

Artistic-pedagogical project of the Master in Visual Arts

0. Introduction

In this document, we describe the artistic-pedagogical project of the Master in Visual Arts. Lecturers, coordinators, coaches, the head, the director and students share their joint vision of the program. By making this vision explicit, we hope to inspire new lecturers and future students.

The text addresses four key questions:

1. What distinguishes this program within higher art education, and why is it relevant?
2. What does the program prepare students for? What is the graduates' competency profile?
3. How do we support artistic development?
4. How do we assess artistic development?

The following summary presents insights from discussions with stakeholders and, where relevant, refers to existing vision documents, online resources, and KdG competencies.

1. What distinguishes this program within higher art education and why is it relevant?

The master's program distinguishes itself from other art programs through a context-oriented, academically grounded, and practice-oriented approach. In a rapidly changing society, in which digital and international developments are playing an increasingly important role and the field of art and design is evolving accordingly, the program trains students to become hybrid professionals. This enables them to respond flexibly to societal and artistic changes and to embrace them. Students are challenged to answer two crucial questions:

- What do they want to achieve with the artistic knowledge, skills, and attitudes already acquired during their bachelor program?
- Within what social context would they like to be active with their own artistic practice?

The master year functions as the first year in the career of a professional artist or designer. The program offers a Brave(r) Space: this is a space for courage, experimentation, and self-development, in which we encourage students to shape their own trajectory. They can draw on the expertise of theory lecturers, master project coaches, and workshop coaches, who support them in developing their own practice. By situating their work within a contemporary theoretical and professional framework, students become aware of the potential of their choices and ambitions. Within the set framework, students act with increasing autonomy and a higher degree of self-direction.

To stimulate polyphony and bring the international character of the arts field to our campus, we organize the program in two variants: the Dutch-language variant Master Beeldende Kunsten and the English-language variant Master of Visual Arts.

Students who do not possess the necessary prior education can start with a bridging program. In this [pre-master's program](#), students attend classes partly alongside master's students, with a focus on developing research skills and initiating visual research at level 6 of the Flemish Qualifications Framework (FQF6) as opposed to FQF7.

2. What does the program prepare students for? What is the graduates' competency profile?

As a graduate of the Master in Visual Arts at Sint Lucas Antwerpen, the alumnus possesses the following competencies at FQF7 level (Flemish Qualifications Framework level 7). The graduate ...

- takes a critical and committed approach to design or artistic practice
- is a discussion partner in a multi-voiced dialogue with the city and its surroundings.
- continuously questions, develops and defines his position as an artist or designer within artistic issues, the professional field and society.
- responds flexibly to digital, artistic and international developments in design or work, and strives for a sustainable and inclusive society.
- deals with manual, analogue and tactile skills, depending on their own practice.
- operates at the interface of art and technology, depending on their own practice.
- further develops their practice in a research-based manner.
- takes final responsibility for collective results, such as collaborations, collective projects and exhibitions.

3. How do we support Artistic Development??

Choice of one of five contexts

The program focuses on the different roles designers and artists can assume in relation to a given context. These are explored through five distinct contexts : Applied Context, Autonomous Context, Socio-political Context, Digital Context, and Jewelry Context. At the beginning of the master's program, each student selects one of these contexts as their focus.

Three components in the curriculum

The [curriculum](#) within these five master contexts consists of three components:

- Master project & Masterclasses (33 ECTS)
- Theory & Reflection (21 ECTS)
- Professional Attitude (6 ECTS)

Together, these three components lead to the six domain-specific learning outcomes (DLR), the learning outcome framework imposed by the government. In the competency profile described above, we translated this to our own program. These DLRs are therefore aligned with the competency profile and the VKS7 level. The table below shows where we test each of the DLRs:

Learning outcomes	Master project & Masterclasses 33 STP	Theory & Reflection 21 STP	Professional Attitude 6STP
Archived an artistic and autonomous attitude, which enables you to continue to develop your own art practice.	X		X
Taking final responsibility for designing and / or realizing a personal artistic project.	X		X
Grasping the essence of your personal artistic development and communicate this in a clear and thoughtful way to a critical audience	X		X
Setting up and conducting independent research in function of the development of your artistic praxis.	X	X	
Established your own artistic visual language based on personal and social involvement	X		
Being able to take and defend a critical position with regard to relevant social, cultural, artistic and international developments.	X	X	

In the **Master project** component, students formulate their own research question, focusing on artistic research and the accompanying process. These form the basis for developing and presenting their own form of expression.

In the **Masterclasses**, students broaden their artistic research with practical and theoretical elements. Through research creation practices, they investigate, observe and create together with researchers and artists.

