SOAS-Alphawood

Asian Art

Programme

2027/28







SOAS University of London in association with The British Museum V&A

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SOAS-Alphawood Asian Art Programme

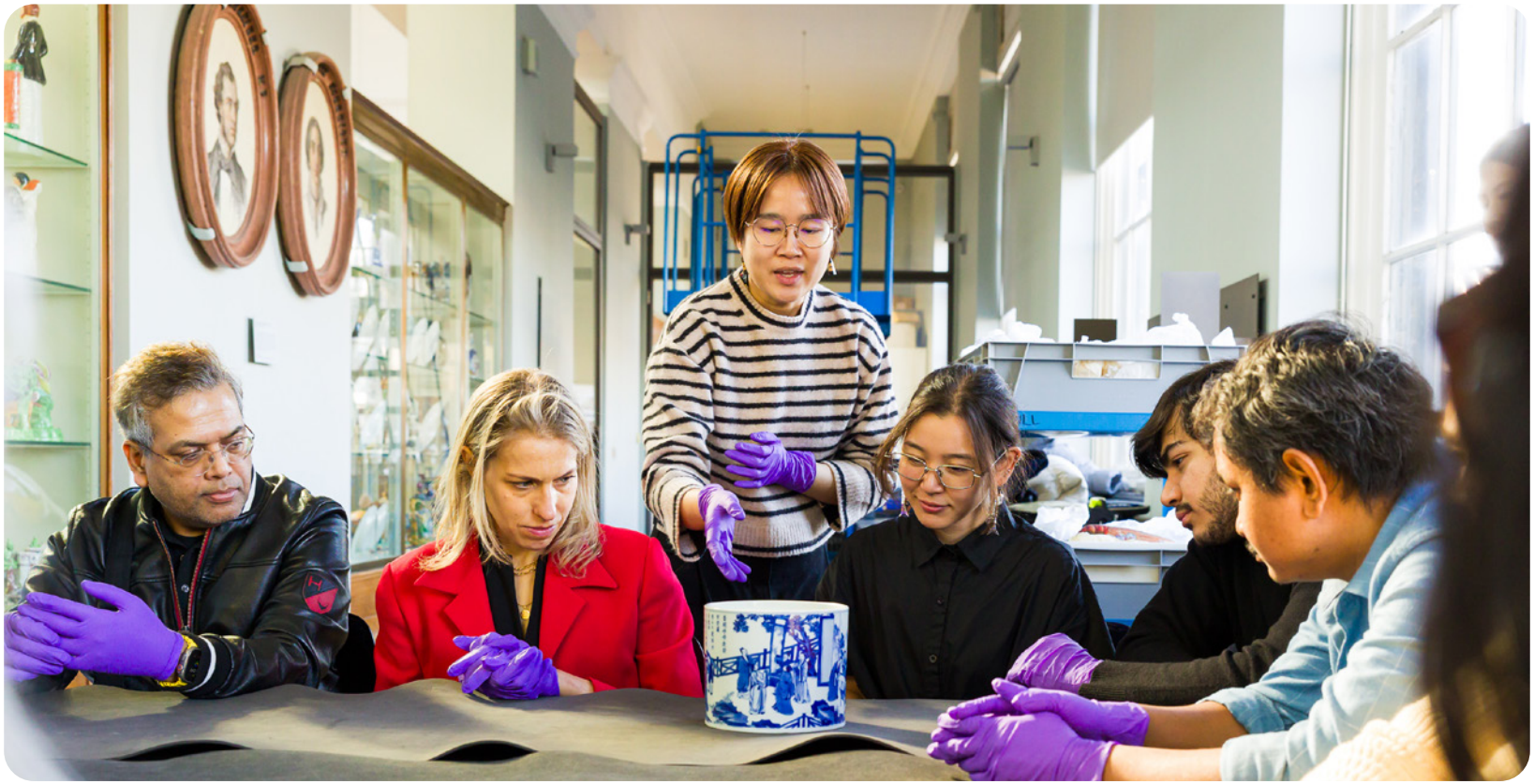
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SOAS University of London



“The superlative collections of the V&A and the British Museum make London one of the most important centres for the appreciation and study of Asian art and culture.

The SOAS-Alphawood Asian Art Programme gives students unique access to these collections and to the expertise of those who curate them.”

Anna Jackson
Keeper of the Asia Department
Victoria & Albert Museum

Jessica Harrison-Hall
Keeper of the Department of Asia
British Museum

Welcome

The SOAS-Alphawood Asian Art Programme offers unique opportunities to study of the Arts of Asia, the Middle East and North Africa via a rigorous postgraduate training in Art History that centres object-based learning.

As a student on our programme, you will hear from a wide variety of specialists, including SOAS faculty and the wider academic community, museum curators, and art market professionals. We foster an environment in which you will encounter and evaluate diverse, sometimes conflicting perspectives, before coming to your own conclusions.

Your learning will be supported by our formal association with the British Museum and Victoria and Albert Museum here in London, offering unique access to the collections of these museums – both physically and digitally – and to the expertise of the curators who care for them.

We offer stackable postgraduate qualifications, all available either in person or online:

- **MA in Asian Art**
- **Postgraduate Diploma in Asian Art**
- **Postgraduate Certificate in Asian Art**

You will receive tailored support from your programme director, module convenors, and dedicated professional services team. We will support you in exploring existing interests, discovering new passions, and asking original questions, all while building your academic abilities and credentials as an art historian.

In recent years, our students have secured numerous internship opportunities unique to SOAS, with placement organisations and institutions including: the British Library, the British Council, Venice Biennale, and SOAS Gallery.

Our alumni occupy positions around the world in academia, museums and the art market. Many of our graduates go on to further study at doctoral level, both at SOAS and internationally. Some go on to develop careers in the arts. Others join us while already working in the arts and cultural sectors, and use their time at SOAS to diversify and deepen their knowledge and expertise, developing projects that are directly appliable in their professional lives. Many graduates also take on personally enriching voluntary roles, both alongside their pre-existing career or as a new project during retirement.

Our programme welcomes applicants who do not have an academic background in the Arts and Humanities, who are returning to higher education after a protracted period, or who come from non-traditional backgrounds. We place particular value on the diversity of perspectives this brings to our classroom.

