Programme

Arts of the Silk Road

Details

Wednesdays, 25 September–30 October 2024.
Hochhauser Auditorium, V&A South Kensington, London

Overview

The fabled Silk Roads reached across Asia, connecting people and places through trade and exchange from antiquity. Textiles constituted just one of a diverse range of commodities which passed along the routes, acting as a vehicle for artistic and cultural interaction and transmitting technical knowledge and expertise.

These same routes provided an important conduit for religion and faith, notably Buddhism, giving rise to thriving communities which today provide some of the most extensive material and visual evidence of Buddhist art and practise in Central Asia and China. Through religious sculpture, cave murals, paintings and manuscripts, this course explores the Buddhist arts of silk route, from the influence of the classical forms of Gandhara to the later characteristics of Tibetan Buddhism. Archaeological discoveries of the twentieth and twenty first centuries continue to shape our understanding of this subject and students will learn about recent finds and projects to preserve the archaeological heritage of the region.

Your course leader

Dr Helen Glaister is an art historian specialising in Chinese ceramics and decorative arts. She worked at the British Museum and Birkbeck, University of London before joining the V&A as Course Director, Arts of Asia. Helen was awarded her MA and PhD from SOAS, University of London where she regularly teaches. Current research focusses on collections history, Chinese lacquer, and porcelain of the late modern period.

Note: V&A Academy programmes are subject to change without notice.
Week 1 - 25 September

*Origins, Exploration and Evidence*

14.00 Mapping the Silk Road: Past and Present **Helen Glaister**

15.30 How did the ‘Turfan Expeditions’ shape our understanding of cultures and art of the Northern Silk Road: 120 Years of Conservation, Research and Exhibition work in Berlin **Lilla Russell-Smith**

Week 2 - 2 October

*Art and Religion along the Silk Roads*

13.00 Group A- Gallery Talk - *additional ticket holders only* (Meet at Exhibition Road Entrance) **Helen Glaister**

14.00 The Spread of Religions Across the Silk Roads **Susan Whitfield**

15.30 Gandhara and the spread of Buddhism **Nick Barnard**

16.30 Group B- Gallery Talk - *additional ticket holders only* (Meet at Exhibition Road Entrance) **Helen Glaister**

Week 3 - 9 October

*Trade and Exchange*

13.00 Group A- Gallery Talk - *additional ticket holders only* (Meet in the Main Entrance) **Helen Glaister**

14.00 Central Asian Textiles **Jennifer Wearden**

15.30 Glass, metalware and ceramics **Helen Glaister**

16.30 Group B- Gallery Talk - *additional ticket holders only* (Meet in the Main Entrance) **Helen Glaister**
Week 4 - 16 October

*Dunhuang and the Arts of the Mogao Caves*

14.00  Cave murals, sculpture, and architecture Helen Glaister

15.30  Paintings and manuscripts from Dunhuang Helen Glaister

Week 5 - 23 October

*Journeys East*

14.00  Silk Road arts in the Tang capital Helen Glaister

15.30  Evidence of Silk Road contacts in the Gyeongju National Museum and the Shōsōin, Nara, Beth McKillop and Meri Arichi

Week 6 - 30 October

*Cultural heritage and archaeology along the Silk Road today*

14.00  Conservation of the Mogao Caves Stephen Rickerby

15.30  Architecture along the Western Silk Roads Paul Wordsworth