



Master in Visual Arts / 2019-2020

Study Domain: Audio Visual and Visual Arts
Programme of Study: Visual Arts

Master Programme in
Fine Arts

- Ceramics
- Open Lab / Senses, Concept and Performance
- Painting
- Printmaking
- Sculpture and Installation

Master Programme in
Graphic Design (Reading Type & Typography)

Master Programme in
Jewellery Design, Gold- and Silversmithing

Index

Introduction

1. An Academic Master in Visual Arts

1.1 Our mission

1.2 Vision of PXL-MAD Visual Arts

1.3 An Academic Master: general information

1.4 Glossary

2. Research in Visual Arts Education

2.1 General Vision of MAD-Research

2.2 Research Group 'MANUFrACTURE'

2.3 Research Group 'FRAME'

2.4 Research Group 'READSEARCH'

2.5 General Coordination and Valorisation

3. Master in the Visual Arts

3.1 Overview of the Master Programme

3.2 Master Project and Thesis

3.3 Master Seminar

3.4 Supporting Subjects and Master Network

4. Practical information

Dear student,

You are about to embark on a journey to become a 'Master in the Visual Arts'. In this guide we want to inform you of the aims, objectives and possibilities of the Master Programme in Visual Arts, as it will be organised in the academic year 2019-2020.

PXL-MAD School of Arts does more than providing education, we are very active in undertaking research and are keen to share knowledge with a range of partners. In this context, we make sure our Bachelor and Master students gain research skills and are in touch with our ever-changing society.

*During the **Master Project and Thesis** you are expected to create both a mature body of work, presented in the Master Exhibition, and a written document in which you report and reflect on your artistic practice. You choose which approach you take to reach the required academic level. We will not force any content, form or style on you. You are however expected to formulate a research question on which to build your studio practice.*

We are there for you, to help with the framing of this question and the development of your body of work.

*You can choose from a range of **Master Seminars**, which lay the foundation for your individual artistic and research practice through analysing theoretical texts, visiting exhibitions, attending lectures, discussions and practical experiments.*

*Depending on your project, you can make your selection of **Supporting Subjects**, or choose to further extend your own network (**Master Network**). This allows you to perfectly position yourself and your work in your discipline.*

*You will also choose a **Work Placement**, either with an artist's studio or institution such as a museum or gallery, or in MAD-Research.*

For each of the course units above a wide selection of options is available. This means you are responsible for making the best choices for your project. Everyone gets the chance to use this one-year Master Programme to create a unique body of work. We offer you the opportunity to develop your artistic practice in a critical and supportive environment.

This guide to the Master Programme offers you information on how the one-year course is organised to be your individual route to become a Master in the Arts. We do hope to welcome you as our student in September.

Erwin Goegebeur, Head of PXL-MAD School of Arts

1. An Academic Master in the Visual Arts

1.1 Our mission

PXL-MAD School of Arts offers academic education and research with a critical look at the future. PXL-MAD School of Arts, is constantly inspiring its students, professors and researchers to strive for innovation by means of experimenting in an academic and international context. Through practical and theoretical research our students become imaginative and innovative artists and designers that contribute to the development of an ever-changing (artistic) context.

1.2 Vision PXL-MAD Visual Arts

PXL-MAD is looking for

Motivated students who are fascinated by learning, creating and their artistic practice. We need clever people who have artistic potential and vision and are eager to create rather than reproduce. We want broad-minded individuals, whom are keen to carry out well-founded research. We are looking for original thinkers, who can critically reflect on society through their work, as well as original makers who want to increase their independence through self-reflection.

PXL-MAD offers

A high quality, affordable programme, built on research and run by excellent tutors with professional artistic careers and networks. Our courses prepare for life after college, stimulate entrepreneurship and care for sustainability. We offer a selection of options, backed up by individual support, so that optimal personal development can be guaranteed for each student.

PXL-MAD is on the move

From Flanders and the Meuse-Rhine Euregion towards the World.

Even though Hasselt is not exactly cosmopolitan, its character does invite experimentation and innovation. Its small size and proximity to larger, culturally more challenging cities in Germany, The Netherlands and Belgium makes it both safe and an ideal kick-off for the emerging artist that wants to pursue an internationally relevant career.

PXL-MAD is different

Our small scale allows us to be flexible and offer individual guidance, it also gives you the opportunity to learn through trial and error.

