

Master of Film – Artistic Research in and through Cinema

Study Guide 2018 – 2019

This Study Guide describes the educational vision of the Master of Film-programme and outlines its translation into the content of the programme. The study guide is complementary to the 'Teaching and Examination Regulations 2018 - 2019'. No rights can be derived from the text in this Study Guide.

OUR VISION

The value of artistic research

We believe in the intrinsic value of art and its critical contribution to society. Research is an integral part of art. Grounded as it is in the practice of art, or, in our case, the practice of filmmaking, artistic research produces knowledge. Knowledge relevant to the worlds of art – all major movements in cinema were the result of artistic research – but also knowledge that extends beyond the arts or cinema. Thus, our Master's programme 'Artistic Research in and through Cinema' can be said to operate at the crossroads where art practice meets production of knowledge.

Our view on education

We believe that education is about creating 'conditions of possibility'. It is about creating a framework in which students (or 'researchers' as we prefer to call them) are given the space to shape their own development. This framework requires a focus on process rather than product, a non-hierarchical relation between teachers and researchers, an understanding of subjectivity as driving force, and an emphasis on the group as a context of support rather than competition.

We focus on process rather than product because we believe that researchers who learn how to steer their own processes are more flexible and therefore more capable of adapting to continuously changing circumstances and professional demands.

The emphasis on a democratic or non-hierarchical relation between teachers and researchers is born from our understanding that education is a space of learning, not just for the researchers but also for the teachers, mentors and all the others that are part of our 'learning community'.

Creating 'conditions of possibility' means taking seriously individual differences and individual needs and desires. Understanding them, 'owning' them and using them to carve out one's trajectory, makes subjectivity a driving force of the learning and research process.

Emphasising the group as a necessary support structure for development, doesn't stand in contradiction to the focus on subjectivity as driving force. On the contrary: successful groups need individuals who recognize their responsibility towards their work and learning processes. This recognition will create respect for other voices and thus prevent a sense of competition.

Artistic Research in and through Cinema

Our practice driven MA-programme has a clear focus: artistic research in and through cinema. This focus sets it apart from other film programmes, both in film or art schools and in universities.

We define 'artistic research' as an open-ended trajectory in which thinking and making are one, and which privileges questions over answers, process over product, experimentation over mere execution and long-term effects over short term gain. 'Artistic research' is neither a discipline nor a methodology. Instead, it's a state of mind, a 'mentality' or an attitude.

'Artistic research in and through cinema' means thinking through images and sounds. It means starting from the practice, knowledge and perspectives of filmmaking, and using its accompanying concepts and language.

Thus, researching 'in and through' cinema refers to research through the frame, notions and paradigm of the filmmaking practice. The research 'in' revolves around questions of the cinema practice itself – spectatorship, perception, storytelling, modes of production, ethics et cetera – while, in addition, research 'through' relates to the use of cinematic conditions and concepts to explore topics and fields beyond cinema – topics such as memory, trauma, archival practices, human relations or identity for example.

Programme structure

The 2-year full-time, English spoken MA-programme (120 EC) is divided into 4 semesters that each have their own focus. Together they create an ongoing research cycle of which the exams are an integral part. The programme uses three pedagogical 'tools' and provides a research budget. It is also closely linked to the Film Academy's Research Group.

The four terms and their focus

Semester 1. Subjectivity and positioning

To understand 'from where you speak' and to take responsibility for that 'point of view' is perhaps the most important precondition for artistic research and for any artistic practice. This is why our programme starts from this notion of 'subjectivity'. It determines what you do, how and why; it's a position towards yourself, your work and the world. This is not to say though that it's a given, on the contrary: subjectivity itself is a process and a space of research and exploration. Although it is related to questions of identity and psychology, 'subjectivity' cannot be reduced to autobiography. It is instead about authorship, about developing your singular vision and defending it.

This notion of subjectivity underlies all other semesters.

Semester 2. Method and methodology

Finding your own (working) method and (research) methodology is the focus of semester 2. We do not believe that there is, or should be, a predetermined or fixed methodology for artistic research in and through cinema. In line with our focus on subjectivity we believe that the methods of artistic research are individual, subjective and singular. In fact, we believe that what makes your 'artistic signature' is your singular research and production methodology.

