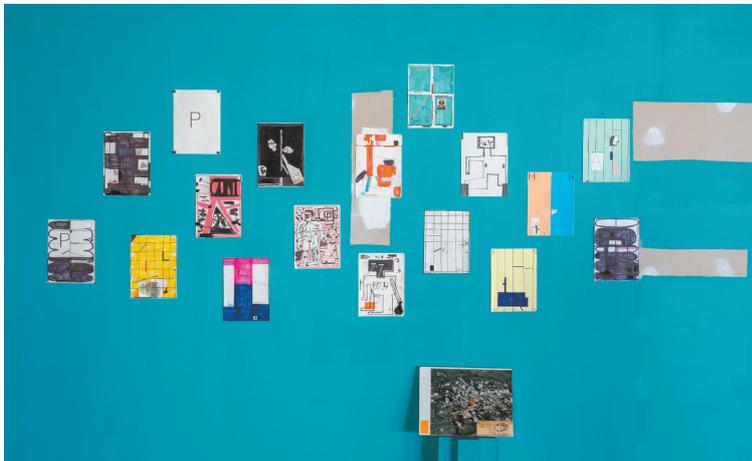


# Lifelong Learning

GIANNA TASHA TOMASSO DISCUSSES ART-RELATED POSTGRADUATE STUDY OPTIONS.



Glenn Fitzgerald, *Being Immensing* (installation detail), 2018 at the MFA Digital and Fine Art first-year show, 'All Other Places' (2 – 5 May), at Point Square, Dublin; photograph by Steven Maybury



Yvanna Greene, *SuperNatural Limpet*, 2018. Greene is a student on the MA in Art and Research Collaboration at IADT

**THERE ARE MANY** considerations, when making the decision to pursue postgraduate education within the field of art and design. For example, you may wish to focus and develop your practice after your undergraduate degree, in which case there are a number of practice-based MA courses offered in art colleges nationwide. Perhaps you want to expand your professional options by developing core skills in related disciplines, including arts management, policy, event production or archival studies. You might be looking to expand your theoretical praxis by undertaking a research-based MA in art history, criticism or curatorial studies. If you are considering an arts education career in post-primary teaching, the course choices in Ireland may be geographically limited. If you are considering an art therapy career, you must consider courses with correct accreditation.

The multiple options available for postgraduate study to level 9 or 10 in Ireland can seem overwhelming. Ask yourself what you really want from the process. Postgraduate study can be an invaluable way to focus and critically reflect on your practice. My ongoing postgraduate research is allowing me the time and space to develop concise positions within my chosen specialisation. Some postgraduate courses are completely self-directed, which may not be suitable for those of us who benefit from structure. Some courses offer studio spaces, peer critiques and visiting lecturers, while others offer strong theoretical grounding and require a high level of academic literacy. Research the course content and contact the course provider, if you are unsure about the requirements. It is also worth researching the course staff, by familiarising yourself with their research interests and activities, and it is beneficial, where possible, to talk informally with previous graduates of the course. Individual colleges have their own database of student research outputs and certain websites offer open-access to research publications in Ireland (e.g. rian.ie).

While an MA or PhD qualification may be a minimum requirement in many employment situations, participating in a course that is right for you is key to getting the most out of your postgraduate experience. If you intend to focus on art practice, as opposed to an academic career, do you really need a PhD? The art practice-based PhD is a relatively new phenomenon. PhD courses are generally 4 years in the Republic of Ireland and 3 years in the UK and Northern Ire-

land. It is possible in some institutions to transfer to PhD after 18 months of a two-year MA. If you are considering research-led study, as opposed to a taught postgrad, you will need a supervisor. Finding a compatible supervisor to help you through each stage of your research is imperative. If you have a particular research topic in mind, actively seek an academic with similar interests and approach them. Supervisors provide critical input and challenge you. Having an engaged supervisor with a genuine interest in your topic can make all the difference to your research as it unfolds.

## FUNDING CONSIDERATIONS

For those paying fees, you can expect the cost of a full-time MA to be between €4,000 and €6,000 per year (EU Students), with non-EU students expected to pay upwards of €15,000 per year. Part-time fees range from between €2,500 and €4,000 per year. This can be higher in private institutions.

SUSI, the state student funding body, offer some fees and maintenance grants for postgraduate education, but these are limited to those on low income (calculated from the previous year). The SUSI website has a handy eligibility reckoner, allowing you to calculate whether you may be eligible for funding. If you are receiving social welfare with secondary benefits such as rent allowance, you cannot receive the student grant and retain these benefits. This means that even if you are eligible for the highest rate of maintenance grant, you may be well worse off. You only qualify for the Back to Education Allowance scheme (BTEA) if you are studying either a higher diploma qualification (in any discipline) or a professional master's in education. For details on eligibility see welfare.ie.

