

## THE COURTAULD INSTITUTE OF ART APPOINTS TWO ASIAN ART SCHOLARS New Teaching Posts Supported by Manuela and Iwan Wirth and Andrew W. Mellon Foundation

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

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.



Wenny Teo, who has just completed her PhD at University College London and has had curatorial experience in Shanghai, Venice and at Tate, will take up her post on 1 April 2012. Supported by Manuela and Iwan Wirth, co-Presidents of Hauser & Wirth, the 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.

Wenny's research focus is on Chinese art from 1978 to the present day, with an emphasis on discourses of globalisation, cross-cultural politics and issues of critical translation. Born in Singapore, she gained a BA in History of Art/English Literature from the University of York followed in 2004 by an MA in History of Art at University College London. She moved to Shanghai in 2005 working as assistant curator and then curator at the newly-opened Museum of Contemporary Art, returning to London in 2008 as a PhD candidate at UCL. In her PhD thesis, *One World, One Dream: Contemporary Chinese Art and Spectacle*, she examined China's hosting of the 2008 Beijing Olympics as a crucial moment in the nation's self-representation and cultural imagery: a fraught confluence of art, politics and spectacle, witnessed by the world.

Sussan Babaie, who has just won a National Endowment for the Humanities (USA) one-year fellowship, will take up the second post at The Courtauld in September 2013. Supported by the Andrew W. Mellon Foundation, this post will be based on the period 1000 to 1750 AD, focusing on questions of imperialism and artistic patronage in Asia and will provide a fascinating comparative dimension to The Courtauld's teaching across the period.



Born in Iran, Sussan attended the University of Tehran's Faculty of Fine Arts until the revolution of 1979 when she moved to the USA to study for a Master's degree in Italian Renaissance and American Arts at the American University, Washington DC, followed by a PhD at the Institute of Fine Arts, New York University where she focused on the arts of Islam. Her dissertation was entitled *Safavid Palaces at Isfahan; Continuity and Change (1590-1666)*. She has many years' teaching experience in America and Europe and is currently Visiting Professor at the Institut für Kunstgeschichte, Ludwig Maximilian University, Munich. Her many publications include *Isfahan and its Palaces: Statecraft, Shi'ism and the Architecture of Conviviality in Early Modern Iran*, University of Edinburgh Press, 2008. This history of Safavid Isfahan, which explores the architectural and urban forms and networks of socio-cultural action that reflected a distinctly early modern and Perso-Shi'i practice of kingship, won the 2009 Middle East Studies Association, Houshang Pourshariati Iranian Studies Book Award.

Professor Deborah Swallow, Mārit Rausing Director of The Courtauld, who was previously Keeper of the Asian Department at the Victoria and Albert Museum, said: "I am delighted that we have found two such excellent candidates to fill these new posts at the Institute. The enhanced teaching on Asian arts and culture that they will bring us is a major step forward with our intent to offer a global outlook on art and its histories. These new posts, generously supported by Manuela and Iwan Wirth and the Andrew W. Mellon Foundation, will enrich The Courtauld experience for all the members of its academic community and the wider public that it serves."

### **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 finest and 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 the Conservation of 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 supervise 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.

**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.

**The Andrew W. Mellon Foundation** currently makes grants in five core programme areas: higher education and scholarship; scholarly communications and information technology; art history, conservation, and museums; 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.

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