

School of Art History Strategic Plan 2021-2026

The School of Art History is a global centre for excellence in the discipline, with an outstanding reputation for scholarship and research-led teaching. We are ranked first in the UK in the Guardian University Guide 2022, first in Scotland and third in the UK in the Complete University Guide UK 2022, third in the UK in the Times and Sunday Times Good University Guide 2022, and second among Art History departments in REF 2014.

An international community with a global outlook, we are one of the largest and most dynamic art history departments in Britain, with world-leading expertise in medieval, early modern, contemporary, and non-western art, history of photography, and museums and collections-based research. In recent years, we have consciously sought to expand the geographical reach of our scholarship, which now includes greater global coverage across Europe, the Americas, the Middle East, Asia and Africa. Art historians at St Andrews are at the forefront of investigations into Scottish art and architecture, increasingly focusing on its transnational links.

Our achievements are made possible by the vibrant, collegial and flexible atmosphere that we have worked together to create. We are dedicated to fostering an inclusive environment that supports equality and diversity and is highly supportive to students and researchers at all levels.

Aspiration

Our chief goal over the next five years is to enhance the international status of St Andrews as a centre of excellence for global art history and collections-based research. We aspire to extend our international reputation for transformative art history and to be known as one of the best places to study and research art history in the UK and in the world.

To this end, our key aims and objectives over the next five years are to:

- Continue to diversify and increase the global coverage of our teaching and research
- Extend the range of audiences for our scholarship within and beyond academia
- Invest in our research themes, centres and institutes
- Enhance knowledge-sharing and support for funding applications, from individual awards to large-scale, multi-investigator grants
- Recruit the best postgraduate students through increased provision of funding
- Strengthen our relationship with University collections and museums and our interdisciplinary collaborations with other Schools and subjects
- Develop our alliances with local, national and international museums and research collaborators
- Explore the potential of digital skills and distance learning while sustaining our ethos of small-group, research-led teaching
- Further promote the principles of equality, diversity and inclusion
- Support colleagues to re-set the focus on research as we begin to emerge from the pandemic

Research excellence

We prioritise world-class art historical scholarship and teaching. In REF 2014, 93% of the School's research was rated world-leading or internationally excellent. The School has a high success rate in research funding, winning one award for every two applications, for a total of £2.4 million in this REF period (more than six times our 2014 total). We are leaders in research networks, centres and institutes, and highly active in organising conferences and

communicating our research to diverse audiences. Our seminar series, distinguished annual lectures and visiting scholars and artists all testify to our lively research culture.

Social responsibility is key to our work, including projects on community museums in Europe, Latin America and the Caribbean. We are one of two Schools in the Faculty of Arts represented on the Research Steering Group of St Andrews' Environmental Sustainability Board.

In the coming years, we will continue to prioritise world-leading scholarship, while actively seeking to broaden and diversify our research. We are committed to teaching an inclusive, global art history that incorporates multiple narratives, perspectives and voices.

Research themes

Over the next five years, we will invest in four world-leading themes where our diverse interests come together. These themes highlight our collective commitment to interdisciplinarity, to alliances with museums and cultural institutions and to engagement with audiences:

- Global encounters and exchanges of artistic objects and networks
- Cultural heritage and the politics of representation
- Artistic practices, materials and techniques
- Art writing and audience reception

We will promote these themes as a means of integrating scholars and research students into our community, enriching our individual projects, and enabling us to forge new connections and conceptual approaches. The School will organise a series of workshops on these areas as part of our drive to work collaboratively, creatively and openly across geographical and chronological borders. Emphasising what connects us will guard against isolation, enable a strong sense of research community, improve communication and open up avenues for new projects and funding bids.

Research support

The School recognises that time, financial resources, training and mentoring underpin research successes. Each semester, our Research Support Committee organises workshops on topics such as coping with the peer review process, publishing a monograph, writing grant applications, and preparing for job interviews. Staff regularly participate in writing retreats and work-in-progress research lunches. All colleagues have equal access to a substantial, dedicated fund for image-related publication expenses, in addition to their annual research allowance, and we have recently instituted a shift to a more frequent, 1-in-6 semester sabbatical cycle. Over the next five years, we will continue to consolidate School support for research, with a particular focus on providing tailored mentoring to colleagues at different career stages, from early career through to mid- and senior levels, encouraging staff to allot time concretely to research, providing dedicated support and information-sharing for grant applications, and incentivising large-scale funding applications and public engagement activities.