The Irish Research Council (IRC) is the main national funder of research across all disciplines and career stages, and the only funder that supports research in the arts, humanities and social sciences (1). Alongside a number of schemes and targeted scholarships (offered in collaboration with strategic partners), the main strand of IRC funding is the Government of Ireland Postgraduate Scholarship Programme. This scholarship allows individuals to pursue a research MA or PhD (either traditional or structured), in any discipline, at eligible higher education institutions in Ireland. Scholarships include a stipend of €16,000 per year, with additional research expenses of €2,250 and a contribution to fees, up to a maximum

of €5,750 per year. Potential candidates submit a substantial research proposal in early November each year. It is advisable to correspond with your prospective institution and supervisor for guidance on the process.

In the UK, the Arts and Humanities Research Council (AHRC) fund research across a wide range of subjects, from history and archaeology to philosophy and languages. Prospective students do not apply to the AHRC for Postgraduate Funding and Training grants, rather funding is provided to universities and they select and administer individual student awards. Candidates should contact the institution at which they wish to study to enquire about available funding. Many universities advertise themed AHRC scholarships each year, inviting proposals on the subjects from prospective students who fulfil the funding criteria (which stipulates being resident in the UK for a three-year period, prior to commencement of study).

At the time of writing, there are no MA courses advertised offering stipends for students. It remains hard to see how those on low incomes can afford to undertake postgraduate study, if colleges are not prepared to offer stipends. Some colleges offer tuition fee scholarships for postgraduate study within certain departments, while others advertise funded research projects from time to time. Identifying potential colleges and subscribing to their mailing lists and social media is key to accessing opportunities. Bear in mind that most scholarships are extremely competitive and can have laborious application processes that may take several months to complete. Some scholarships stipulate that you cannot work, while enrolled in a full-time research course. Make sure you familiarise yourself with these terms, if awarded a scholarship.

The following list of postgraduate courses (on the opposite page) is not exhaustive. There are many creative sector postgraduate options not listed here, including arts management, archival studies, film studies, fashion, animation, digital media, design or art history. New courses are being rolled out, so always check prospectuses.

Gianna Tasha Tomasso is a postgraduate researcher at Limerick School of Art and Design.

## Belfast

**ULSTER UNIVERSITY**  
ulster.ac.uk

**MFA Fine Art (Taught)**  
Duration: 1yr F/T 2yr F/T  
Contact: Mary McIntyre (m.mcintyre2@ulster.ac.uk), +44 (0)28 9536 7414

**MFA Photography (Taught/Online Option)**  
Duration: 1yr F/T or online  
Contact: Ken Grant (pk.grant@ulster.ac.uk), +44 (0)28 9536 7206

**MFA Design (Taught)**  
Duration: 2yr F/T  
Contact: Rachel Dickson (rdickson@ulster.ac.uk), +44 (0)28 9536 7353

**MSc Art Therapy (Taught)**  
Duration: 2yr F/T; 3yr P/T  
Contact: Rachel Glynnne (r.glynnne@ulster.ac.uk), +44 (0)28 9536 7442

**PhD/MA by Research**  
The Research Institute for Art and Design (RIAD) focus on five interconnected research clusters: Art, Conflict and Society; Art and Context; Creative Ecologies; Space and Place; and Future and Virtual Worlds.  
Contact: Karen Fleming (k.fleming@ulster.ac.uk), +44 (0)28 9536 7267

**QUEENS UNIVERSITY BELFAST**  
qub.ac.uk

**Sonic Arts Research Centre (SARC)**  
PhD/DPhil - Sonic Art (Taught/Research)  
Duration: 3yr F/T  
Contact: sarc@qub.ac.uk +44(0)28 9097 4867

**PhD in Film and Visual Studies (Creative Practice) (Research/Practice)**  
Duration: 3yr F/T; 6yr P/T  
Contact: Dr Gary Rhodes (g.rhodes@qub.ac.uk), +44 (0)28 9024 5133

## Cork

**CORK INSTITUTE OF TECHNOLOGY**  
cit.ie

**MA Art and Process (Taught)**  
Duration: 1yr F/T; 2yr P/T  
Contact: Trish Brennan (trish.brennan@cit.ie), +353 (0)21 433 5200

**MA in Art Therapy**  
Duration: 2yr F/T; 3yr P/T  
Contact: Louise Foott (louise.foott@cit.ie), +353 (0)21 433 5256

**Professional Masters of Education in Art and Design (Taught)**  
Duration: F/T 2yr  
Contact: Susanna Broderick (susanna.broderick@cit.ie), +353 21 433 5229

**MA Art & Design Education (Taught)**  
Duration: 5 semesters P/T  
Contact: Albert Walsh (albert.walsh@cit.ie) +353 (0)21 433 5247

## Galway

**GALWAY-MAYO INSTITUTE OF TECHNOLOGY**  
gmit.ie

**MA in Creative Practice (Taught)**  
Duration: 1yr F/T  
Contact: Gavin Murphy (gavin.murphy@gmit.ie)

**NATIONAL UNIVERSITY OF IRELAND GALWAY**  
nuig.ie

**MA/Postgraduate Diploma Digital Media (Taught)**  
Duration: 1yr F/T  
Contact: Emma Hogan (ehogan@nuigalway.ie)

**NUIG/BURREN COLLEGE OF ART**  
burrencollege.ie

- MFA Studio Art
- MA/MFA Art and Ecology
- Postgraduate Diploma Fine Art
- Higher Diploma (Baccalaureate) Fine Art

