

MA SOCIALLY ENGAGED PHOTOGRAPHY PRACTICE WITH COMMUNITY EXPERIENCE

A new socially engaged photography MA from University of Salford,
delivered with Open Eye Gallery.
Starts September 2018.

COURSE SUMMARY

PHOTOGRAPHY HAS BECOME THE MOST PERVASIVE MEDIUM THROUGH WHICH INDIVIDUALS SHARE THEIR LIVES ON A DAILY BASIS. THIS NEW PROGRAMME EXPLORES THE POWER OF PHOTOGRAPHY WHEN WORKING WITH REAL COMMUNITIES TO CO-AUTHOR MEANINGFUL CULTURE.

- Develop career-enhancing theoretical and practical knowledge and skills
- Undertake a profile-raising practice-based research residency and showcase with Open Eye Gallery in collaboration with communities cultural and non arts sectors
- Validate your artistic practice within a bespoke national network

This course will be delivered through a partnership between University of Salford and Open Eye Gallery. You will work with active practitioners and academics to rethink the role of photography in society today, to develop your creative practice and your professional profile.

The course will give students support in producing creative projects with both arts and non-arts commissioners in mind, exploring how to create socially engaged art that is meaningful to both audiences and participants. Students will develop and deliver live projects with partners working in health, youth, community and justice, all embedded within a critically engaged and ethical framework.

We will provide professional practice surgeries, from understanding legal, ethical and safeguarding frameworks, to developing your professional profile, the latter including a free year-long membership and digital profile awarded by partner Axisweb. You will have opportunities to engage directly with national debates and Open Eye Gallery's national network for socially engaged photographic practice.



Andrew Jackson worked with residents of Granby Four Streets Community Land Trust. Together, they produced 'Home is a Person', looking at the history of the area (site of the '81 Toxteth riots) and those that live in it now. This portrait of an MA student and activist that grew up in the area was featured in Culture Shifts: Local, Open Eye Gallery's flagship 2017 exhibition of Socially Engaged photography.

COURSE DETAILS

This is one of the first MA programmes in socially engaged photography worldwide.

Socially Engaged Photography Practice focuses on the process of building relationships with communities. The photographer's practice is developed through this process – they bring their creative expertise together with the life experience of communities to co-author culture.

This programme is part of a new group of four programmes, each dealing with the principles of socially engaged practice across various mediums. Students will share a number of modules across the wider MA programme, encouraging different disciplines to engage in collaborative practice, experimental learning and critical debate. Across all programmes, students will learn key research concepts, practice based approaches, ethical considerations and methods.

Students on the programme will have opportunities to develop their practice and

critical framework through live projects and critical thinking. There will also be active debate around photography's socio-political history, art theory and photography's current position within today's digital society. They will benefit from both the academic rigor of University of Salford and Open Eye Gallery's track record of facilitating professional programmes with communities.

Students will receive gallery support and be in regular contact with the Open Eye Gallery team, including the curator, director, and creative producer. There will also be an opportunity to exhibit at Open Eye Gallery in a socially engaged photography group show.

The course is designed to enable students to graduate as professional artists, curators, producers and creative practitioners. It is open to both photography graduates and humanities or social science graduates with a strong photographic portfolio.



Open Eye Gallery, 2017. Image: Rob Battersby

THIS COURSE AIMS TO...

- Provide the skills needed to professionalise careers through embedded creative placements and live projects with industry and community organisations.
- Develop creative, critical, analytical and intellectual competencies appropriate to Masters level degree study, which is informed by current industry practice.
- Enhance your knowledge and understanding of professional, contextual and collaborative frameworks appropriate to their experiences and objectives by establishing intellectual debate to enable the articulation and dissemination of their propositions.
- Develop advanced understanding of research methods in the context of contemporary art & design practice and to understand how the boundaries of knowledge are advanced through research.
- Assist students at an advance level in developing bespoke approaches to co-authoring culture with communities, understanding complex strategies for process-based collaboration, and embedding appropriate methodologies to validate your practice within critical frameworks relevant to the community and both art and non-art world commissioners.

Socially Engaged Photography Practice focuses on the process of building relationships with communities. The photographers practice is developed through this process - they bring their creative expertise together with the life experience of communities to co-author culture. Students on the programme will have opportunities to develop their practice, contextual and critical framework with the academic rigor of the university and Open Eye Gallery's experience of both facilitating professional programme with communities, and of extending the profile of the practice beyond the local.



