

# MASTER OF ARTS ASIAN ART HISTORIES

**Duration:**

Full-Time — 1.5 Years (3 Semesters)

Part-Time — 3 Years (6 Semesters)

**Award:**

Master of Arts

Asian Art Histories

**Mode:**

Full-Time or Part-Time

Classes will be conducted  
mostly in the evenings

**Intake:**

January

**AT A GLANCE**

1. The programme focuses on Asian modern and contemporary art.
2. Based in Singapore, the programme gives students convenient access to museums, archives and cultural institutions around the region to do research.
3. The programme is taught in a practice-based institution which offers students opportunities to interact and collaborate with art practitioners.
4. An innovative programme, it takes learning beyond the classroom and includes local and overseas field trips to museums, exhibitions, independent art spaces, and cultural institutions as well as seminars and conferences.
5. The programme is taught by an established faculty that includes art historians and curators as well as guest lecturers from the arts industry such as art market specialists, art gallerists, museum professionals and artists.
6. There will be opportunities and platforms for optional attachments in cultural institutions, to write and research as well as to curate exhibitions.
7. Classes are held in the evenings to cater to working professionals.

"I was very impressed by the Asian Art Histories programme... it is especially important to develop centres for the study of art history outside of the mainstream narratives of Western Europe and North America. The faculty and students in the programme are extremely engaged and well informed."

*Professor James Elkins, E.C. Chadbourne Chair in the Department of Art History, Theory, and Criticism at The School of the Art Institute of Chicago*

The MA in Asian Art Histories is the first MA programme in any tertiary institution worldwide to focus on Asian modern and contemporary art. While Asian art history programmes generally focus on classicism or the grand traditions, this programme gives you the art historical and theoretical resources and the opportunity to undertake original research in largely under explored fields, investigate recently emerged artists and movements, and thereby contribute to art historical discourse and scholarship. In addition, the programme encourages you to establish and expand your professional practices and networks, developing your potential to become leading thinkers and cultural producers in the field.

These are exciting times for Asian art and artists, many of whom have attained international stardom buoyed by market demand and greater visibility in the international art circuit. At the same time, Asian countries have been transformed into major centres for the arts. The success and visibility of Asian art means that researching and studying in this area is all the more timely and relevant.

The MA in Asian Art Histories Programme allows you to take advantage of these emerging networks by offering opportunities to participate in conferences, publications and research projects alongside industry leaders. The programme is also committed to supporting innovative individual and collaborative research projects by making available a number of grants for current students and alumni. This includes various alumni grants such as the Winston Oh Art Histories Travel Grant and the Chinese Art and Cultural Research Grant.

By studying at LASALLE, you will benefit from being located in Singapore, the arts and cultural hub of Southeast Asia, with an arts infrastructure that is unmatched by any other country in the region. The MA Asian Art Histories Programme takes full advantage of Singapore's vast resources on Southeast Asian art by including in its curriculum regular off-site visits to galleries and other cultural institutions, as well as one overseas study trip to an area of relevance and interest. Previous trips have included visits to artist's studios, galleries, archives, museums and collections in countries including Hong Kong, Vietnam, India and China. Students wanting to undertake in-depth field research will also benefit from Singapore's strategic proximity to resources around the region.

Expanding the purview of conventional art histories, the programme encourages analysis of Asian modern and contemporary art from Asian perspectives rather than through Euro-American approaches alone. By studying Asian Art Histories in the practice-based environment of LASALLE, you will also experience an immersive environment within which to engage with practitioners and artworks, fostering interdisciplinary approaches towards the study and writing of art histories.

The programme will equip you with the appropriate expertise and academic rigor to undertake a higher level of independent research work such as a PhD.



2 Dr Caroline Turner

## PROGRAMME STRUCTURE

This full-time programme spans three consecutive semesters within a 1.5-year duration. Semesters 1 and 2 each have two 30-credit modules. In Semester 2, a 30-credit elective module option is made available to you with a choice to take the module offered by your respective programme or, in consultation with your Programme Leader, select a module offered by another MA programme. The 60-credit module in the final (3rd) semester will support you to develop a thesis based on your research interests.

