

The Courtauld

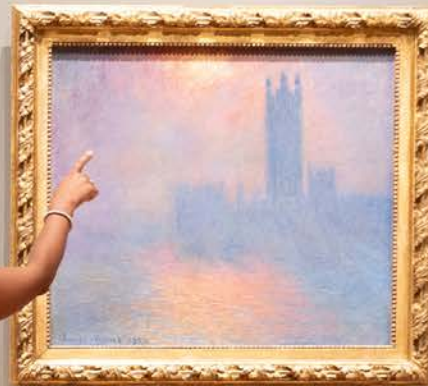


Undergraduate Prospectus 2026/27

BA History of Art

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About us

The Courtauld is one of the world's most prestigious institutions for the study, conservation and curation of art. Located in the heart of London, it's also home to one of the UK's finest art collections.

Since 1932, we have led the way in how art is studied, interpreted and preserved. Today, we bring together the UK's largest community of art historians, curators and conservators – working together to research, teach and champion the visual arts.

We welcome students from around the world. With 700 students across our undergraduate and postgraduate programmes, we have a close-knit, supportive community that embraces bold ideas and new ways of thinking.

We encourage students to look beyond the surface – exploring the stories, ideas and people behind the art and discovering how images influence the way we see and understand the world.

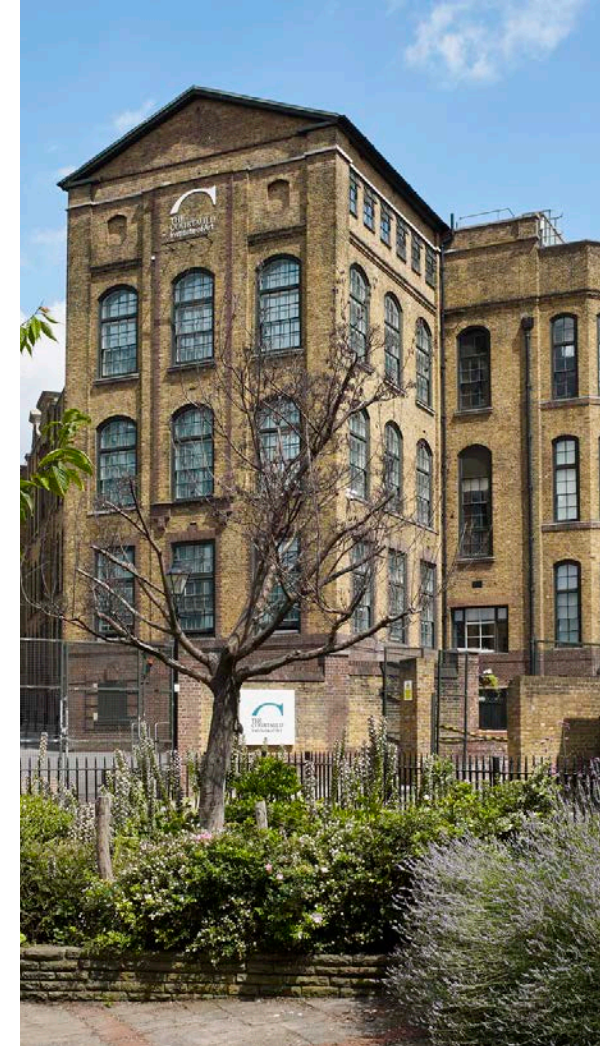
Do you have a curious, creative mind? Are you ready to explore new ways of seeing the world? The Courtauld is the perfect place to start your journey.



Study in the heart of London's cultural scene

The Courtauld is a small, specialist college, part of the wider University of London.

As an undergraduate, you'll study at our Vernon Square campus in King's Cross, in the heart of London's vibrant cultural scene. Vernon Square is just a short walk from iconic landmarks, like The British Museum, and within easy reach of major museums and galleries, including The National Gallery, the British Museum, Tate and the Royal Academy. Surrounded by world-class art, culture and entertainment, you'll find incredible places to explore around every corner.



Learn from the best

Ranked among the world's top five universities for art history*, The Courtauld is home to one of the largest faculties of art historians and conservators.

