

MASTER OF ARTS ASIAN ART HISTORIES

Duration:

1.5 Years
(3 Semesters)

Award:

Master of Arts
Asian Art Histories

Mode:

Full-Time
Classes will be conducted
in the evenings

Intake:

January



"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

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, as well as for Asian countries that have been transformed into major centres for the arts. The success and visibility of Asian art makes its research and study all the more timely and relevant, as economic and cultural shifts move the global balance of power from West to East.

It is also a particularly exciting time to be studying in Singapore, which has become the arts and cultural hub of the region and has put in place an arts infrastructure that is unmatched by any other country in the region in the collection and display of Southeast Asian modern and contemporary art. With the opening of the National Gallery, Singapore in 2015-which will have the largest collection on Southeast Asian modern art in the region-Singapore is also poised to become a leading centre for the study and research of the arts of the region. By studying in Singapore, students will not only have access to the vast collection of Southeast Asian art but will be in a strategic location from where they can conduct research around the region.

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 programmes traditionally focus on the classical periods or grand traditions, the LASALLE Programme gives students the opportunity to lead original research in largely underexplored fields, investigate recently emerged artists and movements, and thereby contribute to contemporary discourse and scholarship.

The Programme encourages analysis of Asian modern and contemporary art from an Asian perspective rather than through a Euro-American lens alone so as to broaden discourse. As such candidates will have the opportunity to play a part in the College's strategic ambitions to "become one of the world's premier educational institutions for contemporary intercultural study of diverse artistic traditions" and to become the "leading Asian educational institution for contemporary creativity in the arts."

The Master of Arts in Asian Art Histories is a one-and-half year programme over three semesters. It seeks to educate and train students who have interest in contributing original scholarship to the emerging field. The Programme equips students with the appropriate expertise and rigour to undertake a higher level of independent research work such as a PhD. The titular use of "histories" represents the plurality of divergent social, cultural and religious narratives that are specific to the environments artists operate within.

By studying Asian Art Histories in the practice-based environment of LASALLE, candidates experience an immersive environment within which to engage with practitioners and artworks, fostering an interdisciplinary approach towards the study and writing of art histories.



2 Dr. Caroline Turner

PROGRAMME STRUCTURE

The Programme focuses on the modern and contemporary periods, covering the period from the early 1800s to the present. While the strength of the Programme's content is derived from its faculty's areas of research and expertise on Southeast Asian art, the Programme will also address the broader swathe of Asia that includes South and East Asia, and is open to research proposals relevant to these regions.

MODULES DESCRIPTION & CREDIT POINTS

SEMESTER 1	CREDIT POINTS
Introduction to Writing and Researching Art Histories	20
Histories and Theories on Asian Art	20
Exhibitions and the Making of Art Histories in Asia	20
SEMESTER 2	CREDIT POINTS
Society and Politics in Asian Art	30
Perspectives on Asian Visual Cultures and Histories	30
SEMESTER 3	CREDIT POINTS
Dissertation	60

SEMESTER 1

Introduction to Writing and Researching Art Histories

This module aims to equip you with the fundamental skills and methods to carry out postgraduate research work specific to art history. You will be guided through the process of academic research and writing such as identifying a research topic, formulating research questions, defining appropriate methodologies, making critical use of primary and secondary sources, writing a literature review and analysing research data.

Histories and Theories on Asian Art

This module will examine the multiple intersections between art histories and critical theories in the 20th century that are used to frame the development of Asian art discourses. 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. In addition, it will discuss the ways in which these theoretical and historical approaches have been embedded and problematised in the art practices of the region.

Exhibitions and the Making of Art Histories in Asia

This module will examine 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 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 the artist-curator in the shaping of art histories in Southeast Asia.

SEMESTER 2

Society and Politics in Asian Art

Perceiving themselves as agents and participants of change, Asian artists have engaged in a diversity of issues on the social and political fronts. These include neo-colonialism, cultural identity, social injustice, political corruption, war, racism, and environmental degradation. 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.

Perspectives on Asian Visual Cultures and Histories

The module is conducted in a seminar style in which you will have the opportunity to dialogue and debate contemporary issues across an interdisciplinary range of visual histories and cultures within the Asian context. The topics will go beyond the conventional boundaries of art history as defined by academic tradition such as painting, sculpture and architecture, and will incorporate photography, performance art, film, and new media. Contemporary issues relating to the art market, art biennales, censorship, curation, and popular culture will also be covered.