Please get in touch if you would like to find out more about our programme and determine if we are the right fit for you.



Dr Malcolm McNeill FHEA
Programme Director
Reader (Associate Professor) in the History of Art
AsianArt@soas.ac.uk

What We Offer

We Offer:

- Postgraduate degrees accredited by SOAS University of London, taught at FHEQ level 7
- Auditing access to our postgraduate modules
- Specialist art short courses

We offer two distinct pathways, in-person and online, each combining object-based learning within a rigorous postgraduate training in the critical analysis, evaluation and synthesis of art historical scholarship.

Both pathways feature:

- A range of module options allowing you to create a programme of study that best suits your aims and interests, with entry points in **September**, **January** and **May**
- Object-based learning grounded in visual and material analysis
- Lectures, seminars and contributions from leading academics, curators and art-market professionals based at SOAS, in London and worldwide
- Close support through weekly one-to-one tutorials with your module convenors
- Access to SOAS' Library, the UK's National Research Library for Asia, Africa and the Middle East

In-Person Pathway

Study in London through immersive, full-time modules featuring:

- Gallery and reserve-collection visits to the British Museum, V&A and other institutions
- An intensive schedule of lectures, seminars and review sessions, supported by recommended readings and one-to-one tutorials
- Hands-on and close-up engagement with artworks to develop your skills and confidence in object-led visual and material analysis

Online Pathway

Study from anywhere in the world with:

- Professionally filmed virtual museum contributions
- A schedule of pre-recorded and live teaching designed for flexible study
- Weekly seminars and one-to-one tutorials delivered online
- A rich set of digital resources and activities that support an object-based approach to the History of Art

Both pathways provide a rigorous foundation for future study and professional roles in museums, galleries, heritage organisations and arts institutions internationally.

Who We're For

Students new to SOAS

Our programme is an accessible entry-point for postgraduate study at SOAS.

Recent graduates and aspiring professionals

Our programme is a proven pathway to a career in the arts. Our alumni work for leading universities, museums and commercial institutions across the globe.

Lifelong learners

We are committed to supporting students at all stages of life and pride ourselves on the diverse range of life experience in our classrooms. Whether you are seeking to deepen understanding of a long-standing interest, or to explore something new, we are uniquely positioned to help you develop you interests in and knowledge of Asian art via postgraduate study, our auditing pathway (see page 36), or our specialist short courses (page 49).

Returning alumni seeking further enrichment

For those who have already studied with us at SOAS, our new modules will consolidate your knowledge and skills, and allow you to revisit topics that excite you with the exceptional academic and administrative support we offer, as well as introducing you to new areas of study.

Students with a recent degree from our programme can join further modules as an auditor. Those who earned a qualification with us prior to the 2022/23 academic year may be eligible to join for a new degree.



Programme Details

Find your ideal postgraduate programme by choosing:			
1. Your mode of study			
In-Person Our in-person study mode requires full-time attendance in London and features on-site visits to museum galleries and reserve collections.		**Online** Our online study mode is accessible from anywhere in the world, bringing the artworks of museum galleries and reserve collections – as well as the curators who care for them – to you virtually.	
2. Your qualification			
Postgraduate Certificate (requires 60 credit points)	**Postgraduate Diploma** (requires 120 credit points)	**MA** (requires 180 credit points)	**Auditor** Study for personal enrichment only

3. Your length of study

Full-Time	Part-Time
Requires consecutive periods of study from enrolment through to completion	Offers flexible study options over a longer period of time

Postgraduate Certificate	Postgraduate Diploma	MA
Full time: Three months Part time: Up to one year	Full time: One year Part time: Up to three years	Full time: Seventeen months Part time: Up to three years

4. Your start date

We run three teaching sessions throughout the year and you can start in:
September, January or **May**

5. Your module options

Each qualification and mode of study offers a range of 15 and 30-credit module options for you to choose from, for a full list, see pages 12 (in-person options) and 24 (online options)



“Apart from the opportunity to engage with outstanding scholars, I believe one of the greatest benefits has been the active engagement with the objects studied in the lectures.

From object study sessions to gallery and museum visits, I have been able to see and study artifacts in ways that no other program offers, and these experiences have definitely given me a competitive edge as a scholar and future educator.”

Kevin Morales Bernabe, Puerto Rico

In-Person Study

In-Person Study Pathway Options

In-person **Postgraduate Certificate** (60 credits)		
Compulsory Module 15 Credits	**Guided Options A** 30 Credits - Select 1	**Guided Options B** 15 Credits - Select 1
• Analysing and Exploring the Arts	• Arts of India • Arts of China • Arts of the Islamic World • Arts of the Buddhist World • Arts of Japan & Korea • Arts of Southeast Asia	• Independent Study Project in Asian Art History • Asian Art: Theories, Practices and Objects • Asian Art in the Museum

In-person **Postgraduate Diploma** (120 credits)		
Compulsory Module 15 Credits	**Guided Options A** 30 Credits - Select 3	**Guided Options B** 15 Credits - Select 1
• Analysing and Exploring the Arts	• Arts of India • Arts of China • Arts of the Islamic World • Arts of the Buddhist World • Arts of Japan & Korea • Arts of Southeast Asia	• Independent Study Project in Asian Art History • Asian Art: Theories, Practices and Objects • Asian Art: Theories, Practices and Objects (online) • Asian Art in the Museum

In-Person Study Pathway Options (continued)

In-person **MA** (180 credits)			
Compulsory Module 15 Credits	**Guided Options A** 30 Credits - Select 3	**Guided Options B** 15 Credits - Select 1	**Core Module** 60 Credits
• Analysing and Exploring the Arts	• Arts of India • Arts of China • Arts of the Islamic World • Arts of the Buddhist World • Arts of Japan & Korea • Arts of Southeast Asia	• Independent Study Project in Asian Art History • Asian Art: Theories, Practices and Objects • Asian Art: Theories, Practices and Objects (online) • Asian Art in the Museum	• Dissertation in Asian Art

30-Credit Module Schedule:

- **Arts of India**
  27 September – 15 December 2027 (annually)
- **Arts of China**
  17 January – 05 April 2028 (annually)
- **Arts of Southeast Asia**
  02 May – 19 July 2028 (biennially)
- **Arts of the Islamic World**
  02 May – 19 July 2028 (biennially)
- **Arts of the Buddhist World**
  May – July 2029 (biennially)
- **Arts of Japan & Korea**
  May – July 2029 (biennially)

