

Art

In

Context

**A Post-Bachelor Master's Program
Taught in English
(Fine Arts study program)**



EVROPSKÁ UNIE
Evropské strukturální a investiční fondy
Operační program Výzkum, vývoj a vzdělávání



INTRODUCTION

About AVU

The Academy of Fine Arts continues to build on its historical tradition and prestige even in the twenty-first century. The oldest tertiary-level art school in the Czech Republic, it has produced many key artists of the past centuries. Over the years, the school expanded from traditional fields of art such as sculpture, painting, and printmaking by adding a special school of architecture and art restoration and, in the 1990s, the fields of new media, intermedia, and drawing. AVU has not adopted the Bologna system, students attend a six-year master's study program during which time they must produce semester projects, write theses, and take tests and exams as outlined in their study program, which can be adapted to best meet the student's needs. Instruction at AVU is thoroughly individual and takes place in studios headed by leading artists or groups of artists, based primarily on each student's specific talents, with the goal of developing them to the maximum possible extent.

Current system of studios and pedagogy

Art instruction at AVU follows the traditional studio-based approach, with students gaining practical experience in specialized studios. These are organized by media. Each of the school's 18 studios serves around 15 to 20 students, and each is led by one head teacher and at least one specialized assistant. The studio heads are chosen on the basis of regularly held calls for application (roughly every 6 years). The same approach applies to the specialized assistants, who play an indispensable pedagogical role.

Overview of studios:

- 4 painting studios
- 1 drawing studio
- 2 printmaking studios
- 2 sculpture studios
- 1 studio of figural sculptures and medals
- 3 studios of intermedia work
- 2 studios of new media
- 1 studio of restoration of painted artworks
- 1 studio of restoration of sculpture
- 1 studio of architecture
- Studio of the Visiting Artist



Practical experience through studio work is complemented by various art-historical, theoretical, and practical subjects, offered with a view to the studios' various specializations. AVU employs a number of leading art theorists and historians, who engage in instruction in the form of lectures and seminars. The school's facilities also include an academic research center (art theory and history, restoration techniques), printmaking and technical workshops, digital laboratory (Digilab), library, gallery, and small cinema. AVU also operates its own publishing house and the online television platform artyčok.tv.

The school is organized in a horizontally accessible manner, meaning that students of the master's degree programs may visit other studios as part of intra-school placements in order to gain experience in other media and artistic methods. Each studio provides instruction for students from all years of study, and for master's degree students as well as doctoral candidates.

Czech students study alongside exchange students studying at AVU as part of the Erasmus+ program. The Studio of the Visiting Artist holds special status at the school. Each semester, this studio hosts a different internationally renowned artist, who spends the semester teaching in English. This studio will be incorporated into the new Art In Context program.

Our aim

The task of AVU's team of experts tasked with putting together the curriculum for the new study program was to update the existing accreditation of the consecutive Art In Context master's program (Fine Arts study program) so that it will allow students – foreign as well as Czech – to complete a fully-fledged English-language master's program at AVU. The aim is to provide an innovative approach to teaching within AVU's studio-based learning environment that reflects modern trends in collective learning, with the goal of joining the ranks of excellent programs at prestigious foreign art academies.

Assessments and Conclusions

SWOT

AVU's innovated accreditation structure was created on the basis of internal initiatives, including a self-evaluation SWOT analysis, pedagogical plans, annual reports, internal evaluation reports, and interviews with lecturers, students and graduates. These resulted in a list of AVU's strengths, and their inclusion into the proposal helped to ameliorate the weaknesses of the current situation.



Strengths

Compared to foreign schools, AVU's teachers are more frequently available for student consultations across a broad range of artistic media (see student surveys, interviews with graduates, Erasmus surveys, pedagogical plans, etc.).

The studios are characterized by a sense community and are non-hierarchical, informal, and openly structured.

The school's strong professional tradition enables the transfer of traditional methods of "instruction" in the various media, problem-solving techniques, and artistic techniques and methods from one generation of teachers to the next, many of whom are AVU graduates.

Some of the workshops, such as the printmaking or restoration workshops, possess excellent technical facilities.

AVU emphasizes the teaching of art history.

