

THE COURTAULD INSTITUTE OF ART EXPANDS INTO THE ARTS OF ASIA **Andrew W. Mellon Foundation and Manuela and Iwan Wirth Support Two New Posts**

The Courtauld Institute of Art is delighted to announce the establishment of two new faculty teaching and research posts in Asian art history as a major step in the expansion of its curriculum beyond the Western tradition as part of its engagement with world art history.

Supported by the Andrew W. Mellon Foundation, the first post will be based chronologically in the period from 1000 to 1750 AD. It will be defined thematically and focus on questions of imperialism and artistic patronage from the perspective of empires outside the Western world, from any major region of Asia.

Supported by Manuela and Iwan Wirth, co-Presidents of Hauser & Wirth, the second post is in the field of Asian modern and contemporary art and will respond to the immensely exciting developments in those areas. It will build on existing expertise in the modern and contemporary faculty, one of the fastest growing areas of teaching and research at The Courtauld.

With these additional posts, The Courtauld will introduce teaching on aspects of Asian art into both the undergraduate courses leading to the BA degree in Art History, the MA in Art History, and in its graduate Diploma by the start of the 2012 academic year.

The Courtauld has an outstanding record and international reputation as a centre for the study of the history of art and conservation. When founded in 1932, its curriculum included programmes in Chinese, Japanese, Indian and Mesopotamian art and archaeology and teaching was intended to cover art history across the world. However, after the Second World War and the development of the School of Oriental and African Studies (SOAS), it began to concentrate solely on the Western tradition.

Mariet Westermann, Vice President, Andrew W. Mellon Foundation, stated: "In our time, leading institutions of higher education cannot afford to ignore major regions of cultural production. The Courtauld's new commitment to advancing study of the arts of Asia is a welcome development for the Institute and for art history at large. These new teaching and research posts open exciting opportunities to scholars, and they will bring great benefits to students at The Courtauld."

Manuela and Iwan Wirth commented: "The Courtauld is an extraordinary institution that is at the forefront of academic excellence in the field of art history. We are delighted to help support their strategy to embrace the new globalised art world, and to expand their expertise in the rich field of contemporary Asian art."

Professor Deborah Swallow, Märit Rausing Director of The Courtauld, who was previously Keeper of the Asian Department at the Victoria and Albert Museum, said: "In an increasingly globalised society, we urgently need to redress this imbalance and to expand our curriculum and research to embrace the arts of the world. Indeed being in London, one of the most cosmopolitan cities in the world, this division of disciplines and the exclusion of the 'non-Western' from the teaching of art history is intellectually, socially and politically unacceptable.

The appointment of two new scholars and experts in Asian art will be a major step forward on a journey towards being able to offer a global outlook on art and its histories. These new developments will enrich The Courtauld experience for all the members of its academic community and the wider public that it serves."

Over the past decade The Courtauld has started to redress the imbalance, expanding research and teaching significantly beyond the Western world. Within art history, Dr Antony Eastmond explores the interactions between the Islamic and Byzantine traditions; in the modern and contemporary fields, Emeritus Professor Christopher Green, Professor Julian Stallabrass and Professor Sarah Wilson, as well as their respective MA and PhD students, work on global issues including topics relating to contemporary Asia. Its Summer Schools have regularly included courses on aspects of Asian art.

The Department of Conservation of Wall Painting already has an impressive record of research and conservation practice throughout the Eastern Mediterranean, as well as in Georgia, Jordan, India, Bhutan and the Himalayan region, and China. With more than a decade of collaborative teaching and research at Dunhuang in China, current conservation and research projects are underway in Bhutan, China and India, with international colleagues, PhD students and Fellows from these countries.

Other initiatives under development aim to build on some of The Courtauld's unique strengths: access to significant heritage sites, multidisciplinary approaches incorporating art, history and science, expertise in constructing physical histories, analysis of technology and strong partnerships and collaborations within India, the Himalayas and China.

The Courtauld Institute of Art has approximately 450 national and international students at any one time and its 6,000 alumni make a major impact internationally with many at the helm of major arts and educational institutions in the UK and worldwide. They include the Directors of London's National Gallery, Tate, Victoria and Albert Museum and British Museum, New York's Metropolitan Museum of Art and the Museo del Prado in Madrid, as well as leading figures in the commercial art world. There is also a growing network of alumni working in and on Asia and on global art including teachers and curators at major universities and museums from west to east Asia.

Note to Editors

The Courtauld Institute of Art is one of the world's leading centres for the study of art history, conservation and curatorship, and its Gallery houses one of Britain's best-loved collections. Based at Somerset House, The Courtauld is an independent college of the University of London. Degree programmes include a BA, Graduate Diploma and MA in the History of Art; a Postgraduate Diploma in the Conservation of Easel Paintings; an MA in Painting Conservation (Wall Painting); an MA in Curating the Art Museum; and MPhil and PhD research degrees. Facilities for students are exceptional, including outstanding libraries and the Gallery's collection of paintings, drawings and prints, and sculpture and decorative arts. Courtauld staff supervises research from classical antiquity to the present, and the Research Forum offers access to visiting speakers from around the world. Public lectures, short courses and lunchtime talks allow members of the public to share in the wealth of expertise at The Courtauld.

The Andrew W. Mellon Foundation currently makes grants in five core programme areas: higher education and scholarship; scholarly communications and information technology; museums and art conservation; performing arts; and conservation and the environment. Within each of its core programmes, the Foundation concentrates most of its grantmaking in a few areas. Institutions and programmes receiving support are often leaders in fields of Foundation activity, but they may also be promising newcomers, or in a position to demonstrate new ways of overcoming obstacles to achieve programme goals. Their grantmaking philosophy is to build, strengthen and sustain institutions and their core capacities, rather than be a source for narrowly defined projects. As such, they develop thoughtful, long-term collaborations with grant recipients and invest sufficient funds for an extended period to accomplish the purpose at hand and achieve meaningful results.

Manuela and Iwan Wirth are co-Presidents and owners of Hauser & Wirth, an internationally acclaimed gallery of contemporary and modern art with exhibition spaces in Zurich, London and New York. Together with Ursula Hauser, Manuela and Iwan Wirth have helped alter conceptions of the role of the art gallery, through their support of and close relationships with their artists. The gallery works with some of the world's most important artists and estates, including Louise Bourgeois, Martin Creed, Roni Horn and Paul McCarthy.

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