

# COURTAULD

**Press Release**

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## **COURTAULD INSTITUTE NAMED WORLD'S BEST FOR ART HISTORY IN LATEST QS GLOBAL RANKINGS**



The Courtauld. Photo: Benedict Johnson

The Courtauld Institute is the world's top institution for the study of History of Art, according to the QS World University Rankings 2026 published today, Wednesday 25 March 2026.

The Courtauld secured the number one spot out of fifty prestigious institutions worldwide. This outstanding achievement reflects the Courtauld's long-standing position as a leading global centre for the visual arts, with an unwavering commitment to delivering academic excellence and a cutting-edge curriculum.

The Courtauld, founded in 1932 by philanthropist and collector Samuel Courtauld, is an internationally renowned centre for the teaching and research of art history, conservation and curation, and is home to one of the world's greatest art collections.

The QS World University Rankings serve as a highly regarded source of comparative data on university performance, evaluating institutions on five indicators: academic and employer reputation, research citations per paper, H-index, and international research network.

The number one world ranking follows the announcement of the Courtauld's plan to create a new state-of-the-art campus at Somerset House in London, set to open in 2029. This major milestone in the Courtauld's history will see a transformation and expansion of its historic Grade I listed building in the North Wing of Somerset House, including flexible, modern teaching spaces, a new lecture theatre, and a spectacular library within Somerset House's historic subterranean vaults. The new campus will open

directly onto the Strand, connecting the Courtauld to an exciting new cultural and intellectual quarter in the heart of the city, alongside its partner King's College London.

The development comes at a time when the Courtauld is expanding into new areas of teaching and research, increasing its focus on global geographies such as the Americas, the African diaspora and the arts of Asia. The Courtauld has also recently launched a series of new MA programmes, including an MA Art Business and MA Curating, as it seeks to meet the evolving needs of students and the professional art world.

The Courtauld also announced a commitment to work with national education and philanthropic partners to broaden access to art history for secondary school children in the UK in the lead-up to the opening of the new campus, enriching the Courtauld's existing work in broadening access to its collection and teaching for young people.

The new campus project is made possible through the recent visionary gift from the Reuben Foundation and the generous long-standing support of the Blavatnik Family Foundation. Additional transformational support is provided by the Deborah Loeb Brice Foundation, the Clore Duffield Foundation, the Garfield Weston Foundation, Oak Foundation, The Julia Rausing Trust, Rothschild Foundation, Georgia and David Winter and the Wolfson Foundation. The Courtauld is most grateful to these foundational supporters, alongside others who have already committed to the redevelopment of our home at Somerset House.

**Professor Mark Hallett, Märit Rausing Director of the Courtauld, said:** "This ranking by QS is a testament to the dedication, excellence, and enthusiasm of our faculty, staff and students and the extraordinary impact the Courtauld has on the wider arts and culture sector. As the Courtauld approaches its centenary, we are continuing to push the boundaries of research and teaching and are deeply committed to expanding access to art history across the UK and beyond, building on Samuel Courtauld's founding mission of 'art for all'".

Find out more about the [QS World University Rankings 2026](#).

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#### **Notes to Editors:**

##### **Courtauld**

The Courtauld works to advance how we see and understand the visual arts, as an internationally renowned centre for the teaching and research of art history and a major public gallery. Founded by collectors and philanthropists in 1932, the organisation has been at the forefront of the study of art ever since through advanced research and conservation practice, innovative teaching, the renowned collection and inspiring exhibitions of its gallery, and engaging and accessible activities, education and events.

The Courtauld Gallery cares for one of the greatest art collections in the UK, presenting these works to the public at the Courtauld Gallery in central London, as well as through loans and partnerships. The Gallery is most famous for its iconic Impressionist and Post-Impressionist masterpieces – such as Van Gogh's *Self-Portrait with Bandaged Ear* and Manet's *A Bar at the Folies-Bergère*. It showcases these alongside an internationally renowned collection of works from the Middle Ages and the Renaissance through to the present day.

Academically, the Courtauld Institute is the largest community of art historians and conservators in the UK, teaching and conducting research on subjects ranging from creativity in late Antiquity to contemporary digital art forms – with an increasingly global focus. An independent college of the University of London, the Courtauld offers a range of degree programmes from BA to PhD in the History of Art, curating, art and business and the conservation of easel and wall paintings. Its alumni are leaders and innovators in the arts, culture and business worlds, helping to shape the global agenda for the arts and creative industries.

Founded on the belief that everyone should have the opportunity to engage with art, the Courtauld works to increase understanding of the role of art throughout history, across all societies and geographies, and to champion its importance in the present day. This could be through exhibitions offering a chance to look closely at world-famous works; events bringing art history research to new audiences; accessible short courses; digital engagement, innovative school, family, and community programmes; or taking a formal qualification. The Courtauld's ambition is to transform access to art history education, ensuring as many people as possible can benefit from the tools it offers to better understand the visual world around us.

The Courtauld is an exempt charity and relies on generous philanthropic support to achieve its mission of advancing the understanding of the visual arts of the past and present across the world through advanced research, innovative teaching, inspiring exhibitions, programmes and collections.

The collection cared for by the Courtauld Gallery is owned by the Samuel Courtauld Trust.