

# MASTER OF ARTS **ART THERAPY**

# PRACTICE AS A CULTURALLY SENSITIVE, COMPETENT AND ETHICAL ART THERAPIST.



Image:  
Students facilitating a community project.

Image:  
Carolyn Lee, *TECHTILE*, 2021.

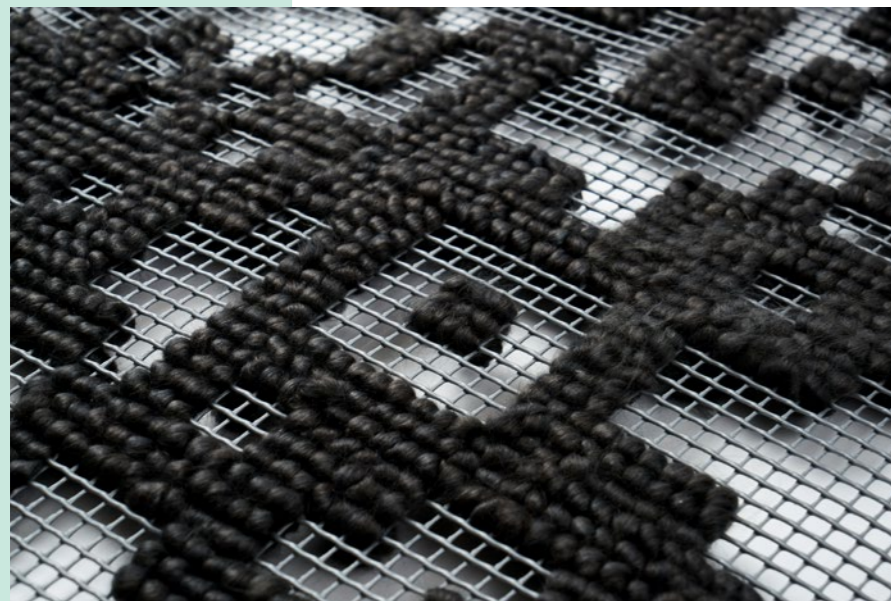


Image:  
A participant takes a photo of his artwork on display at *Shared Narratives: Museum, Memory Boxes and Art Therapy*, a community project with St. Luke's ElderCare.



“The innovative MA Art Therapy programme at LASALLE strategically places Singapore on the world’s stage as a leader in educating culturally sensitive, competent and ethical art therapists.”

Ronald Lay  
Programme Leader, MA Art Therapy



Image:  
Programme Leader Ronald Lay (centre) with MA Art Therapy students at Causeway Exchange 2019 which took place in Kuala Lumpur.

## OVERVIEW

As the first of its kind in Southeast Asia, the MA Art Therapy programme augments the range of mental health options available in Singapore and the region. This programme is distinctive in defining the professional discipline in contemporary ways that are culturally relevant and meaningful within Asian and global contexts.

This is a practice-based, intensive training programme that emphasises experiential learning through art making, reflection and research. The MA in Art Therapy at LASALLE is an ANZACATA approved training programme, preparing graduates to become professionally credentialed as Registered Art Therapists (AThR).

As an art therapist, you purposefully facilitate an art making process to create self-expression, reflection, understanding and change with people and/or communities who encounter a range of stress, trauma, physical, mental or societal challenges and experiences. Art therapy is a form of psychotherapy that helps people to effect change and growth through the use of art materials in a supported and safe environment. For those having difficulty expressing their thoughts and feelings verbally, art therapy is non-intrusive and can tap into the rich non-verbal aspects of communication and creativity.

Art therapists develop the necessary skills and training to effectively work with a variety of populations throughout the life cycle. They work within various medical, institutional, educational and rehabilitative settings that may include learning, development, medical conditions, social work, marginalised groups, crisis and trauma within communities, ageing and eldercare, to name a few. The practice of art therapy ranges from studio-based to clinical approaches, depending on the art therapist's level of expertise, practice and working environment. Art therapists remain sensitive to cultural awareness, difference and diversity, and adhere to international ethics and best practices.

The MA Art Therapy programme spans a range of psychotherapeutic concepts, theories and practices. The experiential model of the programme places an emphasis on acquiring critical knowledge and understanding of the philosophy of the modality itself. You will undergo a substantial period of clinical practice through supervised clinical placements. Clinical work is further explored and discussed through structured group and individual supervision at the College.

You will be encouraged to attain an autonomous and reflective stance in your learning, development and assessment in collaboration with tutors. This is a vital process in developing an approach to your professional practice as a confident, competent and ethical art therapist that will be based upon your ability to be analytical, critical, objective and self-reflective about your work.

