Royal College of Art
Postgraduate Art and Design

Programme Specification

Please note that this specification is subject to change, in line with the national guidance on the response to the Covid-19 pandemic.

1.   General information

Awarding institution:	Royal College of Art
Programme title:	MA Interior Design
Award:	Masters
Qualification framework level:	Level 7
School/Department or equivalent:	School of Architecture
Programme duration:	2-years
Total UK credits:	240 credits
Mode of study:	Full time
Date valid from/to	2020-21

2.   Programme Philosophy

The MA Interior Design Programme engages its participants in exploring emergent ideas and issues concerning distinct aspects of the design of the interior. This incorporates research, practice and making work that explores the diversity of human occupation in numerous environments, extending from the room to the city. The programme encourages the view that the interior is an interface between its occupants and the built environment, and it supports the notion that the interior is an agent for social change.

The programme values speculation, analysis and rigor with regards to the thinking and making of all aspects of the design of interior environments. It challenges its participants to formulate their own rigorous and critically independent responses to these fundamental concerns. This is often undertaken via the reworking of existing structures, the creation of temporal installations and the formation of permanent interventions. All of these practices involve the construction and communication of particular spatial identities using space, objects and materials. The Exhibition Design pathway reinforces this approach. It does so through the development of experimental and innovative ways of making and understanding exhibitions in the 21st Century. The pathway is considered to be one specialism of the design of the interior. It challenges its participants to develop and create display-based environments that demonstrate how the exhibition has become a significant form of cultural production.

Led by Head of Programme Professor Graeme Brooker, the two-year Interior Design programme is located in the school of architecture. Its work is usually undertaken via its own design studio and is supported with lectures, seminars and workshops. Talks by researchers, academics and practitioners from related disciplines – set design, architecture, branding, installation art - constitute the 'inside/out' lecture series. These are offered in the unique RCA context of interdisciplinary, studio and workshop-oriented, speculative advanced study. When possible, there may be opportunities for live projects in conjunction with specific industry partners.

The programme is delivered by leading academics, well-known practicing designers, architects, and theorists, all of whom are internationally renowned and innovators in their fields. Graduates exemplify responsive and intellectually sophisticated designers. They exit the programme replete with thinking and skills that will enable them to develop their own practice and enter the interior and exhibition design profession.

3.   Educational Aims and Outcomes of the Programme

Programme aims

The programme aims to enable students to:

- Develop and apply independent and advanced level thinking in research and design
- Experiment with processes, spaces and materials in order to create environments for inhabitation with appropriately constructed identities
- Evaluate, critique and evidence insights that demonstrate easy systematic understanding of historical and theoretical disciplinary relevant knowledge
- Formulate work that articulates a critical awareness of emergent issues informed by exemplary thinking in Interior and exhibition design research, practice and education
- Demonstrate innovation in the application of knowledge underpinned with rigorous research enquiries and methodologies
- Establish an independent and critically comprehensive knowledge and understanding of techniques and skills applicable to the coherent articulation of their own interior and exhibition design practice
- Develop experimental design thinking and apply it to a range of design project work
- Reflect and engage in an appropriate manner with a diverse range of communities, stakeholders and professionals in order to formulate considered design-led responses
- Produce a body of work that communicates their own unique professional identity.

What will I be expected to achieve?
Students will be expected to produce advanced level interior project work, through process-based thinking, research, making, and design studies

Programme-Specific Learning Outcomes

Able to:	A. Intellectual Engagement
A1.	Develop innovative ideas that challenge the understanding of interior and exhibition design and the students' own practice of the discipline.
A2.	Demonstrate an advanced understanding of historical and contemporary debate and how it relates to their interior and exhibition design practice.
A3.	Demonstrate an advanced understanding of the principles and methods of research and apply them effectively to their own design practice.
A4.	Effectively articulate and debate the intellectual and technical processes involved in the production of their interior and exhibition design work.
A5.	Demonstrate a critical understanding of theories, and methodologies that underpins the field of Interior and exhibition design and its relation to other disciplines.

Able to:	**B. Technical Skills**
B1.	Produce interior and exhibition design work at a level that coherently integrates thought, creativity and technique.
B2.	Experiment in their use of materials, processes and environments in order to translate ideas into interior and exhibition design practice.
B3.	Articulate ideas that evidence the technical skills required in the creation, display and documentation of their own design work.