You'll learn from leading academics and experts in the field. We study, research and teach art from all over the world and every period in history. Our curriculum encompasses art in all its forms,

from cathedrals, mosques, and temples to painting, photography, sculpture, performance art, and urban design.

Recently, we have expanded our teaching expertise to include growing specialisms in exciting areas, including Black Studies, the Indian Ocean world, and Buddhist Art History and Conservation – enabling our students to connect with art in powerful, new ways.

* QS World University Rankings 2025



World-class research

The Courtauld is at the forefront of research in the field of art history and conservation. Our research was recognised as 'world-leading' in the most recent national assessment of research excellence (Research Excellence Framework, 2021).

Our lively research culture attracts leading artists, curators, and art historians from across the world – creating a space to debate the latest ideas and bring art and its histories to life.

The Courtauld Research Forum hosts around 150 events each year, including lectures, conferences, workshops, and seminars, covering diverse periods and themes in art history and visual culture. It also hosts Decolonising Action Groups, a cross-institutional initiative for students and staff



to explore what decolonising art history might mean in theory and in practice. As a student, you'll be encouraged to get involved in our lively research programme.

The Research Forum produces journals, online publications, podcasts and other digital resources, bringing our research to a wider audience.

The Courtauld's art collections



As an undergraduate student, you'll have unparalleled access to The Courtauld Gallery, home to one of the UK's most important art collections.

Based in Somerset House, the Gallery is famed for its collection of Impressionist and Post-Impressionist works. This includes Van Gogh's *Self-Portrait with Bandaged Ear*, Manet's *A Bar at the Folies-Bergère* and the most significant collection of works by Cézanne in the country.

The collection also houses remarkable artworks from the Medieval and Renaissance periods to the present day, including internationally renowned collections of prints, drawings and decorative arts.

The Prints and Drawings Study Room and Object Study Room:

The Courtauld Gallery houses one of Britain's leading collections of works on paper, with approximately 7,000 drawings and watercolours, and 27,000 prints spanning the late Middle Ages to 20th-century avant-garde art. Some of our teaching takes place in these spaces and across The Courtauld Gallery.

Collections-based teaching

You'll often have the chance to get up close to the art you're studying, with access to The Courtauld's extraordinary collections, as well as museums and galleries across London and further afield. Subsidies are available for group trips, and you can also apply for individual research grants – especially for your final-year dissertation.



Partnership with King's College London:

Thanks to this partnership, you'll get to enjoy fantastic facilities across both institutions, including learning resources and libraries, cafés and sports clubs.

As a Courtauld student, you'll have access to King's five campuses, including the Strand Campus – right next door to The Courtauld Gallery and Somerset House.

You can also take modules through King's world-leading Arts and Humanities departments. In your first year, you'll study a language at King's Language Centre, helping you build a well-rounded skillset for your future career.

University of London: While The Courtauld is a small, specialist institution, it's also part of the wider University of London – giving you the best of both worlds. So you can make use of important facilities like the Senate House Library and the University of London's Housing Services.



Student stories



Tien

“The quality of knowledge at The Courtauld has been incredible in my first year. Whilst my lectures and seminars have all been very interesting throughout the year, the availability around campus of niche and varied art historical expertise is for me where The Courtauld stands out.

I was able to reach out and interview the curators of The Courtauld’s latest exhibition for The Courtauldian, our student publication. This was simply because I had access to their email address as a student, a privilege possible only here.

The first year exposes you to topics which may be outside of your comfort zone; I found a passion for Persian metalwork I would never have discovered had I been able to pick my modules.

I’ve also loved The Courtauld’s relationship with King’s College London. Joining their Jazz Society, I have been able to make so many new friends, and it has been great getting both a small and big uni experience from The Courtauld and King’s respectively. ”



Romy

“Despite coming from all over the world and all walks of life, everyone at The Courtauld shares one thing: a genuine and deep-rooted passion for History of Art.

Being in a smaller community provides the opportunity to be taught directly by, and build personal connections with, world-leading researchers in the field.

Much of The Courtauld’s unique course is designed so that seminars can be taught inside galleries and cultural institutions across London. This, alongside our careers service, extensive alumni network, and distinctive

opportunities like the student-led exhibition, the East Wing Biennial, make The Courtauld a singular and special place to study.