Within the **Theory & Reflection component**, we provide input aligned with the various master contexts, with particular attention to contemporary narratives.

In the **Professional Attitude component**, the student has the opportunity to acquire additional expertise related to their own career plans.

Details of the different components of the curriculum, along with descriptions of the contexts, are available on the [program's website](#)

Forms of support

In each component of the curriculum, we **support** the student's learning process through coaching, in which critical questions, inspiration, (peer) feedback and feedforward keep the learning process in motion. Examples include:

- Individual and collective coaching sessions for the Masterproject.
- Brave(r) Spaces, both on and off campus, where students are encouraged to shape their own trajectory.
- Workshops where students can go with design-related questions.
- Cross-context coaching sessions where we broaden perspectives.
- Assignments, presentations, and the master's thesis within the components Theory & Reflection and Professional Attitude, where students engage in critical reflection.
- Research creation practice, a methodological approach in which we integrate research and creative processes to generate new knowledge and explore artistic practices.

In each component, students also receive **input** through workshops, lectures, group assignments, and discussions. Examples include:

- Processing academic knowledge from a critical multi-perspective approach, in which students learn to debate, reflect, write, and present with peers, researchers, and lecturers.
- Technical and other workshops to:
 - Become familiar with tools, technologies, methodologies, materials, and practices.
 - Sharpen practical skills.
 - Explore diverse professional contexts, participatory practices, or socially engaged art.
- Gaining inspiration through group reflections.
- Sessions related to the professional field in preparation for future career paths.

The learning process is further supported by **authentic settings**, such as:

- Contact and collaboration with researchers, designers, artists, and alumni with diverse cultural, social, and ethnic backgrounds.
- The organization of temporary exhibitions and the final graduation exhibition.
- Work-field experience during an internship.
- International exchanges.

In all these forms, we assume a student with competencies at FQF6 level. This implies that a student is able to function fully autonomously and to take considerable initiative, based on the knowledge and insights acquired during the previously completed bachelor's degree programme. More concretely, this implies:

- Prior to learning, the students formulate their own goals, outlines a personal timeline, and apply the skills necessary to persevere.
- During learning, the student applies self-control and self-monitoring.
- After learning, the student independently evaluates if the goals have been achieved.

In order to progress to FQF7 level, students apply their skills in a more complex learning situation. They critically reflect on academic texts, formulate a research question in the chosen context and develop learning activities to clarify their professional orientation towards the end of the programme. Self-regulated learning strongly depends on the context. The transfer of these self-directed skills from bachelor's to master's level requires extra attention. Therefore, we guide students towards FQF7 level by providing increasing autonomy and decreasing guidance in the didactic approach. We do this by:

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- gradually phasing out regular coaching sessions at the beginning of the academic year towards more informal coaching sessions by the end of the academic year.
- organizing interim exhibitions under the guidance of the coach, and then designing the final exhibition together with fellow students.
- providing structured contact moments in which students learn how to get started with their master's thesis and the theory, after which they continue to work independently on reading and writing.
- guiding students at various moments during the master's year in shaping the master's programme and in making design and artistic choices.

Dealing with increasing autonomy requires students to learn to make choices, such as:

- Choosing a context.
- Choosing a research question and master project.
- Choosing the Theory courses.
- Choosing a masterclass.
- Defining activities within the course unit Self-organization and Self-management.

4. How do we evaluate the Artistic Development?

The program works according to vision of assessment of the campus of Sint Lucas Antwerpen. Here we repeat emphases that are important for the master's programme.

- **Formative** feedback moments: regular peer reviews and feedback moments take place within the contexts and the master project. Plenary sessions and presentation moments help students structure and adjust their trajectory.
- **Artistic jury:** Assessing artistic development is, by definition, a nuanced matter. The principle of intersubjectivity is used to ensure quality in the assessment of the artistic process. During the official evaluation moments, students present the work they have developed and the process they have followed to a jury composed of several members. This jury initially consists of the supervising coaches, possibly supplemented by other coaches from the school who are familiar with the context to be assessed. At the end of the process, the jury is expanded to include external jury members from the professional field. Where possible and relevant, external jury members are also involved at earlier stages. This mix of experts delivers an intersubjective judgement on the student's process and work.
- **Master thesis:** in the thesis (at FQF7 level), students apply their research skills to explore a historical, contemporary, or thematic theory, starting from their own research question. In this way, we test research skills and the level of autonomy, responsibility, critical thinking, and reflection.
- **Theoretical component:** tests the research capacity of our students through reading reports, papers, self-reflections, podcasts, and critical presentations; through these assessment forms students are challenged to deepen their knowledge, reflect critically on it, and engage in discussion.