A motivated team of tutors, all professional artists that keep in touch with contemporary developments and professional practice in their field of expertise, help you focus on finding the perfect image or design. We are multi-disciplinary in the courses we offer and in our approach. We are keen to remove the barriers between the different course subjects on one hand, and between education and professional practice on the other.

1.3 An Academic Master: general information

As a soon-to-be Master student, you are probably aware of the recent changes in the educational system. Allow us to clarify certain aspects here.

- When the Bologna Declaration was signed, all European countries agreed to offer higher education in two cycles: undergraduate (Bachelor) courses and graduate (Master) courses. This makes it easier to compare degrees across Europe, so that students can move freely between countries. The classical system, based on the number of years a course takes, was replaced by a system based on credits. Thanks to the ECTS (European Credit Transfer System) it is easier to prove previously gained skills when moving from one university to another, either within one country or internationally.
- When enrolling a course at PXL-MAD School of Arts, you sign a contract. You can choose for a **Diploma Contract** when you want to attain a Master Diploma, or a **Credit Contract** when you only want to receive proof of specific course units. In our Master Programme it is not possible to choose an **Exam Contract**, where you only sit exams, because every course unit demands active participation during the academic year.
- For direct access to the Master Programme, you must have completed an **Academic Bachelor** in the Visual Arts. With a **Professional Bachelor** in Visual Arts Teaching (for example, for candidates from The Netherlands), you can enrol in a **Bridging Programme**, which will give access to the Master Programme. Candidates with a Bachelor in Audio-visual Arts, Architecture, Interior Architecture or Product Design have to follow a **Preparatory Programme** before they can enrol in the Master Programme. Every student that wishes to change subject between graduate studies and our Master Programme should contact study guidance counsellor Eline Valkeneers (eline.valkeneers@pxl.be)
- to prevent problems from arising later on in the course.
- The Master Programme consists of several course units and comprises of 60 credit points. The Master Project and Thesis are the core of the Programme, they are supported by a choice of Master Seminars and a range of Supporting Subjects. You take responsibility for choosing those course units that best suit your project. You start the Master Programme with an Internship in your discipline or in our own research institute.
- If you achieve top grades and want to continue research in your chosen artistic topic, you have the option of writing a proposal for a research project or PhD. You are invited to do this at PXL-MAD, but it is also possible at any other university college in Europe.

1.4 Glossary

Flexibility

The old system, where one the number of years studied is replaced with a credit system. A programme no longer consists of consecutive academic years but is the sum of a number of credits, gained by achieving at least 10 out of 20 on the relevant course unit.

Credit Points or credits (ECTS)

Everywhere in Europe one credit point (or one credit) equals 25 to 30 hours of study comprising of attending classes, fulfilling assignments, self-study, preparing for exams... One Academic Year equals 60 credits. It is possible to follow an individual trajectory (IT), in which the student decides to take on more than 60 credits, or less, depending on their circumstances.

Academic Bachelor

An Academic Bachelor is a Programme of 180 credits, focussed on research and organised by a university. The only exceptions are the Academic Bachelors in the Arts, these are organised by a School of Arts, connected to a University College. The research done in a School of Arts is affiliated with a University. The degree of Academic Bachelor gives direct access to a Master Programme of at least 60 credits.

Professional Bachelor

In Belgium a Professional Bachelor is a Programme of 180 credits, taught only by graduate schools. The aim of such a course is mostly to gain professional competencies (knowledge and skills). The diploma of a Professional Bachelor does not give direct access to a Master Programme.

Bridging Programme

Professional Bachelors that want to enrol in a Master Programme must first complete a Bridging Programme. The Bridging Programme aims to teach academic competencies. It typically consists of 45 to 90 credits, but this can be reduced depending on the previous education of an individual student. A list of the Bridging Programmes we offer can be found in the study guide. Students that successfully complete a Bridging Programme do not receive a Bachelor Diploma, but a certificate that gives access to a specific Master Programme.

Preparatory Programme

Prospective students with an Academic Bachelor Diploma in Audio Visual Arts, Architecture, Interior Architecture or Product Design can enrol in a Master Programme as long as they follow a Preparatory Programme first. Students that successfully complete a

Preparatory Programme do not receive a Bachelor Diploma but a certificate that gives access to the relevant Master Programme.

