

**The Hague University of the Arts
Royal Academy of Art (KABK)**

Advisory report to NVAO

**Master of Arts in Fine Art and Design
(CROHO 49114)**

March 2023

Table of Contents

Summary Judgement	5
Introduction	7
Programme Assessment	9
Standard 1 – Intended learning outcomes.....	10
Standard 2 – Teaching and learning environment	16
Standard 3 – Assessment	25
Standard 4 – Achieved learning outcomes	29
Overall judgement	31
Annexes	33
Annex 1 – Administrative data on institution and programme	33
Annex 2 – Assessment panel	34
Annex 3 – Site visit schedule	35
Annex 4 – Materials reviewed.....	36

Summary Judgement

On 24 and 25 January 2023 a panel of international experts visited the Royal Academy of Art in The Hague (KABK) to perform an external assessment of the Master of Arts in Fine Art and Design (MAFAD). Students in this master degree programme enrol on one of four specialisations ('afstudeerrichtingen' in Dutch): Artistic Research, Industrial Design, Non Linear Narrative, and Photography and Society. Each of these two-year full-time 120 ECTS programmes is offered in English by a dedicated department at KABK. The panel established that the MAFAD programme meets all four NVAO standards under consideration: intended learning outcomes, teaching-learning environment, assessment and achieved learning outcomes. As a result, the **panel's overall assessment of the quality of the Master of Arts in Fine Art and Design is positive.**

In a short period of time, KABK managed to establish a well-rounded master degree programme with four specialisations, each having a clear profile, a unique focus, and attracting creative and competent students. Every specialisation focuses on reflection, promotes a research-driven mindset and an interdisciplinary approach, and constitutes an expert community that is working on topics of contemporary urgency. The programme's intended learning outcomes are formulated adequately and reflect not only the nation-wide professional and educational frameworks but also the specific characteristics of the respective specialisations. The panel thinks highly of the way in which departments have translated this common framework and assume responsibility for their own sets of learning outcomes. Each department also involves the professional field in delivering the curriculum and monitoring its relevance.

The teaching-learning environment at MAFAD is strongly developed, an appreciation that covers the curriculum, the staff and the facilities. Each specialisation has developed a unique curriculum that befits its own profile and ensures that all components together allow students to reach the intended learning outcomes at end level. The staff managing, coordinating and tutoring the respective specialisations is cast very well. The Heads of Programme are creative leaders with strong professional track records and clear visions on the development of their disciplines. The staff is of high quality and provides appropriate expertise. The panel welcomes the attention of KABK to the professionalisation of its tutors and their interest in the Artist as Teacher training programme. The facilities at KABK in terms of studio space, workshops and library are of a high to good quality. The panel acknowledges the efforts of KABK to improve safety and equality across the entire Academy: student wellbeing and social safety are now very much present in the day-to-day operations of the Academy.

The MAFAD programme can rely on a well-developed KABK-wide system of assessment that is aligned with the Academy's vision on education. The assessment principles have been translated in different sets of course assessments and assessment forms in each department. Some of the specific assessment practices constitute good practice and are worth sharing across departments. The quality of education and assessment at MAFAD is assured competently by

the Study Programme Committee and the Examination Board, which play an important role in bringing together good practices across specialisations.

To establish whether the programme learning outcomes have been achieved, the panel reviewed a sample of graduation projects and checked what graduates were doing after they finished the MAFAD programme. The graduation project consists of at least a creative work and a written thesis, which is related to the creative work. The review has shown that students who pass the final exam have indeed achieved the intended learning outcomes and demonstrate a level of competency that can be expected of a Master of Arts in Fine Art and Design. Across the board, the panel found the quality of the graduation projects to be good, with the written publication often being of an even better quality than the artistic work. The discussion with alumni and the professional field demonstrated that the departments prepare MAFAD students well to find and articulate their own role and place in the field. In their day-to-day professional practice, graduates continue to focus on critical reflection, research, societal relevance, collaborating and networking, on positioning themselves and their work in society.

In addition to all positive findings and considerations, the panel sees one point that requires the attention of the Heads of Programme. While each department has been focusing over the past few years on developing its own specialisation, it is now time to start a conversation with the fellow specialisations, to share good practice, to look for more common ground, and to align to a certain extent learning outcomes, educational methods and assessment practices across departments. Furthermore, the panel advises the programme to:

- establish a common MAFAD-wide work field committee;
- develop ethics procedures and establish an ethics committee;
- allocate sufficient time for Heads of Programme to address all tasks in sufficient depth;
- align feedback, judgement and motivation in the assessment of the graduation project.

In view of its positive assessment of the programme quality as a whole and its judgement on each of the four accreditation standards, **the committee issues a positive advice to NVAO** regarding the accreditation of the Master of Arts in Fine Art and Design at the Royal Academy of Art in The Hague.

The chair and the secretary of the panel hereby declare that all panel members have studied this report and that they agree with the judgements laid down in the report. They confirm that the assessment has been conducted in accordance with the demands relating to independence.

On behalf of the assessment panel,

Dr. Sarah Bennett
Chair

Mark Delmartino M.A.
Secretary

Date: 31 March 2023

Introduction

This document reports on the assessment of the Master of Arts degree in Fine Art and Design (MAFAD) offered by the Royal Academy of Art in The Hague (KABK). Students on the master degree programme follow one of four specialisations ('afstudeerrichtingen'), which are offered as self-standing programmes: Master Industrial Design (MID), Master Non Linear Narrative (MNLN), Master Photography and Society (MAPS) and Master Artistic Research (MAR). The administrative data on institution and programmes are presented in Annex 1.

The MAFAD is a relatively new degree in the Netherlands and at KABK. The initial accreditation by NVAO took place in Spring 2017 and looked at what is now called the specialisation Master Artistic Research in the context of the national rearrangement towards the establishment of a single Master of Arts in Fine Art and Design. This single degree programme offered an umbrella for existing A programmes and new plans, as agreed with the other art academies in the Netherlands. By the time the first cohort started in September 2017, the MAFAD programme also welcomed students for the specialisations MID and MNLN. In September 2018 the first group of MAPS students joined, as well.

To establish the quality of the MAFAD programme, the panel has followed the Assessment Framework for the Higher Education Accreditation System of the Netherlands, which is described in the NVAO publication of September 2018. As KABK, under the umbrella of University of the Arts The Hague, obtained accreditation at institutional level, its programmes can be assessed according to the limited evaluation framework of NVAO. Although KABK participates in the pilot of the Dutch Ministry of Higher Education allowing for a lighter accreditation, this external assessment addresses all four NVAO standards because it constitutes the first external review since MAFAD obtained its initial accreditation.

The assessment visit took place at KABK on 24 and 25 January 2023. The assessment was performed by an independent panel of peers, which was approved by NVAO and consisted of:

- Sarah Bennett (UK), chair
- Yvonne Dröge Wendel (NL), member
- Peter Hall (UK), member
- Sofia Hernandez Chong Cuy (MX), member
- Robbert van Binsbergen (NL), student-member

The panel was accompanied by Mark Delmartino (BE), an external secretary who liaised between the panel and the Quality Assurance team at KABK and ensured that the visit complied with NVAO procedures. All members and the secretary signed a statement of independence and confidentiality. Annex 2 contains a brief presentation of the panel.

Prior to the visit, the panel chair and the external secretary discussed the set-up of the assessment, as well as the role of the chair and the site visit programme. The secretary was in contact with KABK representatives to work out the programme of the site visit (presented in Annex 3) and agree on the materials to be made available (listed in Annex 4). The final

arrangements were validated by the panel chair. In order to allow the panel to prepare for its tasks, the programme specialisations under review produced a common Self-Evaluation Report providing relevant background information on the specialisations and addressing extensively the issues covered by the NVAO standards under review. Moreover, the panel had access to a digital folder with background information on each of the four programmes / departments. The panel wants to thank the quality assurance team at KABK for ensuring a good and timely information flow from the programmes to the panel.

When putting together the panel, the KABK explicitly aimed at finding experts with a broad view on Art and Design education who could speak out on both the degree programme and the four dedicated specialisations. Hence, each panel member studied all the information made available by KABK and looked into graduation projects across all departments. Similarly, all sessions during the visit addressed all specialisations of the degree programme together.