## Limerick

**LIMERICK SCHOOL OF ART & DESIGN**  
lit.ie

**MA and PhD by Research and Thesis in Art and Design (Research)**  
Duration: Up to 3 years  
Contact: Kieran Cashell (kieran.cashell@lit.ie)

**MA Social Practice and the Creative Environment (SPACE) (Taught)**  
Duration: 1yr F/T; 2yr P/T  
Contact: space@lit.ie

**MA in Interdisciplinary Design Practice (Practice)**  
Duration: 1yr F/T or 2yr P/T  
Contact: Muriel Dinneen (muriel.dinneen@lit.ie)

**MA EVA International (Practice-based Research)**  
Duration: 2yr (35 hours per week)  
Stipend: €8000 per year  
Contact: graduatesstudies@lit.ie

**MA in Art & Design Education (Taught)**  
Duration: 2 yr F/T  
Contact: Maria Finucane (maria.finucane@lit.ie)

**Professional Master of Education in Art & Design with Digital Media (Practice)**  
Duration: 2yr F/T  
Contact: Muriel Dinneen (muriel.dinneen@lit.ie)

## Dublin

**NATIONAL COLLEGE OF ART & DESIGN**  
ncad.ie

**MFA Fine Art (Taught)**  
Duration: 2 yr F/T  
Contact: Philip Napier (napierp@ncad.ie) or Sarah Durcan (durcans@ncad.ie)

**MFA Digital Art (Taught)**  
Duration: 2 yr F/T  
Contact: Leah Hilliard (hilliardl@ncad.ie)

**MA/MFA Art in the Contemporary World (Taught)\***  
Duration MA: 1 yr F/T; 2 yr P/T  
Duration MFA: 2yr F/T  
Contact: Dr Declan Long (longd@ncad.ie) or Dr Francis Halsall (halsallf@ncad.ie)  
\*Fee scholarships available: admissions@ncad.ie

**MA in Design History & Material Culture (DHMC) (Taught)\***  
Duration: 1 Yr F/T; 2 Yr P/T  
Contact: Dr Lisa Godson (godsonl@ncad.ie) or Dr Paul Caffrey (caffrey@ncad.ie)  
\*Fee scholarships available: admissions@ncad.ie

**MA Socially Engaged Art + Further Education (SEA+FE) (Taught)**  
Duration: 2 yrs F/T  
Contact: Nuala Hunt (huntn@ncad.ie) or Fiona Whelan (whelanf@staff.ncad.ie)

**Professional Master of Education (PME) (Taught)**  
Duration: 2 Year F/T  
Contact: Fiona King (kingf@staff.ncad.ie)

**NCAD Structured PhD Options**

- PhD through Education
- PhD in Fine Art
- PhD in Visual Culture
- PhD in Design

Contact: research@ncad.ie

NCAD also offer a number of options in their Design School.  
Contact: Prof Alex Milton (miltona@staff.ncad.ie)

**DIT DUBLIN SCHOOL OF CREATIVE ARTS**  
dit.ie

**MA Graphic Design Practice (Taught)**  
Duration: 1yr F/T  
Contact: Kieran Corcoran (creatart@dit.ie), +353 (0)1 402 4141

**Taught MA courses – 1 yr F/T:**

- MA in Fine Art
- MA Design Practice: The Dublin Project

**Taught MA course – 1 yr F/T; 2yr P/T:**

- MA Interior Design
- MA Design: 3D Design
- MA Visual Communication
- MA Visual and Critical Studies

Contact: Tim Stott (tim.stott@dit.ie), +353 (0)1 402 4129 or creativearts@dit.ie

**DIT GRADUATE SCHOOL OF CREATIVE ARTS AND MEDIA (GRADCAM)**  
gradcam.ie

GRADCAM is DIT's centre for doctoral research education across design, visual and performing arts, media practice and their associated critical, historical and theoretical discourses.

Contact: Noel Fitzpatrick (noel.fitzpatrick@dit.ie) +353 (0)1 402 4176

**INSTITUTE OF ART AND DESIGN TECHNOLOGY (IADT)**  
arciadt.ie

**MA Art and Research Collaboration (ARC) (Taught)**  
Duration: 18 months F/T  
Contact: Maeve Connolly (maeve.connolly@iadt.ie)

**MA Interdisciplinary Design Strategies (Taught)**  
Duration: 15 months  
Contact: Clyde Doyle (clyde.doyle@iadt.ie)

**TRINITY COLLEGE DUBLIN**  
tcd.ie

**M.Phil Textual and Visual Studies (Taught)**  
Duration: 1yr F/T  
Contact: Justin Doherty (jdoherty@tcd.ie)

**MA in Education Studies – Visual Art (Taught)**  
This course is aimed at primary school teachers/teaching artists  
Duration: 2yr P/T  
Contact: Marino Institute of Education (mie.ie), +353 (0)1 805 7700