I have also benefitted hugely from our partnership with King’s College London (KCL). From an academic perspective, it has allowed me to broaden the scope of my thinking and research. I also found a wonderful community through access to KCL societies and facilities, including netball and radio. To attend The Courtauld is to embrace everything the London art world has to offer.”

Why History of Art?

History of Art embraces the study of the visual arts and architecture across the world, from antiquity to the present day. When you study art history, you're not just looking at works of art as objects. You're seeing how art helps us to understand people, places and the societies in which these works of art were created.

You'll explore important questions and debates: What influenced the artist's choice of subject matter or form? What does the artwork reveal about society at that time? How were power, beliefs or emotion visualised? How was the art received when it was first created or displayed? Have perceptions about the object changed since then? How do we read art today?

By delving into these topics, you'll deepen your understanding of how people lived, thought and made sense of the world around them.

Studying at The Courtauld will challenge how you think and inspire new ways of seeing the world. You'll explore art from lots of new angles – drawing on literature, languages, philosophy, anthropology, social and cultural history, politics, curation and conservation. This broad foundation will set you up with fantastic skills for a wide range of careers.



Our BA History of Art

UCAS code: V350

Study: full-time

Duration: three years (September-June)

Intake: 90-100 students

The Courtauld Institute of Art offers one undergraduate degree: our world-renowned BA History of Art.

The curriculum covers an exceptional breadth of art forms across time: from Byzantium to the Early Modern Islamic World, from Medieval and Renaissance Europe to International Modernism, and from contemporary China to Black art histories.

Designed to give both depth and range, the degree builds strong subject-specific knowledge alongside transferable skills for your future career. You'll study works of art first-hand and explore how new ideas and approaches can change the way we think.

You'll be taught by leading academics and researchers who are working at the forefront of the field globally. Our teaching team share their knowledge and discoveries with you through lectures, seminars, tutorials and gallery visits.

Programme modules reflect cutting-edge research, so they regularly change, ensuring your learning stays fresh, engaging, and relevant.

What you'll study and when

Each year, you'll take a mix of core and elective modules totalling 120 credits (360 credits over three years).

Year 1: Dive into the foundations of art history, with modules exploring different periods, places, and methods. Some classes take place in London galleries and collections. You'll also choose a modern language to study, equipping you with further valuable skills for your future career.





Year 2 is all about looking at art in new ways. You'll take two core modules – Physical Histories and Exhibiting Art – where you'll explore works of art as material objects and the role that museums, galleries and exhibitions play in society. You'll take elective modules that explore different art histories and critical approaches. There is also an option to take modules in the Faculty of Arts and Humanities and the Language Centre at King's College London.

Year 3 is your opportunity to specialise and go deeper. Special Options and further electives allow you to delve deeper into specific areas of art that interest you. You'll also carry out your own independent research project – bringing together everything you've learnt in a final-year dissertation.

We do our best to match students with their preferred choices and keep class sizes small, usually seminar groups of 12 to 15. So, there's plenty of time for discussion, questions and one-to-one support.

You'll have a dedicated personal tutor throughout your degree, who will check in with you regularly, support your progress, help you choose modules and offer advice on next steps after graduation.

Assessment methods are varied, including coursework, exams and a final-year dissertation, giving you the chance to show what you can do in different ways.

Programme structure

Want to learn more about our BA History of Art? Head to: courtauld.ac.uk/ba



Above: Claudette Johnson, *Blues Dance*, 2023, pastel, watercolour and gouache on paper, 183 x 122cm © Claudette Johnson. Image courtesy the artist and Hollybush Gardens, London. Photo: Fergus Carmichael / The Courtauld



Year one

Foundations 1 and 2 (30 credits each):

These two modules, which run in both semesters, introduce you to major themes in art history from late antiquity to the present day, and from across the globe. You'll learn through lectures and small discussion groups (around 15 students), helping you to develop your critical thinking, interpretation, writing and communication skills.

