



Art History

BA

Bachelor of Arts major

Leonardo da Vinci, Yayoi Kusama, Lisa Reihana, Ralph Hotere, Andy Warhol.

These are just some of the artists you will be exposed to and explore as you undertake study that moves from the Renaissance and Baroque periods to Māori and Pacific art, through contemporary art theory and museum studies and which looks at cross-cultural representation, photography and digital culture. Learn to navigate the world of images and how artists challenge power with Art History.



Career possibilities

Art Historians examine the many roles of visual arts across time and cultures – aesthetic, social, religious, political and economic. Harness your visual literacy skills and shape the cultural and artistic spheres in painting and sculpture, whakairo, tatau and tapa, photography and design. You will learn on campus, and in the museum, meeting house and art galleries.

“As a curator of contemporary art, my work falls under three main areas: collecting contemporary art, developing exhibitions and undertaking research that informs acquisition, books and our exhibition programme.

“Our classroom was a gateway to the art community. We also frequented museums and galleries taking in exhibitions and applying our visual analysis and critical thinking in situ.”



NINA TONGA

Vaini and Kolofo'ou, Kingdom of Tonga

**Curator and Assistant Professor of Art History,
University of Hawai'i, Mānoa**

Bachelor of Arts, majoring in Art History
Bachelor of Arts (Hons) in Art History
Master of Arts, PhD in Art History



“We live in a world that is increasingly saturated by images and visual information. Being able to read and understand images across a range of media and art forms is crucial in articulating ideas and communicating effectively.”

CAROLINE VERCOE
Associate Professor

GREG MINISSALE
Professor

Top: Johannes Vermeer, *Girl with a Pearl Earring*, c.1665 www.commonswikimedia.org

Right: Marina Abramovic, *The Artist is Present*, 2010 www.commonswikimedia.org



Lectures are visually stimulating, including a variety of beautiful, puzzling and sometimes controversial images. Explore the rich and expansive tapestry of the visual arts through painting, drawing and sculpture, as well as architecture, photography, video, performance art, design and the graphic and decorative arts.

STAGE 1 COURSE*

ARTHIST 114 – Understanding Art: Leonardo to Dali

Visual intelligence is crucial in navigating the world of images that convey coded messages, and the history of ideas fundamental to all disciplines. How do we read such images? This course decodes paintings, sculptures, prints, architecture, photography and digital images, providing tools to analyse artists from Leonardo to Warhol: experts at moving the eye around the artwork for meanings to emerge.

STAGE 2 COURSE*

ARTHIST 238 – Māori Art History: Mana Taonga

Considers Māori visual art from arrival from the Pacific to the present day. Examines how artists critically negotiated current notions of identity in their work. Forms including moko, carving, weaving, architecture, film and contemporary art are explored through key ideas such as gender politics, patronage, and repatriation. Artists examined include Raharuhi Rukupō, Te Kooti, Pine Taiapa, Lisa Reiha and Ralph Hotere.

STAGE 3 COURSE*

ARTHIST 349 – Special Topic: Art and Fashion

Provides an interdisciplinary study of topics in and tensions between art, fashion, clothing and textiles within a global context. Covering the 16th to the 21st century, it examines how these realms have intertwined, shaping cultural narratives, social politics and identities. Case studies encounter such themes as representation and identity, conflict and exchange, making and materiality, and consumption and consumerism.



Get excited about your course options:



- Global Art Histories
- Artists and Patrons in Renaissance Italy
- Modernism and Design
- Framing the Viewer: 20th Century Art

**Course availability may be subject to change. For a full list of courses and up-to-date information visit our website. Published June 2025.*



Complementary majors include:

Art History
+
Anthropology
Communication
English
History
Māori Studies

“I enjoy the endless opportunities for critical thought, creativity and exploration that my studies offer. I love the breadth of movements, themes and approaches we study, from Renaissance to contemporary art, to architecture and the decorative arts.

“Not only is it a way to appreciate art and visual culture but also to understand historical contexts, society and identity through art.”

AYANE KONDO

Student: Bachelor of Arts, majoring in Art History / Bachelor of Global Studies conjoint

