

Postdoc in (Technical) Art History, Utrecht University

Utrecht University

Application deadline: Nov 11, 2020

Marjolijn Bol

Postdoc in (Technical) Art History (0.8 -1.0 FTE, 3 years)

The Postdoc will work within the research programme Dynamics of the Durable: A History of Durability in the Visual and Decorative Arts (DURARE). DURARE is funded by the European Research Council, by way of a Starting Grant awarded to principal investigator Dr Marjolijn Bol. You will be based at Utrecht University and as such will also be part of the Department of History and Art History, section Art History. DURARE will undertake the first comprehensive study of the impact of the artisan and patron's ambitions to craft, own and theorize durable objects on the long-term development of the visual and decorative arts in the West. To understand the history of durability in art, this research programme investigates how artisans explored ways to make art objects durable and what determined the desire of patrons to order and own durable art objects.

DURARE thus investigates the changing ideas and expectations about:

- 1) the acquisition of art: ideas about how an art object might survive in the future;
- 2) the making of art: what materials and techniques were used for this purpose?
- 3) the owning of art: what social practices and institutions were designed for an object's survival?

The research programme will investigate the history of durability in art by integrating methodologies typical for the humanities and historical disciplines with historically informed reconstructions made in the project's laboratory. We will use historical reconstructions as a historical-analytical tool to fill the gaps between the historical act of making, and the art objects and the textual sources that describe these actions or are the products thereof.

We offer a position for a Postdoctoral Researcher on the project Materials Aging and the Science of Permanent Arts, 1750-1950. Under the influence of the industrial revolution, the problem of durability in art became especially pressing for artists and their patrons in the period between the late eighteenth and the first decades of the twentieth century.

This project will investigate how scientists began to study the aging properties of paints and coating materials to help contemporary artists and restorers understand the relative permanency of the materials produced by the industry. It will chart historical scientific studies into the chemical stability of artist's materials; discussions about their adulterations and how to test for these; and theories about the effect of preparation and workmanship on permanence (e.g. mechanical vs manual grinding, incompatible mixtures, etc.). Further, it will study if and how the results and insights from science were used by artists, and/or were incorporated in their art technical treatises. To this end, this subproject will explore printed and digital editions of artist's journals, hand-

books, instruction manuals, letters, patents, compendia on the arts and the host of periodical publications on the materials, techniques and chemistry of artists' materials that started appearing in the course of the nineteenth and twentieth centuries.

The Postdoctoral Researcher will work closely together with the PI and the other Researchers in the ERC project in Utrecht. The Postdoc will have the opportunity to fill in or expand on the project, based on her/his expertise, and in consultation with the PI.

Offer

We offer a temporary position (0.8 - 1.0 FTE) for a period of one year. In case of good performance, employment will be extended with 2 years. The gross salary - depending on previous qualifications and experience - ranges between €3,353 and €5,127 (scale 10/11 according to the Collective Labour Agreement Dutch Universities) per month for a full-time employment. Salaries are supplemented with a holiday bonus of 8% and a year-end bonus of 8.3% per year. In addition, Utrecht University offers excellent secondary conditions, including an attractive retirement scheme, (partly paid) parental leave and flexible employment conditions [external link](#) (multiple choice model). More information about working at Utrecht University [external link](#) can be found [here](#).

For more information and to apply, see: <https://www.uu.nl/en/organisation/working-at-utrecht-university/jobs/postdoc-in-technical-art-history-08-10-fte>

Reference:

JOB: Postdoc in (Technical) Art History, Utrecht University. In: Arthist.net, Oct 24, 2020 (accessed Sep 17, 2025), <<https://arthist.net/archive/23778>>.