Master Project and Thesis

These two parts are closely linked. The Master Project is the artistic research, done in the studio, resulting in a body of work. The Master Thesis is a written document describing the research and development of the Master Project.

PhD in the Arts

A few exceptional students can start a PhD after their MA. PhD candidates distinguish themselves through their research skills, their ability to communicate their concept through their work, and their efforts to produce an internationally acclaimed (artistic) output.

2. Research in Visual Arts Education

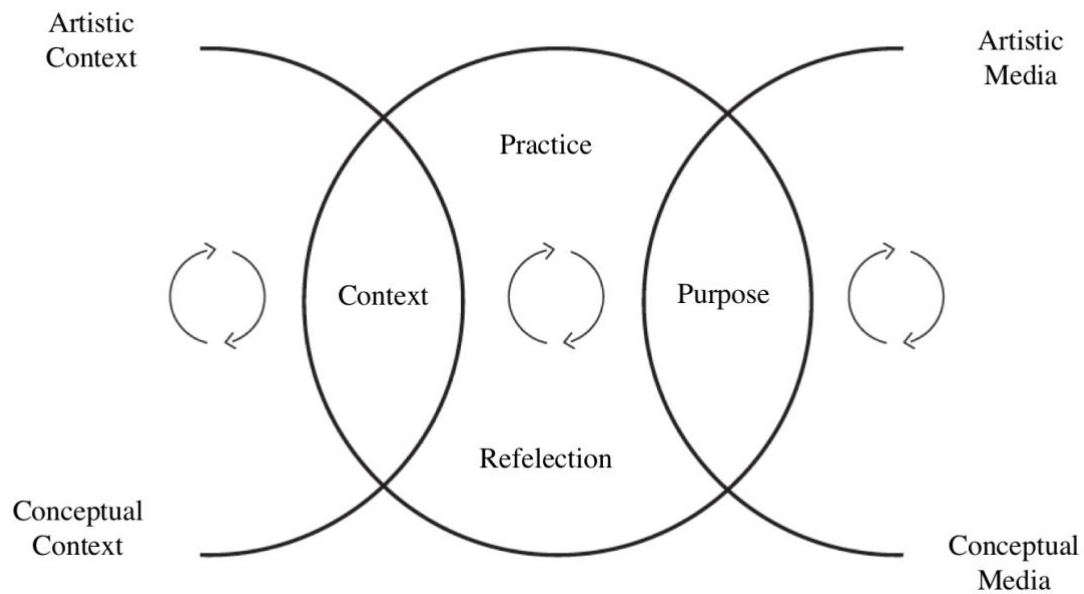
An Academic Programme in the Visual Arts is always organised in collaboration with a university. PXL-MAD School of Arts, joins forces with Hasselt University, **Faculty of Architecture and Art**. Within PXL-MAD School of Arts, artistic research is developed within **MAD-Research**. This research institute comprises of all staff and students that are actively engaged in research, such as professors, researchers, PhD students and supervisors. All students, especially the Master students, are expected to conduct studio-based research, so to a certain extent you are also part of this institute.

2.1 General Vision of MAD-Research

This chapter describes the research and research groups within **MAD-Research**, as they are set up in collaboration with the **Faculty Architecture and Art of University Hasselt**. There are three research groups: **MANUFrACTURE**, **FRAME** and **READSEARCH**.

MAD-Research aims to develop the **content, organisation and valorisation of research** in the Arts, within the department of Visual Arts at PXL-MAD School of Arts, and is closely connected to the faculty of Architecture and Art. We pay close attention to **art, design, media and society**. We specialise in research that examines objects and images through art or design methodologies or through a cross-disciplinary approach. Artists and designers are supported in their artistic research based on experimentation, and in the systematic development of methods and techniques specific to art and design. Lecturers are supported in their cross-disciplinary research about art and in collaboration with artists or designers.

Any research in the arts at MAD-Research revolves around the interaction between the artistic creations of the artist or designer and an in-depth reflection on this work, based on a thorough knowledge of the relevant context. **New meaning or knowledge** is generated through the **interaction between artistic practice and critical reflection**. The artist uses the interchange to find this knowledge, and communicates it in both artistic and written form. **Questioning the essence of the Visual Arts** is an important aspect of this research, communicating the knowledge gained from it contributes to the academic and artistic disciplines.



