



# BA Contemporary Visual Art

## Curriculum for bachelor studies in fine art

180 Study points

Approved by board

Revised by dean/director

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## 1. Short overview of study

Name of study program	Contemporary Visual Art
Qualifies for	Bachelor Degree in Contemporary Visual Art
Normal length of study	4 years full time study
Study points	180
Teaching language	Arabic and English

## 2. Short description of study

The BA in Contemporary Visual Art provides a 3 year programme of study at The International Academy of Art, Palestine in Ramallah. The programme is specialist study in visual art which intends to equip students with knowledge and key transferable skills to be able to continue on to post-graduate study in the arts, practice as an independent artist or enter into employment in the local and regional creative industries .

The BA programme has three main pillars of study, theory, studio practice and specialisation. The ethos is interdisciplinary, offering students a wide breadth of experience across painting, drawing, sculpture, 3D, installation, photography, video, performance and social intervention. In addition to IAAP's staff, instruction is provided by acclaimed local and international visiting lecturers, who are active practioners in the field worldwide. Theoretical studies are specifically tailored to address the local context of Palestine within a larger framework of critical and historical studies. This profile provides a cornerstone for situating the students' practice and enables them to engage in political, historical and art theoretical debates on a local and international platform. Studio practice forms a central part of the BA programme, in which students develop their individual practice through guidance in individual tutorials, group seminars and critiques. A strong emphasis is placed on research as a means of creating a synergy between theory and practice.

Upon completion of the BA programme the student will have identified a trajectory for their artistic practice and gained competence in the use of various media and techniques for the articulation of their ideas.

### **3. Admission requirements**

Successful completion of a prior Foundation programme (separate study plan) enables students to proceed onto study for 3 years to achieve BA in Contemporary Visual Art. Equivalent experience or studies at other institutions may also qualify for entrance into the BA programme.

Entrance procedures for the Foundation programme are as follows:

Application is open to all students across Palestine who have completed high school study or who have equivalent experience. IAAP welcomes mature students to its BA programme, students with learning disabilities and those who have completed related diplomas of study are welcome to apply. IAAP operates an open call which is issued in the spring of each admissions year. Applicants are required to submit a portfolio of work, CV and accompanying statement of interest. IAAP holds open days for those wanting to visit and talk to students and staff. From the applications a short-list of candidates are selected and invited to IAAP and are required to work on a project, which is then presented to jury in an interview for final selection of new students. The criteria for selection in the 2nd round is:

1. Aesthetic awareness, originality of ideas, awareness of context of work
2. Creative and individual expression, independence of thought
3. Evidence of potential for development
4. Evidence of knowledge of artists and exhibitions

IAAP students who are accepted to study are bound by the regulations of IAAP, which can be found in the student handbook. IAAP offers a scholarship for 4 years of study (Foundation year + BA), not including a student fee of \$500. Students are obliged to complete their study during this time period, which involves completion of 30 study points each semester. Each student is provided with studio space with daily access, free art materials for all workshops, loan of audio-visual equipment and computers, and technical support for the production of their work.

### **4. Learning objectives/outcomes of study**

Detailed learning outcomes for each level of study and area of study are available in the course descriptions. On completion of the 4 year BA programme the student will be able demonstrate the following acquisition of knowledge, skills and competence:

## KNOWLEDGE

<i>Upon completion of the study, the student:</i>
- has a comprehensive overview of the main issues informing contemporary art practice and theory
- has a comprehensive overview of the use of media, techniques and methods in contemporary art practice
- has an in-depth contextual understanding of individual art practices, including their own work, within the field of contemporary art
- has in-depth practical knowledge of at least one artistic medium/technique

## SKILLS

<i>Upon completion of the study, the student:</i>
- can demonstrate advanced proficiency in the use of at least one art medium/technique
- can identify and apply relevant theoretical/cultural references to individual art practices, including the student's own work
- can conduct independent artistic research and reflect critically on contemporary art practice and cultural issues
- can analyse, contextualize and discuss their own and colleagues work within a relevant artistic and theoretical framework

## COMPETENCE

<i>Upon completion of the study, the student:</i>
- can demonstrate fundamental writing, oral and visual presentation skills
- can plan, manage and realise art projects independently
- can demonstrate a creative, individual approach in the choice and realisation of their artistic ideas
- can present their work to the public at a professional level

## 5. Design and implementation

The BA in contemporary visual art is designed to give students the knowledge, cognitive, practical and transferable skills necessary to develop an independent professional artistic practice and/or continue on to post-graduate study. The programme is based on three main pillars of study, Studio Practice, Theory and Specialisation. Through the three components it is intended that students develop independent learning strategies and self-management of their individual artistic research. Major emphasis is placed on the cultivation of the students' individual practice, which is achieved through the acquisition of a range of skills via various methods of instruction and learning.

