

# Master in Algorithmic and Networked Photography



How can we creatively and critically engage with the ongoing digital and online transformations of photography?

## Master in Algorithmic and Networked Photography

Start date  
September

ECTS credits  
60

Course duration  
400 hours

Language  
English

Degree  
Master's Degree in Algorithmic and Networked Photography. Degree issued by Universitat de Vic – Universitat Central de Catalunya (UVic-UCC)

Schedule  
Monday, Tuesday, Wednesday, Thursday, Friday.  
For academic reasons, sessions may be scheduled exceptionally in a different time frame.

Directors  
Jon Uriarte  
Marco De Mutiis

Admission Requirements  
Art, photography and design graduates. Professionals with experience in the field of media art, photography and film, and interested in contemporary digital and internet culture and art. If you have doubts about whether you would be a good fit for this programme, please submit your request for a case-by-case evaluation.

## Algorithmic and Networked Photography

The photographic image has been radically transformed by its recent digital and networked developments. The impact and relevance of photography today lies not only in its representational layer, but beyond the visual surface of the image. Its invisible algorithmic and networked properties turned traditional photography into an assemblage of intertwined apparatuses, agents and media. Contemporary forms of digital images capture, circulation and consumption have been redefining the role of the photographic as an expanded and exciting field of visual culture in constant mutation. From AI generated images and computer-generated imagery to screenshotting, from CGI to Photoshop, from VR to in-game photography, practices of image-making and modes of experiencing visual art have created a vast and rich territory, explored by contemporary artists, photographers, curators, researchers, technologists and designers.

The Master in Algorithmic and Networked Photography offers an uncompromising investigation into the world of chronically digital images and terminally online visual culture. Through a series of lectures and workshops from some of the most relevant and inspiring actors in the field, this one-year master programme combines a sharply curated scholarly foundation with an intense practical education. Creative, conceptual and critical, the programme provides you with theoretical and practical knowledge of post-photography, AI images, networked images, machine vision and synthetic imaging. It invites participants to reflect upon the social, political and economic implications of different technological imaging systems. Simultaneously, the programme encourages you to experiment and create with hardware and software, as well as appropriating and misusing media platforms through artistic and alternative forms of image-making.

The programme welcomes students from all over the world and aims at fostering an international community of artists, designers, photographers, curators and researchers working within the growing field of digital images. You'll have access to a global network of outstanding practitioners and thinkers who are involved in the realm of algorithmic and networked visual cultures and actively shape the contemporary image discourse and its practices. The master's programme strives to develop individuals with a blend of conceptual and technical expertise, equipping them to pursue professional careers in the art and culture sector. The aim of the programme is to cultivate graduates who not only contribute to the cultural landscape but also shape its future.

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# Programme

The programme is organised into 3 terms and 7 modules, offered in a low-residency mode which runs for 40 weeks over 10 months between September and June. The programme is structured through a schedule that alternates in-person/remote learning hybrid schedule. 3 one-month in-person residencies in Barcelona will take place throughout the course year: late September - October, January - February and May - June. Specific dates to be announced.

## 1. September – December

### 1.1 Post-Photography Theory

In this module, you'll become familiar with discourses of digital manipulation and the crisis of the real that challenge concepts of indexicality in photography. The module follows the digital turn in photography, questioning the role of representation and the implications of image appropriation and manipulation, photorealistic CGI and computational photography.

### 1.2 Post-Photography Practice

This module provides technical and artistic skills in image manipulation software, as well as introductory workshops on CGI, photogrammetry, 3D scanning and 3D modelling. The module will also introduce scripting and creative coding for videogame modding, as well as different practices of documenting and performing in internet and game spaces.

## 2. January – March

### 2.1 Networked Images Theory

The module explores concepts of global image circulation over the network. It focuses on the political, social and economic role of online images and the materiality and infrastructure of the internet. It invites you to reflect upon the entanglements of an economy of attention, surveillance practices and shaping identities on platforms of media exchange, as well as finding possible alternative networks and distribution systems.

### 2.2 Networked Images Practice

In this practical module, you are invited to research and reflect upon online visual culture, appropriating and curating networked images, screenshotting and collecting pictures through web scraping techniques. Through a series of workshops, participants will experiment with reclaiming the browser, both through coding and conceptual approaches, as a space for artistic intervention that can be subverted, extended and reappropriated.

## 3. April – June

### 3.1 From Machine Vision to Synthetic Imaging Theory

Through a series of lectures, talks and discussions, the module will explore the recent emergence of machine learning and its impact on collecting, analysing and creating images. You will learn about the process behind the creation of large datasets, the global economy and human labour associated with annotation, the politics and biases embedded in the training and the resulting analytical and predictive properties of AI generated images and AI imaging systems.

### 3.2 From Machine Vision to Synthetic Imaging Practice

In this module, you will explore the inner workings of machine learning systems, learning how to work with existing and custom data sets, as well as training machine vision models. Through creative coding, artistic approaches and existing commercial softwares and platforms, participants will engage with object detection and facial recognition applications, as well as text-to-image generative systems and AI prompting techniques.

