PhD Scholarship Aberdeen

Application deadline: Jun 6, 2014

Amy Bryzgel, University of Aberdeen

PhD Title: Documenting Performance Art in Central and Eastern Europe, c. 1960-1989

Elphinstone PhD Scholarship: This scholarship covers the entirety of tuition fees for a PhD student of any nationality commencing full-time study in October 2014, for the three-year duration of their studies.

This project takes as its focus the documentation and dissemination of performance art from the former communist and socialist countries of Central, Eastern and Southern Europe, from the period of c. 1960-1989. Performance art in the West emerged as a self-conscious genre, and a deliberate alternative to the production of painting and sculpture for display in the gallery space. However, in Eastern Europe, artists such as Jiří Kovanda (Czechoslovakia), Andris Grīnbergs (Latvia), and Ion Grigorescu (Romania) often created performance art for a select group of friends and colleagues, and even sometimes only for themselves. If in the West, documentation was often an essential component of performance art, and necessary to exhibit the work in the gallery, in the East, the recording of performances, by video or photography, was more haphazard. At times, artists were intent on documenting their work for posterity, in the hope that someday, somewhere (outside of the totalitarian regime) it would have an audience. At others, photographs were taken simply as a record, without any thought that they would ever be seen.

While Peggy Phelan (1998) has argued that the documentation of a performance can in no way serve as a substitute for having witnessed it, this PhD project will seek to challenge that contention by nuancing understandings of the documentation of performance art in the Soviet bloc during the Cold War era. By examining the function of the recording and (after regime change at the end of the 1980s) dissemination of the work on the understanding and reception of performance art in the region, the study will explore what it means to document these ephemeral works merely as evidence that they occurred, instead of as an art object in its own right. How does this change the function of the photograph or video and its status as an art object? How does it change the relationship between performance and audience, and with what consequences? Projects that employ a comparative method, engaging several countries across Eastern Europe, are particularly welcome.

Supervisor 1 – Dr Amy Bryzgel
Supervisor 2 – Professor Edward Welch

How to Apply:

To apply for an Elphinstone PhD Scholarship, you should apply for a PhD place in the normal way:

http://www.abdn.ac.uk/study/postgraduate/apply.php, stating:
- 'Elphinstone PhD Scholarship' in the Intended Source of Funding section
- The name of the lead supervisor in the Name of Proposed Supervisor section
- The title of the specific research project in the Outline Summary section

Candidates should simultaneously register their desire to be considered by emailing the Graduate School Administrator, Ann Marie Johnston, at a.m.johnston@abdn.ac.uk.
The date by which the above should be undertaken is Friday 6 June 2014. Selection will be made on the basis of academic merit.

More information on this project:
http://www.abdn.ac.uk/cass/graduate/history-of-art-338.php

More information on Elphinstone PhD Scholarships:
http://www.abdn.ac.uk/cass/graduate/elphinstone-phd-scholarships-329.php

Reference:
STIP: PhD Scholarship Aberdeen. In: ArtHist.net, Apr 15, 2014 (accessed Nov 9, 2026), <https://arthist.net/archive/7463>.