The programme of study is divided into three main components of study: Studio Practice, Theory and Specialisation. Students are required to complete 75 points in Studio Practice, 30 points in Theory and 45 points in Specialisation across the 3 years of study, which is divided into 30 points each semester. Details regarding structure can be found in point 5.1 below, and are specified in the study plan of each semester. In Theory courses 1 point is equal to 8 hrs of contact teaching, in Specialisation 1 point is equal to 12 hrs of contact teaching. Studio practice has individual teaching and guidance in the form of tutorials, students receive a minimum of 6 tutorials per semester from staff as well as additional tutorials from visiting lecturers.

In the BA programme's first two semesters the student begins to engage in an in-depth personal project as part of their studio practice, with a selected theme of research. Training in the process of critical reflection, which will support the development of the students individual practice, is provided through tutorials, self-presentations and critiques. Practical and technical workshops are also provided, but at a more advanced level than in the Foundation programme and take their point of departure in conceptual as well as practical questions. Theoretical studies focus on the in-depth study of particular writers and themes, e.g. colonialism, nationalism and globalisation, and the writings of Michel Foucault. Students also develop their writing skills and are encouraged to forge links between theory and practice.

In the third and fourth semesters students develop an individual research based practice, test out creative ideas through experimentation, and are encouraged to explore inter-disciplinary methods in the realisation of their ideas. Students are expected to develop a higher level of competence in execution and presentation of ideas and forms, and to focus on a sustained theme of research, thus developing their own methodologies of practice. Specialist courses, including practical workshops, are provided in order to improve the skills necessary for the student's self-management and execution of their projects. During Level 3 students also have the opportunity for exchange at a partner institution. By the end of the fourth semester, students will be able to realise self-initiated projects and will have identified clear direction of practice and set of theoretical concerns.

Semesters 5-6 represents a year of consolidation of the student's knowledge and skills, with specific focus on the development of their individual artistic research. Students are encouraged to continue experimentation, and to identify opportunities in the working process for the development and realisation of their ideas. Students develop and increasing sophistication in the articulation of ideas, which are expressed with originality, professionally, and reflect a synergy of theory and practice. The written thesis, participation in critiques and final viva demonstrate the student's capacity for self-reflection, critical analysis and originality of thought. In the final exhibition the student demonstrates the ability to select, plan and realise a major project at a professional level; bring together new and previously acquired skills; solve practical problems and work independently with confidence.

### 5.1. Course structure

Course name	Credits per semester							
	1.	2.	3.	4.	5.	6.	7.	8.
Foundation – Art Theory	6	6						
Foundation – Studio Practice	9	9						
Foundation – Basic Skills	15	15						
Art Theory			6	6	6	6	6	
Studio Practice			15	15	15	15	15	

Specialization			9	9	9	9	9	
Art Theory								6
Studio Practice								24
<b>SUM</b>	<b>30</b>	<b>30</b>	<b>30</b>	<b>30</b>	<b>30</b>	<b>30</b>	<b>30</b>	<b>30</b>

## 5.2. Exchange

Students at IAAP have the opportunity to undertake an exchange in their third year of study or the first semester of their 4th year of study. The duration of an exchange is usually set to be between 4-6 weeks, but can be up to 8 weeks if the student is going to attend a particular course. Participation in student exchange requires that all study point have been achieved in previous semesters.

IAAP aims for students to have an enriching exchange experience, therefore attempts to match students to relevant programmes in relation to their practice. Students are therefore selected by the Director of Academic Programme to attend other institutions based on their area of interest and research. As IAAP covers the costs of exchange or has specific agreements with partnering institutions to share the costs, IAAP reserves the right limit the number of students who participate in the exchange program. IAAP currently has exchange agreements with KHiO, University of Brighton, The University of Seville and the KUNO network. Exchange with KHiO includes student exchange from IAAP to KHiO; participation by KHiO staff in IAAP's teaching programme; and a joint workshop at IAAP with staff and students from KHiO.

In addition to the student exchange program, students who have demonstrated outstanding achievements are nominated to participate in international workshops. Previous workshops have included the annual meeting/workshops of the Mediterranean Art Schools; Truth is Concrete and Art Marathon, Austria; Haystack International Artist Workshop, USA; Arab Artist Workshop, Beirut, Lebanon.