AVU's study programs are unique in their length when compared to foreign academies – six years of relatively unstructured and thus self-determined education.

Art education at AVU is not consumer-oriented. Our priority is not what and how many skills the school provides, but how the school functions as a structured organization aimed at developing individual talent.

Weaknesses

With the "Meisterschule" system, students have a single teacher (head of the studio) and assistant as their main teaching authority for their entire six-year period of study.

With media-based studios, each studio is narrowly focused on just one artistic technique (sculpture, painting, printmaking, etc.). Applicants to AVU must take an entrance exam for a specific studio, working with a specific technique. Students nevertheless have the option to transfer from one studio to another during their time at AVU.

Instruction within the studio is rather unstructured, and the curriculum and projects are determined by the studio's head teacher. The students fulfill study requirements and take exams in art history and other subjects outside of the studio.

The study plan does not define any clear progression of studies from one year to the next over the course of the six-year program.

An emphasis on canonical, encyclopedic instruction in art history (from Antiquity to contemporary art). In each year (I – VI), students must take an exam in art history in chronological order (Antiquity – contemporary art).

Art theory is taught only as a non-mandatory elective subject.

Somewhat low demands on writing ability.



RESEARCH

A second pillar of the proposal involved a series of studies of teaching curricula, accompanied by comparative interviews. The comparisons were done as part of OPVVV and involved input from the heads of foreign academies and art schools and from the directors of programs that, thanks to their international university ratings and renown, are considered examples of good practice in the fields of academic as well as artistic practice. These are DAI (Dutch Art Institute), Goldsmiths University, Konstfack Stockholm, ENSBA Lyon, Oslo Arts University, Strelka Moskva, and SPEAP (program Science-Po Paris), among others.

The comparative studies showed that studio instruction and the teaching of theory in contemporary master's programs (MA programs) at the selected prestigious foreign academies share the following common denominators:

- ♥ heterogeneous study groups, as opposed to dividing students up by narrowly defined media or technique (except for Germany)
- ♥ large number of head teachers, as opposed to students guided exclusively by one teacher throughout their entire studies in a “Meisterschule” system (except for Germany)
- ♥ group critiques within the studio as an integral component of the creative process and its evaluation
- ♥ teaching of art theory within the studio, minimization of theoretical/historical lectures outside the studio
- ♥ no teaching of the canon of Western art history (Antiquity – present day)
- ♥ emphasis on ability to present one's ideas and work verbally and in writing and on future artists' professional skills (note: foreign MA programs are all two-year programs; the three-year duration of the AIC program could have a positive impact on the program's attractiveness)
- ♥ existence of “low-residency program” = mentor-based program (mentor could be an individual artist or an artists' group) combining intensive one- to three-week graduate seminars with the unique visiting artist program

Based on the above findings, the creative team designed the following innovative study model



CHARACTERISTICS

Description

AIC is an entirely new English-language master's program at the Academy of Fine Arts. Though based on the traditions of this more than 200-year-old institution, its vision and structure are quite different. The program has been designed on the basis of a study of programs at progressive and innovative art schools and institutions on today's international art scene. The Academy is located in the heart of Europe, in a country of the former East Bloc where the echoes of the totalitarian past clash with influences of Western thinking, in the magical city of Prague, which resonates with a thousand years of history, which pulses with the energy of a modern creative hub, and where local and global themes form fertile ground for the contemporary art scene. AIC, Art In Context, explores questions faced by today's young generation of artists, places them within the worldwide context, uncovers forgotten and marginal themes, and identifies new and current tendencies. It opens up discussion of the subjects of post-transformation, social awareness, collectivity, sustainability and natural resources, gender equality, political identity, globalization and migration, technology, and society and art during the pandemic.

What does the AIC program offer?

Small studio size, with a maximum number of five students per year (fifteen students per studio in total).

Interaction with the Academy's other, traditional studios, including the possibility of visiting other studios via an AVU internship; **collective studio projects**.

