Welcome to the DreaMFactory, a testing ground for wide ranging possibilities - where the only limits are set by imagination, and where ideas and materials are pushed, pulled, teased out and given form...

‘DreaMFactory’ is an interim exhibition of work by students from the MFA Fine Art programme at Oxford Brookes. After just one semester of study, this show provides an opportunity for our students to test out a range of differing works and projects, some complete and some in progress. Participants in DreaMFactory come from varying disciplinary and cultural backgrounds and include artists from the UK, Chile, Iran, Portugal and the USA. Their work demonstrates a critical engagement with wide ranging concepts and interests ranging from: the authoritative power of text, nostalgia and cultural appropriation in the era of Brexit, to the overlooked cultural value of carpet weavers in Iran and encounters with architectural spaces. Other works demonstrate an interest in the curiosity of the everyday providing new ways to address familiar subjects, objects and materials, pushing these to extremes of creative possibilities through practices that, in places, ‘exhaust the subject’.

ABOUT THE MFA FINE ART AT OXFORD BROOKES

The MFA Fine Art at Brookes is a broad-based programme that includes practice, critical theory and professional studies enabling our students to develop their own distinctive artistic practice within a supportive academic framework.

The programme provides an inclusive contemporary curriculum that encourages critical engagement, imaginative exploration and creative risk taking. Our students develop and enhance their independent art practice within an environment designed to enable engagement with issues relevant to current critical contexts, debates and thinking. They each locate their practice within wider frames of contemporary art and its social, cultural and historical contexts and promote the subject as a versatile and inclusive academic discipline.
FEATURES OF THE MFA PROGRAMME

Learning and teaching – An independent studio environment enables our students to further their work within a supported critical framework. Through group and individual tutorials, staff/peer critique and presentations, an incremental approach is applied whereby students confidently develop their work towards public exhibition/dissemination. There are two formal exhibitions during the MFA programme.

Flexible options – Students can choose to study either full or part time. They select to locate their studio either at Oxford Brookes or elsewhere. Students working from their own studios are eligible for a reduced tuition fee.

Technical resources – The School of Arts’ workshops offer supported working environments in a range of specialist areas including: sculpture, photography, video, sound, printmaking and book-works. All our workshops are staffed by highly skilled and creative Technical Specialists.

Extra-curricular activities – MFA students gain exposure to a range of contemporary artistic practice through the thriving creative student community in the School of Arts at Oxford Brookes. Our extra curricula activities include lectures and film screenings set up by the Fine Art Research (FAR) Group. These include visiting contemporary artists, critics, curators and notable alumni. We additionally run free life drawing classes and optional local, regional and international field trips.

Theoretical framework – Students’ ability to articulate their own creative position is enabled through a critical engagement with a range of scholarship informed by diverse practices by nationally and internationally recognised artists, collectives and movements. Students explore contemporary art discourse through seminars informed by selected readings and develop an intense involvement related to their individual practice and/or research interests.

Professional development – MFA students identify a professional focus, which may inform their subsequent career trajectory. This might involve research preparation, a placement, a collaborative project or exhibition management/curatorial practice. With this support and guidance our graduates are better prepared for a successful career as a professional artist.

To find out more about the MFA Fine Art at Oxford Brookes please visit: https://www.brookes.ac.uk/courses/postgraduate/masters-of-fine-art-in-fine-art/
Mariana Acevedo

EXHAUSTING THE SUBJECT

I am originally from Chile where I worked as a designer for many years. I came to the UK in 2015 and I recently graduated from the Fine Art degree at Oxford Brookes University.

My practice as a visual artist incorporates meditation methods to achieve a state of awareness where the mind becomes silent and the senses are fully alert. In this state, observation plays a fundamental role, connecting me profoundly with everything around me, and allowing me to see beyond the physical form of things. In this way, a quality of freedom envelops my work, where the creative process is based on continuous experimentation with different materials, and where discovering becomes almost more important than creating. For this exhibition, I have used only one subject, exhausting it through different mediums, in order to expand its possibilities. Working in a meditative state, has allowed me to open a space, where each material can express itself in full.
I am a mature student who recently graduated from the Fine Art Degree at Oxford Brookes. I make conceptual art that is heavily inspired by Gender Politics and the idea and belief that, 'The Personal is Political'. I try to use my own experiences and expand on the subject to make them more universal. I work in various mediums including video, photography, collage, sculpture and installation.