The NVAO standard on achieved learning outcomes is tested among others by examining a sample of end level products. The panel secretary organised the graduation project review with KABK and supported the panel members in their work. In order to do justice to the different specialisations it was agreed with KABK that the panel would review the final projects and their assessment of 32 students who graduated between September 2020 and August 2022. Based on a list of 80 student numbers, the chair and the panel secretary selected eight graduation projects per specialisation. Each panel member reviewed two graduation projects for each specialisation, one of which was a graduation project from 2020-21, and one from 2021-2022.

In the run-up to the visit, the panel members studied the self-evaluation report, reviewed the sample of graduation projects and reported on their findings. Moreover, the panel held two online meetings: during the introductory meeting on 19 December 2022 the members got to know each other, familiarised with the accreditation procedure, and agreed on the tasks ahead. In the course of January, the secretary compiled the written feedback of the panel members on the self-evaluation report and the graduation projects in a discussion note which was used at the preparatory panel meeting on 16 January 2023.

The external assessment also featured an open consultation hour for students, teaching and support staff; eventually nobody signed up for an individual and confidential meeting with the panel. Furthermore, KABK decided not to hold a separate development dialogue during the site visit but to organise it at a later stage. On the eve of the site visit, Sofia Hernandez Chong Cuy fell ill and could not join the panel on site. Her input on the programme was taken on board during the visit and in the panel deliberations. She also provided feedback to the draft version of the assessment report.

After the site visit, the secretary wrote a draft version of this report and circulated it to the panel members for review and feedback. The final draft was sent to KABK for a check on factual errors on 17 March 2023. Their feedback was discussed and the panel modified the text where it thought this was appropriate. The chair then established the final version of this report, which was submitted to KABK on 31 March 2023.

Programme Assessment

The panel gathered from the extensive description in the self-evaluation report and from the informative discussions on site that the Master of Arts in Fine Art and Design (MAFAD) is a relatively new degree in the Netherlands. It was established in 2017 following changes in the Dutch art education landscape. Instead of many small and specialised degrees, art and design institutions agreed with the Ministry of Education, with the Netherlands Association of Universities of Applied Science and with each other to offer their distinctive specialisations in one single degree programme, the Master of Arts in Fine Art and Design. The respective MAFADs in the different institutions constitute umbrella degree programmes in fine art and design, which cover a specific set of specialisations that reflect the respective historical and disciplinary backgrounds of the individual academies.

As a result of these developments, KABK re-developed its existing Master Artistic Research within a truly fine art framework and presented it for initial accreditation to NVAO. The new MAFAD degree programme at KABK recognises artistic and design practices as being forms of research and knowledge production within a broader academic community. It bridges the gap between applied research and scientific research. With its focus on this researching aspect, the new degree transcends the disciplinary fields in the bachelor programmes and constitutes an overarching qualification for interlinked KABK-specific specialisations.

Since September 2018, the MAFAD degree at KABK has consisted of four specialisations which are organized as largely independent departments but share a common set of intended learning outcomes. These learning outcomes have been concretised in curricula, working processes, and assessments relevant to the specialisation. Each specialisation is a focussed expert community that addresses topics of contemporary urgency and offers advanced support for creative enquiry. Each curriculum is rooted in the experimentation and reflection that defines a research driven mind-set and equips students with a societal understanding of their discipline.

Since the initial accreditation of MAFAD, the specialisations have mainly focused on establishing their own departments and developing their respective curricula as self-standing educational units under the umbrella of MAFAD. At the time of this external assessment visit in the academic year 2022-2023, the management of both institution and programmes indicated that the respective specialisations are up and running and are confident that they do so in good quality. The priority for the next few years is to continue offering good quality education whilst enhancing collaboration and alignment across the specialisations. These intentions are in line with the academy-wide learning environment goals and social and work environment goals set out in the recent KABK Faculty Plan 2022-2024, and were confirmed during the visit by the management team of The Hague University of the Arts and KABK.

Standard 1 – Intended learning outcomes

The intended learning outcomes tie in with the level and orientation of the programme; they are geared to the expectations of the professional field, the discipline, and international requirements.

Profile

The panel gathered from the informative self-evaluation report and the discussions on site that the four MAFAD specialisations have much in common in terms of profile, learning objectives and professional field. The specialisations relate to KABK's two bachelor degrees in Fine Art and in Design but focus more on equipping master students, who are at the same time artists and citizens, with a societal understanding of their discipline. Moreover, the MAFAD emphasises the development of students' critical reflection as a tool of their individual creativity. The MAFAD programme at KABK seeks to 'un-discipline' the classical fields of learning and open up the hidden creative potentials within this social focus. Each specialisation defines this in its own way, yet relates to both the professional creative field and the society it exists in.

Moreover, all four MAFAD specialisations focus on research. Bridging the gap between applied research and scientific research, the programme considers artistic and design practices as forms of research and knowledge production in a broader academic community. The panel was informed that MAFAD students, as part of The University of the Arts The Hague, can benefit from the longstanding collaboration with Leiden University. By engaging in an intensive partnership with a research university, master programmes at KABK link artistic and academic learning at a high level. Students of the different master specialisations can follow courses at Leiden and upon graduation, apply for a practice based PhD studentship.

The MAFAD degree programme at KABK is made up of four specialisations that exist as separately designed units within a single overarching framework. Each specialisation relates slightly differently to its own disciplinary and professional context and has therefore fine-tuned the overall MAFAD learning outcomes and its curriculum to better reflect this context.

The *Master Artistic Research* (MAR) is designed for artists who understand their practice as an investigation and have a specific interest in research processes and critical reflection. Asked about its key selling proposition, the Head of Department/Programme mentioned the support MAR artists/students receive from a broad and experienced team of artistic researchers to increase their research capacity. MAR students are typically artists who are curious about research and advanced reflection, and that is exactly what is offered in the day-to-day pedagogics of the programme. Students from their side mentioned that they chose MAR because it offers a studio-based, multidisciplinary, research-based education with a focus on writing.

The *Master Industrial Design* (MID) sets out to educate students/designers who want to question and redesign the conventions in the industrial system for more diverse, sustainable and

meaningful futures. While production is the central concept – what do we produce, who produces, how, and what is the impact – the programme attracts students with a technical or design background but also philosophers with an artistic mindset. Students indicated that their previous education focused mainly on ‘how’-questions while they chose for this master programme to address the ‘why’-question and to find a place for reflection and for thinking outside of the box.

The *Master Non Linear Narrative* (MNLN) merges investigative methods of journalism and forensics with processing technologies of computer science and visual arts. It educates students who undertake research to analyse, gather and present new forms of narrative. The programme responds to the changing landscape of graphic design towards technology, art and journalism. While students learn the foundational elements of the discipline in year one, the programme is very outward-looking at the world and into socio-political issues, more than inward-looking at the discipline as such. Students were attracted by the multidisciplinary nature of the programme, by the balance between practice and theory, and by the opportunities to experiment; in sum, they were looking for a change after their previous education which often lacked depth, theory and contextualisation.

The *Master Photography & Society* (MAPS) takes image-making as its core and challenges students to foster encounters beyond photographic practice. The programme is not so much about the aesthetics and technicalities of photography but looks at the impact of image on contemporary society. Its core values are collaboration among peers, research and impact. According to the students, this programme is unique in combining photography and research: instead of observing and documenting, this photography programme engages in societal topics and focuses on what photography is. It brings photography to a new level and explores layers of photography that are not often explored in other programmes.

The panel noticed a sense of optimism and ambition in the self-evaluation report. The decision of the authorities to reduce the number of small and specialist art/design degree programmes in the Netherlands in favour of an umbrella MAFAD programme has proved to be successful for KABK, whose master portfolio is now much stronger than it was until 2017. Moreover, the four specialisms seem to coexist quite easily, while students are served well by the learning experience in the distinct curricula. According to the panel, the KABK managed to establish a solid master programme with four specialisations in a short period of time. The KABK indicates the appropriate level of ambition for this master programme by linking MAFAD and its specialisations to the KABK bachelor portfolio while at the same time seeking to ‘un-discipline’ the fields of learning.

