

INTERNATIONAL PROFESSIONAL MASTER'S DEGREE PROGRAM IN AUDIOVISUAL MEDIA (FOR CURATORS, PROGRAMMERS, ARCHIVISTS, AND EXPERTS IN RESTORATION AND PRESERVATION)

Introduction

The proliferation of video installations, performance documentations (on both film and video), multimedia experimental works, and interactive audiovisual forms reshapes the art market and expands the range of knowledge required by its professionals. This rapidly changing scene raises crucial questions about the necessary criteria for curating, programming, preserving, restoring, and archiving works of art. The contemporary art gallery has become a space of multiplicity, fragmentation, and dissemination, a condition that brings new problems to the fore: In what ways can media coexist and interact in gallery space? How do diverse media perform differently? How should these works be installed? What influence do new media have on conventional notions of spectatorship?

The traditional space of the museum is beginning to open up to new media in order to experiment with alternative forms of exhibition by featuring retrospectives, film series, and topical displays. However, those in the field continue to face structural difficulties when dealing with networks, interfaces, and software applications.

Goals

The International Professional Master's Degree Program in Audiovisual Media will provide the technological training and up-to-date skills needed for the cultural comprehension of contemporary exhibition. Courses and seminars will be led by art and film historians, digital design analysts, museum and gallery professionals, and experts and administrators who specialize in festivals and public events of all kind.

Unlike previous plans of study, this program exposes students to a unique international perspective by providing the opportunity to study with scholars from different but interrelated European and American institutions, develop a network of contacts from diverse schools of thought, and gain access to the global job market. While the program is committed to the international mobility of students and professors, its directors also plan to include practical internships to facilitate hiring, spring and summer schools for scholarly debate, intensive workshops on leadership and management skills, and one-on-one training adapted to the intellectual profile of each student.

Cinema and Contemporary Visual Arts

As a result of successful editions of MAGIS Gradisca International Film Studies IP, we learned that future media professionals will think and work by weaving together elements from the field of film studies, the contemporary visual arts, and new media; thus, the International Professional Master's Degree Program will pay special attention to the intersection of film theory and contemporary art. Preservation and restoration have allowed the best universities in the world to teach the history and aesthetics of the cinema, the most important art of the twentieth century. With the number of degrees awarded in film studies increasing by the day, it is now clear that the ability to read and analyze cinematic texts is essential for achieving an audiovisual literacy of the present moment.

In addition, the cinema continues to furnish ideas and provide problems for the practice of contemporary art; for example, multimedia and performance artists both use and interrogate the cinema in order to locate a future for their creative output. Furthermore, the fascination with early film has encouraged avant-garde practitioners to work with cut-and-paste methods and make use of found footage. It is evident that the cinema serves as the new cognitive map of cross-cultural relations in our increasingly global society.

The participants in the master's degree program will be both fully competent in the field of film studies and able to apply the legacy of the cinema to new professional environments and artistic situations.

The Video and Digital Preservation Issue

The International Professional Master's Degree Program will devote significant attention to the question of how to conserve contemporary audiovisual art. Answering this question requires serious debate in order to define the shared theoretical models and operational practices that will allow us to design the conservation and restoration methods needed to preserve the video heritage of the last thirty years. To this end, the University of Udine, DAMS Gorizia, in connection with A.S.A.C., La Biennale di Venezia (Historic Archive of Contemporary Arts), is already involved in a video art preservation project working toward the digital conservation of the art/tapes/22 catalogue.

Included in every contemporary museum collection, video has been firmly established as a mainstream medium for the production of contemporary art. Art works using new electronic media challenge the conservator not only to keep track of rapid developments in these technologies, but also to redefine his or her position as an intermediary between artists and technicians. In contrast to the skills required by the traditional archivist, these changes make obligatory the acquisition of additional knowledge and abilities. For instance, the first step in preserving video art is to document it accurately; therefore, the development of new procedures for cataloguing the registration, insurance, appraisal and loan of artwork is an urgent task. Furthermore, conservators must construct decision-making models, choose preservation strategies, and define access modalities for both the specialist and the general public. This new philosophy of research, creation, and information access will allow new and multimedia works to flourish in the gallery and remain secure in the archive. The international

focus of this master's degree program opens the door to a professional future for a wide range of individuals while ensuring that students acquire the skills necessary to adapt to the changing conditions of art preservation.

Skills and Areas

Each student in the International Professional Master's Degree Program will enroll in pedagogical and laboratory activities in all of the following four major areas:

- Theory of contemporary visual art (cinematic experimentation, video art, the history of computer graphics, art criticism)
- Technology and tools
- Design, implementation, and interaction of models
- Preservation of video and digital art

Because it is a crucial part of a student's work, the program will require the completion of occupational experience in each of the above four areas.

The Master's Degree Program is promoted by Université de la Sorbonne Nouvelle-Paris III and Università degli Studi di Udine, in cooperation with Universiteit van Amsterdam, GeorgiaTech Atlanta, Ruhr Universität Bochum, Université de Liège.

Next Appointment of International Network: 2007 MAGIS Gradisca Film Studies Spring School