## 6. Forms of instruction and learning

The BA programme in Contemporary Visual Art employs a variety of learning and teaching methods designed to support a students' development of knowledge and skills towards becoming an independent art practitioner. The central ethos of the programme is based on the mutual relationship between theory and practice. Emphasis is placed on the each student's development of a research-based practice, in which they bring together artistic knowledge gained through practical working experience with a critical contextual understanding of their work. The curriculum structure and content it is intended to provide the student with knowledge, skills and competence as outlined in general above and in detail in the appended course descriptions.

The study programme of the BA in Contemporary Visual Art focuses on a significant amount of independent learning with different forms of guidance. To facilitate independent learning, students are provided with a studio space for the development of their art practice and to meet their course requirements. In addition students have access to library, technical support and project space. The BA programme encompasses different methods of teaching and learning, which include:

1. Individual tutorials
2. Group tutorials
3. Seminar
4. Workshops
5. Technical workshops
6. Group presentation and critiques
7. Participation in projects
8. Artist assistantship
9. Lectures
10. Thesis
11. Final Exhibition

1. Individual tutorials are one-to-one sessions between tutor and student. Students are required to present their work in progress, experimentation, readings and research. Tutors advise on the ways in which project can be developed, engage in critical reflection of the theme and content of the student's work, and provide relevant references for further research. Students have a minimum of four tutorials during a semester with a regular tutor. The outcomes of tutorials are recorded in a tutorial feedback sheet for reference by the student and staff, which detail strengths of the project and areas that require further development. In addition to tutorials with IAAP's staff, students have opportunities for tutorials with visiting artists/lecturers.
2. Group tutorials are led by a tutor from IAAP's staff and involve discussion of a particular topic or student presentations of their work. Group tutorials are a collective learning environment in which students are required to give oral presentations and contribute to debate and peer learning. Group tutorials enable students to receive collective feedback about their work, troubleshoot, and share observations on their research and working process.
3. Seminars are a form of group instruction led by a tutor, and involve the discussion of texts, film screenings and practical/project work. The emphasis of seminars is upon group participation, collective analysis and critical discussion. The aim of seminars is to develop students theoretical knowledge, visual communication skills, and oral presentation/debating skills.
4. Workshops are conducted by different tutors/artists, based on a project brief. and are component of the study area Specialisation. Workshops involve the acquisition practical skills and the methods to develop concepts and ideas into individual art projects around a particular question or theme.
5. Technical workshops are conducted by different tutors and focus on the acquisition of technical skills in the different mediums of art practice, including: painting, drawing, 3D, video, photography and performance. Introductory workshops introduce students to basic core skills in these mediums. These are followed by workshops that focus on advanced skills, which students can select in relation to the development and realisation of their studio practice.
6. Crits and group presentations are group instruction sessions in which students present their work/projects. Students receive critical feedback and advice from tutors and peers regarding their research and visual articulation of ideas. Crits are scheduled at the middle and end of semester, and all students and tutors are invited to participate.
7. Participation in projects provides students with a unique hands-on learning experience in the planning and realisation of art projects in the community. Via IAAP's network with local organisations, students have the opportunity to participate in a range of art projects across the spectre of theatre, art education, public art and exhibition preparation.
8. Artist assistantships provide students with the opportunity to work with local and international artists on specific research projects and the installation of exhibitions. This form of teaching and learning allows students to gain practical insight into how professional artists realise their works, including the process of research, production and the need for problem solving that is encountered particularly in new contexts.
9. Lectures are part of the teaching methodology where individual tutors present ideas and information to students in relation to particular course content. in order to provide students with a wide breadth of knowledge regarding artistic methods and practice, IAAP also organises lectures by individual artists who discuss their practice or projects.
10. The thesis is a form of learning which students undertake in their final 2 semesters of study at Level 4. Theses involve the undertaking of an individual theoretical research project, which is presented in a 5000 word written essay. Thesis work depend involves independent research and comparative analysis, undertaken in close supervision with tutor over the duration of 2 semesters. It is intended that the subject of research should dovetail or take a tangent related to each student's concerns and area of research in their studio practice and final exhibition.
11. The final exhibition is intended as an accumulation of learning experience. It is also a learning experience in itself, in which students are required to engage in professional production and the display of their research during final semester for assessment by a jury and public audience. The final exhibition requires significant independent learning, research, time management, and the use of practical skills acquired over the course of the BA programme. Students are expected to be able to present a professional portfolio of work and research

to accompany the exhibition as well as statement of intent. Students are supported in their final exhibition with guidance from a tutor.