# Transversal practice

## 4. Final projects

You will develop your own projects throughout the school year, with two presentation and feedback sessions at the end of Term I and Term II. At the end of Term III, you will present their final projects. Final projects can be experimental and artistic works in the field of algorithmic and networked visual art and culture, developed following the ideas and techniques learned throughout the programme. You are mentored by the Master directors, and they will support you through regular meetings and individual consultations.

# Methodology

The Master in Algorithmic and Networked Photography combines theory and practice, encouraging to cultivate a dynamic fusion of critical thinking and experimental creation. At the heart of this approach is the belief that knowledge production is enriched when reflection and production, contemplation and action, are intertwined. The curriculum revolves around a continuous loop of thinking and making, punctuated by lectures, hands-on workshops and seminars to share ideas, discussions and prototypes. The programme also includes different modes of collaborative practice by offering an elective field trip encouraging knowledge sharing and community building within the students.

An inclination towards experimentation and creative ways of employing imaging technologies and AI images is what sets our approach apart. You will be encouraged to wield tools not merely for the sake of technical prowess but as instruments of artistic expression and subversion. Finally, the Master sees photography as its point of departure, offering an expanded understanding of the medium. Photography is an approach and a way of seeing: it encompasses documentation, performance, intervening and shaping reality, creating and disrupting economies, building relations across the subjects of the image, opening up the apparatus and critically thinking about digital images production, representation and circulation. We emphasize that imaging is a social and political act, carried out not only by humans but also non-human actors with their unique properties, visions, and agendas. Our students delve deep into the complexities of these acts, acknowledging the multifaceted nature of the visual medium.

# We go beyond photography

## Expanding photography

The Master in Algorithmic and Networked Photography is committed to explore all forms of digital images that connect to the trajectory and tradition of photography and yet break from it with specific properties which transform the photographic medium. It is rooted in photography, while looking with an open and curious mind towards its contemporary transformations. Rather than focusing on a technical definition of what photography is, we are interested in how algorithmic and networked visual art and culture can expand and challenge what photography could be and what the field of contemporary photography should occupy itself with.

## Critical play

The Master in Algorithmic and Networked Photography prides itself in its combination of critical thinking and exploratory playful approach. You are expected to break systems wide open to reveal their inner working and reassemble them in new and unexpected ways. Playing against closed image platforms, visual rules and norms, participants operate politically and socially.

## Community

The community of the Master in Algorithmic and Networked Photography connects students with scholars, artists and image practitioners. This network is essential for sharing reflections, advancing the field and working together and supporting each other in creative and professional endeavours.

# The experience

We propose four potential experiences for the students beyond the regular teaching hours:

## Image Hackathon\*

A two days experience for students and guest artists to create prototypes around a theme connected to algorithmic and networked images.

## Screen Walks:

Connecting students to the Screen Walks programme and its artists, curators and researchers

## Transmediale\*

A field trip to the media art festival in Berlin.

## Weekend retreat in a rural house\*

A community building and work retreat in Cal Visó, in the outskirts of Barcelona. The hackathon could happen within the weekend retreat.

\*Not included in the registration fees.

# Team

## Director

JON URIARTE

Jon Uriarte is an independent curator, educator, writer and artist working on the digital and networked transformations of the image. Among other projects he has recently curated Getxophoto International Image Festival in Spain and The Photographers' Gallery digital programme in the UK, where he continues to co-curate Screen Walks (in collaboration with Marco de Mutiis, digital curator at Fotomuseum Winterthur in Switzerland).

## MARCO DE MUTIIS

Marco De Mutiis is a Digital Curator at Fotomuseum Winterthur in Switzerland where he leads the museum research on algorithmic and networked forms of vision and image-making. He leads and co-curates different projects and platforms expanding the role and the space of the museum. These include the collaborative live stream programme Screen Walks (developed and co-curated with Jon Uriarte, curator of digital programmes at The Photographers' Gallery in London), as well as Fotomuseum's current experimental platform [permanent beta] The Lure of the Image.

## Faculty

ROC HERMS

SIMONE C NIQUILLE

PENELOPE UMBRICO

DOREEN RÍOS

MATTEO BITTANTI

JOANA MOLL

BANI BRUSADIN

ESTAMPA COLLECTIVE

MARIO SANTAMARÍA

SEBASTIAN SCHMIED

SARA BEZOVŠEK

ALAN BUTLER

LEONARDO ANGELUCCI

KATRINA SLUIS

ESTAMPA COLLECTIVE

## WHY GO BEYOND?

→ You can find out more about the Master in Algorithmic and Networked Photography at [elisava.net](http://elisava.net)

- If you are a Bold Category Member of Elisava's Alumni Association, you may enjoy a 15% discount on our Master's tuition.
- There may be some changes to the faculty for reasons beyond the course programme.
- Elisava will make the necessary and appropriate changes in the programme or, in exceptional circumstances, cancel the programme altogether if the course has not reached the minimum number of students to ensure its proper functioning two weeks before its initiation. Elisava will only refund the amounts already paid by the students.
- According to their specific necessities, the Master schedules may include additional hours, including during the weekend.