### FULL-TIME

SEMESTER 1	CREDIT POINTS
Research Methods in Creative Arts	30
Histories and Theories on Asian Art	30
SEMESTER 2	CREDIT POINTS
Exhibitions and the Making of Art Histories in Asia	30
Society and Politics in Asian Art	30
SEMESTER 3	CREDIT POINTS
Final Research	60

In the part-time mode, the programme spans six consecutive semesters within a 3-year duration. You are required to complete one 30-credit module each in Semesters 1 to 4. The Final Research 60-credit module will span the last 2 semesters in the final year. Part-time students will begin with the Research Methods in Creative Arts module as this establishes core principles and skills necessary across all MA programmes, while also introducing techniques of research, and enables you to present and write analytically and critically across relevant issues in your field of study. You will undergo academic guidance from your Programme Leader to organise your course of study.

### Research Methods in Creative Arts

This module is an introduction to arts research through a thorough study of research methods and analytical techniques informing artistic and critical practices at the MA level. Research operates within a critical context and this module aims to prepare you to confidently articulate your practice, formulate your own critical arguments, and formulate methods to investigate and probe issues.

### Histories and Theories on Asian Art

This module examines the multiple intersections between art histories and critical theories in the 20th century that are used to frame the development of Asian art discourses. In the last two decades, scholars in the field of Asian art have developed theoretical frameworks and perspectives that critiqued the monolithic Euro-American paradigm of art history. This module will give emphasis to histories and theories that are specific to the Asian context such as postcolonial theory, as well as more recent cultural theories that deal with identity and difference.

### Exhibitions and the Making of Art Histories in Asia

This module examines the history of exhibitions as one of the primary drivers of Asian art histories through a series of detailed case studies starting from the 1980s to the present day. It will discuss the issues that surrounded art academies as well as galleries and museums in Asia, before focusing on the phenomenon of the exhibition. It will discuss different approaches to exhibition-making by Western and Asian curators as well as the reception of exhibitions on Asian contemporary art in the West. This module will also analyse the role of artist-curators in the shaping of art histories in Southeast Asia, as well as issues surrounding the art market and new exhibition formats such as biennales.

### Society and Politics in Asian Art

This module investigates the ways in which new paradigms in artistic practices are influenced by local and regional issues and events as well as the critical engagement of artists with those developments.

### Final Research

The thesis is a major component of the programme that is a consolidated application of the skills and knowledge that you have acquired throughout the programme. In the thesis, you will demonstrate your ability to undertake academic and scholarly research by your critical engagement with historical and theoretical issues in modern and contemporary Asian art within an appropriate methodological framework.

"... the course widens the possibilities of approaching art history from the varied contexts of art making in Asia... I have been interested in art for the longest time but this course stretched that interest and gave me the vocabulary and the issues which I needed to know and build on in order to understand, discuss and write about art with greater insight and depth."

Rohaya Binte Mustapha, Alumna (2012),  
MA Asian Art Histories

## POSTGRADUATE RESEARCH

LASALLE has a long tradition of practice-led research in art and design. The College aims to assume a significant role in Singapore for practice-led research in visual, performing and literary arts, and aspires to add the distinctive viewpoint of Singapore to research into artistic practice in the 21st century.

The Research Methods in Creative Arts module is a common module which all students are required to undertake. You will have the opportunity to interact with one another in the first term (7 weeks), to network with peers in other MA programmes and foster a stronger community of research practice that enhances your respective discipline of study as well as within the College.

You will be introduced to relevant professional methods of research and creation which may include profiles of and/or dialogue with creative professionals, critical/theoretical discourse, action research, visual object analysis, textual analysis, case studies, historical and ethnographic research, interviews, life-stories/autobiographies, etc. You will also be introduced to research practices such as literature reviews, process-based discovery, bibliographical searches, quantitative & qualitative methods, citations and the construction of research questions

Postgraduate students are constantly exposed to first-hand experience in current practices of research and creation, leading to the acquiring powerful knowledge and of a wide set of skills by the time you graduate. You will have opportunities to develop expertise in accordance with your research interests.