Open Eye Gallery, 2017. Image: Rob Battersby



Open Eye Gallery, 2017. Image: Rob Battersby

This image of a food bank was taken by a member of the Widnes Vikings Golden Generation Group. Photographers Gary Bratchford and Robert Parkinson gave the group a disposable camera each, and asked them to document what they did before match day. Working alongside Halton NHS Clinical Commissioning Group, their project looked at wellbeing and community cohesion in later life.

STRUCTURE...

The Programme structure consists of 5 modules, 4 of which are delivered within a collaborative framework allowing all students across the Masters in Art & Design programmes (Contemporary Fine Art, Socially Engaged Arts Practice and Design for Communication & Socially Engaged Photography) opportunities to engage with your peers whilst working through individual assignments focused around each programme. The remaining 1 module is tailored to the specific programme learning outcomes.

FULL TIME MODE

For the full-time study option:

Semester 1 - October to January

Semester 2 - February to May

Semester 3 - June to September

You will take five core modules and will study one day a week. Full-time students will have concentrated module delivery in both the morning and afternoon.

Semester 1

During the first semester, focus is placed upon you investigating, critically-reflecting and presenting ideas and findings; developing an understanding of research methods for practice; experiencing different strategies and a broad approach to the subject area. Importance is placed on developing:

- The ability to explore, manage and present research content/drivers and potential of your individual practice.
- The ability to identify and articulate practice-derived and research issues from your studio production or live projects.
- The ability to analyse, critically reflect and present your developing concerns and any potential outcomes.

...Semester 1 Cont.

Creative Research Methods (30 credits)

This module focuses on the understanding of and the application of a range of practice based research methods. You are initially encouraged to develop an individual line of inquiry that will be explored through a variety of creative research methods of which you are supported through lectures, seminars and tutorials.. This module has 2 assessment points at week 6 and 12 and submissions will generally be project based (70%) with an underpinning written component (30%)

Exploring Theory & Practice (30 credits)

This module deals with the theoretical and practical issues faced by practitioners in the context of socially engaged practice and the creative and cultural industries. The module supports you in developing new ideas through research and practice and through an appraisal of the context in which they operate. Particular emphasis is placed on contexts that emerge from international perspectives and from contemporary debates around creativity and collaboration.

Semester 2

This semester focuses upon developing student knowledge, ability and application to explore different practical and theoretical issues relating to a variety of practices in art within the creative and cultural industries.

Developing Socially Engaged Photography Practice (30 credits)

This module looks at the agency of photography now, its position alongside text and the written word as the main medium by which people curate and share their lives on social media. It provides historical and theoretical knowledge from socially engaged practice as well as an exploration of ethical considerations and guidance upon developing individual approaches. You will take part in workshops and seminars focusing on methods of engagement and collaboration and how these impact upon your own creative

practice.

Real World Context (30 credits)

Through the Real World Context module you will undertake a placement in a relevant work place to gain new experiences and test out developing ideas and activities. The creative and cultural industries embrace a range of professional subjects. Given the transversality of these industries, it is important for you to have sufficient knowledge about the sector and its wider contexts, enabling you to identify and acquire professional skills within and across relevant sub-sectors. It is also important to enable you to understand and have experience of working in a multidisciplinary environment and an international context.

Semester 3

This semester focuses exclusively on a self-directed major project/ exhibition.

The aim of this module is to offer you the opportunity to critically engage in a major practice-driven project in which the emphasis will be on production, analysis and critical reflection in response to your practice-drivers and concerns

During the 'major project' you are provided with a supporting supervisor, in developing concerns and practice-drivers accrued throughout your programme, via a programmed series of tutorials. Individual tutorials and peer interaction/group discussions are integral to the development of the major project.

Definitive Practice (60 credits)

The aims of the major project are to offer you the opportunity to critically engage in a major project in which the emphasis will be on defining and analysing through action research, and developing a constructive practical response to a line of inquiry or research question while formulating your own resolutions or conclusions from your body of work. The culmination of this module could be a community based event or presentation of a sustained body of activity within a particular setting.

PART TIME MODE

You will take five core sequential modules and will study one day a week. Part-time students will have concentrated module delivery in the mornings alongside Full time students.