Topics change regularly but recent lectures have covered:

- Classical and Byzantine Art
- The Renaissance: Italy and Beyond
- The Buddhist Arts of Asia
- Connecting Nineteenth-Century Art Histories
- From Civil Rights to Black Lives Matter
- What is the Contemporary? Art Since 1960

Topics (15 credits each):

Each semester, you'll complete a module that takes you out into London – making the most of the incredible art, galleries and museums the city has to offer. You'll study in small groups (of around 12 students) that meet weekly.

Indicative topics include:

- Display as Discourse: Persian Art in London Collections
- Chinese Art in London Collections
- Architecture and Identity
- Modern Women, Modern Artists
- Techniques and Meaning in 20th-Century Art
- Contemporary Art in London

Academic Literacies (15 credits):

Throughout your first year, you'll take part in sessions that help you transition smoothly into undergraduate-level work. These sessions focus on learning how to read critically, write with clarity and explore art analytically – all essential skills you'll need to thrive in your degree and future career.

Language (15 credits):

You'll study a language at the Language Centre at King's College London. You can choose from a wide range of modern languages, such as French, Italian, German, Spanish, Russian, Arabic and Mandarin, from beginner to advanced level.* By learning a foreign language, you'll develop deeper cultural insights, access new ways of thinking and gain valuable skills for your career.

*Some restrictions apply, depending on previous experience and timetabling.

Year two

Physical Histories (15 credits):

In the first semester, you'll take a unique module created with our conservation experts. This module encourages you to explore and interpret works of art by closely observing their physical and material characteristics.

Exhibiting Art (15 credits):

In semester two, the focus shifts to the role of museums, galleries and exhibitions in societies (past, present, and future) and how different display techniques can shape (and also limit) our understanding of works of art and architecture.

Drawing on London's art collections for inspiration, you'll think analytically about the display choices, methods and narrative approaches adopted by different museums and galleries.

Histories (15 credits each):

In each semester this year, you'll also take up to two Histories modules, each focusing on a particular period, theme or event. Through a mix of lectures and small seminar groups, you'll explore how art has been interpreted or created.

Examples of Histories modules include:

- Art and the Crusades
- Artists, Radicals, Mystics: European Art, 1760-1830
- Landscape and Environment in Early Modern China
- American Art and American Landscape, 1800-1920
- Reality and Fantasy in French Art, 1863-97: From Haussmannisation to Enchanted Ground
- The Modern Interior
- Art and Cold War Politics

- Beyond the Great Wall: Mapping Contemporary Art on the 'New Silk Road'
- Radical Light: The Experimental Moving Image Since 1945

Approaches (15 credits each):

Each semester, you'll take an Approaches module designed to introduce you to the theories and methods that shape how we think and write about art and art history. Our weekly small-group seminars give you the freedom to explore your ideas and express yourself in a supportive environment.

Indicative modules include:

- Art History and Social Justice
- Approaches to Islamic Ornament c.650-1350
- Thinking with Things: Theories of Materiality and Material Culture
- Sexual Politics
- Facsimile Debates: From AI to Plato
- Ways of Seeing and Being Seen: The Politics of Vision in Modern and Contemporary Art
- Postcolonialism and Contemporary Art
- Ecologies, Environments and Nature in Art and Architecture

Elective modules at King's (15 credits):

You can swap one of your 'Histories' modules for an elective in selected humanities departments or the Language Centre at King's College London.



Year three

Special Options (30 credits each):

You'll take two Special Options – one in each semester – taught in small seminar groups that meet twice weekly. These elective modules take a closer look at specific topics and methods at an advanced level – great preparation for further study and a wide range of careers.

Examples of Special Options include:

- Arts at the Courts of France, c.1360–1420
- Art and the Modern Nation: from Medieval Islam to Post-Modern Iran
- The Shape of Thought: Art Science and Knowledge in the Early Modern Period
- Reframing Orientalism: The Politics of Place and Representation
- The Black Imaginary
- Modern, Post-Modern and Digital Photography
- Global Constructivism: Art, Politics and the Everyday

Approaches/Histories/Electives (15 credits each):

You'll take two further 15-credit modules, one from our range of Approaches and the other either a Histories or King's elective. This gives even more flexibility to tailor your studies to your interests and future career goals.