Collective instruction by a team of three art teachers and one theorist who work with the students during the program's first two years. In the third year, the students choose one of the teachers, who will guide them through their final year. Two or three of these four instructors will be foreign teachers. Collective instruction involves a system of mutually complementary short- as well long-term projects and group as well as solo projects, on assigned subjects as well as subjects of the students' choosing. Students will work on their own or collective semester projects and on other projects assigned by one of the three teachers.

The low number of students and high number of teachers allows for teachers' personal and informed approach and ensures a diversity of viewpoints in instruction and in evaluating students' works.

The studio's transdisciplinary composition means that the work created within the studio is not determined by any one technique.



The structured nature of studio instruction determines the manner in which students and teachers interact and includes regular instruction, group critiques, studio lectures, field trips, and more; **studio instruction in art theory** includes research, interpretative work, and the writing of theoretical texts. The methods of artistic research encourage students to view their work within the context of art theory and help them to identify the theoretical aspects of their work while placing it within the broader context.

Students' **non-studio activities** include lectures on modern art history and seminars in workshops based on their own choice and personal needs. At the start of the first year, students go on a joint retreat in the Czech Republic.

The quality of the technical facilities forms a source of support for the students' practical needs.

The program's three-year duration ensures that there will be sufficient time for intense and diverse creative production, including students' involvement in the international network of art institutions in Europe. The final year can be done according to an individual study plan, with the option of distance learning.

Participating students' diversity is ensured through the targeted selection of participants, with the aim of creating a compatible and simultaneously creative group capable of working together as a collective.

AIC makes expanded use of the existing potential of AVU's teaching staff and other resources. At the same time, the program follows foreign examples of good practice by implementing team-based instruction, integrating theoretical subjects into studio instruction, and expanding collaboration with external artists and experts from the Czech Republic and other countries in Central and Eastern Europe.

The program's curriculum is internationally competitive and thus contributes to the internationalization of AVU's other programs. It stimulates the linguistic and international atmosphere at AVU, promotes the school's global competence, and increases its international visibility as an institution of learning, research, and artistic creation.

STUDENT TARGET GROUPS

The new program is interested primarily in exceptionally talented students from Central and Eastern Europe and Central Asia, where art education is conservatively oriented. These students' motivation will be the program's international character and competitiveness, AVU's involvement in international artistic discourse and its ties to international art institutions, and the social capital they will gain during their time at AVU.

Another target group is students from Asia, the United States, and other countries where art education is expensive. Important factors for these students include the international



renown of the program's teachers, the clear compatibility of the curriculum, family or other ties to the Czech Republic, and an interest in history.

ELIGIBILITY

Who can apply?

Students with a completed BA degree from an art school or from a school with a specialization related to art.

APPLICATION AND EXAMS

Applications are to be submitted by November.

Applicants are expected to provide a motivation letter, portfolio, and CV.

Exams are held remotely and consist of an oral interview and an assignment on a given subject.

TUITION FEES

The costs of the debut year (October 2022 – June 2023) will be covered by the Academy of Fine Arts.

The annual fee from October 2023 is estimated to be €3000 -5000.



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MINISTERSTVO ŠKOLSTVÍ,
MLÁDEŽE A TĚLOVÝCHOVY

CURRICULUM

	STUDIO	LECTURES	electives
Y1 Creativity Research Knowledge	Studio* 20-25h, ZK* Tutoring I 5-6h, Z* Group crit I Z Field Trip/Excursion Z Studio talk&visit Z Theory in Studio I 2-3h, Z, Z, Z Theory I, Research I, Writing I Induction trip, Internship	Orientation 3x3h, Z Czech Art 20th - 21st Century 2h, Z, ZK	Drawing 6h, Z, Z Graphic Techniques 3h, Z, Z Stucco, metal, wooden works 2h, Z 3D Intro, 3D Print, Robotics, Videopostproduction I 2h, Z Foreign language (CZ,EN) 2h, Z, Z
Y2 Creativity Research Skills Presentation	Studio 20-25h, ZK Tutoring II 5-6h Group crit II Field Trip/Excursion Z Studio talk&visit Z Theory in Studio II 2-3h, Z, Z Research II, Writing II Internship	Contemporary Art 2h, Z, ZK Art History State exam SZZ	Drawing 6h, Z, Z Graphic Techniques 3h, Z, Z Stucco, metal, wooden works 2h, Z 3D Intro, 3D Print, Robotics, Videopostproduction II 2h, Z
Y3 Creativity Concentration Realisation Professionalism	Studio Diploma Project 40h, SZZ Group Crit III Theory in Studio III 2-3h, Z, Z (Diploma seminar) Research III, Writing III, Professionalism		

