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Slade, London, Asia: Contrapuntal Histories between Imperialism and Decolonization 1945–1989 (Part 1)

Liz Bruchet and Ming Tiampo

Abstract

This feature takes the Slade School of Fine Art as the starting point for a global microhistory and reimagines ways of engaging with, co-constituting, and curating a research archive in pursuit of this endeavour. It consists of two parts: contributions in this issue of *British Art Studies* focus on the immediate post-war period, roughly 1945 to 1965, and a forthcoming second part will consider the 1960s to the 1990s. In this issue, the feature comprises a narrative history that interrogates the Slade's role as a contrapuntal node, and a [companion archival feature](#) that brings together materials from multiple institutional and personal archives in Asia and the United Kingdom (UK). Building upon Edward Said's use of the musical metaphor of contrapuntalism to address both the presence of empire in the metropolis and the construction of a transnational counterpoint with multiple voices, this project seeks to surface histories at the intersection of art education, imperialism, and decolonization. By using the Slade as a transversal line that connects multiple people and histories from Bangladesh, India, Pakistan, Hong Kong, Taiwan, Indonesia, Singapore, Nigeria, Sudan, Uganda, Britain and beyond, this essay proposes new ways of writing histories of contrapuntal—not multiple—modernisms, as well as understanding art in Britain itself as a product of empire.

Authors

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Introduction

The Slade School of Fine Art occupies a complex place in the global history of art education, art practice, empire, and decolonization. The Slade is both an art school and a department of University College London, an abolitionist institution and the first secular university in England.¹ From its inception in 1871, the Slade accepted students regardless of race, gender, or religion, and trained students from throughout the British Empire and around the world. As such, it was both an institution of imperial education and a contact zone where imperialism and decolonization existed cheek by jowl, co-constituting the futures of its students, staff, and their networks both in Britain and overseas.²

In the mid-twentieth century, many future artistic and cultural leaders of the postcolonial world would graduate from the Slade. As a result, the Slade is a site of contrapuntal histories that work against the singularity of official imperial narratives, as those who passed through its corridors built new artistic worlds after independence. Indeed, this phenomenon intensified after the end of the Second World War when, with the rise of independence movements throughout Asia and Africa, ambitious students seeking to build new national futures pursued higher education in London and endeavoured to put their learning to decolonial ends. In this context, Britain also began to consider its own post-imperial futures, and imagined itself at the centre of a commonwealth of nations connected through language and culture.³ Between 1950 and 1960, Britain sought to train a “successor generation” of future leaders in newly independent nations, and increased the number of overseas students in the UK from 10,000 to 50,000, and the number of such students at the Slade show it was no exception to this pattern.⁴ Indeed, as a part of the University of London, which had a privileged place in the British university system as the “imperial mother of universities”⁵, the Slade received many students sponsored through official government channels, and its administrative records reveal an increasing interest in promoting and accounting for the international character of its student population.

“Slade, London, Asia” documents how the Slade functioned during the post-war period (1945–1989), as a site of encounter, decolonization, and exploration for overseas artists, with a particular focus on Asian artists, their networks, and the worlds that they made and imagined, both during and after their time at this art school. It demonstrates how overseas students met the challenges of studying within a system still structured by colonial epistemologies, yet found ways to shape postcolonial futures, define contrapuntal visual vocabularies, and build affective communities.⁶ In many cases, overseas students returned to newly independent nations to establish art programmes that were at once in dialogue with Slade pedagogies and

also attuned to local histories, materials, and traditions. A number of these students would create artworks that contributed to the articulation of global modernisms, while others made links through their revolutionary practices between the student movements of the 1960s, decolonization, and the Black Arts Movement.

Although, as an institution, the Slade was not actively imagining ways to create a curriculum designed to accommodate global perspectives, certain conditions created fertile ground for artists from colonized or formerly colonized territories to critically engage with the education that they received, also exposing their fellow classmates and tutors to their evolving perspectives. First, with its overall emphasis on observational practice rather than drawing from antique models, Slade students were not taught to emulate a European past (which was foreign even to British students), but to articulate their own vision.⁷ Second, the teaching of art history at the Slade, although Eurocentric, was not formalist but contextual, encouraging students to situate themselves critically within it and, in some cases, alongside or against it. Third, the opportunities to meet other overseas artists, to travel, and to engage with London's global collections (themselves the result of colonial domination) provided a rich, albeit complex, transnational and transcultural environment in which Slade students could think critically and comparatively about their work.⁸

"Slade, London, Asia" also provides a model for rethinking discourses of global modernisms, as well as histories of art institutions in Britain. While the "global turn" in art history seeks to overcome the discipline's methodological nationalism, it has struggled with the tension between producing unifying narratives that lack historical and cultural specificity, and writing context-specific interventions that fail to provide a larger global architecture. This project examines the Slade as a repository of global microhistories that enable both historical precision and theoretical reflection.⁹

Although the Slade functions here as a site of transcultural entanglement, we self-consciously resist a centring of Slade histories, choosing instead to operationalize the Slade's institutional archive as a starting point and an initial node from which to write contrapuntal histories of empire and decolonization. In so doing, we are foregrounding a layered reading of Edward Said's notion of contrapuntalism, which he drew from musicology. In his book *Culture and Imperialism*, Said advocated re-reading the

cultural archive ... not univocally, but *contrapuntally*, with a simultaneous awareness both of the metropolitan history that is narrated and those of other histories against which (and together

with which) the dominating discourse acts. In the counterpoint of Western classical music, various themes play off one another, with only a provisional privilege being given to any particular one; yet in the resulting polyphony there is concert and order, an organized interplay that derives from the themes, not from a rigorous melodic or formal principle outside the work. ¹⁰

That is to say, in this interpretation, a contrapuntal method is used to reveal the role of the colony in imperial centres, revealing those centres as themselves contrapuntal. By reading the colonies back into the centres and their narratives, Said does not just argue for an inclusion of those voices into an imitative fugue, but for a reckoning with colonial pasts from which emerges a new polyphony.

We use this concept to inform our methods, but also to consider the Slade itself as a site, and the artists as agents of contrapuntalism. This last reading is taken from Said's earlier articulation of the concept in his 1984 essay "Reflections on Exile"—the contrapuntal awareness produced by exile, which here we extend to diaspora and migration. Said writes that:

most people are principally aware of one culture, one setting, one home; exiles are aware of at least two, and this plurality of vision gives an awareness of simultaneous dimensions, an awareness that—to borrow a phrase from music, is *contrapuntal*. ¹¹

More than just a generalized cosmopolitanism, contrapuntalism, as we are using it, is articulated within the context of empire and decolonization.

In order to theorize contrapuntal modernism as a phenomenon that extended across multiple national contexts rather than as separate, disconnected, "multiple modernisms", we are introducing the notion of transversals—connecting lines that in Euclidean geometry create equal angles at their points of intersection with parallel lines on the same plane. ¹² We trace the histories of artists from multiple decolonizing contexts at corresponding points of intersection in order to draw transversals—geographical (nations, cities, and neighbourhoods), institutional (art schools, universities, government bodies), pedagogical (life drawing, contextual art history), historical (decolonization, racial injustice, and the Black Arts Movement), and aesthetic (modernism, national styles)—that reveal shared conceptual structures and also act as points of connection and relationality. Seemingly disparate contrapuntal histories are made audible as themes in a free counterpoint, to continue Said's musical

metaphor, enabling a polyphonic analysis that goes beyond top-down and bottom-up analyses of global art history. By considering how the histories of artists from different parts of Asia, Africa, and beyond relate to one another in the context of their Slade education, this framework enables transversal comparisons that “bring ... into relation terms that have traditionally been pushed apart from each other due to ... the European exceptionalism that undergirds Eurocentrism”.¹³ This configuration allows us to write a transcultural history of decolonial modernism that grapples with the history of empire and decolonization, and enables individual figures and national histories, which have generally been understood as isolated from each other in the history of art, to emerge as revelatory of larger historical structures.

“Slade, London, Asia” brings together two long-term research projects: “Transnational Slade” and “London, Asia”.¹⁴ The rich digital environment of *British Art Studies (BAS)* supports this collaborative approach by facilitating the presentation of research as an alchemy of art history, and archival studies and practices. It has enabled us to publish our research across two interlinked formats: the “[Animating the Archive](#)” template, where readers can explore archival materials in a non-linear fashion, and the long-form essay format you see here. The constellation of archival objects, records, and narratives united here, serve to spotlight artists, artworks, and their accounts, in ways that shed light on the many interconnected and parallel histories, visual modalities, and pedagogical frameworks that are traceable through the Slade’s particular transnational context at the intersection of imperial, decolonial, and migration histories. The non-linear aspects of this digital, open-access publication format enable us to activate and make visible unexpected intersections we have encountered in the research. These records, and our activation of them, create threads between geographically disparate archives and histories.

“Slade, London, Asia” is built around ten thematic nodes, each encompassing multiple transnational narratives, allowing parallel stories to develop in ways that entangle with other themes and accounts. The features in this issue of *BAS* are the first in a two-part contribution, with this part focusing on the immediate post-war period, roughly 1945–1960. The second part will consider the 1960s to the 1990s, and will be published after the “London, Asia, Art, Worlds” conference in May–June 2021, hosted by the Paul Mellon Centre for Studies in British Art (PMC), as well as a series of workshops convened by the PMC and Asia Art Archive (AAA) on art school pedagogies.¹⁵

Institutional Pathways and Documentary Trails

Working with archives, we enter into and contribute to a field of power relations.¹⁶ Archival records provide persistent representations of activities, and are deployed to serve as evidence of action, and support claims about the past.¹⁷ Archival logics and practices underpin and are enmeshed with colonial and imperial ontologies and epistemologies, both in the past and in the present.¹⁸ Archival studies, which we foreground as co-constitutive of the art histories illuminated here, encourages the telling of “archive stories”, placing value on the narratives of our archival research journeys, and on self-reflexive methodologies.¹⁹ Holding these considerations in mind, what then does it mean for us to approach the Slade’s archive looking for overseas students? How can we surface the Slade’s role as a contrapuntal node, linked to other art schools, individuals, and histories in other countries, through student records, photos, oral histories, pages of correspondence, and official records?

Throughout this research, we have sought to read the archive both against and along its grain.²⁰ In our work, student records, supporting an initial biographical approach, provided a necessary entry point. Slade student files are organized by surname, rather than date or country of origin, so we began by consulting the student registers in UCL Records Office, looking for the presence of Asian, African, and Latin American names. This involved moving against the intended logics of the records, attaching new aims to old information. This imperfect methodology was hindered by blind spots for those artists whose names had undergone colonization, such as Colin David from Pakistan and Winston Branch from St Lucia, or those subject to changing conventions of romanization which resulted in multiple spellings and misspellings. We also included British diasporic artists such as Chila Kumari Burman from Liverpool, in order to attend to questions of race and immigration in our study, as well as to probe the intersections between diaspora communities and other global contexts. This growing but tentative list of artists could then be cross-referenced with other documentary sources such as class photos, oral histories, other institutional archives, and published monographs.

During this process, we have paid attention not only to the granularity of the individual records, but also to the relationship between records and record types, and the structure, patterns, and constitution of the archive itself. Paper-based archival records are typically arranged according to the principles of provenance and “original order” in order to preserve the relationship between the content of the records and the context that gave rise to them. Like most Western bureaucratic archives, the records of the Slade have been organized and described hierarchically, reflecting the

institutional endeavours, priorities, and structures from which the records were generated. In their essence, they privilege the perspective of the administration, the tutors, and directors, as well as those actions undertaken in support of colonial and postcolonial educational projects the college participated in and co-constructed. The records of an art school such as the Slade can then be revelatory not only for the surface informational content inscribed, but also as testament to the specific procedures and actions that reflect larger operations and networks of relations at the intersections of imperial, decolonial, and migration histories. This approach has also helped attune us to the nuanced gestures and experiences of power by which artists were both enabled and constrained, in order to foreground the frictions of global connectivities.²¹

In this manner, we have sought to engage with the Slade's institutional archive, that is, not as a fixed or self-evident bank of evidence that can be configured together into some kind of narrative whole. Nor do we present it here with a view towards plugging the gaps in an otherwise linear story. Archives are, as archival theorist Verne Harris notes, only a "sliver of a sliver" of social memory and the documentary record.²² Moreover, the documentation we have relied on and cultivated is uneven and, like all records, these fragments are never neutral, direct conduits to the past, but rather come to us as selections that have been appraised, arranged, and often rearranged by archivists guided by historically and culturally situated archival theory and practices.²³ Here, through our mediation, they are further displaced from their particular context of creation, and configured into contingent scholarly "animations", in a context in which archival source material is increasingly circulating as digitally searchable, disintermediated entities, unbound by real-world geographies and national borders that would have previously grounded our research journeys.²⁴

Rather, we understand ourselves as co-constituting and reimagining the archive to create new potential histories.²⁵ We began with a view to understanding the art school as a literal contact zone for artists mediating contrapuntal histories of London and Asia. Throughout this feature, we have indicated the years of study for those artists who attended the Slade in order to articulate the art school as a transversal node and, additionally, to draw attention to connections between artists that may not be directly addressed in this feature. Yet, in the process, we also generated an archival contact zone in the form of a digitally collaborative site and an ever-evolving repository of names, places, and data points, which stretches far beyond the Slade and highlights an unwieldy and always contingent network of entanglements. The construction of this parallel research "archive" has necessitated an ongoing reassessment of its scope: these collated materials continue to exist dynamically in dialogue with other archives, and related

archival pursuits. The research journey has to date led us to an array of personal, family, institutional, and organizational archives (both formal and informal), as well as oral histories and workshops that extend well beyond the Slade's repositories, and which defy the clear parameters of "London, Asia".²⁶ This expansive and iterative approach has surfaced important alignments and transversals that extend beyond Asia, taking us to parts of Africa—to Egypt, Nigeria, Sudan, and Uganda. As the contours of this archive are continually re-envisioned, we embrace the knowledge that archives, archival records, and the pluralistic, "archival multiverse" in which we participate, are always in the process of becoming.²⁷

Slade Class Photos: Animating Sites and Networks

Every spring since the 1930s, a panoramic class photo has been taken on the lawn outside the Slade, located in the central quadrangle of UCL's campus in London. These images provided a springboard by which to animate the archive, inviting us to consider—and complicate—the Slade as an artistic, pedagogical, and institutional site and contact zone through which artists have moved, leaving a documentary trail of those journeys behind them.²⁸ In these photographs, we can locate artists in the same art school at a particular moment in time, hinting at possible convergences and synergies between them. The 1955 class photo, for instance, includes Ibrahim El-Salahi (1954–1957), A.M. El din Guinead (1954–1957), Menhat Helmy (1952–1955), Khalid Iqbal (1952–1955), Sam Ntiro (1952–1955), Tseng Yu (1952–1956), and Jamila Zafar (1954–1957) (Fig. 1). In 1957, we see Kulwant Aurora (1955–1958; 1964–1967), D.J. Banerjee (1956–1959), A.M. El Guneid [Abdullahi Al-Guneid], Ibrahim El-Salahi, Anwar Jalal Shemza (1956–1960), Phan van My (1955–1957), Wendy Yeo (1953; 1955–1959), and Jamila Zafar (Fig. 2). Three years later, sitters include: Amir Nour (1959–1962), Archana Lahiri (1959–1960), Shama Zaidi (1959–1960), Chengkim Lim (Kim Lim) (1957–1960; 1969–1970), Damyanti Chowla (1957–1960), Gnanasundari Swaminathan (1958–1962), A. Rahim (1959–1962), and Anwar Jalal Shemza and Maisie Tschang (1959–1963) (Fig. 3). Yet, these are misleading representations; we know that not all who studied or passed through the Slade posed for these photographs. We also know that life models often joined in and, on occasion, guests made appearances, such as Sam Ntiro, along with his wife Sarah Nyendwoha Ntiro, who in 1960, sat as a visiting alumnus. We know too that visiting artists such as Affandi (1952) (see Fig. 24) and Zainul Abedin (1951–1952) (see Fig. 25) passed through the Slade, and the documentation by which we have located them is more informal, unofficial, and often serendipitously encountered, defying any easy configurations of its transnational networks.

