Who is this course for?

This evening course is aimed at B2+ level and for people curious about discussing, debating and giving creative opinions, creative professionals, tour guides, just anybody interested in contemporary art and design! This is NOT an art history class, however we will focus on the 20th and 21st century, from modernism to post-modernism.

What kind of language will we use?

Language for debating, discussion points, interrupt, agreeing / disagreeing, giving opinions, and explaining abstract ideas.

What methods are we going to employ in the class?

Plenty of discussions, debates and speaking skills will be encouraged! By the end of the course, participants should be able to express abstract concepts, give an analysis and opinions about different aspects of contemporary art and design.

How long is the course going to last?

This is a 10-week evening course starting on Thursday 7th October, and will be divided into 5 themes. Patrick Loan will focus on fine art, painting, video art, and performance art and Nick Wilkinson will focus on the graphic arts, applied design and architecture. They will teach on alternate weeks, Patrick will teach one week and Nick the next week.

In the last lesson, (if possible and within Covid-19 restrictions, if in force) we would both lead a field trip to MAK to give you, the participants, the ideal opportunity to use the skills you have learnt on the course to describe various art works.
Part 1: Vienna

Week 1: Thursday 7th October
In the first lesson, Patrick and Nick will welcome you to the course! We will discuss the development of contemporary art in Vienna, Austrian sculptor Erwin Wurm, performance and feminist artist Value Export and 1960s group the Viennese Actionists, including Hermann Nitsch.

Week 2: Thursday 14th October
In this lesson, we will examine the legacy and continuing influence of some of Vienna’s most famous “sons and daughters” of design and architecture, including Otto Wagner, Otto Neurath, Harry Glück and Stefan Sagmeister.

Part 2: Metropolis

Week 3: Thursday 21st October
In this lesson we will explore artists who have looked at the urban environment, street art and, of course, Banksy.

Week 4: Thursday 4th November
We will look at the different roles played by inner cities in various countries, focusing on the motorization of the 20th century and those inspired to win back the city for humans, looking for example at Harley Sherlock’s classic book “Cities are Good for Us”.

Part 3: Legacies of the Bauhaus

Week 5: Thursday 11th November
In this lesson, the influence of the ground-breaking design school started in Germany in the 1920s will be discussed and the legacy and influence of the artists and professors within the context of contemporary art today.

Week 6: Thursday 18th November
This week, Nick will examine the controversial argument that the influence of the Bauhaus on the rest of the 20th century was often negative, with its popularity actually severely limiting the creativity of designers and architects from the 1940s until the 1980s.

Part 4: Environment

Week 7: Thursday 25th November
This week, we will deal with environmental and land art artists like Robert Smithson, James Turrell, Olafur Eliasson, Christo and Walter De Maria, as artists have tried to harness and make work about nature and the earth.

Week 8: Thursday 2nd December
We will discuss the practice of “greenwashing” in marketing and sales, and whether it will ever be possible to create a truly sustainable product marketplace when built-in obsolescence is the norm and consumers are prevented from repairing products themselves.

Part 5: Death and life

Week 9: Thursday 9th December
How have artists dealt with death and mortality? Damian Hirst, Tracey Emin, the Chapman Brothers and the YBAs (Young British Artists) based in London in the 1990s.

Week 10: Thursday 16th December
This week, Patrick and Nick will lead a field trip to MAK! (Covid restrictions permitting). If the visit is unable to take place, then there will be a normal classroom session in its place.