Pink- YEAR 1 Yellow- YEAR 2 Blue- YEAR 3 Green- elective (2 electives per term in Y1, Y2)

*Z- credit (acquired for attendance and a brief oral or written work)

*ZK- exam (oral or written examination, higher value than Z)



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*STUDIO 20-25h/week

	description	frequency	requirements
Tutoring 5-6h, Z	-an individual meeting with the 3 tutors -progress, support, evaluation	5-6h weekly 3 lecturers	tutoring report -weekly, after every tutoring -100-800 words (1/2 page) -progress of work, ideas, plans, reflections
Group crit Z	-student-led with tutors responding to needs and concerns of participants -an instrument of criticism and practical self-help (silent, delegated GC etc.)	4h fortnightly 20 min presentation 1-2h discussion 2 GCs per student per year 1 coordinating tutor	group crit report -within a week after every GC -100-800 words -comments, ideas and topics discussed, reflections -presented at Tutoring
Theory in Studio** (for details see below) 2-3h Z, Z, Z	-theory instruction incorporated in studio practice	2-3h weekly	critical writing paper research report etc.
Field trip/Excursion Z	-a group excursion or a trip to see exhibiton, meet artists, participate in workshops	1 per year	
Studio talk and visit Z	-a lecture and a studio visit of a guest artist	1 per 2 months	



****THEORY IN STUDIO 2-3H, Z, ZK**

Theory	instruction, discussions, research and writing on topics related to students' work -theory text interpretation	critical writing paper
Research I,II,III	a continuous effort of students to support their work	research report -part of tutoring report, details of research, sources, ideas, outcomes -50-200 words
Writing I,II,III	instruction on creating a structured text on a chosen topic	Tutoring report Group crit report Research report Critical Writing
Y3 only Professionalism	practical preparation for life as an artist, CV, grants, self-presentation, economies of art system	



LECTURES

Orientation 3x3h, Z	an opening course introducing students to school and its environment- school buildings, studios, staff, equipment, history (9h in total)	
Czech Art 20th-21st Century 2h, Z, ZK	a lecture on the history of Czech art in context of world history	
Contemporary Art 2h, Z, ZK see the annotation below	a lecture on contemporary world art and theory	



Course annotation for the lecture

Contemporary Art of Václav Magid

This planned two-semester course has been tentatively subtitled “A Critical Theory.” The course’s objective is to introduce students to the basic questions in the debate surrounding the term *contemporary art* (from the perspective of its historical, formal, and institutional definition) while engaging in a critical interpretation of the concept. In a loose reference to Fredric Jameson, we will look at contemporary art as a “cultural dominant” of the neoliberal era – i.e., as a cultural form that perfectly exemplifies (meaning that it simultaneously embodies and reveals) the contradictions of the global processes of the past four decades. In line with this interpretation, we will date contemporary art as “art after 1977” (Franco Berardi’s “year when the Future ended”), with its peak in the years 1989–2008, followed by a decade of “crisis,” and culminating in debates regarding possible ways of stepping out from under its shadow. In view of the fact that the planned start of instruction is the 2022/2023 school year, the question arises whether, in this post-pandemic period, contemporary art will already be a closed chapter in the history of art.

Course annotation

for Studio Practice of Jiří Kovanda

The teaching method is the absence of a method, for the course will not involve “teaching” in the true sense of the word. Rather, it will involve collaboration on specific things on a purely individual basis. The students will work on what they wish; they will do what they need to do at the moment. There are no assignments, no tasks, no limits regarding content or means. At this stage in their studies, each student should know which direction they want to take, and the teacher’s job is to guide them on this path and act as a source of support. Skills, knowledge, and manual dexterity are like talent – they are not necessary, but merely an advantage. The studio should be an open space for everyone who wants to work in it, regardless of education, social background, religious belief, or political standpoint... We must always realize and emphasize that the essence of art does not lie in skills and knowledge. Even someone with no knowledge or skills can be a good artist – which is purely theoretical, of course, because everybody is capable of something, everybody knows something. Our shared task will be to discover and to reveal things that lie hidden, to identify possibilities overlooked in the practical world, and to make use of these as best as possible, not just in art but in everyday life.



