ACADEMIC PROGRAM
CONNOISSEURSHIP
POSTGRADUATE

MASTERYING AESTHETICS  LEGAL-ECONOMIC EXPERTISE  VALUATION IN FINE ARTS

Vrije
Universiteit
Brussel
“Becoming connoisseurs and experts in requires insights into the nature
This postgraduate program is based on the most recent discoveries in neuroscience, material analysis, art history, law systems, sociology and economics of the art market.

**Critical visual cognitive-perception** is the base of expertise and enlightened connoisseurship. Quality perception and visual awareness are reachable only through practice and evaluation, in front of the works of art, with the best mentors in the field.

**COURSE OBJECTIVES**

To enable graduates, already specialists in the world of the arts, to improve their connoisseurship qualities. Incorporating the latest insights of neuroscientific research applied within the context of a thorough knowledge of the historical, economic, legal and sociological processes that shape the art market, are essential.

To lead students to a better understanding and to critical visual cognitive-perception of artworks through the study of neuroscience. The deeply human side of the talent of the connoisseur, on the one hand, and the limits imposed by the laws of brain and of cognitive-perception, on the other hand, are studied.
To prepare the students, already specialists in the world of arts, to excell in the knowledge of the legal framework and all issues related to the art market in a global world. The academic program 'Connoisseurship' targets on the knowledge of the legal aspects of different law systems, to be taken into account in the global art market today. Various legal disciplines will be examined and practical cases will be studied.

To put the definition of authenticity in art in the context of the very nature of the work of art and on the legal system. Vendors, buyers, auctioneers, dealers, and agent-strategies have to be understood in the legal, sociological, fiscal, and economic context.

To provide the acquisition of theoretical and practical knowledge for material analysis by specialized laboratory techniques. Diagnostics based on technical results, require great experience to produce the rightful attributions. It focuses on a detailed observation of the work of art, essential in this context.

To increase skills for evaluation and expertise in the light of the art market experience. It needs a 'period eye' and the understanding of the specificity of each work of art.
ADDED VALUE

- Optimize art expertise and valuation through practice with some of the world's best specialized connoisseurs as mentors, in hands-on experiences with works of art.
- Enhance scientifically based knowledge about underlying critical visual cognitive-perception of fine arts through
  - Neuroscience
  - Art history
  - Material analysis
  - Law and jurisprudence,
  - Sociological aspects of authentication and market evaluation
  - Procedures of expertise
  - Economic data and art market trends
- An academic program in English with top expert lecturers from academia and major actors in the international art market
- In cooperation with international partners at the occasions of major events in the art market
- Leading to an official academic certificate of 69 ECTS
- Comparative legal requirements and jurisprudence of different legal systems, procedures of legal authentication and valuation with experienced professionals, such as magistrates and expert scientists
COURSE ORGANISATION

International cooperation of
- The Brukenthal Museum, Sibiu/Hermannstadt (RO)
- CINOA
- Documentatiecentrum Vlaams Kunstpatrimonium (BE)
- EAC Groupe (FR)
- TEFAF-Maastricht (NL)
- Transylvanian-Heritage Summer University, Daia/Talheim (RO)
- Vrije Universiteit Brussel (BE)

Course Direction & Coordination
Vrije Universiteit Brussel
Faculty of Psychology and Educational Sciences
p/a Prof. dr. Willem ELIAS
Pleinlaan 2, B-1050 Brussels
connoisseurship@vub.ac.be

Steering Committee
Prof. dr. Willem ELIAS, Prof. dr. Jacques VILROKX,
Prof. dr. Jan DE MAERE

Course Organisation
- A 2-year academic program of 69 ECTS
- Teaching language: English
- Consists of 7 modules and a thesis
- Starts in October and thought during 4 semesters
- A 2-weeks intensive course in Daia/Talheim (RO) and yearly 6 weekends of 4 days in different European cities

TARGET STUDENT POPULATION
- Graduates already specialists in various fields of the world of arts
- Professionals active in the world of art: auctioneers, museum managers, art dealers, advisors to collectors, cultural policy makers, experts, insurance brokers, lawyers, magistrates, artists, collectors and art lovers who wish to update their knowledge and academic skills
ADMISSION

- Specialists active in the world of art, graduates or holders of a higher education diploma
- Participation limited to a maximum of 30 students
- Admission on the basis of a C.V. and a motivation letter to the Course Direction, p/a Prof. dr. Willem ELIAS, Vrije Universiteit Brussel, Faculty of Psychology and Educational Sciences, Pleinlaan 2, B-1050 Brussels, connoisseurship@vub.ac.be

CERTIFICATE

Successful completion of the program will be awarded by the postgraduate certificate 'Postgraduate in Connoisseurship: Mastering Aesthetics, Legal–Economic Expertise and Valuation in Fine Arts' (69 ECTS), signed by the Rector of the Vrije Universiteit Brussel and the Course Direction.

