
Fine Arts alumni reflections on curriculum and coursework in relation to global arts education: a social realist case study

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Declaration

This work has not been previously submitted in whole, or in part, for the award of any degree. It is my own work. Each significant contribution to, and quotation in, this dissertation from the work, or works, of any other persons has been attributed, and has been cited and correctly referenced.

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Signed by candidate

Date: February 2024

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Abstract

This dissertation aims to provide a legitimate investigation into whether the Fine Arts Degree effectively prepares students for successful integration into creative careers and the globalised arts industry.

This research develops a case study by utilising alumni feedback data and curriculum information that is analysed to reflect on the student experiences in relation to the curriculum and coursework offered by the Michaelis School of Fine Art at the University of Cape Town. The data is examined within a social realist paradigm with reference to global arts educational practices and trends. Archer's Morphogenetic theory and Maton's Legitimation Code Theory is used as theoretical frameworks to elaborate on the curriculum experiences, the coursework changes and progression of the Fine Art department over a timeline of the last decade (2012 – 2022).

The Fine Arts industry is a local and international hub of creative output and positions itself as a network of opportunities, gallery support, exhibitions, and art residencies. However, this research dissertation establishes that students completing Fine Art qualifications feel inadequately prepared or misinformed by their studies in order to pursue sustainable creative careers in this industry. The analysis of alumni responses indicates the missing gaps in the Fine Arts curriculum and establishes the need for recommendations to the curriculum. Important aspects for consideration are the introduction of business in arts subjects as well as educating students on creative technologies, cross-disciplinary collaboration and networking opportunities into the arts industry in line with other tertiary arts educational institutions.

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Chapter 1 - Introduction

At the University of Cape Town (UCT) there is a strong tradition of research output, student achievement and acclaimed international rankings. “UCT not only produces graduates for the labour market, but educates thinkers who are capable of shaping, adapting and responding to the unknown – global citizens who are actively responsible for the world they have inherited, and who will leave a better world for future generations.” (UCT Vision 2030, 2021, p. 11). The curriculum taught at the Michaelis School of Fine Art is aimed to be aligned to contemporary art practice and the practical coursework across the various disciplines are structured to inspire quality artwork output by the students during their course of study. Michaelis is staffed by fine artists and art academics with different specialities amongst the creative disciplines, and who have a range of versatile experience in the arts. This should ideally allow for the development of curriculum and coursework that is at the cutting-edge of the arts education world.

Fine Art tertiary qualifications and the institutional successes are often determined by their ability to produce students that go on to become professional artists - those who are actively integrated into the local and international arts industry. However, the majority of Fine Art graduates are not able to sustain professional art careers and many graduates venture into other industries, taking up roles widely dissociated from their qualification.

Fine Art study at the tertiary level of education is predicated on creativity, critical thinking, and the practical making of non-utilitarian artistic artefacts, which are the essential skills needed for a student to pursue a successful arts career. However, curriculum and coursework in Fine Art studies often vary according to different institutional policies, academics’ professional experience, the creative facilities available and the technological resources offered at departmental level. Fine Art departments within traditionally structured research-orientated universities often develop curricula around the creative research interests of the academics teaching the courses and the convenors in charge of managing the courses - but is this a challenge to transformation in the global context of arts education?

Curriculum is also often bound to the disciplinary praxis offered. “Curriculum is the process of engagement of students and staff with knowledge, behaviour, and identity in different disciplinary contexts” (Lange, 2017, p. 32). This positions the notion that coursework being taught at Fine Art institutions is directly the responsibility of the teaching staff, the university structures, and the student culture of participation. “Unlike teachers in schools with a national curriculum, university academics have fairly extensive freedom and agency to design their curricula, albeit conditioned by various mechanisms. One significant mechanism that conditions such agency is the location of universities in society” (Boughey & McKenna, 2021). In this way, complacency in changing and transforming curricula to meet the arts industry requirements can become a factor that hinders progress.

Context and Background

The Michaelis School of Fine Art offers a Bachelors of Fine Arts degree over a four (4) year duration. According to the Michaelis website (www.michaelis.uct.ac.za) the scope of the qualification is that *“the BAFA degree programme is one of full-time and specialist study. Students who register for this programme will be required to take studiowork and academic courses which are taught on Hiddingh and Upper Campus. Over the four-year degree, students are introduced to the studiowork disciplines of Painting, Sculpture, Photography, Printmaking and New Media, and work towards an increased area of studiowork specialisation.”*

The department offers this as an overview -

“Michaelis offers a vibrant mix of Fine Art study with courses in Studiowork, Foundation, Discourse of Art, Theory and Practice of Art in addition to a range of Humanities electives. Studiowork majors

include Painting, Sculpture, Printmaking, Photography and New Media developing conceptual, critical and creative thinking about contemporary art practice. In addition to the majors in studio work, electives are offered in third year including options in Videography, Animation, Curatorship, Lithography, Screen-printing, Computer Aided Design, Physical Computing, Social Responsibility and Historical Photographic Processes. Study at the postgraduate level is research led.” (Michaelis website, 2023).

It is evident from the current curriculum framework that no arts-related business or entrepreneurial courses are being incorporated into the Fine Arts programme.

Students choose to pursue Fine Art studies at the Michaelis School of Fine Art of the University of Cape Town based on its strong reputation for developing undergraduates into professional artists who then go on to forge successful careers in the global arts industry. These graduates however are a select few from the majority that complete the qualification. The department has become renowned as the ‘institution of choice’ to study Fine Art on the African continent as it has kept its traditional roots of training contemporary artists in disciplines such as Painting, Photography, Sculpture, Printmaking and Drawing. The teaching and learning context of Fine Arts education takes place primarily in studio-based settings. “Studio instruction is quite unlike the conventional lecture and tutorial approach. Rather than providing answers, artist educators challenge students with problems and support them to find their own answers within what is predominantly a self-directed learning process” (Orr et al., 2014 p. 30). Fine Art study requires active student experimentation to practice and develop conceptual ideas, creative techniques and completed artworks. These forms of knowledge should be reinforced by appropriate curriculum and coursework that is relevant to the global arts industry.

Over the last century the arts industry has expanded its scope to include various career paths that are outside the ambit of a ‘professional artist’. These adjacent artistic roles are all important and a necessity to keep the arts industry dynamic and thriving in the current globalised and economic world.

“Art as a subject of education takes its place among others in the creation of ‘new knowledge’ and in the training of ‘knowledge workers’. In the field of art those knowledge workers are categorised in a number of ways such as artists if they are engaged specifically in art practice, or curators if they are working with artists and designers to create exhibitions or other forms of display of artworks and artefacts, or arts managers if they are managing events, festivals or arts businesses, or art educators if they are engaging in the transmission of the principles and practices of art to others” (Grierson, 2011, p. 337).

These diverse career paths are seldom made aware to art students, and the singular role of a professional artist is generally endorsed by educational institutions.

Fine Art graduates tend to leave tertiary education filled with the anticipation to succeed and enter a diverse and complex creative arts industry. However, this soon leads to uneasiness as they have to navigate an industry with unforeseen challenges and processes that they were not aware of. This often causes many Fine Art graduates to abandon the creative industry altogether and move onto other career paths due to the attraction of job stability and higher economic gains. This results in a smaller number of graduates determined to pursue careers in the creative arts and actively participate in the global arts world. White (2013, p. 37) in his article *Barriers to Recognizing Arts Entrepreneurship Education as Essential to Professional Arts Training* states that “this outcome does not help increase the worth, merit or value of professional arts degrees but rather, devalues and demoralizes the arts student and is detrimental to the field of arts education, the nations’ creative and performing arts industries, and of course, the national economy.”

This research study aims to understand the student experience and the relevance of the curriculum and coursework that is and has been offered at the Michaelis School of Fine Arts during the undergraduate programme.

Rationale

Fine Arts education, given the contemporary ontology of the practice should continually change and evolve to align itself within the current art conventions.

It may be seen that “a crucial requirement for the artist and arts educator is the need to consider what precisely is the place and/or role of the creative arts as a knowledge field in globalised economies and if there is room for its creativity, its public and institutional legitimisation, its place to breathe and live - beyond that of serving the needs of the marketplace as a sole provider of value” (Grierson, 2011, p. 345).

Arts alumni of the Michaelis School of Fine Art who have experienced the student progression through the years of Fine Arts curriculum and coursework, that then culminated in the completion of a qualification and then embarked into the creative industry - have valuable insights and comparative epistemology of what is relevant or what is missing from the attributes needed for success in the arts. “Arts alumni still face significant financial obstacles to engaging in art professionally. Almost a third (30%) of former professional artists and those who wanted to be artists but did not do so pointed to debt, including student loan debt, as a reason to find other work” (Lindemann, et al., 2012, p. 22).

Research questions

The central lines of inquiry in this study thus revolve around the key question:

Does the Fine Arts Degree at the Michaelis School of Fine Art effectively prepare students for integration into creative careers and the globalised arts industry?

The supplementary focus questions for this research study are:

- What can be illuminated through reflections about curriculum and coursework by Fine Arts alumni of a South African university in relation to global arts practice?
- Are Fine Art students at the Michaelis School of Fine Art developing the necessary arts industry related skills to thrive after graduation in creative careers?
- Are Fine Arts curriculum and coursework progressive enough to keep up with the global practice of arts education?
- Does alumni feedback have any relevance to the institutional reviews of the student experience at higher education departments?

This research study uses a qualitative case study to better understand the student experiences and the subsequent usage of creative skills attained through the Fine Arts curriculum in the real world. By utilising alumni feedback data that reflect on the Michaelis School of Fine Art programme and offering a comparative review of global arts educational practices it can be determined if there is a requirement to alter or enhance the current curriculum offerings. The curriculum and coursework which are the core components of Fine Art studies at departmental level is to be evaluated for its effectiveness and real-world relevance. “While many professional arts training programs prepare students to excel at the practice and performance of the arts, evidence suggests that many professional arts training programs may be failing to prepare students to be professional artists” (White, 2013, p. 28).

My epistemological stance

In this study I wish to provide an unbiased introspective review of the Michaelis School of Fine Arts department - from the perspective of alumni experiences and determine if there is any need for informed considerations towards curriculum enhancements or coursework additions. The research explores if the Michaelis School of Fine Art is delivering on its mandate to train and develop students to enter the professional arts field through relevant curriculum choices and appropriate coursework. This can directly be evaluated through alumni contributing views of their student experience and highlighting their professional career paths taken since becoming a graduate in Fine Arts. "Make no mistake about it, we in art education need to examine what is happening in our visual culture, and what we do in our classrooms should make sense in this age of globalisation." (Tavin & Hausman, 2004, p. 48).

The globalisation of arts education has become an impending force for development towards change, and with technological advancements in the disciplinary mediums, art-making processes, theoretical concepts and artistic approaches – there is irrefutable pressure for educational institutions to relook at their course offerings and consider how to stay relevant. Tavin and Tervo (2018, p. 290) ask the question of "what does it mean to talk about art education without presuming a change that turns the Now into the New? What will learning and teaching in art education become when the change they intend to bring about in students and teachers does not fall into a chronological timeline of development where the past, present, and future are aligned."

In this research study, Margaret Archer's Morphogenetic Framework is used to evaluate if change took place and if there was a progression of the Michaelis School of Fine Art programme over a period of time. By analysing the factors that influence the arts department's structure, culture, and agency, one can identify the causal mechanisms that shape and develop the curriculum and coursework.

In addition as a supporting theory, Karl Maton's Legitimation Code Theory (LCT) is employed to explore the capacity of the current Fine Art curriculum. Maton's LCT is a useful framework that can define curriculum according to different codes and better understand the values associated with each year of coursework. This will allow the curriculum to be classified into separate quadrants and display its appropriate strengths and weaknesses.

Chapter 2 - Literature Review

Fine Art graduates are the epitome of a diverse student group - stemming from different global locations and ethnic backgrounds, various cultural groups, identities and with mixed creative interests - all completing an undergraduate qualification at the same university department and experiencing a pre-defined set curriculum and coursework. The literature reviewed for this research study is focused on three inter-related categories. The first category of literature considers the curriculum in the arts. The second category highlights how alumni feedback and engagement are being used and introduced into higher educational contexts for curriculum and student experience reviews. The third relevant topic of literature is centred on global arts educational practice that discusses the current situations of arts education, the emergence of new trends and currently used methods to enhance teaching and learning in the arts context.

Curriculum in the arts

Fine Arts study as an educational qualification consists of multiple creative disciplines that each contain their appropriate techniques and conceptual frameworks - with a continual presence of mixed-media techniques and new media arts that incorporates technology integration into the arts making processes. Boughey & McKenna (2021, p. 86) claim that “Bernstein (2006) showed that some disciplines can be considered to be hierarchical, that is, new knowledge builds on and subsumes prior knowledge, whereas other academic disciplines can be considered to be horizontal, that is, new theories emerge as new ‘languages’ which sit alongside or overthrow prior languages”.

Fine Arts when viewed according to Bernstein’s theory is a discipline that is horizontal in nature - as new methods, creative techniques and relevant technologies are being incorporated into the arts industry at an increasing rate. Bernstein (2000) called “it ‘recontextualisation’, to emphasise the widely differing contexts of producing new knowledge in the university and reproducing it in the classroom.” (Muller, 2009, p. 215). This offers an insight that curriculum in creative arts courses should not be stagnant but in a constant flux of change and development. “Since curriculum is a dynamic object that is developed based on the needs of society and the individual university, it must be evaluated periodically to keep it up to date” (Ratri. et. al, 2019, p. 2).

Boughey and McKenna (2021, p. 82) explain that “a curriculum distributes access to the kinds of learning experiences which will lead to the award of the qualification, and the qualification can be key to social mobility.” Higher educational institutions often enable pathways to ensure courses have relevant curriculum although much is left to the academics in each department to develop and define what is suitable. Student voices are often only considered as a commentary during the course evaluation surveys that are completed at the end of courses. “Students’ experiences of their learning process are a key element to their success. We must offer the type of learning environment that facilitates students’ engagement with their own learning to allow them to express their agency and contribute to the curriculum” (UCT Vision 2030, 2021, p. 13).

Curriculum in the creative arts courses are often thought to be in a tug-of-war of what is relevant to arts research and what is relevant to the external arts industry. “Higher Education Qualifications Framework (HEQF) (2007) distinguishes between two modal types of curriculum and qualification: one that aims to produce disciplinary adepts, and is thus formative or research-based; the other that aims to produce knowledgeable professionals, and is thus oriented more to the demands of the workplace.” (Muller, 2009, p. 217). This is something that is clearly apparent in the experiences of Fine Art students who graduate and then seek employment in creative careers within the arts industry. “Curriculum is ‘the process of engagement of students and staff with knowledge, behaviour and identity in different disciplinary contexts’ (Lange, 2017, p. 32). It is thus understood as encompassing

the what, the who, the how, and the where of teaching and learning. It includes both the planned curriculum and the enacted one.” (cited in Boughey and McKenna, 2021)

Curriculum therefore can be seen as selected information that is deemed relevant predominantly according to an academic’s experience and knowledge base. Ellery (2016, p. 222) concluded that “academics have to be able to undertake a rigorous analysis of what is being legitimated in our curricula if they are to provide students with access to powerful knowledge”. Engagement between faculty and departmental level university staff, student graduates and alumni have the potential to greatly enhance and relook at the importance of curriculum projects. “For curricula to be relevant to the needs of society, faculty must be committed to continuous quality improvement, which involves curriculum evaluation, curriculum revision, and reevaluation after implementation of changes” (Billings & Halsted, 2016; Valiga, 2017 cited from Ratri et al., 2019, p 49). “Biases in the form, content, access and opportunities of education have consequences not only for the economy; these biases can reach down to drain the very springs of affirmation, motivation and imagination. In this way, such biases can become, and often are, an economic and cultural threat to democracy.” (Luckett et. al, 2019, p. 35)

Curriculum aligned to the needs of the industries it relates to can however be seen as a detraction away from the core purpose of research-intensive universities and its policy goals. At the University of Cape Town there is a clear awareness of the problem associated with the curriculum requirements for a quality globalised education. “While UCT performs very well by most teaching and research indicators, the current model of the university is not sufficiently responsive to the needs of a new generation of diverse students and academics eager to respond to the world’s challenges.” (UCT Vision 2030, 2021, p. 7). Academics have a vast responsibility to ensure that what is taught within the curriculum is duly relevant to the skills needed by students once they graduate, however this will require first finding out what the discipline needs are in the industry.

This is not something clearly defined within certain industries, particularly the Fine Arts and often academics have to consider their personal experiences as sufficient indicators. This leads to a form of gatekeeping by academics to include into curriculum mainly what is within their interests, skillset and common knowledge. “Changes imposed from outside the discipline onto curriculum and pedagogy can be fiercely resisted by these academics, and those outside the discipline may struggle to identify the basis of such resistance. There is also the reality that a hierarchy of status is evident between the three fields, resulting in research, undertaken in the field of production, being valued at the cost of teaching, in the field of reproduction.” (Boughey & McKenna, 2021, p. 107).

Fine Art curriculum is seen to be based on contemporary art practice that is an ever-changing field, but also held together by the traditional and historical disciplines, methods, conceptual perspectives and the inclusion of additional creative methods incorporating technology and new media. However “there is no fundamental or universal agreement as to what should constitute art education; different kinds of practice are valued though there is often a broad consensus concerning curriculum content.” (Atkinson, 2017, p. 143). This can allow ‘missing gaps’ to be within the curriculum and student’s only realise they have not acquired the requisite knowledge or skills until they are trying to integrate into the arts industry. Therefore, there needs to be consensus of what is required outside the walls of the arts educational institutions for students to thrive. “The increasing emphasis on preparing industry-ready graduates (Brennan et al., 2014) implies that the development of artistry and practice skills are increasingly intertwined with market and community needs” (Pascal, 2013; Reid et al., 2019 cited in Koh & Kan, 2021, p. 6). Kumar & Rewari (2022, p. 428) state that “an effective curriculum is designed after making the needs analysis with an objective to achieve specific academic purposes. An analysis to determine the expectations of the industries and the deficiencies in the present curriculum with the difficulties to provide the required set of skills to the industries is made.” In this way there is a relevance to investigate the requirements to thrive in the arts industry and this is further aligned by the aims of this research study and the alumni feedback data that was examined.

The history of Fine Art at Michaelis

Since the formulation of the Fine Art department at the University of Cape Town, Michaelis has had an interesting historical context of shifting between the utilitarian and non-utilitarian forms of art disciplines and making considerations to keep the curriculum offered traditionalist and structured, with a deliberate shift away from the artistic crafts purported for functional objects. Anna Tietze (2015) in her paper titled *The art of design: Curriculum policy and the fine art vs. design debate at Michaelis School of Fine Art* offers an in-depth account of the art school's timeline - reviewing its directorships' goals and the curriculum that was offered throughout the years. "Michaelis reverted to a relatively narrow fine art curriculum, divorced from most aspects of design practice as well as from architecture – a curriculum which persists to the present day." (Tietze, 2015, p. 4).

The Michaelis School of Fine Art took the stance "that universities should not teach primarily vocational skills and that design belonged within the social and educational world of technical colleges instead". As Shiner (2003, p. 5) notes, "one of the key changes that led to our modern conception of art was a new theoretical division between the concepts of the aesthetic and of the useful – a division that gave rise, in turn, to an unprecedented split between the notion of the artist (the 'fine' artist) on the one hand, and the craftsman or artisan on the other." Tietze (2015, p. 5) goes on to state that "it was the unspoken understanding of the university as a place of refinement and leisured study. If an art school were to be tolerated within its borders, that school had to identify itself likewise as a site of refinement, removed from the utilitarian and commercial in ordinary life and dedicated to the fostering of the intellect." In relation to this statement there is an explicit inference that the university department still exercises this mode of operation and this research study positions itself as trying to understand if this mode is still relevant or needs to change within the modern contemporary arts education space.

At present Michaelis students still create artworks that are developed under a specific conceptual narrative, often devoid of functionality and objects that are in itself non-utilitarian. This Fine Art mode of curriculum has been the development of years of evolution and alignment within the research-intensive structures of a traditional university whereby "the concept of 'fine art', with its presumed relationship to high forms of thought and inspired personal insight, has been mobilised for this purpose." It was however seen as "a university art school that prioritised the fine arts was depriving students of large areas of creativity, both practically and theoretically." (Tietze, 2015, p. 5).

According to Hedgcock & Lee (2017, p. 19) "a purposeful curriculum is required to improve the capabilities of the students and make them employable and industry ready which makes them able to face real-world problems. One of the ways to redesign an efficient curriculum is through industry integration." Fine Art is different in nature to other educational courses as there is no definite blueprint or one-size-fits all to the career opportunities present once a student has graduated. Rather Fine Art studies aims to equip students with the necessary capabilities to become adaptable and integrate into multi-faceted creative opportunities.

The Fine Arts curriculum although diverse enough does still need elements directly related to the arts industry. "Artists are being educated as explorers, problem-solvers, and members of their artistic communities. Through these kinds of learning processes, students in higher arts foster their artistic identity as they develop technique, knowledge of practice, and their artistic philosophy" (Hatfield et al., 2006, cited in Koh & Kan, 2021, p. 2). Luckett & Baijnath (2019, p. 27) state "that 'mainstream curriculum' – what gets taught and how – has remained mostly untouched, ring-fenced as the domain of disciplinary expertise, and often defended by the liberal ideology of academic freedom. Inherited institutional cultures, including approaches to curriculum development, the language of learning and teaching and academic development programmes remain based on assimilationist models and hegemonic norms." In the scope of this research study, one of the focus points is to analyse the various modes of curriculum within the Fine Art department at the University of Cape Town. Additionally, the study aims to present relevant perspectives from alumni.