Course annotation

for Group crit – Materialization of the work of Tomáš Džadoň

What role does the materialization of a work play in contemporary art? What does perfection of the work and its execution mean? Why do current exhibitions look clean and can look like a showroom? How does the culture of social networks and the aesthetics of self-presentation in high-resolution micro-lenses with a variety of perfect filters affect contemporary creators? Does the art viewer change into an art consumer? What do we, as creators, prepare for the audience in the gallery in the competition of the exuberant aesthetics, plurality, multimedia of the present? How to understand the materialization of the work and at the same time be environmentally responsible, even if the digital outputs have their own carbon footprint? How can we and want to be ecological contemporary artists?

Students will learn the basics of methodology of artistic practice with emphasis on a wide range of implementation options, techniques, their variations. The goal of group crit - Materialization of the work is the ability to see your project in the broader context of current events and to critically perceive and classify their work into existing artistic practice in the Czech Republic and abroad. They will learn to take an analytical approach to the process of creation of a work, from thought, idea, sketch to realization and get acquainted with the realization of works by already established artists, thus better understanding the understanding of the craft side of the work.



ARTPROJECTS – TUTORING STRUCTURE

	Artproject (A)*, Tutor (T)*	outcome
YEAR 1		
winter	induction trip (1 week) A1 - T1** A2 - T2 A3 - T3	individual artproject collective artproject collective short term projects* assessment*
summer	A1 - T1/internship* A2 - T2/ --- A3 - T3/ ---	individual artproject/internship project collective artproject/ --- collective short term projects/ --- yearly show
Y2		
w	A1 - T1/internship* A2 - T2/ --- A3 - T3/---	individual artproject/internship project collective artproject/ --- collective short term projects/--- assessment
s	A1 -T1/internship* A2 - T2/ --- A3 - T3/---	individual artproject/internship project collective artproject/ --- collective short term projects/--- yearly show
Y3		
w	theory diploma thesis diploma artproject	diploma text presentation inductive research
s	diploma artwork	diploma art show



***For details see below**

***Artproject-** work on A1-A3 runs simultaneously; A1 is mainly a solo long term project, A2 is mainly a collective long term project, A3 is mainly a collective short term project; artprojects complement each other in order to create a meaningful and balanced system of independent work, all tutors can comment on all projects

***Tutors-** T1 is a local (CZ) tutor, T1 assigns A1; T2 is a visiting artist, T2 assigns A2; T3 can be an individual or an art collective, T3 assigns A3; tutoring is carried out for all projects by all tutors during separate tutoring meetings

***collective artproject** – all students or groups of students work together as a team to create a unique artwork

***short term/long term-** short term artproject lasts from a couple days up to a month whereas long term artwork lasts from a couple months up to a semester (4 months)

***assessment-** check of students' progress of work including an exhibition of his work

***internship-** a term-long experience of following choices:

1) internship at one of AVU's core studios

2) practice at an artspace, cooperation with a gallery, museum, an art institution or with other art school or curatorial studies degree school

3) practice at a non-artistic institution

4) production of an event (conference, symposium)

5) work in public sector (art workshops, therapies)

-internship takes place during Summer Term of Y1 and/or in Winter or Summer Terms of Year 2; students have to undergo 2 of the internships in the course of their studies; students don't have to participate in any of the T1- T3 projects during their internship; the outcome of the internship will be a part of the assessment or a yearly show



****TUTORS - ARTPROJECTS**

Tutor	Work	Tutor Contract
T1 Local (CZ) lecturer	A1 mainly long term individual projects	long term contract
T2 Visiting Artist	A2 long term collective projects	one term contract
T3 Foreign tutor/ collective of tutors	A3 short term collective projects	flexible contract
T4 Foreign theoretician (Theory in Studio tutor)	theory assignments	long term contract

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