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UNIVERSITY OF  
ABERDEEN

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GO BEYOND BOUNDARIES



# Art History

UNDERGRADUATE GUIDE

## On campus and on location

Art History is a research intensive department with recent projects funded by the Wellcome Trust, the Scottish Government, the Paul Mellon Centre for British Art, and the British Academy.

### What does this mean for me as an undergraduate student?

It's about working with lecturers who are engaging with cutting-edge research. Our range of expertise impacts on your courses and relates to the demonstrable contribution our research makes to the wider community.

→ **1ST IN THE UK  
FOR ART HISTORY**

National Student Survey 2024

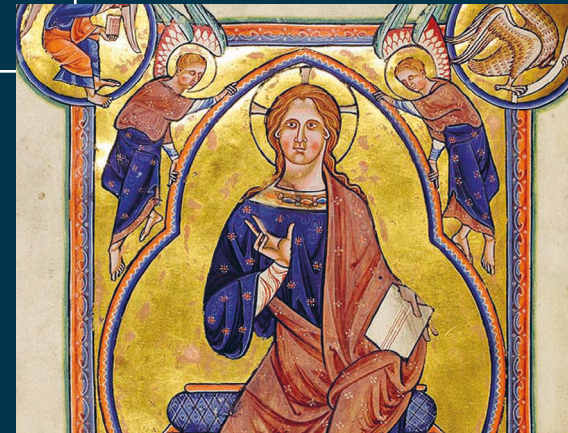
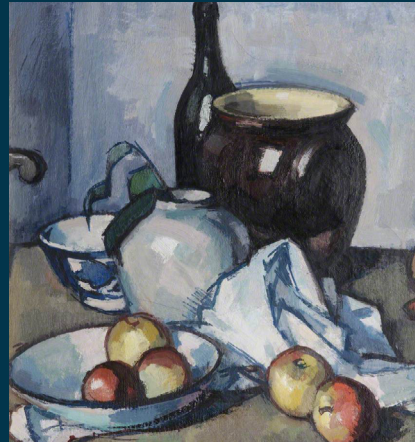






Aberdeen is structured a little differently from other universities and these differences make Aberdeen special. To help you get started let us explain the basics.

In your first two years of study, you can engage with a range of subjects alongside your Art History courses. This interdisciplinary approach will help you to think about Art History from a variety of perspectives. This could mean developing your skills and understanding in subjects such as European languages, literature, theology, philosophy and history.



# Engaging with art in and beyond the classroom

We provide our students with an extensive knowledge of the history of art from the Middle Ages to the present day, covering a wide range of media and techniques. Our curriculum aims to situate European art in its global connectedness and its full complexities.

## Year 1

### Core

#### Introduction to Art History

- Online assessments and essay

#### Introduction to Modern and Contemporary Art

- Essays

#### Encountering Art: Museums through History

- Essays

#### Fashion: History and Theory

- Reflective Report and Essay

+ *Enhanced Study (up to 60 credits)*

## Year 2

### Take at least two

#### Art & Protest

- Poster and essay

#### Art Matters: Materials and Techniques

- Poster and essay

#### What is Art?

- Source analysis and essay

+ *Enhanced Study (Up to 60 credits)*

## SHARING OUR TREASURES

The University of Aberdeen has been commissioning and collecting artworks since the foundation of King's College in 1495, and there are over 400 oil paintings in our art collection. Within our internationally-important Museums and Special Collections you'll find illuminated manuscripts including the Aberdeen Bestiary, the MacBean Collection of Jacobite prints, and the George Washington Wilson archive of Victorian glass plate negatives.

## Year 3

### Honours Option Courses

#### Curation: Theory and Practice

- Taught with Museums and Special Collections
- Exhibition proposal task
- Curatorial teamwork
- Portfolio, presentation and position paper

#### The Twelfth-Century Renaissance

#### Italian Mural Painting and the Making of Visual Cultures, 1400-1500

#### Art and Society in 18th-Century England

#### Queer Beauty: Masculinities in 19th-Century Art

#### Surrealism and its Legacies in Contemporary Art

#### Seminar-Based

#### Diverse Assessments

## Year 4

### Honours Option Courses. As in Year 3, plus

#### Art and the City

- includes a subsidised fieldtrip to a European city

#### Dissertation

- A topic of your own choice, supervised by a member of staff
- 8,000 - 10,000 words

## FIELD TRIPS

Across all four years, our students engage with original artworks, on campus, in museums and galleries, and in the field. Our fieldtrips are run locally, nationally and internationally.