Year One

Creative Research Methods (30 credits)

Developing Socially Engaged Photography Practice (30 credits)

Real World Context (30 credits)

Year Two

Exploring Theory & Practice (30 credits)

Definitive Practice (60 credits)

As part of Culture Shifts, Tony Mallon worked with Northwood Golden Years Group in Kirkby, North Liverpool. When the Northwood community centre was set to be shut down, a group of local women volunteered to take over the running of the centre. Together, Tony and the women explored the history of the area, looking at the effects of heavy industrialisation during the war (the area was a major producer of munitions), followed by the closure of the factories and the long-term impact this has had on the health and wellbeing of those in the area. This project challenged ideas of what activism looks like today.



ENTRY REQUIREMENTS

Degree grade

Relevant undergraduate degree, normally at 2:1 or above, and supporting portfolio of practice.

Applicants with an undergraduate degree of 2:2 will be considered where a high quality portfolio of practice is presented

Accreditation of Prior Learning

We welcome applications from students who may not have formal/traditional entry criteria but who have relevant experience or the ability to pursue the course successfully.

The Accreditation of Prior Learning (APL) process could help you to make your work and life experience count. The APL process

can be used for entry onto courses or to give you exemptions from parts of your course.

Two forms of APL may be used for entry: the Accreditation of Prior Certificated Learning (APCL) or the Accreditation of Prior Experiential Learning (APEL).

English Language Requirements

International applicants will be required to show a proficiency in English. An IELTS score of 6.5 (no element below 5.5) is proof of this.

Application

250 Word statement of why you want to study socially engaged photography at MA level

Photographic portfolio



Open Eye Gallery, 2017. Image: Rob Battersby

As part of *Culture Shifts*, Photographers Stephanie Wynne and Stephanie Fawcett worked with two groups of women with protected characteristics from the Wirral. *In the Pink Room* was produced with Tomorrow's Women Wirral, a safe female-only environment. The women have varied interests and reasons for attending the centre; this is reflected in the work produced. Each participant photographed or

collected images of personal interest, they then applied these images to masks. They chose masks to display their photographs because they felt that we all, often, have to disguise our true selves. With the support and fellowship found at Tomorrow's Women Wirral they feel they've been helped to remove their masks. In this image, the women were photographed outside the centre wearing their masks.

TEACHING

Assessment methods used on the course include:

- Practical projects (60%)
- Reflective writing and essays (30%)
- Group presentations/ exhibitions (10%)

You will be assessed throughout the course on:

Body of work and contextual research: e.g action research/publication/exhibition etc.

Reflective journals: log or sketch-book/ statement/critical writing/seminar or other presentation (you can negotiate the format of your submissions, in response to the needs and priorities within your practice, and in line with contemporary professional practice habits).

All submissions are comprised of a body of practice plus a contextual and critical research portfolio, and reflective logs/journals and case studies. As the 'thesis' is embedded in the action research there is no requirement for a separate, written dissertation – although you may elect to do so, if appropriate, by negotiation with final award Course Team.

This course uses a range of teaching and learning settings including lectures, seminars/ workshops, tutorials, situated learning (e.g. 'live' projects) and independent learning. The combination of these aims is to develop an environment that allows students to progressively take ownership and direction of their learning so that they may develop as independent, life-long learners. The process of Masters level study, relating to an individual and independent arts practice, is one of dense critical self-reflection; this is achieved by including self-directed projects where students have the opportunity to negotiate their learning and assessment requirements.

Indicative to the course are:

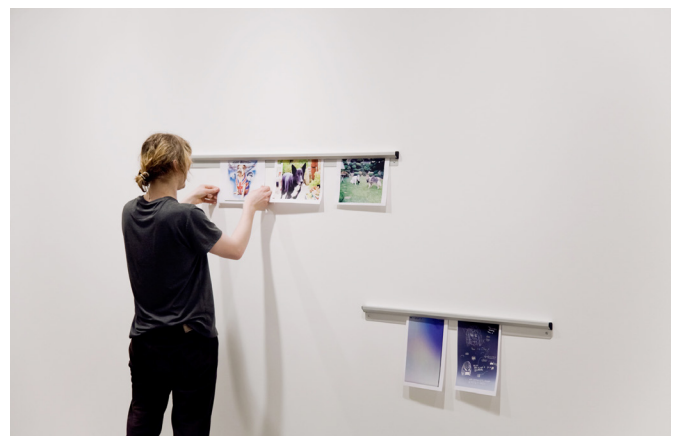
- Formal lectures
- Seminar presentations
- Workshops
- Critical analysis and independent learning.

