

Degree Requirements 2015–2020

MA in Ecology and Contemporary Performance (MAECP)

The MA in Ecology and Contemporary Performance (MAECP) is a two-year master's degree programme that will investigate issues of ecology and performance in our contemporary age of environmental crisis. MAECP seeks to respond to contemporary challenges from an explicitly posthuman framework, acknowledging the interrelations and the interdependencies between the human and non-human.

MAECP will question and expand methodologies, practices and theories of contemporary performance while developing new forms of collaboration, interaction and knowledge production between the arts and the sciences. Ecology and performance will be approached as expanded, open and interdisciplinary terms. Ecological crisis and its prevailing narratives will be approached from multiple points of view including the potentialities of emergent ecologies in our changing world.

Students will be encouraged to review and reformulate existing practices, to experiment with and innovate new forms of performance making whilst maintaining openness, not only towards other art forms but also towards other fields and discourses. The study blocks of the programme will be taught as activities that can and will mingle and combine in order to support students in their development of inquisitive and confident practices in ecology and contemporary performance.

The program requires its students to situate their artistic practice within a larger context, to reflect on its ecological, social and political impacts and to approach the overall relations between art and society from a critical point of view. It aims to educate agents of change, who are capable of working and creating new connections between different contexts (e.g. art, science, education and activism) and of renewing the field of performing arts from within by introducing radical initiatives of their own.

Collaboration, dialogue and diversity are recognised as core values and prioritised both within the studies as well as in their organisation and planning. The program views diversity as both an ecological and a political concern; it wishes to generate and support diversity in performance making and maintain diversity in discursive practices. Collaborations will extend across programmes within the Theatre Academy, to other universities and to local, national and international art organisations.

Crucially there will be a central, distinct and defined area of the degree that is student led and initiated, experimenting with pedagogical structuring and facilitating student driven content, cultivating student investment and influence in the degree and its aspirations.

Learning outcomes:

Upon the completion of the programme students will be familiar with artistic, philosophical, theoretical, cultural and scientific discourses related to ecology and its wider contemporary applications. They will recognise the value of ecology from the point of view of the natural sciences and the arts with an emphasis on the posthuman.

They will be accomplished in their knowledge of the current contexts and discourses in the field of contemporary performance and will be able to question established practices in performance making. Students will approach performance as an open question and will be able to conduct independent, insightful and rigorous methods of artistic enquiry relevant to their individual artistic interests.

They will be cognisant with the issues pertinent to interdisciplinary practices as evidenced by their own artistic and theoretical outcomes, and they will be able to communicate these issues.

Students will be well informed about the national and international professional structures, networks and contexts that enable multidisciplinary and interdisciplinary processes and outcomes, and participate in them according to their own independent studies.

MASTER OF ARTS IN ECOLOGY AND CONTEMPORARY PERFORMANCE

120 CREDITS

year 1 60

year 2 60

	Year 1	Year 2
T-M100 Wild Core	5	5
T-M200 Performing Ecologies	27	9
T-M201a Principles of ecology in theory and practice	9	
T-M201b Principles of ecology in theory and practice		3
T-M202a Thinking through ecologies	9	
T-M202b Thinking through ecologies		3
T-M203a Ecologies of performance, methods and practice	9	
T-M203b Ecologies of performance, methods and practice		3
T-M300 Emerging Ecologies	10	12
T-M301a Artistic project/s	10	
T-M301b Artistic project/s		12
T-M400 Ecologies of Contextual Practises	8	3
T-M401a Research methods and practices	2	
T-M401b Research methods and practices		1
T-M402a Documentation and reflective practices	2	
T-M402b Documentation and reflective practices		1
T-M403a Writing and textual practices	2	
T-M403b Writing and textual practices		1
T-M404 Thesis seminar	2	
T-M500 Mentoring and professional practise	5	6
T-M501a Mentoring and study guidance	4	
T-M501b Mentoring and study guidance		4
T-M502a Ecologies of professional practises	1	
T-M502b Ecologies of professional practises		2
T-M600 Optional studies	5	5
T-M700 Thesis		20
T-M701 Written component		
T-M702 Artistic component		
T-M603 Maturity test for the Master's degree		
	60	60