BA Research (30 credits):

Beginning in semester one, you'll start planning your independent research project, defining your topic and chosen research questions and methods. With one-to-one supervision, you'll write a 7,000–8,000-word dissertation, which is handed in at the beginning of the Summer. For many students, the dissertation is the highlight of the degree – a chance to explore a specialist topic in depth and develop advanced research skills.

How we assess your progress

- You'll need to pass your first year (with a minimum mark of 40%) to progress to the second year
- Your second year makes up 40% of your final degree mark
- The third year counts for the remaining 60% of your mark

Entry requirements

We welcome students from all backgrounds, and you don't need any previous experience in art history to apply.

If you come from a socio-economic group underrepresented in Higher Education, we are able to make you a lower offer than our typical entry requirement as part of our commitment to widening access.

Typical offers

- A-levels: Grades AAA–ABB
- International Baccalaureate (IB): 35 points minimum overall
- European Baccalaureate: 80% overall

For full details of our equivalent entry requirements, visit: courtauld.ac.uk/ba

All applications should be made through UCAS.



Resources and support

We're here to support you every step of the way during your studies. Whether you need guidance on writing your first essay, financial advice or someone to talk to about your wellbeing, we're always happy to help.

Financial support

We have a range of funding opportunities, scholarships and bursaries available, including:

The James Hughes-Hallett Undergraduate Scholarship – designed to support UK students from groups underrepresented in Higher Education (worth £10,000 over the three-year degree).

The Courtauld Bursary – if you're a UK (Home) student and meet certain criteria, you may be eligible to receive up to £3,000 per year.

The Courtauld Hardship Fund – provides short-term emergency funds to meet immediate financial needs.

Student finance – some UK students are eligible for government loans to help cover university tuition fees and living costs. Please see: gov.uk/student-finance

For full details on funding and costs, visit: courtauld.ac.uk/undergraduate-fees-funding

Learning resources and support

The Courtauld Library houses a major international research collection comprising over 200,000 art historical books, journals, and exhibition catalogues, as well as millions of digital resources.

You can also make use of incredible facilities beyond The Courtauld, including:

- *Senate House Library* – the central library for the University of London, just a short walk from Vernon Square
- *King's College London*, including the Maughan Library, with outstanding resources across the humanities, law and sciences
- *The British Library* – one of the world's largest libraries, only 15 minutes from campus
- *The National Art Library in the V&A museum* – home to the UK's largest library collection on art, design and performance



Students' Union

Our Students' Union is the representative student body at The Courtauld – ensuring that everyone feels welcomed, included, and heard.

The Union organises some of the biggest events of the year, including Welcome Week, the Winter Party and the Summer Ball. Events are often organised by students themselves.

You can join all kinds of societies, catering for every interest – from architecture to fashion design and film. You can get involved behind the scenes by running for roles like Students' Union President, Vice President or Executive Officer. There are also representatives for our LGBTQIA+, Disabilities, International, and Global Majority communities. So, you can play your part in shaping student life.

The Courtauldian

This is our student-run publication, with a termly magazine and regularly updated online content covering everything from art and design to politics, culture and student life. Whether you're into writing articles, reviews, creative writing or graphic design, there are plenty of ways to get involved and gain new skills.

East Wing Biennial

The Courtauld's very own student-led exhibition is a brilliant opportunity for students to engage directly with contemporary art forms and gain hands-on experience in exhibition design and management.

One-to-one specialist writing support

Need help structuring your writing or improving clarity? Our Royal Literary Fund Fellows offer one-to-one support to help you sharpen your writing skills and build confidence.

Wellbeing support

University life can be thrilling and rewarding but it can also feel overwhelming at times. Whatever you're dealing with – whether it's money worries, health issues or something else – our dedicated Wellbeing team can help.

Our services include everything from counselling sessions to wellbeing check-ins and help on making a hardship fund application. We offer a safe, confidential space where you can talk things through and get the support you need.

If you're neurodiverse, have a mental or physical health condition that might affect your studies, or a Specific Learning Difference, our team will work closely with you to put tailored support in place.

Your future career

Where could our BA History of Art take you?

Our undergraduate degree gives you highly transferable skills that are in demand in the arts and cultural fields and many other industries.