Semester 3. Exploration and experimentation

Semester 3 is devoted to further exploring your research theme or project in an experimental manner. Experimentation in art and artistic research has less to do with testing assumptions or checking working methods, technologies or production strategies. Instead, artistic exploration and experimentation is about being open to surprises, detours and unexpected encounters – with knowledge, materials, references, technologies and people. Tracing, documenting and communicating that subjective process of exploration is part and parcel of the experimental attitude.

Semester 4. Conceptualisation and communication

The practice of art and artistic research organically leads to a desire or need of conceptualisation, of zooming out from the particularities to see a bigger picture, a wider context in which the research figures or can be meaningful. Like methodology and experimentation, conceptualisation starts from the researcher's subjective understanding of concepts and notions used. Conceptualisation is at the core of artistic research as it enables insights, produces knowledge and gives rise to new questions. Part of the conceptualisation process is also, last but not least, how to share or communicate these insights and new questions with others.

Exams

Understanding the 4-semester programme as a dynamic process, the 'exams' that conclude every semester are considered milestones in that process: moments to take stock of what you have done, how you evaluate that and how you wish to go on. Even the last exam, at the end of the second year, and the subsequent public presentation of your research project during the Artistic Research Week is considered a moment in an ongoing process, albeit an important one. Each exam is dedicated to the theme of the semester and all exams, except for the first one, involve external examiners from the professional field.

Three pedagogical 'tools'

There are three integrated pedagogical 'tools' that are in place to enable your artistic research journey: the curriculum, the mentoring system and the group.

The curriculum

The curriculum is made up of workshops that take your research interests as its material to work with. All workshops combine practice and reflection and are taught or moderated by filmmakers and artists whose own practice can itself be described as invested with an artistic research ethos. Aside from these workshops, there are regular inspiring public lectures by filmmakers, artists, philosophers or scientists, related to the theme of the semester.

Although it's a full-time programme, there's a distinction in the density of workshops between the first and second year. Whereas year 1 is primarily organised around workshops, year 2 focusses more on your individual research project and therefore has fewer workshops.

The mentoring system

You will be supported throughout your research process by a team of mentors, who will mentor and tutor you both individually and collectively in small research groups. We conceive of mentoring as a continuous professional dialogue, for which you also need to

take responsibility. Mentoring sessions are aimed at strengthening your research abilities through systematic reflection on your practice.

At the end of the first year you're stimulated to find external advisors who can support your research in a more specific or in-depth way. Depending on the nature of your research and your needs, it could be a single advisor or different ones at different moments of your process. You have a budget to pay them.

All mentors and most, if not all external advisors are artist-researchers themselves.

The peer group

Every year we select no more than ten researchers on the basis of their cv, portfolio and research interests, aiming to create a group that is inclusive in terms of gender, race, nationality, origin and professional or artistic background. Because of its creative level and its diversity, the group will provide a stimulating and supportive environment for all.

Generally, we believe that the group is a very important, if not the most important learning tool. This is also why, particularly in the first year, there are many collective workshops and why we place a great importance on peer feedback. For this we use a specific technique that understands feedback not as a tool to judge but as a tool to think.

Budget

You will have a research budget to your disposal of around €10.000, which you can use to pay for fees for people you work with – including your external advisors -, rental of equipment (if the equipment is not available at the school), travel and festival visits, et cetera. Part of the budget is kept aside to pay for the concluding public presentation of your research during the Artistic Research Week at the end of the second year.

As a researcher you're of course also entitled to use the Film Academy's equipment and facilities.

OUR PROGRAMME

SEMESTER 1: SUBJECTIVITY AND POSITIONING

(September – December 2018; programme is subject to change)

Focus, structure, goals, final qualifications

The *focus* of the first semester is on 'subjectivity' and 'positioning', described as understanding 'from where you speak' and taking responsibility for that 'point of view'. Subjectivity determines what you do, how and why; it's the position you take, or rather: develop, towards yourself, your work and the world.

The *structure* of the first semester is organised around 4 blocks or thematic periods, consisting of workshops, mentor meetings, feedback sessions, public lectures and a concluding exam. All workshops take your research questions as material to work on, and all workshops include practical experiments and assignments. The four thematic periods are

preceded by a general introduction of two weeks, geared at getting to know the programme, the team, the building and, most importantly, the other members of the group.