SEMESTER 3

Dissertation

The dissertation is a major component of this Masters Programme that is a consolidated application of the skills and knowledge that you have acquired in the Programme. Through the dissertation, you would be expected to demonstrate your ability to undertake academic research through critical engagement with historical and theoretical issues in modern and contemporary Asian art within an appropriate methodological framework.

STUDY TRIPS

A study trip will be organised to one of the countries in the Asian region. This is to enable students to 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.

POSTGRADUATE RESEARCH

Candidates are constantly exposed to first-hand experience in current research practices, leading to the acquiring of a wide set of knowledge and skills by the time they graduate. These skills enable them to successfully adjust to the multi-faceted demands of the industry. Examples of these from past MA Asian Art Histories students include:

- Carrie Chia (2015) *Women Artists Group Exhibitions in Singapore*
- Anette Pusch (2012) *Ai Weiwei: Art of Irony*.
- Paracciani-Pazzini, Loredana (2011) *The Role of Art Education in Bangkok and its Relevance in Twenty-first century Thai Art Practices*.

"... 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,
MA Asian Art Histories



3 Briccio Santos, Philippines, *Heritage Tunnel*



4 MA Asian Art Histories candidates' study trip



5 MA Asian Art Histories candidates in the studio of famous Indonesian contemporary artist Agus Suwage



6 MA Asian Art Histories candidates in the studio of famous Indonesian contemporary artist Agus Suwage

THE FACULTY



Jeffrey Say, Programme Leader

- MA Art History, LASALLE College of the Arts, Singapore
- BA (Hons) History (First Class Honours), University of Queensland, Australia

Jeffrey has been teaching at LASALLE College of the Arts since 1997, during which 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, Jeffrey has undertaken the first extensive study of the history of sculpture in pre and post-war Singapore, for which he has done pioneering research. He is the co-editor (with Seng Yu Jin) of *Histories, Practices, and Interventions: A Reader in Singapore Contemporary Art* (published by Institute of Contemporary Arts, Singapore). In his professional capacity, Jeffrey has curated visual arts exhibitions and contributed essays to both local and overseas exhibition catalogues. In addition, Jeffrey gives talks at museums and art galleries, lectures on art history to museum docents, schools and universities, and conducts art history courses for working professionals. Jeffrey is also a commentator on the visual arts for The Straits Times.

There will be a core team of adjunct and visiting lecturers who are involved in delivering the Programme. The team comprise individuals who are either practising art historians or are knowledgeable in the field of art theory, cultural theory or visual studies. They all have a good track record of publications or curated exhibitions on Asian art, or have participated in exhibitions around the region. They are drawn from a diversity of background in terms of training to ensure that you are exposed to a broad range of perspectives and practice that reflect the philosophy of the Programme. Some of the past visiting professors and lecturers include:

Prof Chua Beng Huat

Professor with the Asian Research Institute and Department of Sociology, National University of Singapore. Prof Chua's publications include *Communitarian Ideology and Democracy in Singapore* (1995) and he has also edited *Consumption in Asia: Lifestyles and Identities* (2000).

Dr. Thomas Berghuis

Dr. Thomas Berghuis is a lecturer in Asian Art at the Department of Art History & Film Studies at the University of Sydney, Deputy Director of the Australian Centre for Asian Art and Archeology (ACAAA), and a Member of the China Studies Centre with the University of Sydney. His writings have appeared in international journals such as *Art review UK*, *Broadsheet*, *Art Asia Pacific* and *The Art Newspaper*. His book, *Performance Art in China*, was published in 2006.

Dr. Vishakha Desai

President and CEO of Asia Society, New York. Dr. Desai is a frequent speaker at national and international forums, a scholar of Asian art. Dr. Desai has published and edited several books and numerous articles on traditional and contemporary art. Dr. Desai was a curator at the Museum of Fine Arts Boston and the head of Public Programs and Academic Affairs. She has also taught at the University of Massachusetts, Boston University, Columbia University, and Williams College.