Slade Administrative Records and the Art School as Intermediary

Slade student files typically include an entry form and photograph (Figs. 4-6), information on courses taken and focus of study, reports from tutors, change of address forms, reference letters, and, on occasion, exhibition catalogues or press clippings. For those students coming from overseas, the documents often highlight the care offered by Slade staff, who liaised between students, the authorities, and their families abroad, who were often anxious for reassurances. William Townsend and Slade Secretary and Tutor Ian Tregarthen Jenkin, for instance, emerge as important advisors to international students, helping them settle into new terrain, sourcing accommodation, putting in a good word, or even directly managing students' wayward finances. At its best, this pastoral role is accented by a sense of collegiality, with students addressed as fellow artists. In some files, we are privy to correspondence between students and their tutors, with comments on exhibitions seen and critiqued, artworks created, and directions pursued, and peppered with gossip and news of others. Such exchanges often continued years after students had departed the Slade.

Yet equally, the documents within these files will have been coded or crafted to convey certain pieces of information towards particular aims. Tutors' reports, for instance, were designed as an internal tool for staff to address students' areas of activity and any issues encountered, and advise on future directions.²⁹ Overall, they capture moments of assessment and judgements of a student's progress and capability, which, while useful for the future writing of reference letters, also convey information in other registers. The tone of these reports is, unsurprisingly, often characterized by colonial-era phrasing and perspective. A tutor's report for Wendy Yeo, dated 1957, and penned by Sam (B.A.R.) Carter, notes: "Original and gifted. Finds it hard to paint in front of the subject. Local colour distracts her. She employs the Chinese approach."³⁰ In the oral history interview conducted for this project, Yeo responded to Carter's comments with some surprise. For her, the period of study at the Slade was characterized by her adopting what she described as a Western style. It was only on her return to Hong Kong, at the end of her studies in late 1960, that Yeo began to consciously foreground her knowledge of ink painting practices within the European approaches she had refined through her Slade training.³¹ It remains unclear to what extent the written notes reflect direct observations made by the tutor, or conversation points in which Yeo would have presented these as dilemmas encountered, but what is clear is that her practice was being considered as one at the intersection of different cultural traditions.

The Sudanese artist and film-maker Hussein Shariffe's (1957-1959) student file gives an impression of his particular disposition and circumstances. A tutor's report, dated 5 March 1958, reads, "Bad lecture record, bad

attendance record, v. good drawings—an artist—most interesting chap” (Fig. 7). This document, in context with the assemblage of documentary fragments that make up his student file, including frequent change of address forms, reflects the story of an often absent and restless artist whose orientation was as much outside of the Slade as within it. His academic pathway—initially modern history at Cambridge, followed by a brief period of studying architecture at the University of Sheffield—is indicative of the transdisciplinary explorations that would come to infuse his artistic practice, encompassing painting, poetry, and film, bridging both documentary and fiction.

The chronological accumulation of administrative files outline contact between artist and art school in ways that begin to illuminate the network of relations that are at once institutional, interpersonal, structural, and chronological, and that span well beyond the site and period of study. Within the file, we also find an exhibition brochure from Shariffe's third solo exhibition at Gallery One in 1963 (the first two were held in 1959 and 1960), with a photograph of him on the cover (Fig. 8), likely taken by Ida Kar whose other images of Shariffe were acquired by the National Portrait Gallery.³² Another document reveals how, over a decade after leaving the Slade, when Shariffe was Head at the State Corporation for Cinema in Khartoum, he also wrote to Ian Tregarthen Jenkin in 1971, asking his advice on applying to the UK's newly established National Film and Television School (NFTS) in Beaconsfield (Fig. 9). Shariffe's growing interest in film captured in this document was fortuitous: in 1972, he was invited by his friend, colleague, and fellow Slade graduate Ibrahim El-Salahi, then Director of the Sudanese Ministry of Culture and Information, to head the ministry's cinema department. There, Shariffe would direct his first film, an experimental documentary *The Throwing of Fire* (1973). After leaving the ministry, Shariffe returned to the UK to attend the NFTS, where he directed two films: *The Dislocation of Amber* (1975) about the Sudanese port of Suakin and its colonial history; and *Tigers Are Better Looking* (1979), an adaptation of a short story by Jean Rhys in which Shariffe counterposes poetic documentary scenes of Sudan with Great Britain as sites of colonialism, exile, racism, and cultural insularity.

Student records also make plain the role of governmental agencies through grants and scholarships. We know that Jawad Selim (1946–1949) came to the Slade through an Iraqi government grant; Krishna Reddy (1951–1952) received an Indian government scholarship; Menhat Helmy was supported by the Egyptian Ministry of Education; while both Abdullahi Al-Guneid [A.M. El Guneid] and Ibrahim El-Salahi received grants from the Sudanese Ministry of Education. Vivan Sundaram (1966–1969) received a Commonwealth Scholarship, and Naazish Ataullah (1984–1985), Colin David (1961–1962), Sam Ntiro, Anwar Jalal Shemza, Gazbia Sirry (1954–1955), K.G. Subramanyan

(1955–1956), and Damrong Wong-Uparaj (1962–1963) were all funded by the British Council.³³ Such channels are, of course, not benign. The British Council’s founding aims, articulated in 1936, read,

[to] promote abroad a wider appreciation of British culture and civilisation, by encouraging the study and use of the English language, and thereby, to extend a knowledge of British literature and of the British contributions to music and the fine arts, the sciences, philosophical thought and political practice.³⁴

In short, their aims were to promote British interests through soft diplomacy and the assertion of cultural and linguistic power. From an educational perspective, the British Council positioned itself as an enabler of “the free flow of students from overseas to British seats of learning ... and of United Kingdom students in the reverse direction”. Indeed, within the context of decolonization and the Cold War, the British Council played a key role in Britain’s post-imperial futures, seeking “to provide opportunities for maintaining and strengthening the bonds of the British cultural tradition throughout the self-governing Dominions. To ensure continuity of British education in the Crown Colonies and Dependencies”.³⁵

While these files convey artists as biographical subjects, they also foreground artistic figures as institutional subjects, in which the Slade functions as an authoritative intermediary. Junctures in students’ lives are captured through administrative transactions, leaving documents that shed light on the wider colonial and postcolonial bureaucratic systems that fostered and influenced—but also restricted—individual and artistic endeavours. Reports to and from the Home Office in a number of student files remind us how the Slade, like all institutions of higher education, functioned as a literal gateway to London. Anxious letters and telegrams about arrival dates and securing visas show the mediation of patrician bureaucracies of foreign embassies and high commissions who dictated the terms of a student’s stay in Britain, or the release of funds for further study. In a report to the British Council on Egyptian artist Gazbia Sirry, written by William Townsend in 1955, Townsend weighs in on the value of the British Council extending her scholarship for further postgraduate study at the Slade (Figs. 10 and 11). He notes that as an established artist who has “a fully formed style of her own”, the chief benefit of the Slade for Sirry was not the tuition, but rather how it provided her with a “centre where she has met other artists”. However, he notes, she has “reached a stage where full-time attendance at an art school is of little value to her. She requires only occasional contact with artists who can give advice, together with facilities for lithography”. In the end, her scholarship was not extended.

Such snippets of complex stories render the artist as subject, rather than author of the records, so we hear nothing of Sirry's perception on these events. By the same token, such records do often illuminate institutional thinking. A letter to the Aliens Department of the UK Home Office, dated 1952, requests visa authorization for prospective student Tseng Yu (Figs. 12 and 13). The letter is a gesture of persuasive bureaucracy, penned by Tregarthen Jenkin:

It is of very great advantage to us, and to all working at this school, to have a number of overseas students here to instil a new outlook and possibly to bring unusual styles of work to the school. As this school is well known throughout the world, we are constantly getting applications for admission from overseas and we believe that Mr. Tseng Yu would probably benefit more by being admitted as a student here than he would by studying at one of his local institutions.

While this document testifies to immigration policies and national boundaries, it is also a statement of institutional position, situating the Slade as a contact point, and site of cross-cultural exchange, both benefiting from the presence of overseas students, and being of benefit to foreign artists as a cosmopolitan site bestowing global access, influence, and prestige.

Records of Play and Postcolonial Fields

Alongside routine administrative tasks, archival records are also generated through other imperatives, such as the drive to document social events. An evocative example, accented with an overt interest in creating an art-historical record, is an autographed cricket bat found in the Slade archive, signed by the players of a friendly game between staff and students of the Slade and Camberwell College of Art in the summer of 1954 (Figs. 14-16). Signatories include William Coldstream, Barry Daniels, Khalid Iqbal, Myles Murphy, Claude Rogers, and William Townsend. Framed for perpetuity, the object captures a self-conscious moment of artistic sociality between two London art schools whose relationship is well established in British national art histories. At the time, Khalid Iqbal was a student at the Slade whose admission to the school had been facilitated “as a special case” through institutional networks with the University of the Punjab, Lahore (Figs. 17-19).³⁶ Yet the presence of Iqbal’s signature in particular asks us to reconsider the dynamics of this exchange and its milieu: a game which enables colonial power relations to be subverted, here played at an intersection of postcolonial artistic networks.³⁷

This record, emerging out of an extracurricular activity and invested with archival significance not through bureaucracy but through ritual and sociality, nonetheless prompted a new pathway of research. Our inquiry about Iqbal resurfaced long-standing networks linking the Slade and the National College of Arts, Lahore (NCA), where Iqbal would go on to teach after his time at the Slade (Figs. 20 and 21). In his 2013 oral history interview, Slade alumnus (and later Slade archivist) Stephen Chaplin recalls befriending Iqbal on their first day in the Slade Antiques Room in the autumn of 1952, noting how Iqbal sought to “paint the Indian countryside as an Impressionist” (Fig. 22). Demonstrating the intergenerational entanglements between Slade printmaking and NCA, Chaplin later related this story to another NCA alumnus in the 1990s, who confirmed that, indeed, Iqbal had become a professor at NCA after his time at the Slade. Such exchanges around a singular individual illuminate the Slade as one node set in relation to others along parallel and transversal trajectories connecting across generations. Shakir Ali (1946–1949), Colin David, Jamila Zaidi (née Zafar), and Khalid Iqbal all spent time at both the NCA and Slade. They taught Naazish Atallah and Afshar Malik (1986–1988), who followed in their footsteps at the Slade, and in turn taught current NCA professors Laila Rahman (1991–1993) and Ali Kazim (2009–2011), both also Slade graduates.

Imagining Postcolonial States

The end of the Second World War brought a wave of decolonization and the rise of independence movements in Asia and throughout the former British Empire. Indonesia became independent in 1945; India and Pakistan were partitioned in 1947, with Bangladesh achieving independence in 1971; Burma and Ceylon became independent in 1948, Malaya in 1957, Singapore in 1965; and Hong Kong passed from British to Chinese control in 1997. Many of these newly independent, or soon to be independent, nations began to shape what Frantz Fanon later characterized as “national culture”, or the creation of postcolonial cultures that sought liberation from the “colonialist theory of pre-colonial barbarism”.³⁸ A key aspect of this postcolonial nation-building was the creation of national education systems, including for the arts, which was understood as a means of giving shape to national culture. At this moment of hope and new beginnings, many artists availed themselves of the opportunities for training and funding provided by their own governments and by the British government, via the British Council. Although it may seem contradictory to seek training in the colonial capital for postcolonial objectives, this tension points to the ways in which processes of cultural self-determination were themselves contrapuntal. Identifying the transversals that connect moments in postcolonial histories to each other and to Britain enables historians to productively analyse parallels and intersections in the articulation of national styles and national curricula in multiple and seemingly disconnected sites.

The documents presented in this section enable us to grasp the different visions for postcolonial artists and cultural education held by figures who were at once not only artists, but also bureaucrats, arts administrators, and key members of government. Many of these artists were mid-career when they arrived at the Slade, and did not necessarily complete an entire degree, as study abroad was often regarded as endogenous development by newly independent nations, and capacity building for those same nations by the British government. As such, art training at the Slade was perceived as serving a larger purpose beyond personal artistic development, be it on the level of teacher training, or building expertise in cultural and educational policy. This was certainly the case for Zainul Abedin, who was already the principal of what was then called the Government Institute of Arts, Dacca when he went to the Slade from 1951 to 1952, a visit profiled by the magazine *Commonwealth Today* (Fig. 23).³⁹ Khalid Iqbal was admitted to the Slade in 1952 after Anna Molka Ahmed, the department head at the University of the Punjab, Lahore, wrote to Tregarthen Jenkin to request help training more faculty for the university (see Fig. 21). Similarly, K.G. Subramanyan was already an established artist and teacher at the Faculty of Fine Arts at the Maharaja Sayajirao University of Baroda, which had been created as a “postcolonial corrective to the problem of art education in India”, when he attended the Slade from 1955 to 1956.⁴⁰ Others, such as Affandi from Indonesia, merely passed through the Slade on larger tours of European institutions in an effort to gather information for the establishment of arts infrastructure, and were supported at a political level in their countries of origin. This is particularly evident in the case of Affandi, whose travel from India to London was facilitated by a letter written in 1947 from Sukarno, the post-independence president of Indonesia, to Jawaharlal Nehru, the post-independence prime minister of India (Fig. 24). Indeed, an article in *The Diplomatist* linking Affandi and Abedin’s work demonstrates the diplomatic pathways that these two artists travelled, as well as the artistic resonances between their work (Fig. 25).