The developments since 2017 and the plans for the near future relate to the goals and strategies in the most recent KABK Plan. According to the panel, this document outlines the path towards a future in which the Academy continues to offer the best possible study programmes and environments for its community of thinkers and makers - staff, guest lecturers, students and alumni. The plan provides context for the ambitions of the MAFAD programme and points to

relevant areas for improvement within KABK in general and the MAFAD programme and its specialisations in particular.

The panel also gathered from the discussions on site that the four specialisations are unique in their focus and attractive to creative and competent students. They focus on reflection, individual authorship and the ability to communicate work. The research-driven mindset and the societal understanding of disciplines is clear. Each specialisation is presented as an expert community working on topics of contemporary urgency. Moreover, all specialisations promote an interdisciplinary approach and combine this with an intersectional outlook.

Finally, the panel noticed both in the written materials and during the discussions that the respective department heads and their staff had well-defined ideas and offered insightful reflections on the past, current and future development of their specialisations and the overall MAFAD programme. The panel appreciated in this regard that their reflections did not dodge difficult questions. One of the main challenges for the near future will be to focus on what binds these four specialisations together. The Department Heads indicated that until now they have been focusing – and admittedly did so quite successfully – on their own specialism. The next step will be to look for more common ground across the specialisations. While the panel noticed that such collaboration and alignment is part of the learning environment goals in KABK's Faculty Plan, it will be up to both programme and institutional management to make these goals operational with as much room for bottom-up initiatives and decision-making as possible. Moreover, the four specialisations would benefit from having a shared basis – of language and formats – upon which the Heads of programme/department can communicate. Such common basis will facilitate the exchange of good practices in and beyond MAFAD, and will be of benefit to the respective specialisations, as well as to the entire Academy.

Intended learning outcomes

The intended learning outcomes for the Master of Arts in Fine Art and Design were established nation-wide before the programme successfully applied for initial accreditation. In 2014 the institutions offering Fine Art and Design programmes in the Netherlands produced - under the umbrella of the Association of Universities of Applied Sciences and with the support of the professional field - common professional and educational profiles for bachelor and master programmes in Fine Art and Design. In the resulting official publication, the Professional and Educational Profile Fine Art and Design, the profiles are linked to the European-wide Dublin Descriptors, which in turn ensure that the competencies established at programme level are in conformity with international standards as agreed in the Bologna process and the European Qualification Framework. In 2017, the profile was fine-tuned listing a number of educational aims that are specific to master programmes in Fine Art and Design.

The panel was informed that still today, this professional and educational profile is the leading document for calibrating the learning outcomes of the Fine Art and Design programmes – at both bachelor and master level – offered at KABK and at all other art and design academies in the Netherlands. The intended learning outcomes consist of seven competences which students

should have achieved by the end of their bachelor or master programme: (i) creative ability; (ii) ability for critical reflection; (iii) ability for growth and innovation; (iv) organisational ability; (v) communicative ability; (vi) contextual awareness; (vii) collaborative ability. The competences are formulated as reference points which reflect the knowledge, skills and attitudes of the student and focus on student development. Testing students on the same competences throughout their study allows to track student progress over time.

While the national reference document and competence framework have not changed over the past eight years, the panel gathered from the self-evaluation report that over the years KABK and its respective departments – including MAFAD – have gone to lengths to apply this educational framework to their daily educational practice of teaching and assessment in the different programmes. In line with their autonomy and responsibility to design and implement curricula that enable students to achieve the intended learning outcomes, each department has adjusted the learning outcomes according to its own flavour and in a way that befits the specialisation. Using the competence framework as the fundament of its intended learning outcomes, every specialisation has tailored the formulation of the competences to its own specific profile. In all cases, the resulting learning outcomes constitute programme-specific reference frameworks that students and teachers follow during the respective two-year master programmes. Hence, the panel established that the competences in:

- MAR have been rephrased into a clear set of questions that are asked (and that students ask themselves in their self-assessments) about the student's working process and into a set of criteria students have to meet through their work;
- MID have been specified as aims/criteria to be applied in various stages during the graduation year;
- MNLN have not been adjusted but reflect the seven nationwide competences;
- MAPS have been clustered in five domains: Making, Research Abilities, Public impact, Critical Reflection, and Personal Aims.

According to the Heads of Programme, the individual translation (or not) of the intended learning outcomes per specialisation was a logical decision. When the different specialisations were established, the MAFAD programme was an umbrella structure without a self-standing curriculum or a Head of degree programme. Instead, specialisations were set up independently and added to the umbrella programme. The decisive factor to opt for a particular translation or not was the relevance of the competences / learning outcomes for students, and the way students could demonstrate – and staff could test – the achievement of the seven competences. While each specialisation has tweaked the set of competences to fit the respective programmes within the limitations and regulations of the framework, the Heads of Programme are increasingly informing each other about their own approaches. The panel was informed that this process can be further enhanced and that there is some potential for aligning the intended learning outcomes across specialisations. Representatives from the Examination Board and the Study Programme Committee indicated to the panel that the quality control bodies do not insist on a pure alignment of learning outcomes across programmes but have urged the institution and the specialisations to seek the conversation and understand each other's practices.

According to the panel, the resulting sets of learning outcomes in the different departments / specialisations are clearly defined and in line with the international requirements of education at master level. It acknowledges that adhering to the common national framework ensures that the learning outcomes of all four specialisations comply with both national and international requirements regarding domain, level and orientation. There is a common ground among all specialisations in terms of the basic learning outcomes, which are then tuned to the different specialisations. These varying approaches to the intended learning outcomes suit the different educational offerings of the specialisations while each specialisation nonetheless remains faithful to the national educational profiles. This results in learning outcomes that do justice to the profile of art and design education at KABK and to the history, conventions, discourse, vocabulary and idiom of the respective disciplines at KABK. The panel noticed that each specialisation found a distinctive means to translate the nationally agreed set of intended learning outcomes, with MAPS providing the clearest interpretation. Moreover, the panel welcomes the growing interaction among the Heads of Programme and encourages them to continue exchanging good practice and exploring further alignment.

Professional field

The panel learned from the self-evaluation report, the programme-specific materials and the discussions on site that the professional field plays an important role in the strategic choices of the KABK, its departments, staff and students. Most teaching staff have an active professional practice outside KABK, while other practitioners share their expertise with the programmes and the students during guest lectures, as internship providers or external examiners.

At the level of MAFAD and its specialisations, working with external partners is already in place. Collaboration with professional communities outside of the academy is an essential aspect of master level professional development, and the involvement of external partners is a key element in all MAFAD curricula. According to the panel, the emphasis on external partners across the specialisations supports the overall focus on arts practices immersed in social, environmental and political contexts. These external partners provide expertise and lend credibility to the curriculum. In this regard, the panel welcomes the intentions of the KABK to extend collaborations in research creation with foreign universities and external partners that could be of interest to all master students at KABK.

The discussions with representatives of the professional field showed that there is regular interaction between the field and the Academy and that the needs and expectations of the professional field are taken on board in the respective specialisations. The panel noticed that most interactions happen rather informally. All specialisations have established a work field committee, although only the Master Artistic Research committee has recently met in a formal setting. Hence, the panel thinks there is room for more structural input from the professional field in general and for reviving the dormant Advisory Committees in particular. The level of expertise among the professional field representatives the panel spoke to is very high; their input would certainly be valuable when discussing the actuality of the learning outcomes. Moreover, their commitment to KABK and its departments is a very strong asset for the

programmes and should be cherished and used by the entire departments, i.e. through joint meetings involving also the teachers/tutors, students and alumni.

Considerations

The panel considers that KABK managed to establish a well-rounded master programme with four specialisations in a short period of time. These specialisations have a clear profile, a unique focus and manage to attract creative and competent students. Every specialisation focuses on reflection, promotes a research-driven mindset and an interdisciplinary approach, and constitutes an expert community that is working on topics of contemporary urgency. While each department has been focusing over the past few years on developing its own specialisation, the panel encourages the future plans of the Heads of Programme to look for more common ground across specialisations.

According to the panel, the intended learning outcomes are formulated adequately and reflect not only the nation-wide professional and educational frameworks but also the specific characteristics of the respective programmes. The panel thinks highly of the way in which some departments have translated this common framework and assume responsibility for their own sets of learning outcomes. The panel encourages the sharing of good practice across the programmes.

