

Doctoral Studentship, V&A Museum / Courtauld Institute of Art, London

Oct 01, 2026

Application deadline: Apr 24, 2026

Felix Jäger

The Victoria and Albert Museum and the Courtauld Institute are pleased to announce the availability of a fully funded collaborative doctoral studentship from 1 October 2026 under the AHRC's Collaborative Doctoral Partnerships (CDP) scheme. The dissertation project is expected to focus on a selection of Paduan Renaissance bronzes from the V&A's collection, about which the successful candidate will write extended research-based catalogue entries and a critical essay that contextualises and interprets them as products of the specific artistic culture of the city of Padua.

This project will be jointly supervised by Dr Rachel Boyd and Dr Kira d'Albuquerque at the Victoria and Albert Museum and by Prof. Guido Rebecchini and Dr Felix Jaeger at the Courtauld Institute. The student will be expected to spend time at both the Courtauld Institute and the Victoria and Albert Museum, as well as becoming part of the wider cohort of CDP funded students across the UK.

Project Overview

This project investigates a corpus of about 40 fifteenth- and early sixteenth-century small-scale bronze sculptures from Padua, Italy, in the V&A. Padua was home to some of the most creative and original artists experimenting with this genre, including Andrea Riccio (c.1470-1532) and Severo da Ravenna (active by 1496, died before 1543). Encompassing statuettes and practical objects (e.g. lamps, inkstands, salt cellars), these diminutive but sophisticated artworks challenge common artistic categories and have received relatively little scholarly attention. They are often noted for their obscure iconography and idiosyncratic renderings of antiquity and folklore, fantastical creatures, non-normative bodies and genders, and erotic content. Considered abject or grotesque, these objects manifest a severely under-researched 'anti-classical' tradition that points beyond the Renaissance canon.

In contrast to the elite production of northern Italian courts – for instance, that of Antico (1460-1528) in Mantua – innovative approaches to metalworking emerged in Padua, where material and design experimentation was facilitated by the city's vibrant university and intellectual ebullience. Building upon important new work in this field, which frames Paduan bronzes as early examples of life-casting technologies, the post graduate researcher will investigate the artisanal knowledge of bronze casting and the human-animal iconographies of Paduan bronzes, exploring connections with disability, animal, and environmental studies. Grounding their findings in close observation and archival study, the researcher will catalogue this portion of the V&A's collections, exploring new approaches to cataloguing as well as inclusive display strategies that make these

remarkable sculptures more accessible to a range of audiences.

Details of Award

CDP doctoral training grants fund full-time studentships for 4 years or part-time equivalent up to a maximum of 8 years. Tuition fees will be covered for home or international students. The successful applicant will be required to reside in the UK until completion of the PhD.

The award pays an annual stipend for all students, both home and international students. This stipend is tax-free, and is the equivalent of an annual salary, enabling the student to pay living costs. The UKRI Minimum Doctoral Stipend for 2026/2027 is £21,805* plus London Weighting of £2,000/year. There is also a CDP maintenance payment of £600 per year. (These figures may be subject to change for subsequent years after 2026/2027.) For full details on the studentship, the award, eligibility, and reasonable adjustments, please consult the Courtauld Institute website at the following link: <https://courtauld.ac.uk/explore-our-courses/postgraduate/ph-d-funding-and-scholarships/>

Make sure to read this information carefully before applying.

The application deadline is 24 April 2026. Interviews will take place on the mornings of Tuesday 12 May and Wednesday 13 May 2026.

Any candidates considering applying should feel welcome to contact the supervisors, Guido Rebecchini (guido.rebecchini@courtauld.ac.uk), Felix Jäger (felix.jaeger@courtauld.ac.uk), or Rachel Boyd (r.boyd@vam.ac.uk), if they have any further questions about the project.

For questions about submitting an application please contact pgadmissions@courtauld.ac.uk.

Reference:

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