EVALUATION

All modules are evaluated on the base of active student participation, examinations (oral or written), and a written thesis in a chosen specialist field.

TUITION AND REGISTRATION

- Yearly tuition is 6800 euro, which includes classes, practical training, laboratory analysis, syllabi and documentation, and examinations
- Additional costs for travel and accommodation to the summer academy and several study-weekends are at participants’ expenses
- Registration occurs after acceptance of your application. An invoice will be sent. Payment confirms registration.

Disclaimer: The organizers maintain the right to change the program's content as outlined in this brochure and can cancel the program if insufficient students register.
The program consists of 7 modules and a thesis.

1. ARTS – Prof. dr. Willem Elias
   *(9 ECTS - Semester 1, 2 and 3)*
   **Art history: Arts premier, Art history: old master painting, sculpture and decorative arts** – dr. Bernard de Grunne, dr. Jan De Maere
   **Art history: modern and contemporary art** – dr. Frederik Leen

**Content**

A great specific domain knowledge is essential. This can not be achieved without a theoretical framework on which one can build experience. Only the best connoisseurs are able to deduct from their visual perception the pertinent theoretical concepts. ‘Hands-on’ courses in front of the works of art are the base of our educational program in the different disciplines. These are freely chosen by the students, who will work out a personalized program in collaboration with their mentor. This includes post factum evaluation of the art experience, documentary research, material analysis, bibliography, proper cataloging of the objects, as well as discussing what quality and authenticity can mean as a concept, in the chosen specialty. All connoisseurship has to be enlightened by the knowledge of all disciplines of art history.

**Module specific competencies**

Students have acquired a thorough knowledge of the distinguishing features of the specific historical episodes in the history of art in order to formulate independent and critical opinions and appraisals of works of art.

**Teaching method**

A combination between ex cathdra and interactive seminars, visits to museums and auctions, case studies, ...

**Teaching material**

Scientific literature, reasoned catalogues and photo library are available at the Documentation Centre for the Flemish Patrimonium.
2. NEURO – Prof. dr. Jan De Maere  
(6 ECTS - Semester 1, 2 and 3)  
Neuroscience and connoisseurship - dr. Jean-Pierre Changeux, dr. François Michel, dr. Lionel Naccache, dr. Semir Zeki

Content
Adequate visual cognitive-perception through thin-slicing and multi-parallel computing linked with exceptional domain knowledge, is the basis of the talent of a connoisseur. The deeply human aspect of it is explained by neuroscience. A short introduction, will be followed by the study of the physiology of cognitive-perception of fine art. The main information is obtained by f-MRI scans and their analysis. The brain is prone to bias and illusions. Cognition and beliefs interfere with perception. The laws of the brain are the limits of our experiences. Neuroscience gives insight in the functioning of the brain and in the exceptional physiology provoked by the masterpiece.

Module specific competencies
Students acquired knowledge of the latest neuroscientific advancements in the functioning of the brain with regard to the visual cognitive-perception of work of art and will apply this knowledge in evaluation and authentication processes.

Teaching method
Ex cathedra, study of neuroscientific research, case studies, ...

Teaching material
Scientific literature.

3. LAB – Prof. dr. Jan De Maere  
(6 ECTS - Semester 1, 2 and 3)  
Laboratory techniques of material analysis and authentication - Till-Holger Borchert, dr. Maximiliaan P.J. Martens, dr. Peter Van Den Abeele, Peter van den Brink

Content
In collaboration with the laboratorium directed by Prof. Maximiliaan Martens technical analyses will be performed. Museum files and complicated case studies will be analyzed for each of the special fields, after a general introduction on laboratory techniques. Collaboration with conservation studios will assure practical experiences on the condition of works of art.
Module specific competencies
Students will be acquainted with the latest techniques and will be able to decide on best practices in specific cases.

Teaching method
Ex cathedra theoretical lectures on laboratorial techniques and concrete practical participation in laboratories.

Teaching material
Scientific literature, case studies, ...

4. LAW – Prof. dr. Jacques Vilroox
(6 ECTS - Semester 1, 2 and 3)
Legal aspects of authentication and evaluation in different law systems, jurisprudence, intellectual property - Iulia Chiriac, dr. Alain Delvaux, Geoffroy Generet

Content
General principles of all legal aspects of contracts, business transactions concerning fine art, personal responsibility in transactions, opinions and expertise, intellectual property law will be examined in two different law systems: continental law and case law. A vast documentation of practical cases is available. Jurisprudence will be analyzed. Procedural questions of legal and court expertise will be addressed.