#### Course Requirements:

**Theory:** Requirements include attendance, the reading of assigned texts, oral presentations from readings and analysis of works, participation in group discussions, and completion of written assignments and examinations.

**Studio Practice:** Students are expected to work on the development of their personal practice over the course of the semester. They are required to produce a body of work and to document their working process and research into the relevant artist practice and theories. The documentation is to be in the form of sketchbook and portfolio, which can be supported by photographic material and video where appropriate. Students are required to present their work and documentation of the working process at the end of each semester for final assessment.

Students who fail studio practice have the opportunity to undertake a studio practice project during the summer break without supervision and upon successful completion can continue their programme of study. Students who fail to submit a studio practice project for assessment receive an academic warning.

**Specialisation:** Requirements include the creation of project description and development of art work, attendance and participation in practical assignments, and documentation of the working process and outcomes that will be assessed.

**Language of instruction:** Instruction in the programme of study is mainly in Arabic, but also in English. Students are thus required to have basic knowledge of English. Translation is also available. An English course is provided for all students wishing to develop their English language skills.

Details of work requirements for each course may differ and can be found in the course descriptions.

Details of attendance requirements for the different components of the BA programme are as follows:

**Theory:** Students are required to attend 80% of the course and complete required assignments. Students cannot acquire theory points if attendance is less than 70%. Students cannot carry more than a third of required points in theory on to their next semester of academic study.

**Specialisation:** Students are required to attend 80% of the course. In cases where attendance is between 60-80%, students are set an additional assignment at the discretion of the instructor and receive points upon successful completion. Students cannot carry more than a third of required points in Specialization on to their next semester of academic study.

**Studio Practice:** Students are required to attend all designated tutorials and all crits for guidance and supervision of their studio practice and projects.

Detailed information regarding attendance, failure, sickness, request for absence, use of IAAP facilities and other matters related to the study programme can be found in the regulations handbook. The BA in Contemporary Visual Art at IAAP, is a full-time course of study. Students are not permitted to undertake commitments that affect their studies without prior approval by the Director of Academic Programmes. IAAP runs a system of academic fore warnings and warnings, followed in severe cases by dismissal from study programme. Details of warning system can be found in the regulations handbook (extract annex 1).

## 7. Assessment

Assessment in the BA programme takes place at the end of each semester. At each level year there is set assessment criteria for the evaluation of the three main pillars of study Theory, Studio Practice, and Specialisation. Details of the assessment criteria are given to the students at the commencement of each semester to ensure transparency and clarity in regard to what will be looked for in the assessment of outcomes of each course. Each student discusses their study plan with the Director of Academic Programmes

at the commencement of each semester to outline their plan, the points they are required to take and the work requirements that need to be met in order to proceed to assessment at the end of semester.

Assessment criteria for the three pillars of study are divided into two main areas: 1) knowledge and understanding, and 2) key transferable skills. Knowledge and understanding focuses on the conceptual articulation of the students' art practice, their understanding of the relevancy of materials and methods, and their contextual understanding of art practice and theoretical debates. Key transferable skills focuses on the ability to undertake research and present ideas and work. At each level of study assessment criteria are progressive in order to ensure that students reach and achieve the overall learning outcomes of the BA programme (outlined above). Assessment criteria for each semester in theory, studio practice and specialisation can be found in the course descriptions.

Assessment methods: A range of assessment methods are used to assess the three pillars of study: theory, studio practice and specialisation. In each pillar of study the student is required to complete course requirements in order to have their work assessed at the examination stage.

Theory: Assessment is continuous throughout each course and based on the evaluation of students' understanding through participation in seminars and in particular discussion of readings. In addition students are assessed on specific assignments such as presentations and essays, in which they demonstrate their comprehension of the course material. In some courses students are required to complete an examination. Theory courses are assessed on pass/fail basis and also graded from A-F.

Specialisation: Assessment is continuous throughout each course and based on student's performance in the acquisition of specialist skills. Students are assessed at the end of each course based on their achievements in relation to the expected outcomes of course. Students overall participation and contribution during the course is also weighted. Students are graded on pass/fail basis and on a scale of A-F.

Studio Practice: Students' progress is continually monitored throughout the semester in regular tutorials given by core staff and visiting lecturers. In addition student progress is monitored at midpoint of each semester in mid-term critiques. Students have set criteria at each level of study and must show progress and development of their studio practice project over the duration of the semester.