T-M100 MAECP: Wild Core

Year 1 and 2: 10 credits

Description:

Wild Core, a central vein of student led and defined activity. It will be usefully nomadic, cultivating unanticipated pathways as the students inform and shape content that they consider to be key to the curriculum throughout the two year masters. At the commencement of the academic year faculty and students will agree a set of provocations to initiate its beginning, acknowledging that Wild Core will evolve as the the students' ideas and progress through the degree develops.

Learning Outcomes:

Students will develop their creative and academic capacities through collaborative processes including negotiation and dialogic skills, group organisation, reflection, assessment and planning. They will become familiar with how to facilitate productive risk and experimentation within pedagogical forms though being active instigators of their own learning. Students will be able to make adjustments, changes and choices concerning their role within their education, crucially it will foster involvement and investment.

T-M200 PERFORMING ECOLOGIES

Running across years 1 and 2 these three streams of theory and practice will deliver distinct but interweaving activities of study. Students will establish a basis in ecology, a foundational understanding of the environment, they will work and experiment with performance methods, whilst forming a critical basis in posthuman theory. They will trial and experiment with these approaches in various constellations of group and individual activities.

Learning outcomes:

Students will be familiar with foundational concepts in ecology as understood from the perspective of different disciplines. They will be able to apply these ideas in practice, considering how they might be understood in different artistic, theoretical and creative contexts. They will have a practical experience of how to think and work with ecology as an interdisciplinary framework.

T-M201a-b Principles of Ecology in Theory and Practice: years 1 and 2, credits 12

Introductory lectures and practical sessions that will give an understanding of basic ecology, its theories, methods, applications and tools and the environment. It will cover animal, plant and microbial ecologies and will include both fieldwork and laboratory practice. Environmental issues will be explored from the environmental sciences. Notions of *scale* and *duration*, concepts common to both ecology and performance, will form a common conceptual thread as they consider ecosystems of different magnitude and the diversity of life cycle lengths. These spatial and temporal concerns will run throughout these studies and will be used to create connections between their activities in ecology and performance.

Learning outcomes:

Students will have comprehensive basic knowledge of ecology in theory and practice, they will understand of the differences and overlapping concerns between ecology and the environment. They will be able to consider how and where they might implicate working with ecosystems and environmental sciences, and how to approach the practicalities this might entail. They will have a developed critical overview of ecology as a conceptual framing device and they will have an awareness of scale and duration from the perspective of biology.

T-M202a-b Thinking Through Ecologies: years 1 and 2, Credits 12

Key texts in ecology, performance, performativity, materiality and non-materiality will be introduced through lectures, workshops and seminars. There will be an emphasis on posthuman discourse with extensive referencing to activities in practical workshops. Theory and thinking will be approached as doing, material and as generative practice. Non-canonical texts from the sciences, anthropology literature, theory, film, performance, history including non-Western philosophies will be referenced to encourage rich and unpredictable conceptual perspectives. Environmental politics and activism will be viewed through the framework of performance and performance as activism.

Learning outcomes:

Students will acquire an extensive knowledge of posthuman discourses and how to consider them in their practical activities. They will be able to comprehend, write and speak critically about material realities of their artistic activities. Students will develop an ability to make connections across critical and material activities with an appreciation of where and how thinking and doing interact and merge.

T-M203a-b Ecologies of performance, methods and practice: years 1 and 2, Credits 12

Investigating performance practice in various sites and in the studio, experimenting with devising and creative approaches including collaborative practices. Students will be encouraged to find possibilities and examine limits of contemporary performance drawing on the practical and material work being conducted with living systems in *Principles of Ecology in Theory and Practice*. Visiting artists will be invited to give workshops, including performance makers working with ecology, bioart, geology, activism, and technology.