The programme is groundbreaking in relation to the varied and distinctive social, cultural and spiritual frameworks within which it is being nurtured. Adopting a blend of Eastern and Western approaches, you will be encouraged to develop a reflective and contemporary philosophical and practical stance, as well as research and work in a range of settings both local and, if appropriate, international.

Self-reflexivity, mindfulness and a contemplative approach are practices you may draw upon to further embrace and/or expand your understanding of an Asian context. It is acknowledged that cultural difference and diversity are at the heart of current art therapy debate and discourse both locally and around the globe.

[View past year graduation catalogues.](#)



## PROGRAMME STRUCTURE

The MA in Art Therapy is a two-year full-time programme divided into four semesters of 13 teaching weeks. You must successfully complete the modules offered in sequence before you can progress to the next semester. You learn progressively, each module building upon the knowledge and skill base of the previous semester. The incremental learning structure of the programme ensures that you will acquire the essential knowledge and practical experience to become a professional art therapist.

### SEMESTER 1 CREDIT POINTS

Psychodynamic Processes and Pictorial Analysis	15
Introduction to Art Therapy	15
Group Training 1	15
Human Development and Clinical Theory	15

### SEMESTER 2 CREDIT POINTS

Research Methods in Creative Arts	30
Child and Adolescent Art Therapy	15
Clinical Placement 1	15

### SEMESTER 3 CREDIT POINTS

Adult, Geriatric and Family Art Therapy	15
Clinical Placement 2	15

### SEMESTER 4 CREDIT POINTS

Group Training 2	15
Clinical Placement 3	15

### SEMESTER 3 & 4 CREDIT POINTS

Final Research	60
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#### Psychodynamic Processes and Pictorial Analysis

This module will explore contemporary psychodynamic theories including object relations and inter-subjective theories to name a few, with in-depth training in the understanding of the symbolism of sublimation and the language of art. This module will provide an introduction to a range of visual methodologies.

#### Introduction to Art Therapy

This module provides the foundation for the programme and the theoretical framework for safe and professional clinical art therapy practice. You are introduced to the history of art therapy and psychodynamic theory that has evolved from object relations into intersubjective theory and how these theories can be connected to the making of artwork. The importance of attachment, transference and countertransference, sublimation and trauma are all elements for discussion and incorporated into assignments. You will develop a beginning understanding of key psychodynamic theory, concepts and terms as related to professional art therapy practice.

Image: MA Art Therapy student facilitating a community arts project.



#### Group Training 1

In this module, you will learn about the facilitation of different kinds of art therapy groups as well as developing an understanding of dynamically based group therapy. Led by an experienced and dynamically trained therapist, you will develop an empathic understanding of group experiences.

#### Human Development and Clinical Theory

This module introduces students to the dynamics of human development across the lifespan looking at the psychology of child, adolescent, adult and geriatric development. The module examines these different stages of development and achievement through the additional lens of attachment and trauma. This module includes one paper which will integrate biological, psychological, social and environmental theories in understanding human development.

#### Research Methods in Creative Arts

This module introduces you 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 methods to investigate and probe issues.

#### Clinical Placement 1

During the first week of semester 2, several Clinical Placement Primers will be scheduled to further prepare you for their first clinical placement. You must accumulate a minimum of 272 hours at placement and carry a clinical caseload, under supervision, in Singapore. You will learn to engage with patients/clients/beneficiaries and develop your ability to facilitate art therapy in the placement setting.

#### Adult, Geriatric and Family Art Therapy

You are further introduced to specific theories and practical ways of working with adults, older adults and families. The coursework will be experiential and builds upon the core skills developed in semester 2.

#### Clinical Placement 2

In this module, you will be more fully engaged with individual clients and groups within their clinical settings. You will continue to develop your clinical art therapy skills and understanding of the dynamic, psychological processes of their clients in the Southeast Asian context.

#### Group Training 2

You will incorporate your theoretical and practical experiences over the course of your training into further exploring dynamically based group theory and practice experientially. You will take turns in leading your own experiential groups under the supervision of an experienced art therapist.

#### Clinical Placement 3

In this module, you will engage fully with individual clients and groups within your clinical setting. Emphasis is placed on the therapeutic relationship and your ability to function as an integrated member of a multidisciplinary team.

#### Final Research

In this module, you will engage in research on an aspect of art therapy of particular interest to you. Practitioners and researchers within art therapy will also provide you with differing perspectives to assist you in the development and the delivery of your research project.