The formation of postcolonial cultures and art education practices entailed a variety of different responses to colonial art education, which was also not uniformly implemented across the empire. Although it varied from colony to colony, from school to school, and from period to period, art education under British colonialism consistently reflected a tension between its “civilizing mission”, which sought to disseminate the values, hierarchies, and aesthetic principles of the European tradition of fine art on the one hand, and on the other hand, to strengthen local visual practices, be it for the purposes of developing art industry, as in colonial India, or as salvage anthropology, as in East Africa, or as a means of “saving” Chinese culture from the threat of communism, as in late colonial Hong Kong.⁴¹ These latter tendencies were also filtered through the discourses of Orientalism in Asia and North Africa, and Primitivism in sub-Saharan Africa. Despite significant local variations, the

colonial education system thus hinged on one particular distinction (or transversal) that played out in different ways across the empire: the distinction between “fine art”, which was coded as Western; and local practices, which were coded as “craft”, applied art, or industrial art. This distinction, repeated across the empire, materialized ideological hierarchies between colonizer and colonized.

In the case of colonial India, four art schools were established in the four main colonial cities under the East India Company in order to provide training in mechanical and vocational skills: The Calcutta School of Art (est. 1854), the Industrial School of Arts in Madras (est. 1854), the Sir Jamsetji Jeejibhoy School of Art, Bombay (J.J. School of Art, est. 1857), and the Mayo School of Arts, Lahore (est., 1875). After the Sepoy Mutiny of 1857 and the assertion of British governmental control through the Government of India Act in 1858, which established the British Raj, the Crown assumed control of the schools and reorganized their curricula. At this point, European hierarchies of fine art and craft were more systematically embedded into the educational system. There was thus a split, and the Calcutta School of Art and the J.J. School of Art took on training as “schools of art”, and the Mayo School of Arts and the Industrial School of Arts in Madras trained students in the *arts*, with a focus on developing local art industries. As Partha Mitter argues, this dual-track system created two separate realms, with the superiority of fine art, defined as Western, clearly articulated. ⁴²

At the beginning of the twentieth century, as Tapati Guha-Thakurta argues, a group that included anti-colonial nationalist Abanindranath Tagore, Orientalists E.B. Havell, A.K. Coomaraswamy, Sister Nivedita, and pan-Asian advocate Okakura Tenshin, reversed those hierarchies in a discourse that operated at the intersections of Orientalism and Hindu nationalism to define and foster the Bengal School at the Calcutta School of Art, and later at the Kala-Bhavan art school at Santiniketan. ⁴³ As Sonal Khullar points out, however, this gesture ironically maintained European epistemologies by preserving the separation between East and West, art and craft. ⁴⁴ Partly in response to Bengal School nationalism, as Simone Wille argues, a Muslim cultural space also began to be defined in Pakistan. Not directly associated with political nationalism, however, it operated at a slight distance from Pakistani nationalism, itself an ambivalent concept, particularly for artists such as Zainul Abedin from East Pakistan, which became Bangladesh in 1971. ⁴⁵

For artists imagining postcolonial states in the post-war period, the challenge thus entailed defining new relationships between practices that had been coded as separate while simultaneously making claims on both modernity and locational identity in the context of new independence struggles (as, for example, in the case of Bangladesh), and the competing cultural patronage

spheres of the Cold War. The case studies in this section provide lenses through which to see how the Slade became a contrapuntal site where diverse postcolonial modernisms were articulated and contributed to an artistic and discursive ecosystem.

Zainul Abedin and the Government Institute of Fine Arts, Dhaka

On the eve of partition, creating an art school in East Bengal became a priority, as it became clear that the three institutions which had been shaping the Bengali art world would be located in India: the Calcutta Art School, Kala-Bhavana of Santiniketan, and the Indian Society of Oriental Art. Abedin and a group of Bengali Muslim teaching staff from the Calcutta Art School thus founded the Government Institute of Fine Arts, Dhaka in 1948.⁴⁶ Abedin's work as a cultural bureaucrat, for which he had been rewarded with the position of Head Artist of the Information Ministry of the Central Government in Karachi, led to him undertaking a "cultural tour" funded by the Government of Pakistan, which included a period of study at the Slade from 1951 to 1952 (see Fig. 23). During that trip, he also travelled around Europe and the Middle East, and attended a UNESCO-sponsored conference in Venice on the role of the Modern Artist in Society.⁴⁷ Indeed, as a quintessential artist-bureaucrat, Abedin would have many opportunities for travel during his career, with a twelve-month long trip to Japan, the USA, Canada, Mexico, and Europe sponsored by the Rockefeller Foundation (1956–1957) as well as a visit to the USSR at the invitation of the Soviet government, where he was honoured with a gold medal (1961).

Zainul Abedin's notes on cultural policy from the 1960s, a draft perhaps written for the purposes of delivering a lecture or chairing a meeting, enables us to see a snapshot of his vision for a national culture, which at that time still included East and West Pakistan (Fig. 26).⁴⁸ These notes set out a plan that encompassed both public arts institutions and education, as well as an ambition to present "different artefacts relating to Fine Arts, such as Folk Art and Crafts, Drawing and Paintings, Music, Drama and Dance, and so on, as well as the aims and implications of each subject". In other words, although he does not advocate for a Bauhaus-style integration of Arts and Crafts, Abedin stressed relationalities between them. Indeed, as Lala Rukh Selim argues, for Abedin, Bengali folk heritage was a means of developing a collective identity that was common to the multiple religious communities living in Bengal, as opposed to the Muslim Mughal miniatures being advocated for in East Pakistan.⁴⁹ Education plays a central role for Abedin, not just at the professional level, but from the primary school level all the way up to university and art schools, as well as in the public sphere. In his notes, he advocates both for museum collections of "our well known painters' work in galleries (preferably attached to universities)" and

“research work, to set up folk museums in cities of both wings”.⁵⁰ Here, it is important to note his desire to establish folk museums in “cities of both wings”, indicating both his professional commitment to a Pakistani national culture, as well as a specific Bengali cultural sphere. This thought would metamorphose into his establishment of the Sonargaon Folk Art and Craft Museum containing objects of Bengali origin outside of Dhaka in 1975, just four years after Bangladeshi independence.

Jamila Zaidi (née Zafar) and the National College of Arts, Lahore

Shortly after she was hired as a faculty member at the National College of Arts, Lahore (NCA), Jamila Zaidi (née Zafar) was recruited to serve on the Pakistani national committee which determined secondary school curricula, and also to write a textbook for secondary school education in 1961 (see [Fig. 78](#)). In the documents collected here, we see both how the project of writing a textbook is framed by the chairman of the Board of Secondary Education as being of “national importance” ([Figs. 27 and 28](#)) and how Zaidi responds by writing that “the undersigned has no objection to undertaking this in the national interest” ([Figs. 29 and 30](#)). As a result of this commission, Zaidi was accorded special permission to travel to India on a study tour of historical monuments of India ([Fig. 31](#)). As is discussed in the “Contrapuntal Pedagogies” section of this feature, Zaidi introduced art and craft into the national secondary school curricula as well as at the NCA, departing from British colonial ideas of art and craft as separate. Zaidi’s thinking was developed at the intersection of post-independence nationalist ideas about culture; the NCA’s own history of being a school for the development of handicrafts and art industry; the Bauhaus-inspired context set by the first NCA principal American artist Mark Ritter Sponenburgh; and her own training, both at Punjab University and at the Slade.⁵¹ Engaging with both Sponenburgh’s craft-oriented paradigm and the Slade curriculum, Zaidi formulated a third path “in the national interest”, which charted a direction between art and craft. By doing so, Zaidi started off a process of postcolonial imagining in the curriculum that, although uneven, would have significant ramifications for future generations of artists and teachers both at the secondary level and at the NCA.

K.G. Subramanyan and Art Education in India

Although written retrospectively in 1997, K.G. Subramanyan’s “An Unfinished Agenda (Some Thoughts on Art Education in India)”, provides some insight into how Subramanyan approached the question of imagining postcolonial states, as well as his attitudes about education ([Fig. 32](#)). A Gandhian in his youth who was arrested for his nationalist activities in the Quit India movement in 1943, a student at Rabindranath Tagore’s nationalist art school in Santiniketan, and a young professor at the Faculty of Fine Arts at the

Maharaja Sayajirao University of Baroda, Subramanyan arrived at the Slade in 1955 with a strong sense of self based in nationalist discourses, both politically and aesthetically. Subramanyan's nationalism was not, however, an essentialist nationalism but one that, developed through the worldly environments of Santiniketan and Baroda, was informed by Chinese and Japanese aesthetics, as well as the history of art in India and Europe.⁵² Indeed, the principle of openness to change, to prevent cultural stagnation by nurturing "critical dissent and innovation" was central to Subramanyan. In his "agenda", he criticizes colonial mindsets that "ingrained in us certain stereotypical notions about our antecedents, as well as progress and change" (emphasis in original). He continues, taking a critical perspective on nationalist culture that was nurtured at the intersection of Orientalism and nationalism, writing, "Our picture of our antecedents harks back to a mythical golden age, and sticks together various highlights of our culture into a flamboyant collage. Our picture of progress corresponds to what is currently in vogue in the West."⁵³ The framework for postcolonial cultural identity that he developed was characterized by what Sonal Khullar has coined "worldly affiliations", exemplified by dynamic exchanges rather than unchanging essences.⁵⁴

As Siva Kumar Raman argues, Subramanyan utilized his time at the Slade as a research student to critically engage with the Slade's intellectual, technical, and aesthetic offerings.⁵⁵ Not interested in the type of painting that was being done at the Slade, Subramanyan made a choice that was surprisingly common for overseas students—to enter into the printmaking department. There, he became close with Anthony Gross, Victor Pasmore, and Ceri Richards. He also created work that introduced Santiniketan techniques of rendering three dimensions without using chiaroscuro into the Slade print rooms, where students and staff worked side by side in an environment of convivial exchange, and left their prints to dry in the common areas.

Late Imperial Contexts: Slade and the Nigerian College of Arts, Science and Technology, and Makerere College

The Asquith Commission report (1945) (Fig. 33), which led to the establishment of the Inter-University Council for Higher Education in the Colonies (IUCHEC), provides a useful context against which to analyse the Slade's support of postcolonial and colonial students in the UK, during a period when Britain imagined its own post-imperial futures, and sought to build British influence (Figs. 34 and 35). Between 1945 and 1953, the Council supported the foundation or post-war restarting of three universities (the University of Malta, the University of Hong Kong, and the University of

Malaya) and five university colleges (University College of the West Indies; the University College of the Gold Coast, Ibadan in Nigeria; Makerere College in East Africa; and the University College of Khartoum).⁵⁶

Within this system, the Slade took a pastoral role in guiding the establishment of art education in colonial universities, particularly in Africa. Slade records show that Coldstream was consulted when colonial universities were seeking new faculty, and that he sometimes even played a role as an external examiner. His advice was not always appreciated. In 1958, two years after Nigeria achieved provisional independence from Britain, Coldstream received a letter from Slade alumnus Ben Enwonwu (1944–1947), who had become an art supervisor in Nigeria’s Information Services Department. Taking umbrage at Coldstream’s planned role in developing art institutions in Nigeria, he wrote to Coldstream (Fig. 36), repudiating Slade intervention into the Nigerian art school system:

I am to make recommendations to my Government on Nigerian Art and Culture generally and want to explore, in accordance with your own scheme, how much [the] Western system of Art Education may be helpful in achieving the cultural and artistic rebirth which we are working for. If our Art does not express African characteristics, then it can play no significant role in our development as a Nation. I am not sure that the entire influence of the Slade School would be a good thing.

Enwonwu was particularly concerned due to a recent visit to the Nigerian College of Arts, Science and Technology by Professor Alfred Gerrard, who had served as an external examiner at the college. It was there that the Zaria Art Society was formed in 1958, and whose members advocated for a “natural synthesis” of European modernist and African visual vocabularies. The Zarianists, for their part, regarded Enwonwu as overly influenced by primitivist aesthetics, and criticized his embrace of Négritude⁵⁷ as a colonial hangover.⁵⁸

The School of Art at Makerere College (Fig. 37),⁵⁹ Kampala (in the former Ugandan Protectorate) was founded in the 1930s by Margaret Trowell, a Slade alumna and a Christian with missionary leanings and “evangelical zeal”, and was the first school in East Africa to offer “professional” European art training (Fig. 38).⁶⁰ In 1949, the school was included among a network of colonial universities that was governed by the IUCHEC. This council established a “special relationship” with the University of London, which it turned to for advice and support in the establishment and testing of courses in colonial universities, in line with British degree-granting standards.⁶¹ The

IUCHEC, made up of representatives from British universities, also had a significant role in staff recruitment for the colonial universities; encouraging secondment of staff from “home” universities; and supporting scholarship schemes and the development of teaching resources.⁶² Following Trowell’s vision, the art school at Makerere was modelled closely after the Slade, introducing figurative art and European art history while seeking to retain the influence of local traditions, conditions, and context, with the apparent aim of keeping it relevant to local needs (see [Fig. 38](#)). Yet, as in colonial India, where Bengal School idioms were defined at the intersection of Orientalism and nationalism, here, at Makerere College, Trowell’s definition of regional traditions was an invented one, inflected by primitivism.⁶³ Indeed, the artistic vocabularies favoured by Makerere College reflected Trowell’s own biases towards figurative art in a context where figuration was not part of local practices. Paradoxically, as Emma Wolukau-Wanambwa has argued, Trowell also rejected artworks that too closely followed modern Western models, preferring primitivist figuration which was also more popular on the art market.⁶⁴

Between 1951 and 1958, William Coldstream, then Slade Professor and Principal, supported Trowell’s plan by advising on the development of the new fine art diploma and validating it to relevant authorities. Indeed, Trowell wrote to Coldstream on 29 June 1955, requesting assurances for both Makerere’s Academic Board and the Director of Education in the three East African Territories, “who would like to have it on paper” that Coldstream had approved of the proposed plans for the course (see [Fig. 39](#)). He served as an external examiner, visiting the college in 1957, and implemented this arrangement with the Slade moving forward, and served on appointment committees for key members of Makerere College staff (see [Fig. 39](#)). The corresponding administrative file in the Slade archive illustrates the colonial structures and mindsets underpinning these pedagogical and artistic relationships. Yet equally, reflecting his interest in fostering multiple styles and approaches to making art within the Slade, Coldstream also advised Trowell that the imposition of British standards onto Makerere College would be counterproductive for the students, writing that “it is so difficult to correlate standards of what must be widely different types of work, though [*sic*] I think the whole question of standards is best left out of it” (see [Fig. 39](#)).