At the end of semester, studio practice projects are presented in final crits to a jury of tutors that includes an external member, during which the students present the accumulation of their research and final outcome of their project. Students then submit additional supporting material and documentation for end of term assessment. Final grades for studio practice are agreed upon by the jury and feedback provided to the student in an assessment sheet. Studio practice is graded from A-F.

Assessment procedures and quality assurance: Students are assessed by individual tutors in Specialisation and Theory courses, based on the submission of designated assignments. These assessments are collated to give an overall point score for the student in Theory and Specialisation. The assessments are further reviewed by the Director of Academic Programme at the end of semester to ensure quality of feedback and to gain an overview of students' strengths, weaknesses and achievements. For Studio Practice students are monitored throughout the semester by an assigned tutor, who also participates in the end-of-term assessment.

Quality assurance is provided for in end-of-term assessments by the participation of a jury of three to five tutors, including members who are familiar with the students' development over the semester and others who view the students's work for the first time. Jury feedback is collated and provided to students in feedback sheets. The jury's composition is thus intended to ensure lack of bias and parity of assessment. Information is provided to students in the Regulations Handbook regarding issues of failure, non-submission for assessment and incompleteness of courses; how many study points can be carried over; details of procedure for resubmission and so forth. Upon completion of assessment, students receive assessment sheets from all courses, a list of grades achieved and an overview of acquired study points.

The jury for the Final Degree Exhibition consists of a representative from KHiO (which awards the BA degree), a representative from the Academic Board, the Director of Academic Programmes, an external assessor and tutors from IAAP. The object of assessment is an exhibition of the student's work in a public space, accompanied by a statement of intent and an oral viva examination. The external assessor is present throughout the assessment to monitor jury methods and impartiality and also participates in students viva. All feedback to students during viva is collated in a feedback sheet. Final grades are first submitted individually by jury members and then agreed upon jointly for final award. Grades are awarded on a scale between A-F.



Thesis Examination: Students receive supervision throughout the 4th year to advise on the research and writing of their 5000 word thesis. Students are provided with criteria for assessments at the beginning of the year, which outline the learning outcomes that students are expected to achieve in the written thesis. Examination of the thesis is by two examiners, who have not supervised the thesis. The thesis supervisor does not participate in the assessment of the final thesis. If there is considerable difference in the allocation of grades, given on a scale from A-F, the thesis is submitted to a third reader for arbitration.

The external examiner is normally appointed from outside of the organisation and main partner institution. The external examiner has no teaching relations with the students, or professional association with tutors. However, it is preferable that they are familiar with the study programme and context of the academy. Any external examiner should not normally be used for more than 3 consecutive years.

## **8. Quality of study program**

Quality assurance is maintained through several mechanisms in the BA Study in Contemporary Visual Art through a system of feedback and recommendations. For every course and tutor, students are required to complete a feedback sheet, assessing the course's content, delivery, resources provided, and other strengths/weaknesses. In addition, collective feedback sessions are held with students each semester to acquire information on strengths and weaknesses of individual courses, the BA programme overall, and to collate recommendations. Students are also able to request courses, technical workshops, and tutors who they wish to teach at IAAP. IAAP does its best to accommodate requests and uses student feedback as an important benchmark for the programme. Course feedback is also collated from each staff member and visiting tutors on the students' participation, strengths/weaknesses, and level of understanding. Courses are calculated to have a certain degree of flexibility in order to accommodate tutors' observations on specific types of course content that are needed by students.

The annual external examiner's report contains recommendations for the study programme, which IAAP attempts to implement over the course of the following academic year. The external examiner normally spends a week at IAAP and not only attends the assessment process for finalists but also undertakes interviews with teaching and administrative staff, students, graduates and representatives of The Academic Board. The aim of the report is to provide IAAP with an annual holistic picture of the BA programme. Recommendations are therefore carefully considered as the report represents a key benchmark for quality assurance and the development of the programme. Quality assurance throughout the academic year is also maintained through monitoring of the programme via the academic board, which meets each semester to discuss academic affairs.

The BA programme is subject every four years to evaluation by the Academic Board and the Director of Academic Programmes. All recommendations and feedback are collated and necessary adjustments made to the programme. The purpose of the evaluation is to assist in the development of the programme in light of changes in art practice, theory and teaching methodologies, and to ensure the programme's quality and relevance in relation to contemporary art practice. IAAP also receives an Institutional Quality Enhancement Review, of which the main part is an evaluation of the academic programme. The external assessor conducts interviews with staff, students and the Academic Board, and has access to all documentation of the BA programme. Recommendations by the assessor are taken as an important benchmark and a programme of implementation is devised by the Academic Board and Director of Academic Programmes following receipt of the report.