## PROGRAMME HIGHLIGHTS

### STUDY TRIPS

A study trip will be organised to one of the countries in the Asian region, during which you will learn how artists and art communities respond to differing social and cultural contexts in the production of art. Harnessing the benefits of experiential learning, this study trip will include visits to artists' studios, collectors' homes, galleries, biennales and art spaces. At the same time, it offers invaluable research opportunities through networking with local art communities.



## THE FACULTY



**Jeffrey Say**  
Programme Leader

- MA Art History, Open University, UK
- BA (Hons) History (First Class Honours), University of Queensland, Australia

Jeffrey Say has been teaching at LASALLE College of the Arts since 1997, during which time he helped to develop its art history programmes. In 2009, he designed the first Masters programme that focuses on Asian modern and contemporary art histories. He is presently its programme leader. As an art historian, Say undertook the first extensive study of the history of sculpture in pre and postwar Singapore, for which he has done pioneering research. In his professional capacity, Say has curated visual arts exhibitions and contributed essays to both local and overseas exhibition catalogues (*Brother Joseph McNally's East, West, North, South, USA, 2001, Karl Duldig Sculptures/Drawings, Vienna, 2003, Singapore Art Museum's The Big Picture Show, 2007*). He is a frequent public speaker on art history at museums, libraries and art galleries. In addition, he has given lectures on art history to museum docents, schools and banks and conducts art history courses for working professionals. Say is the co-editor of *Histories, Practices, Interventions: A Reader in Singapore Contemporary Art* (2016). He is also a regular commentator on the local visual arts scene.

The full-time faculty is supported by adjunct and visiting lecturers. The visiting lecturers include individuals from academia and industry such as art historians, curators, museum professionals and practicing artists. You are exposed to a broad range of perspectives and practices that reflect the philosophy of the Programme. Some of the past and current visiting professors and lecturers include:

### Iola Lenzi

Iola Lenzi is a Singapore-based historian, critic and curator of Southeast Asian art. Through her exhibitions and writings, Lenzi charts transnational Southeast Asian art historical discourses predicated on regional art's critical dialogue with history, society, faith, and power. She has curated numerous institutional exhibitions of in Asia and Europe, and has served as lecturer in the Asian Art Histories MA Programme of Lasalle-Goldsmiths, Singapore, since 2011. She is the author of *Museums of Southeast Asia* (2004), and the editor of and contributing author to four anthologies of Southeast Asian contemporary art. Iola is currently a PhD candidate at the Nanyang Technological University.

### Seng Yu Jin

Seng Yu Jin is a senior curator with the The National Gallery, Singapore. His research interests cover regional art histories focusing on Southeast Asia, particularly diasporic communities, migration, and inter-cultural dialogues. His curated exhibitions include *From Words to Pictures: Art During the Emergency* (2007) and *Cheong Soo Pieng: Bridging Worlds* (2010). He is co-editor of *Histories, Practices, Interventions: A Reader in Singapore Contemporary Art* (2016). Seng is currently a PhD candidate at the University of Melbourne.

### T.K. Sabapathy

As an historian, curator, teacher, critic and advisor, Sabapathy has influenced artistic opinion and shaped knowledge of art over the past thirty-five years. His art historical methods, critical documentation, and detailed explication of the works of key artists have defined Singapore and Malaysian art. His extensive studies of contemporary and modern art in Southeast Asia have added visual intelligibility and intellectual depth to art discourses in and of the region. Sabapathy is currently an adjunct associate professor in the Department of Architecture, National University of Singapore.



**Dr Clare Veal**  
Lecturer

- Doctor of Philosophy (PhD), Art History, University of Sydney, Australia
- BA(Hons) Art History (First Class Honours), University of Sydney, Australia
- BA History/ Art Theory, University of New South Wales, Australia