The specific *goals* of the semester are described as follows. The student/researcher can:

- articulate and communicate his/her artistic / intellectual trajectory (through retrospection)
- articulate and communicate his/her artistic / intellectual intention
- position him- or herself in relevant (artistic) field(s)document and archive
- creatively express him- or herself

The *final qualifications* (or 'most important intended learning outcomes') for this semester are:

- 1a. The student/ researcher has the capacity to understand, develop and creatively express his/her subjective identity
- 1b. The student / researcher has developed an awareness of context and position

General introduction

Presentations by the new researchers of their reasons to join this programme, their research interests and their sources of inspirations. Team members will each give a similar presentation.

Workshop 'Acting class' (Hidde Simons). This workshop combines getting to know each other with offering tools for establishing creative, collaborative relationships with people you work with.

Three-day excursion with assignment (individual and collective).

1. Introduction to 'artistic research' and 'subjectivity'

Mentor days (Sander Blom, Aneta Lesnikovska, Wineke van Muiswinkel). Each of the three mentors will present him- or herself in a one-day class about their view on mentoring in relation to artistic research.

Workshop 'Introduction to Artistic Research in and through Cinema – a subjective journey' (Eyal Sivan, with alumni, guests and other lecturers on the course). This one-week seminar/workshop acts as an introduction to the entire two years' journey of the MA programme of Artistic Research in and through Cinema, with a particular focus on the theme of the first semester: subjectivity.

2. Reviewing and positioning

Workshop 'Post research' (Floris Paalman). Every artistic work has a prehistory, how it emerged within particular subjective conditions, and an afterlife with specific uses, fulfilling personal aims and resulting in new interpretations. This workshop – introduced in the introductory workshop of Eyal Sivan, see above - will (re)trace that process by re-researching your earlier work.

Workshop 'Editing is storytelling' (Menno Boerema). Editing is not about imposing a structure, but about letting a structure emerge from the material. The same is true for research: its focus and meaning aren't given but come into being during the process.

Focusing on your (earlier) work, in this workshop you will examine various ways of approaching your material to discover what you and your material want to say.

Workshop 'Positioning, from the personal to the universal and back' (Marjoleine Boonstra). When man went to the moon, he discovered the earth. In a similar way, using film, or art, to go out and discover the world has a lot to say about you and your subjectivity. There's no need therefore to make autobiographical films to expose your unique point of view. This hands-on workshop deals with the difference between private and personal and will send you into the world on a mission to find your voice.

3. Creating a research environment and working space

Workshop 'Online atelier and archiving' (Eyal Sivan, Bram Loogman, alumni and guests). This workshop focusses on the need to create or design your own research environment – in the form of an online 'atelier' - and find the most suitable way for you to trace and archive your research journey within that atelier.

In this period researchers can also attend the IDFA documentary festival.

4. Critical review

In the last 3 weeks of term, before exam 1, the focus is on critically reviewing where this semester's input has brought you by means of feedback sessions, mentor meetings and individual working time, also to work on a short audio-visual piece on the topic of the semester.

Workshop 'Writing and re-writing' (Mieke Bernink). This brief workshop, included as preparation for the critical review that you need to hand in for the exam, focusses on how to find your way of telling the story of your process, with what means and for which audience.

Workshop 'Presentation techniques' (Pol Eggermont). This workshop is about how to present oneself and one's research reflections. Practicing with different forms of presentation informs, and perhaps changes, your understanding of your trajectory and your research topic. This workshop works as preparation for your audio-visual presentation during the exam.

Exam 1

The purpose or goal of the exam is to discuss and assess your process during the first semester in light of the theme of the semester (subjectivity and positioning) and your particular research interests. The exam consists of material to be handed in before (including a short audio-visual piece), a (public) audio-visual presentation and a Q&A with the committee of examiners. The committee consists of the head of department and the mentors. The different criteria of assessment, for each of the exam parts, relate to the two final qualifications mentioned before:

- 1a. The student/ researcher has the capacity to understand, develop and creatively express his/her subjective identity
- 1b. The student / researcher has developed an awareness of context and position

Mentor meetings

You will be supported throughout your research process by a team of mentors, who will mentor and tutor you both individually and collectively in small research groups.