International connections

International connections and collaborations are at the core of our identity as art historians. Our students and staff are international and our discipline depends upon in-situ study of art works and archives in diverse cultures across the world. Existing international research collaborators include University of Fribourg, the Radboud University in Nijmegen, Leiden

University, the Louvre Museum, the University of Bonn, the University of Tours, the Centre de recherche et de restauration des musées de France (Paris), the University of Padua, the Max Planck Institute in Rome, the University of the West Indies and the National Museum of Costa Rica. The EU-LAC museums project led by Dr Karen Brown has eight official partnerships with the International Council of Museums (ICOM), and universities and museums in Chile, Costa Rica, France, Peru, Portugal, Spain and the West Indies. The University's Global Office and the Erasmus Scheme (until 2021) supported staff and student exchanges with institutions including the École du Louvre, Paris, and the Universities of Lausanne, Leiden, Melbourne, Padua and Vienna. We are welcoming a global fellow and senior global fellow in 2021-22 and we supervise co-tutelle doctorates with the Universities of Turin, Le Havre/Normandy, Ghent and Groningen. Staff have held competitive residential fellowships and visiting scholar positions worldwide.

Strengthening our international networks and alliances is at the heart of our strategy to diversify our curriculum, extend the geographical scope of our scholarship, communicate our research to a wider range of global audiences and recruit the best international research students and postdoctoral scholars. Over the coming years we will both consolidate and build new international networks and partnerships by proactively applying for the University's global fellowship and global PhD scholarship schemes; enabling colleagues to take up residential fellowships and to maximise their potential for networking and recruitment; and investigating innovative teaching, funding and cotutelle opportunities with our partners, and in association with our global fellows and visiting scholars (in the pipeline currently is an online MLitt module in Heritage and Museum Studies, co-taught with The UWI, in collaboration with Anthroplogy).

Postgraduate research

We have a vibrant and growing postgraduate research (PGR) community of around 33 students. In line with our transnational and interdisciplinary focus, this includes an increasing number of co-tutelle and inter-departmental agreements, in addition to collaborative doctoral partnerships such as an AHRC-funded PhD with the National Museums of Scotland, investigating British collecting in Ethiopia. In recent years, we have been successful in securing increased amounts of PGR funding, including fully funded scholarships from a range of international, UK and Scottish agencies and charitable bodies, and a new fee scholarship for doctoral students of any nationality, initiated by the University in 2020. All PGRs receive a research allowance, personal desks in shared offices, mentoring and dedicated skills training. The School will continue to focus on the recruitment and funding of PGRs, actively applying for large grants that support doctoral students and schemes such as the University's World-leading and Global St Leonard's scholarships, so as to recruit the very best researchers and sustainably strengthen our PGR community. We aspire to further integrate our PGRs into our research culture through involvement in our four new collaborative research themes.

Communication and public engagement

Over the coming years, we will increase our investment of time and resources in workshops, colloquia, exhibitions, digital skills, early-stage impact seed funding and grant application development. We will implement lessons learnt from this REF cycle to facilitate a variety of impact activities and to enhance our public outreach, media profiles and data reporting. The intention is to develop new impact work and large-grant applications, and to nurture long-term, multi-activity and interdisciplinary projects with a variety of outputs. Our ambitions include expanding the scope and capacity of the School's Museums, Galleries and Collections Institute (MGCI) and Centre for Contemporary Art and strengthening our alliances with museums in Scotland, England, Europe, Latin America and the Caribbean, and with the Museums of the University of St Andrews (for instance, using our expertise in

the History of Photography to strengthen the public profile of the University's historic photographic collection).

Our staff are highly active in exhibition curating and consulting and in interdisciplinary work with collections and digital tools. Major projects in our School involve engagement with government policy, museums and sustainability, digitisation in relation to museums, engagement with the history of science and with scientific methods and techniques. Current exhibition projects include Prof Kate Rudy's *Sensational Books* at the Bodleian Library, Oxford, in 2021, Dr Catherine Spencer's *Life Support* exhibition at the Glasgow Women's Library in 2021, and Dr Agnès Bos's exhibition on the French Royal Order of the Holy Spirit at the Louvre, Paris, in 2022. An important feature of our current research is to draw attention to significant links between object collections and archives in Scotland and the wider world. One example is Dr Kate Cowcher's recent discovery of a remarkable collection of later twentieth-century paintings by African artists in the municipal collections of Argyll & Bute Council on the West Coast of Scotland: her project has produced new website documentation for each artwork, a workshop for Higher Level Art and History students in Lochgilphead, and an exhibition *Dar to Dunoon: Modern African Art from the Argyll Collection*, held at Dunoon Burgh Hall in 2021. Future projects include a proposal from our medievalists to work with other universities in Scotland to digitize the medieval manuscripts domiciled here.

