

Department of Fine Arts

DOCTOR OF PHILOSOPHY IN FINE ARTS

MODULE GUIDE
NQF 10

Compiled by

The Postgraduate Committee of the Department of Fine Arts and The Department of
Art History and Image Studies
2019



Janine Allen. *Blue* (2016).
Performance still from video *Blue*
(2016).

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DOCTOR OF PHILOSOPHY IN FINE ARTS

CODE	NAME OF MODULE	CREDITS
XDBK 9100	Thesis: Fine Arts (PhD)	360
Programme code: B1925 Degree Code: 19251 Academic Plan Code: BC190625 Abbreviation: PhD (Fine Arts)		

Introduction

The PhD in Fine Arts is considered a cohesive research project, which is approached from different angles, and consists of both studio research and theoretical research. The reporting on the research project in its entirety is presented in different formats. It includes, *inter alia*:

- the creative output in the form of a public exhibition or a public visual presentation of a creative output that is representative of the creative output,
- a catalogue accompanying the presentation of the creative output, which could take on various forms, and
- a thesis.

1. ADMISSION REQUIREMENTS

In addition to the admission requirements as stipulated in 1.4. under the heading General Information and on p.48 in the Rulebook 2019), the following is required:

- The candidate must hold an M.A. (FA) degree or equivalent (NQF level 9).
- A portfolio for creative work of not older than 5 years (or documentary proof of alternative art actions), need to be presented. In addition, a mark of 65% for a M.A. Fine Arts degree or an equivalent NQF level 9 qualification is required.
- A short-written research proposal must accompany the application consisting of 5-12 pages.
- Admission to the course is subject to approval by the Head of Department/Departmental Chair, on advice by The Postgraduate Committee.
- In certain instances, an oral or written examination on a prescribed reading list could be requested.
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2. THE COMPONENTS OF THE RESEARCH PROJECT

The research project consists of several components, including a creative output, a catalogued documentation of the creative output, and a thesis.

2.1 A public exhibition or visual presentation of a creative output which is representative of the studio research

The nature of the creative output is difficult to describe and quantify, because there are so many art activities available to students. It may include the following, amongst others: a traditional exhibition, interior or exterior installations, performance, photography and/or film, land art, the curating of an exhibition, or any other medium which could be motivated in a meaningful way. The output, however, must be representative of the study period and adhere to the exit level outcomes of a PhD. The exhibition must demonstrate that the core issue of the combined studio and theoretical research is addressed in a responsible way.

It is required that the creative output be presented in an impeccably professional manner.

2.2 Documentation of portfolio

The documentation of the portfolio involves a representative visual record (elucidated with relevant information) of a selection of work created or curated during the study period and should be made available in digital format at the back of the dissertation. Photographs of three-dimensional artworks must include a variety of elevations and detail. Two-dimensional works must include photos that show the work in its entirety, as well as detail shots.

If the final presentation of the thesis is not a paper copy (for example, a website) the information must still be accommodated in the presentation. All examples that are used must be dated and contextualised.

2.3 Catalogue

The catalogue has a durable format and is elucidated with visual material. Formats such as a printed, written document, a film or a website may be used, but argumentation, motivation, discussion and briefing must be the primary goal. The goal is to inform a public of peers about the visual presentation of the creative output, and must be made available to the assessors during the examination of the creative output. It is assessed as part of the creative output. Afterwards it is bound into the final version of the thesis as an addendum, unless otherwise accepted by The Postgraduate Committee.

2.4 Written component

There are different approaches with regards to the thesis that a candidate may follow and these differences relate to the academic investigation.

The theoretical investigation is aligned with the creative output discussed in 2,2, but it may not necessarily focus on the creative component. However, in terms of content it must be related to the creative output. Or, the thesis is strongly based on the studio

research and there is inevitably a closer relationship between the two components. In this option, the core issue on which the practise based research (or suitable art equivalent as accepted by The Postgraduate Committee) rests, is addressed more specifically than is the case with the other option. It is the responsibility of the student to indicate their approach and argue the approach as part of the methodology followed in the thesis.