Feedback sessions

An important part of the group as a learning tool consist of the use of a specific feedback method. This method sees giving and getting feedback not as a moment of judgement but as a moment of collective thinking and learning. Feedback sessions are a regular feature of the programme.

Master Lecture Series

Every three weeks the Master organizes public lectures, for which she invites filmmakers, visual artists, philosophers or scientists to share their work, perspectives and research. Where possible these lectures are connected to the theme(s) of the semester.

SEMESTER 2: METHOD AND METHODOLOGY (January – July 2019; programme is subject to change)

Focus, structure, goals, final qualifications

The *focus* of the second semester is on you finding your own (working) method and (research) methodology. There's no such thing as a given methodology for artistic research. Like in your work, it's your own voice that needs to resound in the methods you choose.

The *structure* of the semester is such that it allows you to experience and play with different approaches you can use to sharpen your research interest with, or against. These are of course but a selection of possible methods and you're invited to find or develop your own. After an introductory workshop on the theme of the semester, the second block or period consists of different workshops, together forming a range of possible ways to approach your research, with the 'essayistic' as a combination of several. The last part is dedicated to your critical review of what you took from the semester. Like in semester 1 workshops – combining practice and reflection - are interspersed with mentor meetings, feedback sessions and public lectures. Although the semester formally concludes with an exam, as milestone, the semester in fact only ends after a workshop introducing the theme of the third semester – exploration and experimentation – as you will spend some of the summer continuing working on your research project.

The specific *goals* of the semester are described as follows. The student/researcher can:

- frame his field of research or production
- find and express his method (in view of other possible methods)

- undertake preliminary research, gather theoretical knowledge & provide 'evidence' for it
- articulate a research, project and production proposal
- defend the relevance of his research and project
- critically review his ongoing process
- creatively express himself

The *final qualifications* (or 'most important intended learning outcomes') for this semester are:

2a. The student/researcher has mastered his/her own method(s) after reviewing existing methods

2b. The student/researcher is able to initiate and steer a process of research and production

1. Introduction

Workshop 'Methods of artistic research: an overview' (Eyal Sivan, with alumni, guests and other lecturers on the course). This seminar/workshop acts as an introduction to the second semester and provides an overview of research methods in different fields (science, humanities, visual arts, ..), while also discussing how each and everyone's artistic practice, from the start, is already invested with (more or less consciously chosen) methods.

In this period researchers can also attend the International Festival Rotterdam (IFFR).

2. A range of approaches

Workshop 'Thinking through making' (Albert Elings, Eugenie Janssen). Understanding that the focus of the semester is on methodology, this workshop offers a practical look on how the very act of making film (be it shooting, preparing or editing) can be a tool to find out more about your own way of working and seeing the world, and from this try and find possible personal methods with which you can engage your research question.

Workshop 'Participatory and collaborative research in and through filmmaking' (Maartje Nevejan).

A cinematic research project is an individual subjective authored work. Nonetheless, a film research project can also become participatory, and sometimes even collective or collaborative. This hands-on workshop addresses the complexity and potentiality of participatory and collaborative methods of filmmaking.

Workshop 'Sound research' (Michel Schöpping, Wineke van Muiswinkel, guests). Sound is an often undervalued but highly important part of filmmaking. In this workshop you'll approach your research question or theme from the perspective of sound. How can working with and through sound provide you with relevant insights and new perspectives on your research project?

Workshop 'Pre-research' (Floris Paalman). Following on from the 'Post research' workshop in semester 1, this workshop is dedicated to 'pre-research': tracking one's own thoughts, perceptions and action, from which to distill the outlines of a research methodology

Workshop 'Essayistic filmmaking' (Sander Blom, Albert Elings, guests). This workshop will allow you to explore the boundaries of the seemingly boundary-less essay film. In first collectively formulating a definition – primarily by stating what it is not – it will become clear why this form is an appropriate vessel for the 'thinking aloud' that artistic research requires. Focus of the workshop is on making your own essay film.

3. Critical review

In the last 4 weeks of term, before exam 2, the focus is on critically reviewing where this semester's input has brought you by means of feedback sessions, mentor meetings and individual working time, also to work on an audio-visual piece related to (the theme or workshops of) the semester.