MAD-Research finds it useful to take a cross-disciplinary approach, and operates in three thematic interdisciplinary groups. Each group has its own coordinator that organises the research in such a way that it fits in with the core responsibilities of a university college: research, education and service provision. This way, there is not only a clear connection between research and education, but it also encourages cross-pollination between fundamental and applied research.

2.2 Research Group 'MANUFrACTURE'

The current rephrasing of traditional artistic forms, materials, techniques, functions and/or concepts constitutes the link between the researchers of MANUFrACTURE. This research group unifies research into and with artistic objects that venture into the interface between fine art, the *objet d'art* and design. Crafts(manship), characterised by skill, handicraft, uniqueness and tactility, is combined with the artistic or with industrial processes and practices. Sometimes a specific question is the starting point, sometimes topical needs form the basis. Apart from the final product, also the creative process itself is important, with attention to the active interaction between materialisation and idea as design method. In this, the body often serves as a giver of meaning and as carrier of tacit knowledge or specific 'memory' for acts during the creative process. The aim is not just perfection – also fracture, vulnerability or lack may constitute a source of inspiration or may be externalised. In other words: the crucial role of contemporary art as *fractious* troublemaker.

Contact: david.huycke@pxl.be

2.3 Research Group 'FRAME' (no English Master programme available)

FRAME cherishes the value and necessity of the fragile connection between discipline and discourse: a largely uncharted territory. We explore unconventional forms of knowledge that create new conceptual frames for images from within the artistic practice. We regard this practice itself as a substantial part of the research because the act of making sets forth a way of thinking in and through images and spaces. This thinking needs a language that is 'in tune' with the praxis, but does not coincide with it.

Images should be understood here in the broadest sense of the word. We do not only attentively create and interpret images that can literally be 'framed', like paintings, drawings and pictures, but also sculptures, installations, interiors, buildings, landscapes, literary texts, and even metaphors and philosophical concepts.

FRAME is an interdisciplinary research group consisting of researchers from both the arts (MAD-Research) and (interior) architecture (UHasselt – Arck). Architecture and the arts generate a new form of knowledge that requires an adequate language – verbal, visual and spatial. This entails a certain rigor, it means slowing down and taking time to contemplate, to perceive carefully and attentively. We develop through writing, sketching, building, drawing, painting a discourse that allows us to express those experiences of inner and outer reality that could not be expressed by any other means.

Contact: sofie.gielis@pxl.be

2.4 Research Group 'READSEARCH'

The typographic research group READSEARCH focuses on reading research. Type design and/or typography is looked at from a multidisciplinary and scientific perspective, but always with a practical attitude. The design practice forms next to, based on and in dialogue with experimental, but theoretically funded research a substantial share. It arises from formal experiments and is theoretically founded.

READSEARCH provides a unique and inspiring environment that brings together design researchers, typeface designers, scientists, students and stakeholders through research, courses and documentation. In this environment, thinking and creating are perfectly synchronised.

READSEARCH is embedded in the understanding of the typographic historical development, as well as the impact of type-making and typesetting technologies. Besides classical typography, READSEARCH explores borders of legibility/readability for several target groups. Established conventions aren't lost track of during research, but are combined with looking at what conventions could be on digital media and complex information structures, or what they could mean for digital typography. The digitisation has a considerable part in the emergence of typographic specifications that are not only fluid across platforms and use scenarios, but also across time. (Typographic designers are now multi-skilled individuals or closely integrated teams of designers and coders.) READSEARCH is aware of possible combinations between the parameters mentioned above.

READSEARCH investigates different topics: Rhythm & Legibility, Rhythm & Reading Comfort, Visual Prosody, Dyslectic Readers, Beginning Readers, Readers with a Visual Impairment, Homogeneity & Heterogeneity in typefaces and Reading Ergonomics.

Contact: ann.bessemans@pxl.be

2.5 General Coordination and Valorisation

The general research coordinator manages the global coordination of the research department (including finance, quality control and the PhD Programme). The research coordinators also actively look for external partners, such as Z33, Design Platform Limburg, CIAP, FLACC, HISK, C-Mine and Innovation Centre Limburg. This leads to specific research projects involving students, so you can participate too.