From 1952 to 1955, after studying at Makerere College, Sam Ntiro attended the Slade at the encouragement of Trowell. Once at the Slade, Ntiro was a popular and charismatic student, serving as the Slade representative of the Union Council (1954–1955), and as treasurer of the Slade Society (1954–1955). Upon graduation, Ntiro returned to teach at Makerere College, and kept up a friendly epistolary relationship with Coldstream, as well as with Slade Secretary Ian Tregarthen Jenkin (see [Figs. 45–50](#)). Ntiro’s enthusiasm at

Coldstream's impending visit to Makerere in 1956 is palpable in the letter from his student file, which expresses how all the staff and students are looking "forward to your visit as it is going to mean so much to the future of our Art School", and that "nothing would give me more 'kick' than to see you in person here!" (see [Fig. 45](#)).

Ntiro's position was, however, complex. Although he maintained warm relations with Coldstream as a mentor—and from the correspondence, it would suggest welcomed his involvement with Makerere College—he was under no illusions about colonialism. Of particular note is a letter that Ntiro wrote to Tregarthen Jenkin on 16 October 1958, after he had assumed duties as acting head of Makerere College, due to Trowell's illness. In it, he clearly states his hopes for self-government, and responds to an inquiry from Tregarthen Jenkin about the Capricorn Africa Society, writing, "You asked me about Capricorn Africa Society. It is regarded by Africans in East Africa as a means of pacifying Africans and keeping them from attaining self-government." He signs off the letter with a critique of Tanganyika's tripartite voting system, with reserved seats in government determined by race, stating that "In spite of that, Tanganyika will achieve self-government" (see [Figs. 49 and 50](#)). Ntiro went on to fight for independence, becoming the Republic of Tanganyika's first High Commissioner to the United Kingdom (1961–1964), and from 1967 to 1973 served as the Commissioner of Culture for the Government of the United Republic of Tanzania (see [Fig. 51](#)). The records speak to the fluidity of interpersonal registers between Ntiro and those at the Slade, expressing at once formalities and hierarchies ("Dear Sir William Coldstream"), but later marked by friendship ("My Dear Bill", and "My Dear Sam"). Notes exchanged share news of family and projects (see [Figs. 45–47, 54–56](#)), and are equally counterbalanced with reference requests ([Figs. 40–44](#)), and more formal dispatches, such as the note of congratulations sent on the occasion of Ntiro's appointment as High Commissioner on 4 April 1963 (see [Fig. 53](#)). That he should appear in both an individual student file and institution-to-institution ones is telling of the bridging role he held at the intersection of artist, mentor/mentee, pupil, postcolonial diplomat, and colleague, and the multivalent power dynamics that this engendered.

Contrapuntal World-Making

The experience of study in Britain was not a uniformly positive one for many overseas students, as they faced culture shock, racism, and loss of status in their new environments. Yet, they also found ways of life that provided them with more than just a Slade education. While in London, these artists befriended students from other countries; visited global museum collections, many containing objects purloined by agents of the British Empire; and they watched films from other places, giving them new frameworks for their

artistic practices. They travelled while they were at the Slade, visiting museums, monuments, and collections in Europe; even en route, they had adventures, stopping to explore other countries on the way. These encounters expanded their frames of reference, their mastery of multiple aesthetic systems and vocabularies, and made the condition of mobility central to their understanding of modernity. As Edward Said argues about the experience of exile, the “plurality of vision” opened up by the experiences that these artists had at the Slade and in London more generally, gave “rise to an awareness of simultaneous dimensions”, which they seized upon in acts of interpretation and creation to produce complex contrapuntal structures.⁶⁵ These contrapuntal interventions went beyond simple cosmopolitanism, as they were realized within an awareness of, and negotiation with, the British Empire. More often than not, they represented critical assertions of “simultaneous visions” in a context where the modernity of their aesthetic propositions was not fully acknowledged.⁶⁶ The entangled worlds that they made through their artistic practices resonated with those of other overseas artists in post-war and increasingly post-imperial Britain and beyond, creating a cultural and artistic fabric woven from the complex threads of post-Empire.

Ultimately, it is by looking at these works transversally that a contrapuntal fugue of post-Empire begins to emerge, exposing as reductive the analytical models that art historians have been using to understand the history of modern art, and revealing the complex cartographies produced through “London, Asia”. Here, we put this into practice looking at five particular artists who studied at the Slade.

Zainul Abedin

For Zainul Abedin, time at the Slade provided not just exposure to new pedagogical approaches in the life drawing room and printmaking formulas in the print room, but also to understand more about the logics of modernism through lectures, museum visits, and the critical responses to his two London exhibitions. Held at the Imperial Institute (1951) and at the Berkeley Galleries (1952) while he was in London, Abedin’s exhibitions drew critical praise, especially for the works from his acclaimed 1943 series on the Bengal Famine. Eric Newton commented that they “are brilliant drawings done at white heat under the immediate spur of a visible tragedy” (see [Fig. 25](#)). At a time when European and American art were heading towards pure abstraction, British art was, as James Hyman argues, looking for alternative models of realism, and Abedin provided a novel and powerful model.⁶⁷ In his London sketchbook ([Fig. 57](#)), Abedin demonstrates his virtuosity and experimentation with multiple visual vocabularies, from academic realism, to reduced, post-cubist experiments, as well as an expressive language of ink adapted from the Bengal School, itself a synthetic form created at the

Calcutta Government School of Art in relation to East Asian ink painting (Fig. 58).⁶⁸ Analytical in his approach, his dissection of cubist space in certain sketches (Fig. 59) provides rare insight into the series of paintings that he made at the Slade and shortly after, such as *Woman with a Pitcher* (1951) (Fig. 60).

Tseng Yu

For Tseng Yu, the question of representation was a contrapuntal symphony, in which artists invoking multiple historic traditions took up themes such as resemblance, expression, perspective, line, space, and colour in complementary fugues. As a student, Tseng was highly regarded and, in 1954–1955, shared the prize for Head Painting with Paula Rego.⁶⁹ Like Abedin, Tseng was committed to defining his own approach to realism, and wrote to Coldstream after he had moved to Paris to study at the *École des Beaux Arts* in Paris that he found Tachisme suffocating, writing in 1957 that “the pressure to conformity in Paris is so oppressive that [it] often makes me so totalitarian in a fatal attempt to defend my belief”.⁷⁰

A lecture that Tseng gave at the Slade in 1975 demonstrates the analytical ways in which he was thinking comparatively about Chinese and European aesthetic systems, dissecting different modes of defining line, space, form, time, and “spiritual resonance” in the two visual languages (see Fig. 99). *Interior with a Man Painting* (1955), made while a student at the Slade, engages cleverly with the artificiality of representation, multiple vocabularies of abstraction, and questions of race and identity (Fig. 61). In this work, which depicts a faceless and ambiguously racialized man with blue hair painting a still life of two fruits on a table, Tseng experiments with the use of negative space in order to define three-dimensional form. Where normally there would be a line defining shadows and volume on the tablecloth, and at the corners where the walls meet the ceiling, here Tseng uses empty space, what he calls “infinite space” in the lecture, which he describes as “gradually invading the solid quality of an object”.⁷¹ His depiction of fruit on a table with its surface tipped towards the picture plane makes reference to Paul Cézanne, whose work he identifies in the lecture with a disintegration of form similar to that found in twelfth-century Chinese painting. At once defining his own contrapuntal vocabulary of form and making a claim to Cézanne’s modernist innovations, Tseng resists the Orientalist expectation to perform difference, yet thematizes mobility and contrapuntal aesthetics in his modes of representation.

In a letter to the noted Sinologist and translator David Hawkes, from the collection of the Chinese University of Hong Kong Library, Tseng described the ambivalent subjectivities engendered by Britain’s colonial enterprise, both in the UK and overseas (Fig. 62). He wrote:

I thought of what you said to me last time. You said British people embody a double consciousness and belong to two different worlds: one within the UK and the other within Britain's overseas colonies. I started to realise what you meant by this when I set foot in the UK. Perhaps I am falling in love with this foggy, ancient country and her entitled residents.

Wendy Yeo

Wendy Yeo first attended the Slade for a brief period in 1953 as a short-term "external" student, when she accompanied her family to the UK at the age of sixteen, then still in secondary school. Hailing from a prominent medical family in British colonial Hong Kong with deep roots in the UK, being educated in Britain was a well-established pathway, although the pursuit of fine art was not. Later, Yeo returned to attend as a full-time student (1955–1959), after Slade alumna Madeleine Pearson (1927–1928) admired her work at an exhibition in Hong Kong and persuaded her reluctant parents to allow her to pursue her art practice at the Slade.

Yeo had been trained in both Chinese and Western painting before leaving Hong Kong, and won many awards at the Slade, later obtaining a place as a postgraduate student. Yeo's paintings at the Slade engaged playfully and cross-culturally with her lessons on mathematical perspective, bringing an understanding of aerial or axonometric perspective from her studies in Chinese painting, to her Euston Road inflected representations of presentness. In both *Townscape with Figures* (1958) (Fig. 63) and *Mountain Streams* (1958–1959) (reproduced in Fig. 64), Yeo uses aerial perspective to draw the viewer into her landscapes, encouraging an embodied and sustained interaction with the works that refuses the optical mastery of one-point perspective. She explored avenues that enabled her to articulate the "plurality of her vision" and journeyed through Europe on a scholarship in her final year at the Slade.⁷² At the recommendation of her tutor Anthony Gross, she spent time at Stanley William Hayter's Atelier 17 in Paris, where she assisted Hayter and Krishna Reddy (Slade 1951–1952), among others, to develop colour etching, and connected with other international artists, before returning to Hong Kong for two years, prior to settling in the UK (Fig. 64). These experiences informed her experimentations in technique at the intersections of abstraction and ink painting, and through combining materials such as oil and paint, paper, raw linen, and wax.

Anwar Jalal Shemza

Anwar Jalal Shemza's oft-repeated and devastating realization in Ernst Gombrich's class that Islamic art was not understood as art because it was functional opened his eyes to the limits of European universalism. In the artist's statement accompanying an exhibition of his paintings and drawings at the Gulbenkian Museum of Oriental Art, Durham in 1963 (Fig. 65), he wrote:

One evening, when I was attending a Slade weekly lecture on the history of art, Prof. Gombrich came to the chapter on Islamic Art—an art which was “functional”—from his book, “The Story of Art”.

All evening I destroyed paintings, drawings, everything that could be called “art”. All night I argued with somebody—as I was told next morning by my hostel neighbour. All day restlessness sent me from place to place, until I found myself in the Egyptian section at the British Museum. For the first time in England, I felt really at home.

For Shemza, the realization came all at once, that Islamic Art did not partake of “universal” European epistemologies and could not be called “art” within that system because it was functional. Having been educated at the Mayo School of Arts when it was still focused on art industry, before its transformation into an art school in the form of the National College of Arts, Lahore, Shemza received a commercial art diploma before going to the Slade to study. As a member of the Lahore Art Circle and a successful artist in Pakistan, it was not until that moment in Gombrich's class that the hierarchies of the colonial art system condensed into form for Shemza. That moment of alienation allowed Shemza to see the operations of art history, and enabled a decolonial critique, as well as the possibility of solidarity. Indeed, it is crucial to note that Shemza's response was not that of an essentialist assertion of national identity. He did not, for example, find himself at home in the South Asian collections of the British Museum, but rather in the Egyptian wing.

In the work *The Wall* (1958) created shortly after this crisis, Shemza created a painting that was at once abstract, representational, and decorative, piercing to the heart of the problem posed by Gombrich's analysis of Islamic art as functional (Fig. 66).⁷³ The work appears at first entirely abstract, placing a figure defined by graphic lines against a two-toned ground of thick, impasted paint in a manner that nods towards Paul Klee, an important reference point for Shemza. The title, *The Wall*, pulls the work back to a realm of representation, however, causing a shift in the viewer's perception

of form, as the figure resolves into what in some of his other works of the same period is explicitly identified as a city wall, ornamented with Islamic patterns that, in this context, call into question the distinction made in Western modernism between abstraction and Islamic decoration. It is as if in this work, Shemza is taking Gombrich's thinking about the openness of art's epistemologies to its logical conclusion, and using it to challenge his claims about Islamic art. By positing abstraction, realism, and decoration as three possible contradictory readings within the same work, Shemza questions their separability, positing the inextricability of modernism and its presumed others.

Kim Lim

Even before going to London, Kim Lim (Chengkim Lim)'s experience was already contrapuntal.⁷⁴ She was born in Singapore, spent much of her childhood in Malaysia during the war years and, as a result, attended Japanese school while under occupation. After the war, her family returned to Singapore, which became a British colony in 1946. Being asked to situate her own practice within the history of art taught at the Slade meant that she quickly understood its limitations. She commented, making her own interventions:

when I went to the Slade there was art history where you learnt that ... there was primitive art ... leading up to the kind of epitome of Western art, which is the Renaissance, and I still don't feel that way ... there were other things equally good ... so in the end, you just have to go according to your instincts.⁷⁵

Every summer, she would visit her family in Singapore, stopping along the way to pursue what she called her "real visual education" (Fig. 67). Study trips to Japan, India, Cambodia, and Egypt, among other stops, endowed Lim with a sense of space, vocabularies of ornament, and an understanding of the capacities of abstraction far beyond the Eurocentric models that she learned at the Slade.⁷⁶ In 1958, Lim won second prize in sculpture. An image of the work, found in an album of prize-winning works in the departmental archive, shows two heads in embrace, profiles abstracted through the delineation of textures, flat surface, and curvature (Figs. 68 and 69). A reference to Brancusi, the work was also an early experiment with salvaged stones, and an engagement with the surfaces of ruins that she saw in her far-ranging travels.⁷⁷ *Ronin* (1963) plays on the notion of the wandering samurai without a master as a metaphor for modernism's mobilities (Fig. 70). *Stack* (1976) (Fig. 71), for example, plays against and through the multiple vocabularies of grid and lattice that Lim observed on her travels to Fatehpur

Sikri in India, Kiyomizu Dera in Japan, and Karnak in Egypt, distilling form that is at once situated and multiple, hinting at the possibility of complex identities (Figs. 72–74).

Contrapuntal Pedagogies

This section conducts a transversal comparison of three groups of pedagogical artefacts from three different sites—Dhaka, Lahore, and the Sinophone world—in order to analyse the ways in which artists who passed through the Slade appropriated and transformed pedagogical and artistic models that they encountered there.

