environment for inter- and trans-disciplinary activities, including our Pavement Gallery exhibition space which works as a hub for all curatorial activities, the British Council's Venice Fellowships opportunities, apexart' international student jury programme and the international Curators of Tomorrow residency opportunity.

**Dr Gulsen Bal**

Subject Leader Contemporary Curating

# CONTEMPORARY CURATING

**MA – 1 year (full-time), 2 years (part-time)**  
**MFA – 2 years (full-time), 4 years (part-time)**



MA/MFA Contemporary Curating explores the notion of curatorial practice in contemporary culture in addressing a number of inter-related fields of creative practice and theoretical approaches and situate them in a historical and critical context. The course explores different kinds of curatorial issues in addressing exhibition-forms and exhibition-making processes and how we conceive of spaces of production and curating as subjects with our integrated research and practice-led approach.

The shifting relationship between artist-institution-curator-critic/writer forms a central element to the course with a special focus on the meaning the culture of curating, in which our perception of creativity has been transformed by curating and the discourses surrounding it. The course also explores the potential of seeing curating as something that can be applied to various forms of knowledge: publications, symposia, events and interventions.

MA/MFA Contemporary Curating is a dynamic programme for students who wish to develop the essential practical and critical thinking skills that is needed by contemporary curatorial practice. The course also enables you to experiment and study in a diverse range of the wider field and you will have access to our dedicated Curating Base Room. This allows you to explore and plan collaborative ideas on an interdisciplinary basis and facilitates a sense of community.

You will be supported to develop student-led projects and encouraged to engage in creative and critical dialogue, collaborative mind-mapping, ideas exchange processes. These practices are integrated by providing students with access to our dedicated Pavement Gallery which acts as a hub for all curatorial activities and a space to generate ideas. Pavement Gallery runs on an associate model to provide MA Contemporary Curating students with the opportunity to develop their practical skills.

Opportunity to take part in the British Council's Venice Fellowships programme that encourages students to utilise their trans-disciplinary skills and explore how to work internationally. The Venice Fellowships programme is a unique opportunity for students to spend a month in Venice during the world's most important biennale.

The course offers an international Fellowships opportunity through the Curators of Tomorrow initiative. This unique initiative is to support an understanding of transdisciplinary contexts of the MA/MFA Contemporary Curating programme. This is designed mainly for our current students who are about to engage with the professional practice stage of their studies. Selected participants of the Curators of Tomorrow collaboration are given the opportunity to live and work for the period of one month in one of the Q21 studios at MuseumsQuartier Wien in Vienna.

You will benefit from the rich programme of events which includes Curator talks and seminars from a range of galleries and programmes, such as Liverpool Biennial, Manchester Art Gallery, Open Eye, Tate Liverpool, The Whitworth Gallery and more.

The MA Contemporary Curating is made up of five units totalling 180 credits.

**Practice 1: Curating Spaces** (30 credits)

**Practice 2: Curatorial Process** (30 credits)

**Practice 3: Major Project** (60 credits)

**Culture and Context** (30 credits)

**Professional Practices** (30 credits)

To mirror our approach of teaching with its impact on curatorial practice and approaches, we need to look into what constructs our course program. These areas underpin practice base assignments, presentations, and projects.

## **HOW DO WE TEACH CURATING AS A SUBJECT THAT SHAPES THE CREATIVE POTENTIAL?**

**Curating Spaces** (30 credits)

This unit covers a practical introduction to processes of curating with a focus on what is 'curatorial practice' mean and what do we understand of the meaning the culture of curating in which our perception of art has been transformed by curating and the discourses surrounding it.

**Curatorial Process** (30 credits)

The unit considers the nature of the 'curatorial' in terms of the processes associated with a contemporary exhibition programme, as well as related activities in establishing an individual methodology and the start of the development of an individual voice that is thoroughly grounded in research skills.

**Culture & Context** (30 credits)

This unit offers focussed opportunity for students to extend and enhance their practice by including working in a wider art & design research community.

**Professional Practices** (30 credits)

The unit introduces students to the key skills and experience into the professional sphere, either through a practical project, research context, exchange, work experience, or other negotiated professional set of interactions with an external partner and/or peer group of students.

**Major Project** (60 credits)

The unit is designed to provide the critical perspectives and essential practical skills needed by contemporary curators. This unit encourages some collaborative and interdisciplinary practice to support students work towards the development and production of a piece of work that would take the form of either a dissertation, exhibition proposal or live project in relation to curatorial practice.

The MFA Contemporary Curating continues with the following two units totalling 120 credits.