15-Credit Module Schedule:

- **Analysing and Exploring the Arts**
  Runs alongside every teaching session
- **Independent Study Project in Asian Art History**
  Runs September to January and May to August (annually)
- **Asian Art: Theories, Practices and Objects**
  Runs January to April (annually)
- **Asian Art: Theories, Practices and Objects (online)**
  Runs September to December (annually)
- **Asian Art in the Museum**
  Runs 24 July – 04 August 2028 (annually)



In-Person 30-Credit Module Delivery

30-Credit Module Delivery

Our in-person 30-credit modules require full-time attendance in London for 10 weeks and feature:

- In-person lectures given by SOAS academic staff, leading national and international scholars, museum curators, and art market professionals, generally taking place between 10.00 and 13.00 Monday through Thursday
- Exclusive contributions from the British Museum and Victoria and Albert Museum, including access to their reserve collections
- Visits and object study sessions at a variety of museums, galleries and auction houses, generally taking place on Tuesday and/or Thursday afternoons
- A series of asynchronous online lectures exploring critical thinking and current methods with associated seminars
- Recommended weekly readings
- Weekly review sessions
- Weekly one-to-one tutorials with your module convenors



30-Credit Modules Offered In-Person

- **Arts of India** 27 Sep – 15 December 2027 (annually)
- **Arts of China** 17 January – 05 April 2028 (annually)
- **Arts of Southeast Asia** 02 May – 19 July 2028 (biennially)
- **Arts of the Islamic World** 02 May – 19 July 2028 (biennially)
- **Arts of the Buddhist World** May – July 2029 (biennially)
- **Arts of Japan & Korea** May – July 2029 (biennially)

Arts of India

27 September – 15 December 2027 (annually)

From 2500 BCE to the present day, the *Arts of India* module explores the monumental, fine and decorative arts of South Asia. The module deals with architecture, sculpture, miniature painting, carved jades, carpets, textiles, furniture, jewellery, arms and armour, and the rural arts. The syllabus is broadly chronological and places the art in its religious and historical context. The module begins with an introduction to the Vedas, Buddhism, Jainism and Hinduism focusing on early Jain and Buddhist art and the principles of Hindu iconography, architecture, sculpture and wall painting. It emphasises the relationship between ritual and image in the study of medieval Hindu sculpture and architecture. Lectures cover Buddhist, Jain and Hindu manuscript painting.

The latter half of the module will explore Mughal and Rajput court art from the 16th to 18th centuries, with a particular focus on painting, jewellery and textiles.

Terra-cottas and other rural arts will also be covered and there will be lectures on modern and contemporary South Asian art.



Arts of China

17 January – 05 April 2028 (annually)

The *Arts of China* module examines the material and visual cultures of China from the Neolithic period to the 21st century.

The course covers developments in metalwork, jade, lacquer, ceramics, painting, calligraphy, sculpture, and textiles. Lectures on history, religion, philosophy and literature provide a contextual framework for understanding these developments.

The module also considers the importance of patronage (imperial, elite, and popular), the impact of systems of belief (Confucianism, Buddhism, Daoism), and the role played by changes in the lives and social roles of artists. Technology and design approaches as well as the impact of interaction between China and the outside world are among the topics considered.



Arts of Southeast Asia

02 May – 19 July 2028 (biennially)

This module covers the art of mainland and maritime Southeast Asia from prehistoric times to the present day.

A wide range of art objects are considered from the ethnographical to the classical and monumental arts of Buddhism, Hinduism and Islam. Art historical, archaeological and ethnographic interpretations are presented side by side so that this interdisciplinary approach enhances students' understanding of the vast artistic heritage of the region. The module covers the ethnographic art of the outer Indonesian islands and New Guinea, and the fertility, ancestor and spirit cults it expresses. It surveys the bronze age and the later dramatic development in social complexity engendered as the maritime trade routes developed throughout Southeast Asia and linked China with the Mediterranean. The profound impact of Hinduism and Buddhism is studied as these Indic systems rich in cosmology, philosophy and ritual infused the sacred monumental art and 'real-politik' of Cambodia, Java, Burma, Vietnam and Thailand and produced a boom in magnificent temple construction unmatched in human history.

The module ranges over Southeast Asia's cultural tapestry to offer insight on its statuary and reliefs, its textiles, ceramics, painting, lacquerware, shadow puppets, metalwork, calligraphy, and wood-carving.



Arts of the Islamic World

02 May – 19 July 2028 (biennially)

The *Arts of the Islamic World* module explores the origin and development of the arts produced in the central regions of the Muslim world from the 7th century CE to the present day: architecture, the arts of the book, ceramics, metalwork, glass as well as textiles and carpets.

The module follows a broadly chronological structure, ensuring clarity and continuity, and providing a coherent framework for study. Among the topics covered will be the use of decorative motifs such as calligraphy, the arabesque and geometric ornament and their evolution through different periods and regions. The module will explore what is particular to Islamic art and how artists in the Muslim world borrowed from other cultures as well as the impact Islamic art had on Europe. The influence of the China trade, the exchange of luxury items along the Silk route, and the contacts with Europe and the Mongols in Central Asia will also be examined.



Arts of the Buddhist World

May – July 2029 (biennially)

The *Arts of the Buddhist World* module introduces you to the religious, historical and geographic context for the spread of Buddhism and Buddhist art across Asia: from Buddhism's origins two and a half millennia ago in Northern India, to its current status as a global religion.

The module begins with a brief overview of the life and teachings of the Buddha and considers the earliest Buddhist images in South Asia. We then trace the movement of Buddhist images, ideas and beliefs across the deserts and mountains of Central Asia into China. Exploring the adaptations and developments of Buddhism in China, we go on to examine how these iterations of Buddhist art and culture acted as a catalyst for subsequent developments; first in Korea and Japan, and later in Southeast Asia, Vietnam, Java and Cambodia. The module also explores the distinctive expressions of Esoteric Buddhism developed in Tibet, and the distinctive forms of Buddhist art engendered by the tradition in Burma, Thailand and Cambodia.

