

AHRC Collaborative Doctoral Award

University of Birmingham, Oct 01, 2017

Deadline: Mar 24, 2017

Claire Jones

AHRC Collaborative Doctoral Award:

Where Art and Science Meet: Art and Design at Oxford University Museum of Natural History

Level of Study: Doctoral research

Subject area: History of Art

Nationality: EU, UK

Type of Award: Research Council

Deadline for applying: 24/03/2017

Award Description

The Department of Art History, Curating and Visual Studies at the University of Birmingham, is delighted to offer one AHRC Collaborative Doctoral Award with the Oxford University Museum of Natural History. This Award offers you the opportunity to pursue a fully funded PhD in art history, natural history and museology.

This research project is the first comprehensive interdisciplinary study of the Oxford University Museum of Natural History, and as such will significantly enhance our knowledge of its disciplinary and institutional history, and the role of art and design in giving those ideas material expression. Oxford University Museum of Natural History has one of the most important surviving, and under-researched, museum and university interior schemes in Britain. Its ambitious decoration includes 28 portrait statues and busts, which collectively represent a pantheon to the forefathers of natural science; decorative sculpture and ironwork illustrating the natural world; columns representative of the geology of the UK; bespoke furniture and furnishings; and murals in the geology lecture room.

Despite increasing academic interest in museums, few studies have focused on university museums. This doctoral project therefore presents a significant opportunity to consider the role of a museum and its fine art and decorative scheme in the development of scientific disciplines and university education. The project will firstly document the origins and evolution of the interior scheme. The works, both individually and collectively, raise complex questions regarding the location and function of art and design in science and education, including the role of sculpture in the construction of the scientific canon; relations between the natural world and human creativity; disciplinary interconnections and boundaries; and the communication of intellectual endeavour through the visual arts. The research is therefore inherently intra-disciplinary, and will engage with a range of related academic and curatorial discourses, including geology, botany, zoology, sculp-

ture studies, the history of collections, museology and institutional history.

The collaborative nature of the project will enable the successful student to pursue doctoral research in Art History and its intersections with the History of Science and Museology, while gaining first-hand experience within a museum setting. The student will have access to the extensive collections and archives at OUMNH, and related material at the Ashmolean and the Bodleian Libraries. They will work closely with supervisors to determine the focus of the research, establish precise research questions and methodologies, and identify relevant source material. As well as furthering our understanding of the intersections of art, design and science, museology and academia, this project will contribute to the museum's redevelopment plans by creating new ways for engaging a range of audiences in the histories of the arts and of science.

The closing date for applications is 5pm on Friday 24 March 2017

Interviews will take place at the Oxford University Museum of Natural History on Wednesday 5 April 2017.

This studentship is funded through the AHRC's Collaborative Doctoral Partnership scheme. Collaboration between a Higher Education Institution and a museum, library, archive, or heritage organisation is the essential feature of these studentships. This project will be supervised jointly by Dr Claire Jones and Professor John Holmes (University of Birmingham) and Professor Paul Smith (Oxford University Museum of Natural History) and you will be expected to spend time in both Birmingham and Oxford, as well as becoming part of the wider cohort of CDP funded students across the UK.

Informal enquires can be made by contacting Dr Claire Jones (c.jones.4@bham.ac.uk) or Professor Paul Smith (paul.smith@oum.ox.ac.uk). For general CDP-related enquiries, please contact Dr Harriet Warburton, Oxford University Museums Research Facilitator (harriet.warburton@ashmus.ox.ac.uk, tel.: 01865 278068).

Value of Award

The AHRC Collaborative Doctoral award offers you the opportunity to pursue a fully funded PhD in art history, natural history and museology, including:

- Payment of tuition fees at the UK/EU rate
- Maintenance grant/stipend. This is £14,553 per annum (for 2017 entry).

Eligibility Criteria

To be considered for this scholarship, you will need to meet the below criteria:

- Have or a first or upper-second class honours degree or equivalent.
- Have completed a masters-level qualification, or be expecting to complete this by the time you start your PhD study.
- Be a resident of the UK or European Economic Area (EEA)

In general, full studentships are available to students who are settled in the UK and have been ordi-

narily resident for a period of at least three years before the start of postgraduate studies. Fees-only awards are generally available to EU nationals resident in the EEA. International applicants are normally not eligible to apply for this studentship.

If English is not your first language, then candidates must also meet the University's English language requirements.

Applications from those who have previously studied the history of art, history of design, natural history or museology will be welcomed but these are not essential.

How to Apply

To apply, please send the following to the College of Arts and Law (CAL) Graduate School at the University of Birmingham, calpg-research@contacts.bham.ac.uk, with 'OUMNH CDP' as the email header:

- Covering letter;
- Two-page statement outlining your interest in this project and details on why you have chosen the University of Birmingham and the Oxford University Museum of Natural History; how you will apply your current skills, knowledge and experience to undertaking a PhD and completing this project; successes and achievements that are relevant to the CDP and show your aptitude for study; and how the CDP fits into your career plans;
- CV;
- Academic reference;
- Copy of your most recent academic transcript.

The CAL Graduate School will then send the paperwork received to the academic lead once the deadline has passed.

The successful applicant would then need to apply to the University of Birmingham through the admissions system. The closing date for applications is 5pm on Friday 24 March 2017. Interviews will take place at the Oxford University Museum of Natural History on Wednesday 5 April 2017.

Reference:

ANN: AHRC Collaborative Doctoral Award. In: Arthist.net, Feb 20, 2017 (accessed Jul 5, 2025), <<https://arthist.net/archive/14818>>.