**Practice 4:** Contextualising (60 credits)

**Practice 5:** Realisation & Publication (60 credits)

**ENTRY REQUIREMENTS**

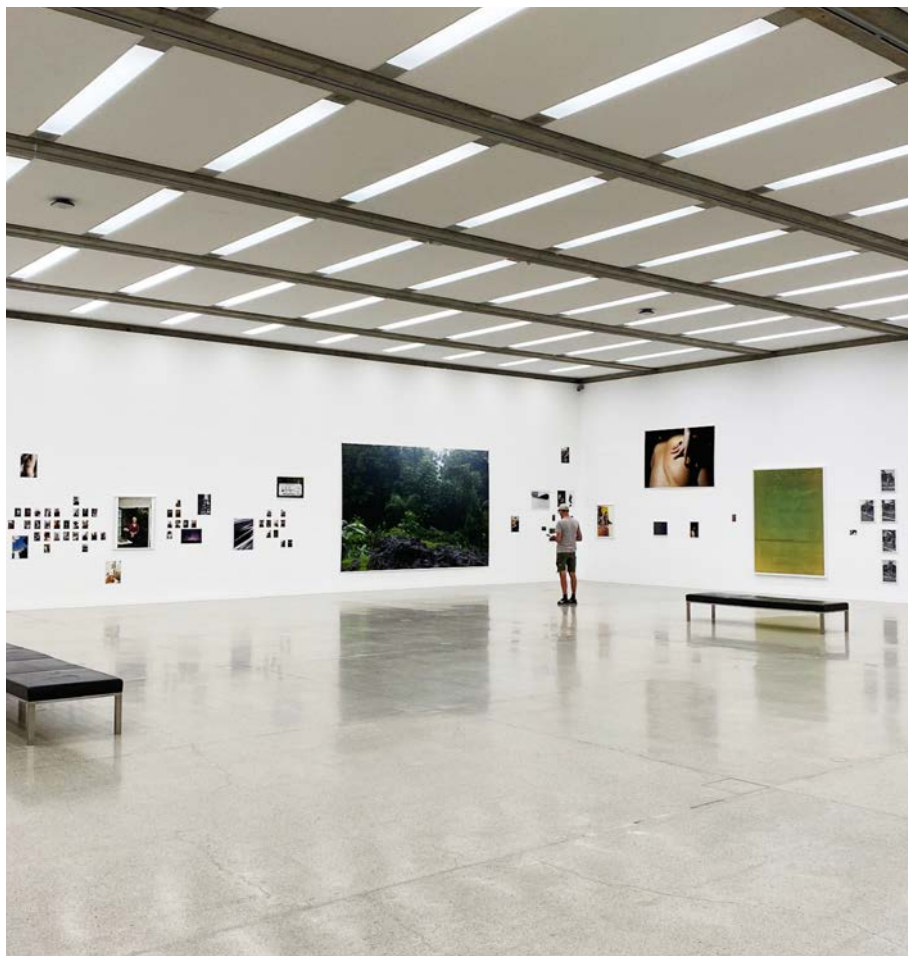
You will normally have an undergraduate UK honours degree (or international equivalent) or a degree-equivalent postgraduate diploma or a professional qualification. Alternatively, you may be admitted if you can demonstrate appropriate knowledge and skills at honours degree standard. In addition, you may also need to submit a Digital Portfolio.

Overseas applicants will require IELTS with an overall score of 6.5 with no less than 5.5 in any category, or an equivalent accepted English qualification. Accepted English qualifications can be viewed here.

**TO APPLY, VISIT:**

[art.mmu.ac.uk/postgraduate/ma-mfa-contemporarycurating](http://art.mmu.ac.uk/postgraduate/ma-mfa-contemporarycurating)

# OPPORTUNITIES BEYOND YOUR MASTER'S



## **The “Curators of Tomorrow” fellowship**

This unique residency co-operation program between MA Contemporary Curating programme and MuseumsQuartier Wien is to support an understanding of transdisciplinary contexts of the MA/MFA Contemporary Curating programme. The “Curators of Tomorrow” fellowship is a unique opportunity for students to spend a month in Vienna and aims to support students to develop their practice internationally.



### **Videocity fellowship program**

This is an international internship opportunity under the Videocity fellowship program between Basel School of Art and Design – FHNW and MA Contemporary Curating programme to cultivate different ways of working digitally together.



### **apextart' student juror programme**

apextart' student juror programme (NY) encourages lively discussion about many aspects of curating, writing, and exhibition making processes while helping students develop a greater understanding of their own curatorial values.



### **Pavement Gallery**

The course also enjoys links to the city and region's galleries and arts organisations. You will be supported to develop student-led projects and encouraged to engage in creative and critical dialogues. These practises are integrated by providing students with access to our dedicated Pavement Gallery which works as a hub for all curatorial activities.



### **The Venice Fellowships programme**

Manchester School of Art is a partner institution in the British Council's Venice Fellowships programme. Our students have been regularly selected to work and spend a month in Venice during the world's most important art biennales. This distinctive Fellowships opportunity offers the Fellows to have the chance to conduct their independent research in and around Venice and enhance their current studies and professional practice.