## PROGRAMME HIGHLIGHTS

The programme is formally approved by the Australian, New Zealand and Asian Creative Arts Therapy Association (ANZACATA). Graduates are eligible to apply for professional registration (AThR) with ANZACATA. It may be possible to apply for professional membership with other international art therapy organisations and registration authorities. It is the graduate's responsibility to be familiar with the appropriate professional credential and membership organisations in terms of requirements and procedures for professional membership, credentials, and of working within a country outside of Singapore. You are encouraged to obtain student membership in any of the professional art(s) therapy organisations in addition to the Art Therapists' Association Singapore (ATAS).

The MA Art Therapy programme continues to develop community and collaborative relationships locally and internationally to enhance its professional, clinical, and research profile. There are several opportunities for students to volunteer with various projects locally and abroad throughout the academic year. The programme has been the Educational Partner with The Red Pencil Humanitarian Mission, an international art therapy humanitarian foundation based in Singapore since 2012. The MA Art Therapy programme has organised international student learning trips to Bali, Sarawak, London and, Napa (California) that combined art, culture and mental health exchange and experience. MA Art Therapy students have also presented at and/or participated in art(s) therapy conferences and workshops in Singapore, UK, USA and Australia.

## ESSENTIAL ELEMENTS OF THE THERAPIST TRAINING EXPERIENCE

#### CLINICAL PLACEMENT

There are three clinical placement modules in the programme. For each module, you must accumulate a minimum of 272 hours at placement and carry a clinical caseload, under supervision. You will gain practical experience at an approved and relevant clinical placement setting wherein you will develop your clinical art therapy skills and learn to utilise on-site and offsite clinical supervision through individual and group formats. The programme applies a variety of strategies to promote learning while you are on placement. These include process notes written throughout the semester, case presentations, case studies and supervisor reports and discussions. The programme's Clinical Placement coordinator will liaise with the various placement settings and will assist you with logistics related to your placement based on your identified interests and learning needs. Our students provide a significant number of clinical art therapy hours (10,000+) on a yearly basis and most students actively contribute to their communities through volunteer work.

#### ETHICS AND ESSENTIAL WORKSHOPS

International best practices and ethical codes in art therapy are adopted, and these serve to guide and inform your training. Discussions on ethics will be integrated throughout the programme in supervision, coursework and during your research thesis process. This is in addition to a risk assessment workshop at the beginning of semester 1. Child abuse identification and intervention training will take place in semester 2 by a local agency. In semester 3, a workshop on elder abuse and family violence identification and intervention will be scheduled.

#### CROSS CULTURAL AWARENESS AND SENSITIVITY

Art therapists often provide services to culturally diverse groups of people with varying backgrounds and experiences. Throughout your course of study, you are expected to further develop cross-cultural awareness and sensitivity as you develop your professional skills, identity, experience and knowledge. This will assist in your empathic stance and enrich your clinical skills while working in the rich diversity of cultures in Singapore and abroad.

#### PERSONAL THERAPY

You are required to receive regular personal therapy during semesters 2, 3 and 4 of the taught programme; personal therapy in semester 1 is strongly recommended. This provides art therapists-in-training with the opportunity to explore and reflect on issues that may arise for them during the experiential learning process.

#### FITNESS-TO-PRACTICE/TRAIN

You will be required to satisfy the programme of your fitness to work and undertake training, which involves children and vulnerable people. You are required to sign a Suitability Declaration related to criminal convictions and to occupational health prior to admission to the programme. Assessment of your health and occupational fitness will be based on your ability to satisfy the following criteria, taking into account the range of duties which you will undertake as part of your training, including clinical placement and community projects as well as any health problems you may have.

- You are physically able to cope with the day-to-day duties of your training (at the College and at the placement).
- You can communicate effectively with children, parents, clients and colleagues.
- You have sound judgement and insight, and can remain alert at all times.
- You are able to respond to clients' needs rapidly and effectively.
- You can manage classes or groups.
- You do not constitute any risk to the health, safety or well-being of those in your care.
- You can, where disabilities exist, meet all these criteria through reasonable adjustments made by LASALLE.

Concerns and/or questions pertaining to your mental fitness to become a therapist will be discussed, documented and assessed at the end-of-semester meeting and as needed during the semester. Your progress will be monitored through regular faculty meetings, feedback from your clinical placement, and feedback from your supervision.

#### ARTISTIC PRACTICE AND INTERDISCIPLINARY PROJECTS

With the backdrop of LASALLE as a vibrant and innovative art school, students may include interdisciplinary collaborations with programmes such as drama, music, fine arts, film, media and design. This accentuates the continued development of your artistic practice, clinical expertise and research capacity. You are encouraged to consider and integrate collaboration across LASALLE faculties into your coursework where appropriate and according to individual interests. Many of our students are accomplished and practicing artists, and many maintain a national and/or international exhibiting profile.