4. Introduction semester 3

Workshop 'Experiencing, exploring and experimenting' (Eyal Sivan, Wineke van Muiswinkel).

This workshop, given after exam 2, just before the summer break, works with you on your ideas and concrete planning of the next steps in your research, under the aegis of exploration and experimentation.

Exam 2

The purpose or goal of the exam is to assess whether you've passed year 1 and can go on to year 2 of the programme. Discussing and assessing your process during the semester in light of the theme of the semester (method and methodology) and your particular research interests, the exam also looks forward to how you intend to move forward with your research and project. Like in semester 1, the exam consists of material to be handed in before (including an audio-visual piece), a (public) audio-visual presentation and a Q&A with the committee of examiners. This time the committee consists of the head of the department and two external examiners from the professional field. The different criteria of assessment, for each of the exam parts, relate to the two final qualifications mentioned before:

- 2a. The student/researcher has mastered his/her own method(s) after reviewing existing methods
- 2b. The student/researcher is able to initiate and steer a process of research and production

Mentor meetings

You will be supported throughout your research process by a team of mentors, who will mentor and tutor you both individually and collectively in small research groups.

Feedback sessions

An important part of the group as a learning tool consist of the use of a specific feedback method. This method sees giving and getting feedback not as a moment of judgement but as a moment of collective thinking and learning. Feedback sessions are a regular feature of the programme.

Master Lecture Series

Every three weeks the Master organizes public lectures, for which she invites filmmakers, visual artists, philosophers or scientists to share their work, perspectives and research. Where possible these lectures are connected to the theme(s) of the semester.

SEMESTER 3: EXPLORATION AND EXPERIMENTATION **(September – December 2018; programme is subject to change)**

Focus, structure, goals, final qualifications

The *focus* of the third semester is on further exploring your research theme or project in an experimental manner, open to surprises, detours and unexpected encounters. Tracing, documenting and communicating that subjective process of exploration is part and parcel of the experimental attitude.

The *structure* of the semester is such that the focus is on your individual research project. The introduction to the semester took place before the summer – see under semester 2 – as we assume that you'll be working on your research project through (part of) the summer and the first month of the new term. The semester itself only has two workshops (in September / October), reflecting on the 'outcomes' of your research thus far and thinking about the relation between form, content and presentation of your research project. Both workshops, as usual, combine practice and reflection. Like in previous semesters the last part of the semester is dedicated to critical reviewing where you stand and preparing for the exam. Although you will work on your research with external advisors (of your choosing), there will also be mentor meetings, feedback sessions and public lectures.

The specific *goals* of the semester are described as follows. The student/researcher can:

- set up and organize a process of creative experimental research
- produce and execute research plans
- implement acquired knowledge and gained experimental practice into subsequent production process
- evaluate, communicate and discuss the process and the results of the production/ experiments conducted
- creatively express him- or herself

The *final qualifications* (or 'most important intended learning outcomes') for this semester are:

3a. The student / researcher is able to explore by creative experimentation

3b. The student / researcher can open up possibilities of innovation through experimentation

Workshops

Workshop 'From exploration to projection' (Eyal Sivan). This workshop's goal is to review the results, findings, insights and outcomes of your explorations and experimentations, in order to 'project' yourself in the next 'movement' or stage of your research journey. In this workshop you'll be invited to conceptualise your findings and envision tools that will help you to take your next steps.

Workshop 'Concepts, forms and formats' (Rada Sestic). At any moment during your artistic research journey you might consider exhibiting or exposing your insights, research results or outcomes. The question to answer is what's the relation between what you want to share

about your research and explorations and the form of publication you choose. In this workshop you'll be invited to work on other formats, forms and media than the ones you envisioned to work on. This will allow you to better understand and define the relation between the thematic concept of your work and the aesthetic and formal concepts you use.