Given that these artists began their studies in other contexts, and that some of them were already teaching at or leading art institutions when they went to study abroad, the Slade School of Fine Art functioned as a contrapuntal node that contributed to, but did not fully determine, the formation of the artists who attended it. Here, the notion of journeying *through* modernism rather than *to*, as articulated by Lotte Hoek and Sanjukta Sunderason, is an important idea as it captures the significance of London as a site of critical engagement rather than as a pilgrimage destination.⁷⁸ Importantly, it also operated as a multivocal contact zone where, as Wendy Yeo related in an oral history interview, Slade students often learned as much from each other as from their tutors.⁷⁹

Until William Coldstream was appointed Slade principal in 1949, the Slade curriculum was based on a Beaux Arts model, which followed a strict progression from drawing from antique plaster casts to drawing in the life room, before painting and sculpture could be taken at more senior levels. This methodology stressed the pre-eminence—both visual and ideological—of classical European models, and left little room for other modes of representation. This was, for example, the curriculum that Ben Enwonwu (1944–1947) and Shakir Ali (1946–1949) encountered during their times at the Slade. Enwonwu’s response, explored already in the section “Imagining Postcolonial States”, was one of rejection, whereas Shakir Ali’s engagement with the Beaux Arts model (filtered through his time in Paris and Prague), led him to adapt and incorporate modernist approaches. Appointed the first Pakistani principal of the National College of Arts in 1961, Ali implemented curricular reform that entailed refusing the colonial curriculum of the Mayo School of Arts. For him, this required a greater focus on the fine arts, and a rejection of the craft orientation of both the Mayo School’s programme of industrial art and design and the Bauhaus-inspired reforms which had been implemented to integrate art and craft under the NCA’s first principal, Mark Ritter Sponenburgh, with the collaboration of Jamila Zaidi.⁸⁰ As Nadeem Omar Tarar argues, Ali’s postcolonial modernism followed

theories of modernisation and development, steering the NCA curriculum away from craft. Still, Ali moved beyond his Slade training, towards modernist epistemologies, drawing on his time at André Lhote's studio in 1948, and in leftist circles in Prague between 1947 and 1951.⁸¹ This represented Ali's own assessment of what constituted modernity after independence. As Iftikhar Dadi writes, Ali "modernized postcolonial subjectivity in Pakistan by persistently disregarding formulaic responses", imagining the possibility of a postcolonial subject that was not purely local.⁸²

Coldstream's arrival at the Slade in 1949 brought many changes. He reoriented the school's focus away from a Beaux Arts model towards methods of inquiry. As a result, in lectures on art history and in the studio, idealized aesthetics became less central. Coldstream was a painter of the Euston Road School, which sought to create works accessible to a larger public through observational realism and engagement with social issues. For Coldstream, the goal was not to continue in the academic tradition of the Beaux Arts, nor to transmit Euston Road School painting as a technique or follow current trends, but rather to create an environment where representation and form were aligned with research and society rather than style. Not long after the end of the Second World War, when the British art world was in a state of aesthetic flux, these reforms contributed to a pedagogical environment where the relationship between art practice and the history of European art was purposefully misaligned, pivoting students gently away from the history of Continental European art as the model for all art-making.⁸³ As Courtney Martin argues of Coldstream's impact on Shemza, "The Euston Road example would also have showed Shemza that there was more than one way to be modern".⁸⁴

The 1950–1951 UCL Course Calendar (Fig. 75) details some of Coldstream's reforms, including a pivot away from drawing from the antique towards observational practice as well as a less technical and more intellectual approach to anatomy and perspective (see also Fig. 93). Additionally, this revised curriculum placed a greater emphasis on the study of art history and complementary subjects in addition to studio practice, encouraging a variety of different artistic styles. As Coldstream commented in 1965, "A modern art school is run on the understanding that all sorts of ideas and approaches, good of their kind, have to be encouraged".⁸⁵ Unlike the Bauhaus curriculum—then a major pedagogical model that was gaining currency during this period in the UK, South Asia, and beyond—the Slade did not embrace the inclusion of craft into the curriculum, and continued a Beaux Arts focus on realism, albeit with a major epistemological shift away from idealized form. Critically, whereas Bauhaus pedagogy only provided instruction in art history in so far as it informed the teaching of historical

artistic techniques, art history has been taught consistently at the Slade since 1904, and was made into a central, foundational subject under Coldstream.⁸⁶ In the 1960 report of the National Advisory Council on Art Education headed by Coldstream, he advocates for the centrality of art history in British art schools, stating that “The presence of art historians ... [has] enabl[ed] the student to understand relationships between his own activities and the culture within which he lives.”⁸⁷ Within this pedagogical framework, students were not taught to revere an idealized past (although Eurocentric hierarchies and epistemologies were omnipresent, as discussed in the “Schema and Correction: Repositioning Art Histories” section), but to understand how to critically situate their work within the history of European art.

In this section, we examine three case studies that demonstrate some of the interconnected ways in which artists critically engaged with the Slade curriculum. In particular, this section surfaces how artists judiciously supplemented or disrupted instruction in European art and art history in various ways, provincializing Eurocentrism in the process. We consider curricular developments at the Government Institute of Arts in Dhaka following Zainul Abedin’s return from the Slade; curricular developments implemented at the National College of Arts, Lahore by Jamila Zaidi under Principal Mark Ritter Sponenburgh; as well as two art history textbooks translated by Tseng Yu.

Zainul Abedin and the Government Institute of Arts, Dhaka

Already the principal of the Government Institute of Arts, Dhaka (GIA) and an accomplished cultural bureaucrat by the time he arrived at the Slade in 1951, Zainul Abedin went to the UK with a mission to gather information about artistic and pedagogical methods towards the development of cultural policy and art education in Pakistan.⁸⁸ Indeed, it is possible to see how Abedin approached his encounter with Slade analytically, assessing and translating methodologies on the spot to determine how they might or might not be applicable in Pakistan. In his meticulous notes on printmaking, for example, Zainul Abedin identified methods of mixing printmaking ink from lampblack, polishing burnishers with knife polish, creating plate cleaning solvents with household ingredients, and identifying alternative resists for aquatint, seeking methods and materials that were practicable in Pakistan (Fig. 76). These notes capture the granularity of concerns that he expressed in letters home to his colleague Anwarul Huq, which reflect on how his experiences in London could be useful to the GIA.⁸⁹ More materially, Abedin also had two etching machines and a library of art books sent to Dhaka, establishing a fine arts library, which he stipulated was important for “develop[ing] knowledge of history of arts”.⁹⁰

When the GIA was established in 1948, it followed the curriculum of the Calcutta School of Art, where all of the founders of the GIA were teaching or studying before Partition. A two-year Elementary Course was followed by three years of specialization in Fine Art (Drawing and Painting), or Commercial Art (Graphic Design), and no theoretical subjects were offered.⁹¹ The first-year course focused mainly on drawing, and the distinctions between fine art and commercial art reflected European categorizations of the arts that formed the basis of the British curriculum on which the Calcutta School of Art was founded. Abedin's year at the Slade (1951–1952) appears to have been a turning point, since upon his return, he proposed a new curriculum and, in 1955, the Department of Oriental Art was established (Fig. 77).⁹² The syllabus takes some elements from the Slade undergraduate curriculum, yet introduces a contrapuntal perspective, lightly situating the curriculum within an art-historical framework, which Abedin intended to support with the creation of an art library. The syllabus maintains the GIA's previous emphasis on drawing as the foundation of all instruction, systematically introduces perspective and anatomy into the Elementary Course, and introduces instruction in the history of art. In addition, the new syllabus creates the Department of Oriental Art, and puts "Western" and "Oriental" art in dialogue, requiring all students to take both in the Elementary Course. Specialization would become possible in the third year, and a programme adapted from Bengal School methodologies provided instruction in Oriental drapery, fresco, and architecture, as well as theoretical instruction in the "methods of old masters, and history of Oriental painting". As Lala Rukh Selim observes, this programme was localized further by introducing outdoor sketching of landscape and figures, in the syllabus rendered as "outdoor study, flowers and foliage, and drawing from life". Focusing largely on the Bengali countryside, labourers, and artisans, this provided a leftist take on *plein air* training.⁹³

The Mayo School of Arts, Lahore into the National College of Arts, Lahore

The Mayo School of Arts in Lahore was established in 1875 as one of four art institutions located in the major metropolises of colonial India. Under the leadership of its first principal, John Lockwood Kipling, the Mayo School became a pre-eminent centre for the development of craft and art industry (along with the Industrial School of Arts in Madras, established in 1854), offering courses such as woodworking and metalworking. Tellingly, it operated under the Department of Industries until it became the National College of Arts, Lahore, in 1958. As such, its original mandate was very different from that of art schools such as the Calcutta School of Art (established in 1854) and the Sir Jamsetji Jeejibhoy School of Art, Bombay (established in 1857). The transition from the Mayo School of Arts to the National College of Arts (NCA) was stewarded by Principal Mark Ritter

Sponenburgh (1957–1961), an American artist who had trained at the Arts and Crafts inspired Cranbrook Academy of Art, the École des Beaux Arts in Paris, and the American Research Centre in Cairo, and spent a year teaching at the Royal Academy of Art in London, prior to being hired as the NCA's first principal. Sponenburgh's vision for the NCA was, as Iram Zia Raja notes, "based loosely on the model of Bauhaus, yet rooted in the indigenous mores of arts and crafts".⁹⁴ Indeed, Sponenburgh took a major interest in the folk arts of the Swat valley, and organized the first national exhibition on that subject during his tenure as principal.

Drawing on resources made available through the Colombo Plan, Sponenburgh hired many foreign faculty members as well as artists who had been trained abroad. In 1960, he hired Jamila Zaidi, the first Pakistani woman to graduate from the Slade. Although Zaidi has not received as much attention as other NCA founding faculty, and although she was at the NCA for a short time, from 1960 to 1964, the archives demonstrate the important role that she assumed as the NCA representative on national curriculum committees, as a national curriculum textbook author (see [Figs. 27–31](#)), and as a thinker about art pedagogy ([Figs. 78 and 79](#)).

Studying at the Slade from 1954 to 1957, Zaidi overlapped with Khalid Iqbal, Kim Lim, Sam Ntiro, Gazbia Sirry, K.G. Subramanyan, Ibrahim El-Salahi, Anwar Jalal Shemza, Tseng Yu, and Wendy Yeo, who are all mentioned in this feature, as well as other overseas students. This particularly interesting moment of transversal crossings would have provided Zaidi with a comparative ecology against which to imagine other postcolonial pedagogies. When she was hired in 1960 by Sponenburgh, her thinking about art and education condensed into a vision that brought together her fine art training with Sponenburgh's interest in craft, challenging epistemological divisions between the two. Indeed, she proudly advocated for contrapuntal pedagogies that wove together art and craft: on her CV, Zaidi mentioned that she had made "art and craft" compulsory in secondary education, that she had written a textbook titled *Story of Art*, and had co-taught a course on "Folk Arts and Crafts in Pakistan" at the NCA (see [Fig. 78](#)).⁹⁵

The 1960–1961 curriculum for the foundation course "Intro to the Visual Arts" separates "related arts" from "applied and industrial design", placing Zaidi's Folk Arts and Crafts course in the latter category, with Architecture and Archaeology in Pakistan in the "related arts" term ([Fig. 80](#)). A syllabus for the History of Art and Architecture from the same set of documents provides further context, demonstrating a comparative and global approach to teaching art history, in the Fall term covering East Asia, South Asia, Egyptian, Mesopotamian, Greek, Roman, and Buddhist art, with only minimal attention paid to European prehistoric art ([Figs. 81 and 82](#)). History of Art II offers a

history of Architecture, Sculpture and Painting in France 1848–1960, along with sections on “Luministic Realism” in Tokugawa Japan and “Impressionism” in Islamic Art, in an effort to place French modernism within a global context (Figs. 83 and 84). These efforts to disrupt the Eurocentrism of art history also translated into the practice side of the curriculum, which we can see in a contemporaneous note setting out the syllabus for a third-year class on technical methods, which focuses on copying from miniature paintings, and introduces techniques such as brush and ink, wash, colour, and application of gold leaf (Fig. 85). Furthermore, when Zaidi presented the paper “Criticism in Art Education at the College Level” at the 16th All-Pakistan Science Conference as a delegate from the NCA in 1963, she addressed the importance of using critique as a pedagogical tool to help students navigate between multiple artistic systems (see Fig. 79). Although when Shakir Ali became principal in 1961, he shifted the curriculum towards European art and its methods, it is useful to trace this brief moment of contrapuntal pedagogy developed by Sponenburgh with Zaidi’s contribution.⁹⁶ They laid the groundwork for later developments in the Print department that will be discussed in Part 2 of this “Slade, London, Asia” feature, which will focus on the 1960s to the 1990s.

Tseng Yu and Art Education in Hong Kong and Taiwan

As a young student at the Slade, Tseng Yu developed strong relationships with both William Coldstream and William Townsend, evident in the archive through the warmth of their correspondence and, in the case of Townsend, a friendship that evolved to include visits to his home in Kent and the exchange of works of art. Tseng’s letters to Coldstream show him seeking to educate the Slade professor about contemporary Chinese art (see Figs. 97 and 98), and he later returned to the Slade in 1975 to give a lecture about Chinese painting to Slade students (see Fig. 99). Tseng saw himself as a contrapuntal mediator, bringing knowledge about Chinese art history and aesthetics to European audiences, and vice versa. Tseng was born in Shanghai, but had moved to Hong Kong by the time he applied to the Slade in 1952. After graduating from the Slade in 1956, he moved to Paris and studied at the École des Beaux Arts, spending some time at Stanley William Hayter’s Atelier 17 (another node for former Slade graduates), then moved to Rome in 1960, where he stayed for ten years before being hired as Department Head of Fine Arts at the Chinese University of Hong Kong (CUHK) in 1971.