Decolonisation of education and the protests

The Rhodes Must Fall and Fees Must Fall student protests formed significant movements in South Africa that called for the decolonization of higher education at universities across the country. These protests were driven by a range of interconnected issues, including historical inequalities, racial disparities, and the high cost of education. While they were distinct movements, they shared a common goal of transforming the higher education system in South Africa to be one that is more inclusive, equitable, and reflective of the country's diverse population. The initial protests were sparked over the concerns of the statue of Cecil John Rhodes – which was seen as a symbol of oppression and a reminder of colonialisms' legacy. Chetty and Knaus (2016) argue that “the student protests are a manifestation of a class struggle in South African universities” (cited in Le Grange, 2016, p. 1).

This was clearly apparent in how higher education is perceived in South Africa – a university qualification was a tool that provided people with higher economic earning potential and a route out of poverty. The Rhodes Must Fall movement evolved to become a broader call for the decolonisation of the university curriculum and institutional environment. Students began demanding a curriculum that incorporated African and indigenous perspectives and that the university should be more representative of the demographics of South Africa. When the Fees Must Fall movement emerged in October 2015 due to protests over tuition fee increases, it quickly spread to universities across the country. Both movements mobilized students and activists, leading to increased awareness and dialogue about the need for decolonization in South African universities.

“Since inception, all South African universities adopted Western models of academic organisation which largely excluded and decimated the knowledges of colonised people. The colonial model of academic organisation of the university, based on Western disciplinary knowledge, was entrenched during apartheid and has not been redressed in post-apartheid in any serious way.” (Le Grange, 2016, p. 5)

The protest movements pressured universities to re-evaluate their curricula, hiring practices, and institutional cultures to be more inclusive and representative of the country's diverse population. These movements helped shift the national discourse and encouraged policymakers to prioritize higher education transformation as an important issue. At the Michaelis School of Fine Art protesting art students setup camps on campus and embarked on ‘decolonisation imbizos’ – meetings amongst students, alumni and art practitioners to discuss aspects of curriculum and coursework and how it needed to be changed at the university department. The protesting students then developed a memorandum of over fifty (50) pages citing their concerns and posing corrective actions to academic, teaching and support staff on how to ‘decolonise’ the Fine Art department.

Many of the students' distress was a result of the curriculum not taking into account Africanised examples of art and art production, viewing art history and discourse from a purely Westernised perspective and disregarding student's cultural capital and lived experiences. Ted Aoki (1999) argued that “curriculum should not focus only on the planned (curriculum-as-plan) but also on how it is lived (curriculum-as-lived) – how the curriculum is lived by students and teachers. Legitimizing the curriculum-as-lived necessitates taking seriously how students are experiencing the current university curriculum and using this as a basis for its decolonisation.”

Through the actions of the protest movements and bringing decolonisation to mainstream discussions, higher education institutions embarked on transformational projects to implement changes to how university departments and the curriculum it offers was developed and experienced by students. Although this was at the level of policy and frameworks – the execution of these were left to the university faculties and departments to fulfil. Curriculum at the Michaelis School of Fine Art was relatively changed to begin to encompass some Africanised views and more local contemporary examples, but the entire existing curriculum was not wholly interrogated – although this was directly in the hands of the academic staff who possess the required agency to initiate any form of change.

Alumni engagement

Alumni are to be considered as vital stakeholders to the educational institution. Younis (2002) argued that “the input of alumni is vital to the development and improvement of the program”. It can clearly be seen that “colleges and universities are increasingly calling upon alumni to ‘provide critical assessments of the institution’s performance in preparing students to lead productive and rewarding lives,’ and it is now recognised that there is a vast alumni research domain to be explored” (Pettit & Litten, 1999). Richards (2001) stated that “the alumni are as the providing evidence of their outputs in pedagogical competence and the relevance of what they have learned to their needs”. Bauer & Bennet (2016) have mentioned that “alumni judgment of undergraduate experience can be an accurate measure of undergraduate achievement.”

There is considerable evidence that alumni feedback surveys are being used as a positive means to assess success of the programmes being taught. “An alumni survey had been conducted among the Masters and PhD graduate alumni of the Faculty of Engineering and Built Environment, Universiti Kebangsaan Malaysia (UKM) to enhance the academic programmes as part of the continual quality improvement initiatives for graduate studies at the faculty” (Ratri & Hapsari, 2019). Clark et. al (2015) used alumni feedback to conduct research in the article titled ‘It’s everything else you do...’: Alumni views on extracurricular activities and employability. “Quantitative and qualitative information was needed, so a mixed-methods approach was used. A questionnaire provided numerical information and interviews, and the free text section of the questionnaire allowed for elaboration on the quantitative aspects. Surveys were carried out of alumni, that is, of those graduates still registered with and so contactable by a university. Using alumni from a single university allows a partial control over some of the academic, demographic, and geographical variables as student leave for their careers.” (Clark et. al, 2015).

In the research study titled *Assessing Undergraduate Engineering Programmes using Alumni Feedback* by Sankaran and Rath (2021) there is a clear statement that “a robust liaison with the alumni community is imperative and integral for the development of any academic institution because the benefits are perceived to be more. The role of alumni in engineering education is indispensable and their viewpoints add more benefit to curriculum enhancement and acts as an indicator for measuring the quality of teaching.”

Fine Arts studies should be actively engaging with alumni for participation in understanding the respective viewpoints and perspectives that would be beneficial to the course structure and development of better suited methods of pedagogy and curriculum. Utilising alumni feedback for creative arts courses at higher education institutions could open up completely unseen and unique perspectives of what could be relevant in arts curricula and what should be considered to be designed into existing curricula.

Kumar & Rewari (2022) state that “the first module of designing a curriculum should be focused on getting the feedback of various stakeholders of the course on the existing or proposed curriculum. The purpose of collecting the feedback is to identify the gaps between the expectations of different stakeholders and what academia offers.” Curricula should be inspected and developed on a continual basis in order to be refined and progressive to the needs of research criteria, student employment and industry requirements “Researchers identify alumni as an important stakeholder group (e.g. Stout et al., 2004; Stout & West, 2004) who can provide valuable insights into strengths and weaknesses of their educational experience, which will benefit the design of the programmes. Indeed, the alumni of an educational institution are in a unique position to be able to provide valuable input into the design of the educational programmes, in terms of feedback on the current programmes and suggestions for improvement.” (Carr et. al 2006). Alumni within arts departments are hired to teach classes on a temporary basis but they have limited powers to develop curriculum and rather have to teach already set content by the permanent staff members. “Many fine arts graduates describe themselves as brokers across disciplines. The process of innovation that is described is generally social – close

links to social and professional networks open up new opportunities, and the process of creating or pursuing new opportunities often crosses disciplinary boundaries.” (Oakley et. al, 2008). It is clear that alumni possess a vast amount of knowledge and perspectives that could be absolutely beneficial to the coursework and curricula that university departments offer.

Universities around the world have in place exercises aimed at reviewing and updating current curricula, however Fine Art are slow to deal with newer forms of change, often settled on the formal structures of traditional disciplines and a mere introduction to interactive digital and virtual media, performance and installation art. Buckley and Conomos (2009) state that art schools are “in a perpetual state of “moral panic” as to how to deal with these new art forms of extraction and immersion. This is further complicated by the possibility that a fair few non-art academics in senior university management, although familiar with the more established arts in very general terms, may be judging by their pedagogic rhetoric.” “If arts programs are to address these criticisms concerning skill development, collecting information from current students as well as alumni is an instrumental aspect of curricular modification.” (Dumford & Miller, 2015). Consensus needs to be made in certain terms of how to establish new knowledge and enable it to be integrated into arts curricula.

Global arts education

The arts educator should be seen as someone that is inherently aware of the nature of artistic practice - with continually evolving mediums and emergent techniques. Contemporary artists are always pushing the boundaries to create something new, unseen, and unique. Art educators although aware of this, are also preferential to their own personal creative interests and disciplinary mediums which they are more accustomed to using. This has the potential to lead to stagnancy in curriculum development - where newer developments are seen as too risky or unfamiliar to engage with. Clarke et. al (2018) states that “art educators rely on tacit knowledge that is often difficult to articulate. Even though their artistic knowledge and experience may be substantial, this experience does not always translate into transparent learning and assessment processes and practices.” Fine Art education at tertiary level is predominantly the development of professional levels of practical and conceptual ability in creative processes. “Studio-based pedagogies are the well-established norm for an education in art practice where students think through creative practice, take conceptual risks by engaging with materials, imagine and speculate with ideas and processes, and seek solutions through visual or material means” (Grierson, 2011).

Global arts education has progressively widened the scope of what should be included in the curriculum and coursework for creative qualifications. “Contemporary art schools face the challenge of integrating the substantial strengths of their historical practices with new ideas and models of art and education. Changes in contemporary art and educational paradigms are calling for change in approaches to teaching practice” (Marshall, 2006). This globalisation of arts education has consistently made it imperative that art institutions review what they are teaching and look at what is lacking - but this is often not the case in most institutions. González-Zamar and Abad-Segura (2021) state that “the term arts is associated with visual creative teaching method, design education, learning, skill, decision making, creative work, fine arts, industrial design, performance, product design, 3D printing, architecture, blended learning, creative problem solving, development, environmental education, industry, artificial intelligence, computer aided instruction, creativity development and education program”.

There are many hidden aspects that affect the curriculum structure of Fine Art courses at tertiary institutions, from traditionalism and policies to complacency and lack of resources. Globalisation of education as a concept of progress is placing significant pressure and emphasis on initiating change in education. “For art educators, these concepts of globalisation present problems to be investigated and possibilities not yet realised. On the one hand, globalisation allows art educators to be aware of more things in our visual environment. This awareness is reflected in the art of our time and should be reflected in the teaching of visual culture” (Tavin & Hausman, 2004).

One of the central works of literature reviewed for this research paper is *Rethinking the Contemporary Art School* by Brad Buckley and John Conomos (2009). This publication gives an in-depth analysis of how fine art departments in traditional universities need to stay relevant, its role in society and in the context of a globalised educational world. “The intersections of art, culture, technology, and dissent are vividly embodied in studio art production and teaching, signifying that art education functions as a discursive irritant in the larger context of the classical-modern university and its ideology of scientism and vocational education. Art education, ideally speaking, should be critically defined, and practiced beyond the (art) market. It is constantly rethought, restructured, reinvented. Art schools are concerned with the transgressive, with the single and singular - artist dissecting contemporary reality. Art is a cultural conversation that is acutely aware of the predominant mythologies of our everyday life, which means art is both politicising and political.” (Buckley & Conomos, 2009). Considering how art departments in universities operate “art education today tries to link artworks with social, cultural, and political issues (Dawtre et al., 1996). Postmodern art education is open, fluid and devoid of absolute rules (Blohm, 1995), favouring diverse didactic approaches and content (e.g. popular culture and mixed media). It transcends divisions between particular visual art disciplines such as drawing, painting and sculpture and is inclusive of non-arts disciplines.” (Zupancic, 2005).

In the globalised educational context, it is important to take into account that we are part of a world run on economical means, where the fine arts industry participates. This means that “arts having to function and be integrated into a business environment, the new curriculum has introduced business related subjects such as entrepreneurship and management.” (Ebewo & Sirayi, 2018). “The graduate should not only have a sound grasp of knowledge in his or her own field but should also be able to cope with related and sometimes totally different fields and have a general understanding of the world. Most importantly, he or she should not only acquire a body of knowledge but should be able to apply it to real life situations.” (Ngara 1995, 77). “Without doubt, students in the arts are eager for both professional development and entrepreneurship education.” (Beckman, 2007).

White (2022) mentions that “arts entrepreneurship educators are faced with at least two obvious choices: resist accountability or embrace and articulate specific and measurable contextual business/career/technology learning objectives for arts students.” “Arts entrepreneurship education can serve as contextual business/career/technology education for arts students.” (White, 2022). “Although most of the institutions are beginning to talk about professional practice, generally, they aren’t really giving their students that practical guideline of what happens when you step out of the institution, from a non-academic perspective” (Les Cohn cited by Maina & Walker, 2022)

The globalisation of arts education directly affects the student experience and goes about defining the significant student attributes that are required to successfully navigate the arts industry once students have graduated. Students that are in the university system and alumni hold important and differing perspectives that could play a beneficial role in the way that courses are structured - as they have experienced the progression of the coursework and have an understanding of venturing out into the arts and creative industries. Duncum (2001) sees art classrooms as “crucial sites for discussing issues raised by global culture” and students of visual culture as imagining “alternative projects of social existence”.

Art students and the academic staff need to relate to the existing curriculum offered within institutions and begin to consider the relevance and usefulness of each approach, while reflecting on what should be implemented under the scope of global arts education. “Art students need access to training in other disciplines, combining what we may identify as the very best of historical and contemporary drawing, painting, sculpture, photography, and installation art with conservation, ecological, and environmental efforts; ethics; cultural anthropology; urban sociology; behavioural psychology; global political science and economics; robotics; and media theory, among other fields. Nevertheless, the challenge is not just to open old boxed-up departments and bring in this challenging and refreshing

intellectual diversity; it is also to not set this in stone” (Pujol, 2009, p. 5). “While universities across the world have changed the composition of their student and staff bodies, transformation of their cultural systems has generally proved to be more elusive.” (Behari-Leak, 2017).

Fine Art students enter undergraduate studies with significantly different perspectives of what constitutes a career in the arts, yet over the duration of their qualification this is not fully resolved, and many are still unsure of their next step at the time of graduation. This is where the student experience of Fine Art courses are of importance and understanding the attributes that allow some students to seamlessly progress into the arts world, while others may struggle to make it. “In the new knowledge economy and developments in the creative industry, art for-art’s-sake is gradually losing currency” (Ebewo & Sirayi, 2018). Many graduating Fine Art students are confused as to how to effectively make use of the creative skills acquired through their qualification once immersed into the arts industry. “Often, people who wish to pursue a career in the visual arts are not aware of all the roles that one can take up in the industry beyond being a practicing artist and if they are, it can be intimidating figuring out where to start.” (Maina & Walker, 2022).

“It appears that one of the worst outcomes for all stakeholders of professional arts training programs occurs when a newly graduated arts student abandons the field due to financial necessity. This outcome does not help increase the worth, merit or value of professional arts degrees but rather, devalues and demoralises the arts student and is detrimental to the field of arts education.” (White, 2022). Pavlou & Kadji (2021) state that “education for the twenty-first century needs to be radically revisited in terms of the objectives, knowledge, skills and competences it has to transfer”. This indeed holds true for Fine Arts tertiary qualifications and how students are meant to proceed into arts related careers that are sustainable and financially viable.

Fine Art institutions such as the Michaelis School of Fine Art at the University of Cape Town need to review their alignment to the global arts educational practices and consider the student perspective in what makes the curriculum relevant to a modern economically driven society.

Chapter 3 - Theoretical Framework

In this chapter, we establish the theoretical perspectives used in the research study. These allowed the progression of the research to find contextual parameters and to understand the data through the selected educational frameworks.

Critical Realism

Critical realism emphasizes the importance of understanding the underlying structures and mechanisms that shape experiences and outcomes, while also acknowledging the social, cultural, and historical contexts that influence these structures. In this way Critical Realism as a theory can be applied to an educational context to better understand its systems. According to Bhaskar (2008), “it is possible to differentiate three levels of reality: the empirical (that which we can apprehend through sense data), the actual – which refers to events that can be experienced, but which occur whether we are aware of them or not; the actual emerges when the causal powers of the real, which consists of “objects, their structures or natures and their causal powers and liabilities” (Fairclough et al., 2002, p. 3). “Critical realism is regarded as an underlabourer or underpinning philosophy for social realism” (Archer, 1995, 1996, 2000). This theoretical perspective offers the affordance that curriculum changes and enhancements within Fine Art studies are a suitable space for systematic inquiry and analysis.

This can be done by examining the factors that determine how the curriculum is shaped and impacted. “According to critical realists, the social world (in this case the university) consists of three strata or levels of reality: the Empirical, where agents observe and experience phenomena; the Actual, where events that shape what is experienced are created and established; and the Real where invisible and intangible mechanisms, that give rise to or structure experiences and events, are located” (Behari-Leak, 2017, p. 488). “A critical realist perspective postulates that there is a reality that is possible to know. To develop this knowledge requires that we understand that reality is differentiated, structured, and stratified” (Archer, 1995, p. 9, Bhaskar, 2008, p. 12). Critical realists also offer the notion of ‘emergence’ which is seen as an enabling feature that allows the domains of structure, culture, and agency to develop and acknowledge new emergent properties that might become available in the relevant social contexts. These emergent properties then have social agents that can enable and act on these circumstances or choose not to through social interactions. “Events in the world (whether natural or social) come about as a result of particular causal mechanisms (Archer 1995, p.15). However, the fact that it is possible for a mechanism to exercise causal powers, does not mean that it will; what one can say for sure is that mechanisms have tendencies to exert causal influences.” (Vorster, 2010, p. 15).

Social Realism

“Archer’s theory of social realism provides the theoretical framework for explicating processes of social change or reproduction.” (Vorster, 2010, p. 18). Social Realism in education emphasizes the importance of taking into account the social context and structural constraints when designing educational programs and policies. It is based on the broader theoretical framework of critical realism, which suggests that social structures and mechanisms have real effects on individuals and their actions.

According to Archer (1996), education should not be seen in isolation from the broader social context. Instead, it should be understood as a system that is influenced by social structures, cultural norms, and economic forces. It emphasizes the role of education in either perpetuating or challenging existing social structures and inequalities. By recognizing the influence of social structures on education, educators can develop strategies to promote social justice and equity within the educational system.

In this research study, one of the main considerations is to unpack some of the determining factors that define how curriculum and coursework in a Fine Arts degree programme are conceptualised, developed, translated, and delivered to the student body. This involves examining the underlying and unseen factors that drive the evolution of curriculum change or the lack thereof within the university department. Archer's Morphogenetic Theory provides a relevant social realist framework that is suited to evaluate curriculum change and determine if the Fine Arts qualification at the Michaelis School of Fine Art is progressive in light of globalised arts education. Boughey & McKenna (2021, p. 25) iterate that "Archer's morphogenetic framework not only allows us to analyse the interplay of structure, culture, and agency over time; it also allows us to account for why the emergence of change, 'morphogenesis', happens or does not happen."

Archer's Morphogenetic Framework

"At the heart of Margaret Archer's (1995) theory is the concept of morphogenesis (and its inverse, morphostasis). The term morphogenesis refers to change (-genesis) in the shape of things (morpho-), a change in agency, culture, or structure. The term morphostasis, as the name suggests, refers to a scenario where no change takes place. The morphogenetic cycle is an analytical framework that follows the course of time. In the arena of higher education, we are centrally focused on the morphogenesis of student agency; we aim for students to leave higher education with different knowledge and capacity for action than that with which they entered" (Case, 2015). The theory focuses on understanding the relationship between structure and agency in shaping human behaviour and social change. In the context of education, Archer's Morphogenetic Theory emphasises the interplay between societal structures, individual agency, and educational outcomes. It suggests that educational practices and institutions are influenced by social structures, such as cultural norms, economic systems, and political ideologies. At the same time, individuals within these educational contexts possess agency, which refers to their capacity to act and make choices.

Educational Context

From an educational perspective, the Morphogenetic Theory suggests that educational interventions and reforms should consider both the structural aspects of the system and the agency of individuals. It acknowledges that educational practices and policies need to be responsive to societal contexts, while also promoting the development of agency among students and educators. This can involve creating learning environments that foster critical thinking, autonomy, and empowerment, allowing individuals to actively shape their educational experiences.

Fine Arts curriculum and coursework are strongly determined by the cultural reproduction of the contemporary practice of artists situated both locally and abroad. The nature of the discipline is reliant on awareness and understanding of these practices, influences, and artistic output of peers within the arts field – practicing artists, curations, exhibitions, art auctions, art residencies, art competitions, and research publications. "Traditionally, the focus has been on pedagogical knowledge, subject-matter knowledge, pedagogical content knowledge, and curricular knowledge." (Pavlou & Kadji, 2021). These all directly affect the perceptions and interests of academics and educators in the department and how they consider what is relevant to the curriculum that is offered. Archer (1995, 1996, 1998, 2000) indicates that "change in the domain of culture often takes far longer to achieve than change in the domain of structure. Furthermore, if discourses in the domain of culture do not complement the structural change, unintended consequences may result."

"Higher education in South Africa is fraught with inequalities that have hindered transformation. These are the legacies of the apartheid era. Various frameworks, policies, and laws have been established to address this issue. Some of such frameworks, policies, and regulations passed to address the inequalities in higher education and achieve transformation include the Higher Education Act, 1997; White Paper for Post-School Education and Training, 2014; National Framework for Enhancing Academics as University Teachers, 2018, among others" (Maama, 2023). These frameworks, policies, and laws have on paper clearly stated how change should take effect but ensuring that implementation

is warranted is often dependent on the higher educational institution itself to take significant action. This is often whereby the necessary changes needed go against the cultural and structural norms that are present in the institution and therefore result in morphostasis (no consequential change taking place). This is a primary reason why to assess changes within educational institutions there needs to be an examination of the interactions between the 'parts' and 'people' - the social interactions and the privileged positionality of these roles.

Structure

"Structures are irreducible to the people who brought them about or the people who operate within them. Thus, Archer contends that people are born into or enter a pre-structured context. Structure is understood to include social institutions, (sedimented) social practices, roles, positions, and so on" (Vorster, 2010, p. 13). "Structure has to do with material goods (unequally distributed across society) and is also the domain of social positions and roles" (Case, 2015, p. 843). In the context of a Fine Art university department, the structural aspect refers to the formal organization and institutional framework that governs the department's operations. This includes the hierarchy of authority, administrative policies, and physical infrastructure. The structures at the Michaelis School of Fine Art that are present are the teaching and learning systems, curriculum, pedagogies and assessment procedures that have developed and become the operational standards since its inception as an art school within the Humanities faculty of the University of Cape Town and operating within the confines of a research-intensive higher educational institution.