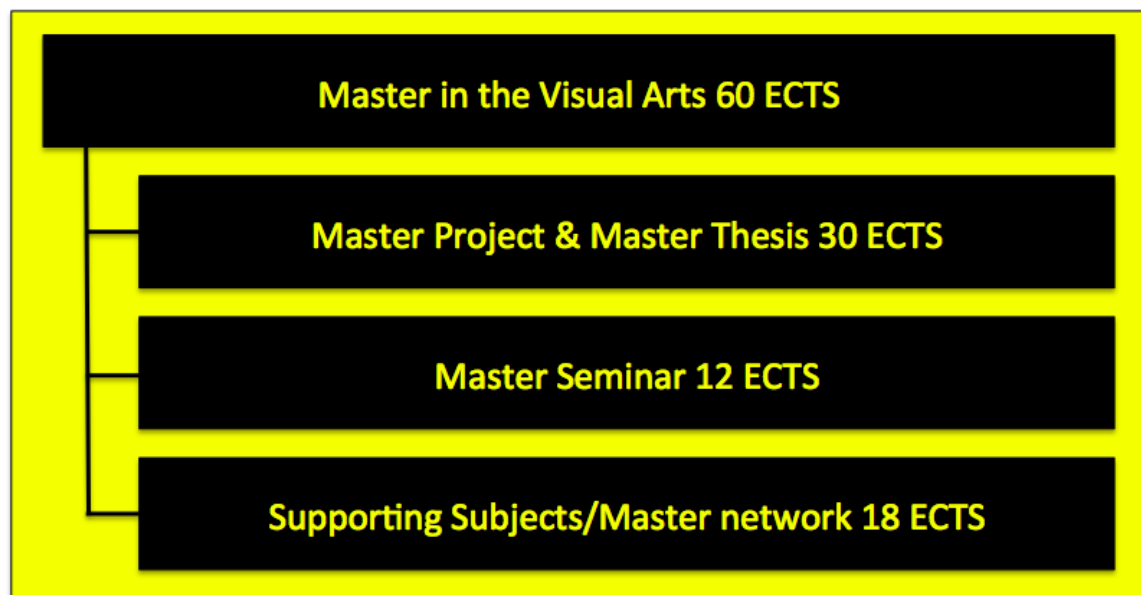
Contact: bert.willems@pxl.be

3. Master in the Visual Arts

3.1 Overview of the Master Programme

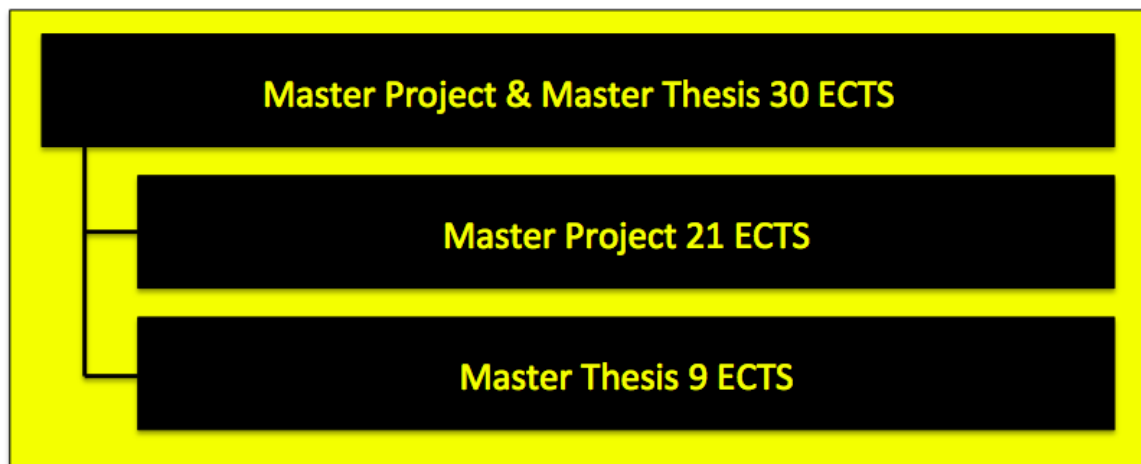
The Master Programme in Visual Arts offers students in Fine Arts, Graphic Design and Jewellery Design, Gold- and Silversmithing the chance to further develop their own expertise. You are given the chance to broaden your horizon and to expand your visual artistic abilities with the expert help of tutors and artists, who are either connected with PXL-MAD School of Arts or independent. The Master Programme is also a unique opportunity to work within the global research programme of MAD-Research. You might enjoy this so much that you want to continue working within a research project, or even take the time to take on a PhD in the Arts.

