



Overview

KYOTO Gathering for Asian Art Students is a three-day conference with accommodation provided, bringing together students from Southeast and East Asia to deepen their mutual understanding and their region at large within the context of the contemporary art world. The event aims to reexamine Western-centric narratives in art and provide opportunities for practical learning and meaningful connections through discussions on global art trends, individual research interests, and career pathways.

The program includes group discussions where students exchange visions and ideas, lectures by internationally acclaimed artists and curators, and excursions that offer insight into Kyoto's rich cultural and historical heritage.

Purpose

Since the 1990s, contemporary art has undergone rapid global expansion, with models of museums, art festivals, and art fairs emerging across various regions—including Asia, which has seen remarkable economic growth. At the same time, recent global disruptions such as the pandemic and ongoing political and economic instability have cast uncertainty over the future for the next generation of creators. In an age of overwhelming digital information, even imagining “what the world is” and “where we truly stand” has become increasingly difficult.

In response to this situation, the KYOTO Gathering for Asian Art Students seeks to foster real human relationships among young artists and curators, offering a space to collectively envision alternative futures.

While geographically close and historically interconnected, Southeast and East Asia are also marked by diverse languages, religions, and cultural traditions. This gathering seeks to strengthen transnational networks across the region, focusing on emerging artists and curators, and to reassess dominant narratives shaped by Euro-American art histories.

In collaboration with partner art universities primarily in Southeast and East Asia, the gathering offers an intensive setting for group discussions on shared concerns such as global affairs, artistic research, and career pathways. Internationally recognized artists and curators will also be invited to join as guest speakers, bridging the students' dialogue with professional practices in the contemporary art world.

In addition, excursions to Kyoto's cultural and historical sites will deepen participants' understanding of Japanese traditions and foster mutual appreciation among diverse Asian cultures.

This Year's Theme

“Flipping Point: Looking Back at the World from Asia”

Event Details

Dates: Wed, November 12 - Fri, November 14, 2025

Venue: Kyoto University of the Arts

Number of Participants: 30 total (15 domestic, 15 international)

Eligibility: Graduate students and 4th-year undergraduate students enrolled in art universities in Southeast Asia and East Asia.

*Domestic participants from Japan must be able to attend the kick-off meeting (hybrid format) listed below.

Kick-off Meeting: August 23, 2025, 2:00 PM - 4:00 PM

(Program) Pre-event lecture by Mami Kataoka, Director of ICA Kyoto, and orientation session.

Program Details:

Group Discussions

Over the course of two to three days, participants will engage in discussions on global art trends, individual research themes, and career pathways. These sessions will offer students the opportunity to exchange ideas and explore possible future directions.

Keynote Talks by Guest Speakers

Talk 1: An internationally acclaimed artist or curator will give a talk about their career and share insights into the current state of the art world.

Talk 2: A guest speaker will reflect on aspects of Kyoto's and Japan's historical and cultural heritage.

Kyoto Excursion

Participants will walk in small groups through Kyoto to experience the city's history and culture firsthand.

Networking Sessions

Participants will have several opportunities to connect with one another and with invited guests in open, informal settings. These sessions are designed to encourage future collaborations and help build lasting networks across the region.

How to Apply: Please complete and submit the application form.

Application Deadline: Monday, July 28, 2025

Notification of Results: Tuesday, August 5, 2025

Participation Fees: Free of charge.

For Domestic Participants>Those living in remote areas (outside the Kansai region) will receive actual transportation expenses and accommodation for 2 nights.

For International Participants>Round-trip airfare from the main airport in your country to Kansai International Airport or Itami Airport will be covered, along with accommodation for 4 nights will be provided. Visa application support will also be provided.

Organized by: ICA Kyoto, Kyoto University of Arts Graduate School

Supported by: The Japan Foundation

Inquiries Regarding Applications

info-icakyo@office.kyoto-art.ac.jp +81(0)75-791-9167 (Shimizu, Kanazawa)

Frequently Asked Questions (FAQ)

Q: How should I apply?

A: Please apply by filling out the designated application form with all required information. Please upload your portfolio or materials introducing your research and/or practice. Also, please select group discussion topics that interest you.

Q: Do I need to prepare anything in advance for the conference?

A: Yes. Participants will be asked to select a group discussion topic of interest in advance and prepare a brief self-introduction and a short presentation about their work or practice. The working language of the conference is English.

Q: How should I apply for a visa?

A: Participants are responsible for applying for and obtaining their own visas. The conference office will provide necessary support documents such as an invitation letter.

Q: Can I go sightseeing during the conference period?

A: No. During the conference, you are expected to fully participate in the program, which centers on group discussions and related activities. However, you may travel or explore on your own after the conference ends, at your own expense and responsibility.

Q: What are the selection criteria for participants?

A: Selection will be based on applicants' interests, learning goals, and motivation toward art. Regional balance will also be taken into consideration.

Q: Will participants be required to use English?

A: Yes, English will be used as the common language, as participants will come from multiple countries. However, speaking in your native language is not prohibited. All participants are encouraged to support one another by sharing and navigating across languages.

Q: Will there be any required outcomes after the conference?

A: Yes. After the conference, participants will be asked to submit a report summarizing what they learned and discussed—approximately 800 words in English or 1,500 characters in Japanese. Students aiming to become artists may choose to submit an alternative artistic response instead of a written report.

Q: Is participation in the excursion mandatory?

A: Yes. The excursion is part of the official program, and all participants are expected to take part as a group.

Q: Will meals be provided during the conference?

A: Yes.

Q: Will I receive a certificate of participation after the conference?

A: Yes, a certificate will be issued upon completion of the program.

Q: What if I don't speak Japanese?

A: That's not a problem.

Japanese is not required, but the ability to communicate in English is essential.

Q: What should I do if I cannot speak Japanese?

A: It is not a problem if you cannot speak Japanese, but communication in English will be essential.