Clare Veal received her PhD from the Department of Art History and Film Studies at the University of Sydney. Her doctoral thesis entitled *Thainess Framed: Photography and Thai Identity, 1946-2010* examined the role of photography in the construction and destabilisation of discourses of Thai national identity. Dr Veal has research and teaching experience from institutions in Australia, Thailand and Singapore. From 2015 to 2016, she was a participating scholar in the Power Institute's *Ambitious Alignments: New Histories of Southeast Asian Art* research programme, and in 2017 she was a co-convenor of the symposium "Gender in Southeast Asian Art Histories" held at the University of Sydney. She is the editor for the Asian Art section of the *Routledge Encyclopedia of Modernism* (2016) and has contributed papers to a number of publications including *Ambitious Alignments: New Histories of Southeast Asian Art* (Power Publications and National Gallery of Singapore, 2018). In addition to her work as a consultant for a survey of the Chang Tang collection in Bangkok, Dr Veal has co-curated exhibitions including *Storytellers of the Town: Works by Araya Rasdjarmrearnsook* (2014) and *Retold-Untold Stories: Phaptawan Suwannakudt* (2016). Her research interests include intersections between technology and visuality in Southeast Asia, visual culture and politics, sexual difference in Southeast Asian art history and non-Euramerican theories of photography.

### Dr Caroline Turner

Caroline Turner is an Adjunct Senior Research Fellow and Associate Professor in the Research School of Humanities and the Arts, ANU. Prior to joining the ANU in 2000 she was Deputy Director of the Queensland Art Gallery and organised and curated many international exhibitions from Europe, Asia and North America. She was co-founder and Project Director for nearly ten years in the 1990s for the Asia-Pacific Triennial exhibitions (1993, 1996, 1999) at the Queensland Art Gallery and scholarly editor of the three major catalogues for the first three Triennials. Turner's books include *Tradition and Change: Contemporary Art of Asia and the Pacific* (1993) and *Art and Social Change: Contemporary Art in Asia and the Pacific* (2005).

### Professor James Elkins

James Elkins is an internationally renowned art historian and art critic. He is E.C. Chadbourne Chair of art history, theory, and criticism at the School of the Art Institute of Chicago. He is the author and editor of numerous books, some of which have received critical acclaim such as *Stories of Art* (2002) or have sparked much debate in the discourse of art history, such as *Is Art History Global?* (2007). Elkins's writings focus on the history and theory of images in art, science, and nature.

### Zhuang Wubin

Zhuang Wubin is a photographer, writer and curator. As a writer/curator, he focuses on photographic practices in Southeast Asia. Zhuang was the recipient of a research grant from the Prince Claus Fund (Amsterdam) in 2010. This enabled him to write his book *Photography in Southeast Asia: A Survey* (published by NUS press in 2016), the first comprehensive survey of photographic practices in Southeast Asia. He has been invited to research residency programmes at the Institute Technology of Bandung (2013) and Asia Art Archive, Hong Kong (2015). He has lectured and conducted

workshops in many institutions and universities around the region. As an artist, Zhuang uses photography and text to visualise the Sinoophone communities in Southeast Asia.

### Dr June Yap

June Yap holds a PhD in Cultural Studies from the National University of Singapore. She has been an independent curator since 2008 before joining the Singapore Art Museum as its director of curatorial programmes and publications. Prior to 2008, Yap worked in the curatorial departments of the Institute of Contemporary Arts in Singapore and the Singapore Art Museum. She curated an exhibition of the work of Ho Tzu Nyen for the Singapore Pavilion at the Venice Biennale in 2011. Yap was selected as the first curator for the Guggenheim UBS MAP Global Art Initiative from 2012 to 2014. Her work culminated in the exhibition *No Country: Contemporary Art for South and Southeast Asia* (2014).

### Professor Partha Mitter

Partha Mitter is a writer and historian of art and culture, specialising in the reception of Indian art in the West, as well as in modernity, art and identity in India, and more recently in global modernism. At present, he is Emeritus Professor in Art History, University of Sussex, Member of Wolfson College, Oxford and Honorary Fellow, Victoria & Albert Museum, London. His publications include *Much Maligned Monsters: History of European Reactions to Indian Art* (Clarendon Press, Oxford 1977); *Art and Nationalism in Colonial India 1850-1922: Occidental Orientations* (Cambridge University Press, 1994); *The Triumph of Modernism: India's Artists and the Avant-Garde - 1922-1947* (Reaktion Books, London, Oxford University Press, New Delhi, 2007).

## GRADUATE CAREER PATHS

Our graduates have gone on to work as Curators, Academics, Gallery Managers, Art Writers, Researchers, Art Administrators and Art Consultants. You will be invited to participate in seminars both regionally and internationally. With the strong demand for Asian art in the art market and the anticipated continued growth of the visual arts sector, the potential employment opportunities for graduates of this programme are on the rise.

