



# Situated Practice MA

Programme Information Sheet

This document provides details of the structure and content of this programme.

## Programme context and history

Situated practice is a key development in arts and humanities, where expertise comes not from a focus on a pre-defined discipline or subject such as art, architecture or design, but from a creative and critical position that operates across and beyond these categories. It is a rapidly growing and highly active post-disciplinary domain.

Situated Practice is internationally understood as a domain that may encompass activity and research in curatorship, public engagement, event design, creative regeneration, participation design and activism, site-writing, situated film, information design and new media work, communication design and publishing, online environment design and civic media, and management of associated institutes.

The Bartlett School of Architecture possesses an internationally recognised profile in the subject of architecture as an expanded field, including Architecture and Interdisciplinary Studies BSc, a programme that offers undergraduates an opportunity to understand architectural design in an expanded field. The Bartlett also offers a renowned Architectural Design PhD, with candidates drawn from across the spatial disciplines, including architects, artists, and curators.

## Programme structure

Situated Practice MA is taught over a 15-month period, starting in September and finishing in the following December. In this time, students must complete and pass 180 credits. 90 credits are completed in approved taught modules, and 90 credits are gained from the Major Project module. Where relevant, students may replace 15 credits with another UCL department's graduate module, with the permission of the Programme Director and the respective department.

Term 1 Sept-Dec	Term 2 Jan-March	Term 3 April-June	Summer July-Sept	Term 4 Sept-Dec
Field Trip		Live projects		Final Examinations and show
<p>Situated Practice: Research Methods Core - 15 credits Jane Rendell</p> <p>10 seminars on practice-led research methods; 10 lectures by theorists and practitioners; two tutorials to guide the drafting of the project proposal and choice of relevant optional modules to develop skills for executing the project.</p>	<p>Critical Spatial Practice - Site Writing Core - 30 credits Jane Rendell</p> <p>A combination of seminars, workshops, tutorials and crits.</p> <p>Skills taught: creative writing and book-making.</p>	<p>Major Project Core - 90 credits James O'Leary</p> <p>Stage 1: Intervention (formative assessment in late June - 30 credits)</p> <p>Students allocated individual tutor, studio working, tutorials, group crits, specialist training workshops</p>	<p>Stage 2: Documentation (formative assessment mid-September - 30 credits)</p> <p>Students allocated individual tutor, tutorials, off-site working</p>	<p>Stage 3: Exhibition (final assessment in mid-December of all 90 credits)</p> <p>Students allocated individual tutor, studio working, tutorials, group crits, preparing work for final exhibition in specific sites and the studio</p> <p>- Verbal presentation</p>
<p>Mediated Environments - Core 30 credits James O'Leary</p> <p>A combination of seminars, workshops, tutorials and crits.</p> <p>Skills taught: audio and video environments - theory and practice.</p>	<p>The Open Work Optional - 15 credits James O'Leary</p> <p>A combination of seminars, workshops, tutorials and crits.</p> <p>Skills taught: situated research and practice specific to students' interests</p>			
Previous cohort				Next cohort

Tutorials and seminars are the leading teaching modes, together with: lectures, group working, writing workshops, research seminars, film screenings, reviews of student work by Bartlett School of Architecture staff and visiting researchers, building and gallery visits in London and further afield, and an annual fieldtrip. Modules use these advanced teaching approaches to encourage innovative student-led work. The Major Project provides students with an opportunity to conduct their own original research into a specific subject of their own choosing.

## Programme modules

### **Situated Practice: Research Methods**

This module uses a weekly series of lectures and seminars to introduce the students to the main types of research method adopted in situated practice. It provides an underlying conceptual framework concerning practice-led research, and also makes reference to examples of significant site-specific theories, criticism and practice. The perspective provided will look both at the situation in London and the UK in detail, as well as exemplars from around the world. In terms of specific approaches to situated practices to be addressed, these include (but are not limited to):

- Critical Spatial Practice, Theory/Practice/Poiesis
- Installation Art and Spectatorship
- Scenography and Curating
- Practice-led and -related approaches to research in art and design
- Discourses and Practices concerning Site-Specificity in and outside the Gallery
- Action and Participatory Research
- Questions of Ethics and the Relation to the Other
- Critical Architecture and Design Research
- Public Art, Regeneration and Urbanism
- Performativity and Subjectivity

Above all, the module aims to provide students with a wide-ranging perspective on how practitioners from across the spatial disciplines including, art, architecture, design, performativity, and urbanism have articulated their practice in relation to concepts and theories concerning space, place, site and location; and how working in specific sites opens up the possibilities of practice, from responses to the formal and material conditions of location; to the social, cultural, political and historical pasts, presents and futures of a site; to engaging with inhabitants and their roles as spectators and possible co-producers and/or collaborators.

Topics will be introduced through lectures by contemporary theorists and practitioners, and by an accompanying series of seminars, each one focusing on a key aspect of situated practice with readings and exemplars of practice. In doing so this module introduces students to the kinds of approaches and questions they will need to tackle when it comes to developing their own individual approach to situated practice later in the course. The module hence places a particular emphasis on transdisciplinary ways of working, and on the importance of situating one's own work in relation to existing theoretical ideas and practices. In this respect, the module serves as the foundation for all the subsequent modules.

