

**College of Arts and Law**

**School of Languages, Cultures, Art History and Music**

**Department of Art History, Curating and Visual Studies**

MODULES FOR

INCOMING EXCHANGE STUDENTS

2024/2025

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#  Semester 2 modules

## 33075 LC A History of Art in 20 Objects B

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| **Credits: 10****Semester 2** |
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| **Module Description:**These modules will introduce students to a History of Art in 20 Objects. Each lecture will take as its premise a single artwork or other type of visual object and focus in detail (but also in visual comparison) on its specificity as this relates to a history of art defined in broad geographical, temporal and methodological terms. The objects to be studied have been selected for a range of coherent reasons that may relate to their uniqueness, their representativeness or their capacity to act as the springboard for discussion of broader themes. One is just as likely to study an object made by a contemporary or ancient artist, or a ‘masterpiece’ by Leonardo da Vinci or Pablo Picasso, as a work by a less canonical or even unidentifiable artist. The module will not provide a chronological survey of the history of art but will introduce students to some fundamental ideas about art, its origins, functions, materials, techniques, meanings and cultural purposes.*33075 LC A History of Art in 20 Objects B (Semester 2)*Topics are likely to include: Edouard Manet’s *Olympia*, Hannah Hoch’s *Dada Performance*, and Emily Kame Kngwarreye’s *Untitled (Alalgura/Alhalkere)*. |
| **Assessment:***33075 LC A History of Art in 20 Objects B (Semester 2)** 1 x 15 minute recorded presentation (100%)
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| **Module Convenors:** Camilla Smith (History of Art in 20 Objects B) |

## 24004 LI Renaissance Art in Italy and the Netherlands c.1400-60

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| **Credits: 20****Semester 2** |
| **Pre-Requisite Information:**This module is also available to Exchange students. |
| **Module Description:**The module examines Renaissance art in Italy and the Netherlands over the period c.1400-60. It will look at developments especially in Florence by Italian ‘founders’ of the Renaissance, Donatello, Ghiberti and Masaccio, as well as considering comparable innovations that occurred at the same time in the Netherlands in the works of their Northern contemporaries Van Eyck and Rogier van der Weyden, and it will compare their achievements. In addition to analysing many individual works in detail, the module will also be exploring the specific connections between Northern and Italian art, as well as the varying conceptions of nature and realism, and of Renaissance and revival; it will consider too the ranges of styles on offer and the most characteristic forms of art works, such as altarpieces and portraits, as well as their differing religious and secular functions and the differing systems of patronage which led to their creation. |
| **Assessment:*** One 4,000-word essay (100%)
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| **Module Convenor:** David Hemsoll |

## 30802 LI Making Culture: New Ways of Reading Things

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| **Credits: 20****Semester 2** |
| **Pre-Requisite Information:**This module is also available to Exchange students. |
| **Module Description:**This module will introduce you to different ways of interpreting, communicating about and engaging with objects in museums, galleries, archives and other heritage or research contexts. Through object-based learning, understood in its broadest sense, it will enable students to critically engage with the material world and will explore material culture from a variety of perspectives, considering issues surrounding collection, interpretation and display of material culture;; current debates about ‘ownership’, ethics and public engagement; and the impact of new digital technologies.Its aim is to develop students’ transferable skills, in particular understanding, analysing and managing the kinds of information that are conveyed to different audiences, about and through collections- and how these relate to the history of museums, collecting and interpretation. It will draw on the university’s extensive range of museums, collections and archives and the expertise of our heritage professionals. |
| **Assessment:*** 2000 word essay (50%)
* A portfolio of resources demonstrating approaches to engagement, based on a specific artefact, accompanied by a 2000-word report exploring the rationale for the resources. (50%)
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| **Module Convenor:** Sophie Hatchwell |

## 37657 LH ‘Islamic’ Aesthetics in Art

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| **Credits: 20****Semester 2** |
| **Pre-Requisite Information:**This module is also available to Exchange students. |
| **Module Description:**The module studies the field of ‘Islamic’ art history and its positioning within the framework of the larger discipline of ‘Western’ art history. Approaching the relation between form, content and the aesthetics of artworks which traditionally have been labelled as ‘Islamic’ from multiple perspectives, the module critically evaluates art historical notions such as ‘decorative’ arts and emphasizes diverse applications of the term ‘Islamic’. Beginning with an exploration of classic traditions of Islamic art, such as calligraphy, geometric patterns or miniature painting, the module moves to consider its influences on modern and contemporary artists hailing from regions of the ‘Islamic world’, the diaspora and the West. Through the study of key artworks, exhibitions, and texts the module challenges dominant Eurocentric paradigms of writing and interpreting (Islamic) art’s histories, questioning binaries of East-West and centre-periphery. The module may also include site visits to exhibitions or archives, drawing on the University of Birmingham’s Mingana Collection of Middle Eastern Manuscripts. |
| **Assessment:*** 1 x 2500-word essay (50% of the final module mark)
* 1 x 1.5-hour unseen examination (50% of the final module mark)

Alternative assessment if on campus activity is restricted: proctored exams will be converted to take home papers |
| **Module Convenor:** Deniz Soezen |

## 30794 LH An Unnatural History: Animals in Modern Western Art

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| **Credits: 20****Semester 2** |
| **Pre-Requisite Information:**This module is also available to Exchange students. |
| **Module Description:**Drawing on recent developments in the field of animal studies, this special subject module will explore the representations, and uses of, animals (or ‘non-human animals’) in Western art from the nineteenth century to the present day. As an interdisciplinary, and often highly politically-charged, field of study, animal studies can offer us a new perspective on modern art, demanding consideration of objects and artists usually seen as being outside ‘the canon’. Though images of animals have always been popular (think Edwin Landseer’s Victorian dog paintings), and despite the centrality of animals in the contemporary art scene (Damien Hirst’s shark suspended in formaldehyde), art historians have often been resistant to the representation of animals – perhaps mindful of the dark truths many of these images conceal. This module offers a thematic rather than a chronological overview of the subject, with key themes including empathy, ethics, anthropomorphism, imperialism, domestication, symbolism, sexuality, and conservation. We will examine a wide range of material, from natural history illustrations to children’s books, equestrian portraits to performance art, zoo architecture to taxidermy. There may even be some works of art by animals. Artists discussed will include figures as varied as George Stubbs and Mark Dion, Beatrix Potter and Lucian Freud. |
| **Assessment:*** 1 x 2500-word essay (50% of the final module mark)
* 1 x 1.5-hour unseen examination (50% of the final module mark)

Alternative assessment if on campus activity is restricted: proctored exams will be converted to take home papers |
| **Module Convenor:** Kate Nichols |