Culture

Archer (1995) argues "that cultural factors have a profound influence on how individuals perceive their educational opportunities and constraints, and subsequently, how they make choices and decisions within the educational system." The cultural aspect in Archer's theory pertains to the shared beliefs, values, norms, and practices that shape the department's identity and how its members interact. "Culture, relates to the body of ideas and beliefs" (Slemming, 2019). The Michaelis School of Fine Art is steeped in traditional and conceptual praxis to develop students as particular practitioners of contemporary art. This culture has been a dominant factor in how the school has maintained its current way of operating through decades of existence. "The potential for change to occur in the social system or the cultural system is also conditioned by what happened in the past". (Boughey & McKenna, 2021). Understanding the overall culture of an educational system is crucial as it shapes the behaviour of individuals, and the structures present within it. It also emphasizes the interdependent relationship between culture and education, underscoring the importance of comprehending cultural dynamics in order to promote more effective educational practices.

Agency

"According to Archer (1995), agency is the domain of human action and interactions. Archer explains that agency is the ability of an individual to act autonomously and to make their own free choices." Within higher education institutions, agency refers to the capacity of staff members, students or stakeholders at the university/college to act unaided and influence or change the direction and development of the faculty, department or educational space. Although agency can be enacted upon to facilitate change, agency can also be used to maintain the status quo. Agents, whether social, individual, group or corporate, have the ability to enact agency. "Agency plays a key role in the morphogenetic process" (Maama, 2023).

Stages of the Morphogenetic Cycle (T1 – T4)

"Morphogenesis has the character of a cycle which involves three phases, (Timeline 1) structural or cultural conditioning, (Timeline 2 – Timeline 3) social or sociocultural interaction, and (Timeline 4) social or cultural elaboration" (Zeuner, 1991). Figure 3a, Figure 3b and Figure 3c located on page 28 depict the Morphogenetic Cycles in relation to structure, culture and agency. "According to Vega (2020), the study of components of Archer's sociological theory and the form of interaction between agency, structure, and culture can provide perspectives that help to understand higher educational improvement processes. This is based on the view that the logic of the morphogenetic cycle results in a

historical analysis of a transformation process; that is, it focuses on its implementation” (Karlsson, 2020).

Structural Conditioning (T1)

During this initial stage, it is observed that societal structures such as institutions, norms, and cultural systems have a significant impact on individuals. These structures provide the context that helps individuals develop their identities and shape their understanding of the world. Societal structures also influence an individual’s perceptions, preferences, and actions. The development of the Fine Arts curriculum and coursework has been shaped by the structural conditioning of being part of a research-intensive university and the traditional position it held within the art education landscape in Africa. The University of Cape Town is a historically privileged university, opposed to the apartheid systems and yet slow to act from the social changes required until the dawn of democracy in South Africa. In UCT’s Vision 2030 strategy document it states that “like most English-speaking colonial universities in South Africa, UCT has a contradictory history. Moulded on the Western tradition of university excellence over its existence, UCT has struggled with its own identity, culture, and position in society. While under apartheid it stood for academic freedom and its right to teach all students, this position was not always consistent when it came to black academic staff and campus segregation. UCT’s political resistance to apartheid, as imperfect as it was, constituted an important base to start the process of deracialising and transforming the university” (UCT Vision 2030, 2021).

The Fine Arts curriculum at the Michaelis School of Fine Art has shaped and evolved over numerous years since its inception as a university department. It however clearly favoured Westernised art contexts and European/American dominated disciplines and techniques for art creation. The department focused on retaining only traditional disciplines and that fell into the categorisation of what is narrowly deemed ‘fine art’.

Trying to fit within the pre-defined structural realm of what constitutes a research-intensive university department - the Michaelis School of Fine Art shifted away from all forms of utilitarian art and developed more in the arena of contemporary conceptual art. Tietze (2015) elaborates that “the art school has often had to mark its difference from art training centres outside by emphasising its intellectualism, its transcendence of mere manual labour. The concept of ‘fine art’, with its presumed relationship to high forms of thought and inspired personal insight, has been mobilised for this purpose.” This can be seen as the context of how structural conditioning (T1) according to Archer’s social realism theory of Morphogenesis resulted in the limiting and shaping of the current curriculum that is offered at the Michaelis School of Fine Art.

Castells (2001) has “characterised universities as complex dynamic systems with at least four contradictory functions: the generation and transmission of ideologies, the selection and formation of dominant elites, the production and application of knowledge and the training of a skilled labour force, including the state bureaucracy.” These functions encompass how universities have over a long duration of time developed the structural conditions to function in a very specific way - often making agents reluctant or unsure how to effect change within these systems. Lockett (2016) defines it as “these systems of structure and culture set up ‘situational logics’ configured through particular institutions and roles that set up differential power relations and access to material and cultural resources, thus shaping the daily events and experiences that individuals encounter, predisposing them to act in particular ways and enabling or constraining the emergence of human agency.

Cultural Conditioning (T1)

Cultural conditioning refers to the process through which individuals internalize and are influenced by the cultural values, norms, and structures of the society or social groups to which they belong. It emphasizes the impact of cultural factors on shaping individuals’ dispositions, attitudes, and behaviours. According to Archer (1995), cultural conditioning shapes individuals’ consciousness, self-perception, and understanding of their roles and possibilities in society. This conditioning occurs through various socialization processes, such as family, peers, media, and educational institutions,

which transmit cultural values and expectations. Cultural conditioning plays an important role in developing an individual's decision-making processes and shaping their agency.

The University of Cape Town has a historical tradition rooted in the development of academic research and knowledge production from colonial times. With the advent of democracy in South Africa and the abolishment of the apartheid system, there have been great shifts at the university to decolonialise curricula and provide greater equitable access to the student population of South Africa. Archer explains that “the starting point of cultural morphogenesis is cultural conditioning, understood as the ideas which at any given time have holders. Only if ideas have holders can they have any effect on the agency. According to Archer, cultural conditioning is characterised by its logical relations” (Zeuner, 1999). This directly places the rationale that academic staff at the university are in a position to exact change and initiate development within the institution. However, this is highly dependent on their own cultural conditioning and the innate willingness to use their agency to achieve curriculum alignment with other global educational institutions.

Luckett (2012) explains how the University of Cape Town “in reaction to this and other state interventions, the university tried to protect its traditional identity and culture by consolidating the disciplines and by reinventing itself as a ‘research-led’, ‘world-class’ university (suggesting perhaps a return to cultural morphostasis). In what appears to be an attempt to portray an ivy-league identity, strategic documents of the time describe the university as a world-class, research-intensive, medium-sized contact university that offers a good student learning experience (for very high fees). There was a ‘necessary complementarity’ between this intensification of a research culture and the development of improved organisational structures and resources for research and the old elitist aspirations and ethos. But in keeping with the advent of managerialism at the top, greater accountability for research outputs was built into the performance management instrument for academics.”

The institutional culture and its structural elaboration have led to the current course offerings being developed within the university and particularly the Michaelis School of Fine Art over many years of operation. However, it can be seen that the culture of a Fine Art department also has the possibility to significantly influence the agency of individuals. The Michaelis School of Fine Art is a department with a strong emphasis on conceptual, critical, and creative thinking about contemporary art practice. This can encourage students and faculty to push boundaries and take risks in their work, promoting a culture of experimentation and innovation - however, it has a primary focus on concept and narrative, without necessarily considering the required fundamental skills needed to develop a sustainable career in the arts industry.

Social interaction (T2 - T3)

Social interaction is the process through which individuals learn and internalize the values, norms, and roles of their society. It occurs through interactions with family, peers, educational institutions, and other socializing agents. Social interaction is a crucial stage in Archer's Morphogenetic framework as it analyses the development of individuals, and how it shapes their understanding of social expectations and their roles within the broader social structure. “Social interaction elaborates upon the composition of social structures by modifying current internal and necessary structural relationships and introducing new ones in the process of morphogenesis.” (Vorster, 2010).

Since the advent of democracy in South Africa - the national government has had the realisation of all the major problems associated with basic and higher education inherited from the apartheid era. There are and have been numerous viewpoints, discussions, conferences, frameworks, policies, and meetings held to interrogate these issues and create a more balanced educational atmosphere in the country. Transformation, however, in the higher education sector is seen as an ongoing evolving project. Maama (2023), states that “at the heart of the discussions on higher education lie several critical questions: What constitutes educational improvement? What is the role of the state in driving such improvement? How should the education system be organised to achieve transformation?

What are the measurable indicators of educational improvement? These questions have sparked intense debates within the education discourse, highlighting their controversial nature.” These can be seen as efforts by agents with a certain amount of social privilege utilising their agency to push towards some change – albeit within certain boundaries. “Various attempts have been made to transform South African higher education to wean it from the apartheid legacy. Hence, with the dawn of democracy, more black students entered higher education as the youth perceived education to be the means to a better quality life” (Mzangwa, 2019). This has however not produced the intended results in a country where the majority of the population is in low-income brackets and there is a significant rise of graduates who cannot find jobs and are adding to the high unemployment rate. Maama (2023, p. 1224) states that “most of these students may not have the required knowledge and skills for tertiary education. This has resulted in a high unemployment rate among university graduates.”

Identifying Agents

In the context of the Fine Arts department at the University of Cape Town, agency can be seen to be expressed through agents in particular groups – university strategic leadership, various senior faculty members, heads of departments and administrative staff, the student body, and academic staff involved in the research or teaching and learning processes. Identifying the enabling factors over the last decade that could have shifted the agency of these groups of agents is limitless – however, in the specific considerations of how curriculum change has been affected over ten years at the Michaelis School of Fine Art, these can be considered:

- Departmental staff developed and delivered innovative art courses aligned to their own research interests,
- Students pursuing unique artistic projects and approaches that brought them art awards, publicity, or industry recognition,
- Administrative staff developing departmental policies and budgetary resource allocations to enhance and improve the functionality of the different art courses.
- New academics and part-time teaching staff that develop new projects to be added to the coursework
- Students collectively protesting towards a more Africanised and inclusive curriculum.

Archer identifies two groups of agents: primary agents and corporate agents. Primary agents are accorded very little power and influence by the social structures and cultures within which they find themselves. According to Archer, they are ‘collectivities sharing the same life chances’ (Archer 2000, p. 263). This can be seen during the Rhodes Must Fall and Fees Must Fall student movements that developed the necessary collective agency to nationally protest the persisting structures in higher educational institutions across the country. Students used their agency to push forward agendas of university decolonisation and open up spaces for more access, equity and academic validation of the knowledges produced and perpetuated.

At the Michaelis School of Fine Art - curricula were guided specifically to enforce and set up an elitist notion of conceptual and contemporary art. The department over decades developed a form of gatekeeping of what criteria needed to be met to be considered an academic artist. The curriculum and coursework remained stringent to the core values of the department to continually reproduce artists of a certain calibre – regardless of the shifting spaces of globalised arts education. “Academic knowledge is produced using rules about what can count as research and is evidence-based. The process of producing academic knowledge is often discipline specific.” (Boughey & McKenna, 2021, p. 79).

Certain art forms were largely ignored due to it falling outside the categories of academic knowledge and research criteria. Anna Tietze (2015, p. 11) makes note of art mediums such as glass-blowing, woodwork, leatherwork, textiles, and jewellery design that were cast aside due to the notion that it had lesser status. These art forms were considered merely craft mediums and could not be

considered in the space of 'conceptual art'. Tietze (2015, p. 4) went on to explain how "unexamined assumptions and prejudices, respectively, about the artist and craftsman/designer have powerfully influenced theories of art education, and particularly adult art education, where the division between (fine) art and craft, and (fine) art and design, has intersected with social prejudice and assumptions about the appropriate training for different sectors of society." Archer (1995) insists that, "although human actors find themselves involuntarily inserted into prior differentiated distributions of power and resources, creating 'situational logics' that predispose them to act in certain ways, structural conditioning is always mediated by human reflexivity – such that some actors can and do choose to act counter to their own vested interests."

Considering the individual and corporate agency that is held by the various stakeholders involved at the Michaelis School of Fine Art - it can be perceived that resistance to change, and improvement of the curriculum is often based primarily on the structural conditioning that has persisted throughout many years of its existence. "We think it is important for academics to be continually reflecting on and reviewing their own epistemologies of knowledge and to be assessing how their views interact with students' views of knowledge." (Cliff & Woodward, 2004). Koloba (2017) reports that several people study for a qualification with no idea of where they will apply the knowledge and skills from the programme once they graduate. This can be found applicable from the alumni perspectives of the Michaelis graduates that are analysed in the upcoming chapter of the 'Analysis and Discussion'.

Interactions between social structures and agents

Vorster (2010) explains that "Morphogenesis is a theory about change – structural, cultural, social and agential change." There has been a constant tension between the formal structures of the Fine Art department and the agency of individuals within it over the period 2012 - 2022. This period was selected to be analysed as it was a decade of dynamic change in the South African higher education space as well as the political, social and economic sectors. Faculty members and students have challenged or adapted to the established structure by proposing new courses and new methods, advocating for curriculum changes or additions, or organising exhibitions externally, and developing research projects with other institutions. This dynamic interaction between structure and agency has led to the evolution of the department over this period of time.

Over the last decade, the Michaelis School of Fine Art has seen a significant change in departmental staff turnover - with older tenured professors retiring, non-white staff given the opportunity to serve directorships, various academics leaving to pursue positions at other universities locally or internationally, part-time staff changing over and new younger staff taking up permanent positions in the department. However, it can be assessed that due to the structural conditions developed over time and the institutional culture of the Fine Art department – the curriculum and coursework has not shifted notably and there is a slow pace to evolve. The Fine Art department still maintains a strict conceptual narrative of artistic teaching and learning that is led by staff members who were once students of the same department, set within their own limitations and research interests. This reinforces the culture of the department based on its traditions since its early inception. Vega (2020) makes us understand that "the systemic properties of society are consequences of past actions form the framework that limits and allows the action of agents." Lockett (2016), explains that "some situational logics are highly integrated, creating the potential for social reproduction of the status quo and correction or assimilation for those who fall outside the systems (morphostasis)."

Emergent Properties (SEPs and PEPs)

Within the last ten years, the Michaelis School of Fine Art has seen a substantial change to the staffing complement – across academic, technical, and support staff. Prior to that and bound by its traditional history as well as the privileged paradigm of being considered the best art school in the country, it had a certain status quo that was upheld. As the years went on there was an increase in the diversity of the staff hired by the university department. In 2015 and 2016 the student protest movements demanded a more equitable approach to staff in the different disciplines but also the

inclusion of more black part-time lecturers and tutors. In 2018 the first non-white director took up the helm of leadership at the school. Other noteworthy developments are the inclusion of new art theory and discourse programmes introduced by new academic staff, the setup of new technological equipment, facilities and workshops, student meals and materials bursaries, and more initiatives for student support and their wellbeing.

These modes of development clearly indicate that there has been a certain amount of structural and agential interchanges within the department that slowly allow the morphogenetic process to take place. “Structural emergent properties (SEPs) depend primarily on material resources, including people; cultural emergent properties (CEPs) develop as ideas, beliefs, values, rules and so on become part of the cultural landscape (Archer 1995, p. 176 – 180, Archer 1996, p. 107), while agential emergent properties (PEPs) come about as people interact in different contexts that require them to exercise different sets of powers as part of new groups or where individuals’ interactions are challenged within the natural, practical or social realms of reality” (Archer 1995, p. 184). Although there have been significant progress and developments within the department due to the exertion of staff emergent properties – the curriculum and coursework structures of the studio work courses remain relatively unchanged albeit with the same or similar project-based formats and methods of assessment and evaluation.

Structural elaboration (T4)

Structural elaboration refers to the process through which individuals and social structures mutually evolve and become more complex over time. This concept in the Morphogenetic cycle emphasizes the dynamic interplay between individual agency and the structural constraints and opportunities present within a society. As individuals go through the structural and cultural conditioning as well as the social interaction stages of the Morphogenetic Cycle, they will tend to reflect upon their actions and the societal contexts they operate in.

This self-reflection often results in a desire to adapt and modify existing social structures to better fit their needs and aspirations, or it sustains them if the prevailing conditions align to their cultural and social beliefs and values. This process of reconfiguration may ultimately lead to the elaboration and transformation of societal structures, creating new opportunities and constraints for future generations. “T4 is posterior to social interaction and denotes the social, cultural or agential elaboration. T4 then forms the context that conditions the next morphogenetic cycle and presents the next set of agents with either an enabling or a constraining context within which to operate.” (Vorster, 2010)

Writing about the South African educational context, Lockett (2001) argues that “an epistemically diverse curriculum is required to deal with the postmodern context. She identifies four kinds of knowledge that need to be part of an adequate curriculum for the 21st century. These are: propositional knowledge, practical knowledge, experiential knowledge, and epistemic knowledge.” The Michaelis School of Fine Art omits or ignores the consideration of coursework that would enable students to develop industry-related practical knowledge in order to understand how to develop a sustainable career as an artist in the art world.

In relation to the structural elaboration (T4) of Archer’s morphogenetic framework - it can be identified that there is a case of double morphogenesis. Archer’s concept of ‘double morphogenesis’ – explains that structural transformation inevitably changes the agents (PEPs) involved. “T4 is the outcome of the social interaction and it is also the start of the new T1 and thus forms the conditioning influences of the next cycle of morphogenesis” (Vorster, 2010).

The Morphogenetic Cycle

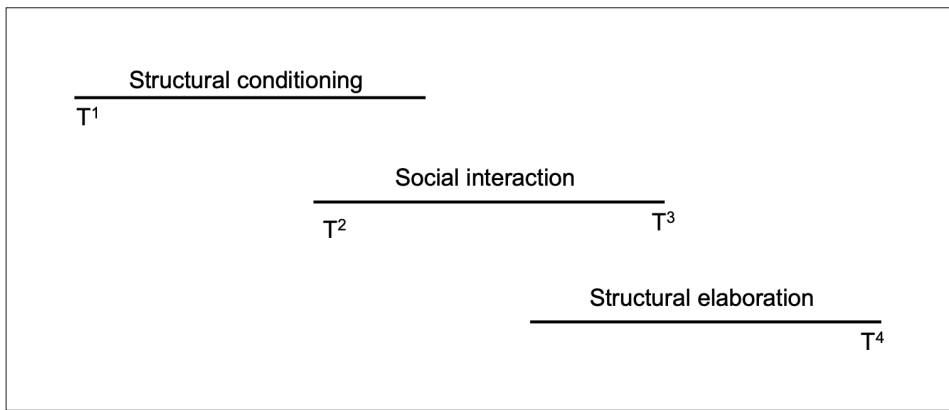


Figure 3a - Morphogenesis of Structure

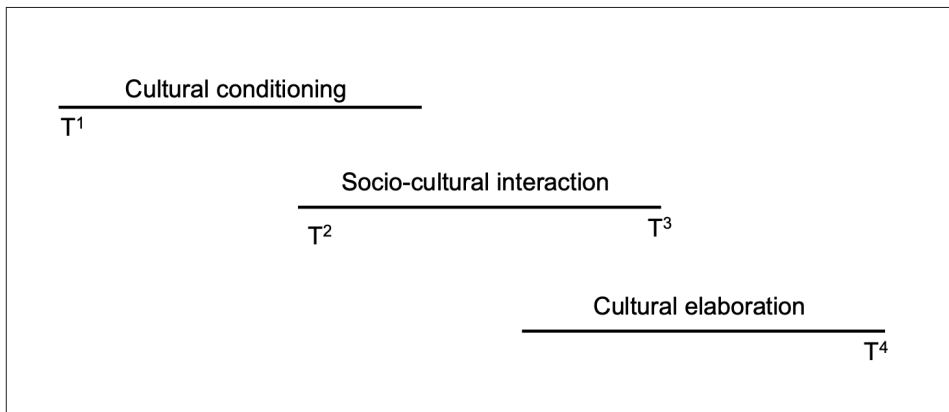


Figure 3b - Morphogenesis of Culture

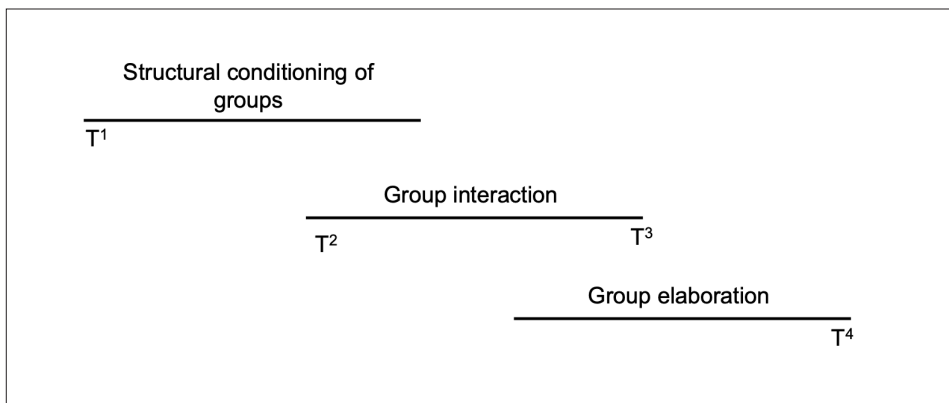


Figure 3c - Morphogenesis of Agency

When considering that agency lies directly with the Fine Art departmental staff in order to bring forth curriculum change that will align the coursework closer to industry-related requirements or globalised educational objectives – is this not seen as an imperative for equitable education in South Africa? Maama (2023) asks whether “higher education institutions should use their autonomy in determining the appropriate design of the programmes they offer. In the meantime, the following essential issues need to be addressed. Should public higher education institutions take the responsibility to contribute towards bridging the republic’s skills shortage actively? What level of commitment do the institutions take in graduates’ unemployment rate or lack of entrepreneurial skills? How dynamic are public higher education institutions in responding to changes in the economy’s needs?”.