In exploring the diverse incarnations of Buddhist art across Asia, this module offers a broad and immersive introduction to the visual and material manifestations of one of the world's most significant religions.



Arts of Japan & Korea

May – July 2029 (biennially)

This module examines the *Arts of Japan and Korea* in relation to religious, historical, and social contexts. The module follows a broad chronological progression from pre-history to contemporary, with the first few weeks focusing primarily on religious art and architecture of ancient to medieval eras when the links between Japan and Korea were particularly strong. While the major part of the module is dedicated to Japan, the study of Korean art is integrated into the module in order to compare and contrast the cultural and art historical development of the two countries. The relationship with China is also considered in a larger East Asian context of transmission of ideas and trade.

The second part of the module examines secular traditions of painting, and a wide variety of decorative arts such as ceramics, lacquer, and textiles. The study of innovative modern and contemporary art, architecture and design towards the end of the module will encourage students to gain a sound understanding of both continuation and evolution of aesthetic ideas.



“I was very grateful that I did not get left out from receiving an education at SOAS with the SOAS-Alphawood Asian Art programme being accessible online. I knew it would be challenging to live up to the high expectations SOAS imbibed into their students alongside my family and job, but it was also an exclusive access to the specialists developing the integrous research in Asian art history I did not want to pass up on.

Having completed the course in a year, it is almost surreal to realise I did it! The autonomous learning platform designed well with manageable tasks meant I could find a harmony that inspired me to work in depth on my specific interests while learning about how they relate to and are relevant to art history scholarship as a whole.

The online course was an exclusive journey led by energetic, intuitive, and highly intelligent authors. On the friends I met online, their work and stories from their parts of the world make me feel honoured that I was a fellow traveller on their critical thinking paths. Thank you for making such an intensive online course elegant and engaging.”

Candice Bressmer, Singapore

Online Study

Online Study Pathway Options

Online **Postgraduate Certificate** (60 credits)		
Compulsory Module 15 Credits	**Guided Options A** 30 Credits - Select 1	**Guided Options B** 15 Credits - Select 1
• Analysing and Exploring the Arts	• Asia's Art Histories • Curating Asian Art • Arts of the Buddhist World (online) • Arts of Southeast Asia (online)	• Independent Study Project in Asian Art History • Asian Art: Theories, Practices and Objects (online) • Asian Art in the Museum

Online **Postgraduate Diploma** (120 credits)		
Compulsory Module 15 Credits	**Guided Options A** 30 Credits - Select 2 or 3	**Guided Options B** 15 Credits - Select 1 or 3
• Analysing and Exploring the Arts	• Asia's Art Histories • Curating Asian Art • Arts of the Buddhist World (online) • Arts of Southeast Asia (online)	• Independent Study Project in Asian Art History • Asian Art: Theories, Practices and Objects (online) • Asian Art in the Museum

Online Study Pathway Options (continued)

Online **MA** (180 credits)			
Compulsory Module 15 Credits	**Guided Options A** 30 Credits - Select 2 or 3	**Guided Options B** 15 Credits - Select 1 or 3	**Core Module** 60 Credits
• Analysing and Exploring the Arts	• Asia's Art Histories • Curating Asian Art • Arts of the Buddhist World (online) • Arts of Southeast Asia (online)	• Independent Study Project in Asian Art History • Asian Art: Theories, Practices and Objects (online) • Asian Art in the Museum	• Dissertation in Asian Art

30-Credit Module Schedule:

- **Asia's Art Histories**
  27 September – 15 December 2027 (annually)
- **Curating Asian Art**
  17 January – 05 April 2028 (annually)
- **Arts of the Buddhist World (online)**
  03 May – 21 July 2028 (biennially)
- **Arts of Southeast Asia (online)**
  May – July 2029 (biennially)

15-Credit Module Schedule:

- **Analysing and Exploring the Arts**
  Runs alongside every teaching session
- **Independent Study Project in Asian Art History**
  Runs September to January and May to August (annually)
- **Asian Art: Theories, Practices and Objects (online)**
  Runs September to December (annually)
- **Asian Art in the Museum**
  Runs 24 July – 04 August 2028 (annually)

“As junior curator of Southeast Asian Art of the Ferenc Hopp Museum, Budapest, it was immensely useful to join the online modules provided by the SOAS-Alphawood Asian Art Programme.

Quite naturally, to somebody whose living and working conditions are located outside of the U.K. this online pathway is just the perfect choice to be able to broaden their professional knowledge and perspective as well as to get acquainted with the most recent trends and development of their prospective fields.

With the kind support of my convenors, I could frame my assignment in line with my professional interests and current work/research at the Museum.

I consider my time at “Virtual SOAS” as a fun, demanding and also necessary step in my professional development”. (And it was even more exciting to visit the university and meet the team in person as a closing accord/chapter of my studies.)”

Anna Vécsei, Hungary

Online 30-Credit Module Delivery

30-Credit Module Delivery

Our online 30-credit modules offer you an immersive foundation at postgraduate level in a richly rewarding field of study, with a unique range of digital resources and exceptional pedagogical support over 10-weeks.

Our online modules are designed to be accessible from anywhere in the world, and with those who will have other professional and/or personal commitments in mind (although we do recommend allocating 30 hours of study time per week).

Online modules consist of a variety of different modes of learning, including:

- Asynchronous, online lectures given by SOAS academic staff, leading national and international scholars, museum curators, and art market professionals
- Exclusive contributions filmed in the exhibitions, galleries, and reserve collections of the British Museum and Victoria & Albert Museum
- Recommended weekly readings
- Live, weekly seminar discussions conducted via Zoom
- Recommended weekly readings
- Online discussion fora facilitated by module convenors
- Weekly one-to-one tutorials with your module convenors



30-Credit Modules Offered Online

- **Asia's Art Histories** 27 Sep – 15 December 2027 (annually)
- **Curating Asian Art** 17 January – 05 April 2028 (annually)
- **Arts of Southeast Asia (online)** 02 May – 19 July 2028 (biennially)
- **Arts of the Buddhist World (online)** May – July 2029 (biennially)

Online 30-Credit Module Overviews

Asia's Art Histories

27 September – 15 December 2027 (annually)

This module will provide students with training in art history at a postgraduate level. The first half of the module addresses a range of analytical approaches to the varied Art Histories of Asia. We will analyse how narratives of art history are shaped and written, explore distinct approaches to reading visual and material evidence, consider relationships between archaeology and art history, and examine the interrelationship of architecture and sculpture. The second half of the modules examines thematic topics, building on the methods and approaches covered in the first half of the module.