2.4.1 Thesis

The dissertation must adhere to all the requirements of a PhD degree thesis in the Faculty of the Humanities. It is assessed on NQF level 10 of SAQA. The core issue of the combined studio and theoretical research must be addressed in a responsible manner. The dissertation must of at least between 180 and 250 pages of text.

All dissertations are assessed on NQF level 10. The thesis does not include the catalogue, but the catalogue forms a separate document included as an addendum in the final version of the thesis. The core issue of the combined studio and theoretical research must be addressed in a responsible manner.

A supervisor/ promotor with the necessary interdisciplinary expertise (in the visual arts) must be appointed. Continuous interaction between the supervisor from the Department of Fine Arts and the co-supervisor is very important. It is advised that the co-supervisor be appointed from the fields of art history and image studies. Depending on the nature of the academic investigation, the co-supervisor and/or additional supervisors from different fields may also be involved. Consultants may be used for certain sections of the thesis and must be acknowledged in the thesis.

2.4.2 The nature of the thesis

Candidates complete their PhD under the tutelage of supervisors/promoters and co-supervisors, and the student must provide proof that the candidates have the ability to conduct scientific research and report on it in an academic manner.

3 Subject/Investigation

Candidates must provide proof of their understanding of, and insight into, the nature and research goals of the investigation, and whether they are able to address the research subject matter with all its art and academic components in a meaningful and acceptable manner at PhD level.

3.1 Research

Candidates have to provide proof of their:

- Knowledge of related literature and other scientific sources
- The application of this literature and other sources
- Understanding and knowledge of scientific research methods and techniques.
- Must add new insights to the content and knowledge generated in the thesis.

3.2 Content

The content must indicate:

- Scientific adaptation of the content with reference to the handling of applicable research methods/techniques, for example experimentation, systematisation, interpretation, support of statements, etc.
- Clear formulations.
- The presentation of a logically-responsible structure.
- Critical approach and independent insight are very important on PhD level.
- The ability to evaluate and interpret findings/results.
- A conclusion that ties the main conclusions of each chapter.
- A core summary or abstract of the relative meaning of the study.

3.3 Technical requirements

An exceptionally high level of technical care is required with reference to:

- Table of contents.
- Chapter demarcation and balance.
- List of references.
- Abstract.
- Use of consistent and self-explanatory reference techniques.
- Documentation of visual material according to reference techniques.

3.4 Grammar and style

- Pay attention to all facets of language usage and style.

4. The appointment of a supervisor and co-supervisor

4.1 Postgraduate committee

The Postgraduate Committee, convened by the Departmental Chairperson, will identify promoters (supervisors) with the necessary expertise with regards to the specific field of research. Should local expertise in a specific research field not be available, the option of an external supervisor should be considered.

The Postgraduate Committee consist of the heads of department of Fine Arts and Art History and Image Studies, as well as representatives from these and other fields, as needed. A quorum is four members, of which one each must be from Fine Arts and Art History and Image Studies Department.

4.2 Student's involvement

Although students may make suggestions regarding supervisors, the decision regarding the appointment of supervisors remains with The Postgraduate Committee. The candidate may request to work with a specific supervisor, and should that supervisor be knowledgeable in the field involved and be available, the request will be considered favourably.

4.3 Contracts

The supervisor and candidate must enter into a contract regarding practical arrangements, manner of work, ethical issues, title registration, submission of the project and other important issues.

- The supervisor must enter into a contract with the candidate,
- Co-supervisor(s) must enter into a separate contract with the student as the co-supervisor(s) would probably handle separate components,
- The supervisor and co-supervisor(s) must enter into a contract to agree upon the manner of work and expectations.

The contract form is attached.

4.4 Title registration

The planning of the research project as a whole must be explained when the student applies for title registration. The title registration should take place after six months to a year. The fluid relationship between studio research and theoretical research (or the theoretical and visual discourse) must be apparent in the formulation of the core research question of the project. The application must be accompanied by visual material from the candidate's own creative output. The relationship between the different components (as discussed in paragraph 1 above) is explained in the motivation at the title registration as a negotiated agreement between the candidate, supervisors, and the head of department. The candidate must also complete a question on ethics, which accompanies the title registration document. These documents must be submitted on the online UFS system.