An additional educational theory that is appropriately used for this research study is the Legitimation Code Theory by Karl Maton. This will be drawn on in order to establish the distinct nature of the current Fine Arts curriculum and to understand the progression of the knowledge dissemination throughout the undergraduate programme.

Legitimation Code Theory

Karl Maton’s Legitimation Code Theory (LCT) is a social realist framework that seeks to understand how knowledge is constructed, evaluated, and transmitted within social contexts, particularly within education. It focuses on the relationship between knowledge and power, examining how different forms of knowledge are legitimised and valued within society. Maton and Chen (2017) mention that “there are five dimensions to LCT: Specialization, Semantics, Autonomy, Temporality and Density. Each dimension is a set of concepts centred on theorising a different form of legitimation code.” Legitimation Code Theory (LCT) can define curriculum according to relevant codes such as the knowledge code, elite code, relativist code and knower code.

When viewed in the context of arts education, epistemic and social relations (Figure 3d) provide insight into important areas such as pedagogy and curriculum. This allows an identification of what is valued in the coursework offered during the Fine Arts programme.

Figure 3d - LCT Table of Specialisation

SPECIALISATION	FOCUS	AREA OF IMPORTANCE
Epistemic Relations	Curriculum	Project criteria and discipline content
	Pedagogy	Project teaching and tools used to complete project
Social Relations	Curriculum	Learner’s knowledge and creative ability
	Pedagogy	Learner’s ideas, concepts and understanding

The Specialisation Code refers to specialised knowledge that requires specific skills and attributes - therefore it is relevant to Fine Arts curriculum and the various studiowork disciplines offered. For the curriculum offered at the Michaelis School of Fine Art the dimension of Specialisation (Figure 3e) allows an understanding of how the knowledge is formulated and then transferred to art students. Maton and Chen (2017) elaborate that “the focus on the dimension of Specialisation which conceives social fields of practice as knowledge–knower structures whose organising principles are conceptualised as specialization codes that comprise epistemic relations and social relations.”

Maton and Chen (2017) define the ‘Knowledge and Knower Codes as follows:

Knowledge Code

- curriculum that emphasises content knowledge and downplays personal knowledge;
- pedagogy emphasising procedures for delivering teachers’ expert knowledge about subject content and downplaying personal dimensions of learning; and
- assessment with explicit criteria for evaluating learners’ states of knowledge and that downplays personal measures of achievement.

Knower Code

- curriculum downplaying content knowledge and emphasising personal experience;
- pedagogy downplaying teachers delivering subject content or structuring student learning, and emphasising the need for self-regulating learners to create their own understandings; and
- assessment avoiding explicit evaluative criteria and emphasising knowers evaluating themselves based on their own criteria.’

These codes are a method of interrogating and understanding the unseen elements that govern knowledge practices. What can be assessed utilising the Knowledge and Knower codes of LCT is how the curricula at the Michaelis School of Fine Art is disseminated and what happens in the process

of students that transition through the coursework offered. Epistemic relations are more prominent in the early years of study and begin to shift whereby social relations become more pronounced in the later years of study. Legitimation Code Theory is a valuable lens that can be used to examine the complexities of knowledge production and its validity to education and society.

By understanding the relevant codes and structures that govern the knowledge of specific courses and departments, educators are able to determine how particular knowledge is prioritised over other forms of knowledge. It can also be used to determine how assessment practices in education may favour certain disciplines and types of knowledge over others. “LCT theorises that while every kind of knowledge has a particular structure, it also has a particular relation to the subject of the knowledge, the knower. So, it is not only what you know, it is how you know that counts” (Boughey & McKenna, 2021, p. 86)

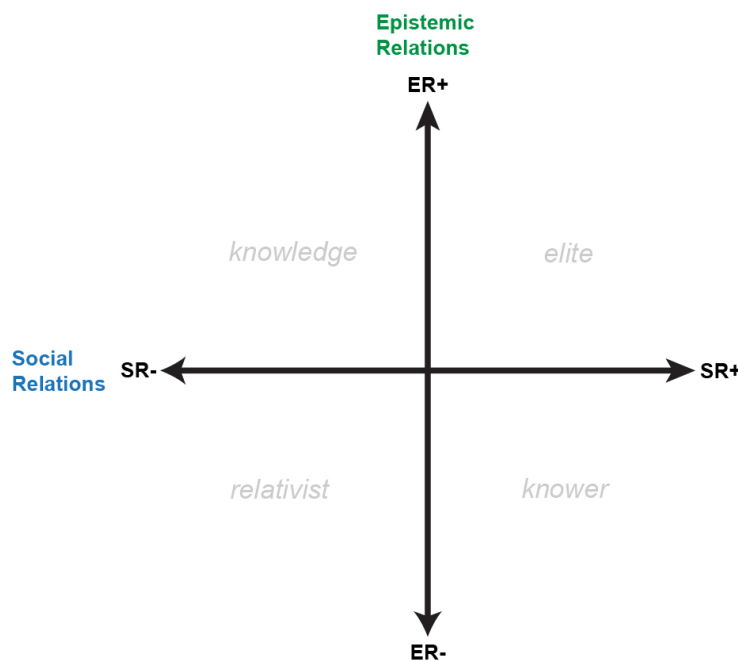


Figure 3e - LCT Dimensions of Specialisation

Overall Legitimation Code Theory is an informative and beneficial framework that has an array of tools to recognise educational contexts and provide methods of developing equitable and inclusive curriculum that potentially favours all students.

Chapter 4 - Methodology

In this chapter, the research approaches taken to gather alumni perspectives as primary data and evaluating the Fine Arts curriculum as secondary data are listed and explained.

Case Study Research Design

This research study utilises a qualitative approach as it is primarily focused on generating unique and subjective responses from the alumni of a singular university department. The feedback data is used in this research study to provide sufficient evidence that supports the research question and to identify the curriculum progressiveness and change over a period of ten years. The data will be analysed within a social realist paradigm in relation to global art education practices and trends. Qualitative research helps identify causal explanations for whether curriculum change is progressing or stagnating in evolving with contemporary educational practices - which has direct implications to the agency of students and their ability to effectively develop careers in the local and global arts industry.

The previous chapters have covered the theoretical framework and the research questions designed for this research study. In this chapter, there will be a thorough explanation of the research design methods utilised and the data generation procedures selected to complete this dissertation. Creswell (2007), mentions that “case study research involves the study of an issue explored through one or more cases within a bounded system (i.e., a setting, a context).” In this study, a qualitative single instrumental case study, primarily focused on only one humanities faculty department at the University of Cape Town – the Michaelis School of Fine Art has been used. The Fine Arts provides the focus for a reflective analysis of current curriculum and coursework in conjunction with variable feedback data from alumni respondents throughout this research. The research study offers causal explanations as to whether curriculum change is taking place progressively or whether there is a stagnancy to evolve with contemporary arts educational practices - which has direct implications for the agency of students and their ability to effectively develop careers in the local and global arts industry.

The case study design creates the foundation for developing an in-depth understanding of how one university undergraduate qualification at a singular department operates and is formulated. “Types of qualitative case studies are distinguished by the size of the bounded case, such as whether the case involves one individual, several individuals, a group, an entire program, or an activity.” (Creswell, 2007). In relation to this research study there were 494 individuals who completed the undergraduate degree in Fine Arts at the University of Cape Town between the years of 2012-2022. This was the defined unit of Fine Art alumni that were selected for this qualitative case study. As this research focuses on a decade-long time period, all the curriculum and coursework that were offered in the undergraduate degree programme of Fine Arts were subjects analysed to determine if there was substantial progression, changes, or enhancements made under the framework of Archer’s Morphogenetic theory.

Rationale for sampling selection

An important aspect of this research design is the involvement of graduates who have completed their undergraduate degree in Fine Art at the Michaelis School of Fine Art at the University of Cape Town. In qualitative studies, we examine how participants make sense of physical events and how it influences their behaviour. (Maxwell, 1992, 2004). This is true because the alumni have gone through the undergraduate programme, experienced the curriculum and coursework, and after completing and graduating from the institution, have pursued various career paths within and outside the arts industries, both locally and globally.

Kumar and Rewari (2022) offer the important aspects to consider from alumni data by stating that “the alumni feedback is a continuous assessment tool which provides important and valuable information for evaluating the academic programs. The feedback is used to improve the quality of curriculum and teaching practices in the institutes. The feedback obtained from alumni provides inputs on the following:

- Quality of education they received during the academic program
- Course fulfilling their expectations
- Relevance of the curriculum and present industry requirements
- Effectiveness of curriculum on entrepreneurship development.”

Sampling: The participants

In this research study, the participants are alumni who have graduated with a Bachelor’s in Fine Arts Degree from the Michaelis School of Fine Art during the period of 2012 to 2022. The contact details of the participants were sourced from the UCT alumni department records via the administration staff at the Fine Arts department. A Microsoft Excel spreadsheet was provided with the names, year of degree completion, and email addresses of the alumni. A total of 494 names were listed on the spreadsheet. There were 52 email addresses that were listed as UCT student email addresses and had to be disqualified as these do not work anymore. In addition, there were 74 email addresses that had to be disqualified as they were returning as undeliverable email addresses. The initial research questionnaire was sent successfully to 368 alumni.

The approach to this research study incorporates purposive sampling as it determines the most effective information sources to generate the required data.

“There are several important uses for purposeful sampling. First, it can be used to achieve representativeness or typicality of the settings, individuals, or activities selected. A small sample that has been systematically selected for typicality and relative homogeneity provides far more confidence that the conclusions adequately represent the average members of the population than does a sample of the same size that incorporates substantial random or accidental variation. Second, purposeful sampling can be used to capture adequately the heterogeneity in the population.” (Maxwell, 2005, p. 235).

A direct feedback method was used to contact alumni and graduates of the Michaelis School of Fine Art undergraduate course. Feedback from alumni proved to be the most effective method in generating data that encompasses detailed information about the student experience and attributes required for successful integration into the arts industry.

Research Methods

Data collection

Data collection is the systematic process designed for this research study to gather the relevant information that can be used to address the research question. It consisted of first searching various sources online and offline to find and obtain relevant curriculum documentation for the specified duration of the investigation of this research. The qualitative research methods of an online questionnaire and semi-structured interviews were then devised and planned accordingly as preferred methods of data collection for obtaining alumni perspectives. Before administering the questionnaire to alumni or conducting interviews – there was a pilot session with a small group of participants who were Fine Arts students. This was to identify any issues such as clarity and ambiguity or irregularities with the questions developed for the questionnaires and interviews.

Secondary Data - Curriculum Documentation

Curriculum and coursework materials offered at the Michaelis School of Fine Art for the undergraduate programme were collected from various reliable sources such as the University of Cape Town’s

Humanities faculty handbook, the departmental website, and other relevant documentation uploaded to platforms such as the student content management system (VULA) or Amathuba (Brightspace). This was done as a desktop review of secondary sources of data collection that unpacked each course and project offered through the four years of study toward the undergraduate degree to inspect if change or progress consistently takes place.

Primary Data - Questionnaire Data

The online questionnaire was created in Google Forms and comprised a tickbox to consent to participate in the research study and then a total of ten (10) questions to complete in long-answer or short-answer text (see Figure 4a below). The questions related to the student’s individual experiences of Fine Art study, their respective progression from tertiary education into different career paths, and their perspectives regarding the curriculum and coursework offered at the Michaelis School of Fine Art. The affordances of utilising Google Forms allowed an easier method of collating the data received from the student survey questionnaire.

From the total of 368 alumni who were emailed the questionnaire – 47 selected the option ‘Do not consent’ to participate in the research study and 142 ignored/did not respond to the emailed questionnaire. A total of 219 responses were recorded from alumni. The responses were exported directly from Google Forms as a PDF document containing 186 pages of alumni feedback on the research questions. The responses of these participants were diverse and directly related to their past experiences at the art school. Furthermore, these responses served as a clear indication of the cultural capital students brought with them into the teaching and learning space. The numerous responses also offered a fair indication of the relevant issues that students identify with relating to the coursework and curriculum offered during the Fine Arts programme. The feedback data was tabulated according to each question response received and initially saved as a Microsoft Excel spreadsheet.

Figure 4a - Online Questionnaire

Question	Research Questionnaire	Type of input response
1	In what year did you complete your qualification at the Michaelis School of Fine Art?	Short answer text
2	What is your current occupation and are you still active in the creative arts industry?	Long answer text
3	Do you consider that your studies at the Michaelis School of Fine Art sufficiently prepared you to embark on a successful career in the creative arts? Please explain further?	Long answer text
4	During your time at the Michaelis School of Fine Art, do you consider the coursework and curriculum progressive and relevant to keep up with global arts education and studio work practice standards? Please elaborate?	Long answer text
5	Would you consider there is a need for any enhanced and different coursework to be added to the Fine Arts curriculum? If so, please substantiate your answer with any examples?	Long answer text
6	What is your perception of the Michaelis School of Fine Art and its reputation as being the top ranked art school on the continent of Africa?	Long answer text
7	During your experience at the Michaelis School of Fine Art were there any negative aspects that hindered you from achieving your full creative potential? Please explain?	Long answer text
8	Upon completing your qualification at the Michaelis School of Fine Art did you fully understand the direction to take to venture out into the creative arts industry?	Long answer text
9	Do you think that alumni feedback should play a significant role in how the projects, curriculum and coursework are planned, conceptualized and implemented? Explain your answer?	Long answer text
10	Would you consider being a part of an online interview over MS Teams or Zoom to discuss any of the related research questions further? If yes, please leave your email address below.	Short answer text

Primary Data - Interview Data

Based on the response rate of the initial research questionnaire and by agreement of participation, alumni were asked to partake in a more focused interview using the online software applications Zoom or MS Teams. There was a total of 34 alumni who responded 'Yes' to participate in an online interview (Question no. 10 of the survey). All corresponding alumni who had agreed to an online interview were emailed in order to set up a specific time to conduct the interview. There were 11 responses and a total of 10 interviews were conducted online and one interview was done in person.

The online interviews were recorded, and the audio recordings were converted into text transcripts with the usage of MS Teams software for easier analysis of the student opinions and perspectives. The transcripts were then read through and checked for any spelling or grammar errors. The in-person interview was conducted at a local coffee shop and summarised notes were taken recording the alumni's viewpoints and perspectives centred around the research theme. From the alumni interviews conducted - 6 participants were located locally within South African provinces and 5 participants were located internationally. International participants were residing in Croatia, India, China, and the United States of America at the time of the interviews. This allowed diverse perspectives to be recorded and enhanced the data generated for this research study. The resulting text transcripts were deductively analysed to find common themes guided by Archer's social realism and any information signifying current trends and thoughts about global arts education practice compared to the curriculum and coursework experiences at the Michaelis School of Fine Art. Alumni participants were asked to conclude the interview by offering their perspective on how a solution could be developed to ensure that the Fine Art qualification offered is suitable to effectively traverse the global arts industry and forge an active career in creative arts.

Semi-structured interviews were conducted to allow alumni to explore their perspectives related to the themes of curriculum and studio-based coursework, as well as their views of what constitutes essential arts-related skills needed for successful integration into global arts practice. Semi-structured interviews allowed the alumni reflections to be more expressive and open up to information that is not clearly communicated in a general questionnaire. Alumni were able to reflect on the interactions experienced during their undergraduate studies and the career path taken to the industry they are currently in. This was completed by having pre-determined questions that were open for discussion but allowing the participant to elaborate on their experiences and viewpoints. (see Figure 4b below).

Figure 4b - Interview Questionnaire

Question	Research Online Interview	Type of input response
1	Would you like to expand on your experiences in the questionnaire related to the curriculum and coursework offered at the Michaelis School of Fine Art? Was it suitable, did it help you become a better artist?	Verbal - recorded into text transcript
2	This research is focused on alumni reflections, accounts, and experiences in order to further investigate the causal mechanisms that affect curriculum and coursework. Do you have any specific accounts explaining where the coursework you encountered was problematic in any form?	Verbal - recorded into text transcript
3	What could be done better or changed to improve the overall course offerings and student output at the Michaelis School of Fine Art?	Verbal - recorded into text transcript
4	Do you think that Alumni feedback should be a relevant tool to guide and shape the coursework and curriculum of Fine Art as students have experienced the course and now have experiences from being active in the arts industry? If so how could this be established?	Verbal - recorded into text transcript

The data that was received from the questionnaire and semi-structured interviews were first read thoroughly to understand the alumni responses. The feedback was then organised into two pre-determined categories – alumni who are still active in the arts industry and alumni who are active in other fields outside the arts. It was then reviewed to identify any commonalities that can be categorised into specific codes. The data was then reduced to find what information applies to this

study and if they are suitable according to the specified categories. “Such categorising makes it much easier for you to develop a general understanding of what is going on, to generate themes and theoretical concepts, and to organise and retrieve your data to test and support these general ideas.” (Maxwell, 2005).

The interviews were conducted with the explicit purpose of obtaining comprehensive perspectives and experiences from a sample size of ten alumni. These alumni were selected based on the years that they completed their qualification and their geographical location and nationality. Five of the alumni were older graduates who have established careers over a few years in the creative arts industry and five were newer graduates who are still finding their path in the art world.

Data Analysis

Data Analysis plays a crucial role in extracting meaningful insights and to be able to draw formulated conclusions from the data received. The raw data collected from the online questionnaires and the interview transcripts were cleaned and prepared for proper analysis. This process involved checking for incorrect spelling of words, inaccurate punctuation, and inconsistencies in grammar, as well as organising the data in a workable format that could be uploaded to NVivo data analysis software.

Coding used in the analysis

The process of coding involved identifying and labelling specific parts of data that are relevant to the research focus. This typically involved assigning descriptive labels or “codes” to data segments, from the questionnaires and interview responses, representing concepts or ideas related to the research question. As the data was read through critically each line, text response or recorded transcript that fit according to the themes identified were then coded into that specific theme. The codes were defined by the themes of global arts educational practices such as arts entrepreneurship skills, technology integration, and cross-disciplinary collaboration. This enabled the creation of individual files containing data for each theme, sourced from multiple sources but viewed together. “In qualitative research, in contrast, the goal of coding is not to produce counts of things but to “fracture” (Strauss, 1987, p. 29) the data and rearrange it into categories that facilitate comparison between things in the same category and between categories.” (Maxwell, 2005).

The coded data resulted in a dynamic overview of thematic responses. Numerous responses provide informative explanations and perspectives on the identified themes. The goal of coding the data into themes was to find relevant solutions to issues raised by alumni concerning the undergraduate curriculum, coursework, and structure across all responses.

Thematic Analysis

Thematic analysis is a qualitative research method that involves identifying, analysing, and reporting patterns or themes within data. The process typically involves coding and categorizing qualitative information to uncover recurring patterns of meaning. “Every qualitative study requires decisions about how the analysis will be done, and these decisions should influence, and be influenced by, the rest of the design” (Maxwell, 2004). Thematic analysis is frequently used to gain a more comprehensive understanding of complex phenomena, as it enables the researcher to systematically organize and interpret substantial volumes of qualitative data. By identifying and analysing recurring themes, one can generate valuable insights that contribute to the development of theories, and frameworks, or to develop practical implications in the understanding of arts education. A combination of inductive and deductive approaches were utilised in the analysis of the data for this research study. Deductive reasoning was present in the way the online questionnaires and interviews were conducted, while inductive reasoning were used to draw out the various themes within the data accumulated.

The research data software NVivo was used to aggregate established themes found within the data. NVivo is a qualitative data analysis tool that provides a variety of functionality and is excellent at finding patterns in unstructured data. The resulting data was then used to generate outcomes

that were incorporated into graphic representations such as tables and graphs to represent the information used in the research study suitably. This data is formulated and included in the analysis of data section of this dissertation - highlighting the common thematic perspectives, enhancing the research aims, and indicating suitable evidence to answer the research questions.

Ethical considerations

This research study entails direct feedback from alumni who have an affiliation with the University of Cape Town only through means of graduating with a bachelor's qualification in Fine Arts. All participants of this research have been asked to explicitly state their consent to partake in the questionnaire or online interview. Each participant has acknowledged that their responses to the questions and discussion during interviews will be used to build toward evidentiary data formulated for this research study.

There has been no collection or usage of personal data such as the research participants' names, contact information, or videographic or photographic images. Anonymity has been ensured as no personal information will be used in the research study. The online interviews were conducted primarily with only the transcripts being saved. The transcripts have been used for the development of the research paper. The research study is aimed to fulfil the requirements of the Masters in Education qualification and could have beneficial reciprocity by offering the Michaelis School of Fine Arts a valuable alumni perspective relating to the current course offerings of the undergraduate programme.

Limitations

One of the limiting factors related to this research study was the navigation around the POPIA (Protection of Personal Information Act). According to the Alumni Office at the University of Cape Town, there are certain stipulations to alumni contact information and how it may be collected and used. One of the criteria that was allowed was to make contact with alumni regarding feedback. This research study fell into the category of requesting direct feedback from alumni regarding their student experiences and their perspectives on the curriculum. No personal information was used in the research and no contact information or names will be published in the contents of this research paper. This duly meets the requirements of the POPIA Act and allows for ethical clearance to be approved by the university to conduct this form of qualitative case study research.

Researcher positioning

My intention in this research study is to provide an impartial and introspective view of the Michaelis School of Fine Arts department. The objective of this research study is to evaluate the Michaelis School of Fine Art's proficiency in equipping students with the necessary skills to succeed in the competitive arts sector. To achieve this, the research intends to acquire input from former students regarding their post-graduation experiences and career trajectories. The ultimate goal is to identify any potential areas for improvement in the curriculum or additional coursework that may be required to meet the school's commitment to delivering pertinent and pragmatic instruction to its students.

