

Course outline: Production Design

The MA in Production Design is a specialisation within the broader **MA in Film and Television**.

Year One

There is now a three-week foundation course for first year students which identifies the basic design building blocks. The following projects and workshops indicate a range of subjects covered on the course. There may be variations in this programme during the year.

“Springboard” Cross Specialisation Introductory Workshop (duration 1 week)

- an introduction to the moving image, looking at cinematic and televisual language through the prism of storytelling
- it investigates how the main crafts of cinema and television, screenwriting, cinematography, visualisation, editing, sound and music each relate to the way filmmaking puts across narrative ideas.

Take One Painting (with Digital Effects and Cinematography)

The students research the historical background of a chosen painting paying attention to perspective and obvious light sources, period furnishing and architectural detail. They analyse the space of the painting and produce a plan and sections of the space to scale.

The design students collaborate on the working drawings and details of the selected space. They then collaborate on the build and paint finishes as well as the dressing of the set. Cinematography students undertake the lighting of the set and shooting. Each student develops an imagined set extension working with Digital Effects students in Post Production; this is designed to demonstrate the importance of the interaction between the Art Department and Visual Effects Department.

Character of Place (Cross specialisation workshop with Animation & Cinematography)

Content

Working in groups, students will design a still that evokes the *character of place* within specified parameters on a given axis. Emphasis is on the minimal use of formal elements (through the choice of objects and the significance of their positioning within the frame). The creation of mood and

atmosphere with *light* will be fundamental in conveying the intention. Each student will work within the same *special* framework. This material will form the basis of stories to be developed further in the animation pixilation. Through observation and analysis students will have acquired an insight in to the significance of material, nature of light and objects in the telling of stories.

Computer Aided Design

In the first year there is a two week AutoCad training workshop for those students who do not already have a working knowledge of AutoCad. After this time the students will be able to produce basic plans and elevations. This is a foundation on which to build.

Later in the year there is a 2 week Rhino training workshop. This introduces the students to the basics of Rhino and 3D modelling. Again this is a foundation on which to build.

Throughout the course there is assistance given on Sketchup, Photoshop, Illustrator, etc., depending on need.

Method of Teaching

Tutor demonstration/individual assignments

Budgeting

To develop a system of breaking down, planning and budgeting scripts according to industry practice and applicable to a range of projects. This is integrated into other workshops and films.

Students will be shown:

- how to use computer programmes (Excel) which enhance this process
- how to liaise and work with a construction manager
- how the Production Buyer fits into the system along with the SetDecorator
- how given a fixed budget, to utilise this sum with maximum efficiency and budgeting as a process of allocation.

Animation and Design Workshop

- a one-week workshop with the Animation Directors to explore ideas through visualisation
- fast interaction and then further development of ideas into a concrete visual form

Film Design Module: Fantasy

The visual and physical interpretation of fantasy writing for the screen is an irresistible challenge for production designers. This is a paper project which allows the student to develop their technical skills and their own personal design style. Students choose a given story and develop a set as if it were to be built on a large stage at a UK studio.

Content

- Practical tuition in draughting, model making and visualisation
- Individual tutorials which address both the script and the design process.
- Visit to film studio to see Art Department and studio builds, if any available.

Model Making Workshop

This module is generally incorporated into the above major project

First Year Film

Throughout the first year ideas and scripts will be developed for a short film which is shot and edited during the autumn term. Scripts will be developed by the producers and directors in conjunction with cinematography, production design and sound. The composers provide the music and the films are edited and mixed by the end of the year.

Film Architecture Foreign Setting/Historical Period Part 1

The aim of this module is to further develop architectural knowledge, 'design for space' skills and ideas by addressing a piece set in a foreign country and in an architectural setting of a previous historical period. It also aims to develop technical drawing, detailing and visualising skills.

Reviews and end of year assessments

Year Two

The following projects and workshops indicate a range of subjects covered on the course. There may be variations in this programme during the year.

Film Architecture: Foreign Setting Historical Period

Module continues

Animation Graduation Film

Each Production Design student will collaborate with an Animation director on the design development and/or the design of the film both live action and digital. In some cases, this may only involve the pre- visualisation of the design and the characters.

Design for Television

Working with the Television department on their graduation projects, students will have the opportunity to design and implement a set for the television multi camera shows..

Summer Fiction Film

With Producing, Directing Fiction, Screenwriting, Production Management, Cinematography, Sound, Editing & Music

Working with materials generated by the screenwriting programme, Designers will design a short film within the production guidelines set by the school.

CAD/Visualisation Workshop

These workshops are tailored to each student, helping them to develop their own style using a mixture of hand drawing and appropriate software.

Portfolio Development

Content

- how to devise portfolios to suit specific job requirements
- presentation of a comprehensive range of work (to visuals, working drawings, details, photographs, computer generated images and research material)
- familiarisation with methods of presentation, appropriate materials and equipment
- deciding on a format and visual continuity
- portfolio as an 'Art of Selling yourself'