5. ASSESSMENT

5.1 Marks

The PhD does not receive a mark but the assessment reports indicate whether the project has been accepted or not. The research output as a whole is assessed by external examiners in order to obtain a pass. The studio research and thesis carry an equal weight and the catalogue accompanies the exhibition.

5.2 Appointment of external and internal examiners

The appointment of external examiners is done by the supervisor and co-supervisor in co-operation with The Postgraduate Committee, and is approved by the Departmental Chairperson of the Department of Fine Arts. External examiners are

appointed with the greatest care. Two external examiners from academic institutions outside South Africa is used, but on occasions one of the two may be from another institution inside the country. Examiners must be experts in the field of research that applies to the PhD project and must be able to evaluate both the dissertation and the creative presentation. Language might create a barrier in instances where students use Afrikaans, and a compromise should be reached in these instances, especially if bursary requirements specify the use of Afrikaans as an academic language. PhD projects should be translated into English by a professional translator and must preferably be submitted in English as external examiners from international institutions are used.

The UFS does not appoint any internal examiner.

5.3 Supervision of assessment procedures

The rules regarding assessment procedures must be adhered to in order to avoid embarrassment for the department with external examiners and the university authorities. It includes amongst others that all deadlines and all prescriptive regulations regarding documentation and other requirements are met. In order to monitor the process and to prevent problems there will be an internal/departmental set of dates and procedures in place that supervisors and students have to adhere to. Assessment procedures of candidates are a confidential process. Candidates may not contact the external assessors.

6. INFORMATION AND REQUIREMENTS FOR ASSESSORS FOR EVALUATING EXHIBITIONS AND THESIS OF PhD (Fine Arts)

6.1. General

6.1.1 Assessors are required to view the student's creative output together and to assess it before the public opening of the exhibition or similar output. The creative output must prove that the candidate has the ability to create artworks at an exceptional professional art and academic level, and do scientific research and report on it in an academic manner.

6.1.2 For the purpose of assessment, the candidate may hand in a final examination copy in a temporary binder and which is put together neatly.

6.1.3 An assessor may keep the copy of the thesis handed to him/her for assessment, unless the thesis is not approved, in which instance it must be sent back to the Head of the Department of the Department of Fine Arts as soon as possible. As soon as proposed revisions are made a revised final copy will be sent to the assessor which he/she may keep.

6.1. 4. Assessment reports are confidential. Only technical detail may be shared with the candidate by the supervisor without permission from the assessors.

6.1. 5. Accepting the role of assessor does not imply that assessors have to supervise a candidate in any way.

6.1. 6 Should an assessor require further information regarding the thesis, he/she must contact the supervisor directly.

6.1.7 In the instance of a disagreement in the recommendations of the assessors, the University retains the right to appoint additional assessors. or submit the dissertation and reports for arbitration. The final decision in each instance rests with the UFS.

6.2. Allocation of marks and recommendation

6.2.1 An assessor is required to evaluate the thesis in a professional manner and to make a recommendation and write a short, concise report following the viewing of the creative output in the form of an exhibition (see section 3).

6.2.2 No marks are allocated according in this procedure:

6.2.3 The catalogue is considered as part of the exhibition.

6.2.4 To pass the exhibition, as well as the thesis. the project should fulfill the requirement of the exit-level outcomes and level descriptors of NQF Level 10.

6.2.5 The assessors offer a recommendation according to one of the following:

- Accept the project as a whole without conditions – the exhibition and thesis is accepted as fulfilment/partial fulfilment of the requirements for the degree.
- The exhibition is accepted, but revisions must be made to the content of the thesis as stipulated with regard to technical revisions and/or grammar and/or content to the satisfaction of the Head of the Department of Fine Arts.
- Rejected – the dissertation and exhibition as a whole is rejected.

6.2.6 An assessor must also indicate the academic standard of the project within the report, whether the project is commendable or not, within the report.



Adelheid von Maltitz. *[In]visible threshold*
(2016). Ash, resin and earth.