

# The Courtauld

## Press Release

6 September 2021

### THE COURTAULD'S CONSERVATION DEPARTMENT LAUNCHES NEW TEACHING AND QUALIFICATIONS FOR AUTUMN 2022

The Courtauld is extending its world-leading conservation teaching from autumn 2022, offering three newly developed curricula for three MA qualifications in Buddhist Art History and Conservation, Conservation of Wall Paintings and the Conservation of Easel Paintings.

[The MA in Buddhist Art History and Conservation](#) is a new 12-month programme, hosted at the Robert H. N. Ho Family Foundation Centre for Buddhist Art and Conservation at The Courtauld. It aims to provide a comprehensive grounding in Buddhist art history and theoretical aspects of conservation. Taught by leading specialists in conservation and Buddhist art, the MA will address issues of art history preservation — through appreciation, continuing use and conservation — of the vast heritage of Buddhist art worldwide, drawing on key sites where The Courtauld has been involved in conservation. Visits to collections and sites are central to the degree.

The updated [MA in Conservation of Wall Paintings](#) will be accepting applications for the first time in five years, and aims to ensure the improved care of wall paintings through providing appropriate education in their conservation. The three-year full-time course focuses on wall painting conservation through a rigorous ethical and scientific framework for the assessment of risk, and the impact of passive, preventive and remedial conservation treatments.

The [MA in the Conservation of Easel Paintings](#) is a new qualification replacing the previous Postgraduate Diploma. It is also a three-year full-time course, which prepares students for a professional career in easel painting conservation. The strong practical and intellectual focus of the degree is reflected in courses designed to build on knowledge, and to develop both practical and decision making skills underpinned by ethical, historical and scientific principles.

Following consultation with stakeholders and international advisors from museums and private practice, new curricula in Wall and Easel Paintings Conservation reflect progress in the profession; from the use of non-invasive imaging equipment for technical analysis, which is a particular strength of the Conservation Department, to the inclusion of core modules devoted to preventive conservation and collection care. Advanced Principles and Theory in modules introduce the latest research and approaches to the conservation of modern and contemporary works of art.

In addition to three taught programmes The Courtauld also offers [a PhD in Conservation](#), with graduates focusing on a range of subjects from the technical analysis of paintings from The Courtauld's collections, to the management of the conservation of wall paintings in Ladakh.

Dr Austin Nevin, Head of Conservation at The Courtauld, says: "I'm delighted to be able to announce these new and updated programmes, which build on The Courtauld's track record in training some of the leading art conservators. It's particularly exciting to be able to relaunch the MA in Wall Paintings Conservation and the MA in Buddhist Art, as part of The Courtauld's continued drive to globalise our teaching. All three conservation courses will offer graduates unique transdisciplinary teaching and grounding in the latest techniques and methodologies, ensuring our future graduates will be well placed to make their mark on an exciting field."

Professor Deborah Swallow, Märit Rausing Director at The Courtauld, added: "Our Conservation department has been a vital part of The Courtauld's work since our earliest years, with many experts in the field having passed through our doors. With these new qualifications, we hope to continue that tradition, whilst also expanding into new areas. We are particularly grateful to the Robert H. N. Ho Family Foundation for their support for the MA in Buddhist Art and the J. Paul Getty Trust for the support of the Wall Paintings Programme."

The Courtauld's Department of Conservation is one of the very few specialist centres for the training and research in fine art conservation and technical art, and dates back to the mid-1930s. In addition to specialist work on the collections displayed in The Courtauld Gallery, recent Courtauld conservation projects include sites in China, India and Bhutan, as well as collaborations with national bodies including the National Trust and English Heritage, the National Gallery, National Portrait Gallery, and Tate.

The Courtauld has recently been [awarded two grants totaling more than £2.2 million from the Arts & Humanities Research Council Capabilities for Collections Fund \(CapCo\)](#) to upgrade critical scientific instrumentation for imaging and molecular analysis in the Conservation Department, and support the infrastructure development essential to further care of The Courtauld's world-class collections. The grant has supported key areas, including equipment upgrades that underpin The Courtauld's world-renowned art conservation research.

[Applications for the Conservation courses](#) from academic year 2022/23 will open in October 2021, and prospective students can find out more about each programme through [Open Days taking place over the autumn](#) and [via The Courtauld's website](#).

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## THE COURTAULD

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## NOTES TO EDITORS

### About The Courtauld

The Courtauld works to advance how we see and understand the visual arts, as an internationally-renowned centre for the teaching, 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 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 faculty is the largest community of art historians and conservators in the UK, teaching and carrying out research on subjects from creativity in late Antiquity to contemporary digital artforms - 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 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 played by art throughout history, in all societies and across all geographies – as well as being a champion for the importance of art 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 and expert 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, by extending the horizons of what this is, and ensuring as many people as possible can benefit from the tools to better understand the visual world around us.

The Courtauld is currently undertaking an ambitious transformation project that will make it accessible to even more people. The Courtauld's home in historic Somerset House – London's working arts centre - is closed for a major programme of renovation. The Courtauld's students and academic staff are based near King's Cross. The Gallery is scheduled to reopen in November 2021.