Able to:	**C. Professional Development**
C1.	Take responsibility for directing their studies through setting goals and managing time and resources effectively.
C2.	Participate as a responsible member of the design community.
C3.	Define their professional identity through self-reflection and an understanding of the creative economy with particular reference to the field of interior and exhibition design.

4.   What will I learn?

Year 1
The first year emphasises experimentation and innovation through a 'foundational' approach to the study of the interior. In the first year, students will examine and develop ideas in response to what is considered to be some of the fundamental elements and principles of the interior. These have been developed into three key areas of work: 'Proximities', 'Inhabitation' and 'Identities'.

In term one, students undertake a series of short introductory project(s) entitled the *primer* often in conjunction with the second year students. Following this diagnostic introductory period, one of three phases of the fundamentals begins.
In the second phase of the year, 'Inhabitations', introduces projects based around different forms of the use of the interior. The third phase consolidates the previous learning into a project entitled 'Identities'. This is where students are required to undertake design projects that examine the manifestations of particular atmospheres, surfaces, objects and rooms, all of which convey the aspects of a particular site, communities, clients and stakeholders. It will foreground, and subsequently develop, all aspects of the student learning to date and will be realised at the end of the year in a portfolio submitted for the summative examination.

Year one is underpinned by a school-wide elective lecture and seminar series entitled media studies. This underpins the studio work with key ideas, texts, theories and discussions. A year-long dissertation is undertaken in the CHS unit.

Year 2
At the start of the second year (term four) students integrate with the first year through undertaking a series of collaborative short projects in mixed groups (primer). After this, students join a particular platform in order to pursue their personal thesis project for the rest of the academic year.

The focus of the work is concerned with developing an innovative project that explores an aspect of

interior design at a level appropriate for a master's project.

This work may be a single interior design project, involve an extended piece of research, a series of smaller exploratory projects or a combination of these approaches. The project culminates in the material developed for the Independent Research Project, assessed in the final examination.

Programme Units and Credit Weightings

- Unit 1: Proximities, 20 credits
- Unit 2: Inhabitations, 20 credits
- Unit 3: Identities, 20 credits
- Critical and Historical Studies, 40 credits
- Unit 4: Platform/Exhibition Design Pathway, 60 credits
- Unit 5: Independent Research Project, 60 credits

Curriculum Map

Y1

TERM 1	TERM 2	TERM 3
PROXIMITIES (20 CP)	INHABITATIONS (20 CP)	IDENTITIES (20 CP)
SCHOOL-WIDE OFFER -MEDIA STUDIES (20 CP)		
CHS (40 CP)		

Y2

TERM 1	TERM 2	TERM 3
PLATFORM (60 CP)		IRP (60 CP)

5.   How will I learn?

Please note that these are subject to change, in line with the national guidance on the Covid-19 response.

Design Project
Design projects form the core learning and teaching element of the programme. Projects are a mix of both set and self-generated. They will vary in duration and format. They are usually supported through twice-weekly tutorials, and initially formatively assessed, leading to summative assessments at the end of the year. In the early parts of years one and two, students will work together as mixed vertical groups to enhance peer-to-peer learning. This will take place online, and in person, when possible and safe to do so. In the second and third terms of the course students work in groups within their year group but with timetabled reviews of each other's work, at key points in their respective curriculum. In the second half of term one, second year students work independently in their platforms or pathway as their project is developed. It is expected that individual students will pursue projects of a particular personal interest in relation to their platform.   Design projects will always be concerned with issues in and around the design of interior environments, exploring issues such as proximities, inhabitation and the construction of a range of spatial identities. The context for design projects will vary, but will often include existing buildings, urban spaces, the analysis of site and human occupation and inhabitation, material and spatial identity and so on. Where applicable and appropriate live briefs will be included in the curriculum where students work with commercial or industry partners. In some cases, design projects will take the form of competitions that may be set within the programme or by

organisations external to the College.

Platforms and Pathways

The second year of the programme is organised around a number of Platforms and the Exhibition Design Pathway. Each Platform will begin around the middle of term one and be based around emergent or current issues in the subject of Interiors and in other built environment/design led contexts. Each platform is configured in order to respond to a particular overall provocation and location. Exhibition Design is a research- informed, practice-led approach to the making of exhibitions. Participants engage in the development of a specialised approach to making exhibition environments.

The programme employs a variety of different learning and teaching methods to help you achieve your individual aims and objectives, as well as those of the programme. These include:

Group Tutorials
The development of design project work is mostly discussed at group tutorials. These involve a small number of students and one or more tutors. Group tutorials provide a constructive forum for you to discuss work and ideas in a critical and reflective manner.