Each week, you will have access to three lectures or online object study sessions presented as case studies on the weekly theme. Over the course of the module, lectures will cover the following regions and topics: South Asian Art, Chinese Art, Japanese and Korean Art, Southeast Asian Art, Arts of the Islamic World, and Arts of the Buddhist World. These topics have been selected to reflect the regions and themes taught in-depth on other modules of the SOAS-Alphawood Asian Art Programme, offering students either a consolidation of past study, or an introduction to potential further study.

An indicitive list of themes include:

- Art historiography
- Art historical approaches to archaeological material
- Approaches to material arts and material culture
- Analysing architecture, space and environment
- Approaches to visual arts and culture
- Religious and ritual uses of objects, artworks and architecture
- Gender and agency
- Collection histories
- Modernities
- The contemporary

Curating Asian Art

17 January – 05 April 2028 (biennially)

This module introduces you to the curation of Asian art, and visual and material culture. You will explore a diverse range of contexts in which Asian art is curated: from museums, to monuments, to commercial and private spaces.

Each week, you will explore a distinct theme or topic connected to curation and museology. These themes link your programme of study to current discussions and debates shaping curatorial practice and museological scholarship today.

Each weekly theme is supported by a series of case studies, drawing on the diverse areas covered in the SOAS-Alphawood Asian Art Programme. These case studies are delivered by a wide range of SOAS faculty and guest speakers, exposing you to a unique range of perspectives from across the museum, university and commercial arts sectors.

You will engage in practical, reflective assignments, with options to select projects and case studies that are relevant to your interests, aspirations, or current employment and to collections and institutions you have access to locally.

Curating Asian Art offers an in-depth introduction to curatorial and museum practice today. You will reflect on past and present practices of curation, while also developing skills and knowledge that will equip you to help shape its future.



Arts of the Buddhist World (online)

02 May – 19 July 2028 (biennially)

The Arts of the Buddhist World module introduces you to the religious, historical and geographic context for the spread of Buddhism and Buddhist art across Asia: from Buddhism's origins two and a half millennia ago in Northern India, to its current status as a global religion. The course begins with a brief overview of the life and teachings of the Buddha and considers the earliest Buddhist images in South Asia. We then trace the movement of Buddhist images, ideas and beliefs across the deserts and mountains of Central Asia into China. Exploring the adaptations and developments of Buddhism in China, we go on to examine how these iterations of Buddhist art and culture acted as a catalyst for subsequent developments; first in Korea and Japan, and later in Southeast Asia, Vietnam, Java and Cambodia. The course also explores the distinctive expressions of Esoteric Buddhism developed in Tibet, and the distinctive forms of Buddhist art engendered by the tradition in Burma, Thailand and Cambodia.

In exploring the diverse incarnations of Buddhist art across Asia, this course offers a broad and immersive introduction to the visual and material manifestations of one of the world's most significant religions.



Arts of Southeast Asia (online)

May – July 2029 (biennially)

This module covers the art of mainland and maritime Southeast Asia from prehistoric times to the present day, with a strong focus on pre-modern Hindu-Buddhist material. A wide range of art objects are considered from the ethnographical to the classical and monumental arts of Buddhism, Hinduism and Islam. Art historical, archaeological and ethnographic interpretations are presented side by side so that this inter-disciplinary approach enhances students' understanding of the vast artistic heritage of the region.

The module covers the ethnographic art of the outer Indonesian islands and New Guinea, and the fertility, ancestor and spirit cults it expresses. It surveys the bronze age and the later dramatic development in social complexity engendered as the maritime trade routes developed throughout Southeast Asia and linked China with the Mediterranean. The profound impact of Hinduism and Buddhism is studied as these Indic systems rich in cosmology, philosophy and ritual infused the sacred monumental art and 'real-politik' of Cambodia, Java, Burma, Vietnam and Thailand and produced a boom in magnificent temple construction unmatched in human history.

The module ranges over Southeast Asia's cultural tapestry to offer insight on its statuary and reliefs, its textiles, ceramics, painting, lacquerware, shadow puppets, metalwork, calligraphy, and wood-carving.



Our 15-Credit Modules

Our 15-credit modules are offered on both our in-person and online pathways.

They are all designed to support, enrich and expand your learning on the SOAS-Alphawood Asian Art Programme.

All students on our postgraduate programme must complete (at least) two of these modules to earn an academic award.

For a full list of module selection options please see page 12 (for in-person study) or page 24 (for online study).

15-Credit Modules Offered:

- **Analysing and Exploring the Arts** (compulsory)

  Runs alongside every teaching session

- **Asian Art: Theories, Practices and Objects**

  Runs online September to December and in person January to April (annually)

- **Independent Study Project in Asian Art History**

  Runs September to January and May to August (annually)

- **Asian Art in the Museum***

  Runs 24 July – 04 August 2028 (annually)

  On campus, in London

  *Requires supplementary fee

Analysing and Exploring the Arts

This module is compulsory and will be taken alongside (or prior to) your first 30-credit module.

Analysing and Exploring the Arts provides core training in object-based approaches to the History of Art for students on the SOAS-Alphawood Asian Art programme, through a combination of practical and reflective learning activities supported by multiple contributors.

The module explores the mechanics of art historical research, writing and argumentation, reflecting on different contexts for and priorities in the production and reception of art historical knowledge. Through a reflective process we support you in maximising the opportunities offered by in person encounters with objects, artworks and sites on this programme, while also cultivating a critical awareness of the conditions that shape those encounters. By comparing and contrasting approaches to analysis, interpretation and curation in museums and cultural institutions, auctions houses and commercial galleries, arts journalism, and academic writing we support you in situating objects of Asian Art and the narratives through which they are interpreted within the at times contested priorities of arts, culture, commerce and academia.

Asian Art: Theories, Practices and Objects

In this module, you will explore the theories and practices that have shaped the study of the arts of Asia, the Middle East and their diasporas.