Module specific competencies
Students will have the knowledge to understand the complicated legal aspects of the art market and will be able to judge what kind of legal assistance/expertise is needed in specific circumstances.

Teaching method
Theoretical study of legal systems the study of cases.

Teaching material
Scientific literature, case studies, ...
Content

As is the case with all commodities, the valuation of works of art is subject to market forces. Trends in tastes, the tension between what is at a specific moment perceived as high or low cultural expressions of art determine how the mechanisms of “pricing of the priceless” operate. Elite groups in society, collectors and opinion leaders play an important role in such mechanisms. The production and consumption of the arts will also be viewed from an historical perspective.

Module specific competencies

Students will understand, and act consequently, in their professional life when confronting works of art and the art market, and the sociological and psychological mechanism underlying the economics of the art market.
**Teaching method**
Interactive lectures based on the literature of the sociology of art, practical experiences of the participants in determining the value of works of art, ...

**Teaching material**
Scientific literature on the socio-psychology and cultural economics of art, case studies, ...

6. **EXPERT – Prof. dr. Jan De Maere**
*(6 ECTS - Semester 1, 2 and 3)*

**Content**
Techniques of expertise, evaluation for different purposes and different aspects of opinions will be addressed theoretically and on the field with mentors. Practical exercises in auction houses and on the art market will be organized with specialists in the different special fields. Evaluation of the work of the students will be discussed. The impact of opinions on the market position of a work of art will be discussed. Exercises will be organized.

**Module specific competencies**
Students will learn to apply the knowledge and expertise techniques recognized connoisseurs use in their daily life operations.

**Teaching method**
Theoretical and practical interactive capacity building based on the critical study of cases, ...

**Teaching material**
Works of art 'hands-on', reports from museums on collection formation, expertise reports, ...
7. **ECON – Prof. dr. Jacques Vilrokx**  
(9 ECTS - Semester 1, 2 and 3)  

**Content**
All the aspects of the art market in general and in the different specialized 'niche' markets will be treated. Economical, financial, organizational, investment market, fluctuation and fashion will be connected to general aspects of the art market and to the importance of connoisseurship. Each student will have to conduct market analysis in his special fields under the direction of tutors. The importance of media, communication, strategies and marketing can nowadays not be ignored.

**Module specific competencies**
Students will understand and will be able to use the commercial qualities needed to operate in the global environment of the art market.

**Teaching material**
Scientific literature, case studies, ... 

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8. **THESIS – Prof. dr. Willem Elias**  
(21 ECTS - Semester 4)  

**Content**
Students will write individual theses in their specialized domain. Collective work (max. 2 students) is a possibility but has to be formally approved by the program direction. Students will be actively supervised (face-to-face, electronically, laboratory/study visits, ...) by the supervisor who will be assigned by the program direction on the basis of a thesis title and hypothesis formulation by the student.

**Module specific competencies**
Being able to "see" problems in a specific art related domain. Capability of hypothesis formulation and expertise and evaluation in the legal context.
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The collaboration with CINOA, Groupe EAC (Paris), major fairs as TEFAF-Maastricht, some of the world’s best auction houses, the extensive photo library of the Documentation Center for the Flemish Patrimonium, the international networks of the professional staff and a wide circle of connoisseurs and art market professionals, coordinated by Prof. Dr. Jan De Maere, will provide students with a great variety of cognitive-perceptive ‘hands-on’ approaches of the works of art and antiquities.

An extensive network of experienced connoisseurs from museums, academia and the art market, will coach and direct the master classes in front of the original works of art.

Europe’s top collectors will disclose their private collections and will share their insights and motives. Le Prince de Ligne, le Marquis de Trazegnies and Alexander Herzog von Wurtemberg are only a few names among the distinguished collectors.

**EXPERT LECTURERS**

**Neuroscience**
Jean-Pierre Changeux, François Michel, Lionel Naccache, Semir Zeki

**Connoisseurs**
Till-Holger Borchert, Christopher Brown, Marc Evans, Nicolas Sainte Fare Garnot, George Gordon, Claus Grimm, Bernard de Grunne, Fritz Koreny, Walter Liedtke, Maximiliaan P.J. Martens, Martin Royalton-Kisch, Karl Schutz, Gary Schwartz, Peter van den Brink

**Course Organisation**
Jan De Maere, Willem Elias, Jacques Vilroox

**Human sciences specialists**
Marc De Mey, Razvan Theodorescu

**Specialists in law and judicial proceedings**
Iulia Chiriac, Alain Delvaux, Geoffroy Generet

**Media expert**
Simon Hewitt

**Specialists of the economy of the art market**
Victor Ginsburgh, Bruno Heyndels, Hans van Miegroet