Individual Tutorials
Individual tutorials can provide you with an informal opportunity to discuss the progress of your work with a tutor. An individual tutorial can also be a more formal occasion where you are required to present your work or may be an opportunity to receive formal feedback on your work or progress to date.

Workshops
Workshops are organised to provide you with a variety of support. This might be a working knowledge of technical skills that may enable you to undertake your design project work more successfully, or events delivered by specialist visitors to support projects with specific technical requirements.

Lectures
Individual or a series of lectures, are an integral part of the delivery of specific aspects of the programme and will often connect specifically to current design project work. Other times lectures may not directly relate to the design projects you are undertaking but are instead intended to expose you to a wide range of views in order to encourage critical reflection and debate. To this end lectures will be delivered by a variety of speakers including academics, practitioners, communicators, commentators and artists from related disciplines as well as programme staff. Lectures may be delivered digitally or live, to specific project groups, specific cohorts or the whole programme.

Students are also encouraged to take advantage of the numerous opportunities offered by the College and to participate in the many talks, seminars and lectures hosted by other programmes. They are also strongly advised to participate in talks and events hosted by the numerous cultural institutions in and around London, where these are available and it is safe to do so.

Reviews

A review or 'crit' provides an opportunity for you to present your work to a larger group and then respond to questions from the audience. Fellow students, tutors and guests may attend the review. These may take place online, or in person where government guidance and College policy allow.

Field Study Visits
Field study visits can take many forms including individually motivated research visits or organised group visits to exhibitions, talks, sites, design practices, manufacturers, clients and different cities. Each year the programme will aim to organise an international study trip that students can opt to join. This trip will usually be student-funded. Visits will only take place where government guidance and College policy allow, and may be subject to change at short notice.

Practice Mentorships
Each second year student is assigned a practice mentor, with whom they are expected to meet with at least three-times a year, in both their practice and in the college. The mentors are practitioners drawn from numerous exceptional design practices. Second year students are expected to manage the process of communication and organising their meetings and documenting progress. Mentors are invited to reviews and shows. Student progress is documented through the personal tutorial processes. If mentors need to be changed, then students need to articulate why before it is advanced by staff. Any work undertaken in a mentor practice by students needs to be agreed upon with academic staff and then appropriately remunerated.

Personal Tutorials
Each student is assigned a personal tutorial when they enrol on the programme. This is usually a member of staff with whom they meet and with whom they can contact at any time if, primarily, they are in need of pastoral assistance. One tutorial a term is designed to allow the student to reflect on their progress as well as challenges on the programme and in the college, as well any challenges they face outside of the college. The personal tutorial is usually at least 15 minutes long and is arranged in advance termly. Digital records are kept of each tutorial to ensure that any actions are completed by both the staff and the tutor. Each tutorial will begin with a reflection on the notes of the previous meeting and establish what actions were undertaken (if appropriate). Both the student and the member of staff will hold a record of the tutorials.
You may get the opportunity to participate in an exhibition of your student work, either during or at the conclusion of your studies. Your Programme Handbook should provide more information on the nature of this participation.

6.   Assessment and feedback

Unit assessment
Summative Evaluation The summative examination is a formal examination of each student's work that evaluates progress part way through his or her studies. Each student will be asked to present and discuss work completed-to-date. Following completion of this examination, the Exam Board drafts a brief report on the development of each students' work, attendance record, and application to their subject including any other relevant observations. This report goes to the Academic Board for Concessions & Discipline, with the recommendation that a student does or does not progress. If a student's Personal Tutor is not present at the summative examination, their report contributes to the overall assessment.

If at summative examination a student's work is considered to be a borderline fail, a programme of work may be set for further examination to enable progression. For more information, please see the RCA Regulations.

Final Examination
The Final Examination is the culmination of a MA degree, and provides students with an opportunity to demonstrate that they have fulfilled the objectives of the programme and that they have achieved the standard necessary for the award of Master's Degree. The examination will focus on the completed "Project" which will be displayed as appropriate for review.
Students are also required to submit a portfolio containing project work from both years of the course. Each student's work is assessed by a panel of academics, and a sample of a cohort's work is reviewed by an External Examiner. If your Personal Tutor is not present at the Final Examination, their report contributes to the overall assessment.
The Final Examination is in two parts: a) A Viva-Voce, which takes place in the final term of a programme of study b) A School Examination Board, chaired by the Dean of School, will be held to recommend results to the Academic Board for Concessions & Discipline for ratification.