You will critically interrogate a plurality of voices that shape modern and contemporary art historical theories and methodologies. These will be examined alongside analysis of contemporary, modern and historic aesthetics, art discourses and art practices. Via synthesising a wide variety of materials, you will develop a critical understanding of historic development of art historical inquiry in Asia.

The module aims to bring together theoretical perspectives, practical examples and object-based encounters, fostering critical and considered engagement with your course material and allowing you to develop your own lines of enquiry.

Independent Study Project in Asian Art History

The Independent Study Project in Asian Art History allows you to develop a focused project on a single topic in Asian Art history. You will consolidate the skills and approaches you have developed throughout your programme, by applying them to a single output. Your output can be an essay (3000 words), an exhibition proposal with selected object catalogue entries (3000 words), an extended presentation (20 mins), or a guided tour of a museum gallery (20 mins). You will work with a supervisor to select a topic, develop a formative proposal, select and appraise appropriate sources, and research and deliver your final output. This is an opportunity for you to pursue a singular, focused passion, communicating and consolidating your understanding, enthusiasm and critical engagement with the content of the SOAS-Alphawood Postgraduate Diploma in Asian Art programme.

The Independent Study Project in Asian Art History includes five workshops that help you conceive, focus and develop your project, and six 30 minute 1-1 meetings with your supervisor.

You can complete this course alongside your final 30-credit module or in a future term (visa permitting), so long as you complete within your maximum period of registration.

Asian Art in the Museum

24 July – 04 August 2028

Runs annually, **in-person** in London

This intensive two-week module offers immersive training in critical museology and object biography through the direct study of Asian art.

Taught through case studies spanning diverse regions, periods and artistic traditions, it combines lectures and seminars with on-site, object-based learning in museum galleries and exhibitions, reserve collections, libraries and archives, meeting with the curators who care for them.

The module develops essential skills in object analysis, critical interpretation, and museological practice.

Ways to join Asian Art in the Museum

As your first module

Begin your journey on the SOAS-Alphawood Asian Art Programme by joining us for *Asian Art in the Museum* and you will earn 15 credit points at FHEQ level 6.

At any other time

Complement your journey on the SOAS-Alphawood Asian Art Programme by completing *Asian Art in the Museum* at any other point within your maximum period of registration and you will earn 15 credit points at FHEQ level 7.

As an independent programme

Asian Art in the Museum is available to take independently of further study. You will earn 15 credit points at FHEQ level 6.

Fees

When taken as part of an MA, Postgraduate Diploma or Postgraduate Certificate, Asian Art in the Museum requires a supplementary fee of **£1,895**.

When taken as an independent programme, the fee for Asian Art in the Museum is **£2,575**.

Accommodation

Please note that accommodation is not provided and must be arranged at your own expense.



Dissertation in Asian Art

Runs January - May (in person)
and January - September (online)

For those enrolled on the MA in Asian Art (in-person or online), our dissertation module will be your capstone module, taken after you have completed 120 credit points in other modules.

This module is an opportunity for you to develop a chosen project in depth and detail. You will be supported by a dedicated supervisor, as well as a dissertation convenor who will work with you as a cohort.

You do not need to begin your dissertation module with a fully defined project, only an area of interest or indicative topic framed with some initial research questions.

We will support you in shaping your project and developing your research and writing with 5 hours of lectures and 5 hours of workshops.

Supervision will involve 3 hours of one-to-one tutorials with your dedicated supervisor.

You will have full access to the SOAS Library - the UK's dedicated research library in Asia and Africa.



Auditing

Auditing Policy

We offer auditing spaces on our modules to those who are not seeking an academic qualification.

Those who choose to audit the course enjoy full access as a SOAS student to all teaching on the programme, university resources and even the option of weekly one-to-one tutorials with their module convenors, but are not required to complete any assessments.

Auditors receive no credit points and cannot earn an academic award for their time on the programme.

Application process

Auditors must be eligible for study on the programme as per our entry requirements and must submit an application to join each teaching session as an individual course of study.

Transferring to accredited study

Should you wish to do so, we will endeavour to support auditors transferring to accredited study within the first two weeks of the teaching session. This may not be possible for in-person study if visa restrictions apply.



2027/28 Auditing Fees		
	Per 30-Credit Module	Per 15-Credit Module*
In Person	£3,950	£1,975
Online	£2,390	£1,195

* Does not apply to Asian Art in the Museum, which is charged at the full fee

Fees and Payments

2027/28 Tuition Fees			
	Postgraduate Certificate (60 credits)	**Postgraduate Diploma** (120 credits)	**MA** (180 credits)
In Person (with Asian Art in the Museum)	**£8,780** (£10,675)	**£17,555** (£19,450)	**£26,330** (£28,225)
Online (with Asian Art in the Museum)	**£5,310** (£7,205)	**£10,620** (£12,515)	**£15,930** (£17,825)

Deposits and Payment Schedules

Programmes lasting longer than three months can be paid for in installments, with fees being calculated based on modules to be taken in each 12-month period. 50% of the annual fee must be paid before the start of the year, with the remaining 50% due within 20 weeks of the start date.

Supplementary fees for joining **Asian Art in the Museum** will be charged separately to your programme's tuition fee.

Successful applicants may be required to secure their place on the programme by making a deposit payment.

Annual Fee Increases

Tuition fees are subject to annual increases (applied from each September). Students paying in installments are protected from any annual increase exceeding 5%.

Alumni and Family Discount (in-person study only)

A 25% reduction in tuition fees is available to all alumni who have an Undergraduate degree in any subject from SOAS, but no higher qualification. The same discount is available to any applicant whose family member (defined as grandparent, parent, sibling, child or spouse) is a SOAS graduate or staff member. Please note that the reduction only applies to the first year of a full-time course or equivalent part-time enrolment.

For full information, please see: **www.soas.ac.uk/study/fees-and-funding/**

The Alphawood Scholarships

Alphawood scholarships are available to support residents of Southeast Asia (Brunei, Cambodia, East Timor, Indonesia, Laos, Malaysia, Myanmar/ Burma, Singapore, Thailand or Vietnam) in completing the SOAS-Alphawood Postgraduate Diploma in Asian Art via our in-person pathway.

The scholarship covers full tuition fees for the complete programme as well as a stipend to cover living costs during term time. Financial support is also available to cover travel, visas and other preparatory costs.

