

# MASTER OF ARTS **ASIAN ART HISTORIES**

**MODE**

Full-time / Part-time  
Classes will be conducted mostly  
in the evenings.

**DURATION**

Full-time — 1.5 Years (3 Semesters)  
Part-time — 3 Years (6 Semesters)

**INTAKE**

January

# ADVANCE YOUR KNOWLEDGE OF THE HISTORIES OF ASIAN MODERN AND CONTEMPORARY ART.



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Image: Aung Ko, *Aung Ko's Village*



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Image: MA Asian Art Histories students in the studio of Indonesian contemporary artist Agus Suwage in 2011.

Through the acquisition of research skills and study on theoretical and historical frameworks, you will engage with living artists, field experts, curators and collectors drawn from Singapore and Asia's rich visual arts ecology.

Image: MA Asian Art Histories student and recipient of LASALLE's SEAsia Scholars Award Reaksmei Yean presenting a research poster during the symposium *Art and Action: Contemporary Art and Discourse in Southeast Asia*, 2018.



## OVERVIEW

The MA in Asian Art Histories is a path-breaking programme focused on grooming a new generation of art historians, curators, art writers and exhibition-makers focused entirely on Asian modern and contemporary art histories and practices. It is the first MA programme in any tertiary institution worldwide to focus on Asian modern and contemporary art.

The programme adopts a liberal attitude to nurturing the appreciation of art from Asia, attracting a diverse and rich community of participants who seek to make a difference in their various fields, countries and art. It provides a rare opportunity for historians-in-the-making to work and study alongside artists and their art-making practices and engage with the College's curatorial division, the Institute of Contemporary Arts Singapore.

Through the acquisition of research skills and study on theoretical and historical frameworks, you will engage with living artists, field experts, curators and collectors drawn from Singapore and Asia's rich visual arts ecology. The rigour of the programme prepares students to pursue PhD studies.

The programme provides you with the art historical and theoretical resources as well as the opportunity to undertake original research in largely under explored fields, investigate recently emerged artists and movements, and contribute to art historical discourse and scholarship. It also encourages you to establish and expand your professional practices and networks, developing your potential to become leading thinkers and cultural producers in the field.

The burgeoning success of the visual arts industry in Asia means that researching and studying this area is 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 MA Asian Art Histories Programme draws on 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 artists' studios, galleries, archives, museums and collections in countries including China, Hong Kong, India and Vietnam.

## 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 allow you to develop a thesis based on your research interests.

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 three-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 two 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 as well as 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.



Image: Dr Gauri Krishnan (left), recipient of LASALLE's inaugural McNally School of Fine Arts Scholars Residency Programme, interacts with MA Asian Art Histories students.



## 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 (seven 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 of powerful knowledge and a wide set of skills by the time you graduate. You will have opportunities to develop expertise in accordance with your research interests.

## CAREER PATHS

Curator, Academic, Gallery Manager, Art Writer, Researcher, Art Administrator and Art Consultant

Image: Prof Partha Mitter at the MA Asian Art Histories Annual Lecture in 2018.

## PROGRAMME HIGHLIGHTS

- Based in Singapore, the programme gives you convenient access to museums, archives and cultural institutions around the region to do research.
- The programme is taught in a practice-based institution which offers you opportunities to interact and collaborate with art practitioners.
- 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.
- 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.
- There will be opportunities and platforms for optional attachments in cultural institutions, to write and research as well as to curate exhibitions.

### 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 artist studios, collectors' homes, galleries, biennales and art spaces. At the same time, it offers invaluable research opportunities through networking with local art communities.



Image: Study trip to art space Sa Sa Bassac, Phnom Penh, Cambodia.

## THE FACULTY



### Jeffrey Say

Programme Leader, MA Asian Art Histories

- MA Art History, The Open University, UK
- BA Honours, University of Queensland, Australia

Jeffrey Say is an art historian specialising in Singapore and Southeast Asian art history. Importantly, Jeffrey undertook pioneering research and study of the history of sculpture in pre-and post-war Singapore. An author of numerous essays on art, his seminal co-edited work *Histories, Practices, Interventions: A Reader in Singapore Contemporary Art* (2016) remains a critical anthology for researchers, curators and students on Singapore art to date.

Prior to LASALLE, Jeffrey was a curator at the former National Museum where he was overseeing the collection of Buddhist and Indian artefacts. As a museum curator, Jeffrey curated exhibitions on Tibetan Buddhist art, the Maritime Silk Routes and *Alamkara: 5000 Years of India*. In his professional capacity, Jeffrey has curated visual arts exhibitions and contributed essays to both local and overseas exhibition catalogues.

Jeffrey has been instrumental in the development of art history studies at LASALLE supporting artists to develop a contextual and historical understanding of the evolution of visual arts. In 2009, he designed the world's first Master's programme focusing on Asian modern and contemporary art histories.

Jeffrey is a public advocate of the importance of art history to Singapore. He is a frequent public speaker at museums, universities and galleries, and conducts short courses which remain hugely popular among various publics. Jeffrey is also a regular commentator on the local visual arts scene.