The Master Programme exists of four parts, of which the **Master Project and Thesis** together form the main part (30 credits). The **Master Seminar** (12 credits) supports the Master Project and Thesis, and the research necessary to complete these. On top of this, you can choose your own bundle (18 credits) of various **Supporting Subjects** (supporting the Master Project) and the **Master Network** (improving your position in your discipline). The **Work Placement** is an obligatory part of this bundle. You can choose how many weeks you want to spend on it, and whether you prefer to take an internship in your chosen discipline, or in a research group at MAD-Research or elsewhere.



3.2 Master Project and Thesis

The Master Project (21 credits) and Master Thesis (including a verbal presentation) (9 credits) belong together. To understand their relationship, please read the following explanation.



The Master Project and Thesis are the result of an **artistic research process**. Within this research process, two research activities can be distinguished: practice and reflection. **Practice** comprises of the design process or the making of the art. It takes place mostly in the studio environment. **Reflection** is the development of a personal frame of reference. The structure of this framework is important because it gives you insight in the work you make, and allows you to position yourself within the context of other people's creations. Others can also use your framework to gain this insight and position your work. Building your frame of reference can be done in several ways: starting from a literary review, from empirical research (for humanities and exact sciences), from existing frames of reference, from personal impressions of one's environment, from confronting one's frame of reference with the work of others, but certainly also by confronting one's frame of reference with one's own body of work. That makes the interaction between creating your own body of work and reflecting on it through a self-constructed frame of reference an essential aspect of your artistic research process.

The two types of research activity (practice and reflection) interact. But when the building of the frame of reference is mostly done in advance (based, for example, on a literary review or on one's own empirical research), the interaction is minimal. We aim to develop a more constant interaction between practice (doing) and reflection (thinking). This allows for the reflection on one's own practice to contribute to one's frame of reference, which in its turn can then influence the practical work.

As you can see, whichever way you turn, artistic practice is a key part of the artistic research process. The research process starts from one's practice, and its outcomes are results from this practice. Within the Master Programme, the **Master Project** forms the basis for this

research practice. Within the given description of reflection as the building of an individual frame of reference, 'the others' have been mentioned before. These observers can understand your work based on your framework and compare it to other people's work. That is why it is important that your frame of reference is communicated towards these observers. Within the Master Programme, and next to the Master Project, The Master Thesis is ideal for this purpose.

Two supervisors help you with the content of your Master Project and Thesis: one will supervise your thesis, and the other your project. Apart from that, you have a supervisor supporting you with the process. The **thesis supervisor** is active within the Visual Arts Programme (or exceptionally within another academic programme) and can offer you help with the content because of their expert knowledge. The **project supervisor** is a tutor within your department, who supervises you for your Master Project, and who can also help you with the content of your thesis because of their expert knowledge. These two supervisors will monitor your progress on a regular basis and direct the content if necessary. The **process supervisor** oversees the formal aspects of your research project: the structure of your artistic research process and the formulation of your research question. He offers support with presentation and reporting. Sofie Gielis supervises the process, he is sometimes assisted by a tutor from your department. The Master Project and the Master Thesis are two separate parts of the research process, so two different panels of examiners judge them. However, because they are closely linked, the thesis supervisor will be a judge in the examination of the Master Project, and the project supervisor will be a judge in the examination of the thesis.

Research Thesis (9 credits)

The Research Thesis consists of a condensed written text, abundantly documented with digital or analogue images. It contains around 10 pages or 3500 words. At the end of the academic year all students defend their research project during a 20-minute Master Lecture (a verbal presentation). An internal panel of judges can then ask questions based on the thesis and presentation.

Master Project (21 credits)

The Master Project is mostly created within the studio of your chosen discipline. An external panel of judges is invited to do the assessing. The tutors will also assess the work. This way, a well-balance appraisal of both the working process and the outcome can be made.

