fully-funded AHRC PhD studentship, London

Royal Holloway, University of London, and the British Library
Application deadline: May 4, 2020

Sophie Defrance, The British Library

The British Library and Royal Holloway, University of London are delighted to offer a fully-funded Arts and Humanities Research Council (AHRC) PhD studentship (fees and living allowance) on the theme:
Caricatures from the Franco-Prussian War and the Paris Commune, 1870-71.

If successful, you will be expected to begin your studentship on 1 October 2020. Your project will be co-supervised by Robert Priest (Royal Holloway), Teresa Vernon and Sophie Defrance (British Library). You will spend time at both Royal Holloway and the British Library, and be part of a wider cohort of Collaborative Doctoral Partnership (CDP) funded students across the UK.

The British Library's collection of caricatures and printed images responding to the tumultuous events of 1870-1 provides an opportunity to explore a pivotal year in modern European history through an international frame. To what extent did artists and publicists engage with the Franco-Prussian War, Paris Commune, or even the year as a whole, as 'European' events? What can comparing French and German images and responses reveal about the way publics from warring nations engaged with the entangled histories of War and Commune? How can the histories of collecting and visual culture enrich our understanding of the emerging European public sphere?
You will develop a PhD project that draws on the British Library's collection of over 5,000 caricatures and images produced during the Franco-Prussian war and the Paris Commune. Most of these images are French and produced in Paris but there are also significant numbers of German, war-themed illustrations and caricatures. Frederick Justen, the owner of booksellers Dulau and Co, who was of German origin and possibly of Huguenot descent, donated the main part of this collection to the British Museum Library in 1889. The forthcoming 150th anniversary of the Franco-Prussian war and the Paris Commune in 2020-21 offers us the chance to promote and foster research and teaching based on this exceptional collection of primary material.

Students will be invited to propose a project that uses one or more of the following themes to bring this rich collection into a wider European context:

- Prints as sources for a Franco-German history of 1870-1. It is well-established that the French and German nations were often defined in contrast to one another in the period after 1871. How important was popular printed imagery to the development of conflicting national identities? This collection also permits the exploration of neglected themes. For example, the German images contain a wealth of often racially stereotyped representations of colonial troops in the French Army, a subject that has been explored more for 1914-18 than for this period.

- The international public for printed satire. To what extent can we use traces and provenances of the images in the British Library's collection, alongside archival sources and other similar collections (e.g. Cambridge, Victoria & Albert Museum, and Heidelberg), to reconstruct the history of exchange and dissemination of visual news in the 1870s-'80s? How far can we use Justen's collection and other collections of material related to the Franco-Prussian War and the Commune to understand the market for European news in late nineteenth-century London?
- Collection history. We know relatively little about Frederick Justen, the collector of the British Library's formidable caricature collection, but he was a thoroughly transnational figure. How far might Justen's collecting practice itself be understood as a form of history? To what extent did Justen pursue materials to understand how different European national artists and publics interpreted and satirised the tumult of 1870-1? How did Justen share the collections he had formed, for example through the 'Literary Gossip' column in The Athenaeum?
Through the exploration of one or more of these strands, the aim will be to bring the distinctive role of visual culture, caricature and collecting into dialogue with the latest research agenda in transnational European history.

Benefits and Opportunities
The successful candidate will be hosted by the Department of History at Royal Holloway, which has an excellent research reputation, an active postgraduate community, and a Doctoral School that delivers a wide range of training opportunities through its a Researcher Development Programme. You will also have a substantial presence at the British Library over the course of the project. At the British Library, you will sit with the other CDP students within the European and Americas collections department. You will become part of a vibrant cohort of collaborative doctoral researchers and benefit from staff-level access to British Library collections, resources and training programmes, including the opportunity to participate in courses run by the in-house Digital Scholarship Team. You will also benefit from the dedicated programme of professional development and networking events delivered by the Library in tandem with the other museums, galleries and heritage organisations affiliated with the AHRC CDP scheme.

Through this scheme, you will have the opportunity to work behind the scenes of a major cultural institution. This is a unique opportunity to gain transferable research skills, for example by preparing web guides, using social media, writing posts for the Library's European Studies Blog, and organising events. If you wish to develop professional skills in order to support your understanding of the material in the library environment, you will have the opportunity to contribute to the Library's digitisation and cataloguing processes. Beyond the Library, the CDP student will have the opportunity to work with other institutions to compare the different sets of caricatures held in the UK.

Funding Notes
This doctoral training grant is funded through the AHRC's Collaborative Doctoral Partnership (CDP) scheme, which offers doctoral studentships as part of a collaboration between a Higher Education Institution and an organisation in the museums, libraries, archives and heritage sector. The studentship is fully funded for 3 years and 9 months full-time or part-time equivalent, with the potential to be extended by a further 3 months to provide additional professional development opportunities. Overall, a minimum of 3 and up to 6 months of the total funded period will be spent on professional development.

Through the doctoral grant held by Royal Holloway, the student will receive a stipend at standard UKRI London rates. For the academic year 2020-1 this will be £17,885, consisting of £15,285 basic stipend, a CDA maintenance payment of £600 and £2,000 London Weighting. In addition, the British Library will provide a research allowance directly to the student for agreed research-related costs of up to £1,000 a year.

How to Apply
To apply for this studentship, you must submit an online application via Royal Holloway's postgraduate application portal by 5pm on Monday 4 May 2020. Applications received after this date cannot be considered.

When completing the form:

- For ‘Course Details’: select ‘Postgraduate Research’ and then the following course: ‘PhD History 2020/21’.
- For ‘Supporting Statements’: please upload PDF files rather than use the text boxes. For the Research Proposal (750 words), outline how you will develop an original PhD project based around this collection. You can use the strands suggested above as a model. For the Personal Statement (500 words), you should explain your reasons for applying for this studentship. Please refer to your academic qualifications and interests, and also provide brief details of your language skills.
- For ‘Potential Supervisor’: put ‘Dr Robert Priest’.
- For ‘How are you paying your fees?’: you must select ‘Royal Holloway Advertised Studentship’, write ‘AHRC CDP BL Caricatures’ and specify ‘Not yet awarded’.
- You will need to provide details of 2 references.

We are keen to encourage applications from a wide range of candidates with suitable qualifications and/or experience. All applicants should have either a Master’s degree in a relevant discipline or equivalent experience. Relevant disciplines include, but are not limited to, History, Art History and French Studies. Equivalent experience might include, but is not restricted to, a strong track record of employment in a library, museum, or heritage institution, that includes responsibility for relevant archival research, collections curation, and/or public engagement activity. A good reading knowledge of French is essential for this studentship, and a reading knowledge of German would be desirable.

Applicants must satisfy the standard UKRI eligibility criteria. To be eligible for a full award, non-British nationals should normally have been resident in the UK for 3 years immediately prior to the date of the start of the course. EU students not resident in the UK for 3 years prior to 30 September 2020 may be eligible for a fees-only award. Please see Annex B of the UKRI Training Grant Guidance to confirm eligibility before applying.

Shortlisted candidates will be invited to interviews at Royal Holloway in the week beginning 1 June 2020.

Informal Enquiries
To discuss the project further, potential candidates are very welcome to contact Robert Priest (robert.priest@rhul.ac.uk), Teresa Vernon (teresa.vernon@bl.uk) and Sophie Defrance (sophie.de-

france@bl.uk) in advance of submitting an application.

Reference:
STIP: fully-funded AHRC PhD studentship, London. In: ArtHist.net, Apr 6, 2020 (accessed Nov 1, 2026), <https://arthist.net/archive/22952>.