#### SELF-REFLECTIVE JOURNAL REVIEW

During the end-of-semester meetings, you will present your self-reflective journal to the programme team to demonstrate your active engagement in a self-reflective process through visual and written means. You are to include response art, reflections from art exhibition and studio visits, reflections from course material and lessons as well as documentation of art experientials from your training and/or outside experiences. The artwork can be cross-faculty based and include drama, fine arts, design, media and film to name a few. Studio time is provided in the course schedule.

#### END-OF-SEMESTER MEETINGS

At the end of each semester, you will meet individually with the programme team to review your progress academically, clinically and artistically. You will have the opportunity to verbally review your fitness to practice with the programme team during these meetings.

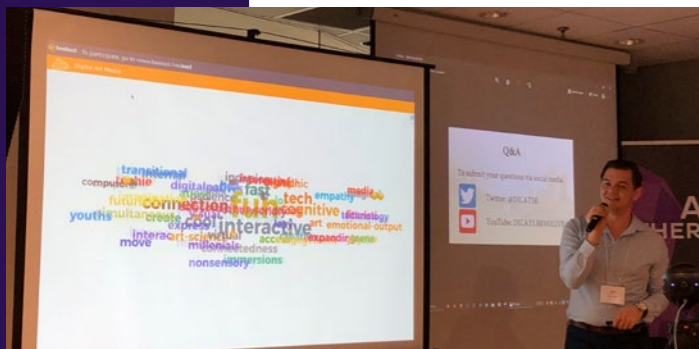




Image: Programme Leader Ronald Lay leads guests through the MA Art Therapy Graduation Exhibition, 2018.



Image: Study trip to Bali, Indonesia.



## 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, 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 and 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

Art therapist, counsellor, educator, social worker, artist, researcher, writer.

Image: MA Art Therapy student presents at the 2019 Digital International Creative Arts Therapies Symposium (DICATS).

## THE FACULTY



**Ronald P.M.H. Lay**  
MA, AThR, ATR-BC, EdD (candidate),  
Programme Leader

- MA (Art Therapy), Concordia University, Canada
- BA (Fine Arts), University of Guelph, Canada
- BA (Psychology), Wilfred Laurier University, Canada

Grounded in a psychodynamic psychotherapy paradigm, Ronald P.M.H. Lay's career blends both practical and academic pursuits. His years of experience working full-time as a forensic art therapist in California's Department of Mental Health acknowledges the invaluable role that education plays in developing, informing and preparing postgraduate students to become competent, ethical, socially responsible and effective professional therapists. This is especially critical in regions of the world wherein art therapy is emerging as a viable, meaningful and relevant discipline.

The California State Legislature awarded him the prestigious Sustained Superior Accomplishment Award, a two-year honour, on two separate occasions, recognising his art therapy and contributions to the faculty. Ronald developed a sustained art therapy internship at this setting, providing clinical supervision and holding several leadership positions including Acting Chief of Rehabilitation Therapy Services and Chair of the Professional Rehabilitation Therapy Practice Group. He was an active member on several local and state-wide committees that addressed assessment, development, budgets, documentation, quality assurance, privileging, credentialing, treatment intervention and planning as well as continuing professional development.

Ronald is a board-certified and registered art therapist. He maintains professional credentials and memberships nationally and internationally, including the Art Therapists' Association Singapore, the Australian, New Zealand and Asian Creative Arts Therapy Association, the American Art Therapy Association, and the Art Therapy Credentials Board. He has actively contributed to these as well as the Northern California Art Therapy Association through membership on committees to nominate board members, planning international conferences and training events, providing workshops and presentations at peer-juried conferences and providing consultation.

Ronald is an accomplished and award-winning artist. His artistic inquiry is in the area of memory, the passing of time and the psychological interplay between these, and the mixed media he explores (photographs, found objects and acrylic paint). He has donated his personal artwork to several group auctions to raise funds and awareness to several charitable causes, including mental health, breast cancer, heart and stroke, HIV/AIDS and community arts projects. In addition to this, he has spent a considerable amount of time volunteering in Africa.

Ronald is currently pursuing his Doctorate in Education. His research focuses on the impact of experiential learning within postgraduate training on professional practice. He is interested in how art therapy is being applied within Asian and local contexts.