Learning outcomes:

Students will develop a sensitivity and comprehensive awareness to fundamental practices of working with living systems and they will be competent in a basic ability to test and experiment with novel approaches to performance making. They will recognise the material complexity of how ecology can be understood to include both the living and the technological.

T-M300 EMERGING ECOLOGIES

Students will work on artistic projects which will focus the skills and critical knowledges as they develop, in a supportive environment they will experiment with applying their ideas

using processes and materials that might be unfamiliar to them. They will be supported through mentorship and faculty consultation as they in their practical explorations, they begin to identify the artistic edges and limits of MAECP.

Learning outcomes:

They will have intimate knowledge of emergent performance practices from their own identified and executed pathways, this will include a knowledge of collaborative practices and approaches including implicating the nonhuman. From this they will have an awareness of ethics from a practical and critical perspectives when making emergent art works and forms

T-M301a-b Artistic Projects: year 1 and year 2: Credits 22

Towards the end of the Year 1 students will begin to identify practical artistic projects that they wish to initiate and develop independently or in collaboration with other students, these might be a series of investigations or one large project that will extend into year 2. Some of the preparatory consultation will address the question of ethics, what are they and what might be our consideration of them within the sphere of collaborative activity with humans and non humans?

Learning Outcomes:

Students will be able to identify and plan the processes necessary to realise their artistic projects. They will know how to access specialisms and conditions that enable the practical applications they deem necessary.

T-M400 ECOLOGY OF CONTEXTUAL PRACTISES

Learning outcome:

Students will know how to contextualise their own and others practices, what are the concerns of their practice and how they might frame them. They will be able to present and discuss their artistic processes textually and with other media.

T-M401a-b Research methods and practice: year 1 and year 2: credits 3

Through a series of cases studies, presentations and discussions with invited practitioners, students will be introduced to a variety of approaches to how research informs individual practice.

They will increase their knowledge of pertinent artistic approaches whilst identifying how they might formulate the aims and processes required for their own projects. Running through these presentations will be discussion of the part risk plays in experimental interdisciplinary practice.

Learning outcome:

Students will have a comprehensive appreciation of a range of approaches to independent

research and methodologies in interdisciplinary and experimental practices and they will be able to identify components of what a successful independent project is. They will recognise the value of experimental approaches and how to assess and reflect on outcome, including perceived failure and its generative usefulness.

T-M402a-b Documentation and Reflection Practices: year 1 and year 2: credits 3

These workshops will approach documentation as a requirement for professional practice as well as both a productive and creative activity. These will include practical and theoretical aspects drawing on both scientific and artistic methods enabling students to experiment with systems and modes of representation.

Learning outcomes:

Students will become accomplished in the specific key technical skills of how to document their own artist output. They will understand the theoretical and practical basis that informs their processes and decisions of what forms and media to use. They will understand the potential platforms for their documentation including professional ones. Students will be able to contribute to a larger discourse about contemporary performances that deal with novel media. Additionally, students will be able to use their documentation in their own self-reflexive processes and in self-assessment, including how documents can function in artistic and generative processes.

T-M403a-b Writing and textual practices: year 1 and year 2: credits 3

A series of workshops that will approach writing and textual, forms and will consider the conceptual and philosophical implications of language. Whilst an essential part of its function will be to support students writing practices towards realising their thesis, it will also introduce writing as a generative and creative process, including nonacademic writing and multiple genres such as performative writing. Although English is the teaching language of MAECP, language and literacy will also be addressed from the nonhuman and posthuman perspectives.

Learning outcomes:

Students will obtain a proficiency and confidence in writing and will be able to make qualified decisions about the written content and form of their thesis. They will understand how writing can be generative and material. They will be able to discern forms and platforms in which textual approaches will enable their processes and outcomes.