Chapter 5 - Analysis and Discussion

Fine Art knowledge as a whole is propagated through its curriculum and coursework that fall into a horizontal knowledge structure - this is a determining factor that ensures it always has space for new additions and changes, progressing the discipline to include more appropriate methods, techniques, relevant information, and additional practices. Bernstein (2000) argued “that it is important to distinguish between horizontal knowledge structures and vertical knowledge structures. Horizontal knowledge structures are characteristically built up through adding distinctive bodies of knowledge, as occurs in the arts, humanities, and social sciences”. This affordance within the curriculum opens up the exploration of what can be investigated to be pertinent, outdated or irrelevant in modern times to enable students to garner a well-rounded education in the creative arts.

Data generation and analysis

First and foremost, it is crucial to clarify that the approach to collecting and generating data in this study aimed to primarily produce honest and distinctive insights from alumni who have firsthand knowledge of the coursework, curriculum, and teaching methods utilised at the Michaelis School of Fine Art. These alumni have graduated from the institution and then pursued a range of career paths within and externally to the creative arts industry. The alumni's experiences and perceptions regarding their arts education and the arts industry are pivotal to developing substantial data that is used in this research study.

As part of the analysis, a secondary review was conducted of the curriculum and coursework currently offered in the Bachelor of Fine Arts programme as well as reviewing the curriculum that was offered back in the year 2012. The objective was to evaluate the programme's diversity and alignment with globally recognised arts education standards throughout a decade.

Primary data

The alumni responses are the primary source of data for this research study. They provide diverse perspectives on alumni's experiences with the curriculum and coursework. The alumni reflections also aim to identify what is considered successful and what changes or additions are necessary within the undergraduate Fine Arts programme. The alumni responses were analysed with the intent of finding common problems or experiences associated with the student experience and grouping these together to determine the relevance to the research topic.

Secondary data

A desktop review of the Fine Arts curriculum is considered secondary data that is utilised to identify curriculum change and alignment to global arts education that has taken place over a decade. This is done by integrating Archer's Morphogenetic approach to consider the causal mechanisms that initiate significant change or the lack thereof. Looking at the university department's position through the historical and political contexts also allows us to determine the reasons why change can or did not occur concerning the higher education sector in South Africa.

Reviewing the aims of the undergraduate degree programme (which can be found in Appendix L on page 74) it can be seen that one of the underlying purposes of the qualification is to prepare students to become artists and creative professionals. This would entail offering a well-rounded curriculum that ensures the content is versatile and aligned to the dynamic requirements of the external arts industry that students will be moving into. However, in the analysis of the data collected this aim is shown to have fundamental flaws that need to be probed further.

The undergraduate programme appears to prioritise critical, philosophical, historical and theoretical aspects rather than practical real-world ones. This can be compared to other universities and art

Alumni backgrounds

The Fine Arts department has a diverse intake of students who enter the undergraduate programme each year stemming from different schools, various provinces, and other countries. Each student's unique interests, life experiences, and perspectives add to the multicultural mix in the art teaching spaces, resulting in a wide range of distinctive artwork ideas, styles, and techniques across various mediums.

Students choose to study Fine Art primarily to develop and hone their creative skills and to learn more about the functioning of the arts industry. At the tertiary level, students bring along some developed creative abilities to make artworks and have fundamental experience with basic art mediums. Prospective students are required to submit a portfolio of completed artworks along with secondary education transcripts to be selected as a student at the Michaelis School of Fine Art. The majority of students enter Fine Art courses at tertiary institutions hopeful to begin a career in the arts, however, a large percentage of students choose to divert into other career paths upon graduating and do not remain active in the creative space. This is evident in the collected data from the alumni who responded to the online questionnaire.

PRIMARY DATA - ALUMNI REFLECTIONS

Alumni engagement

During the questionnaire and interviews, participants were asked if alumni feedback is essential to bring positive changes to the coursework and curriculum offered at the Michaelis School of Fine Art. The majority of respondents (98% of 219 alumni questionnaire respondents) agreed that it is necessary to consider the experiences of alumni who have completed the qualification and engage with them to make improvements (see Figure 5b).

“Alumni feedback is crucial in ensuring that Michaelis remains a leading program in the creative/ arts industry. It is important to receive feedback from a variety of alumni, as each person’s experience and career path is unique. This information can inform the potential for new students and art professionals entering the industry, ensuring that they are equipped with the necessary skills and knowledge to succeed in the field.” (Alumni questionnaire respondent, 2019).

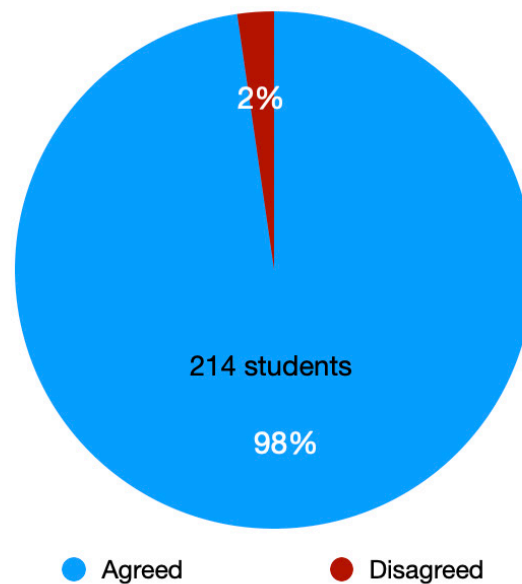
It is systemic that graduates feel alumni engagement could act as a positive set-up to initiate relevance and progressiveness to the course, after considering their own experiences. Another response mentioned that:

“I think alumni provide a reflection of the ‘outside’ world which should be considered, otherwise the only feedback is from people within Michaelis and that can be a bit repetitive and ‘in the bubble’.” (Alumni interviewee, 2016).

Feedback and alumni engagement can be regarded as an appropriate and notable method of gauging the success of the current Fine Art coursework and curriculum offered and a great indicator of what areas should require changes and enhancements. “A robust liaison with the alumni community is imperative and integral for the development of any academic institution because the benefits are perceived to be more” (Sankaran & Rath, 2021). Alumni should be allowed to offer their insights that are encountered in the arts industry as well as indicate problem areas or difficulties that have been experienced. Currently, apart from basic student evaluations that happen at the end of each course internally, there are no other feedback processes that are enabled within the Fine Arts department at the University of Cape Town. Student feedback rarely gives an outer view of the arts industry but is more concerned with student satisfaction with the coursework and curriculum offered.

“You have to hear feedback from people who have experienced the experience. And it makes even more sense to hear from people who can reflect on their experience once they’re out of the environment.” (Alumni questionnaire respondent, 2014).

Figure 5b - Percentage of students who agreed that Alumni engagement is important



Total of 219 alumni respondents

There is a concerted effort by course convenors to get students nearing the completion of their degree in their fourth year to complete course evaluations, but the response rate is very limited as students often do not see the benefit of this and have not experienced the arts industry post-graduation. Therefore, it makes more sense to offer feedback cycles to alumni who have ventured into various career paths and have a better understanding of their experiences with their Fine Art studies to give ample and relevant information that would be beneficial to academics and course administrators - knowing what works, what is missing and what is deemed problematic. “Alumni are an integral part of the higher education institution when they provide valuable feedback on the service of the institution” (Petratos and Calitz, 2019).

The arts industry and alumni career paths

One of the questions asked in the questionnaire was ‘What is your current occupation and are you still active in the creative arts industry?’. It is evident from the survey questionnaire responses that numerous students are opting for career paths beyond the creative arts industry. This should be seen as an alarming trend that requires more attention from the university arts department. “Helping students understand and ultimately respond to the inequities and contradictions inherent in our current global society requires critical investigations and analyses of how issues of equity and cultural and ethnic diversity are intimately connected to economics, corporate propaganda, visual culture, media ownership, and info-diversity.” (Darts, 2008). A significant part of this research study aims to offer suitable reasons found in alumni responses for the lack of sustainable engagement in the creative arts industry by qualified art practitioners.

The table below (Figure 5c) demonstrates the range of careers that were pursued by a sample of the alumni respondents after graduating from the Michaelis School of Fine Art undergraduate programme.

Figure 5c - Career paths pursued by the sample of alumni respondents

Active in the Fine Arts industry	Not active in the Fine Arts industry
Poet, Sculptor and Artist	Social media manager
MFA Candidate in US	Graphic Designer
Office Manager at Zeitz MOCAA Art Gallery	Photographer
Creative Arts teacher	Web developer
Professional sculptor	Children's book illustrator
High School Art teacher	Freelance graphic designer
Part time lecturer and practising artist	Animator and VFX
Art content writer	Au Pair
Founder of online art education platform	Events Manager
Independent artist and Arts administrator	Video editor in film industry
Registrar at Art Museum	Production manager at design agency
Sessional lecturer in Art History at Wits	Logistics office manager
Artist and Freelancer	Preschool teacher
Curator at gallery	Spiritual practices teacher
PhD student	Caterer
Gallery assistant	Book keeper and accountant

Many Fine Arts graduates often venture outside the fine arts industry due to its lack of sustainability and ability to provide a steady income. This is a significant deciding factor that leads graduates to pursue other careers as they often feel they lack the necessary skills to establish a successful career in the arts. The Fine Arts industry offers various roles and positions that are adjunct to the role of a specific practicing artist, but these are not explicitly made known to students during their undergraduate studies.

“I think something I realised after my studies, is that Michaelis does not necessarily make you aware of all your career options.” (Alumni interviewee, 2021).

One of the more apparent issues that have surfaced from this research is the lack of student awareness about these adjunct roles within the arts industry that a graduate could find outside the path of being a practicing artist.

“It taught us nothing about the industry and how to navigate it or even how to enter it at all” (Alumni interviewee, 2015)

The Michaelis undergraduate coursework and curriculum focus mainly on the path of a trained contemporary and research-based artist and largely ignore informing or training students in the roles of other positions that are available in the arts industry that could lead to sustainable career paths. This creates a very narrow area for students to understand how to navigate once they complete their qualifications and leads to many abandoning hopes of being active in the arts industry.

“After graduating I contacted galleries, and all manner of different creative arts studios (from art departments and production studios in the film industry to digital design studios looking for interns). I sent my CV to nearly 100 different places looking for work in Cape Town. Cape Town is already inundated with creatives and companies only hire people in their circles. I couldn't find work and had to leave the city.” (Alumni questionnaire respondent, 2017).

There is an underlying problem with the lack of relevant information or non-guidance provided to students during their undergraduate studies at the Michaelis School of Fine Art, as expressed by numerous concerned alumni in these responses. It is one of the first contentious aspects that were found to appear often within the analysis of the alumni questionnaire and interview data. From the majority of the alumni responses regarding career paths in the creative industries, it is clear that there is a certain level of resentment and discouragement that is held towards the Michaelis School of Fine Art department for not offering a structured way for students to be more informed, aware and to be guided towards relevant sustainable jobs in the arts industry.

“It was made clear from the beginning of my studies at Michaelis that there were very low expectations and hopes for most of our class in becoming active participants in the creative arts industry after graduating. We were told “Only 5% of you will become artists”. Our training was geared almost exclusively to fit a narrow model of what an artist is, as someone operating within the fine arts industry. Very little attention was paid to any other contexts in which a creative art practice might take place. So in this narrow sense, my studies did not prepare me for a successful career in the creative arts.” (Alumni questionnaire respondent, 2013).

Some alumni perspectives tried to offer affordances to how the Fine Art curriculum could be developed or shifted to accommodate these issues and change the trajectory of students leaving the university with their qualifications.

A (2022) alumni interviewee mentioned in the questionnaire that *“Once a month or once a week or whatever. Just to get a few freelance artists talking about the business side who have their own studio practice and how they manage to accomplish that”*.

These initiatives that can be set up internally would greatly benefit Fine arts students to become more aware of the industry that awaits them once they complete their studies.

Another (2018) alumni interviewee who is presently active in the creative industry abroad offered this perspective saying *“Oh, working in India over here is that uh, while doing my masters they have this period called the internship period where you have to get an internship like it’s a whole process. And I would say experience to start applying for jobs to get to know the market that you’re working in and try to find an internship and get to know the art world better.”*

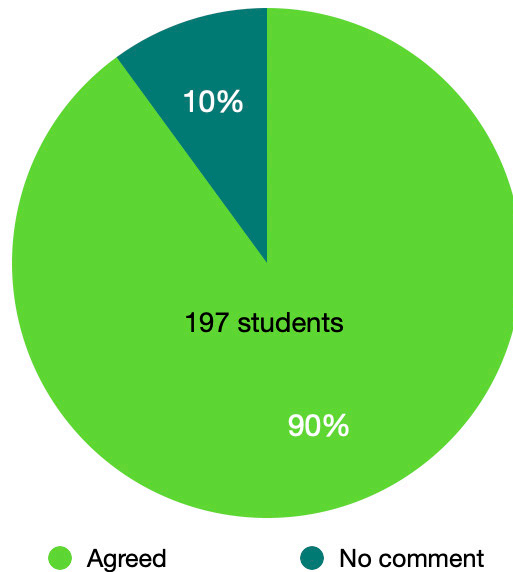
These alumni experiences and their perspectives are tantamount to showing how alumni feedback can indeed be a beneficial and important method of improving the course offerings at the Michaelis School of Fine Art and allowing academics to develop a more holistic and well-rounded programme.

Arts Entrepreneurship

Alumni participants were asked if they considered the Michaelis School of Fine Art curriculum had sufficiently prepared them to embark on a successful career in the creative arts. Most alumni mentioned the importance of teaching business etiquette and skills to students to navigate the arts industry in their questionnaire responses. Arts Entrepreneurship and the ‘business side of art’ brings the potential for an exciting opportunity to introduce and develop Fine Art students with relevant business skills that would encourage them to be active and pursue a career in the arts - however, this is largely missing from the current curriculum that is offered. At least 90% of the 219 respondents answered that there was inadequate information or time spent discussing anything to do with professional practice as a working artist (see Figure 5d).

A (2017) alumni questionnaire respondent offered that *“Career preparation-related courses should be taught from the first year, preparing artists for the realities of the career paths they can go on with their degree and teaching them skills which will benefit their professional careers, such as art valuation, negotiation with galleries and museums, logistics and art handling, basic accounting for artists, funding proposal protocols, budgeting, contract negotiation with clients etc.”*

Figure 5d - Percentage of students who agreed there is inadequate information about business in arts in the Fine Art curriculum



Total of 219 alumni respondents

These seem to be fundamental skills that every professional artist would need to utilise once embarking on their art careers, however, it is not included in any of the courses offered at the Michaelis School of Fine Art. The notion of commercial art and the economical aspect of selling art seems far removed from the institutional culture of non-utilitarian art and art for research purposes at the department. However, there are other art schools around the country and abroad that have seen the compelling requirements and have added 'arts entrepreneurship' as an important course offered to their undergraduate students.

"Yes, there needs to be better preparation for the working world, a more in-depth study on entrepreneurship, what it takes to work as a freelancer and just good fine art business skills as I felt that those topics were just rushed through as an afterthought. Also looking into other industries more (film, theatre, architecture, fashion, industrial design etc.) for inspiration instead of simply fine art as that would better enhance the work and broaden the mindset of students." (Alumni questionnaire respondent, 2018).

Dempster (2011), explains that "What makes little sense is expecting that we can drive students through four or five or six years of a highly regimented curriculum that affords few choices and asks for little individual initiative, and then expect them to flourish in a world that rewards creativity, opportunism, experimentation, and distinctiveness more than anything else—in short, an entrepreneurial world." Arts entrepreneurship courses need to be context-specific and even though there are general business skills-related courses in other departments - these do not offer the particular instances that can be applied to the Fine Arts industry. This is why there needs to be a curriculum that is developed and offered within a Fine Arts department.

A (2014) alumni interviewee mentioned that *"as an artist, you are an entrepreneur and in essence a brand yourself. In no way does Michaelis prepare you for that. Each student should have to do a business/brand management/law aspect to the course so that you're not inept when walking out of your fine art studies."*

Arts Entrepreneurship as a subject is fast becoming a globalised arts educational norm and being added to a curriculum that allows artists to come to terms with the inevitability of managing the

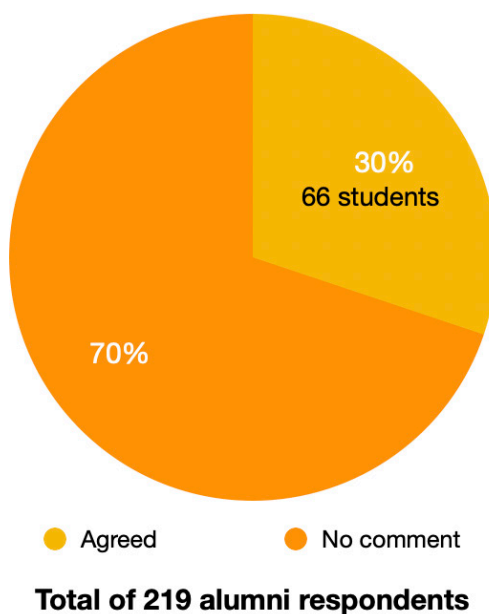
commercial aspects of artistic practice and understanding how to navigate the creative industries by monetising their artistic output and creative skills. Through the insightful responses of the alumni participants, this research study has been able to pinpoint the key skills that are currently missing in the arts education programme at Michaelis. By identifying these gaps, we can then begin to offer considerations towards effective solutions to equip future graduates with the necessary tools to succeed in this field.

Collaboration and Cross-Disciplinary Work

When alumni participants were asked if they considered the coursework and curriculum offered at the Michaelis School of Fine Art to be relevant and progressive enough to keep up with global arts education and studio work practice standards - the majority of alumni participants agreed that it was but had room for improvement. There were numerous respondents (30% of 219 alumni) who mentioned the need to consider collaboration and cross-disciplinary work as alternate modes of learning in the Fine Art programme (see Figure 5e below).

A (2013) alumni questionnaire respondent offered that *“it would have been helpful to be exposed to more cross-pollination between the so-called ‘Fine Arts’ and other creative industries, as well as traditionally non-creative industries. I believe this would have increased the relevance of the course to its students, as well as making the course more relevant in our society as a whole. An example of this would be to introduce collaborative projects with students from other departments and faculties.”*

Figure 5e - Percentage of students who mentioned there is a need for collaboration and cross-disciplinary work in the Fine Art curriculum



The ability to create cross-disciplinary work has been a part of the curriculum in many international art schools and is vital to thrive in a completely multimedia mixed approach contemporary art industry, however, this is absent from the current curriculum offered at the Michaelis School of Fine Art.

“The unfortunate system in which one chooses a specialisation in their third year is incredibly regressive – I felt I was quite restricted by the department I was in because the lecturers were only engaged in deeply specialised, and very formally straight photographic work. I wanted to work across disciplines, and this needs to be more possible at any contemporary art institution.”
(2012 alumni interviewee).

At the Michaelis School of Fine Art, studiowork practice is divided into different disciplines that run their projects as different sections but as part of the overall curriculum, however, there is very little to no formulated cross-over between the disciplines. The ability to mix mediums and incorporate various techniques into one artwork or series as well as collaboration between differing parties can add to the strengths of creative practice. “At the moment, the aims of art education appear to be well immersed in a constant progression toward definition. So, what if there is simply too much to say, too much to know, and too much to learn within institutional confines such as a field of study.” (Carpenter, 2019, p. 274).

A (2017) alumni questionnaire respondent stated that *“Students should be allowed full creative choice to choose the discipline they want to pursue in their final despite their grades. Being a multidisciplinary artist gives you more advantages in the art world.”*

Many successful contemporary artists around the world are considered mixed-medium artists who incorporate a variety of disciplines and techniques into their overall art. They collaborate with professionals in other spheres and create unique bodies of work that allow them to excel in their artistic careers.

Creative technologies integration

The alumni respondents were clear in their feedback that the curriculum and coursework at the Michaelis School of Fine Art needed improvement in the area of creative technologies. They emphasized that this was an important topic of contention that required serious attention. To ensure that students are well-equipped for the demands of the modern artistic landscape, the school should consider taking proactive steps to develop and integrate the latest technologies into the curriculum in a more formalised way.

“The world of Fine Arts is very unique, in the sense that the world around us is evolving everyday, and in order to keep up with the new techniques and technologies we constantly need to update ourselves in how we conduct our work.” (Alumni interviewee, 2017).

Currently, New Media is run as an adjunct subject that is offered either within project-based electives in the third year or condensed core projects in the second year but not as a fully-fledged major that is offered such as the traditional disciplines of Painting, Printmaking, Sculpture and Photography. This means that these projects are more structured, and set within shorter time frames resulting in students having less creative space to explore the technologies offered in its entirety.

“When I left Michaelis they got rid of the “New Media” major which I think was silly because it was that very major that made me capable of my current job today. I work with the very programs I was introduced to within the major such as the Adobe Creative Cloud software. We are living in a digital age and if anything that major is more necessary and relevant now than it was ever before.” (Alumni interviewee, 2020).

New Media-based artworks have a wider range of techniques, in an ever-evolving space and are often not able to be defined within the parameters used for assessment purposes in a non-utilitarian art school. Although this is something to be considered at length as New Media is a discipline that has securely established itself in the fine arts domain amongst the more traditional forms of art. The Michaelis School of Fine Art has several students each year who are interested in creating new media-based artworks and exploring various creative technologies. However, without a proper assessment and evaluation policy in place, the school fails to adequately support these students in utilising creative technologies to their full potential.

“The new media needs to be expanded. The use of technology in art is only going to be more prevalent in the future and there is already a high standard of new media art.” (Alumni questionnaire respondent, 2018).

Michaelis curriculum and coursework

From the onset, the Michaelis School of Fine Art offers graduates a satisfactory curriculum in traditional art-making disciplines and introductions to creative technologies as well as art history and art discourse subjects. However, the majority of alumni questionnaire respondents (87% of 219) have offered feedback in some way or another to enforce their opinions on the need for curriculum enhancements and pedagogical shifts to more appropriate and useful skills for art students intending on a creative arts career (see Figure 5f).