We will take a more proactive approach to embedding an understanding of the outreach and impact potential of our research projects in their early stages, for example through a tailored impact workshop for exhibition projects. Aided by our Social Media Officer and Visual Resources curator, we will continue to promote our research and reach out to wider audiences through our School Twitter feed and through radio and TV broadcasts, online blogs, podcasts, comments and short articles, and an improved School website. A core aspiration is to work more closely with artists, in the form of residencies, invited lectures, and enrichment of the University's collections (staff advise on acquisitions for the Harry & Margery Boswell Collection of Scottish Art).

Teaching excellence

We receive outstanding feedback for our research-driven teaching. Art History achieved an overall satisfaction score of 98.9% in NSS 2021. Our first-year retention rate is 100% and our completion rate 99%. We prioritise small group teaching that facilitates first-hand encounters with art works. Opportunities for students' entrepreneurial engagement include the University's Undergraduate Research Assistant Scheme (URAS), for which we match-fund the central budget; our three long-standing student-run magazines; the Laidlaw Scholarship programme; and recent initiatives such as the Summer Team Enterprise Programme (STEP), and a Digital Enhancement Project in which first- and second-year undergraduates received training in Exhibit software to work with St Andrews University Museums collections.

The School brings together scholars with expertise in multiple artistic media, theoretical approaches and historical periods from the twelfth century to the present, with the three subject areas of Art History, History of Photography and Museum and Gallery Studies providing distinct degree pathways at postgraduate level. Our teaching covers the Medieval period, the Islamic world, the Italian Renaissance, the early modern Iberian world, modern central and eastern Europe, art in France and its empire (1600 to the present), modern and contemporary art and photography, the arts of Africa, modernism in the Americas, and museum studies. In summer 2020 we established a Committee for Curricular Development and Diversification consisting of staff and student members, as part of our commitment to diversify our curriculum and reflect critically on histories of colonisation and empire. Starting in 2021, new research-led Honours modules that demonstrate our engagement with critical

issues include: *Decolonial, Feminist Queer: Histories of Art in Britain since 1945*; *Aspects of Japanese Visual Culture, 1820-1920*; *Art History and Environmental Crisis*; and *Scotland and the Arts of Africa*.

In the coming years, we wish to develop our emerging concentrations in Islamic, Caribbean, Latin American, Asian, and African art, while sustaining and extending the geographical and thematic breadth of topics that we currently offer. To this end, we will focus future academic appointments on opening new perspectives while reinforcing our existing strengths. A core ambition is to retain the small-group, discussion-based classes for which we are known and the friendly, collegial and engaging atmosphere that they promote. At the same time, we will explore the potential of distance learning and summer schools to expand our student profile.

Museum and Heritage Studies

A key strategic focus for the School is the redevelopment of our MLitt in Museum and Gallery Studies (MGS). The reimagined programme – to be launched in 2022-23 and renamed Museum and Heritage Studies – builds on the substantial strengths of the existing programme, developed over 30 years, and adds the significant expertise of the Museums of the University of St Andrews. It will be distinctive in its combination of theory and practice, establishing a robust and broad knowledge base through two core modules (*The Museum: global perspectives and debates* and *Museum practice*) before allowing students to pursue specialised learning paths, facilitated in part by its move to the Graduate School for Interdisciplinary Studies. A number of practical options – including exhibition projects and work placements – will ensure that students graduate with the skills needed to successfully secure employment within the competitive cultural sector and adjacent fields. The part-time course will move to a blended online and residential mode of delivery that will better provide for students globally and those in the UK who would benefit from a distance learning option.

The new MHS programme aligns with central planks of our School strategy: to develop our alliances with museums, invest in collections-based research, explore the potential of digital tools, and extend the global coverage and impact of our research and teaching.

An inclusive community

In 2018-19 the School was successful in its application for an Athena-SWAN bronze award (extended until April 2024). We work hard to promote an environment that provides development opportunities at all career stages, ensures that professional responsibilities are fairly and transparently distributed, and respects the entitlement of all staff to a reasonable work-life balance. The School's EDI Committee organises consciousness-raising workshops each semester on questions of inclusivity, discrimination, protected characteristics and inequalities related to disability, gender, sexuality, race and intersectionality. We make adjustments to work schedules, including the timing of core meetings and research activities, for colleagues with constraining circumstances, health requirements or caring commitments and put reasonable adjustments in place in response to the disclosure of disability.

We will continue to ensure that the values of equality, diversity and inclusion are reflected in all aspects of the School's activities. This means amplifying our efforts to develop a more inclusive and diverse curriculum and to achieve greater diversity in our staff and student body. We wish to work with the University to increase education and awareness of disability as it affects staff as well as students. A particular priority is to be attentive to and promote awareness of mental health, workloads, and the needs of those with caring responsibilities. Our ambition is to emerge from the pandemic with a deeper understanding of the diverse needs of our community and of the potential for digital communication to increase our global connectivity