Alphawood scholarships also provide support for our students to advance their English-language proficiency through dedicated courses at the SOAS Department of International Foundation Courses and English Language Studies (IFCELS).

The Alphawood scholarships form part of an academic programme which is generously supported by the Alphawood Foundation (Chicago). The remit of the programme is to support and advance, through study and research, the understanding and preservation of Southeast Asian Buddhist and Hindu art and architecture from ancient to pre-modern times.

Alphawood scholars are selected with the expectation that they, as alumni, will be in a position to apply the learning and skills they gain while on award to the benefit of the galleries, museums, heritage organisations, universities, government departments and other institutions in the Southeast Asian region in which they may go on to work.

Since 2014, Alphawood has provided for over 100 scholarships which supported Southeast Asian scholars' postgraduate study at the Postgraduate Diploma, MA and MPhil/PhD levels at SOAS.



The Hettie Elgood Scholarship

This scholarship covers full tuition fees for the in-person pathway of the SOAS-Alphawood Postgraduate Diploma in Asian Art and an allowance to cover living costs during term time.

The scholarship is open to anyone, anywhere in the world who is not financially able to pursue the course without a full scholarship and stipend.

The Ortigia Scholarship

This scholarship covers full tuition fees for the in-person pathway of the SOAS-Alphawood Postgraduate Diploma in Asian Art and an allowance to cover living costs during term time.

The scholarship is open to those who were the first in their family to go to university or who are resident in a country where there is conflict, extreme challenge or adversity.

We strongly encourage applicants who would not have considered the programme without the opportunity afforded by these scholarships.

We hope these scholarships will be a transformative opportunity, enabling the successful applicant to pursue a career related to Asian art, such as academia, curatorial or museum work, or a position in the commercial art world.

For full details on all scholarships (including availability and application deadlines) please visit: **www.soas.ac.uk/soas-alphawood**



Entry Requirements

Entry Criteria

We will consider applications with the equivalent of a UK undergraduate degree at 2:2 or above. International qualification equivalents are listed on our website.

In addition to degree classification, we take into account other elements of the application including a supporting statement and references. While references are optional, they can help build a stronger application profile if you fall below the 2:2 requirement or have non-traditional qualifications.

Our programme welcomes applicants who do not have an academic background in the Arts and Humanities, who are returning to higher education after a protracted period, or who come from non-traditional backgrounds. We place particular value on the diversity of perspectives this brings to our classroom.

Accessibility

Applications are considered on the standard academic criteria, regardless of any disability. We do recommend that you contact the Disability & Neurodiversity Team on **disabilities@soas.ac.uk** before submitting your application so that any potential adjustments can be discussed and so that you can decide if SOAS is suitable for you.

We will do all that we can to make it possible for you to study at SOAS but in the unlikely event that we are not able to make the adjustments necessary we will let you know as soon as possible.

Visa Requirements for In-Person Study

All international students (non-UK and Irish nationals) looking to study in-person will be required to follow UK Visa and Immigration policy.

International students are required to study our in-person programme via our **full-time** route and programmes of study lasting longer than six months (Postgraduate Diploma, MA) will require a **Student Visa**.

International students completing an in-person MA must be begin in January to comply with the above.

Programmes of study lasting fewer than six months (Postgraduate Certificate, auditing a module) can be joined as a standard visitor to the UK.

You can use the **UK Government's visa checking tool** to find out which type of visa you will require for periods of in-person study over or under six months.

Asian Art in the Museum can be joined as a standard UK visitor if it is your only period of in-person study with us as part of your programme.

Please note that individuals in the UK with Graduate Visa status are not eligible to enrol on any of our in-person programmes.

There are no visa requirements for online study.

Please be aware that, regardless of any offer you hold for our programme, permission to enter the UK is always at the discretion of the UK Visa and Immigration authorities.

Language Requirements

All international applicants not from a government-recognised Majority English Speaking Country must be able to show that their English is of a high enough standard to successfully engage with and complete the programme.

The required standard for direct entry is IELTS level 6.5 overall with at least 6.0 in all sub-scores.

More information about these requirements, accepted forms of evidence, and exemptions can be found at:

www.soas.ac.uk/international/english-language-requirements



Prepatory English Courses

For applicants who don't yet meet our language requirements, SOAS offers preparatory English courses via our International Foundation Courses and English Language Studies (IFCELS) department:

www.soas.ac.uk/ifcels

Study Restrictions

Students cannot be enrolled on more than one SOAS programme at any one time.



How to Apply

Application Procedure

Our online application form is accessible via our website.

A completed application form must be submitted along with:

- A personal statement outlining your background, interests, and why you are applying for the course (approximately 500 words)
- Validated evidence of your degree (transcript and/or certificate, officially translated into English if international)
- Evidence of English Language ability (if required)

Application deadlines are as follows. Early application is strongly advised. Late applications will be considered where possible.

Places on each module will be allocated on a first-come, first-served basis.

Start Date	Application Deadline
27 September 2027	16 August 2027
17 January 2027	06 December 2027
02 May 2028	21 March 2028

Interviews

Applicants may be invited to attend an informal interview with the Programme Director, who will assess the candidate's commitment and aptitude. No special preparation for this interview is necessary.

Accommodation

London/UK residency and full-time attendance is required for in-person modules. Those relocating to London are responsible for their own accommodation and are strongly advised to allow ample time to make suitable arrangements before their course begins. SOAS offers support for finding a variety of accommodation options, including halls of residence for postgraduate students, shared student housing or private rental.

For more information see: **www.soas.ac.uk/accommodation**

Programme Amendments

Those responsible for the programme reserve the right to amend the content and timing of the courses.

The information in this prospectus is accurate at the date of publication but may have been amended.

For the most up to date information, please see our website: **www.soas.ac.uk/soas-alphawood**



The Student Experience

Support

Ensuring you have the best possible experience as a student on the SOAS-Alphawood Asian Art Programme is our utmost priority. While studying with us, you will be fully supported by the programme director, manager, a dedicated administrative team and your module convenors, who will each do their best to see you get the most out of your time with us.

Learning

The flexible nature of study, allowing you to select your modules and complete the course on a part-time basis, is aimed to fit around those who work or have personal commitments.

