PhD studentship, Courtauld Institute of Art and Tate

London, Courtauld Institute of Art and Tate, Oct 01, 2018
Application deadline: May 29, 2018

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Collaborative PhD studentship Courtauld Institute of Art and Tate

Net Art East: Post-Socialist Artists' Networks and New Media

Tate and the Courtauld Institute of Art invite applications from eligible candidates for a full-time collaborative PhD studentship, funded for 3 years by the Arts and Humanities Research Council, to commence in October 2018.

The proposed doctoral research aims to break new ground in the understanding of 1990s art and networks in the former USSR, the Soviet satellite countries and former Yugoslavia by studying the effects of the internet on creative developments in countries with little institutional support for contemporary art.

Opening with a survey of the material legacy of digital art from this period (by tracing early social media such as listservs, and finding out what 'net art' still exists and in what form), this research project will adopt a comparative methodology in assessing how the critical and historical positions adopted by net art in former Eastern Europe were inflected by different experiences of post--socialism in the aftermath of so-called 'transition'. To what extent did digital culture align itself with or seek to oppose the ideological shifts that accompanied debates about neoliberalism and globalisation in different political contexts?
Much European net art of the early period, both from the former-East and from the former-West, had an activist dimension. It experimented with avant-gardism and with legacies of conceptual art, playing up collaboration across national boundaries and playing down commodity status and overt technical sophistication. It was often sceptical towards the established art world. The research seeks to address the shortage of historical perspectives on a field in which the most prominent artworks are hard to access at a time when the salience of art that engages with Internet culture is increasing.

Some of the following additional questions might be used to frame the project:
• How and why did approaches to net art differ in different national and regional contexts?
• To what extent is an 'area studies' approach compatible with the study of net art, in view of its fundamentally transnational character?
• Does it make sense to argue for the existence of a distinct 'post-socialist' net art?
• How might we shape a more equitable future for the discipline that avoids recourse to a default

tendency towards Cold War thinking?
• How significant was the Open Society Institute (the George Soros Foundation) in establishing an infrastructure for new intersections between contemporary art and new media in the region?
• How true is the standard narrative that these histories are lost (or in the process of becoming lost)?
• How might works be brought into a collection and conserved?

In addition, the student will engage with tasks at Tate that will benefit the student, the museum and the wider research community, including:
• undertaking research on artists and artworks in relation to Tate's developing collecting strategy
• preparing one or more public-facing short research feature articles about aspects of the research for publication on Tate's research web pages and summaries about individual Eastern European artworks
• contributing and helping to organise one or more workshops at Tate about this subject
• transcribing (and possibly translating) a number of agreed interviews with artists and academics that form an integral part of the research, with a view that some or all will be made publicly accessible on Tate's website.

At Tate the student will be able to draw on the expertise of a range of staff, including curatorial, time-based media conservators, as well as the broader collection care and research teams, and will gain professional insights and experience in doing so. Tate has currently over thirty doctoral students, and the successful applicant will be part of a lively student community within the museum.
Applicants are expected to show a high level of preparedness for independent research in this still little mapped field. It is desirable that the applicant is fluent in one or more languages from the region.

Principal supervisor: Prof. Julian Stallabrass (Courtauld Institute of Art)
Second supervisor: Juliet Bingham (Curator, International Art, Tate)

ENTRY CRITERIA

We invite applications from candidates with a strong academic background in modern art associated with Eastern Europe or net art, archival skills and a clear and engaging research proposal that can be developed through the available research supervision. The candidate must have an excellent command of English, both spoken and written, and it would be advantageous to have a good knowledge of one or more other languages. The candidate should show evidence of an ability to write about artworks for a specialist and for non-specialist audiences in an engaging and accessible way. Successful applicants are expected to have a good first degree (at least 2.1, or international equivalent) in a relevant field of humanities, and have obtained, or are currently working towards a Master's degree at Merit or Distinction level or international equivalent.

TO APPLY

Applications should be made by email to pgadmissions@courtauld.ac.uk at The Courtauld Institute of Art and should include the following documents as electronic attachments:

• a covering letter, stating why you are applying for this particular collaborative opportunity and why you think your academic interests qualify you for this award
• a research proposal of up to 1,000 words (max.)
• a curriculum vitae
• a transcript of your qualifications to date (and anticipated results if still studying for an MA)
• if relevant, proof of English language proficiency
• a writing sample (e.g. MA essay or dissertation; images may be omitted if the document is too large otherwise to send by email)
• contact details for two referees
Please ensure the files are labelled as follows: 'surname, first name, application component' (e.g. writing sample / CV).

Closing date for applications: 29 May 2018
Interview date: week beginning 11 June

MORE INFORMATION

If you have any queries or would like to discuss this opportunity before applying, please contact Julian Stallabrass at Julian.Stallabrass@courtauld.ac.uk.

The successful student will join a large cohort of Collaborative Doctoral Partnership award students at Tate, as well as the thriving postgraduate community at The Courtauld Institute of Art. For more information about doctoral students at Tate see http://www.tate.org.uk/about/our-work/tate-research/research-posts/studentships.

The award is subject to the AHRC's terms, to which applicants should refer before applying (see the Research Funding Guide: https://ahrc.ukri.org/documents/guides/research-funding-guide-v4-2/). The studentship is funded through the AHRC Collaborative Doctoral Partnership programme, and includes tuition fees up to the standard Home/EU amount 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. Details of current maintenance and fee rates can be found on the Current Research Awards page (https://ahrc.ukri.org/skills/phdstudents/currentawardholders/) on the AHRC website. 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.

Reference:

STIP: PhD studentship, Courtauld Institute of Art and Tate. In: ArtHist.net, May 2, 2018 (accessed Nov 7, 2026), <https://arthist.net/archive/18029>.