“No, it seems a little too undefined. A fair number of the graduates can probably make decent work by the time they graduate - but many have no concept, and therefore no desire, to market themselves in a manner that will elevate them to a sustainable business and career.” (Alumni interviewee, 2021).

Existing students and alumni graduates all require a curriculum that would enable and prepare graduates for success in the fine arts industry and the skillset to cross over into adjoining creative industries. Currently, the Fine Arts department is still maintaining a traditional and cultural heritage to remain as a non-utilitarian arts education department within a research-intensive university. Clarke et. al (2018) mention that art schools offer a form of “art educational practice that strongly resists economic rationalist justification for creativity.” However, this is not suitable nor sustainable when one of the core aims is to train students who need to thrive in the present globalised creative arts industry.

There need to be considerations made in the curriculum and coursework of Fine Art programmes to the changing times and the evolving nature of the external arts industry. The requirements to attain a sustainable career in the arts should be premised upon first understanding alumni experiences and then developing a network with arts institutions, practising artists and other arts-related businesses that sustain a community of creative practice.

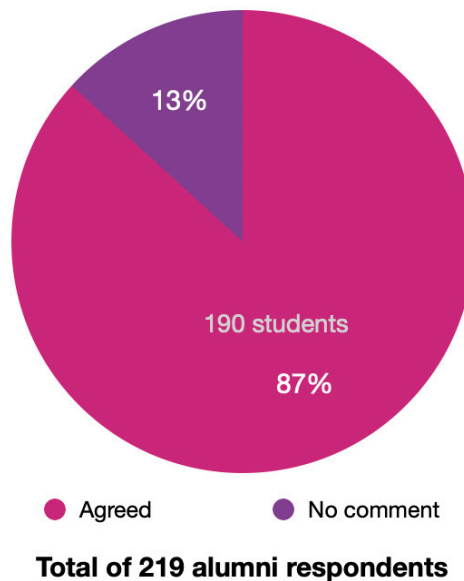
“Students coming to Michaelis are passionate about creating art and making a difference, but more tools are required than an art degree to make this a reality. Although I am sure that Michaelis does produce 5-10% of artists that succeed, mostly it produces students that work odd jobs to support a struggling art career. Can you really call yourself top-ranked with such a high failure rate?” (Alumni questionnaire respondent, 2018)

From the overall data analysed and the alumni feedback generated in this research study, there is an imperative to relook and readjust the curriculum offered at the Michaelis School of Fine Art. Based on the themes that presented themselves throughout the analysis there is an urgency to align with the globalised requirements of arts education and to place students into the arts industry with the necessary knowledge and information to thrive. Currently, this is not how a majority of students and graduates feel about the programme offered at Michaelis.

“They are not operating within the Cape Town art scene. In fact, they are totally disconnected from it. They foster an incredible studio practice which I am very grateful for. But they crucially didn't teach us how to survive as artists - which means that we risk losing the very practice we have worked so hard to gain. (Alumni questionnaire respondent, 2022)

The information provided by the alumni varied concerning their specific experiences and interests according to the years that they completed their undergraduate degree – however, it should be noted that there were frequent responses that all shared a common sentiment. Students attended the Michaelis School of Fine Art to gain a substantial arts education that would allow them to graduate and enter a career in the creative arts.

Figure 5f - Percentage of students who have mentioned there is a need for curriculum changes in the Fine Art curriculum



SECONDARY DATA - FINE ART CURRICULUM DOCUMENTATION

The documentation selected to conduct an analysis of the curriculum offered at the Michaelis School of Fine Art undergraduate degree (BAFA) consists of descriptions of each course offered from the first year through to the fourth year of study. A key point of consideration in this study was to analyse the curriculum from the years 2012 and 2022. The curriculum was relatively stagnant until the year 2015 when the student protest movements called Rhodes Must Fall and Fees Must Fall demanded the decolonisation of higher education and increased accessibility to all students. This in turn caused some moderate changes to the curriculum. The student protests that ensued from 2015 to 2018 caused a ripple effect on the department as it caused staff members who were firmly embedded into the cultural system of the department to see what students were requesting – something different, an alternative to what was currently being taught. Assessing the changes in the curriculum over the numerous years allows one to identify how the transformation took place within the department, but also importantly who had enacted their agency to initiate changes to the curriculum and who enacted their agency to keep the curriculum static.

The Fine Art courses listed in the tables on the following pages are broken up between theoretical-based subjects and practical studiowork courses in each year of study. This clear delineation of courses is convened and delivered by separate academic, part-time and professional staff across the different sections of the department. Theoretical-based courses are run independently without any contextual linkage to the practical studiowork courses and the individual projects within them. This separation of coursework according to disciplinary boundaries may lead to students feeling less integrated, resulting in a lack of unification across the programmes offered each year.

Fine Art curricula, although fragmented between differing disciplines and theoretical subjects needs to start maintaining a holistic view of the transferable skills that students are graduating with. This will be a way to better understand how students can find success in different career paths. “Fine arts graduates remain keen to stress the distinction between cultural and non-cultural pursuits. However, while fine arts graduates work across both cultural and non-cultural occupations, they continue to distinguish between the two in a way that suggests that they retain a meaningful notion of separate cultural sectors.” (Oakley et. al, 2008). One of the most important undertakings that a Fine Art department needs to implement is a discussion as an educational unit about the legitimacy of the curriculum offered. It can be seen there have been curriculum changes during the years 2012 and 2022, however was this purely as a pushback from the student movements, the agential changes

Bachelor of Fine Arts Degree Courses Table (2012)	
Year of Course	Course code and name
First Year Courses	FIN1001W - Studiowork FIN1005W - Fine Art Foundation FIN1006F - The Emergence of Modernity FIN1009S - Images in Conflict: Politics, Power & Propaganda
Second Year Courses	FIN2011W - Painting 2 FIN2012W - Sculpture 2 FIN2013W - Photography 2 FIN2024W - Printmedia 2 FIN2025W - New Media 2 FIN2026W - Core Practice 2 FIN2027F - Art Narrative: Traditions and Tensions FIN2028S - Discursive Strategies: Innovation and Adaption
Third Year Courses	FIN3011W - Painting 3 FIN3012W - Sculpture 3 FIN3013W - Photography 3 FIN3024W - Printmedia 3 FIN3025W - New Media 3 FIN3030H - Studiowork 3 Electives FIN3026F - New Art: New Perspectives FIN3010H - Theory and Practice of Art FIN3028F - Art, Theory and Society FIN3027S - Strategies for Art in Times of Change
Fourth Year Courses	FIN4011H - Theory and Practice of Art FIN4015W - Fine Art 4

Figure 5g - Bachelor of Fine Arts Degree Courses Table (2012)

of the staff that ran these courses or did the academics look into the actual legitimacy of each course and decide on what the relevance is in line with the globalised arts industry? What is clearly noticeable about the curricula of 2012 and 2022 is that there are more pronounced changes in the theoretical courses compared to the practical studiowork courses. These can be seen in the list of courses from 2012 and 2022 (see Figure 5g and Figure 5h). Maton's Legitimation Code Theory is an ideal framework to start assessing the current curriculum and coursework to understand what is outdated and what requires change.

“To draw on the work of Maton (2014) academics and teaching staff can ask three key questions:

1. What knowledge is legitimated by the curriculum?
2. Which knowers are legitimated by the curriculum?
3. How are these knowledges and knowers legitimated in the curriculum?” (Boughey & McKenna, 2021)

Fine Art knowledge needs to be balanced, beneficial and relevant to the student body undertaking the course. There needs to be a reciprocation of tangible skills that can be used in the career paths chosen by graduates and those need to be defined by the educators in charge of running the courses. The UCT Vision 2030 document states that the university should aim “to cultivate and nurture the capabilities of the younger generation for them to become leaders in different spheres of life, and to provide the conditions for academics to produce research that broadens our understanding of the social and natural worlds and the relationship between them.” (UCT Vision 2030, 2021).

Descriptions of Fine Art Courses

The course descriptions were compiled from the UCT Humanities Handbooks of the years 2012 and 2022. These were found on the University of Cape Town website (<https://uct.ac.za/students/study-uct-handbooks/handbooks>). Due to the limitations of the wordcount of this research study the course breakdowns are located in the appendices (pages 60 to 74). The tables provide an overview

Bachelor of Fine Arts Degree Courses Table (2022)	
Year of Course	Course code and name
First Year Courses	FIN1001W - Studiowork FIN1005W - Fine Art Foundation FIN1006F - Introduction to African Art FIN1008W - Foundations of Visual Literacy FIN1009S - Approaches to Art History
Second Year Courses	FIN2011W - Painting 2 FIN2012W - Sculpture 2 FIN2013W - Photography 2 FIN2024W - Printmedia 2 FIN2026W - Core Practice 2 FIN2028S - Discursive Strategies: Innovation and Adaption FIN2029F - Envisioning the body
Third Year Courses	FIN3011W - Painting 3 FIN3012W - Sculpture 3 FIN3013W - Photography 3 FIN3024W - Printmedia 3 FIN303W - Studiowork 3 Electives FIN3026F - New Art: New Perspectives FIN3027S - Strategies for Art in the times of change FIN3028F - Art, Theory and Society FIN3029S - Critical Studies in Art History and Visual Culture
Fourth Year Courses	FIN4012W - Theory and Practice of Art FIN4015W - Fine Art 4

Figure 5h - Bachelor of Fine Arts Degree Courses Table (2022)

of each course and highlight the concepts, disciplines, curriculum and techniques covered in the undergraduate programme over each year of study.

First Year of Fine Arts course changes

When reviewing Appendix A and Appendix B (located on pages 60 and 61), course information from the Humanities faculty handbook - five (5) Fine Art First Year courses were offered in both 2012 and 2022. The first year of study shows varied theoretical subjects and one practical-based course introducing the traditional disciplines of drawing, painting, sculpture, printmaking, photography and new media art.

Between 2012 and 2022 it can be seen that there has been a change in the theoretical course (*FIN1006F*) 'The Emergence of Modernity' which has been replaced by (*FIN1006F*) 'Introduction to African Art'. This new course directs students through a history of art from a more post-colonial Africanised viewpoint showcasing artistic movements across the continent of Africa. In addition, (*FIN1009S*) 'Images in Conflict: Politics, Power & Propaganda' has been replaced by (*FIN1009S*) 'Approaches to Art History'. This course examines the fundamental aspects of art history while challenging the conventions of academic art.

There has been an additional theoretical course that has been added between the timeline of the last decade which is (*FIN1008W*) 'Foundations of Visual Literacy'. This new course covers critical and visual literacy, academic communication, and creative thinking. These changes indicate that there has been a curriculum shift in the first-year courses away from the Westernised central viewpoint model to a more Africanised perspective of art theory and offer a more inclusive iteration of art discourse.

Second Year of Fine Arts course changes

The second-year course descriptions located in Appendix C and Appendix D (pages 63 and 64) have also shown substantial change over the period of 2012 – 2022. The theoretical courses (*FIN2027F*) 'Art

Narrative: Traditions and Tensions' and (FIN2030S) *Visual Cultures: Space & Place*' were removed. These courses operated on a more Westernised view of art and theory and therefore were considered problematic to be continued.

A noteworthy change in the overview of the second-year courses is the complete removal of the practical studio work course (FIN2025W) *New Media 2*'. This studio work course offered students introductory lessons to digital application techniques for creative practices such as image manipulation, augmented reality, vector graphics and animation. Instead, some of these digital techniques were now being incorporated into smaller projects with a shorter duration under the (FIN2026W) *Core Practice*' course. The (FIN2026W) *Core Practice*' course allows students to select projects that interest them according to project briefs that are sent out in advance. This course allows students to have an introduction to various traditionalist techniques with an element of creative technologies included in each project. However many students feel that the course is too condensed to be able to fully explore the technological aspects of the project within the timeframe.

This is in part because New Media mediums are different to traditionalist disciplines and cannot be assessed according to the same criteria used for other studio work courses. Technology-related arts subjects are often regarded as experimental and not of the same value as conceptual non-utilitarian contemporary arts in the department – which creates a barrier of engagement amongst Fine Arts academics who were trained mainly in the traditional forms of art-making. There seems to be a distinct bias towards creative technologies as a formalised structured examinable course in Fine Art and this in turn creates a negative perception as many students who are interested in utilising technology in their artworks are detracted from doing so.

Third Year of Fine Arts courses changes

In the third-year course overviews located in Appendix E and Appendix F (pages 65 and 67) between 2012 – 2022 the theoretical course (FIN3010H) *Theory and Practice of Art*' has been removed as well as the practical studio work course (FIN3025W) *New Media 3*'. The *Theory and Practice of Art*' (FIN3010H) course explored independent research in contemporary South African or African art from a historical and theoretical perspective. The (FIN3025W) *New Media*' studio work course allowed students to choose it as a subject major, covering new technology and methodologies, as well as industrial applications of new media techniques. Elements of (FIN3025W) *New Media*' were then incorporated into (FIN3030W) *Electives*' such as videography, computer-aided design and manufacturing and sound art.

In the same mode as the second-year course (FIN2026W) *Core Practice*' the third-year course (FIN3030W) *Electives*' allows students to make a selection of different projects that interest them with an extended timeframe to complete the project. Many technology-based projects that were a part of (FIN3025W) *New Media*' were relegated to become a part of the offerings of the elective projects. Creative technologies that are offered as compacted projects within the studio work courses act as mere introductory practices that students often get dissatisfied and anxious about. They expect the time and space to explore and master the ability to integrate technology into their art-making processes, but this is lacking within the current structure of the Fine Arts curriculum. Koh & Kan, (2021, p. 7) aptly stated that “knowledge about implementing technology-enhanced pedagogical practices for artist education remains fragmented.” From the analysis of the data identified, this is an issue that is present in the studio work practices and curriculum, at the Fine Arts department.

Fourth Year of Fine Arts courses changes

Among the Fourth-year course descriptions located in Appendix G and Appendix H (pages 69 and 70), the (FIN4012W) *Theory and Practice of Art*' has replaced the older (FIN4011H) *Theory and Practice of Art*'. This course has undergone significant changes in curriculum content, with a greater emphasis on practical applications of contemporary Fine Art practices and discourses.

Additionally, students now learn technical skills related to catalogue design and publishing, enabling them to produce a printed catalogue for their assessment exhibition on their own. In the (*FIN4015W*) ‘*Fine Art 4*’ studiowork course students have more autonomy in the development of their artworks for their final assessments – however this is bound within the confines of a structured conceptual framework and under the acceptance of academic supervisors.

Curriculum Analysis

The curriculum formation and structure at the Michaelis School of Fine Art are directly dependent on the academic staff and course convenors located in the department. The curriculum has been formed over numerous years maintaining a close alignment with the traditional and institutional culture of the university. These parameters dictated the conditioning of how the curriculum norms needed to remain relevant to the realm of arts and creative research and often acting separately to the external evolution of the arts industry. The Fine Arts department has remained astute in keeping a strict differentiation between what constitutes an artist and other creative roles in the arts. To the department, an “artist” now meant the creator of works of fine art whereas “artisan” or “craftsman” meant the mere maker of something useful or entertaining’ (Tietze, 2015).

Conceptual and critical thinking are the foremost skills that the Fine Arts department deems important over other aspects such as technique, creativity, or practical application. This emphasis on conceptual art in gallery spaces often leaves students underprepared for the economics and business aspects of the arts industry. It is fair to surmise that the curriculum offered at the Michaelis School of Fine Art creates inconsistencies among graduates, as discernible from their questionnaire responses regarding the lack of alternative creative modes. Tietze (2015) mentions this detachment by alluding that “unexamined assumptions and prejudices, respectively, about the artist and craftsman/designer have powerfully influenced theories of art education, and particularly adult art education, where the division between (fine) art and craft, and (fine) art and design, has intersected with social prejudice and assumptions about the appropriate training for different sectors of society.”

DISCUSSION

Morphogenetic Cycles Timelines

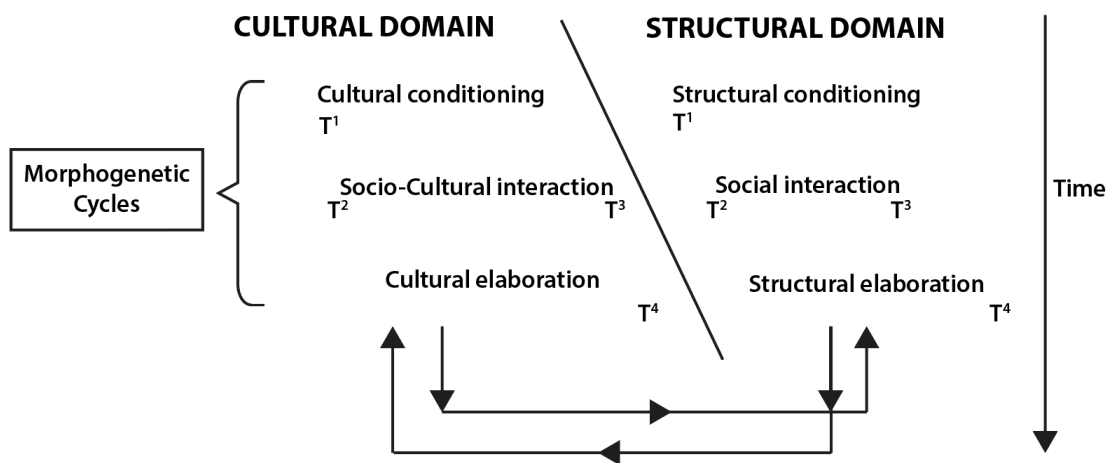


Figure 5i - Morphogenetic Cycle Timelines

Timeline 1 (T1)

Timeline 1 (T1) is discussed in the theoretical framework chapter by offering a historical explanation of the university and the art department during the time of its inception in South Africa. The structural and cultural conditions that pertained to its establishment as an educational institution can be found in Appendix I (located on pages 71 - 72).

Timeline 2 – Timeline 3 (T2-3)

When utilising Archer’s Morphogenetic framework to review the course changes from 2012 to 2022 (T2 to T3), there has been a transformation in the structural and agential realms. Theoretical courses have changed to become more inclusive of the global arts yet also adopt a more Africanised perspective and staff complements have changed to include more diversity. These changes could be attributed to the university’s changes in recruitment policies and the decolonisation of curriculum as well as newer staff members entering the department with varied levels of backgrounds and experiences. However, it can also be considered that the institutional culture at the Michaelis School of Fine Art has remained stagnant and morphogenesis has not taken place in that realm. The department still relies heavily on traditional forms of conceptual and contemporary non-utilitarian art-making processes and has a certain level of disconnect from the outside arts industry.

Timeline 4 (T4)

From the analysis of data, it can be stated that there is sufficient evidence when reviewing the curriculum and coursework, from the alumni feedback perspectives and discovering the various thematic responses to assess change and progress at the Michaelis School of Fine Art. Reflecting on the data presented in this chapter and contained in the appendices it is appropriate to advocate that curriculum and coursework additions need to be considered for the undergraduate Fine Arts programme. The problems that surfaced during the curriculum reviews and the alumni feedback of the Michaelis School of Fine Art justify the need for alignment with global arts educational practices.

LCT Code Shift

There is definitive evidence to also suggest that the Fine Arts curriculum when reviewed utilising Maton’s Legitimation Code Theory moves from a Knowledge code to a Knower code as students progress from the first year of study to the fourth year of study to complete the undergraduate degree. “LCT is a ‘practical theory’ used to explore a host of issues, practices and contexts in education and beyond.” (Maton, 2016). The knowledge structures present in the Fine Art course relies on students becoming more independent as they progress through the years of study.

During the first year of study, students have a relatively structured coursework programme, and the teaching staff exercises a significant amount of control over their individual projects across the

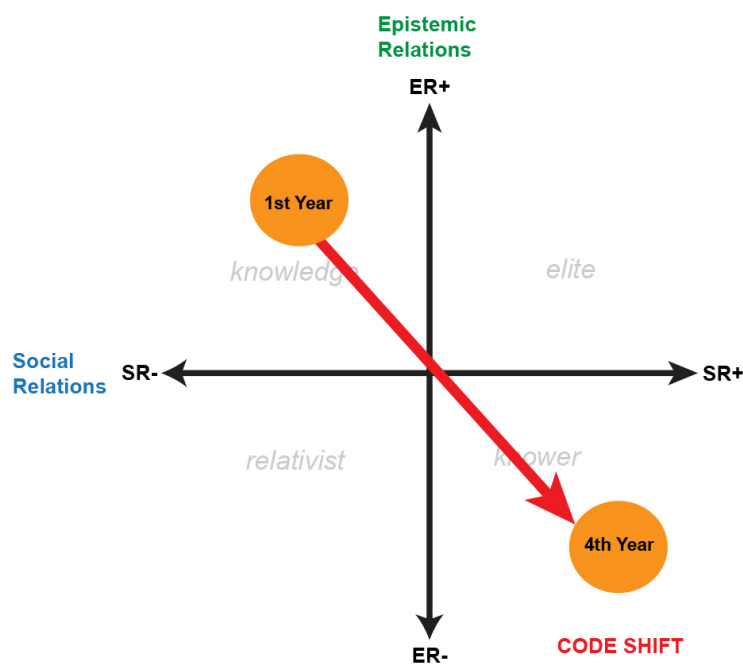


Figure 5j - LCT Code Shift of Fine Art Curriculum

different disciplines. However, in the fourth year, students are given more autonomy to choose their own path of progress to create artwork. This shift from a Knowledge Code to a Knower Code (see Figure 5j) relies on student agency to make the progression of taking specific instructions and working within well-defined limitations (1st Year) to being able to work independently and developing one's own work (4th Year) with the variety of disciplinary and creative techniques and options available.