In each in-person module, art history of a particular region or religious tradition is introduced in a broadly chronological framework. In our online modules, you are introduced to current themes and approaches in art history through focused case studies.

Skills

Across the programme, you will develop key skills in documenting, analysing and contextualising objects, alongside transferable academic skills in essay writing and presentation. This ensures that candidates who do not have an art history background are able to adapt quickly to art historical academic writing. Many of our students come from varied academic and professional backgrounds and we ensure that they are well equipped to handle the material alongside students from an arts background, with dedicated training offered in our 15-credit module, Analysing and Exploring the Arts.



Careers and Further Opportunities

The SOAS-Alphawood Asian Art Programme is a pathway to further study or a career in museums and the art world.

Many of our graduates, including those with no prior background in art history or archaeology, go on to further study, including taught postgraduate and PhD projects at SOAS and other institutions worldwide.

Alumni from the programme have gone on to work in UK and international Museums, auctions houses and galleries including: the Asian Civilisation Museum Singapore, the British Museum, Tai Kwun, The Victoria and Albert Museum, the Hong Kong Palace Museum, Bonhams, Christies, Sotheby's and many more.



"The SOAS-Alphawood Asian Art Programme was a life-changing experience for my academic and professional career. The lectures are dynamic and thought-provoking, and the convenors frequently invite truly inspiring specialists to lecture on a wide range of amazing topics. This learning experience is complemented by seminars and visits to museums, galleries, and auction houses.

Object handling sessions were unique opportunities for students to develop an intimate relationship with Art objects, combining the theoretical approach with practical and sensorial experience. I have never met anywhere such a vast range of diverse individuals so affectionately devoted to Asian arts. The course is an intense immersion in this field, offering great learning and exchange opportunities with lecturers, students, and professionals who work with art.

The program's multi-focal organization is efficient, adapting and corresponding to the demands of students who intend to engage in academic research or those looking for Museum and Galleries positions or working in the art market. The convenors were always available for advice and guidance, and it was through their support that I was able to develop my Ph.D. proposal. I feel that I am more prepared for the next steps in my academic career and have more professional opportunities after getting this Diploma."

Diogo Farias, Brazil

Internship Opportunities

Students on our programme are supported in applying for internship positions when they are made available.

Examples of internship opportunities available to our students in recent years include placements with:

- **The British Council and the Venice Biennale**
- **The British Library**
- **The British Museum**
- **The Fondation Chu Teh-Chun**
- **SOAS Co-Creator Internships**
- **SOAS Gallery**



"As part of my time as the 2024/25 Dr Hettie Elgood scholar on the SOAS-Alphawood Asian Art Programme, I was fortunate to also be selected by the university and British Council to undertake a fellowship at the 19th Venice Biennale of Architecture with the British-Kenyan Pavilion.

I engaged visitors to Venice from around world with an impactful exhibition examining architecture and colonisation as parallel, interconnected systems.

The fellowship provided an invaluable opportunity to observe how site, materiality, and narrative converge within a major international exhibition and these ideas will continue to inform my ongoing research into systems of interbeing within the material world—the relationships between objects, their environments, and the people who engage with them.

Being in a city as unique as Venice alongside a cohort of incredible students from universities around the UK, as well as meeting other Fellows to the Biennale working at the Peggy Guggenheim museum and other national pavilions from Romania to the United States was a singular experience.

These new friends enriched my understanding of how architecture, technology, material culture, and creative practice intersect, particularly in the context of addressing colonial legacies and environmental sustainability."

Vy Tsan, Australia



Specialist Art Short Courses

Alongside our postgraduate degrees, our specialist short courses have become an integral part of the SOAS-Alphawood Asian Art programme.

These courses are open to all and aimed at those from a wide variety of backgrounds seeking to broaden their knowledge of specialised areas of Asian art. Short courses are ideal for those who do not have the opportunity to attend our full-time programme. They also serve as a taster to our longer, more immersive modules. These courses enable you to explore specialist areas which are not covered in depth within our postgraduate modules.

In-person specialist art courses explore a single topic over an intensive four-day programme, including lectures by leading experts. Where appropriate we also include practising artists, musicians and object-study sessions.

Online specialist art courses offer eight weekly lectures by leading experts from academia, museums and the art market. Lectures are followed by in-depth discussions moderated by the course convenor.

In 2027/28 we are thrilled to offer a combination of weekly, online short courses as well as four-day, in-person courses.

There are no entry requirements for our short courses.

For more information regarding our upcoming courses, please visit:

www.soas.ac.uk/art-short-courses

or contact asianart@soas.ac.uk





Our Global Alumni Network

Our Alumni

All who engage with our programme, be it as a postgraduate student, auditor or attendee of a specialist short course are welcomed into our global alumni network of over 1,500 like-minded individuals passionate about the Arts of Asia, living in over 50 countries worldwide.



Our Alumni have access to:

- A series of exclusive events run by our Founder and Director of the Global Alumni Network, Dr Hettie Elgood, including museum and gallery tours, as well as tours of private collections both in the UK and worldwide
- An annual Distinguished Lecture Series and Alumni Party event
- International tours run in partnership with Distant Horizons
- Access to free lectures and events

Graduates of our postgraduate programme are also eligible for:

- Lifelong free access to the SOAS Library (with the option to upgrade to a borrowing membership at a discounted rate) as well as online resources such as JSTOR for access to thousands of scholarly articles digitally
- Lifelong access to the SOAS Careers Service, for support with job searches, networking opportunities and more

Ready To Take The Next Step?

Contact Us

If you have any questions about our programme, pathways, application process or anything further, contact us on:

Phone: +44 (0)20 7898 4445

Email: AsianArt@soas.ac.uk

Book a One-to-One Meeting

Our Programme Director, Dr Malcolm McNeill, would be delighted to meet with you to discuss your goals and help you explore whether our programme is the right fit for you. Meetings can be arranged in person, via phone or via Zoom.

Email: AsianArt@soas.ac.uk to set a time and date.

Apply

Applications are open year-round, with entry points in **September, January** and **May**.

Find our application form at:
www.AsianArtProgramme.co.uk

Connect With Us

Follow us for updates on our programme and related news and events:

Instagram: @asianartprogramme

YouTube: /asianartsoas





www.AsianArtProgramme.com