# A week in the life of an Art History student

Here's an example of how the week's commitments pan out for a current first year undergraduate who has chosen to study Archaeology and Theology alongside their core Art History courses.

## Monday

**12noon-1pm | Archaeology Lecture**  
Archaeology in Action:  
An Introduction

**3pm-4pm | Art History Lecture**  
Introduction to Art History

This course investigates key episodes in the history of art in the western world, from antiquity to the nineteenth century. Students will be introduced to the artistic production of distinct historical periods, with reference to their social, political, religious and cultural contexts, in lectures and tutorials.



## Tuesday

**4pm-5pm | Art History Lecture**  
Introduction to Art History  
Today's lecture is on Roman art and originality - Were they copying Greeks? What of their own traditions? Why does art change over the course of time and how do we account for it?

**12noon-1pm | Divinity Lecture**  
Utopia and Apocalypse

**9am-11am | Divinity Tutorial**  
Utopia and Apocalypse

## Friday

**9am-10am | Art History Tutorial**  
Introduction to Art History



**1pm-2pm | Archaeology Tutorial**  
Archaeology in Action



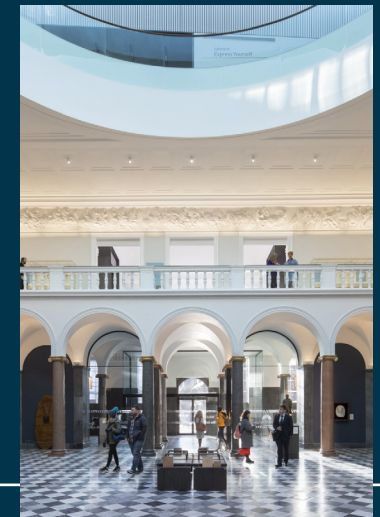
**10am-11am | Art History Tutorial**  
Fashion: History and Theory

## Thursday

## Wednesday

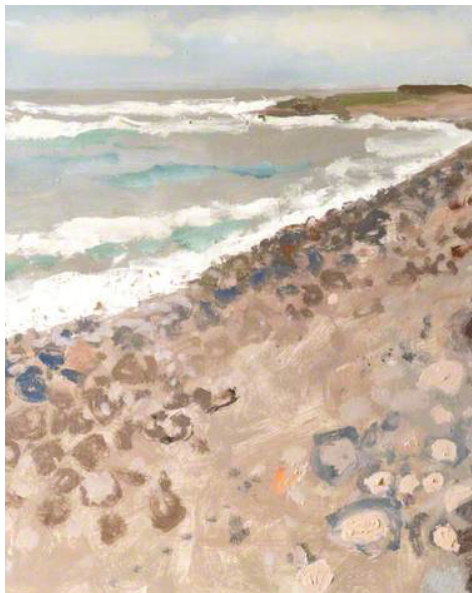
**11am-12noon | Art History Lecture**  
Encountering Art: Museums through History

This course takes you on a journey through the history of collecting, from early modern cabinets of curiosities, to questions of curation in the digital age. The course also addresses key debates on the practice and ethics of museums, on restitution and decolonisation.



# What skills will a degree from Aberdeen give me?

- Communication
- Critical thinking
- Flexibility
- Analysis
- Relationship-building



Students will gain specialised and applied knowledge in art history, curation and museums, developing transferable skills sought after by employers.

In a world where analysis and communication are ever more important, Aberdeen graduates develop the core employability skills valued in the workplace - the ability to work independently and in teams, to collate and evaluate evidence, and to present arguments clearly and persuasively.

## The Complete University Guide

A degree is typically a challenging, engaging and creative experience undertaken by students with a wide range of backgrounds and interests, and from which graduates successfully go on to a variety of careers, in law, publishing, media and education as well as museums and the commercial art world.

## Vivi Brooke

MA (Hons) Art History-  
Film & Visual Culture

It seems that many of our class are presently working in marketing-based creative jobs, either in visual, digital or communications roles. I think it is fantastic to see how many of us have been able to apply the skills we worked on at university in diverse settings. People sometimes wonder where the students who study for a degree end up working. It is great to see that there are so many transferable and important critical and creative thinking skills that were drilled into us during our studies, and that they have given us a great foundation for a range of different fields of work.