## ENTRY REQUIREMENTS

Admission to the programme is determined through an interview as well as the submission and fulfillment of the following:

- A Bachelor's degree in any discipline from a recognised tertiary institution.
- A minimum of IELTS 7.0 or TOEFL iBT 100 for applicants from countries where English is not the first language or whose qualifications are obtained from institutions where English is not the medium of instruction.
- A 300-500 word statement of interest highlighting the candidate's reasons for choosing to enrol in the Programme and research interest in the area of Asian art histories.
- A reference letter (either an educational reference from the student's university or a character reference from an employer).
- Samples of academic writing or published work (where available).

### Southeast Asia (SEAsia) Scholars Award

The SEAsia Scholars Award, which covers the full tuition fees, is open to new MA Asian Art Histories students pursuing full-time postgraduate studies at LASALLE. Mid-career professionals with outstanding track record and/or relevant experience in the chosen field from Brunei, Cambodia, Indonesia, Laos, Malaysia, Myanmar, Philippines, Thailand, Timor-Leste, or Vietnam are eligible to apply.



6 Lee Wen, *Ping-Pong Go Round*



7 Jompet Kuswidananto, Indonesia, *Java Phantasmagoria*



8 Vasan Sitthiket, Thailand, *Committing Suicide Culture: The Only Way Thai Farmers Escape Debt*



9 Aung Ko, *Aung Ko's Village*

## PHOTOS

### page 2:

1. Donna Ong, *Cocoon (Garden of Waiting Virgins)* (detail), 2012, paper illustrations, acrylic, furniture, wooden walls and wallpaper, 421 x 311 x 220 cm.  
© Courtesy the artist

### page 4:

2. Dr Caroline Turner speaking at MA Asian Art Histories annual lecture 2014, *Art and Ethical Responsibilities: Contemporary Asian Contexts*

### page 5:

3. Briccio Santos, Philippines, *Heritage Tunnel*, 2009, books, wood, mirrors, 244 cm. © Courtesy the author
- 4 & 5. MA Asian Art Histories candidates in the studio of famous Indonesian contemporary artist Agus Suwage with curator and guide Enin Supriyanto in Jogjakarta, Indonesia.

### page 7:

6. Lee Wen, *Ping-Pong Go Round*, 1998 and Ongoing, participative installation, round ping-pong table. © Courtesy Iola Lenzi
7. Jompot Kuswidananto, Indonesia, *Java Phantasmagoria*, 2008, kinetic sound and video installation. © Courtesy Iola Lenzi
8. Vasan Sitthiket, Thailand, *Committing Suicide Culture: The Only Way Thai Farmers Escape Debt*, 1995, plywood, metal frame, rice, rope, 250 x 400 x 150 cm. (From the 1995 exhibition 'I Love Thai Culture', National Gallery, Bangkok)  
© Courtesy the author
9. Aung Ko, *Aung Ko's Village*, 2010 - 2011, participative installation, 3-person bicycle.  
© Courtesy the artist

## ABOUT LASALLE COLLEGE OF THE ARTS

LASALLE College of the Arts in Singapore is a leading tertiary institution in cutting edge contemporary arts and design education and practice. The college offers more than 30 diploma, undergraduate and postgraduate programmes in fine arts, design communication, interior design, product design, film, animation, fashion, dance, music, theatre, arts management, arts pedagogy and practice, art therapy, Asian art histories, and creative writing.

Its faculty is led by a community of award-winning artists, designers, educators and researchers, and their practice-led research sets LASALLE apart as an international centre of excellence. Critically acclaimed alumni form the core of the cultural and creative sectors in Singapore and increasingly, internationally.

Founded in 1984 by De La Salle Brother Joseph McNally – a visionary artist and educator – LASALLE is a not-for-profit, private educational institution. LASALLE receives tuition grant support from the Singapore Ministry of Education. Its degree programmes are validated by Goldsmiths, University of London.

## CONTACT US

For Programme consultation or to schedule a guided campus tour, contact our Admissions Office.

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Closed on weekends and Public Holidays

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