Postdoctoral Position, Japanese Art History, Kunsthistorisches Institut, Zürich

Kunsthistorisches Institut, Universität Zürich, Feb 1, 2027–Jan 31, 2030
Application deadline: Oct 31, 2026

Vera Müller

The University of Zurich is Switzerland's largest university and one of Europe's leading research universities. With approximately 10,000 employees, it offers an international environment for ambitious research and high-quality teaching.

The Chair of East Asian Art History at the University of Zurich invites applications for a postdoctoral position in Japanese Art History.

Employment level: 65%
Start date: 1 February 2027
Contract Initially three years, with the possibility of extension up to a maximum total appointment of six years, subject to University of Zurich regulations

The successful candidate will pursue an independent research project and develop their postdoctoral profile while contributing to the Chair's research, teaching, administration and academic activities.

Led by Prof. Dr. Ewa Machotka, the Chair studies the art and visual cultures of East Asia from antiquity to the present https://www.khist.uzh.ch/en/chairs/ostasien.html.
Established more than five decades ago, it is the only chair dedicated to East Asian Art History in Switzerland. The Chair fosters an environment in which independent research, collaborative studies, outreach activities and innovative teaching reinforce one another. Its research and teaching combine close engagement with objects, images and archives with critical and interdisciplinary approaches, including global and transcultural art history, museum and collecting studies, and Digital Art History. The Chair is expanding Digital Art History as an integral part of its research and curriculum. It brings art-historical questions into dialogue with computational methods while maintaining the discipline’s critical, historical, and object-based foundations. The position offers therefore an opportunity to develop a distinctive and highly competitive academic profile, strengthening the successful candidate’s prospects for a future career in academia, museums, and the broader cultural sector.

Your responsibilities
• Develop and conduct an independent postdoctoral research project in Japanese Art History leading to further academic qualification (including publications, conference presentations and competitive grant applications).

• Actively contribute to the Chair's research, teaching, and academic administration, with particular responsibility for Japanese Art History and Digital Art History.
• Teach 2-4 semester hours per week (SWS; one SWS equals 45 minutes), normally corresponding to one or two courses per semester. Teaching may include theoretical, methodological and object-based formats developed in collaboration with museums and collections.
• Contribute to the integration of digital methods into art-historical research and teaching, including the development of suitable learning formats and research resources.
• Participate actively in the intellectual and organizational life of the Chair and the Department of Art History including research projects, workshops, exhibitions, public events and international collaborations.
Your profile

Required qualifications
• A PhD in Japanese Art History or a closely related discipline, with a clearly identifiable specialization in Japenese Art History, completed or in the final stages of completion by the start date.
• A defined and original postdoctoral research project in Japanese Art History.
• A strong record of high-quality research demonstrating the potential to achieve international scholarly recognition, evidenced by publications and conference presentations appropriate to the candidate's career stage.
• A demonstrable interest in integrating digital approaches into art-historical research and teaching, evidenced through relevant experience, training, and clearly articulated plans for their use in the proposed research project and future teaching.
• Japanese-language proficiency sufficient for research with relevant primary sources.
• Excellent spoken and written English.

Desirable qualifications
• Experience of university-level teaching.
• Practical experience in the application of digital methods relevant to humanities or art-historical research. This should be demonstrated through completed research projects (incl. datasets, code), publications, teaching or other scholarly activities. Relevant approaches may include digital image analysis and computer vision, GIS and spatial analysis, network analysis, semantic modelling and linked data; corpus construction from digital repositories.
• Experience in museum or curatorial practice or collections research.
• Experience with collaborative or interdisciplinary research projects.
• Knowledge of German.

The position provides the opportunity to establish an independent postdoctoral research profile in a dynamic and internationally connected environment at the Chair of East Asian Art History and the University of Zurich (UZH). The successful candidate will become an active member of the Chair and benefit from its scholarly expertise, visiting researchers, research initiatives, museum partnerships and collaborations across Switzerland, Europe and Asia. The position offers opportunities to engage with Digital Art History in relation to Japanese art, and to develop a distinctive, internationally competitive academic profile, enhancing future career prospects.
Postdoctoral researchers at UZH have access to a broad range of career-development and research-support opportunities, including transferable-skills training, individual coaching and career counselling, internal research and mobility funding, and advice on national and internation-

al grant applications. Relevant services are provided principally through the UZH Graduate Campus, the Research and Grants Office and faculty-level structures.

UZH is committed to equal opportunities, diversity and the compatibility of academic careers with family life. Employment conditions and salary are governed by the regulations and salary scales of the University of Zurich and the Canton of Zurich.

How to apply
Please submit the following documents electronically as a single PDF by 31.10.2026.
• A letter of motivation explaining your interest in the position and how your profile aligns with the Chair's research and teaching.
• A curriculum vitae clearly outlining your research, teaching, and administrative experience, and listing your publications, publications and training and completed digital humanities projects. For collaborative projects, please include a brief statement describing your individual contribution.
• An outline of the proposed postdoctoral research project (2,000-4,000 words), including research questions, sources, methods, work plan and intended outputs.
• One academic writing sample, such as a published article, book chapter or dissertation chapter (maximum 30 pages).
• Copies of relevant academic degree certificates.
• The names, institutional affiliations and contact details of two referees. Reference letters will be requested only for shortlisted candidates.

Applications should be sent by 31.10.2026 to applications@khist.uzh.ch

Please use the subject line: Postdoctoral Position in Japanese Art History or use the Jobportal UZH for application.
Shortlisted candidates will be invited to an online interview in early December. Additional materials may be requested at a later stage.

Further information
Questions about the academic profile of the position may be directed to:
Prof. Dr. Ewa Machotka
Professor and Chair of East Asian Art History
Department of Art History
University of Zurich
Email: applications@khist.uzh.ch

Questions regarding the employment conditions, salary, or recruitment procedures may be director to:
Ms. Vera Müller-Hellstern
HR Officer
Department of Art History
University of Zurich
Email: personal@khist.uzh.ch

Reference:

JOB: Postdoctoral Position, Japanese Art History, Kunsthistorisches Institut, Zürich. In: ArtHist.net, Sep 18,

2026 (accessed Nov 9, 2026), <https://arthist.net/archive/54322>.