# Graduating class



**Ainize Moschynski** MA (Hons) Art History.

Senior Manager of the Art Collection, Grampian Hospital Art Trust

I transferred my degree from Curtin University in Australia to the University of Aberdeen. Although daunting at first, it has been a wonderful experience. The department at the University of Aberdeen has excellent lecturers that transmit their passion for the subject to all of us students. The degree is varied and engaging and lecturers are always available to give support and advice. I enjoy the mixture of tutorials and seminars, as well as the interactive lectures, which have helped me to develop my communication and presentation skills. The practical approach to art history has been an important part of our degree, especially through fieldwork, which takes teaching out of the classroom and directly into museums and galleries. These visits have enriched our learning and have also enabled us to meet art historians and other professionals working in the arts industry. I now work as Senior Manager of the Art Collection of Grampian Hospital Art Trust. The skills acquired during my degree are a crucial foundation for my day-to-day work. I'm delighted to be able to pursue a career in museums in Aberdeen - and to collaborate with many old friends and fellow Art History graduates employed by other art institutions in the city!



**Georgi Chichkov**  
MA (Hons) Art History



Art History was not my original degree, but after taking "Introduction to Art History" in Year 1, and coming into contact with the lecturers from the department, I changed my degree intention which has taught me that everything is connected, and how to recognise such connections. A work of art is not a singular entity existing on its own. It is linked to the world around: the politics, the social life, the developments of the time. The support received by the department is unquestionably the best I've had through my four years at the University of Aberdeen, and this has been crucial in helping me to become the best I can be.

**Andrea De Monte**  
MA (Hons) Art History



There are many different perspectives from which you can look at art; by stimulating your critical thinking, a degree teaches you not only how to adopt a dynamic approach to art, but also how to enhance problem-solving skills that are crucial in many professional fields. Why Aberdeen? Besides having the chance to study at a beautiful campus with an impressive library collection, you will find outstanding teaching staff, who will prepare you, through lectures, seminars and fieldtrips, for whichever path you choose next.



# What sorts of careers do art historians enter?

Employers highly value what humanities students learn at University. According to an AAC&U poll, more than nine out of ten employers say that a job candidate's capacity for thinking and communicating clearly and solving complex problems is more important than his or her degree subject. More than three-quarters favour applicants who understand other cultures.

In the past, our graduates have had no difficulty in securing rewarding jobs in a wide variety of sectors, ranging from museums and galleries to education, tourism and local government. Here is what just a few of our graduates had to say about how Art History has been useful to them in their careers.



**Dr Joanne Anderson**  
Head of Art History

Whenever I hear back from our graduates, it is always rewarding to learn how valuable and inspiring their time as art historians at Aberdeen has been, and how they are now contributing to the wider world beyond university.

**Olivia Ross**  
MA (Hons) Art History;  
Junior Specialist, Decorative  
Arts and Design at  
Lyon & Turnbull, Edinburgh

Participating in group projects really helped me build the confidence needed to establish strong relationships with people which is so important in the commercial art sector. Often working under pressure to meet cataloguing and consignment deadlines, I discovered my attention to detail and an ability to prioritise assignments had served me well after four years of analysing artworks. Art History does not just lead to museums and further research, it also offers a great platform for entering the art business world in ways I had not initially realised



**Charles Mackay**  
MA (Hons) Art History;  
now Gallery Director at  
the Weiss Gallery, London

Fundamentally, studying at Aberdeen provided me with a broad knowledge of Western art history that taught me how to contextualise and associate artworks with particular periods, styles and even tastes. This, along with working at the Scottish National Portrait Gallery during the summer breaks, encouraged me toward a niche specialism for myself, of sixteenth- and seventeenth-century Northern European portraiture. From viewing paintings with academic lenses, to examining the same piece with a more objective perception, I have been able to develop a more authoritative perspective. My university studies taught me how art can immortalise history as it happens and, thus, be a didactic medium, whereas my (ongoing) professional experience makes me establish the importance of an individual object's condition, provenance and context within art history. I am in a very privileged position where, every day, I can handle masterpieces by the most renowned Old Masters, including François Clouet, Sir Anthony Dyck, and Artemisia Gentileschi, whose oeuvres I was first introduced to at Aberdeen. On graduating, my degree gave me a platform from which I could explore several different professional options and use my own instincts and experiences to guide me to where I am today.





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