Furthermore, the panel appreciates the efforts of KABK and its departments to involve the professional field in its programmes. However, there is room for involving these external partners more systematically in discussions on the relevance and actuality of the profile, objectives and curricula of the respective specialisations. In this regard the panel would encourage establishing a MAFAD-wide work field committee with specific terms of reference. In this committee, there should also be room for input from alumni.

The panel considers that at the time of the site visit early 2023 the intended learning outcomes of the respective specialisations meet the standard. For the further development of the programme, the panel sees an opportunity for the specialisations to revisit their intended learning outcomes and the way they are interpreted in assessment. Given the expressed desire of the specialisations to come closer to each other, the panel definitely sees an incentive to revisit some of the learning outcomes.

Conclusion

Based on the above-mentioned findings and considerations, the panel judges that **the master programme Fine Art and Design meets standard 1, intended learning outcomes.**

Standard 2 – Teaching and learning environment

The curriculum, the teaching-learning environment and the quality of the teaching staff enable the incoming students to achieve the intended learning outcomes.

Programme

MAFAD is a two-year full-time master programme that amounts to 120 ECTS. Its specialisations have set up curricula that are different in structure, working methods and internal study credit allocation, but have the same features in terms of length and size. The first year of each specialisation focuses on expanding the mind-sets of the students and on familiarising them with the ways art and design research entwines making with thinking. Where needed, students also update the technical or artistic skills that are needed for the programme and which they may not have obtained fully during their bachelor education. Moreover, additional courses support the development of theoretical knowledge and technical research skills, public presentation and the discourse that accompanies this. Students are also involved in so-called collaborative projects with external partners where they enhance their communication skills in professional contexts and experience working with colleagues from different disciplines and backgrounds.

The second year emphasises more the individual artistic or design interests of the students. In MID, MNLN and MAPS, the learning focus clearly shifts towards independent study. Students develop their individual research, thesis and graduation projects, and learn how to position themselves with their work in an unpredictable world characterised by a variety of ongoing social, political, technological, economic and global changes. In MAR, this personal artistic development is a core subject across the two year study with the second year being more about the intensification and clarification of the students' individual enquiry.

The extensive written materials in the self-evaluation report (on the MAFAD programme in general) and in the digital folder (on the respective specialisations) provided a good basis for the panel to study the overall programme set-up and its implementation in the different specialisations. Moreover, the discussions on site with students, alumni, staff and programme management have made the respective study programmes come to life. The panel noticed that the course descriptions included in the different specialization folders gave a clear sense of the course focus and group dynamic proposed to create a learning environment. The courses show unique, timely and experimental approaches to methods, themes and formats for each specialization. Moreover, several documents such as for instance the MAR Student Handbook provided a detailed outline of what a student may expect from the staff and the facilities, and what the programme is expecting in terms of commitment from the students.

According to the panel, there is a clear connection between the profile and objectives of the specialisations on the one hand, and the way the programme is set up and the curriculum is delivered on the other hand. In this respect, the panel established that each specialisation has developed a unique curriculum that befits its own profile while ensuring at the same time that

all curriculum components together allow students to reach the intended learning outcomes at end level.

Students indicated in their written contribution and during the discussion that most students appreciate most of the curriculum components. In addition to all positive elements, the panel noticed three points for attention that came back on several accounts: several specialisations need to pay considerable attention in the first year to get all students on the same page regarding the technical and artistic skills, which is not always useful for those students who already acquired these skills in the bachelor programme. Secondly, students mentioned that the individual curriculum components are fine but that the link – and possible overlap - between the components is not always clear and can be improved. Finally, students informed the panel that each specialisation delivers students with the envisaged competences in terms of disciplinary knowledge, skills and attitudes; however, students do not feel ready to enter the labour market from an entrepreneurial point of view as they are missing for instance the necessary information to start their own practice.

The panel appreciates the focus on research in the different MAFAD specialisations. The emphasis on research, as well as attention for current societal issues, is at the core of each specialisation, and has the potential benefit of cross-fertilisation between disciplines. Research constitutes a particular strength of the programme, according to the panel, which is also reflected in the professional whereabouts of the alumni. The Heads of Programme indicated during the site visit that each specialisation has its own way to encourage students approaching research through, in and for making. The panel learned that all specialisations somewhat struggle with the word “research” because of its fundamental scientific connotation. At MAR, students learn to ‘search re-search’ at the crossroads of making and reflection with the aim to increase the creativity of the master students. For MID, the word research is tricky, too. Students focus on searching and the programme brings in tutors with different research methods to support students in their search. At MNLN, artistic research is inherently part of the programme, just as design, and is also seen as an outcome. Students also engage in external and very tangible projects doing field research e.g. in the domain of archaeology or with Greenpeace. The MAPS team has an artistic research background and the programme has a sustainable work relationship to the Leiden University – KABK research programme. Students are encouraged to take their time when formulating their specific research question.

After the period of isolation during the COVID-19 pandemic, all KABK master programmes decided to organise together a non-educational extra-curricular programme of small evening events, the Master Collaborative Programme. Recent graduates provide a series of different experiences, such as drawing, movement and discussion groups, and every event is accompanied by a shared dinner. These extracurricular encounters between staff and students from several specialisations aim at getting people together from across the KABK master programmes for social interaction in different sorts of activities. The panel noticed during the visit that these events are widely communicated in the Academy and that MAFAD students very much appreciate these informal gatherings. The Heads of Programme indicated moreover that they are currently exploring opportunities to encourage exchanges and collaborations also

at curricular level. According to the panel, the initiative of the master collaborative programme constitutes an innovative response to online learning and its after-effects on the studio culture. The panel thinks highly of the collaborative programme initiative, which constitutes a good basis for considering more curricular cooperations across specialisations within and beyond MAFAD. The panel fully understands that over the past five years, the Departments have focused on building up their internal educational infrastructure ensuring good quality education through adequate and feasible curricula. According to the panel, the previous period has been used very well and resulted in good quality programmes.

The panel welcomes and encourages the plans of the specialisations to start looking at each other, exchange good practices and seek for synergies. This is all the more relevant – and urgent – given that students indicated both in their written contribution and during the discussion that they would like to have more opportunities for collaboration across specialisation. Staff members very much support the idea to start experimenting with different forms of cross-specialisation collaboration in their respective curriculum components.

Moreover, specialisations should look to develop – together – opportunities for external study or internship periods. The panel is aware that this suggestion is not very innovative or controversial because it basically repeats what is announced in the KABK Faculty Plan and in the MAFAD self-evaluation report: “With the foundations, profiles and curricula in place, the space has grown to learn from each other, to exchange best practices, to explore what collaboration is possible at curricular level.”

Finally, the panel discussed the way ethics are incorporated in the curriculum. While research ethics is not included in terms of philosophical discourse, students are made aware that ethics is a component of their work and that they need to reflect if and indicate that they address their work in an ethical way. The Heads of Programme agreed with the panel that it would be a good idea to install an ethical committee that advises students and staff on the ethics process in the different specialisations and verifies that student deliverables such as graduation projects fulfil the ethical requirements.

Language of instruction

The panel was informed that all bachelor and master programmes at KABK are offered in English. It is a conscious choice of the Academy and The Hague University of the Arts to do so because in this way the international orientation of the programmes is underlined. All students are expected to have a proper level of English in both speaking and writing before they enrol on the programmes. These requirements are clearly stipulated on the website and checked in the application dossier and during the selection interview.

The current assessment panel noticed during the site visit that the findings of the initial accreditation panel on the international orientation of the programme still apply. Both the teaching staff and the student population are internationally quite diverse. Although the international perspective does not have a fixed place in the curriculum, it is implicitly present

in many tutorials and other educational activities. Moreover, students bring in their own background and value systems. Hence, the panel endorses the long-standing decision of KABK to offer its programmes, including the MAFAD and its specialisations, in English.

Didactics

The panel gathered from the materials and the discussions that each specialisation works with a variety of learning and teaching methods in order to support students in achieving the learning outcomes. The self-evaluation report lists a dozen forms of educational activities, ranging from one-to-one tutorial support, independent study and lectures by tutors, experts and visiting artists to creating collective public presentations and excursions. The panel gathered from the discussions that these forms are also effectively used throughout the two-year study programme.