Courtauld graduates go on to take up roles as:

- heads of major museums and galleries
- curators
- conservators
- art dealers and auction house experts
- lawyers
- entrepreneurs
- publishers
- academics and teachers
- banking and finance professionals
- media professionals and journalists
- marketing and communications specialists

You'll develop all kinds of job-ready skills, including:

- *Analytical and critical thinking skills* – ideal for evaluating complex information from art to AI-generated content
- *Visual literacy* – a huge advantage in today's image-dominated culture
- *Strong communication skills* – enabling you to express complex ideas clearly and succinctly

- *Time and project management*
- *Digital fluency* – helping you build a strong profile on job search platforms
- *Cross-cultural awareness and understanding*
- *Adaptability and resilience* – must-have skills in any fast-moving industry

Planning your next steps

At The Courtauld, our career consultants are here to support you. Through one-to-one guidance, workshops, and networking events, we'll help you:

- explore career paths – from museums and galleries to publishing, media, marketing, heritage, and other industries
- write a standout CV/cover letters and prepare for interviews
- find internships, work experience or volunteering opportunities
- plan your next steps, including postgraduate study or training for careers in curating, conservation or academia

The Courtauld Institute Careers Programme

We run regular events to help you explore your career options and build confidence, including:

- panel sessions with Courtauld graduates from a range of industries
- talks with recruitment and careers experts who know the skills employers are looking for
- skills workshops on topics such as interview techniques and career planning
- networking events with leading employers in the arts and heritage sectors

You'll also get access to a huge library of online resources, including practical guides on CV writing and careers.

Employment opportunities and internships

Many of our students take on jobs or internships during the holidays, gaining hands-on experience, making new contacts and earning money along the way. It's also possible to take on part-time work during the semester and students are supported to find a balance between paid work and their degree studies.

Our students have worked in:

- museums and galleries
- auction houses
- digital heritage organisations
- creative consultancies

There are also exciting opportunities for students to work within The Courtauld itself, from helping out in the Gallery to becoming a digital ambassador or assisting with Research Forum events.

Our amazing alumni

The Courtauld may be small, but our impact is mighty. Our alumni community spans more than 80 countries, shaping the arts and cultural sectors worldwide.

Many leading museums and galleries are led by Courtauld graduates. Our alumni also go on to become leaders in tech, law, journalism, marketing, politics and finance.

Wherever their career paths lead, Courtauld graduates apply the core skills they learnt here – to think critically, challenge conventional thinking, and make a difference to the world around them.

Alumni mentoring programme

We run a dedicated alumni mentoring programme specifically designed for students from underrepresented backgrounds. Each year, selected students are matched with a Courtauld graduate working in a field that interests them, with personalised careers support and advice on life after graduation.

Come and meet us



There are lots of ways to find out more about life at The Courtauld, whether you want to visit us in person or connect with current students online.

Open Days are usually held in the Summer and Autumn – the perfect opportunity to learn more about our undergraduate degree and student life here in London.

Campus and Gallery tours: Join one of our regular term-time tours where you can meet with a current student and hear first-hand what it's like to study here.

Book your place:
courtauld.ac.uk/open-days

If you can't attend in person, you can also watch our virtual Open Day presentation online at: courtauld.ac.uk/ba

Ask a student: Chat online with one of our current students. Our students share their views on everything from the course to where to grab lunch!

Start the conversation:
courtauld.ac.uk/ask-a-student

Explore art history with our free programme for 16-18-year-olds

If you're interested in art history, conservation or curating, our Young People's Programme is a great way to get involved...for free!

These fun events take place online and in person:

- *Summer University:* A week-long taster of life as a Courtauld student.
- *Seminar Sessions:* Bite-sized seminars led by research students.
- *Insights into Art History:* Creative workshops exploring The Courtauld Collection, covering all kinds of art, periods, geographies and themes.
- *Free School/College Workshops:* Online and in-person sessions for students in state schools and colleges across the UK – designed to support your curriculum and spark an interest in art history:
courtauld.ac.uk/take-part/schools

For more information on our Young People's Programme, visit:
courtauld.ac.uk/young-people




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Disclaimer: All information in this prospectus is correct at the time of going to print (September 2025).
Please check our website for the latest programme information and updates.