With this work I am looking at how our ‘inner critic’ is formed and the importance of the language that we use in relationships with each other.
John Blythe

Situated in the realm of light based image making, my personal practice focuses on the familiar and unfamiliar in the (often repetitive) daily experiences of life, the physical interactions involved in moving from place to place and internally to places of memory, sensation and the ineffable. I interrogate the material, experiential and perceptual nature of these interactions through a practice of mindfulness, attending to the present moment. I work with both still and time based media looking at how light forms image and exploring the boundaries of photography between documentation and performance.

This ongoing project takes an almost archaeological approach to my daily journey to teach in Oxford from my home in Abingdon and is as much a political commentary on our relationship with our environment, consumption and attitudes to our environment as it is a fascination with the narrative of objects.
I completed the BA Hons in Fine Art as a mature student at Bucks New University in 2002. Since then I have exhibited in various exhibitions including ‘Control’, Bristol, ‘At Play’, Bracknell and ‘God’, Pune, India.

My work is multi-media, concept led and has included installations, video and photography. Materials that melt, such as wax, ice and gelatine have been a part of my work, as well as found objects ‘reinvented’, reflecting some of the transient, temporal and vulnerable aspects of our worlds.
I am originally from California, and moved to the UK four years ago. In both the US and in the UK I have worked in interior design. I run my own interior design company, ‘Hart Habitats’ alongside my practice as a painter.

My artwork investigates the organic shapes and repeated patterns found in nature. I am interested in how such patterns transcend scale, from the geographic to the microscopic. Currently I am examining the beauty and complexity of fall leaves. Upon closer examination of each unique leaf, we can see explosions that look like volcanic eruptions, undulating lines that could be mountain ranges, and plains of colours merging and mixing together like river deltas. The leaves have the capacity to replicate not only the natural world, but also our emotional states. Despite their beauty and uniqueness, they are in a state of flux. Their decay means that they will soon cease to exist in their present state. Just as the Buddhists meditate on a decaying corpse, to come to terms with death, I believe my investigation can provide a similar purpose and potential freedom.

Kristina Hawley
Rebecca Herreros

I have returned to Oxford Brookes after graduating from the Fine Art BA Hons as a mature student in 2012.

Prior to my degree, I lived for 10 years in the USA working in television as a producer alongside my art practice. There, my work centred around performance art and installation, both as a sole practitioner as well as within collaborations and artist collectives in Los Angeles and San Francisco.

My undergraduate degree centred on lens based media and sound art, producing works that were conceived through personal reflection and autobiographical inquiry. Returning to study for this MFA my intention is to continue to explore the ‘personal’ and the ‘collective’ through an examination of social identity with an emphasis on ‘nostalgia’. Taking inspiration from Bekonscot Model Village I have explored images and texts of an idealised past and set them against the reality of the present as observed in my daily life.
I’m Iranian and graduated in architecture in Iran. I decided to continue my education in Fine Art since it has always been my primary interest. I’ve been working as a figurative artist professionally for 10 years recently becoming interested in Surrealism.

Since arriving in the UK, I’ve been thinking of Iran and missing home. I was moved by the work of Iranian artist Aydin Aghdashlo, whose paintings reflect on the fading nature of Iranian culture post-revolution. I believe the strength of this culture is still alive in people’s hearts. I see the Persian carpet as a key cultural expression of Iranian identity. I have always been astonished by the lively and intricate patterns. I imagine how the weavers of such beautiful objects have woven their souls into the carpets, but also have lost their fingers and sight in this way. I feel a heavy responsibility to try to represent this in my work. My artwork in this exhibition is a small struggle for reviving interest in the Persian carpet with the hope of regaining its respect and value.
Isabel Quadrado

*Body and Space*

I am originally from Portugal and I came to the UK, in 2011. I graduated from the BA (Hons) in Interior Architecture at Oxford Brookes University in 2017 but have always been passionate about both architecture and art trying always to incorporate both into my work. My background in Interior Architecture allowes me to show, interior spaces and how the human body relates to these.

The aim of this project is to look at abandoned and historic spaces that have left behind traces of an unfamiliar past. I am intrigued by how the human body relates to those spaces. For this exhibition I show the relationship between body and space through a series of photographs, where the history of these old buildings crosses with the experience of the body moving within it.
An exhibition by Fine Art MFA students from the School of Arts at Oxford Brookes University

The Glass Tank Gallery
Abercrombie Building
Headington Campus

To find out more about the MFA Programme at Brookes visit:
https://www.brookes.ac.uk/courses/postgraduate/masters-of-fine-art-in-fine-art/

For all enquiries about the MFA Programme please contact:
T: 01865 488322
E: TDE-Arts-Enquiry@brookes.ac.uk