The Department of Fine Arts at CUHK was founded in 1957 as a two-year Fine Arts Specialized Training Program at New Asia College, and was the first tertiary institution in Hong Kong to offer courses in Studio Practice and Art History. Founded by Principal Ch’ien Mu and other scholars from mainland China in Hong Kong, the New Asia College was an effort to establish Chinese

language, culture, and learning at the level of tertiary education within an ecosystem of British colonial education.⁹⁷ The Fine Arts programme was established by École des Beaux Arts-trained Chen Shi-wen and Tokyo School of Fine Arts-trained Ding Yanyong, and today “carries a special mission to promote the study of Chinese art and culture and the exchange of Chinese and Western art with dual emphasis on studio practice and art theories”.⁹⁸

Tseng was hired at a critical moment for the Department of Fine Arts and stewarded an important transition as department head. It was under Tseng that the department was separated from the Board of Studies in Philosophy and Fine Arts and established as its own independent Board of Studies. Furthermore, the 1971 CUHK *Bulletin* notes that (Figs. 86 and 87):

with these new appointments, it is possible to modify the curriculum so that it has greater emphasis on Chinese Art History. It is hoped that with the development of the programme, students of Fine Arts will have an opportunity to choose areas of concentration, initially between art history and theory as one area and practice of art (drawing, painting, sculpture, design, etc.) as another. It is also hoped that eventually the following four areas of concentration can be developed: Chinese Art History; Chinese painting; calligraphy and seal carving; Western painting, sculpture and prints; and design and ceramics.

Tseng’s pedagogical thinking was systemic and synthetic, and can be analysed through three art history textbooks he co-translated into Chinese: Michael Sullivan’s *The Arts of China* (Fig. 88 in 1985, H.W. Janson’s *History of Art* in 1991 (Fig. 89), and Giulio Carlo Argan and Maurizio Fagiolo’s *Guida a la storia dell’arte* in 1992 (Fig. 90). The combination of the three texts indicates Tseng’s belief in the importance of enabling contemporary artists to situate themselves within multiple histories of art. Argan and Fagiolo’s *Guida a la storia dell’arte*, a book on art history methodology, is of particular interest, as it is accompanied by a preface written by Tseng. Reflecting the department’s institutional separation from the Board of Studies of Philosophy, Tseng argues for a theoretical shift in Chinese art history, which he sees as too invested in aesthetics and poetry rather than history, society, and politics. As with Abedin, who identified the importance of establishing an art library for the purposes of teaching art history, Tseng identifies the creation of art libraries and photographic image libraries such as the one at the Courtauld Institute of Art for art students, for whom it was necessary to develop a contrapuntal language of art.⁹⁹

Schema and Correction: Repositioning Art Histories

Between 1949 and 1961, Art History at the Slade was taught by two eminent art historians, Rudolf Wittkower (1949–1956) and Ernst Gombrich (1956–1961). Both European émigré scholars were based at the Warburg Institute, and both were, in different ways, concerned with the history of the classical tradition. These two figures set the tone at the Slade by embracing new art-historical methods that emphasized the relationships between art and its social and historical contexts, leading to a cultural relativism that, although limited by its reliance upon Western epistemologies, was uncommon for its time.¹⁰⁰ This left open the possibility of what Gombrich termed “schema and correction”, or challenges to the status quo.¹⁰¹

Both Wittkower’s and Gombrich’s inaugural lectures at UCL (“The Artist and the Liberal Arts” in 1950; and “Art and Scholarship” in 1957, respectively) not only elucidate the historical and contemporary imperatives to ensure links between arts, humanities, and sciences, but they also used this platform as an opportunity to rationalize their “unusual situation” (to use Wittkower’s phrase) of being art historians lecturing to practising artists (Fig. 91). For his part, Gombrich advocates that scholars “turn to the working artist to learn what actually happens when somebody makes an image: What use does he make of tradition, what difficulties does he encounter?”¹⁰² This commonality between the two presentations foregrounds the art school as a site of encounter not only between artists of the past and those of the present, between historical and modern art, but pivotally, between contemporary artists and art historians. In this context, artists are understood by these scholars—conceptually at least—as having agency and expertise (whether or not this was acknowledged at the level of individual students). Artists make use of inherited “schemata”, comparing it to direct observation of their surroundings, and then set about correcting the schema. For artists familiar with more than one system of inherited schemata, understanding them as visual languages opened up the possibility of negotiating between multiple modes of representation. Even so, both Gombrich and Wittkower ultimately could not escape their own inherited schemata and privileged pictorial realism, expressing ambivalence with respect to modern art as well as to other artistic traditions.

Art history at the Slade also existed within a wider interdisciplinary context of the university, set alongside lectures on anatomy (for instance, “Growth and Form” by N.A. Barnicot and biologist J.Z. Young), the psychology of vision (A.R. Jonckheere), mathematical perspective (taught by B.A.R. Carter, who concurrently published with Wittkower on the topic),¹⁰³ and later film (Thorold Dickinson).¹⁰⁴ Gombrich’s lectures at the time were informed by the long gestation of ideas that would come to constitute *Art and Illusion*

(1960). In addition to being exposed to art and art histories as active and interdisciplinary academic subjects, students were invited to take subsidiary subjects from across the college, and attend lectures at the Courtauld Institute of Art and the Bartlett School of Architecture. The curriculum included a range of additional visiting lecturers in art history. As indicated by the 1953–1954 report to the Slade Committee alone, there were invited lectures by Ronald Alley, Michael Kitson, Gillo Dorfles, Oliver Miller, Charles Mitchell, Ellis Waterhouse, Margaret Whinney, Frances Yates, and Kenneth Clark, who, along with Anthony Blunt, also served on the college's Slade Committee (Fig. 92). Yet, even with this array, the focus of study remained squarely focused on classical, European, British, and American art, underpinned by the presuppositions of Western ways of seeing. This included the centrality of geometrical, single-point perspective as a hallmark skill students were accountable for, as shown by lecture notes for B.A.R. Carter's lectures on mathematical perspective and accompanying exam questions (Fig. 93).¹⁰⁵

It was in this context of intellectual openness and deeply rooted Eurocentrism that overseas students critically engaged with—and often rejected—the false universalism of art-historical narratives taught at the Slade. Frustrated by the Eurocentrism of the Slade curriculum, for example, Ben Enwonwu supplemented his Slade degree with a postgraduate year studying West African ethnography at University College London.¹⁰⁶ As discussed in the section “Contrapuntal World-Making”, for Anwar Jalal Shemza, the experience of hearing Gombrich characterize Islamic art as “functional” shattered him, and led him to destroy his previous works, paving the way for a pictorial language of decolonial modernism that questioned the distinction in European art between abstraction and decoration (see Fig. 65). Handouts from Gombrich's lecture in the Slade archive outline the art-historical paradigm Shemza would have encountered in his first year at the Slade (1956–1957) (Figs. 94 and 95). Accompanying these documents are Gombrich's own notes for lecture delivery, with annotations corresponding to slides that would have been screened as juxtaposed images for comparing and contrasting (Fig. 96). Although hard to make out, reading them for their form and structure encourages us to grasp these occasions as staged, live events, and moments of intellectual and visual encounter. These were performances generating an alchemy between delivery and reception that could support ambivalences, nuance, and critical engagement, even as they marginalized non-European artistic epistemologies.

The documents also show how students were encouraged to view artworks for themselves by visiting collections such as the British Museum, in a sense extending the pedagogical space. Yet, while these museums may have showcased global collections, and so in principle provided pathways to enrich and diversify the set curriculum, many of these artworks were displaced and

decontextualized, acquired through imperial and colonial exploitation and violence. Moreover, through the museum's discursive enterprises, these collections were deployed in ways that naturalized the dominant cultural narratives of progress and cultural superiority which sought to affirm Britain's global position. ¹⁰⁷

Even as a young student, Tseng Yu understood the limitations of his professors' knowledge bases—their schema—and sought to educate them in Chinese art and art history. In a letter to Coldstream in 1955, written when Tseng was in his third year of studies, Tseng introduced the Slade professor to the work of Ch'i Pai-Shih (Qi Baishi) and Hsü Pei Hung (Xu Beihong), two of the most celebrated modern Chinese artists of their generation (Figs. 97 and 98). Seeking to give Coldstream a lesson in contrapuntal modernism, Tseng explained how “by mingling the arts and craft elements and traditional elements together [Ch'i Pai Shih] created a very individual style”. Not content to leave the analysis at the level of particularized modernism, however, Tseng also cites Renoir as having engaged in a similar gesture, having “start[ed] as a porcelain painter, he started from the city's low arts and craft”. He then predicts and corrects Coldstream's response to Ch'i's modernity, which the senior painter would likely have perceived as derivative of European art, writing that: “Matisse must have seen his pictures, as their artistic approach is very alike. They are very modern in Europe.” ¹⁰⁸ Turning to Hsü Pei Hong, Tseng makes an even more radical correction, writing that Hsü's “combination of East and West, like Whistler's, is a very superficial one”, knowing that Hsü was likely known to Coldstream as the teacher of two former Slade students, Chang Chien-Ying (1949–1951) and Fei Chengwu (1950–1951).

In 1975, Tseng returned to the Slade, this time as a visiting lecturer, and delivered a lecture comparing Chinese and Western painting and aesthetics, focusing on the question of “how people look” at art (Fig. 99). In other words, by analysing ways of viewing, Tseng was addressing Gombrich's ideas about how schemas shape perception, and making his own corrections to both Gombrich's schema and to the Slade curriculum. In this lecture, Tseng addresses five points: line, intuition and measurement, disintegration of form, time and space, and spiritual resonance. Ultimately, Tseng argues that Chinese painting offers a “new way of looking”, and a competing schema that provincializes and relativizes European ways of viewing, knowing, and painting.

Similarly, for students of Gombrich who arrived with a developed postcolonial perspective, such as K.G. Subramanyan and Partha Mitter (the latter his student not at the Slade but University of London), Gombrich's theoretical frameworks proved useful rather than limiting, and have, in recent years, been appropriated and transformed in different contexts of global art and art

history.¹⁰⁹ As Mitter commented about Gombrich's former students, "We are not clones. We all have our own interests and concerns."¹¹⁰ Indeed, for both Subramanyan and Mitter, the relationship that they established with Gombrich's intellectual structures was precisely one of taking on Gombrich's schema and correcting it to address the world as they saw it.

For Subramanyan, Gombrich provided a vocabulary drawn from the psychology of perception that helped him develop his Santiniketan teacher Nandalal Bose's ideas about the semiotics of artistic expression (Fig. 100). As Sonal Khullar argues, "Gombrich's anti-Hegelian art history allowed for the possibility of divergent temporalities for art and for divergent representational forms, both nature-improving and nature-spiritualizing in Riegl's terms."¹¹¹ In other words, Gombrich's *Art and Illusion* established the *conventional* nature of representation, and opened the possibilities of art as language, which Subramanyan adopted in his own pedagogical practice. Appropriating theoretical schemas drawn from both Gombrich and Bose, Subramanyan made his own corrections when teaching "Fundamentals of the Visual Arts" as a world art history course at the Faculty of Fine Arts at the Maharaja Sayajirao University of Baroda from 1959 to the 1970s.

Finally, for Partha Mitter, the methodological tools that he learned enabled him to make his own "corrections" to both Gombrich and to art history more generally (Fig. 101). Mitter had wanted to be an artist and attended a few classes at the Calcutta Art School but found it not sufficiently intellectual. Dreaming of going to art school in Paris, he ended up being admitted to an undergraduate programme in history at the School of Oriental and African Studies (SOAS) in 1962, and went to London instead, where he painted and did drawings in the evenings after classes at St Martin's School of Art. His very first lecture was delivered by Ernst Gombrich in the General History Lecture Series at Senate House, London University, which Mitter comments, "just bowled me over for his radical rethinking of Hegel ... He gave me a very new insight. I started looking for his books, then read *Art and Illusion*, which was central to my work" (Fig. 102).

Inspired by the lecture and his other interactions with Gombrich, Mitter eventually approached Gombrich to ask if he would supervise his dissertation on Paul Klee. Not considering himself an art historian, Gombrich demurred, suggesting that Mitter study with Anthony Blunt, but then posed a question to Mitter that would prove pivotal. "You know," said Gombrich, "I find the aesthetic principles and taste of Hindu temple sculpture and architecture very difficult to come to terms with and assimilate." Not understanding his own schemas, Gombrich asked Mitter if he would want to try to answer that question in his dissertation and offered to supervise him.

“I was at SOAS at a very important colonial moment”, Mitter comments, noting that it was populated by “ex-colonial teachers, army officers, orientalist”, who, although friendly, were “very patronising in a very kind way”. Between Gombrich’s unanswered question and Mitter’s immediate environment at SOAS, he began thinking about the intellectual structures of colonialism and racism, which eventually led to him teaching a course on the ideology of racism, giving a guest lecture on Indian art in Susan Hiller’s class at the Slade around 1965. From 1965–1970, Mitter pursued a PhD with Gombrich through a joint degree at the University of London between SOAS and the Warburg Institute, and his doctoral dissertation became the book *Much Maligned Monsters: A History of European Reactions to Indian Art* (Fig. 103). Published in 1977, one year before Edward Said’s *Orientalism* (1978), *Much Maligned Monsters* revealed the colonial schemas that demonized Indian art within European ways of knowing.

Conclusion

Drawing transversal connections and comparisons between the histories of Bangladesh, India, Pakistan, Hong Kong, Taiwan, Indonesia, Singapore, Nigeria, Sudan, Uganda, Britain, and beyond, this feature offers a methodological proposition for writing multi-perspectival or *worlded* global art histories.¹¹² Additionally, it reveals the contrapuntal histories of the Slade, partially restoring what Hammad Nasar calls the “empire-shaped hole” in British history and the British imagination.¹¹³

This feature situates itself between a worlded global art history and archival studies, in order to offer a methodological proposition that experiments with new forms of collaboration and knowledge co-creation that are necessarily generous and generative, working across archives, countries, languages, and disciplinary boundaries. It seeks to read and give form to archives both against and along the grain, co-constituting histories at their points of friction—generative intellectual spaces that, like rubbing two sticks together, produce sparks that can burn down or burn brightly. We use this metaphor, which refers creatively to Anna Lowenhaupt Tsing’s theorization of friction, to think through what it means to write a worlded global art history that contends with empire critically, narrating yet decentring histories that are both centripetal and centrifugal, caught between empire and decolonization.¹¹⁴

This feature is part of the “London, Asia” project at the Paul Mellon Centre for Studies in British Art headed by Sarah Victoria Turner and Hammad Nasar. It is a project that plays with scale, zooming in to the level of the urban and out to encompass the region, in order to shift the lenses through which we see transnational and transcultural histories. In this way, the nation is rendered

as a body of topics for discussion rather than as a fundamental organizational category, allowing us to find new ways of connecting the dots, new through lines and transversals that give birth to new histories. Following the “London, Asia, Art, Worlds” conference which took place in May and June 2021, ¹¹⁵ and a forthcoming series of workshops on art pedagogy co-organized by the Paul Mellon Centre for Studies in British Art and Asia Art Archive, we will create a second part of this “Animating the Archive” feature in *British Art Studies*, which will address the period from the 1960s to the 1990s. We hope that you will join us in this ambitious endeavour to rethink how we write art history, and perhaps more importantly at this moment in history, how we imagine new forms of transnational connection and worlds beyond ethnic nationalisms.