His current research interest is on Singapore modern and contemporary art histories. He has written an essay on the early contemporary art scene of Singapore which offers a revisionist view on the beginnings of contemporary art in Singapore (published in the July 2019 edition of *BiblioAsia*). He is also working towards a reader on Singapore modern art which will be a co-edited volume.

The programme maintains a roster of well-known local and international teaching staff, guest lecturers, artists, consultants, researchers and artists in residence, including:

**Dr Seng Yu Jin** is a senior curator at the National Gallery Singapore. He completed his PhD at the University of Melbourne on the history of exhibitions in Southeast Asia. He was previously a lecturer at LASALLE College of the Arts in the MA Asian Art Histories and BA Fine Arts programmes. He currently lectures in the Minor in Art History at the National University of Singapore. Seng's research interests cover regional art histories focusing on the history of exhibitions and artist collectives in Southeast Asia. His curated exhibitions include *From Words to Pictures: Art During the Emergency* (2007) and *Cheong Soo Pieng: Bridging Worlds* (2010). He recently co-edited *Histories, Practices, Interventions: A Reader in Singapore Contemporary Art* with Jeffrey Say and co-authored *Singapore Chronicles: Art* with Shabbir Hussain Mustafa. He publishes in journals and art magazines such as *Art Critique Taiwan* and *ArtReview*.

**Dr Iola Lenzi** is a Singapore-based art historian, curator and critic of Southeast Asian modern and contemporary art. Also trained in law, she uses exhibition-building to chart discourses of the field, devising curatorial strategies for enlisting global audiences into regional art's concerns relating to Asian society, history and politics. She has edited/authored several multi-lingual research publications exploring characterising aspects of Southeast Asian art, and in addition to journal essays, is the author of two monographs, including *Museums of Southeast Asia* (2004). She teaches undergraduate and graduate modern Asian art history, and has served as adjunct lecturer in the Asian Art Histories MA programme at LASALLE College of the Arts, Singapore, since 2011.

Past visiting professors include:

**Prof Anthony Gardner**, Head of the Ruskin School of Art at the University of Oxford, where he teaches Contemporary Art History and Theory and is a fellow of The Queen's College.

**Prof Partha Mitter**, 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.

**Prof James Elkins**, E.C. Chadbourne Chair in the Department of Art History, Theory, and Criticism at the School of the Art Institute of Chicago, as well as a prolific writer on the visual arts.

**Prof David Clarke**, founder and academic director of the Hong Kong Art Archive. His research has been primarily in the areas of American and Chinese art history.

**Prof Irit Rogoff**, Professor of Visual Culture at Goldsmiths, University of London, a department she founded in 2002. Rogoff works at the meeting ground between contemporary practices, politics and philosophy.

**Dr Caroline Turner**, Adjunct senior research fellow and associate professor in the Research School of Humanities and the Arts, Australian National University (ANU). She was formerly the deputy director of the Humanities Research Centre, ANU from 2000 – 2006.

Image: MA Asian Art Histories students visiting Silpakorn University.



## ENTRY REQUIREMENTS

### Academic requirements

- A Bachelor's degree from a recognised local or international institution.
- A minimum of IELTS 7.0, TOEFL iBT 100 or PTE Academic 65 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.

### Statement of Purpose

In 500 – 1,000 words, highlight your reasons for applying to this programme and how they relate to your future plans. You should also include a brief description of your research intention or interest(s) that you are keen to explore.

### Reference letter

Provide a reference letter to support your application.

### Portfolio

If available, you are invited to submit samples of your academic writing and published work. These will need to be uploaded online.

### Interview

All applicants will attend an interview. During the interview, you are required to participate in a dialogue regarding the purpose of your application. Please be prepared to talk about your background, what inspires you and your influences. We would like to find out what motivates you to learn, explore and experiment in your areas of interest. You should also share how you think the programme will benefit you in your future career choices or develop your research interests.

### International applicants

If you are unable to attend the interview at LASALLE, an online interview will be arranged for you.



Image: Students participating in a talk by curator, Vuth Lyno.

# ABOUT LASALLE COLLEGE OF THE ARTS

Asia's leading tertiary institution in contemporary arts and design education and practice.

LASALLE College of the Arts offers 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.

LASALLE provides a nurturing, interdisciplinary learning environment to inspire the next generation of forward-looking, globally engaged artists, designers and leaders of creative industries.

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.

Founded in 1984 by the late De La Salle Brother Joseph McNally – a visionary artist and educator – LASALLE is a non-profit private educational institution. The College receives tuition grant support from Singapore's 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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Monday – Friday, 9:30am – 5:30pm  
Closed on weekends and Public Holidays

## CONNECT WITH US

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Partner Institution:



Cert No.: EDU-1-1002  
Validity: 01/10/2019 - 30/9/2023

LASALLE College of the Arts is registered with the Committee for Private Education (CPE). The Committee for Private Education is part of SkillsFuture Singapore (SSG).  
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**Goldsmiths**  
UNIVERSITY OF LONDON