

Leader Fellowship Programme in Japanese Arts 2025–26

The Ishibashi Foundation Network, Norwick, UK / worldwide, Oct 01, 2025

Application deadline: May 30, 2025

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The Sainsbury Institute for the Study of Japanese Arts and Cultures is delighted to announce the launch of the new Ishibashi Foundation Network Leader Fellowship Programme in Japanese Arts, generously supported by the Ishibashi Foundation. This ambitious programme aims to create an innovative network of next-generation global leaders in Japanese art studies, shaping the future of Japanese art history.

The programme is open to PhD students and early-career scholars (up to 2 years post-PhD) specialising in Japanese arts, and fields related to Japan's visual culture, from around the world and includes an online component featuring personalised mentorship and structured training, a residential programme in the UK in summer 2026, and research funding for a clearly defined individual project.

Project Summary:

Starting in 2025, the Sainsbury Institute for the Study of Japanese Arts and Cultures is establishing a programme of Ishibashi Foundation Network Leader Fellowships in Japanese Arts, offered to exceptional candidates from anywhere in the world and generously supported by the Ishibashi Foundation. In 2025–26, six Network Leader Fellows will be selected. The project will provide an innovative new model to transform how new generations of researchers engage with Japanese art, mentored by the Sainsbury Institute and drawing on our global networks.

Eligibility and Selection Criteria:

This programme is open to PhD candidates and early postdocs (up to two years post-PhD) specialising in Japanese arts, and fields related to Japan's visual culture, from anywhere in the world.

Priority will be given to scholars from regions without established centres for the study of Japanese arts (outside Western Europe, North America, and Japan), though we will consider all applications.

Scholars with exceptional academic potential, demonstrated interest in Japanese visual cultures, necessary language training, clearly defined project goals, and a vision for their future career trajectory.

What We Offer:

- Financial support for well-defined individual research projects in the amount of £7500 for the academic year 2025/26.

- Online mentoring and training sessions in the field of Japanese arts during one academic year.
- Access to the extended professional networks of the Sainsbury Institute to develop the fellow's research project and support their career development.
- One-week trip to the UK in summer 2026, to include academic programme, museum visits, and research symposium.

Examples of Possible Projects to Support:

- Pop-up exhibitions in the scholar's location and/or Norwich (applicants are responsible for securing the venue independently).
- Virtual exhibitions.
- Processing of original primary sources, from public or private collections of Japanese art in the scholar's location, which results in a defined output.
- Website or digital output.
- Academic publication.
- Local histories of Japanese art and artists, including oral art histories.
- Original creative project with focus on Japanese art histories and original research.
- An option to work on one of SISJAC's special library collections, or contribute an independent piece of research to SISJAC's ongoing research projects.

And more.

Application Materials and Deadline:

- CV (please include language skills).
- 1 letter of recommendation from home institution (PhD supervisor).
- 5-page proposal to include:

Your background and training in Japanese studies and art.

You motivation to apply for this fellowship and how your profile fits into the framework of the project.

Outline of the proposed project.

Timeline for the project.

Draft budget.

Type of support you would require from SISJAC to realise your proposed project.

Explanation of how this project will enhance the global studies of Japanese arts.

Please submit your application materials in a PDF format to sisjac@sainsbury-institute.org. Letters of recommendation should be sent directly by the referee to the aforementioned email address.

The application deadline is 30 May, with online interviews for selected candidates scheduled for June 2025 and the online programme commencing in October 2025.

The Programme will include:

- Online Training Component (October to May 2025-26) with fortnightly online sessions, consisting of networking sessions; personalised mentorship; training sessions in methodology and art history of Japan; sessions with invited speakers; and workshop sessions centred around fellows'

individual research projects.

- Residential Component in Norwich and London in July 2026, to include a public symposium with fellows' presentations on their individual research projects; talks by invited speakers; visits to selected institutions related to Japanese arts in the UK; and an opportunity for independent research.

For questions about this programme, please email sisjac@sainsbury-institute.org.

For more information, please see <https://www.sainsbury-institute.org/news/fellowships/call-for-applications-the-ishibashi-foundation-network-leader-fellowship-programme-in-japanese-arts-2025-26/>

Reference:

STIP: Leader Fellowship Programme in Japanese Arts 2025-26. In: ArtHist.net, Apr 17, 2025 (accessed Dec 15, 2025), <<https://arthist.net/archive/47271>>.