Footnotes

- 1 University College London (UCL) was founded in 1826 by nonconformists as a liberal and secular alternative to the universities of Cambridge and Oxford. The founders and supporters including the poet Thomas Campbell, a lawyer and politician Henry Brougham, intellectual James Mill, and abolitionist Zachary Macaulay, and according to UCL calendars of the period, the founding abolitionist figures were the reason behind the school’s inclusive policies. See also Negley Harte, John North, and Georgina Brewis, eds., *The World of UCL* (London: UCL Press, 2018).
- 2 Sarah Victoria Turner, “Real Places and Imagined Journeys”, *Imagined Cosmopolis: Internationalism and Cultural Exchange, 1870s–1920s*, ed. Charlotte Ashby, Grace Brockington, Daniel Laqua, and Sarah Victoria Turner (London: Peter Lang, 2019), 231–249. Turner’s discussion of the coexistence of imperialism and internationalism at the turn of the century resonates with our argument here about the post-war period and the intersections between imperialism and decolonization. See also Miguel Bandeira Jerónimo and José Pedro Monteiro, “Pasts to be Unveiled: The Interconnections Between the International and the Imperial”, in *Internationalism, Imperialism, and the Formation of the Contemporary World: The Pasts of the Present*, ed. Miguel Bandeira Jerónimo and José Pedro Monteiro (London: Palgrave Macmillan, 2018), 1–29.
- 3 The Asquith Commission led to the establishment of the Inter-University Council for Higher Education in the Colonies in 1945, charged with developing a network of British-certified universities in the colonies, in preparation for post-independence futures. See The Colonial Office, “Report of the Commission on Higher Education in the Colonies” (June 1945), <https://obtienearchivo.bcn.cl/obtienearchivo?id=documentos/10221.1/29331/2/213787.pdf>. Another major organ of dissemination for British language and culture was the British Council. See Annabella Pollen, *Art without Frontiers: The History of the British Council and the Visual Arts* (New York: Art/Books, forthcoming 2021).
- 4 J.M. Lee, “Commonwealth Students in the United Kingdom, 1940–1960: Student Welfare and World Status”, *Minerva* 44, no. 1 (2006): 1–24. <http://www.jstor.org/stable/41821340>.
- 5 Walter Adams, “Colonial University Education”, *Higher Education Quarterly* 4, no. 3 (May 1950): 283.
- 6 We borrow this concept from Leela Gandhi, *Affective Communities: Anticolonial Thought, Fin-de-siècle Radicalism, and the Politics of Friendship* (Durham, NC: Duke University Press, 2006).
- 7 Emma Chambers, “Prototype and Perception: Art History and Observation at the Slade in the 1950s”, in *The Concept of the “Master” in Art Education in Britain and Ireland, 1770 to the Present*, ed. Matthew C. Potter (Farnham: Ashgate, 2013), 197.
- 8 For a more detailed treatment of this subject, see Ming Tiampo, “Slade, London, Asia: Intersections of Decolonial Modernism”, Paul Mellon Centre for British Art lecture for “London, Asia”, 10 November 2020. <https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=LF-eG5XqWV8>.
- 9 This project is informed by the emergent field of global microhistory. See John-Paul A. Ghobrial, “Introduction: Seeing the World like a Microhistorian”, *Past & Present* 242, Issue Supplement 14 (November 2019): 1–22, doi:[10.1093/pastj/gtz046](https://doi.org/10.1093/pastj/gtz046).
- 10 Edward Said, *Culture and Imperialism* (New York: Vintage, 1993), 51.
- 11 Edward Said, “Reflections on Exile and Other Essays”, in *Reflections on Exile and Other Essays* (Cambridge, MA: Harvard University Press, 2000), 398.
- 12 The concept of transversals was first used by Tiampo to theorize the relationships between histories that are both parallel and linked through a third term; see Ming Tiampo, “Slade, London, Asia: Intersections of Decolonial Modernism”, 10 November 2020, <https://www.paul-mellon-centre.ac.uk/whats-on/slade-london-asia>.
- 13 Shu-mei Shih, “Comparison as Relation”, in *Comparison: Theories, Approaches, Uses*, ed. Rita Felski and Susan Stanford Friedman (Baltimore, MD: Johns Hopkins University Press, 2013), 79.

- 14 For more information on, "Transnational Slade", see Slade School of Fine Art, <https://www.ucl.ac.uk/slade/sladearchive/transnational-slade>; and for "London, Asia", see Paul Mellon Centre, <https://www.paul-mellon-centre.ac.uk/research/london-asia-art-worlds-conference>.
- 15 The first two workshops, on "histories" and "lived experiences" between the National College of Arts, Lahore, and the Slade School of Fine Art, took place 10 December 2020 and 4 February 2021.
- 16 Joan M. Schwartz and Terry Cook, "Archives, Records, and Power: The Making of Modern Memory". *Archival Science* 2 (2002): 1-19, doi:[10.1007/BF02435628](https://doi.org/10.1007/BF02435628); and Stuart Hall, "Constituting an Archive", *Third Text* 15, no. 54 (2001): 89-92, doi:[10.1080/09528820108576903](https://doi.org/10.1080/09528820108576903).
- 17 Geoffrey Yeo, "Concepts of Record (1): Evidence, Information, and Persistent Representations", *The American Archivist* 70, no. 2 (2007): 315-343, www.jstor.org/stable/40294573.
- 18 J.J. Ghaddar and M. Caswell, "'To Go Beyond': Towards a Decolonial Archival Praxis", *Archival Science* 19 (2019): 71-85, doi:[10.1007/s10502-019-09311-1](https://doi.org/10.1007/s10502-019-09311-1).
- 19 Antoinette Burton, ed., *Archive Stories: Facts, Fictions, and the Writing of History* (Durham, NC: Duke University Press, 2005).
- 20 Ann Laura Stoler, *Along the Archival Grain* (Princeton, NJ: Princeton University Press, 2008).
- 21 Anna Lowenhaupt Tsing, *Friction: An Ethnography of Global Connection* (Princeton, NJ: Princeton University Press, 2005).
- 22 Verne Harris, "The Archival Sliver: A Perspective on the Construction of Social Memory in Archives and the Transition from Apartheid to Democracy", in *Refiguring the Archive*, ed. Carolyn Hamilton et al. (Dordrecht: Springer, 2002), 135, doi:[10.1007/978-94-010-0570-8_9](https://doi.org/10.1007/978-94-010-0570-8_9).
- 23 Michelle Caswell, "'The Archive' is not an Archives: On Acknowledging the Intellectual Contributions of Archival Studies", *Reconstruction* 16, no. 1 (2016), UCLA, retrieved from <https://escholarship.org/uc/item/7bn4v1fk>.
- 24 Lara Putnam, "The Transnational and the Text-Searchable: Digitized Sources and the Shadows They Cast", *The American Historical Review* 121, no. 2 (April 2016): 377-402, doi:[10.1093/ahr/121.2.377](https://doi.org/10.1093/ahr/121.2.377).
- 25 Ariella Azoulay, *Potential History: Unlearning Imperialism* (London: Verso, 2019).
- 26 These include Affandi Museum; Asia Art Archive; Archives of the National College of Arts, Lahore; British Library Sound Archive; Archives of the Chinese University of Hong Kong; Slade Archive; Tate Archive; UCL Art Museum; UCL Special Collections; and the artists' archives include those of Zainul Abedin, Helen Ganly, Chila Kumari Burman, Kim Lim, Vivan Sundaram, and Wendy Yeo. Four workshops regarding "Slade, London, Asia" have now been hosted by the Paul Mellon Centre for Studies in British Art: two in London, addressing the histories and lived experiences of overseas artists at the Slade, and two between London and Lahore, bringing together the entangled histories and ongoing relationships between the Slade and the National College of Arts, Lahore.
- 27 See Anne J. Gilliland, Sue McKemmish, and Andrew J. Lau, eds., *Research in the Archival Multiverse* (Clayton, VIC: Monash University Publishing, 2016), <http://library.oapen.org/handle/20.500.12657/31429>. Rather than assuming a linear life cycle model of archives in which records are understood to be created and then archived into a static state from which evidence can be retrieved, the records continuum model in archival theory posits that records are in an ongoing state of activation, reactivation, and authentication along a continuum of creation, capture, organization, and pluralization. It is in this sense that archival records can be conceptualized as always in the process of becoming. Sue McKemmish, "Placing Records Continuum Theory and Practice", *Archival Science* 1, no. 4 (2001): 334.
- 28 These class photos were the inspiration for the 2013 *Crowdsourcing the Slade Class Photos*, a collaboration between UCL Centre for Digital Humanities and the Slade. The pilot website deployed face recognition software and social media platforms as a way to capture contributions from former students, staff, and scholars and identify sitters in the photographs. The resulting platform was also used in the first phase of the *Transnational Slade* project (2013-2014), led by Amna Malik and Melissa Terras.
- 29 Ian Tregarthen Jenkin interviewed by Linda Sandino, *National Life Stories: Artists' Lives*, Oral History, British Sound Archive, 2002, C466/133 Part 11: Tape 6, Side A, duration 31:06. <https://sounds.bl.uk/Oral-history/Art/021M-C0466X0133XX-0011V0>.
- 30 Student record for Wendy Yeo, UCL Records Office, used with permission.
- 31 Wendy Yeo, oral history interview with the authors, 27 November and 11 December 2020.
- 32 "Hussein Shariffe (1934-2005), Artist and Film-Maker", National Portrait Gallery, <https://www.npg.org.uk/collections/search/person/mp88859/hussein-shariffe>.
- 33 These lists are provisional; access to archival records was disrupted due to the Covid-19 pandemic.
- 34 As quoted in Frances Donaldson, *The British Council: The First Fifty Years* (London: Jonathan Cape, 1984), 1-2.
- 35 As quoted in Donaldson, *The British Council*, 1-2.
- 36 See Amna Malik's profile on Iqbal, in "Transnational Slade: Khalid Iqbal", *Slade Archive Project*, 9 June 2014: <https://blogs.ucl.ac.uk/slade-archive-project/2014/06/09/transnational-slade-khalid-iqbal/>.
- 37 C.L.R. James, *Beyond A Boundary* (London: Stanley Paul/Hutchinson, 1963); Ashis Nandy, *The Tao of Cricket: On Games of Destiny and the Destiny of Games* (London, Viking: 1989); Arjun Appadurai, "Playing With Modernity: The Decolonization of Indian Cricket", *Modernity at Large Cultural Dimensions of Globalisation* (New Delhi: Oxford University Press, 1997); and Ian Baucom, "Put a Little English in It: C.L.R. James and England's Field of Play", *Out of Place: Englishness, Empire, and the Locations of Identity* (Princeton, NJ: Princeton University Press, 1999), 135-163.

- 38 Frantz Fanon, "On National Culture", in *The Wretched of the Earth*, translated by Constance Farrington (New York: Grove Press, 1963 [1961]), 209. Partha Mitter also addresses the reception of pre-colonial culture within colonial epistemologies in his book, *Much Maligned Monsters: A History of European Reactions to Indian Art* (Oxford: Clarendon Press, 1977).
- 39 The Government Institute of Arts, Dacca, was established in 1948, in two rooms on the ground floor of the National Medical School building. In 1963, it became an affiliated college with Dhaka University, and changed its name to the East Pakistan College of Arts and Crafts. After independence in 1971, it became the Bangladesh Government College of Arts and Crafts. It became the Institute of Fine Art, a part of Dhaka University, in 1983. Nasimul Khabir, "Brief History of the Institute of Fine Arts, Dhaka", *Art, A Quarterly Journal* (October-December 1998), 14.
- 40 Sonal Khullar, *Worldly Affiliations: Artistic Practice, National Identity, and Modernism in India, 1930-1990* (Berkeley, CA: University of California Press, 2015), 139. Subramanyan was among the first group of faculty invited to teach at the Faculty of Fine Arts at the Maharaja Sayajirao University of Baroda after it was upgraded from the Baroda College of Science (established in 1881) to the M.S. University of Baroda in 1949.
- 41 Partha Mitter, *Art and Nationalism in Colonial India, 1850-1922: Occidental Orientations* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1994), 29-62; Emma Wolukau Wanambwa, "Margaret Trowell's School of Art: A Case Study in Colonial Subject Formation", *Art Education Research* 15 (February 2019): 1-14; and So Mui Ma, "Identity and the Visual Arts Curriculum in Colonial and Postcolonial Hong Kong", *Visual Arts Research* 36, no. 1 (2010): 1-11.
- 42 Mitter, *Art and Nationalism in Colonial India, 1850-1922*, 29-62.
- 43 This argument is made and elaborated in Tapati Guha-Thakurta, *The Making of a New 'Indian' Art: Artists, Aesthetics, and Nationalism in Bengal, c.1850-1920* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1992). The school at Santiniketan was founded as an alternative place for learning in 1901 by Rabindranath Tagore. In 1919, the Kala-Bhavan art school was founded under the leadership of Nandalal Bose, and became the Faculty of Fine Arts of the Visva-Bharati University, when it was founded in 1921. It was the first Faculty of Fine Arts at an Indian university.
- 44 Khullar, *Worldly Affiliations*, 131.
- 45 Simone Wille, *Modern Art in Pakistan: History, Tradition, Place* (New Delhi: Routledge, 2015), 6.
- 46 Lala Rukh Selim, "50 Years of the Fine Art Institute", *Art: A Quarterly Journal* 4, no. 2 (1998): 6.
- 47 J.P. Hodin, "The Artist in Modern Society: International Conference of Artists. Venice, 22-28 September 1952", *College Art Journal* 14, no. 3 (1955): 297-298, doi:[10.2307/772431](https://doi.org/10.2307/772431).
- 48 As Iftikhar Dadi and Sanjukta Sunderason argue, Abedin was situated between being an "artist bureaucrat" working for the Pakistani government, and an East Pakistani artist, see Iftikhar Dadi, *Modernism and the Art of Muslim South Asia* (Chapel Hill, NC: University of North Carolina Press, 2010), 99-112; and Sanjukta Sunderason, "Shadow-Lines: Zainul Abedin and the Afterlives of the Bengal Famine of 1943", *Third Text* 31, nos. 2-3 (2017): 239-259.
- 49 Selim, "50 Years of the Fine Art Institute", 12.
- 50 Zainul Abedin, untitled, undated notes on cultural policy, ca. 1960s, Estate of Zainul Abedin.
- 51 Nadeem Omar Tarar, "From 'Primitive' Artisans to 'Modern' Craftsmen: Colonialism, Culture and Art Education in Late Nineteenth-Century Punjab", *South Asian Studies* 27, no. 2 (2011): 199-219; and Nadeem Omar Tarar, "Aesthetic Modernism in the Post-Colony: The Making of a National College of Art in Pakistan (1950s-1960s)", *The International Journal of Art & Design Education* 27, no. 3 (2008): 334, doi:[10.1111/j.1476-8070.2008.00587.x](https://doi.org/10.1111/j.1476-8070.2008.00587.x).
- 52 Siva Kumar Raman, *K.G. Subramanyan: A Retrospective* (New Delhi: National Gallery of Modern Art and Brijbasi, 2003), 28.
- 53 K.G. Subramanyan, "An Unfinished Agenda (Some Thoughts on Art Education in India)".
- 54 Khullar, *Worldly Affiliations*, 133. See also Nilima Sheikh, "A Post-Independence Initiative in Art", in *Contemporary Art in Baroda*, ed. Gulammohammed Sheikh (New Delhi, Tulika Press, 1997), 53-144.
- 55 Raman, *K.G. Subramanyan*, 26-30. See Fig. 101 of this feature.
- 56 Walter Adams, "Colonial Universities To-Day", *Journal of the Royal Society of Arts* 101 (August 1953): 715-730.
- 57 Négritude was a political and cultural response to French colonialism in Africa and the Caribbean that asserted the importance and humanity of Black culture as a response to the dehumanization of colonialism. Major proponents included Léopold Sédar Senghor and Aimé Césaire. It has been critiqued, most notably by Frantz Fanon, as not adequately departing from the logics of European colonialism. Fanon, "On National Culture".
- 58 Enwonwu was challenged by the Zaria Art Society and their advocacy for a "natural synthesis" after independence in 1960. Prominent Zaria Art Society members included Uche Okeke, Bruce Onobrakpeya, and Demas Nwoko. See Chika Okeke-Agulu, *Postcolonial Modernism: Art and Decolonization in Twentieth-Century Nigeria* (Durham, NC: Duke University Press, 2015); Bea Gassmann de Sousa, "Decolonizing Nigerian Modernism: Ben Enwonwu's 'Identity in Politics'", *Tate Papers* 30 (Autumn 2018), <https://www.tate.org.uk/research/publications/tate-papers/30/decolonising-nigerian-modernism-ben-enwonwus-identity-politics>; and Matthew Lecznar, "Weathering the Storm: Ben Enwonwu's Biafrascapes and the Crisis in the Nigerian Postcolony", *Tate Papers* 30 (Autumn 2018), <https://www.tate.org.uk/research/publications/tate-papers/30/weathering-the-storm>.
- 59 This is now Margaret Trowell School of Industrial and Fine Arts, Makerere University.
- 60 Emma Wolukau-Wanambwa, "Margaret Trowell's School of Art or How to Keep the Children's Work Really African", in *The Palgrave Handbook of Race and the Arts in Education*, ed. Amelia M. Kraehe, Rubén Gaztambide-Fernández, and B. Stephen Carpenter II (Cham: Palgrave Macmillan, 2018), 86-7.