Each specialisation places research at the core of its study as a form of creative reflection. Supplementary activities expand upon and deepen specific areas of theoretical knowledge, as well as communicative and professional abilities. Each curriculum consists of an intensive programme with carefully chosen work forms and teaching practices, which depend on the specific objectives of the respective educational activities. This mix of didactic methods ensures that the development of creatively grounded research skills go hand in hand with the preparation of an impactful professional practice, and with a developed articulation of an individual creative position. The panel endorses this didactical approach, and welcomes in particular the mixture of teaching methods including collaboration with external organisations.

Students

The panel gathered from the materials and the meetings that the MAFAD programme and its specialisations manage to attract a wide variety of students in terms of their educational, cultural and geographical background. KABK has an informative website. It very clearly sets out what the formal admission requirements are for EU and non-EU students. Moreover, each specialisation has its own section on the website to describes its profile, show outputs of graduate work and list the names and bios of the tutors. The panel was informed that students are now much better prepared for their application and the interview than a few years ago.

Successful MAFAD applicants mostly enter the academy with a suitable bachelor level education in either art and design, and with the ambition to expand and deepen their knowledge, strengthen their research capacity and more explicitly connect with current societal issues. Given that the MAFAD programme has research at its core, specialisations sometimes accept applicants from neighbouring disciplines like anthropology, engineering, philosophy and psychology. In these cases, applicants should have a clear motivation for enrolling on the programme and a basic artistic level, and they must be capable to further develop their artistic skills to the required level. This approach in turn creates a diverse learning community with students from a wide variety of backgrounds.

Candidates apply for a specific specialisation and need to demonstrate potential for the development of their creative competency within the terms of the specialisation. Each specialisation admits between ten and fifteen students each year. As there are many more applicants than there are places, the admission teams screen the applications and carefully produce a shortlist per specialisation. Shortlisted candidates are then interviewed by a team of Heads, teachers, students and alumni to check if candidates are open to exploring new and unexpected directions in their work and whether there is a good match between the aims, approach and content of the specialisation and the expectations of the candidate. The panel was informed that there is no automatic admission for students with a bachelor degree from KABK. Moreover, the Heads of Programme indicated that there are hardly any applications from 'internal' candidates. Students indicated that they found the application procedure transparent and feasible.

Based on the written materials and the discussions, the panel established that the programme attracts a large number of applicants, who manage to make informed choices prior to enrolling. Moreover, the entry requirements are clear and relevant, the admission process is managed in a meticulous way and in the final selection interview specialisations manage to identify the most suitable candidates. This selection proves to be effective as only few enrolled students drop-out during the programme and most students manage to finish the programme within the given timespan.

Staff

Each specialisation is overseen by a Head of Department, who leads a carefully appointed teaching team. The Heads are all practising professionals and appointed on a part-time basis (0.4 FTE). They are responsible for the design and the content of the curriculum, for assessment and examination, and for the general organisation of the educational process. The panel noticed during the discussions on site that these Heads fit the description in the self-evaluation report of creative leaders with clear visions for the development of their disciplines and strong professional track records. Moreover, Heads connect both with students and institutional management. In this regard, they play a key role in the educational policy development of the Academy. The panel gathered from the discussions that Heads have plenty of tasks and responsibilities and that the allocated time is not sufficient to manage all obligations.

Every Head is supported by a coordinator (0.4 FTE) who facilitates the delivery, planning and administration of the programme. Coordinators are responsible for the practical organisation of educational activities, for administrative procedures within the overall KABK framework, and for advising students on practical programme-related matters. The panel was informed that coordinators have their own network across KABK programmes and exchange information regularly with each other.

Teachers (called tutors at KABK) are also practising professionals with part-time teaching positions. They have all been educated to the appropriate standard and specialisation, and most have extensive prior experience. As active researchers in art and design, curators, theorists, and

critics, they bring contemporary discourse to their work. Currently, every specialisation can allocate 1.2 FTE for teaching. The tutors whom the panel spoke to during the visit were invariably competent and skilled to deliver their part of the curriculum. Moreover they showed commitment to KABK and had clear ideas and perspectives on the development of the MAFAD programme and its specialisations. They had close connections both formally and informally with their Heads of Programme and their coordinator and appreciated the degree of freedom, flexibility and trust they experience in delivering their parts of the curriculum. Although this may be due to the selected individuals, the panel found these tutors to be very knowledgeable about other specialisations and the general educational offer at KABK. In sum, the panel found that the staff involved in the different specialisations was of high quality and provided the right expertise to the respective student audiences.

The panel was informed by the institutional management that KABK is working towards a balance between tutors with fixed contracts and a more flexible pool of self-employed guest teachers who join the programmes for shorter periods of time. On request of the panel, the Quality Team provided additional information on staff deployment in the four specialisations. In addition to the Head and the Coordinator, each specialisation features between 7 and 19 tutors. According to the overview that presented the situation in the academic year 2021-2022, most tutors had temporary or freelance contracts. The panel was informed that tutors who are on freelance contracts prefer to remain freelancers. Nonetheless the share of temporary and freelance contracts is likely to decrease in view of new rules set by the Government and in the collective labour agreement. Combining the staff deployment with the number of student enrolments per specialisation, the panel read in the overview that the staff student ratio ranges between 1:12 (MID) and 1:15 (MAPS).

Following indications from students and alumni that the didactical skills of the tutors are not equally strong, the panel inquired about the competences of the tutors. The expertise of the tutors is in almost all cases extensive and relevant and their English language skills are adequate. However, not all tutors seem to do equally well in terms of pedagogics. Both the Heads of Programme and the KABK management are aware of the issue and are working on it. Since this academic year 2022-2023, KABK has been offering the Artist as a Teacher training programme, which upon completion leads to a basic teaching qualification (BKO), which includes the basic qualification examination (BKE). The interest in this training is considerable: the demand reportedly exceeds the offer, hence it will take a few years before all staff is trained. The panel was informed that two Heads of Programmes are currently following this teacher development programme, which aims to give tutors at any stage of their career stimulating learning experiences to increase their knowledge and skills in educating and coaching art students. The basic principle behind the programme is that participating teachers co-shape and inform the programme by sharing expertise and experience, reflection, and inter-vision on both teaching and assessment. The panel welcomes this initiative and appreciates that KABK frees up time for tutors to sign up for this training. In addition, the panel endorses the decision to keep track in the new HRM system of KABK of (temporary / freelance) tutors having completed didactic training.

Facilities

The Royal Academy of Art The Hague is housed in a single building, with each specialisation having its own space for studios and classes. During the site visit, the panel was shown around the different departments. The MAR, MAPS and MID specialisations are located closely to one another in one wing of the building, while the MNLN studios and classrooms are located on the top floor of a nearby wing. A total of 742 m² of floor space is allocated permanently to MAFAD as studio space, teaching and office space. In addition MAFAD can book over 1000 m² for events. On request of the panel, the Quality Team provided a detailed breakdown of the dedicated office and studio spaces for each of the specialisations. MAFAD students on average have 8 – 9 m² of studio space. Students indicated that they appreciated having a dedicated studio space and that this facility is an important selling point of KABK. However, students did complain about the strict rules within the studios (which are mainly related to fire hazard) and about the limited opening hours of the building. According to the panel, the dedicated studio space is clearly essential. The current facilities for the MNLN students, however, are sub-optimal. While the room as such is very nice, it is not a permanent base and students often have to move to other places when KABK needs the room for other events, such as accreditation panel visits.

The panel also visited the library of KABK, as well as the workshops and the technical equipment service. These technical production facilities are accessible to all students and are staffed by specialist instructors. The panel was impressed by the specialist collections in the library, the equipment of the facilities, the technical and creative expertise of the instructors and the accessibility of these facilities to all KABK students. MAFAD students indicated that they regularly make use of this and other facilities that are put at disposition outside the KABK building.