This code shift can often lead to possible complications, problems and confusion for certain students and lead to levels of dissatisfaction with their undergraduate studies. One consideration is that students all have differing interests, distinct backgrounds and how they chose to focus that on their art and the production of artworks has the ability to either set them apart or to make their educational progression more difficult. This code shift can be made more explicit to Fine Art students in order for them to understand the complexity of how their studies requires independence and self-sustainability in the latter years of the qualification.

Questionnaire and Interview Data overview

The overall data generated through the questionnaires and interviews produced different perspectives, opinions and experiences associated with the alumni's time spent completing their studies at the Michaelis School of Fine Art. The online questionnaire responses were in-depth and pointed out the various issues, problems, disagreements and judgements towards all aspects of the curriculum, pedagogy, activities and patterns identified within the department. The alumni viewpoints received in the questionnaire responses were far-ranging although only the most common with the frequency to determine the data themes were included in this research study. The research study's focus was upheld by the substantial information provided through the alumni questionnaires, which led to valid assumptions about the Fine Arts curriculum.

The purpose of the interviews was to gather alumni perspectives on potential areas for improvement. Interviewees offered suggestions as well as discussed from their career-related experiences how the Fine Arts coursework could be enhanced and progressive. The interviewee data was more nuanced and reflective without just listing negative standpoints or making contentious judgements.

From the data analysed according to the alumni interviews, questionnaire responses and curriculum evaluation - the most important considerations that need to be made for curriculum additions or enhancements fall into these categories:

1. Arts Entrepreneurship (The business side of art)
2. Multidisciplinary and cross-collaborative learning
3. Creative Technology integration into the curriculum

Arts Entrepreneurship (The business side of art)

Arts Entrepreneurship as an additional module could be added to the curriculum as part of a theoretical subject or as a stand-alone course. It is crucial though to carefully consider what elements are required to make it a successful addition to the curriculum. Reviewing the alumni responses to this topic there are numerous suggestions made for the development of skills-based learning that could take place to formulate an extensive curriculum for this subject.

These include the following aspects:

- How to price and evaluate artworks properly
- Developing an online website to sell art
- Setting up an art business
- Catalogue design and layout
- Income generation as an independent artist
- Networking with art galleries and art auctioneers
- Intellectual Property and Art laws

- Applying for art residencies, grants and funding
- Developing relationships with other artists
- Artist communities of practice
- Understanding finances and taxes
- Working with art curators
- Contracts and applications
- Social media and online marketing
- Studio Etiquette

Arts entrepreneurship and the business side of art are fast becoming a universal topic that is becoming a mainstay subject in various higher educational arts institutions. Art schools need to be cognisant of the ‘missing parts’ in their curriculum and develop a strategy to attend to the requirements of students in a globalised educational setting.

There is a common misconception by Fine Art educators that the Fine Arts industry is to be seen as separate from the commercial market and that its economic aspects impede creativity. This factor often causes a disconnection between art students and the art industry. However, it can be seen that through curriculum reviews and university policies inducing transformation, these notions are fast changing. Ebewo & Sirayi (2018) when reviewing the curriculum transformation at Tshwane University stated that “arts having to function and be integrated into a business environment, the new curriculum has introduced business-related subjects such as entrepreneurship and management.” There needs to be a concerted effort to realise the implications of the changing world and how artists need to be multi-skilled and well-rounded to be successful in the field.

Multidisciplinary and cross-collaborative learning

Another important aspect that surfaced was the consideration of introducing more multidisciplinary and cross-collaborative learning projects in the curriculum offered at the Michaelis School of Fine Art. These could be individual projects aimed at allowing students to engage and network across departments or to allow artworks to be created utilising multiple disciplines within and external to the Fine Arts department. Some of the other departments that can be considered to allow cross-collaborative work are the School of Music, the Centre for Theatre, Dance & Performance Studies, the School of Architecture, Film and Media Studies and the School of Information Technology. The importance of offering projects that are multidisciplinary and cross-collaborative will allow students to be more adaptable and ready for the working world, to be able to be multi-faceted and versatile will surely allow positive developments in any career path. The UCT Vision 2030 document states that “We will find space for inter-, multi- and transdisciplinary teams to work, and explore ways in which we can teach and learn and undertake research from our own environment.” (UCT Vision 2030, 2021)

Nowadays, the creative arts field is diverse and continually expanding into newer territories - always adding to different industries and sectors the ability to create. Therefore, a field such as Fine Arts needs to be more open to accepting newer methods, techniques and processes to create with. González-Zamar & Abad-Segura (2021) state that “the term arts is associated with visual creative teaching method, design education, learning, skill, decision making, creative work, fine arts, industrial design, performance, product design, 3D printing, architecture, blended learning, creative problem solving, development, environmental education, industry, artificial intelligence, computer-aided instruction, creativity development and education program.”

In light of this, the Michaelis School of Fine Art needs to be more open to incorporating a dynamic and varied mode of curriculum that is not just based on traditional disciplines but open to newer exploratory methods and practices.

Creative Technology integration

Alumni have also stated numerous responses about the need for more creative technologies to be integrated as part of the curriculum offered at the Michaelis School of Fine Art. This is often dependent on the facilities, equipment, and knowledge base of the teaching staff to incorporate newer technology into studio work projects. Beyond that the limitations of the department lie in the ability to offer equitable assessment practices of technology-based creative projects alongside the artworks made using the traditional art disciplines. New media-based artworks rely on different processes and methods utilising a multitude of technologies that often have no similarity or comparative methods as a sculpture or painting. Without the assessors completely understanding the creative processes involved, they might not necessarily understand the success of the artwork produced. “This division may be due in part to cultural differences among the disciplines; older studio art programs tend to be more regimented and susceptible to traditional arts aesthetics, whereas the more recent design and computer arts disciplines are less concerned with these aesthetics.” (Beckman, 2007)

Michaelis should consider developing an assessment framework to better understand how to assess and evaluate new media-based artworks within the parameters of set criteria. This could help in setting up the right strategy to enhance the current curriculum with better creative technologies. “Current technology is making the world smaller. Understanding and being able to adjust to the challenges and opportunities of globalisation is playing an ever-increasing role in students’ decisions to stay as competitive as possible (whether or not that employment is arts or arts-related).” (White, 2022). Incorporating creative technologies into the curriculum is essential for enhancing education. In today’s society, technology has become ubiquitous, and students who learn creative technologies possess a more comprehensive skill set, which can help them become successful alumni and thrive in the professional world.

Global Arts Education

The globalisation of arts education was primarily used in this research study as a comparative context to understand how other Fine Arts and creative arts institutions can evolve and progress with newer forms of curriculum and coursework additions or enhancements. It can be seen as a blueprint to develop a more well-rounded curriculum and to engage with issues of understanding how change is taking place outside the walls of the institution in the educational spaces. “Crucially for art education, the globalisation of culture involves a search for new reference points by which to chart identity. In a consumer culture that now spans the globe what new forms of identity and social bonding are now possible and appropriate? This is the primary question that faces art education in a global, consumer culture”. (Duncum, 2002).

During the completion of this research study, several initiatives and projects within the arts industry had emerged that were relevant to the research topic and questions. After interviewing some of the Michaelis alumni participants, it was encouraging to hear that they had identified some of the ‘missing gaps’ in the current curriculum and coursework offered by the fine art institution and then went on to develop entrepreneurial projects to solve these issues in various ways. Globalisation of education in this light allows us to identify shortcomings and problems and to figure out ways to correct them. “Make no mistake about it, we in art education need to examine what is happening in our visual culture, and what we do in our classrooms should make sense in this age of globalisation.” (Tavin & Hausman, 2004)

Art Meets

One of the alumni respondents has been involved in the development of a social media website and mobile application catering towards creatives to have an online space for networking, showcasing their work and professional services, as well as listing arts-related activities such as exhibitions and festivals taking place in different cities across Africa. ‘Art Meets’ was recently completed as a mobile application and is downloadable on most smartphones via the application store and has enough

features to become a central hub for creatives to thrive in their pursuit of creative endeavours. “Art Meets began in 2013 as a mobile gathering space for conversations amongst artists and other art professionals, as a bridge from university to industry; a space to discuss shared challenges (often market-related or ethical questions) and find ways to address them.” (Art Meets website, 2024). This is an example of an initiative that was developed primarily to fill the needs of artists and art students who need to find suitable ways to access and connect to the local arts industry and what happens in it.

Art School Africa

One of the founders of the organisation ‘Art School Africa’ was an alumni respondent to the questionnaire and then participated in a semi-structured interview. It was informative to gauge the universality of these issues related to ‘missing gaps’ in the arts curriculum and how it is being handled by the resourcefulness of a few graduates. “Art School Africa, a non-profit organisation established in 2022, is dedicated to empowering individuals across the African continent to kickstart or advance their careers in the art industry.” (Art School Africa website, 2024). The premise for the development of Art School Africa was to offer a platform for artists and other creatives to find ways to upskill themselves and learn more about engaging with the arts industry through informative workshops, knowledge shares, panel discussions or online videos. Maina & Walker (2022) mention in their research how “it sought to test the hypothesis that visual arts university students graduate with a wealth of theoretical knowledge but often lack the practical and business skills to succeed in the art industry which would present an opportunity for Art School Africa to close that skills gap.”

The arts industry in South Africa has firmly established itself as a key sector for cultural activity and employment. The creative economy has been significantly expanding through numerous art galleries, art conventions and conferences, art auction houses, art festivals and competitions, art studios, artist residencies and government funding. These are all signifying factors that art graduates should be able to immerse themselves successfully into the arts industry post-qualification and lead a sustainable career - however, it is evident from this research study that many graduates are detracted from pursuing art careers. Maina & Walker (2022) stated that “according to a recent Deloitte report, there will be \$17 billion of wealth associated with art and collectables in Africa by 2025. Africa has an abundance of talent but limited resources to support the careers of many aspiring and practising art professionals.”

To effectively usher in an evolution of the arts industry to one that is more sustainable - the student participants entering it need to be developed with the necessary skills required to thrive. This will only happen if the creative institutions collectively adhere to the needs of the students and to enhance their course offerings to a more globalised arts curriculum.

Chapter 6 - Conclusions and Recommendations

From analyzing the structural, cultural, and agential factors that affect the Michaelis School of Fine Art, using the Morphogenetic Framework, it becomes apparent that there are several reasons that are hindering the progress of curriculum change. Boughey & McKenna (2021) mention that “curricula are constrained and enabled by multiple structural and cultural mechanisms”. This holds true for the Fine Arts department at the University of Cape Town.

In relation to the main research question proposed in this paper which states - *Does the Fine Arts Degree at the Michaelis School of Fine Art effectively prepare students for integration into creative careers and the globalised arts industry?*

Based on the data presented throughout this study it can be safe to make inferences that there are various aspects within the operations of the Michaelis School of Fine Art that do not effectively prepare students for a full integration into the plethora of creative careers in the globalised arts industry.

What can be determined is that the Michaelis School of Fine Art maintains a strict notion of artistic integrity where the priority is on artistic expression and creative research knowledge over commercial viability. The department is also steeped in tradition and it has developed a history of values that it stands for within arts practice. There is a sentiment within the Michaelis School of Fine Art and its staff to focus on art being about critical thinking and creative expression, and to look at commercialisation of art as an undermining of the true purpose of art production.

Using the parts of structure, culture and agency from Archer’s Morphogenetic Framework - an explanation is offered below to explain the various dimensions that constrain curriculum change and to offer conclusions regarding the way the Fine Arts department operates.

Structure

The structural conditions that the Michaelis School of Fine Art developed under were fraught with systemic inequalities and political turmoil in an apartheid government with a colonialist history. A department such as this was part of a privileged higher educational institution, Michaelis became the premier Fine Arts training school for creative arts and art research. It formed a longstanding traditionalist approach to arts education and maintained a certain status quo amongst staff and students who became a part of the institution over numerous years. However, in the last few decades, there have been various structural conditions that have changed. A new democratic government pushed forward policies of transformation and educational access, as well as student protests and activism in the push for the decolonisation of education. These have all made an impact on the Michaelis School of Fine Art department and initiated a certain amount of change within – but these can mainly be seen in terms of staffing, students and operations. Much remains the same and as the external world changes and evolves the university department should ideally follow along and consider ways of improving and transforming its educational facilities, cultural spaces and course offerings. A Morphogenesis of Structure table listing the structural conditions is located in Appendix I on page 71.

Culture

The cultural conditions at the Michaelis School of Fine Art formed over numerous years established a sense of non-utilitarian artistic culture that has persisted until the present. From the course overview, reviewing the curriculum and analysis of alumni feedback it can be seen that there is a level of morphostasis in the culture of the department. There is still a level of disconnect from the changing external arts world and based on many of the alumni perspectives - there are not enough considerations towards skilling students to achieve sustainable careers in the arts industry. The

curriculum and coursework have been stagnant favouring only traditional-based disciplines of art-making. The department needs to review its course and curriculum offerings against the backdrop of student and alumni satisfaction. This will open up space for improvement and the potential to be developed further with a holistic view of the art spaces students will enter after they graduate. This would require support from external structures to the department as well as the capacity of the faculty and university management. A Morphostasis of Culture table is located in Appendix J on page 72 offering a detailed breakdown of the factors that determine the cultural conditions.

Agency

The agency for change in the department lies in the hands of the academic and leadership staff at the Michaelis School of Fine Art, but due to the cultural conditions that have been firmly established for decades this happens reluctantly or not at all. Agential capacity of newer staff members may be diminished to conform to the modes of existing curriculum and pedagogical systems already in place. The ways in which students can describe the conditions that should change within the department to align itself to a more thorough understanding of the actual arts industry is seen in the alumni feedback responses. A Morphogenesis of Agency table listing a breakdown of agential factors is located in Appendix K on Page 73.

From utilising Archer's Morphogenetic framework to identify the parts of structure, culture and agency at the Michaelis School of Fine Art - this research study proposes that even though the university has transformed which has resulted in varied changes, there are still many aspects of the curriculum and coursework that needs to be revisited as students find it problematic and unsatisfactory in many instances. The institutional culture of the Fine Arts department needs to address these issues that pertain to how students can develop sustainable careers and the data generated by this research study proposes that alumni could be the key to finding workable solutions.

Archer (1995, 1996, 1998, 2000) indicates that "change in the domain of culture often takes far longer to achieve than change in the domain of structure. Furthermore, if discourses in the domain of culture do not complement the structural change, unintended consequences may result. Understanding the ways in which structural and cultural mechanisms condition curricula is fundamental to transformation." Fundamentally the Michaelis School of Fine Art need to be aware of the practical knowledge that students require to enter the arts industry while still maintaining the core aims of the undergraduate degree in developing artists with superior theoretical knowledge to understand, create and critique art. For successful careers in the arts, a well-rounded curriculum should balance practical and theoretical training. "Bernstein looks at how education institutions transform knowledge through three stages or levels, knowledge-as-research; knowledge-as-curriculum; and knowledge-as-student-understanding." (Ashwin, 2009). This process needs to be undertaken on the various projects run at the Fine Arts department to identify what is beneficial and what not.

Academic and teaching staff often base the present coursework according to their experiences and interests - but this can often lead to the misconception of what is relevant and legitimate to art practices in the contemporary space. Archer's concept of personal emergent properties (PEPs) dictates that the modes by which those in charge of making the decisions on what goes into the curriculum could be entirely misconstrued and biased. "Archer's contribution to this debate is not only the concept of analytical dualism, that is the idea that structure, culture and agency can be analysed separately, but also the accordance of personal powers and properties to people (PEPs). Although people use these PEPs to pursue the concerns and projects they have identified for themselves, they are conditioned in the way and to the extent they use them by their previous experiences." (Boughey & McKenna, 2021). It could be suggested that the agents responsible for the curriculum should consider the significant number of negative responses from alumni regarding its effectiveness. They should begin to question how their personal beliefs and experiences may be influencing the curriculum that is being offered and find ways to address that.

Conclusion

Arts education at the Michaelis School of Fine Art would need to evolve to become more aligned with the globalised arts sector and its industry requirements. This will require a major shift in mindset for academics and teaching staff who prioritise research in the arts over the commercial aspects of it. “Teaching and researching in art schools or colleges that are merged with universities are highly problematic activities in the light of how governments and universities have thought in the past about what legitimately represents these two activities. The basic criteria promoted to define what is university research are hopelessly inflexible and unaccommodating to the aesthetic, cultural, and intuitive ideas as well as the forms and processes of the contemporary visual arts.” (Buckley & Commons, 2009). The Fine Arts department needs to find a middle ground whereby it can focus on the academic project but give precedence to the development of students who can effectively negotiate the unstructured arts industry and the associated financial aspects that go with it. This would involve seeking support from structures outside of the Fine Art department and engaging the faculty and senior university management with a clear plan of improvement.

This research study aimed to offer appropriate viewpoints and critical reflections from alumni regarding their experiences of the curriculum and coursework offered at the Michaelis School of Fine Art and to investigate if there were any changes needed. It is evident from the research conducted that the Fine Arts department requires additional coursework to be added to the curriculum to be aligned with the needs of art graduates entering the arts industry.

When considering Archer’s morphogenetic framework, the Fine Art department’s history and culture were significant contributing factors resulting in a slower capacity to introduce radical curriculum change. Apart from internal departmental considerations about the curriculum, there could be initiatives to develop a closer introspection of the department with alumni graduates. Arts education should be progressive and encompassing to allow artists from varied backgrounds with diverse interests to positively add to the arts sector. Tavin & Tervo (2018) ask the question “What does it mean to talk about art education without presuming a change that turns the Now into the New? What will learning and teaching in art education become when the change they intend to bring about in students and teachers does not fall into a chronological timeline of development where the past, present, and future are aligned, to challenge how the historicity of art education’s present practices is understood along with the very ontology of educational thought.”

Recommendations

It is highly recommended that the Michaelis School of Fine Art consider reviewing their current curriculum and evaluate the need for the inclusion in part or fully the following additions:

1. Arts Entrepreneurship (The business side of art)
2. Multidisciplinary and cross-collaborative learning
3. Creative Technology integration into the curriculum

The Fine arts department has maintained the status of being regarded as one of the best on the continent of Africa for the training and research development of visual artists - however, the curriculum can always be reviewed and enhanced to produce graduates who are multi-skilled and adaptable to the dynamic creative arts industry. “The curriculum is a highly ideological hybrid discourse that includes implicit ways of knowing, ways of doing and ways of being, as well as content.” (Lockett, Morreira & Baijnath, 2019).

An arts curriculum that is aligned with global arts education standards should continually encompass creative, practical, and critical knowledge that will help students progress and cultivate their abilities in the diverse arts arena beyond the classroom and studio. This will ensure the relevance of a Fine Arts undergraduate degree persists over time, as the external arts industry continues to evolve whilst still maintaining the academic and artistic integrity.

Appendix A

First Year Courses offered in 2012

Course Code and name (2012)	Course Description (2012)
FIN1001W - Studiowork 1	Drawing, two and three-dimensional problem-solving. Projects incorporating: figure-drawing, object-drawing, use of different drawing materials, working procedures and processes, colour theory and its application in painting, three-dimensional work in clay, plaster, cardboard and wood; introduction to New Media, Printmaking and Photography.
FIN1005W - Fine Art Foundation	The course introduces creative thinking and critical and visual literacy, paying attention to academic reading and writing and communication skills. Case studies will be used to introduce core concepts, issues, theories and approaches to knowledge-construction. The common theme will be “representation and display” and the ways in which this reflects power, politics, gender and identity. Students will be introduced to both African and other comparative examples. This course aims to enable students to articulate and contextualise their own creative production. Visualisation and visual retention will be stressed. Fieldwork in the form of gallery visits introduces art criticism and reporting.
FIN1006F - The Emergence of Modernity	This course focuses on the emergence of modernity in art and visual culture from ca 1850-2000 and includes African perspectives. Taught in a combination of a thematic and chronological survey, the course covers the major art movements and ideas key to understanding this period. Students will develop basic skills in visual analysis, critical thinking and writing about art and visual imagery as well as approaches to visual and textual research. Students will also engage contemporary debates in and about visual modernity.
FIN1008W - Foundations of Visual Literacy	The course introduces creative thinking and critical and visual literacy, paying attention to academic reading and writing and communication skills. Case studies will be used to introduce students to core concepts, issues, theories and approaches to knowledge construction. The common theme will be “representation and display” and the ways in which this reflects power, politics, gender and identity. Students will be introduced to both African and other comparative examples. The course will have a contemporary focus and where appropriate will explore historical origins. This course aims to enable students to articulate and contextualise their own creative production and visualisation and visual retention will be stressed.
FIN1009S - Images in Conflict: Politics, Power & Propaganda	This course considers the social and political power of the visual, the capacity of art and visual culture to engage historical events and influence behaviour. The course focuses on art and visual cultures produced in response to specific moments of crisis in the period 1848-2010 through case studies of contested visual imagery and artefacts. The course examines the vital role played by the visual in producing, expressing and representing social and cultural processes, including inciting resistance and revolution, maintaining public order, and inspiring fear, awe or adoration.