Dr. Wulan Dirgantoro, Lecturer

- Doctor of Philosophy, University of Tasmania, Australia
- Master of Art Curatorship, University of Melbourne, Australia
- Bachelor of Fine Arts, Bandung Institute of Technology, Indonesia

Wulan holds a BA Fine Arts from the Bandung Institute of Technology and a Master of Art Curatorship degree from the University of Melbourne. She completed her PhD at the University of Tasmania, Australia. Her PhD dissertation entitled "Defining Experience: Feminisms and Contemporary Art in Indonesia" explored the discourse around feminisms and feminist strategies in modern and contemporary Indonesian art. Wulan is the co-author of "The Curtain Opens: Indonesian Women Artists" (with Carla Bianpoen and Farah Wardani, YSRI, 2007). Wulan has teaching and research experience in Australian and Indonesian universities. She has also worked in various cultural institutions in Indonesia and Australia in the past decade. In addition to her teaching and research, she has also contributed to various publications and exhibition catalogues in Australia, Indonesia and Japan. Her research interests focus on visual culture, gender theories, feminisms, memory and affect in contemporary art and human-animal interactions.

Dr. Patrick Flores

Professor of Art Studies at the Department of Art Studies at the University of the Philippines, Diliman, and Adjunct Curator at the National Art Gallery of the Philippines and Singapore. Among his publications are *Painting History: Revisions in Philippine Colonial Art* (1999) and *Past Peripheral: Curation in Southeast Asia* (2008).

Kwok Kian Chow

Senior Advisor, The National Art Gallery of Singapore and founding director of the Singapore Art Museum.

Daniel Komala

CEO of Larasati Auctioneers, specialist in Southeast Asian Contemporary Art.

Iola Lenzi

Iola is a critic, curator and lecturer of contemporary Southeast Asian art. Researching art and culture in Southeast Asia for nearly two decades, she takes a synthetic view of regional practice, her texts and institutional exhibitions comparing themes, expressive languages and approaches to media. Iola is particularly interested in the place of history and hybridity in Southeast Asian contemporary art, regional expressions analysed first from within Asian and Southeast Asian cultural and historical frameworks. She is the author of *Museums of Southeast Asia* (Thames & Hudson 1995).

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. In his publications he has examined practices of artists such as Ng Eng Teng, Latiff Mohidin, Redza Piyadasa, and CheoChai-Hiang. 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 and lectures on art history in several institutions.

Seng Yu Jin

Yu Jin worked as a Senior Curator heading the Southeast Asia Gallery at The National Art Gallery, Singapore. His research interests cover regional art histories focusing on Southeast Asia, particularly diasporic communities, migration, and inter-cultural dialogues. He is currently researching on artistic activities and its histories, focusing on the history of exhibitions as sites of discourses and artist collectives within the larger framework of how the different artworld systems operate in shape artistic production, reception, and dissemination.

Enin Supriyanto

An independent writer and curator based in Jogjakarta who has written widely on Indonesian contemporary art.

Asso Prof Wee Wan-ling

Associate Professor of English in the School of Humanities and Social Sciences at the Nanyang Technological University. Author of many publications such as *Culture, Empire, and the Question of Being Modern* (2003) and editor of *Local Cultures and the 'New Asia'* (2002)

June Yap

Curator and writer. She curated the Singapore Pavilion of the 2011 Venice Biennale, which featured the critically acclaimed work *The Cloud of Unknowing* by Ho Tzu Nyen.

CAREER PATH

Our graduates have gone on to work as freelance curators, academics, museum curators, gallery managers, art writers, researchers, art administrators and art consultants. They have also been 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)



7 Montien Boonma, Thailand, *Venus of Bangkok*



8 Jompet Kuswidananto, Indonesia, *Java Phantasmagoria*



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



10 Heri Dono, Indonesia, *Wayang Legenda Indonesia Baru*

PHOTOS

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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

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

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

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7. Montien Boonma, Thailand, *Venus of Bangkok*, 1991-1993, packing crate, bucket, scrap metal, sponge, 180 x 180 x 94 cm. © Courtesy Natalia Kraevskaia
8. Jompet Kuswidananto, Indonesia, *Java Phantasmagoria*, 2008, kinetic sound and video installation. © Courtesy Iola Lenzi
9. 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
10. Heri Dono, Indonesia, *Wayang Legenda Indonesia Baru*, 2000, painted cardboard. © Courtesy Natalia Kraevskaia

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 31 undergraduate and postgraduate programmes in art, design, film, animation, fashion, dance, music, theatre, arts management, arts education, art therapy, and art history.

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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Monday – Friday, 9:30am – 5:30pm
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