COVID-19 pandemic

At the time of the site visit in January 2023, education at KABK had returned to its normal pre-pandemic rhythm. However, between March 2020 and December 2021, the KABK buildings had been (semi-) locked for several periods and education and assessment had temporarily moved to online environments. For big part of the academic year 2020-2021, the KABK reopened as the Academy was recognised to provide practical education. This meant that students could work at least part of the time in the studio space again. However, structural contacts with other departments, with fellow students from other programmes and even with other cohorts of MAFAD students were not possible. Moreover, the ongoing pandemic with its periods of severe and mild lockdowns impacted considerably on the wellbeing of students.

Asked how the pandemic had impacted on MAFAD and what lessons were drawn for the future delivery of the programme, the Heads of Programme indicated that the pandemic has certainly had an impact on the practical and community-building aspects of education, as well as on the mental wellbeing of students. However, there had not been a major negative influence on the didactic set-up of the programmes, nor on the quality of the student work. However, now that

the pandemic is over, it is clear that a lot of learning takes place in the studio space and that this aspect of the education was lacking during part of the pandemic.

In terms of lessons learned, the hybrid form of learning proved to be not feasible because it brought twice as much work for tutors. The pandemic also allowed/forced management, staff and students to work together more, which led to a greater and more regular exchange of ideas, which all specialisations are keen to uphold now. Moreover, the development of the online teams environment is good to have and is definitely there to stay. Also in the post-pandemic era, experts from all over the world continue to give guest lectures.

Social safety

A newspaper article from 2020 about transgressive behaviour at KABK led to a wave of personal experiences, revelations and accusations, and an independent investigation into the safety culture of/at the academy. Following the publication of the report on this investigation in March 2021, the KABK director and the chairperson of the Supervisory Board resigned.

The panel inquired during the discussions on-site how the KABK has been addressing the key findings from the report. The newly appointed director of KABK mentioned that a series of measures have been taken at different levels of the academy and targeting both students and staff. In addition to establishing both an internal and an external confidentiality advisor, KABK also elaborated a new and positively formulated code of conduct, which was presented at a major internal event for all staff and students. Moreover, KABK made sure that information is clearly available on the website and that all students and staff are aware of the formal arrangements and the services that are available. Students from their side emphasised that the Academy and the specialisations are informing newcomers about the services and how to reach these. They feel heard by and have easy access to their Heads of Programme.

The panel gathered from all the discussions that KABK has worked hard to improve safety and equality across the entire academy. It is clearly on the mind – and the agenda – of the management. Student wellbeing and social safety are very much present in the day-to-day operations of the Academy and its programmes, including MAFAD. Moreover, students seem to feel comfortable to talk about their problems throughout their studies. Finally, the panel acknowledges that the growing attention to social safety has facilitated other discussions on topics such as workload, professional training and staff contracts.

Considerations

The panel considers that the teaching-learning environment at MAFAD is strongly developed, an appreciation that covers the curriculum, the staff and the facilities. According to the panel, each specialisation has developed a unique curriculum that befits its own profile and ensures that all components together allow students to reach the intended learning outcomes at end level. The Heads of Programme and their teams should be credited for developing these curricula under difficult circumstances. The panel welcomes the attention for external collaboration and for cross-departmental evening classes. Having developed strong self-

standing specialisations, the panel encourages the management to facilitate structural links across the MAFAD specialisations. In this regard, the panel supports the desire of the Heads of Programme to engage in cross-departmental cooperation. Given that all students eventually have to address issues of ethics in their (research) work, the panel advises the KABK to develop ethics procedures and establish an ethics committee that advises, validates and protects students and the people that are involved in the student research.

The panel considers that the specialisations attract an interesting mixture of students with different educational, cultural and geographical backgrounds. The admission process is transparent and the selection is both careful and effective.

The staff managing, coordinating and tutoring the respective specialisations is cast very well. The Heads of Programme are creative leaders with strong professional track records and clear visions on the development of their disciplines. The staff is of high quality and provides the right expertise to the respective student audiences. The panel did notice, though, that the Heads of Department currently are not allocated sufficient time to address all management tasks in sufficient depth. As they occupy a very central position in KABK between management, services, programme, students and professional field, it is important that these responsibilities are recognised in their deployment.

Moreover, the panel welcomes the attention of KABK to the pedagogical professionalisation of the tutors and thinks highly of the number of the tutors who want to follow the Artist as Teacher training programme. Given their comments on the quality of tutors, it may be good to inform students about the actions that are being undertaken to address this particular flaw.

The panel was assured that the quality of facilities at KABK in terms of studio space and workshops meets the needs of the MAFAD students, with the exception of the MNLN studio needing to be permanent and proximal to the other MAFAD studio spaces.

Finally, the panel welcomes the efforts of KABK to improve safety and equality across the entire Academy. Student wellbeing and social safety are now very much present in the day-to-day operations of the academy and have facilitated other discussions on topics such as workload, professional training and staff contracts.

Conclusion

Based on the above-mentioned findings and considerations, the panel judges that **the master programme Fine Art and Design meets standard 2, teaching-learning environment.**

Standard 3 – Assessment

The programme has an adequate system of student assessment in place.

Assessment system

The panel gathered from the self-evaluation report that assessment at KABK is an important tool of learning for students and serves staff to track how students are coping with the education load. The general principles of the assessment system are described in KABK's Education and Examination Regulations, which the panel looked at in the run-up to the visit. As education at KABK is competence-based, its assessment system relates to how students have integrated and apply their learned knowledge to deal with tasks that they will also face in the context of their professional practice. In line with its interpretation of the competence framework and the set of learning outcomes, KABK's approach to education and its system of assessment supports students to develop a practice rather than complete a single product. Hence, the assessment system balances between a focus on integral development and on individual subjects and skills. Students do receive specific feedback on their process in single courses, but assessments always consider their work in the context of their integral growth and development. Moreover, as KABK's vision on education is student-centred, its assessment system provides students with the information they need to responsibly own their own learning journey, and to steer their personal, artistic and professional development in a direction that fits their individual ambitions and interests. Students are required to self-evaluate their progress before or as part of the assessment process to ensure that assessments and feedback are meaningful to each student.

The panel noticed furthermore that the assessment system at KABK is aligned with the intended learning outcomes of the respective specialisations, which in turn ensures that students have achieved the intended learning outcomes by the time they are about to graduate. At the end of the first three semesters, the progress of students is noted in their file with either a Pass or an Insufficient and this is supported by content driven feedback on achieved results combined with guidance in mapping out the next steps in their studies (feedforward).

Course assessment

During the discussions on-site, the panel learned that these overall principles that apply across KABK are effectively implemented in the MAFAD programme. The panel was impressed to hear how thorough the assessment in MID is organised. MID uses different forms of assessment and pays particular attention to the effectiveness of the assessment methods. The MID coordinator has a background in educational sciences and is well placed to oversee the assessment part of the programme. MID students have many formative assessment moments throughout the study, with three so-called 'zoom-outs' in the second year. Every zoom-out is moderated by two tutors and focuses on one particular aspect of the student's work. MAPS has less variety in assessment methods but is using the so-called 'snapshot' to monitor student progress. Moreover, the programme has developed student self-assessment forms which according to the panel constitute good practice. At MNLN there has been an alignment of assessment types recently, including a stronger integration of theory and practice at the level of the graduation project. In MAR tutors consistently use the intended learning outcomes as

indicators to comment individually on the student's progress throughout the two-year programme. This in turn leads to an extensive set of feedback and formative feedforward, reflecting the different perspectives taken by the respective tutors.

Evaluation of end level products

The final assessment, also known as the final exam, results in Pass or Insufficient grade. While MID had been scoring course and thesis assessments for a long time, it also switched to a pass/fail grade as of this academic year 2022-2023. The grade is always accompanied by feedback stating how students have achieved the intended learning outcomes of their specialisation. Students present at least two components at the final exam: their creative work and a written thesis. The thesis is related to the creative work. In some specialisations, the thesis is marked prior to the exam but is always re-presented and taken into consideration during the discussion of the final creative work. The creative work is the result of extensive experimental research and highly individual. The work should represent a cohesive whole and demonstrate that the student meets all the criteria of the MAFAD degree (specialisation). The final assessment is performed by a team of tutors and always includes at least one external expert, whose input and opinions must be taken into account when the team decides on the pass/fail outcome. Having a team of final examiners ensures that a diversity of perspectives and opinions are taken into account and that assessment is valid and reliable because the teams respond to similar questions on the various aspects of the exam components.