# MEET OUR EXPERTS

## **Dr Gulsen Bal (Programme Leader)**

Senior Lecturer, Curating for Programmes in Art Theory & Practice & Contemporary Curating Programme, MA/MFA Degree

Gulsen is a curator and an art and visual culture theorist. Gulsen took on a new role as Course Leader of MA/MFA Contemporary Curating Programme and joined Manchester School of Art as Senior Lecturer in Curating for UG Programmes in Art Theory & Practice in 2020. She previously held the position of Visiting Research Fellow at Manchester School of Art working in Contextual Practice, in curating with her main focus on the Department of Art & Performance, Art Theory and Practice programmes (Curating, Art History, Fine Art, BA Degree & Department of Contemporary Curating, MA/MFA Degree) between 2019 to 2020. At the same time, she was lecturer in the Faculty of Arts at ARUCAD - Arkin University of Creative Arts and Design in Cyprus from 2018 to 2020. Bal was appointed as Departmental Advisory Consultant at Istanbul Bilgi University during 2017-18, where she was Head of Department as well as holding the position of Course & Program Coordinator, NABA and Domus Academy liaison and Erasmus+ coordinator for the period of 2013-17. Additionally, she lectured as a Visiting Professor at Istanbul Yeditepe University for the MA degree program in Curatorial Studies between 2013 and 2017. She taught at the Vienna University of Technology (TU Wien) in the Department of Visual Culture from 2008 to 2013.

Gulsen completed her undergraduate degree in time-based media art specialising in multi-media installation and video art in London and her MA in Critical Fine Art at Central Saint Martins College of Art & Design, where she also undertook her Doctorate studies with a compilation of a thesis titled *Negation of Complicated Mirrors – An Examination of Differential Structures within the “Production of Subject”* Realised through Creative Practice. Her research has involved exploring the temporal and strategic conjunctions of differential structures. Bal sought

to understand the implications and complexity of the “production of the subject” exploring methods for practice-based research in fine art and in curatorial practices.

Her research addressed a number of inter-related fields of creative practice and situated them in a critical inquiry in methodologies that structure how the ‘subject’ is manifested. She developed a “philosophy of practice” through which a mirror reflection of a world “yet-to-come” would become visible in art. A “philosophy of practice”, linking artistic works and curatorial activities was developed through a series of philosophical reflections; artworks; curatorial practices and dialogues with variety of artists and theorists.

She has curated and contributed to Art Fairs and Biennials and participated in talks and conferences internationally. She has published wide range of articles in peer reviewed journals and magazines and, to date, has edited fifteen books.

Recent curatorial practice includes: “BALKAN(S) NOW” – Status seminar and artistic survey” at Vienna Art Fair - ‘VIENNA Live’ (Vienna, 2013), Mestna galerija (Ljubljana, 2013) and Remont (Belgrade, 2013); “It’s in the ‘can’” at Open Systems (Vienna, 2012); the 12th edition of the renowned festival “PIXXELPOINT: Let’s Get Ready” at Metropolitana Gallery (Nova Gorica, 2011), Nova Gorica City Gallery (Nova Gorica, 2011), Tir Gallery (Gorizia, 2011) and the Mostovna Cultural Centre (Gorizia, 2011); “Ist dies alles?” at Open Space (Vienna, 2011); “No Ifs, No Buts” at DEPO (Istanbul, 2010) and she is also one of the co-curators of the 28th Biennial of Graphic Art: “The Matrix: An Unstable Reality” at Gallery Škuc (Ljubljana, 2009).

Gulsen has also been called upon as a juror and critic on several boards including, AHRC (Arts





Project: OPEN SPACE is 10!  
 Installation: Director, Head of Development of Projects and  
 Programs: Gulsen Bal

and Humanities Research Council) - Research Network, Lincoln University (Cambridge); Cultural Critique Journal (The University of Minnesota Press, Minnesota); The Global Board of Contemporary Art (Brussels); Museum of Contemporary Art - GfZK (Leipzig); Akademie der Bildenden Künste Wien - aK (Vienna); Fellowship Program for Künstlerhaus Büchsenhausen (Innsbruck) and Siemens Art (Istanbul).

She has received several awards for the “distinguished” delivery of its programs recognized as amongst the best accomplishments in the field of international contemporary art. Its primary focus is to bring different critical perspectives on art and visual culture to the surface in search for new outlines of contemporary arts. Amongst others, she was selected by London’s Saatchi Gallery as one of a hundred curators from all over the world to participate in “100 CURATORS 100 DAYS” for the largest exhibit of its kind on a global platform.

