

# Art History

**1st**

in the UK for  
overall student  
satisfaction\*

UNDERGRADUATE  
GUIDE

\*National Student Survey (2022)



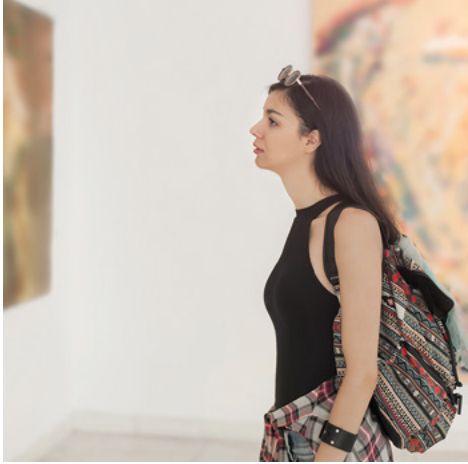
Art History is a research intensive department with recent projects funded by the Wellcome Trust, the Scottish Government and the Paul Mellon Centre for British Art.

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.

# On campus and on location





**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.

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## YEAR 1

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*Core:*

### **Introduction to Art History**

- Online assessments and essay

### **Introduction to Modern and Contemporary Art**

- Portfolio work and essay

### **Encountering Art: Museums through History**

- Essays

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+ *Enhanced Study (up to 75 credits)*

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## YEAR 2

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*Take at least two*

### **Art & Protest**

- Poster, essay and exam

### **Art Matters: Materials and Techniques**

- Poster, essay and exam

### **What is Art?**

- Source analysis, essay, exam

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+ *Enhanced Study (Up to 60 credits)*

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## *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.



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## YEAR 3

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*Honours Option Courses*

**Curator: 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*

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## YEAR 4

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*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

***Fieldtrips***

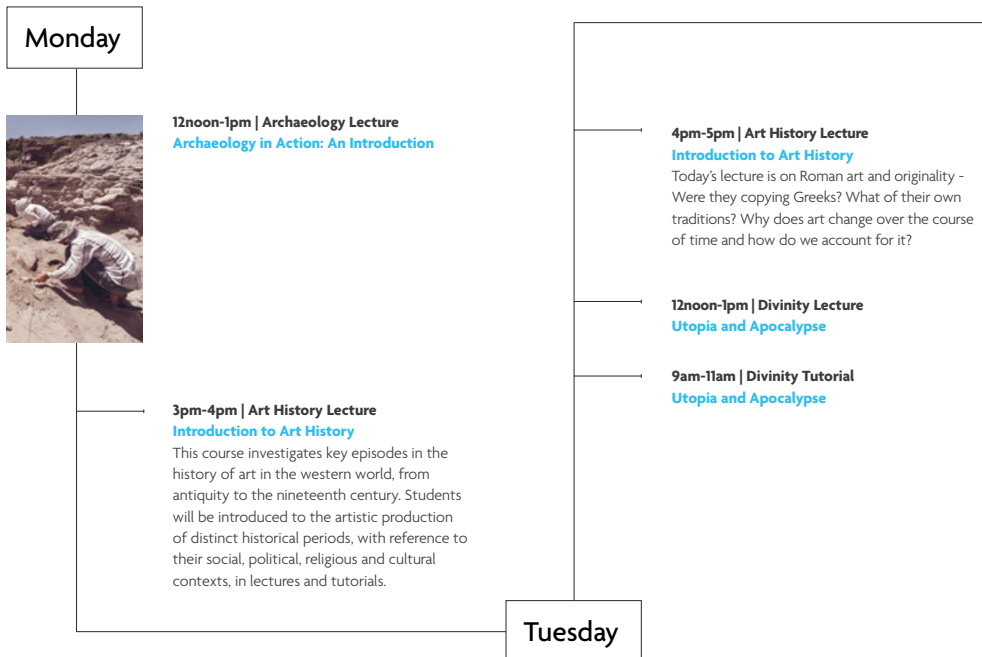
Across all four years, our students engage with original artworks, on campus, in museums and galleries, and in the field.

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, History and Theology alongside their core Art History course.





Friday

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



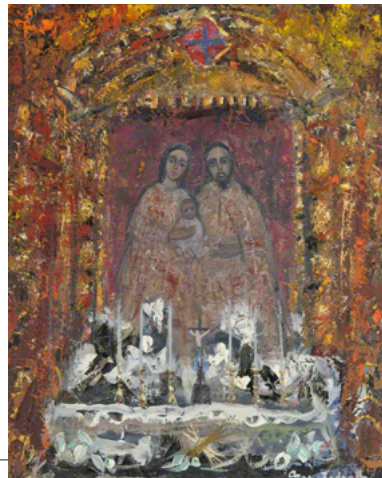
1pm-2pm | Archaeology Tutorial  
Archaeology in Action

10am-11am | History Tutorial  
Europe in the Twentieth Century

Thursday

Wednesday

11am-12noon | History Lecture  
Europe in the Twentieth Century



# What skills will a degree from Aberdeen give me?



Students will gain specialised and applied knowledge in the 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.

Communication





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.

Critical thinking

Flexibility

Relationship-building

Analysis



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.

***The Complete University Guide***

# Graduating Class



## **Ainize Moschynski, MA (Hons) Art History**

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 would like to become a curator, but by studying I have also learned that this degree is full of possibilities and is not limited to getting jobs within the arts. I believe that having a sound visual knowledge of the world that surrounds us is key to becoming an effective professional in any field, and the degree at Aberdeen has provided me with that knowledge. By studying I have made many new friends, I have learned to recognize my own strengths and weaknesses, I have become a better creative thinker, a better independent worker and I have gained greater understanding of the social and cultural issues that we have to deal with every day.

# 8th

**IN THE UK FOR ART  
HISTORY**

(The Times & Sunday Times  
Good University Guide 2022)



### **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.



### **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.



# 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:

“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”

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





“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”.

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

“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”.

***Dr Joanne Anderson***

Head of Art History

# 100%

for overall  
student  
satisfaction

NSS 2022

**Interested? Find out more:**

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