As part of its external assessment, the panel reviewed a sample of 32 graduation projects and their evaluation in order to evaluate the assessment process. The panel noticed that every specialisation has its own approach to assessing the creative work and the thesis of its students. When reviewing the projects and their assessments, panel members indicated whether they thought the evaluation form had been properly filled in. Across the entire sample, the panel found that this had happened in 26 cases out of 32, with MAR and MID getting a positive answer for all their assessments, i.e. eight per specialisation. Panel members also indicated whether they thought the score/appreciation had been adequately motivated in the form. While MAR received again a perfect score, less than half of the other forms were completed in an insightful way. The panel noticed that in many cases students had received extensive and useful feedback prior to the final exam and that exam teams provided mostly concise and very personal comments in the final form rather than a motivation of how students had reached the respective evaluation criteria. In the case of MAPS, the panel thought it was a lost opportunity for students' learning that the exam team did not respond in writing to the student's self-assessment report, which the panel found particularly interesting.

In sum, the panel found that the assessment feedback in the different MAFAD specialisations reflected a close relationship between teachers and students, and a learning environment that clearly supported students in their development. Moreover, the feedback seemed to work well in providing constructive criticism and areas for improvement, which resulted in noticeable developments at the next assessment point. While every specialisation provides extensive and insightful verbal feedback at some point in the graduation project trajectory, this is not always

reported in writing at the very final exam moment. In this respect, the panel was very satisfied with the way the MAR programme had provided in-depth, critical and overall helpful feedback on the thesis as well as on the creative work, and encourages the other specialisations to develop a similarly thorough approach. In so far as the student self-assessment is concerned, the panel found these forms to be particularly relevant in both MAPS and MAR.

Quality assurance

Two main bodies are responsible for assuring the quality of the MAFAD programme. While the Study Programme Committee looks into the quality of education, the Examination board is legally responsible for the quality of the assessments and examinations. The panel read the latest annual reports of both bodies and spoke to their representatives during the site visit.

There is one KABK-wide Study Programme Committee and one Examination Board covering all five bachelor and master degree programmes and their respective specialisations. The panel noticed that both Committee and Board fulfil their legal tasks to the best of their abilities. One secretary serves both Committee and Board. While the Examination Board consists of several long-standing members with good expertise, the Study Programme Committee had some problems over the last few years to find sufficient and good quality members. As it was not very well known before, the Study Programme Committee is now slowly but steadily taking up the position it deserves. According to the panel, the key members of the Committee are very competent and have a clear vision on their tasks and on the way forward for the Academy.

The panel was satisfied to hear that both Committee and Board are actively involved in bringing together the different assessment practices that currently exist across the degree programmes and within their respective specialisations. The panel understands – and agrees – that the aim of this exercise is not to fully align assessment practices across programmes, but to establish conversations among degree programmes and specialisations, to exchange good practices and to facilitate the uptake of individual good practices in other programmes.

Moreover, the Examination Committee is looking after the training of exam committee members in the framework of the Artist as Teacher training programme and is actively promoting this training among institution and programme management. After all, assessment and teaching are interwoven in arts education, hence the need for tutors to have at least the basic teaching and examination qualification. The panel noticed moreover that the Examination Board report for the period of the Covid-19 global pandemic gave a good account of the work done to adjust exam processes and making decisions about student exemptions and the awarding of credits.

The panel was informed that the Examination Board regularly checks how each Department has defined the learning outcomes and translated these in the seven competences that need to be assessed – and demonstrated by the student. While the feedback of the Board is mostly advisory, the Departments tend to take it on board. Moreover, members of the Board attend final exams and ask external members of the exam committee to write a report on their exam

experiences. These external members and their reports are important indicators to safeguard the level of the programme.

The panel shared its main concern about the assessment of the graduation projects, i.e. that a more consistent approach in the final assessment forms would help clarify why students are receiving a particular grade. The Examination Board indicated that it fully understood this finding of the panel, that it is on the radar of the Board as a priority action for next year. The Board agreed with the panel that the assessment issue is not so much about how the graduation project is assessed but what is assessed, and that the intended learning outcomes should be the leading criteria across all specialisations. Moreover, the Board indicated that tutors have long-standing experience with giving feedback to students but have little experience up to now with elaborating how their judgement has come about. Hence, the current Artist as Teacher training programme can be a useful opportunity to train tutors in making a clear distinction between feedback and judgement.

Considerations

The panel considers that the MAFAD programme can rely on a well-developed KABK-wide system of assessment that is aligned with the Academy's vision on education. The assessment principles have been translated in different sets of course assessments and assessment formats in each specialisation. While each specialisation has been focusing over the past few years on getting its assessment forms align with its curriculum goals and programme learning outcomes, the panel sees room for exchanging information and sharing good practices across specialisations.

The panel considers that good assessment practices exist in each of the specialisations: MID has a good assessment strategy featuring an exploratory approach to assessment; MAPS makes optimum use of the self-assessment forms completed by students; MNLN is integrating the assessment of theory and practice in the graduation project; and MAR is particularly strong at providing insightful feedback motivating to what extent students have achieved the intended learning outcomes at the time of the final exam.

The panel welcomes the attention of both Study Programme Committee and Examination Board to quality assuring the MAFAD programme and its specialisations. Moreover, both quality assurance bodies play an important role in bringing together the existing assessment practices across programmes and specialisations.

In so far as the assessment of the graduation projects is concerned, the panel encourages the Examination board to continue its efforts in getting the different MAFAD specialisations to align feedback, judgement and motivation in the final assessment form.

Conclusion

Based on the above-mentioned findings and considerations, the panel judges that **the master programme Fine Art and Design meets standard 3, assessment.**

Standard 4 – Achieved learning outcomes

The programme demonstrates that the intended learning outcomes are achieved.

There are two ways to establish whether the programme learning outcomes have been achieved – through a quality review of the final products and through checking what graduates are doing after they finished the programme. The panel has looked at both elements when assessing the end level qualifications of the MAFAD programme.

Quality of end level products

The MAFAD final examination concludes two years of education in one of the four specialisations. The exam committee establishes whether students have achieved the intended learning outcomes on the basis of the final artistic work and the thesis. The committee consists of the Head of Department, tutors and at least one external expert. When they pass the final exam, students can participate in the KABK Graduation Show. This annual public event is prepared together with the tutors and provides students with a safe testing ground for their work to interact with the world, i.e. family and friends but also experts, critics, potential clients and/or partners from the professional field.

As part of its external assessment, the panel reviewed a sample of 32 graduation projects of students, eight per specialisation, who successfully passed the final exam in the academic years 2020-2021 and 2021-2022. When reviewing the theses and the artistic works, panel members indicated whether the combination of thesis and work was of sufficient quality to pass the final exam. In 31 out of 32 graduation projects, the panel members indicated that this was clearly the case. For only one graduation project, submitted in the framework of the MID specialisation, the panel had doubts whether the combined quality of thesis and artistic work was just above or just below the quality threshold. In its final deliberations the panel agreed it was a borderline pass. With such results, the panel thought it was fair to state that MAFAD students who successfully pass the final exam, have indeed achieved all learning outcomes.

Reporting on their individual reviews, panel members indicated that each Department has its own specific identity and that there is no such thing as a MAFAD ‘house style’. Overall, the quality of the projects was good, with theory and practice being integrated well and with projects being professionally finished in many cases. Students often attempted to do something uniquely individual. In many cases the panel thought that the research work was of very good to outstanding quality. The panel also appreciated the dedication of the programmes and the students to combine written and artistic work, and thus to both publish and exhibit.

Comparing the ‘written’ and ‘artistic’ components of the graduation projects, the panel found that if there was a difference in quality, the written part tended to be better. Moreover, the relation between the writing and the practice component was not always clear. In that respect, the panel noticed that the way in which some artistic works had been documented did not match with the character of these works. While the documentation format may have been adjusted for

the sake of this external review, the panel was nonetheless surprised that no further thought was given on how these works would (not) speak for themselves in the way they had been put at disposition. Finally, the panel noticed that in several cases the students had not given credits to other artists in their graduation work. Discussing the latter point with the Heads of Programme, they agreed that this had not been addressed but is indeed a point for attention that will be taken up. According to the panel, this observation further underlines the need for an ethics training and guidance on reference protocols.