- 61 University of London is a federation of universities of which UCL and hence the Slade are part and was, at that time, the awarding body of its fine art degrees.
- 62 See the *Inter-University Council for Higher Education in the Colonies: Report* (London: Her Majesty's Stationery Office, 1946-47).
- 63 Tapati Guha-Thakurta, *The Making of a New "Indian" Art: Artists, Aesthetics, and Nationalism in Bengal, c.1850-1920* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1992), 226-312.
- 64 Wolukau-Wanambwa, "Margaret Trowell's School of Art or How to Keep the Children's Work Really African".
- 65 Edward Said, "Reflections on Exile", 172.
- 66 See, for example, Courtney J. Martin, "Anwar Jalal Shemza's Art World in London: 1956-60", in *Anwar Jalal Shemza*, ed. Iftikhar Dadi (London: Ridinghouse, 2015).
- 67 James Hyman, *The Battle for Realism* (New Haven, CT: Yale University Press, 2001).
- 68 Renamed the Government College of Art & Craft, Kolkata in 1951.
- 69 Thanks to Andrea Frederickson for this archival discovery.
- 70 Tseng Yu, letter to William Coldstream, 20 November 1957. UCL Special Collections.
- 71 Tseng Yu, audio recording of Lecture on Chinese and Western painting, Slade School of Fine Art, 1975. UCL Special Collections, 37:00.
- 72 Edward Said, "Reflections on Exile", 172.
- 73 Iftikhar Dadi, "Calligraphic Abstraction: Anwar Jalal Shemza", in *Anwar Jalal Shemza*, ed. Iftikhar Dadi (London: Ridinghouse, 2015), 14.
- 74 Joleen Loh, "Relocating Kim Lim: A Cosmopolitan Perspective", *Southeast of Now* 2, no. 2 (October 2018): 42-43, <https://muse.jhu.edu/article/707953>.
- 75 Kim Lim interviewed by Cathy Courtney, *National Life Stories: Artists' Lives*, Oral History, British Library Sound Archive, 20 October 1995, Kim Lim C466/51 Track 8: Tape 5: Side A, 95, <https://sounds.bl.uk/related-content/TRANSCRIPTS/021T-C0466X0051XX-0000A0.pdf>.
- 76 David J. Getsy, "Reduction as Abstraction: The Queer Capacities of Abstract Art", public lecture, 1 February 2021, ici Berlin. <https://www.ici-berlin.org/events/david-j-getsy/>. Getsy coined the phrase "capacities of abstraction" to capture the narrative content of abstraction that is coded in queer abstract painting.
- 77 Elena Crippa, "Kim Lim's Early Work: Reconfiguration and Reconciliation", paper given at "London, Asia, Art, Worlds", Paul Mellon Centre for British Art, 17 June 2021. Crippa's paper addressed the reparative engagement of Lim's early work with her childhood memories of the Japanese occupation of Malaya.
- 78 Lotte Hoek and Sanjukta Sunderason, "Journeying through Modernism: Travels and Transits of East Pakistani artists in Post-Imperial London", *British Art Studies* 13 (September 2019), doi:[10.17658/issn.2058-5462/issue-13/hoek-sunderason](https://doi.org/10.17658/issn.2058-5462/issue-13/hoek-sunderason).
- 79 Wendy Yeo, oral history interview with the authors, 27 November and 11 December 2020.
- 80 Tarar, "Aesthetic Modernism in the Post-Colony", 334.
- 81 Simone Wille, *Modern Art in Pakistan*, 19-21; Simone Wille, "South Asian Artists at the Académie André Lhote", in *André Lhote and his International Students*, ed. Zeynep Kuban and Simone Wille (Innsbruck: Innsbruck University Press, 2020), 195-200.
- 82 Dadi, *Modernism and the Art of Muslim South Asia*, 131.
- 83 Nigel Llewellyn, "Introduction: Histories and Contexts", in *The London Art Schools: Reforming the Art World, 1960 to Now*, ed. Llewellyn and Beth Williamson (London: Tate Publishing, 2015), 9-25.
- 84 Martin, "Anwar Jalal Shemza's Art World in London", 28.
- 85 William Coldstream, quoted in Emma Chambers, "Prototype and Perception", 203.
- 86 Walter Gropius, "Program of the Staatliche Bauhaus in Weimar", 1919, quoted in Matthew Shanley, "Tracing Bauhaus Pedagogy," M.Arch dissertation (Manchester School of Architecture, 2014), 53.
- 87 Ministry of Education, First Report of the National Advisory Council on Art Education (London: Her Majesty's Stationery Office, 1960), 11.
- 88 For a more in-depth discussion of Abedin's transnational career, see Hoek and Sunderason, "Journeying through Modernism".
- 89 Sayed Azizul Huq, *Zainul Abedin: Sristishil Jibonshomogro [Zainul Abedin's Creative Life]* (Dhaka: Prothoma Prokashon, 2015), 74.
- 90 GIA Curriculum, Estate of Zainul Abedin.
- 91 Nasimul Khair, "Brief History of the Institute of Fine Art, Dhaka", *Art: A Quarterly Journal* (December 1998): 14.
- 92 The curriculum document reproduced here is very likely from 1956, when the Draughtsmanship department was established, as it is included in the document. The next major change to the curriculum came in 1964, when the course was discontinued, due to a similar programme being offered at the Tejgaon Polytechnic Institute.

- 93 Despite hewing closely to the Calcutta curriculum, Selim points out that the GIA introduced outdoor sketching of landscape and figures, especially labourers and artisans, which fostered an engagement with Bengali progressive politics. Selim, "50 Years of the Fine Art Institute", 8.
- 94 Iram Zia Raja, "Shakir Ali, an Enigma within a Layered Reality", *Pakistan Perspectives* 22, no. 2 (July–December 2017) 76. For details, see NCAA file no. 49-E, Annual Convocation Report of the National College of Arts (Part I & II), 1959–1961, H-26.
- 95 Zaidi developed these positions in the context of working with Mark Ritter Sponenburgh, an American sculptor who was the first principal of the National College of Arts, Lahore, and who introduced the NCA's modern curriculum in 1958. Sponenburgh was a champion of arts and crafts in Pakistan, and was known for his work on the Swat Valley. See, for example, Mark Sponenburgh, "Folk Arts of the Swat Valley", *Contemporary Arts in Pakistan* 2, no. 2 (Summer 1961). This was not purely Sponenburgh's initiative, however, and Zaidi took credit for her accomplishment, mentioning that "I got the subject of 'Art and Craft' made compulsory up to the 8th Class in all Schools of Pakistan" on her CV of ca. 1965. National College of Arts, Lahore Archives, Personal File of Ms. Jamila Zaidi, 1963–1985, page 84.
- 96 Ali first became temporary principal in 1961, after Sponenburgh's departure due to his wife's cancer diagnosis. See Tarar, "Aesthetic Modernism in the Post-Colony".
- 97 Chinese University of Hong Kong, *University Gallery: Dr. Ch'ien Mu*, https://www.cuhk.edu.hk/ugallery/en/story/chien_mu.html.
- 98 Chinese University of Hong Kong, *Sixty Years of Fine Arts Education*, <https://www.iso.cuhk.edu.hk/english/publications/CUHKUPDates/article.aspx?articleid=1909>.
- 99 Tseng Yu, Preface to Giulio Carlo Argan and Maurizio Fagiolo, *Yi Shu Shi Xue De Ji Chu [Guida a la storia dell'arte: Guide to Art History]*, trans. Tseng Yu and Tien-Tseng Yeh Liu (Taipei: Dong Tai Tu Shu Publishing, 1992). We gratefully acknowledge Gigi Wong's assistance with this research. As Sneha Ragavan has demonstrated in her work on the Faculty of Fine Arts at the Maharaja Sayajirao University of Baroda, Rattan Parimoo also established an image library based upon the Courtauld model, but with a much wider global scope. Sneha Ragavan, Dhaka Art Summit, 2020.
- 100 Chambers, "Prototype and Perception", 197.
- 101 Ernst Gombrich, *Art and Illusion: A Study in the Psychology of Pictorial Representation* (New York: Pantheon Books, 1960).
- 102 Ernst H. Gombrich, "Art and Scholarship", *College Art Journal* 17, no. 4 (1958): 355, doi:[10.2307/774148](https://doi.org/10.2307/774148).
- 103 R. Wittkower and B.A.R. Carter, "The Perspective of Piero Della Francesca's 'Flagellation'", *Journal of the Warburg and Courtauld Institutes* 16, nos. 3–4 (1953): 292–302, www.jstor.org/stable/750368.
- 104 See Slade Annual Reports, UCL Records Office UCLCA/4/1/1
- 105 These documents are part of a fuller file of documents dating 1955–1959 including Gombrich's lecture notes, that were copied for the archive by Slade alumnus and former Slade Archivist, Stephen Chaplin when he interviewed Gombrich about his time at the Slade in 1994. See Slade Archive Reader, UCL Special Collections MS ADD 400.
- 106 Sylvester Okwunodo Ogbachie, *Ben Enwonwu: The Making of an African Modernist* (Rochester, NY: University of Rochester Press, 2008), 84.
- 107 Dan Hicks, *The Brutish Museums: The Benin Bronzes, Colonial Violence and Cultural Restitution* (London: Pluto Press, 2020).
- 108 Tseng Yu, letter to Coldstream, 20 January 1955, UCL Special Collections.
- 109 See, for instance, Yiqiang Cao, *The Legacy of Ernst Gombrich in China, in Art and Mind of Ernst Gombrich Mit dem Steckenpferd unterwegs*, ed. Sybille Moser-Ernst (Göttingen: V&R Unipress, 2018), 399–406.
- 110 Partha Mitter, Oral History Interview, 3 February 2021.
- 111 Khullar, *Worldly Affiliations*, 144.
- 112 *Worlding*, or the situated-ness of world-making, takes the shift from the adjectival form world to the gerund wording in order to invoke the labour and contingency of world-making. This situated-ness, which is necessarily linked to the work of art, offers a corrective to top-down constructions of the global that fail to account for the production of multiple, sometimes competing, and often intertwined worlds. The starting point of the discourse on worlding (*welten*) has conventionally been philosopher Martin Heidegger's essay, "The Origins of the Work of Art" (1950). In the intervening years, this concept has been appropriated, expanded on, and deconstructed by thinkers from postcolonial theorist Gayatri Spivak (1985) to literary scholar Pheng Cheah, and anthropologists Marisol de la Cadena and Mario Blaser. Gayatri Spivak, "Three Women's Texts and a Critique of Imperialism", *Critical Inquiry* 12, no. 1, "Race", Writing, and Difference (Autumn 1985): 243–261; Pheng Cheah, *What Is a World? On Postcolonial Literature as World Literature* (Durham, NC: Duke University Press, 2016); and Marisol de la Cadena and Mario Blaser, *A World of Many Worlds* (Durham: Duke University Press, 2018). Our conception of worlding is informed by Ming Tiampo's participation as co-principal investigator (with Paul Goodwin) of the Trans-Atlantic Platform funded *Worlding Public Cultures* project.
- 113 A version of this comment was published in Hammad Nasar, "Opinion: In Order to be British We Must Acknowledge Our 'Indianness'", *Tate Etc.* 41 (Autumn 2017), <https://www.tate.org.uk/tate-etc/issue-41-autumn-2017/opinion-hammad-nasar-british-indianness>.
- 114 Anna Lowenhaupt Tsing, *Friction*.
- 115 For more details on the "London, Asia, Art, Worlds" conference, see Paul Mellon Centre, <https://www.paul-mellon-centre.ac.uk/research/london-asia-art-worlds-conference>.

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