**Emylia Safian**  
MA, AThR, Lecturer

- Postgraduate Certificate in Clinical Supervision, The University of Derby, UK
- MA Art Therapy, Open University, UK
- BA Psychology & Humanities, Monash University, Australia
- Certificate of Teaching in Higher Education, Temasek Polytechnic, Singapore

Emylia is a practicing art therapist and educator with specialist training in stress, trauma and loss. Her practice gravitates towards mind/body sciences and integrates physiology with psychology for an encompassing approach in capitalising human development.

Since 2007, she has been in partnership with educational institutions, voluntary welfare organisations, government agencies and NGOs within Southeast Asia, working with persons of all ages in situational and developmental crisis within different communities. As a clinician, Emylia is also informed by the science of yoga and expressive arts therapies. She is passionate in reconnecting children and adults alike with the essential *joie de vivre* through play, creativity, warmth, compassion and sensitivity, and to bring joy to the mind, body, and spirit.



**Daniel Wong**  
MA, AThR, Lecturer

- MA Art Therapy, Western Sydney University, Australia
- MA Art Administration, University of New South Wales, Australia
- BA Fine Art, The School of the Art Institute of Chicago, USA

Daniel is an art therapist and researches the intersection between the arts, health and well-being. He has worked in Australia, Thailand and Singapore with diverse populations in long-term care and day settings for over 15 years. He teaches full-time on the MA Art Therapy Programme at LASALLE College of the Arts in Singapore.

A trained artist, he works primarily with discarded household material as he finds the unpredictability of these found materials inventive. Daniel has also provided consultation to cancer centres and community-based agencies in Thailand. His focus as an art therapy educator spans clinical, population-specific and studio-based approaches.

In addition to his academic work, he has presented various topics such as art therapy in the early years, art therapy in museums and found art and objects that have led to regional and consultations and collaborative projects. In February 2021, his first co-edited book, *Found Objects in Art Therapy: Materials and Process* with Ronald Lay, was published by Jessica Kingsley Publications (UK).

## 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 / interest(s) that you are keen to explore. You are required to submit your Statement of Purpose online.

### Reference letter

Provide a reference letter to support your application. You are required to upload your reference letter online during your application.

### Portfolio

Your portfolio should contain images of 10 - 15 pieces of your original artwork that demonstrate your creative practice. You are required to upload your portfolio online.

### Interview

Shortlisted 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.

### Other requirements

It will be preferable if you have prior educational knowledge in the fields of visual arts, psychology, medical, social or human sciences; or relevant work or voluntary experience in a rehabilitative setting.

You are also required to:

- Commit to undergo weekly personal therapy for the duration of the programme.
- Sign a suitability declaration indicating whether you have any criminal record and/or history at the point of admission to the programme\*.
- Complete an Occupational Health Declaration, verified by a medical physician prior to admission to the programme.

Both forms can be obtained from the Division of Admissions.

\*Please note that given the nature and sensitivity of confidential case materials, professional and ethical best practices and the potential vulnerability of the clientele, many clinical placement settings as well as potential employers require a mandatory background security check for potential student interns.

The programme maintains a roster of well-known local and international teaching staff, guest lecturers, artists, consultants, researchers and artists in residence including Jessica Koh, Joanna Tan, Joyce Tan, Shubigi Rao, Weixin Chong, Dr Pamela Whitaker (Ireland), Dr Debra Kalmanowitz (Israel), Dr Shaun McNiff (US), Dr Lisa Hinz (US), Abbe Miller (US), Dr Barbara Fish (US) Dr Arnell Etherington-Reader (US/UK), Dr Christian Widdascheck (Germany), Dr Lynn Kapitan (US), Dr Neil Springham (UK), Dr Mercedes Ballbe ter Maat (US), Marian Crawford (Australia), Cathy Moon (US), Jane M. Adams (US), Dr Val Huet (UK), Pilar Olabarria (US), Dr Marian Liebmann (UK), Dr Lorna Collins (UK) and Dr Bill Gillham (UK) to name a few.



Image: Dialogue and art experiential with artist in residence.

# ABOUT LASALLE COLLEGE OF THE ARTS

Asia's leading contemporary arts and design institution.

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. LASALLE is ranked within the top 151-200 institutions globally for art and design (QS World University Rankings 2021).

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, with degree programmes validated by Goldsmiths, University of London. The College receives tuition grant support from Singapore's Ministry of Education. It is set to become part of Singapore's new university of the arts, which is currently under development.

## 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).  
Registration No.: 199202950W  
Validity: 25/03/2019 - 24/03/2023

**Goldsmiths**  
UNIVERSITY OF LONDON