T-M404 Thesis seminar: credits 2

The MA Thesis Seminar supports the student in formulating their research questions, and how to frame and contextualise their thesis project in relation to the overall aims of the program. It is also a platform in which where each student can familiarise themselves with their peers' work and take advantage of the potential synergies between the various thesis projects. Students will learn what a thesis involves including the possibility of various formats as well as the dynamics between their practice and theoretical models. They will identify their

own areas of thesis study through peer presentation and studying research methods from other practices.

Learning outcomes:

Students will be able to identify thesis model that reflects their independent artistic and theoretical direction and interests. They will have a comprehensive knowledge of approaches and a knowledge of how theory and practice inform and support each other. They will be familiar with the scope of their peers' research and the potential for collaborations, peer support and critical engagement within their student group.

T-M500 MENTORING AND PROFESSIONAL PRACTICE

Learning outcomes:

Students will be able to identify who and what supports their artistic activities and what are the contexts in which they can usefully work to develop and promote them.

T-M501a-b Mentoring and study guidance: year 1 and year 2: Credits 8

Given the interdisciplinary nature of the programme, study guidance and mentoring is of key importance to support the individual pathways of students. During years 1 and 2 students will consult with artists, scientists and other experts. With faculty advise and support, they will consider what kind of input and from which discipline will their learning and artistic development will be best facilitated. The mentors will support the students' individual and collective thinking and foster the development of their artistic/research practice. Mentoring will begin the process of creating networks outside the Theatre Academy and the possibility of legacies beyond this programme.

Learning Outcomes:

Each individual student will learn to define what kinds of conversations and experiences enable their work and their current thinking. They will be confident and experienced in negotiating interdisciplinary and transdisciplinary discourses, and how to identify and approach experts in relevant disciplines. They will be active participants in communities that support their artistic aims.

T-M502a-b Ecologies of professional practises: year 1 and year 2: Credits 3

Students will work with festivals, conferences, residencies and other public contexts as dictated by their individual pathways. This might include presenting art works, curating or participating in conferences as audience or presenter. Importantly they will discover potential national and international contexts in which to test and trial participating. Given the scope and interdisciplinary nature of their activities within the programme and the novel questions it promotes; students will question what contextual scenarios might be called for in regard to their own artistic outcomes.

Learning outcomes:

Students will understand the process of positioning their practices within professional contexts and they will be active in creating connections with professional practitioners and networking.

They will have the ability to define and initiate new contexts they consider expedient and necessary in which to locate their outputs.

T-M600 OPTIONAL STUDIES

Credits: 10

Optional studies allow the student to supplement their studies with content that is not offered within the framework of the programme. The student will be able to choose elective courses from within the Theatre Academy, or those offered by other institutions such as the University of Helsinki, or alternatively studies at another university in a field that is complementary to their studies. Study guidance and mentoring will support the student in identifying the areas of study that is most useful and how to find the relevant places of study.

Learning outcomes:

Students will be able to identify specific practices necessary to their completion of their studies within the programme. They will gain knowledge appropriate to the learning outcomes of those elective studies. They will understand the implications of these elective studies and how they benefit their main focus of activity.

T-M700 THESIS

Credits: 20

The MA Thesis will be completed during the second year and realised as a final project at the end of their studies. The thesis will have both artistic and written components, the ratio and form of which will be negotiated in consultation with faculty and mentors. The thesis offers the student the possibility to deepen their practices and to bring to completion their investigations and artistic conclusions in regard to ecology and contemporary performance. It challenges the student to produce new knowledges, to address questions concerning the relationship between ecology and performance and the possibilities performance offers during this age of ecological crisis. In effect it affords the students the opportunity to define MAECP from their own perspectives, processes and outcomes.

Learning outcome:

Students will be able to evidence successful realisation of artistic and theoretical outcomes as defined by their individual concerns and enquiries.

They will have an in depth knowledge and experience of how theory and practice compliment, inform and implicate each other in the particulars of their work.

As informed by their thesis, students will be able to address the relationship of ecology and contemporary performance from the both unique perspective of their own artistic practice and scholarly activities as well as from the large context of their peer groups and communities as developed within MAECP.