Gulsen is the founder and inaugural Director of Open Space, the influential art forum based in Vienna since 2007. Open Space is an on-going initiative that seeks a critical construction of how the curatorial practices are made manifest within an open-ended experimental dynamic in its wider context. Open Space articulates both curating’s expanded field and alternative spaces of creative production toward a wider articulation of situated curatorial practice and new creative connections.

## **Professor Andrew Hunt**

Senior Lecturer, Fine Art and Curating

Andrew Hunt is a curator, writer and educator based in London and Manchester. He is Professor of Fine Art and Curating at Manchester Metropolitan University.

Since the early 2000s, he has worked on intimate solo exhibitions with significant international artists such as Mike Nelson, Elizabeth Price, Tris Vonna-Michell, Kai Althoff, and Marc Camille Chaimowicz, and designers such as Fraser Muggeridge, Jonathan Barnbrook, James Langdon, Abacke, Manuel Raeder, and Sara De Bondt on projects that range from minor printed ephemera to major publications, exhibition design and branding for art institutions. In 2012 he was a member of the Turner Prize jury.

Between 2016 and 2017 he founded and directed the contemporary art organisation Reading International and was a Research Fellow at Kingston University, while between 2008 and 2014 he was the director of Focal Point Gallery (FPG) in Southend-on-Sea, where he was responsible for developing the organisation's acclaimed exhibitions programme and publishing activities. Hunt oversaw FPG's move into its new building (arch. Manalo and White, 2013), while his doctoral thesis 'Six Years in the Development of a Contemporary Art Institution: Focal Point Gallery 2008 to 2014' concentrated on strategies for the expansion of a critically independent publicly-funded UK visual art organisation in a period of austerity after the financial crisis.

He is founding editor of the Slimvolume imprint, which to date has published editions and books by over 250 artists. Recent publications include 'Nicol Allan: Collages' and 'Andy Holden Collected Free Labour: Blog Interviews 2010-2021' (both 2021), 'Painting: Funny Peculiar' and 'Emotionarama' (both 2020), 'JocJonJoschi: Almost One. Say Again!' and 'Tris Vonna-Michell: No more racing in circles – just pacing within lines of a rectangle' (both 2019), 'Dom Sylvester Houédard' (edited with Nicola Simpson) and

'Jeffrey Dennis: Ringbinder' (both 2017), and 'Scott King: Public Art' and 'Cally Spooner: Scripts' (both 2016).

He also contributes to many magazines and journals of contemporary art and culture, such as Artforum, Art Monthly, The Burlington Magazine, Domus, frieze, Mousse Magazine, Picpus and TATE ETC.

Recent independent projects include 'Artists Against Homelessness: Insiders and Outliers' for St Mungo's (2020), 'As You Change So Do I' a series of public art commissions for Luton, UK co-organized with artist Mark Titchner (2016 to 2019), 'C. R. McBerny' (2018) co-organized with artist Veit Laurent Kurz, 'The Critic as Artist' (2017) co-curated with writer Michael Bracewell, 'The Green Ray', Wilkinson Gallery, London and 'Concerning Concrete Poetry', Badischer Kunstverein, Karlsruhe (both 2016).

## **Matthew Retallick**

Lecturer, Art History and Curating

Matt Retallick (Art Historian / Curator) is a Lecturer of Art History and Curating at Manchester School of Art. His research interests are broadly situated within a range of issues connected to modernism. He is interested in the slippages and transitional moments between art and artists, artistic movements, and ideologies. His research examines hidden or little-known modernisms and aims to reframe standard art historical accounts. This includes St Ives and Cornish modernism, British modernism, Irish modernism, German modernism, German painting (1920s-1990s), German sculpture (1920s-1990s), the Austrian avant-garde, Viennese Actionism, the art and subculture of divided Berlin (1961-1989), and Social Sculpture as curatorial practice.



## **FACILITIES AND OUR SCHOOL**

**The School of Art offers an extensive range of spaces, workshops and equipment, creating a vibrant and creative learning environment.**

The Benzie Building and the historic Grosvenor Building are part of an art and design complex that are home to workshops that are both traditional and digital. Alongside are display spaces, a communal roof terrace, gallery, library (with one of the largest collections of art and design material in the country) and a café.

Students from all disciplines and courses can access our workshops, with a team of highly skilled technicians – who each have years of specialist experience – on hand to guide, advise and allow students to realise their most ambitious artistic visions.



[art.mmu.ac.uk/postgraduate/ma-mfa-contemporarycurating](https://art.mmu.ac.uk/postgraduate/ma-mfa-contemporarycurating)

For more information on the MA/MFA Contemporary Curating please visit [art.mmu.ac.uk](https://art.mmu.ac.uk)  
or contact Dr Gulsen Bal (Course Leader) directly: [g.bal@mmu.ac.uk](mailto:g.bal@mmu.ac.uk)