If at Final Examination a student's work is considered to be a borderline fail, the student may be required to retrieve the work within an academic term, or at a referral examination within 12 months. For more information, please see the RCA Regulations.

The Final Examination provides students with an opportunity to demonstrate that they have fulfilled the objectives of the programme and that they have achieved the standard necessary for the award of Master's Degree. The examination usually takes place in June.

Students will present their work to the Exam Board for assessment and thirty minutes will be allocated to each student.

Information regarding individual assessments will be included in the Unit Descriptors, and will be available to students at the beginning of the academic year.

7.   What award can I get?

To be awarded an RCA MA degree you need to gain 240 credits at level 7 of the Framework for Higher Education Qualifications (FHEQ). This will involve successfully completing all units.

If you fail a unit at the first attempt, you will be offered an opportunity to resit the unit. If you are successful you will be awarded the credits for that unit. If you are unsuccessful, you cannot progress further in your programme.

Exit awards:
If you have gained at least 120 credits at level 7 of the FHEQ, you may be eligible for the exit award of Postgraduate Diploma. An exit award is a final award from the College and cannot be rescinded.
For more detailed information about the College's assessment, progression and awards policies see the Regulations.

8.   Admissions

Cross-College requirements

Academic Entry Requirements

Candidates must normally have obtained a good relevant undergraduate degree or an equivalent qualification. The College recognises as an equivalent qualification any degree, diploma, certificate or other evidence of formal qualification awarded by a university or other higher education establishment where the award is made following the successful completion of a course of at least three years' study, the programme of study being open, as a general rule, only to persons holding a certificate awarded on the successful completion of a full course of upper secondary education.

Other qualifications may be approved, providing that the College's Academic Board for Concessions and Discipline (ABCD) is satisfied that the applicant has the ability to pursue the programme of study successfully. The ABCD is empowered to make judgements about the extent to which qualifications or experience gained elsewhere may be accepted in partial fulfilment of its requirements.

Portfolio

All applicants are required to submit a portfolio as part of the application process. A portfolio is a showcase of an applicant's work as an artist or designer and can be made up of images, videos or writing examples. The portfolio helps us to better understand the applicant and allows them to show evidence of their ability and motivation to undertake a given programme.

Each programme is looking for different things in a portfolio; each Head of Programme provides specific advice on portfolio requirements in the online application system. We advise prospective students to consider these requirements carefully before submitting their application.

Applicant Qualities

Generally, we are looking for applicants to demonstrate their:

- creativity, imagination and innovation;

- ability to articulate the intentions of the work;

- intellectual engagement in areas relevant to the work;

- technical skills appropriate to the work;

- potential to benefit from the programme and achieve MA standards overall.

English Language

Applicants who are not a national of a majority English-speaking country will need to demonstrate their English language proficiency. The College accepts a range of English language qualifications. The full list can be seen at https://www.rca.ac.uk/studying-at-the-rca/apply/entrance-requirements/english-language-requirements/
Applicants are exempt from this requirement if they have received a 2.1 degree or above from a university in a majority English-speaking nation within the last two years.

If a student would need a Tier 4 visa to study at the RCA, they will also need to meet the Home Office's minimum requirements for entry clearance.

Admission Process

Applications must be made directly to the College through our online application portal: https://www.rca.ac.uk/studying-at-the-rca/apply/application-process/ma-application-process/

Upon completion of that first stage of the application process, candidates will be invited to submit a portfolio of their work, a 300-word statement of intent and a video communicating clearly their

motivations, personal interests and why they are pursuing a Masters degree at the Royal College of Art. These materials are reviewed by members of the programme team who will communicate an academic decision to the College Registry, who manage the process of offer-making in line with the College's recruitment targets. In some cases, where the programme team is not able to make an admission decision based solely upon the work submitted by the applicant, we may invite the candidate to undertake an interview with us.

- Applications are considered chronologically by date and time of final portfolio submission. Whilst a programme still has vacancies, successful candidates will be made an offer of a place. Once a programme becomes full, subsequent successful applicants will be placed on a waiting list, and may be made a firm offer should a place become available for them.

Programme-Specific requirements

Specific advice on programme portfolio requirements is provided by the Head of Programme in the online application system. Please consult the College website for further information on programme-specific admission and portfolio requirements:
https://www.rca.ac.uk/study/programme-finder/interior-design-ma/#requirements