

Collaborative PhD studentship with The University of Edinburgh and Tate

The University of Edinburgh and Tate, London, Oct 01, 2017

Application deadline: May 10, 2017

Susannah Worth

Tate has up to five fully funded AHRC Collaborative Doctoral Partnership (CDP) studentships to allocate each year. We are currently inviting applications for the following full-time collaborative PhD studentship:

Intermediality: The Transformation of Art and Literature in the International Avant-garde 1945–75, as Referenced in the Nimai Chatterji Archive

Principal supervisor: Prof Neil Cox (University of Edinburgh)

Second supervisors: Adrian Glew (Tate); Dean Hughes (University of Edinburgh)

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The University of Edinburgh, in partnership with Tate, is seeking to appoint a suitably qualified applicant for a full-time collaborative PhD studentship focused on the extensive archive of the literary observer and passionate collector Nimai Chatterji (1933–2010).

Housed at Tate, the newly catalogued Chatterji archive contains a wealth of documents and objects relating to international avant-garde movements in the period 1945 to 1975. The project will re-examine the post-1945 avant-garde from the perspective of Chatterji, a Bengali-born collector and broadcaster, charting his interest in 'intermedia', a phrase coined by Fluxus artist Dick Higgins to cover new art that crosses boundaries of recognised media or even fuses the boundaries of art with media. The proposed research is intended to develop a critical and historical approach to the archive, engaging with its intermedial dimensions (for example, interactions between drawing and poetry, or between painting and theatre), and will include research into experimental and modernist literature, concrete and visual poetry, and specific groupings or practices including Letrism, Oulipo, Pataphysics, Situationism and Fluxus.

The research may also reflect on Chatterji's extensive broadcasts on culture for the BBC, as well as his interest in Bengali parallels with Western intermedia art, such as the Prakalpana movement. Initially intrigued by the cross-fertilisation of ideas within modernist Indian and English literature, Chatterji – once settled in the UK and exposed to the tumult of international avant-garde movements arising in the 1950s – merged his previous interests with an examination of the current transformation of art and literature within a wider cultural vanguard. The resultant archive collection, acquired by Tate in 2006, documents chronologically this evolving and deepening engagement by individual authors, artists and groups, creating a microcosm of primary, secondary and

tertiary research materials through which the macrocosmic avant-garde can be better understood.

The partnership between Tate and Edinburgh has special significance for the intermedia aspect of this research project. In 1968 Hans Breder founded the first university programme in the United States to offer an M.F.A. in intermedia called 'The Intermedia Area' at the University of Iowa. Today the Edinburgh College of Art, part of the University of Edinburgh, is the only academic institution outside North America to offer a degree in intermedia practice (click here for more information). The expertise in this field at Edinburgh will support enquiry into the ways in which self-theorisation, publication and literary experiment in the mid-twentieth century went hand in hand with diverse forms of experimentation with visual practices, often bringing these two fields into confrontation and dialogue. Further areas that might be considered within this doctoral project include:

- Chatterji's motivations in collecting the material, and the theory of intermedia art that informed so much of his thinking and characterised the practices concerned
- the relationship between documentation and art practice
- the structures of the archive as a mediation of historical and artistic phenomena

As the archive is housed at Tate Britain, the student will spend a significant amount of time based in London. Alongside and as part of work for the dissertation, the student will undertake a number of tasks at Tate to share his or her research with a broad public. Gaining new skills and professional experience, he or she will:

- Write c.60–100 summary texts (online short texts written for a general audience) on individual items in the Chatterji archive
- Add to the current biography of Chatterji online or publishing one or more essays about the collection's genesis and importance on Tate's website
- Create a timeline documenting Chatterji's first encounters with avant-garde artists and authors.
- Enhance some Wikipedia entries relating to the artists and writers associated with the Chatterji archive.
- Generate ideas for displays and Tate Archive's 'Show and Tell' programme, open to members of the public
- Foster the engagement of ECA Intermedia BA students and MFA students through a seminar or an event (Edinburgh students will be able to attend the Tate's 'Show and Tell' event).

Entry criteria

Applications are invited from candidates with a strong academic background in the study of the history of modern art, especially the international avant-garde of the 1950s and 1960s, and with the ability or interest to engage with the history intermedial practices. Candidates should be interested in the value of archives and have a clear and engaging research proposal that can be developed through the available research supervision.

Successful applicants are expected to have a good first degree (a 1st Class or Upper 2nd Class degree, or international equivalent) in art history or a relevant field of humanities, and have obtained, or be currently working towards, a Master's degree at Merit or Distinction level or their international equivalent. An excellent command of English, both spoken and written, is essential, and it would be advantageous to have a good knowledge of one or more other languages. The

candidate should also have demonstrable ability to write about artworks for a specialist and for non-specialist audiences in an engaging and accessible way.

The award is funded through the AHRC Collaborative Doctoral Partnership programme and is subject to the AHRC's terms. It includes full-time tuition fees at the standard Home/EU rate and an annual maintenance grant. Note that overseas students are not eligible for AHRC awards (except under specific circumstances) and EU students need to assess whether they are eligible for fees and maintenance or fees only. The AHRC doctoral award does not include funds for travel but please note that the student will be able to apply for external grants that would help to enable travel in the region. Collaborative Doctoral Partnership awards provide funding for 3.5 years, including a period of six months for research training. The studentship will commence 1 October 2017.

To apply

Applications should be submitted online to the Edinburgh College of Art (please use 11 September 2017 start date for online application). The application will need to include writing samples and a research proposal of c.1000 words in length. Please also send a covering letter to the Edinburgh College of Art Postgraduate Office at ecaresearchdegrees@ed.ac.uk about your application and stating why you are applying for this particular collaborative opportunity and why you think your academic interests qualify you for this particular award.

For any queries about the application process, please email ecaresearchdegrees@ed.ac.uk. For questions relating to the doctorate please contact Professor Cox at neil.cox@ed.ac.uk or Adrian Glew at adrian.glew@tate.org.uk.

Application deadline: 10 May 2017

Interviews: 26 May 2017 at Tate Britain

Please note that candidates may be required to write a summary text as part of the interview process.

More information

The successful student will join a large cohort of PhD students across Edinburgh College of Art, including three Collaborative Doctoral Partnership award students in History of Art, as well as a thriving research community at Tate. [Click here for more information about doctoral students at Tate.](#)

For further guidance, see the AHRC Collaborative Doctoral Partnerships website: <http://www.ahrc-cdp.org/>

Reference:

STIP: Collaborative PhD studentship with The University of Edinburgh and Tate. In: ArtHist.net, Apr 27, 2017 (accessed Apr 7, 2026), <<https://arthist.net/archive/15337>>.