3.3 Master Seminar

Your skills in artistic research are critical for the creation of a Master Project and Thesis. You register with one Master Seminar before the course starts. Please take care to select the Master Seminar that corresponds best to the content of your Master Project, so that you can benefit from the experience, knowledge and skills of its researchers and tutors. Choosing the Master Seminar not only means you will not gain much relevant knowledge, it could even hinder your research process.

You are obliged to take one Master Seminar, to the value of 12 credits. The Master Seminars take place in the second half of the first semester and start with an intensive week (from the 14th to the 18th of October 2019). Of course, you can still ask for guidance, advice and feedback from the research group during the second term.

Selecting a Master Seminar has to be done before the start of the academic year. Once the year has started, you cannot change the chosen Master Seminar any more. Exceptions are only possible within three weeks from the beginning of the Master Seminar (deadline for changes: 4th of November 2019) if sufficient motivation is provided.

The Master Seminar offers support and guidance for the research process and the construction of a personal frame of reference. This is done through activities such as processing theoretical concepts and conceptual frameworks; applying these insights to your own body of work or that of others; conducting artistic experiments and practicing research-through-design.

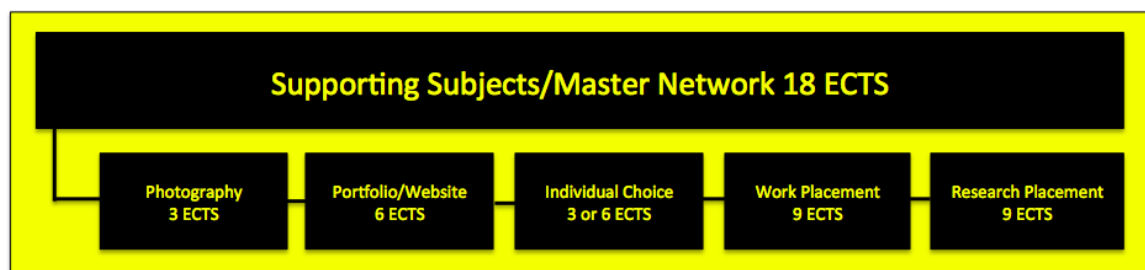
The marks or grades you receive for the Master Seminar are process based: they reflect your attendance, participation and the progress you made towards your Master Project. Some Master Seminars demand that you complete one or more assignments; these will be part of your evaluation. You receive feedback when this course unit is completed, after the first semester. Evaluations take place in January 2020.

The diagram below gives an overview of the Master Seminars offered in 2019-2020.



3.4 Supporting Subjects and Master Network

As you have come to realise, you can select and adapt the Master Programme so that it best fits your own Master Project. You will work in the studio of your choice, where you will be assisted by artistically skilled tutors. You select a supervisor that can provide meaningful help with the content of your thesis. A selection of **Supporting Subjects** (18 credits) can also be made to help you develop the right skills for your Master Project. Or you can choose to build and expand your network within your discipline (**Master Network**). Of course it is possible to make a combination of course units from both these options. You select any combination of units you want to a total of 18 credits. You are however obliged to make the Work Placement (9 credits) or Research Placement (9 credits) part of your package.



Photography (3 credits)

Some students need extra support for the presentation of their work through photography. In this course unit you get personalised advice, informed by the choices you made in other course units. Katleen Verjans coordinates this course unit.

Portfolio/Website (6 credits)

In this course unit you receive help with the presentation of your work through a portfolio, website or book. Wim De Buck is coordinator.

Individual Choice (3 or 6 credits)

You can also propose your own supporting subject, depending on what you have not been taught in your previous education. You can use 3 or 6 credits for this option, depending on the workload. If you want to take this option, please contact Bert Willems as soon as possible. He will investigate whether your proposal is beneficial for your personalised Master Programme.