Assessment is done through a 1250-word project proposal, and accompanying portfolio, the production of which will be supported through a

tutorial. This proposal and its accompanying practice-led portfolio will provide the basis for each student's subsequent project work, to be developed in Term 2 through the choice of specific modules to help develop skills relevant to the type and mode of situated practice adopted, and for the Major Project to be developed through Terms 3 and 4.

### **Mediated Environments**

This module is designed to impart skills in new forms of research dissemination, focussing on the development of 'new media' practice as a method of framing arguments and posing questions in relation to specific sites. Mediated Environments addresses the intersection of media theory, contemporary technology and architectural practice, charting the development of the contemporary mediated spatial paradigm. This module will explore the complex interplay of spatial, sonic, filmic, networked and performative practices through early manifestations of Mediated Environments, through the work of Xenakis, Charles and Ray Eames, Dan Graham, Stan Van Der Beek, Steina and Woody Vasulka, Joan Jonas, Wodiczko, etc. The module will then progress to examine the impact of the development of networked environments and the pervasive spread of personal media devices, apps and the impact of social media and new forms of publishing in the present day.

Throughout this module, students will engage with and develop processes within an expanded field of creative practice including urbanism, architecture, fine art, time-based media and performativity, focusing particularly on the making of a Sound Broadcast and a Film Essay.

The module is 30 credits, focusing on the understanding of theories relating to contemporary media and the development of a practice related to mediated environments. Initially, students will construct a sonic environment, developing skills in sound recording, field recordings, multi-track audio editing and podcasting, ending with the submission of a podcast in response to a specific site. Following this, students will develop the sound work into a film essay, through the development of skills in video recording, narrative development, scriptwriting, and scoring. The module will consist of a series of seminars, cinematic presentations, tutorials and practical workshops to introduce students to the potential of the film-essay to discuss architectural themes. At the end of this module, students will submit a 5-minute film-essay in response to a specific site.

### **Critical Spatial Practice - Site-Writing**

This module is designed to impart skills in the development of site-writing as a form of critical spatial practice. Critical spatial practice, developed by Professor Jane Rendell, defines an approach to site-specific practice comprising projects that critique the sites into which they intervene, as well as question their own disciplinary limits. Site-writing is a textual mode of critical spatial practice which considers situatedness and positionality in relation to writing, specifically in terms of voice, style, word and page, and explores how voice and textual strategies can be adopted as ways of responding to sites.

This module has been running for 10 years in different forms, taught by Professor Jane Rendell, with input from fiction writers Sarah Butler and Tony

White, artist/poet Kristen Krieder, and graphic designer Marit Munzberg. The module is 30 credits and consists of a series of seminars, project presentations, tutorials and practical workshops to introduce students to site-writing through methods drawn from fiction and creative writing to graphic design and book binding. Students will develop skills in creative and situated writing, through the development of a site-specific piece of prose in which they develop a new kind of voice in response to a specific site. They will go on to develop an artist's book out of their prose piece, learning the potential of font, typography, layout, paper stock and binding for spatial writing.

### **The Open Work**

This module is designed to impart skills in the development of situated research that forms a foundation toward a form of critical spatial practice. The intention of this module is to encourage a broad range of interdisciplinary practices and skills to inform the developing research domain of the student. This module is designed to facilitate students to frame a self-directed research question to answer in order to gain specific knowledge related to the development of their wider project.

If relevant, students can opt to take a 15-credit module from across The Bartlett School of Architecture, Bartlett Faculty, or UCL, or frame their own research questions or programme to be supervised by the Programme Director. In doing so this module develops the kinds of approaches and questions they encountered in the module Situated Practice: Research Methods in a practical way that is focused on their own research domain, and helps to define further questions they will need to tackle when it comes to developing their own individual approach to situated practice later in the course.

Assessment will be through a 1250-word project, and accompanying portfolio, the production of which will be supported through tutorials and presentations. This research work and its accompanying portfolio will provide the basis for the development of each student's subsequent Major Project work, to be developed for the Major Project to be developed through Terms 3 and 4.

### **Major Project**

This module is based around the preparation of an original piece of situated practice in the form of a Major Project, submitted first in the form of a live intervention into a site (or sites), then documented and reflected upon through an artist's book or digital archive, and finally remade in an exhibition format, which can include film-making, artwork and gallery installations, digital scripting, curation, scenography, live art, participatory works, and or a conceptual design proposition. All final submissions must contain a substantial piece of written text of no less than 5000 words that outlines the theoretical investigation, conceptual positioning and critical response to the particular site and approach chosen.

In some cases, the final project might take a written form, for example a script for a performed piece, but in this case 5000 words of the project need to consist of writing that is critical reflection rather than prose, fiction or creative writing. In no cases, however, can the written element that critically situates the work for a Major Project be less than 5,000 words.

Students will be asked to plan out their project work and define the format of their final submission, from the early stages of Term 1 and the submission of a project proposal at the start of Term 2, through to the final submission. The subject and approach to situated practice to be adopted for the Major Project will be agreed in discussion with the allocated supervisor/tutor, plus with the overall approval of the Programme Director.

The aim of the module is for students to be able to produce a unique work of situated practice, which responds to a specific site or sites, in form as well as content. The module will be taught through a series of individual tutorials between the student and allocated supervisor, with a strong expectation being placed on the student to drive the intellectual agenda and practical development of their Major Project.