Exam 3

The purpose of this exam is to decide whether or not your research project has developed enough for you to start preparing for the final exam and the public presentation during the Artistic Research Week in June 2019. Discussing and assessing (the update of) your research process during the semester in light of the theme of the semester (exploration and experimentation), the exam also looks forward to how you intend to continue with your research project and what ideas you have for presenting both process and project at the end of the next semester. Like in earlier semesters, the exam consists of material to be handed in before, a (public) audio-visual presentation and a Q&A with the committee of examiners. The committee consists of the head of the department and two external examiners from the professional field. The different criteria of assessment, for each of the exam parts, relate to the two final qualifications mentioned before:

3a. The student / researcher is able to explore by creative experimentation

3b. The student / researcher can open up possibilities of innovation through experimentation

Mentor meetings

You will be supported throughout your research process by a team of mentors, who will mentor and tutor you both individually and collectively in small research groups. In this semester you will also work with external advisors that you have chosen in light of your research project's needs.

Feedback sessions

An important part of the group as a learning tool consist of the use of a specific feedback method. This method sees giving and getting feedback not as a moment of judgement but as a moment of collective thinking and learning. Feedback sessions are a regular feature of the programme.

Master Lecture Series

Every three weeks the Master organizes public lectures, for which she invites filmmakers, visual artists, philosophers or scientists to share their work, perspectives and research. Where possible these lectures are connected to the theme(s) of the semester.

SEMESTER 4: CONCEPTUALISATION AND COMMUNICATION

(January – July 2019; programme is subject to change)

Focus, structure, goals, final qualifications

The *focus* of the fourth semester is on zooming out from the particularities of your research project to see a bigger picture or a wider context in which the research figures or can be

meaningful. Conceptualisation is at the core of artistic research as it enables insights, produces knowledge and gives rise to new questions. How to communicate these insights and new questions to others is an integral part of conceptualisation.

The *structure* of the semester continues the focus on your individual research project. Like in semester 3 there will be only two workshops – one focusing on the conceptualization of your process and project, the other, on how to choose appropriate forms to communicate both to a diversity of audiences. Aside from working with your external advisors, there will be mentor meetings, feedback sessions and public lectures. You will publicly present your research project during the Artistic Research Week at the end of June in the EYE Film Museum. The final exam takes place some 5 weeks before, to give you time to incorporate the examiners' observations in your public presentation. During this last period you will be supported, not just by mentors and external advisors but also by the curatorial team of the Artistic Research Week.

The specific *goals* of the semester are described as follows. The student/researcher can:

- accomplish his/her research and creative project
- conceptualize and creatively present his/her project or project proposal
- conceptualize and present the research outcome in an appropriate and original form
- demonstrate a subjective understanding of the relation between research and project
- communicate the research process
- creatively express him- or herself

The *final qualifications* (or 'most important intended learning outcomes') for this semester are:

- 4a. The student / researcher can reflect on and present his/her process and outcome(s)
- 4b. The student / researcher has the ability to conceptualize his/her point of view

Workshops

Point of View (Eyal Sivan). This workshop focuses on how to develop, share and defend a subjective understanding (POV) of the relation between project and research. The workshop will help you to assess and develop the ability to expose (to project or to screen) a clear and affirmative Point of View on the topic, concern or problematic of your research project.

Going public (Rada Sestic). The focus of this hands-on workshop is on helping you to explore, define and practice with ways to present your research project and its process to different audiences, while always staying true to your research intentions.

Exam 4

The purpose of this exam is to decide whether you have sufficiently acquired the qualifications of the Master's programme in order to graduate. The exam is meant to discuss and assess the overall process and outcomes of the two years of your research and your concrete plans for the public presentation of it during the Artistic Research Week in June. As the exam takes place some 5 weeks before the Artistic Research Week, you can take on board the comments and suggestions of the examiners while preparing for that public presentation.

Like in earlier semesters, the exam consists of material to be handed in before, a (public) audio-visual presentation and a Q&A with the committee of examiners. The committee consists of the head of the department and three external examiners from the international

professional field. The different criteria of assessment, for each of the exam parts, relate to the two final qualifications mentioned before:

4a. The student / researcher can reflect on and present his/her process and outcome(s)

4b. The student / researcher has the ability to conceptualize his/her point of view

Mentor meetings

You will be supported throughout your research process by a team of mentors, who will mentor and tutor you both individually and collectively in small research groups. In this semester you will also work with external advisors that you have chosen in light of your research project's needs.

Feedback sessions

An important part of the group as a learning tool consist of the use of a specific feedback method. This method sees giving and getting feedback not as a moment of judgement but as a moment of collective thinking and learning. Feedback sessions are a regular feature of the programme.

Master Lecture Series

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