Award specific learning activities include exercises; team and peer-based learning, studio practice and critical seminar-events, site visits, visiting professionals, work placements, online activities and critical debates.

FACILITIES

The MA Art & Design programme is based at Peel on the main campus. They have access to facilities in New Adelphi Building. These include:

- 2D & 3D Printing Facilities
- 3D workshop
- Fibre Workshop
- Photography studio which includes a lighting set-up
- Computer suites
- Gallery Spaces
- You will be inducted into the workshops, which covers how to use all the machinery, by trained workshop technicians.



POSTGRADUATE STAFF PROFILE

Elizabeth Wewiora

Liz Wewiora is a photographic artist and curator/ producer specialising in socially engaged practice over the past 9 years. Her Curatorial / Producer experience spans over institutional roles, including Communities Curator at FACT, Programme and Engagement at CFCCA, and Glasgow Sculpture Studios.

She is currently Creative Producer at Open Eye Gallery. She also continues to work as part of a freelance curatorial agency between Manchester and Glasgow, working with organisations such as Freud Museum London, Leftcoast Blackpool, Touchstones Rochdale, 501 Arts Space, Chongqing (China) and Glasgow Women's Library in Scotland.

Furthermore she has been invited to contribute to academic writing and research into the field of photography and curating within socially engaged practice including articles for NORTH publication with UCLAN and regular articles for asocialpractice.com, an international online platform for socially

engaged photography. She has been a regular guest lecturer at Manchester School of Art as well as delivering talks and seminars for Falmouth University, Leeds Art University, UCLAN and University of Salford.

Her artistic practice predominantly focuses on photography, video and textiles delivering long-term community and collaboratively driven residency programmes that underpin the thinking behind and approaches to her curatorial work. She simultaneously employs both artist and curator expertise, to deliver critically engaged quality artwork with contemporary arts settings as well as with health, older community and heritage partners. She is also a studio holder and gallery programme member of the new artist studios space, Paradise Works, situated on the borders of Manchester and Salford.



TESTIMONIALS

STEPHANIE FAWCETT

Developing Artist and participant in Culture Shifts, Open Eye Gallery's socially engaged photography programme.

"When given the opportunity by Open Eye Gallery to become part of the Culture Shifts project, I saw this as the perfect opportunity to venture out of my comfort zone and work within a community setting that enabled me to practice my passion for collaborative creativity, within a real life socially engaged context."

"Working alongside a cohort of exceptionally talented professionals and experts across various creative fields allowed me to develop my own personal working practice greatly. "This experience has enabled me to develop professional and technical confidence, career

direction and the appreciation of how effective socially engaged practice can truly be. I was able to see first-hand the impact collaborative efforts can have on individuals or community groups in ways I would have never imagined before."

"My ambition now is to continue on my professional venture with an informed and focused mindset: facilitating creative and emotional involvement, no matter how big or small, that enables individuals to discover the power of their own voices through the medium of photography."

JANE BEARDSWORTH

Director North
Arts Council England

"As a core supporter of Open Eye Gallery, we are delighted to see this collaboration between Open Eye and Salford University, to deliver a masters course in Socially Engaged Photography."

Bringing together cultural organisations with higher education institutions is a key priority for us, and this venture will enable photography in the North to continue to flourish and benefit from new ways of working. I very much look forward to hearing more about the next generation of photographers making excellent work with different communities across the north."

AFTER GRADUATION

This course is built around preparing students for a career in the arts, applying their expertise in socially engaged photography and visual representation to real life projects. Graduates may go on to work as a Freelance photographer/ artist, Creative producer, Creative educator / lecturer, Curator, Arts administrator, or undertake a Practice-based Phd. Graduates may join Open Eye Gallery's Associates programme, meeting with fellow practitioners to share learning, best practice, and opportunities for collaboration.

Those leaving the course may choose to develop specialist knowledge in specific settings such as prisons, youth centres, hospitals and schools. There will be opportunities within the course to look at specific routes to establishing professional practice and projects in these areas.

Photographers / artists leave the course as professional freelancers, understanding the opportunities to work in a variety of formal and informal project settings, including residencies. They will have an understanding of both arts and non arts funding opportunities and a similar range of commissioners, as well as approaches to profile their work and develop useful networks.