Appendix B

First Year Courses offered in 2022

Course Code and name (2022)	Course Description (2022)
FIN1001W - Studiowork 1	Drawing, two and three-dimensional problem-solving. Projects incorporating: figure-drawing, object-drawing, use of different drawing materials, working procedures and processes, colour theory and its application in painting, three-dimensional work in clay, plaster, cardboard and wood; introduction to the disciplines of New Media, Printmaking and Photography as well as the development of visual research methodologies.
FIN1005W - Fine Art Foundation	The course introduces creative thinking and critical and visual literacy, paying attention to academic reading and writing and communication skills. Case studies will be used to introduce core concepts, issues, theories and approaches to knowledge-construction. The common theme will be “representation and display” and the ways in which this reflects power, politics, gender and identity. Students will be introduced to both African and other comparative examples. This course aims to enable students to articulate and contextualise their own creative production. Visualisation and visual retention will be stressed. Fieldwork in the form of gallery visits introduces art criticism and reporting.
FIN1006F - Introduction to African Art	This course is an introduction to the theory of African Art across different historical periods. It is also an introduction to the complexities and contradictions of ‘modernity’ and ‘modernism(s)’ in postcolonial Africa. With a focus on ideology-driven interdisciplinary artistic movements and 20th Century art schools in Senegal, Nigeria, Sudan, Congo, Egypt, Ethiopia and South Africa, we will examine various schools of thought that were part of modern consciousness which characterised the independence decades. The course includes critical discussion of colonisation and the rise of PanAfricanism, Pan-Arabism and nationalism during the independence decades. The anti-colonial nationalist struggle in Africa is characterised by the formal appropriation of languages and visual aesthetics, globally. We debate the complexity of this appropriation and its significance in the nationalist struggle through a critique of unilinear progress from tradition to modernity (transfer of technology and political systems [civil society and African state]). Aimed at undermining colonial ideological foundations, African nationalism is characterized by literacy, cultural revival (traditionalist and neo-African), and a quest for African history. Through dialogue, debate and discussion this course provides a forum for critical thinking on art history and African art.
FIN1008W - Foundations of Visual Literacy	The course introduces creative thinking and critical and visual literacy, paying attention to academic reading and writing and communication skills. Case studies will be used to introduce students to core concepts, issues, theories and approaches to knowledge-construction. The common theme will be “representation and display” and the ways in which this reflects power, politics, gender and identity. Students will be introduced to both African and other comparative examples. The course will have a contemporary focus and where appropriate will explore historical origins. This course aims to enable students to articulate and contextualise their own creative production and visualisation and visual retention will be stressed.

FIN1009S - Approaches to Art History

This course examines some of the foundational issues of academic art history. How and where did the study of art history begin, and what were its founding principles? We consider its origins in the late 19th century and then trace how it has changed in the course of the succeeding century and into the contemporary period. We look at debates over issues of aesthetic quality, questions of the relationship between art and society, questions of the art-historical canon and its exclusions. The core theme is art history as a subject of academic study, but this inevitably links to broader issues of how art is taught within the art school and of how art is exhibited within the museum. The course is taught by all members of the department and while aiming to offer an overview of its subject, it also aims to offer insight into how different art historians respond differently to the academic field they work within. How do they understand their task as art historians, how do they believe it should be taught? We foreground, via the example of our own different approaches, some of the diversity of opinion within the field.

Appendix C

Second Year Courses offered in 2012

Course Code and name (2012)	Course Description (2012)
FIN2011W – Painting 2	Broad exposure to a range of painting techniques including acrylic and oil. Emphasis on mimetic skills, development of colour and composition and conceptual engagement with contemporary painting.
FIN2012W – Sculpture 2	Intermediate problem-solving. Projects incorporating: metalwork: joining, brazing, welding; modelling and casting: plaster moulding, casting in wax, plaster, cement fondu; ceramics: hand-building, slabwork, press-moulding, slip-casting; projects that incorporate woodcarving, construction and assemblage.
FIN2013W – Photography 2	Introduction to theory and practice of photography in the form of specific problem solving projects, including darkroom process for black and white film and systems of exposure for film and digital imaging.
FIN2024W – Printmedia 2	Introduction to the theory and practice of printmaking including intaglio, relief, and lithographic techniques and book arts. Conceptual engagement with both historical and contemporary aspects of printmaking.
FIN2025W – New Media 2	Introduction to the theory and practice of new media including digital image manipulation, augmented reality, vector-based graphics and animation.
FIN2026W – Core Practice 2	Traditional and contemporary approaches to drawing as well as the development of visual research methods.
FIN2027F - Art Narratives: Traditions And Tensions	This course considers Western theories of art and aesthetics operating in contemporary art, with a significant focus on Africa. We explore the tensions and continuities between different perspectives on art practice and theory, including new art historical narratives, the discourses of feminism, social theory and postcoloniality in a global context. Students will build skills in visual analysis, critical thinking and writing about art and visual imagery as well as approaches to visual and textual research.
FIN2028S – Discursive Strategies: Innovation and Adaption	This course explores the urban environment in contemporary art practice and theory. We consider in particular the artist and artistic collectives focusing on the city, urban life, space, the body and technologies in Africa and across the globe. In part of the course students will engage the city in their own creative practice. Students will build skills in visual analysis, critical thinking and writing about art and visual imagery as well as approaches to visual and textual research. Fieldwork introduces site-specific practice.
FIN2029F – Envisioning The Body: Representations Of The Human In Art And Visual Culture	This course explores the imaging of the body as both the subject and site of representation. With reference to art-historical examples, it examines some of the many ways the human body has been visualised to produce, express, and represent significant cultural ideas and social forces. Furthermore, it considers the powerful social role that body imagery has played in history. This will include visual representations of health and sickness, the visual commemoration of faces/bodies of power, the religious use of the human figure, and the visual tradition of the rational vs sensuous body.
FIN2030S - Visual Cultures: Space & Place	This course analyses how visual cultures are related to their environments, and how they respond to them. Operating at two levels, it studies the institutional structure (including art institutions) of successful visual cultures of the past and engages the art historical question of how those cultures visualised their relationship to their surroundings. The latter involves the study of attitudes towards space and place, as expressed through a variety of visual media.

Appendix D

Second Year Courses offered in 2022

Course Code and name (2022)	Course Description (2022)
FIN2011W – Painting 2	This course provides a broad exposure to a range of painting techniques including acrylic and oil. Projects emphasise mimetic skills, the development of colour and composition, and painting in the expanded field. The course demands a conceptual engagement with contemporary painting and the genres of landscape, narrative and still life are critically addressed.
FIN2012W – Sculpture 2	This course introduces the theory and practice of traditional sculpture and contemporary forms of three-dimensional construction, emphasising the development of concepts in relation to particular techniques. Projects include: metalwork - cutting, bending and welding; modelling and casting multiples - plaster and silicone moulding, casting in clay slip and / or plaster, wax, cement; woodwork - cutting and construction; assemblage incorporating a variety of found materials.
FIN2013W – Photography 2	This course introduces the theory and practice of photography. Technical, conceptual and critical skills are taught through specific problem-solving projects. Students are encouraged to refer to relevant contemporary and historical practice and theory to inform their work. This course may include an introduction to portraiture, documentary and narrative photography, street photography, and related topics such as ethics and voyeurism. A number of technical skills are taught including colour and black and white photography; digital and camera skills; artificial and low-light photography; and basic digital image manipulation for print.
FIN2024W – Printmedia 2	This course introduces the theory and practice of printmaking and projects demand a conceptual engagement with both the historical and contemporary aspects of the discipline. Processes include intaglio, relief and lithographic techniques as well as book arts. Students are introduced to aspects of printmaking such as editioning, paper care, print collections and the traditions of the print studio.
FIN2026 – Core Practice 2	This course is divided into four thematic projects. Within these sessions traditional, exploratory and contemporary approaches to drawing will be presented as well as an introduction to digital technologies. The focus is on developing observational, perceptual and formal sensitivity as well as encouraging creative and conceptual approaches to production through both drawing and digital means. The development of visual research methodology is emphasised.
FIN2028S – Discursive Strategies: Innovation and Adaption	This course explores the urban environment in contemporary art practice and theory. We consider in particular the artist and artistic collectives focusing on the city, urban life, space, the body and technologies in Africa and across the globe. In part of the course students will engage the city in their own creative practice. Students will build skills in visual analysis, critical thinking and writing about art and visual imagery as well as approaches to visual and textual research. Fieldwork introduces site-specific practice.
FIN2029F – Envisioning the body	The human body has been central to art throughout its history. This course examines some of the many ways in which the body has been visualised and some of the manifold expressive purposes it has fulfilled. Themes vary from year to year but many include: nakedness versus nudity, the tradition of figure drawing, the ideal and the abject body, the body in space, reading gesture and pose, and the significance of costume in art.

Appendix E

Third Year Courses offered in 2012

Course Code and name (2012)	Course Description (2012)
FIN3010H - Theory and Practice of Art 3	Theory and Practice of Art 3 develops independent historical / theoretical research in selected aspects of contemporary South African or African art. Students choose a topic in consultation with the lecturer. There is a major emphasis on primary research in this course. Topics could focus on an artist or art collective, curating, a significant exhibition, debate or text, or any art world event or initiative. Each student will produce a written proposal outlining the research task, and then the completed research, which will be a fully referenced, illustrated long essay.
FIN3011W – Painting 3	First semester: emphasis on exploring the materiality of paint and ideas generation. Second semester: self-motivated development of own work conceived within the terrain of contemporary painting.
FIN3012W – Sculpture 3	Advanced problem-solving and sculpture techniques. Large scale works based on FIN2012W Sculpture 2 including introduction to bronze casting, metal-working and ceramic techniques. Fieldwork introduces site-specific installations as an aspect of professional practice. Participants develop proposals for self-motivated creative projects in the second semester.
FIN3013W – Photography 3	Advanced photographic techniques and related problem-solving projects during first semester leading to self-motivated specialisation in second semester. Fieldwork introduces new technology and methodology as well as conceptual thinking in alternative environments.
FIN3024W – Printmedia 3	Photomechanical print technologies: lithography, screen printing; colour printing; digital applications used in the production of books; curatorship; catalogue and exhibition design. Conceptual emphasis on the expansion of notions of print. Fieldwork introduces industrial methodology and processing techniques.
FIN3025W – New Media 3	Advanced digital techniques. Web design, animation, augmented reality, interactivity and videography. Fieldwork includes new technology and methodology as well as industrial applications of new media techniques.
FIN3030H – Studiowork 3 Electives	Compulsory (core) half-year course. Students are required to choose two electives from the following options (in some years, not all options will be available): Videography, Animation and motion graphics, Curatorship, Lithography and screen-printing, Computer-aided design, Social responsibility, Physical computing, Historical photographic processes.
FIN3026F – New Art: New Perspectives	This course focuses on the way developments in technology have transformed contemporary artistic practice, theory and reception. Included here is coverage of weblogs the engage with African and global art practice, as well as artistic practice deeply involved with new forms of social networking. Students will develop advanced skills in visual analysis, critical thinking and writing about art and visual imagery, visual and textual research approaches.
FIN3027S – Strategies for Art in times of change	This course focuses on a basic understanding the history and development of key concepts underpinning contemporary art practice and theory, including 'modernity', 'postmodernity', 'postcoloniality' 'subjectivity', 'otherness', 'image', 'art', and 'aesthetics'. This focus will enable students to situate their own creative practice within the contemporary moment. Students will develop advanced skills in visual analysis, critical thinking and writing about art and visual imagery as well as approaches to visual and textual research.

FIN3028F – Art and Theory	<p>This course considers the theoretical issues raised by visual artefacts, in particular the way in which the history of art, the historical study of images, has evolved as a subject since the beginning of the 20th century, and how this field relates to the practical one of art-museum management and curatorship. Some of the issues addressed include: the status of the art expert, authentication, forgery and artistic value, art and social context, private and public art collecting, and the social and artistic function of the art museum.</p>
FIN3029S – Critical Studies in Art History and Visual Culture	<p>This course develops themes and competencies addressed in FIN3028F Art and Theory. Building on the knowledge of historiographic methods introduced in that course, this second semester course offers a deeper understanding of art and visual history as disciplinary practices. Focused seminars on methods and topics introduce students to high-level, independent research that results in an extended research paper on a subject of their choice.</p>

Appendix F

Third Year Courses offered in 2022

Course Code and name (2022)	Course Description (2022)
FIN3011W – Painting 3	<p>First semester: Surface and medium are key components in the generation of meaning in contemporary painting. Students are expected to explore historical precedents from 20th century modernism and postmodernism and to create works where the implications of surface and materiality in painting are primary. Students are required to expand the range of painting medium and consider using substances that might function as alternatives to paint, thereby expanding the range of paint beyond that which is commercially available. Traditional supports may be used, or alternatives considered. Scale and format are also examined to encourage students to move beyond the conventions of the rectangle. After immersion into alternative media students are then engaged in ideas generation and conceptual responses to painting. Historically rooted in modernist minimalism and conceptualism, process work is key here. Second semester: Utilising the ideas and methods generated in the first semester students move into a self-motivated development of their own work conceived within the terrain of contemporary painting.</p>
FIN3012W – Sculpture 3	<p>During the first semester advanced sculpture techniques are introduced, building on the technical, conceptual, and critical skills learnt during the second year of study. These include bronze casting and contemporary three-dimensional art forms such as site-specific installation. In the second semester, students are required to work on a self-motivated project, drawing on ideas and methods developed in earlier projects to produce a coherent body of work. Students are encouraged to continue to explore relevant contemporary theory and practice, as well as historical examples to inform their practice.</p>
FIN3013W – Photography 3	<p>This is an advanced course on the theory and practice of photography. It builds on the technical, conceptual and critical skills learnt during the second year of study. Projects encourage an exploration of the medium and emphasise the generation of ideas. Students are exposed to studio and advanced photographic lighting techniques, various format cameras and postproduction skills through specific problem-solving projects. During the second semester students work on a self-motivated project, which draws upon their previous photographic knowledge and further develops personal expression and critical understanding. Students are encouraged to explore relevant contemporary practice and theory, as well as historical examples to inform their practice. Fieldwork introduces new technology and methodology as well as conceptual thinking in alternative environments.</p>
FIN3024W – Printmedia 3	<p>Advanced printmaking techniques are introduced in the first semester. These include photomechanical print technologies: lithography and screen printing; colour printing; digital applications used in the production of books; curatorship; catalogue and exhibition design. Conceptual emphasis is on the expansion of notions of print. Ideas generated and technologies learned in the first semester are used toward a self-motivated area of study in the second semester. Fieldwork introduces industrial methodology and processing techniques.</p>
FIN3030W – Studiowork 3 Electives	<p>This course exposes students to alternative forms of art production outside of their major studio work areas. Contemporary in orientation, the various sub-courses will familiarise students with developments in digital image production, video editing and computer-aided design as well as social responsiveness and curatorship. A strong creative relationship to other studio work options will be sought. Fieldwork introduces new technologies and methodologies as well as industrial applications of computer design and manufacturing techniques.</p>

FIN3026F – New Art: New Perspectives	<p>This course focuses on the way developments in technology have transformed contemporary artistic practice, theory, and reception. Included here is coverage of African and global art practice, as well as artistic practice deeply involved with new forms of social networking, comic books and video games. Students will develop advanced skills in visual analysis, critical thinking and writing about art and visual imagery, visual and textual research approaches.</p>
FIN3027S – Strategies for Art in times of change	<p>This course focuses on a basic understanding of the history and development of key concepts underpinning contemporary art practice and theory, including ‘modernity’, ‘postmodernity’, ‘postcoloniality’, ‘subjectivity’, ‘otherness’, ‘image’, ‘art’, and ‘aesthetics’. This focus will enable students to situate their own creative practice within the contemporary moment. Students will develop advanced skills in visual analysis, critical thinking and writing about art and visual imagery as well as approaches to visual and textual research.</p>
FIN3028F – Art, Theory and Society	<p>This course is a study of art as social engagement. Through a critical analysis of art theory, this course is aimed at facilitating discussions about intersecting discourses of class, gender and race. It is an interrogation of the changing conceptions of public space, collective action, collaborative practice and (artistic) citizenship. Based on debates and discussions, this course examines multiple perspectives on art, politics and social impact. The plurality of artistic approaches to persistent and emergent socio-political issues, bio-politics and political geography draws attention to uneven development. Focusing on the Global South, students will learn different approaches to transdisciplinary art forms such as live art, performance and popular cultural interventions.</p>
FIN3029S – Critical Studies in Art History and Visual Culture	<p>This course develops themes and competencies addressed in FIN3028F Art and Theory. Building on the knowledge of historiographic methods introduced in that course, this second semester course offers a deeper understanding of art and visual history as disciplinary practices. Focused seminars on methods and topics introduce students to high-level, independent research that results in an extended research paper on a subject of their choice.</p>

Appendix G

Fourth Year Courses offered in 2012

Course Code and name (2012)	Course Description (2012)
FIN4011H – Theory and Practice of Art	As with FIN3010H, this is a lecture/seminar-based theory half course taught over the whole year. The course is directly related to creative practice. Students will produce a fully illustrated catalogue of their work with a framing essay for their final submission. The catalogue should show familiarity with critical aspects of contemporary art practice relevant to their creative work, including sources, context, and artists. Students should engage with contemporary theorizations of current art practice and be able to use these in an appropriate way in their catalogue submission.
FIN4015W – Fine Art 4	This course is self-motivated study and research into a specialised area of contemporary fine art practice that may include painting, sculpture, printmaking, photography or new media.

Appendix H

Fourth Year Courses offered in 2022

Course Code and name (2022)	Course Description (2022)
FIN4012W – Theory and Practice of Art	This course examines the place of the artist in contemporary society and the skills and tools (both practical and theoretical) that may be needed to traverse this terrain. Through the course students will be exposed to the conventions of professional art practice; examine the relationship between theory and practice; look at how the current internal art world is structured and discuss the economics and ethics of art production both globally and locally. They will learn to write catalogue essays and design exhibition catalogues.
FIN4015W – Fine Art 4	This course is self-motivated study and research into a specialised area of contemporary fine art practice that may include painting, sculpture, printmaking, photography or new media. Familiarisation with the historical and contemporary trajectories of the chosen practice is emphasised, as are display and exhibition methodologies. Students work towards a professional exhibition presented at the end of the year.

Appendix I

Morphogenesis of Structure (South African Higher Education History)		
Timeline 1 (T1) Pre 1990s	<i>Structural Conditioning</i>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Colonialism history • Apartheid government • Racial Exclusion in higher education • Westernised educational perspectives and theories • Traditionalist and elitist • Research-intensive institution • Diverse student population groups
Timeline 2 - Timeline 3 (T2 - T3) (2012 - 2022)	<i>Social interaction</i>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • South African democratic government • Government interventions in education • Educational access and transformation • Development of inclusive policies • Frameworks for higher education • Student protests and activist groups • Decolonisation projects • University transformation frameworks
Timeline 4 (T4) (2023 onwards)	<i>Structural elaboration</i>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • University leadership changes (Vice Chancellors) • NSFAS funding initiatives • Student access and diversity increased • Staff development (decolonisation project) • University transformation initiatives • Retirement of older staff, hiring of new staff (BEE) policies • Equitable staff complement • Space for new ideas on curriculum and developments

Appendix J

Morphostasis of Culture (Michaelis School of Fine Art history)		
Timeline 1 (T1) Pre 1990s	<i>Cultural Conditioning</i>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • University privileged positionality in society • Research intensive concerns • Alignment to institutional policies • Elitist institution choosing who attends • Gatekeeping of art students that get departmental awards • Departmental staff made up of majority of white academics
Timeline 2 - Timeline 3 (T2 - T3) (2012 - 2022)	<i>Socio-cultural interaction</i>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Changes to government education policies • Departmental staff is more racially diverse • Higher Education transformation frameworks • Rhodes Must Fall student protests • Fees Must Fall student protests • Curriculum stagnant and slow to change • Covid-19 period and lockdown • Remote and blended learning modes • Diverse Fine Art student body demand change
Timeline 4 (T4) (2023 onwards)	<i>Cultural elaboration</i>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Departmental leadership changes • Introduction of scholarships and other funding • Art materials assistance to art students • Africanised views on art favoured • Still non-utilitarian mode of art • Traditionalist and fixed disciplines • Disconnected from external arts world

Appendix K

Morphogenesis of Agency (Fine Art academics and lecturers)		
Timeline 1 (T1) Pre 1990s	<i>Structural Conditioning of groups</i>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Apartheid era privileged white staff • European-centric methods of teaching • Westernised curriculum structures • Academic staff mainly white • Support staff mainly coloured and black • Elitist position in Cape Town arts industry • Reputation grows for training successful artists
Timeline 2 - Timeline 3 (T2 - T3) (2012 - 2022)	<i>Group interaction</i>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Departmental changes according to institutional employment policies (BEE) • University adopts ways to enforce employment equity and transformation • Non-whites are given opportunities to run the department and research projects • Changes in staff complement initiates changes in the curriculum structures • Move away from total Westernised views on Fine Art and creative practices • Fine Art remains as non-utilitarian contemporary practices
Timeline 4 (T4) (2023 onwards)	<i>Group elaboration</i>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • New departmental leadership • Younger and newer staff complement • Conform to existing departmental culture • Stagnant curriculum perpetuated • Older staff retiring/completing tenure • Dire need for holistic departmental integration in the arts education programme • Review of curriculum and teaching methods • Staff buy out teaching and conduct research • Research-led academics • Working to promote university transformation initiatives and progress

Appendix L

Aims of the BAFA degree programme

The following broad aims and description of the BAFA degree (listed below) are cited from the Michaelis School of Fine Art website (www.michaelis.uct.ac.za).

The BAFA degree programme is one of full-time and specialist study. Students who register for this programme will be required to take studiowork and academic courses which are taught on Hiddingh and Upper Campus. Over the four-year degree students are introduced to the studiowork disciplines of Painting, Sculpture, Photography, Printmaking and New Media, and work towards an increased area of studiowork specialisation.

The broad aims of the programme are:

- To offer students an enriching and intensive education which will enable them to apply their skills with confidence as artists and creative practitioners.
- To provide students with relevant technical, intellectual and interpersonal skills, both within and across the specialist subjects.
- To facilitate an understanding of fine art, its practice and its theory, in philosophical, critical and social contexts, both contemporary and historical.
- To foster the originality of individual vision and the ability to express it.
- To cultivate a very high degree of visual literacy and awareness coupled ideally with an ability to formulate ideas in speech and in the written word

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