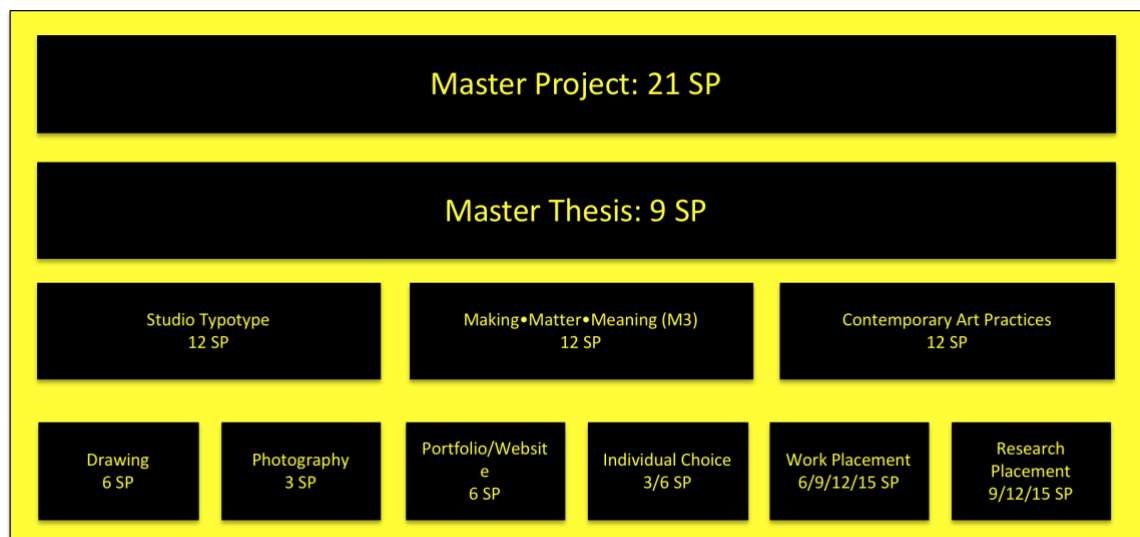
Work Placement (9 credits) or Research Placement (9 credits) / 7 weeks

The academic year starts with an obligatory internship. You can however choose to get your work experience in your discipline (**Work Placement**) or within a research institute of your own or another organisation (**Research Placement**). You are supposed to commence your

internship at the start of the academic year, and complete it by the end of the autumn mid term holiday. If you want to deviate from this timing, please discuss your options with the coordinators for this course unit: Erica Cselotei for Graphic Design, Stijn Maes for Fine Arts and Karen Wuytens for Object and Jewellery. In any case, the Master Seminar, Master Project and Thesis will start after the completion of the internship, which is to say from 14th of October 2019 on.

4. Practical information

This guide offers information about the structure of **the Master Programme**, which is set up to give you both the opportunity to further specialise in your chosen subject and to broaden your view beyond the limits of a single department. You make your own combination of course units, following the figure below.



The Master Seminar, Master Project, Master Thesis, Supporting Subjects and Master Network all, on 14th October 2019, after the internship has finished.

Because the Master Programme and the content of the course units are very specialised, it is possible that changes are made to the sequence of events as described above. So it is of the utmost importance that you are well organised and that you make sure clear arrangements are made with all parties involved. If you have any questions about the sequence and timing of the course units, please contact Erica Cselotei or Bert Willems. Students that follow an individual trajectory (for example combining working and studying) have to discuss their options with Eline Valkeneers.

Apart from information about the general structure of the Master Programme and the timing of the course units, this guide also provides information about the content of the Master Programme. It is however possible that you still have questions about specific course units. If so, please feel free to contact the coordinators of those course units that need clarification. You can find a list of all coordinators below.

Head of PXL-MAD

Erwin Goegebeur (erwin.goegebeur@pxl.be): Head of PXL-MAD

Coordinators Master Programme Visual Arts 2019-2020

Ann Bessemans (ann.bessemans@pxl.be): Masterstudio 'STUDIO TYPOTYPE',
Masterproject Reading Type & Typography (Graphic Design)

Erica Cselotei (erica.cselotei@pxl.be): Coordination Visual Arts Programme, Internship
(Graphic Design).

Willem De Buck (wim.debuck@pxl.be): Portfolio/Website

Sofie Gielis (sofie.gielis@pxl.be): Thesis writing

David Huycke (david.huycke@pxl.be): Master Studio 'Making•Matter•Meaning (M3)',
Masterproject Jewellery Design, Gold- and Silversmithing

Stijn Maes (stijn.maes@pxl.be): Internship (Fine Arts)

Katleen Verjans (katleen.verjans@pxl.be): Photography

Bert Willems (bert.willems@pxl.be): Coordination Master Programme, Coordination
MAD-Research, Individual Choice.

Karen Wuytens (karen.wuytens@pxl.be): Internships (Object & Jewellery)

Eline Valkeneers (eline.valkeneers@pxl.be): Study guidance counsellor