The School co-ordinates a range of enterprise projects and initiatives that can benefit graduating students, in order to assist their career opportunities or routes into self-employment.



Open Eye Gallery, 2017. Image: Rob Battersby



Open Eye Gallery, 2017. Image: Rob Battersby

Filmmakers and photographers Rebekah Tolley and Darryl Georgiou at the launch of Culture Shifts: Local, with participants from Granby Four Streets Community Land Trust.

Colin Mcpherson worked with a mutual support network for young LGBTQ+ people exploring their sexuality or transitioning gender. Together, they produced a series of staged shots that both charted their struggles and celebrated their identities.



THE CASE FOR SOCIALLY ENGAGED PHOTOGRAPHY



“I look at the photograph and I think this is me, completely me, everything summed up about my experience” –

– Gina, participant in *Life Beyond Diagnosis*, a co-authored project from Tadhg Devlin and the Surf Dementia Network Group. Commissioned as part of our region-wide socially engaged photography practice, *Culture Shifts*, involving 10 residencies and 7 exhibitions during 2016–18.

Worldwide, photography has become the most commonly used means of visual representation. Its availability and ease of dissemination make it a medium well-suited to socially engaged practice, allowing communities to work together with photographers to produce work that communicates vital issues, consensually and effectively.

Since 2016, Open Eye Gallery has been leading *Culture Shifts*, a programme of socially engaged photography projects spanning Liverpool City Region. It began with eleven photographers

working with seven communities across the region, including a support network for young people identifying as LGBTQ+ and women with protected characteristics. So far, it has resulted in eight exhibitions (with an audience of over 40,000), hundreds of workshops and a new digital platform for sharing sequences of images, *PhotoStories*. Open Eye Gallery also programmed two daylong industry events: a national gathering of leading socially engaged photography practitioners and a public symposium on how public art organisations can foster useful

collaborations with other civic institutions, including healthcare commissioners, police and community organisers.

'From the rapid rise of social and politically driven documentary photography in the 1970s to today's daily user-generated imagery via Instagram and Facebook, photography continually finds itself at the forefront of sharing what matters around us. It has become a language all of its own and it is not only professional photographers who are now capturing moments in society but society itself. With this in mind, I ask: 'what role does photography and the photographer play within the bigger picture of image making today?'

Liz Wewiora, Open Eye Gallery

'18 months ago we advertised for photographers to work with 7 co-commissioning partners on socially engaged photography residencies across the city region. We had very few proposals from photographers who understood the process of collaboration with communities. On discussion with our arts sector partners nationally we realised there was a real gap in the supply chain – which is bizarre given photography is the perfect medium for socially engaged practice.'

Sarah Fisher, Director of Open Eye Gallery.

'Having worked with a socially engaged photographer for the first time over the last couple of years I have been delighted with the outcomes and shared these with colleagues at a major national health conference. I can really say that I have been awakened to the potential for socially engaged photography within my field.'

Sarah Butchard, Head of Dementia for NHS Merseyside.

'The council works with a range of artists within community settings. Photography works well because it is so accessible as a medium. The skills needed in working with communities are varied and mostly gained slowly through years

of experience once people have left university – it would be great if these same skills were taught at masters level.'

Colin Simpson, Principal Museums Officer, Wirral Museums Service.

'As artists roles or ways of working in the world are evolving, we need quality photographers who understand socially engaged practice.'

Patrick Fox, Director of Heart of Glass, St Helens.

'I have recently developed a socially engaged photography practice through Open Eye Gallery. Having worked as a photographer for 15 years in a range of contexts, from working for national newspapers to commercial briefs to exhibitions of documentary work – I am a convert to the power of this practice, both in meeting my creative potential, connecting to new commissioners and in having an effect in the world.'

Tadhg Devlin, photographer.

'Our first project with a socially engaged photographer has grown into a second project and I see potential for future like projects with us and our partners.'

Tina Ball, Arts Officer Knowsley Borough Council.

'Socially Engaged Photography Practice has been central to The Atkinson's programmes from the outset. We have regularly commissioned photographers to develop projects with a range of community groups. It is important to us that there is a growing body of practitioners who are skilled in effective and empathic approaches to this area of practice. This will continue to be important to us as we develop projects with wide ranging groups and vulnerable residents across the borough, and it is crucial that we can find fresh, new and innovative talent to work with.'

Emma Anderson, Director of the Atkinson Museum, Southport.

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