Performance of graduates

The panel gathered from the information in the self-evaluation report and the discussions on-site that the vast majority of MAFAD graduates is successfully participating in the professional field in which they have been educated. They take up a wide variety of practices ranging from autonomous self-employment to stable employment in fields closely connected to art and design. Several students had relevant work experience before they entered MAFAD and are more impactful in the professional field upon re-entering the world of work. As an internationally oriented academy, KABK attracts students from all over the world. The panel was informed that upon graduation, several students go back to their places of origin, while others stay in The Hague to build their own creative community. According to a quantitative survey, called *Kunstenmonitor*, carried out at national level among alumni who graduated 18 months before, none of the MAFAD graduates reported to be unemployed, while 90% was fully or partially working in their own field of education.

Having discussed with alumni, the panel acknowledges the statements that were made on their behalf in the self-evaluation report. Graduates who were interviewed on-site by the panel and for the self-evaluation report by KABK indicated that they are still using many of the competences they acquired during their MAFAD period: research and critical thinking often play an important role in their practice, alumni developed their own individual paths shaping or reshaping their careers, and all graduates increased their networking and collaboration skills. Moreover, alumni indicated that they were actively seeking these competences when they enrolled at KABK.

During the visit, the panel also asked the representatives of the professional field what they consider to be key characteristics of a MAFAD graduate. One participant mentioned that MAR students understand and have the ability to work collectively and individually, which allows graduates to be flexible when they look for assignments. As MID students very often bring in prior knowledge, they have plenty of space during the programme to develop these competences further while taking on board new perspectives from fellow students with different backgrounds. In this regard, MID graduates tend to be good at seeking collaboration with other academic and artistic institutions. Another participant representing the University of Leiden was positively surprised when attending the graduation show about the level of scholarly research of the MAPS students and about the way they managed both the scholarly and the artistic dimensions. When joining a collaborative project with an external partner, MNLN students were very much engaged and worked in a professional and thorough way. They

instilled confidence and were not afraid to explore areas and territories they had not covered before. The panel noticed moreover in the discussion with the professional field that the MNLN specialisation can rely on an extensive and international professional network.

According to the panel, both the quantitative survey and the testimonials in the report and on-site visit indicate that MAFAD graduates have achieved all learning outcomes by the time they finish the programme. Moreover, the panel was impressed by the CVs of alumni and the profiles of the graduates.

Considerations

Based on its review of 32 graduation projects, the panel considers that students who pass the programmes' respective graduation trajectories have indeed achieved the intended learning outcomes and demonstrate a level of competency that can be expected of a Master of Arts in Fine Art and Design. Across the board, the panel found the quality of the graduation projects to be good, with the written publication often being of higher quality than the artistic work. If anything, the programme may want to pay careful attention whether students give credits to artists in their artistic work and how they are documenting their artistic projects.

Furthermore, the written information as well as the discussions with recent graduates, alumni and the professional field demonstrate according to the panel that the different departments prepare MAFAD students well to find and articulate their own role and place in the field.

The graduation projects and the professional whereabouts of the alumni moreover indicated according to the panel that the programme has been very successful in transmitting the key features/learning outcomes of the MAFAD programme: critical reflection, research, societal relevance, collaborating and networking, positioning oneself and one's work in society. Moreover, the panel was pleased to hear that MAFAD students are starting to impact on their colleagues at Leiden University.

Conclusion

Based on the above-mentioned findings and considerations, the panel judges that **the master programme Fine Art and Design meets standard 4, achieved learning outcomes.**

Overall judgement

In sum, the panel considers that the degree programme and its four specialisations meet the four NVAO standards under consideration: intended learning outcomes, teaching-learning environment, assessment, and achieved learning outcomes. **The panel therefore issues a positive advice to NVAO on the quality of the master programme Fine Art and Design submitted for accreditation by the Royal Academy of Art The Hague.**

Annexes

Annex 1 – Administrative data on institution and programme

Administrative data on the institution

Name of the institution:	The Hague University of the Arts Royal Academy of Art The Hague
Status of the institution:	publicly funded
Result of the institutional quality assurance assessment:	positive (2020)
Contact person:	Leo Capel (l.capel@kabk.nl)

Administrative data on the programmes

Degree programme:	Fine Art and Design
CROHO:	49114
Programmes:	Artistic Research Industrial Design Non Linear Narrative Photography and Society
Level:	master
Orientation:	professional
Credits:	120 ECTS
Location:	The Hague
Mode of study:	full-time
Language:	English

Annex 2 – Assessment panel

Dr. Sarah Bennett, chair

Sarah is visiting fellow at Kingston University (UK) where she was formerly Head of the School of Art and Architecture. She has worked as programme director and external examiner for different Fine Art programmes. Sarah has extensive accreditation experience in the Netherlands and is board member of the evaluation agency EQ Arts.

Yvonne Dröge Wendel, member

Yvonne is a visual artist living and working in Amsterdam. She studied at the Gerrit Rietveld Academy, where she currently heads the Fine Art Department. Yvonne chaired the NVAO panel for the programme's initial accreditation.

Dr. Peter Hall, member

Peter has been lecturing in the United States and Australia before returning to the UK where he currently is Reader in Graphic Design at the University of the Arts in London. His research focuses on mapping and visualization as critical and participatory practices.

Sofia Hernandez Chong Cuy, member

Sofia is an art curator and currently the director of the Kunstinstituut Melly in Rotterdam. Born in Mexico, she has worked among others in Caracas, New York, Porto Alegre and Kassel.

Robbert van Binsbergen, student-member

Robbert studied Graphic Design at HKU and is now master student in the pathway Situated Design at the Institute of Visual Cultures in 's Hertogenbosch.

Mark Delmartino, secretary / process coordinator

Mark is managing director of MDM Consultancy in Antwerp, Belgium. He is certified by NVAO since 2010 and regularly accompanies panels on assessment visits.

All panel members and the secretary have signed the NVAO Declaration of non-disclosure and independence.

Annex 3 – Site visit schedule

Venue: KABK, Conference Room

Tuesday 24 January 2023

- 10h00 Arrival panel chair and secretary – internal meeting
- 11h00 Arrival panel members, lunch, internal meeting and open consultation hour
- 13h15 Guided tour of KABK departments
- 14h30 Session with KABK management
- 15h15 Session with Heads of Departments
- 16h30 Session with students
- 17h30 Session with Exam Committee and Programme Committee
- 18h15 Internal wrap-up meeting and debriefing with hosts
- 19h00 End of day 1

Wednesday 25 January 2023

- 08h45 Arrival panel – internal meeting
- 09h30 Session with Alumni and Professional field
- 10h45 Session with Staff
- 11h45 Lunch and internal meeting
- 13h00 Clarification session with Heads of Department
- 13h45 Internal panel meeting
- 15h00 Panel feedback
- 15h30 End of site visit

An overview of the persons interviewed is available on request.

Annex 4 – Materials reviewed

The panel studied first and foremost the following document:

- Self-evaluation Master of Arts in Fine Art and Design, Royal Academy of Art The Hague, 2022-2023. Students from the four specialisations produced a Student Contribution, which was integrated in the self-evaluation report as a self-standing chapter.

Moreover, the departments put at disposition a digital folder featuring background information per programme. Each department provided materials on:

- the profile and points of departure of the discipline
- the learning outcomes
- the curriculum with an overview of courses and study credits
- the teaching staff
- student guide to assessment
- course assessments and assessment forms
- CV's of recent graduates
- the work field committee
- a self-reflection on the programme by the head of department

The QA team also provided the panel with:

- University of the Arts Institutional Plan 2019-2024
- KABK Faculty Plan 2022-2024
- KABK Culture Survey report
- Annual Report Study Programme Committee
- Annual Report Examination Board
- Education and Examination Regulations 2022-2023
- Results Alumni Survey
- Results National Student Survey

Prior to the site visit, the panel reviewed a representative sample of 32 graduation projects and their evaluation forms selected among the 80 students who graduated the four programmes between September 2020 and August 2022. A list of the selected student numbers and their graduation projects is available on request.