AHRC Collaborative Doctoral Partnership Award (London)

London
Application deadline: May 17, 2015

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The Courtauld Institute of Art and Tate

AHRC Collaborative Doctoral Partnership Award - commencing October 2015

Research Project: Reporting the Revolution: The Artist as Witness, Critic and Propagandist for the 1917 Revolution in Russia

The Courtauld Institute of Art in partnership with Tate invites applications for a PhD studentship fully-funded for three years by the Arts and Humanities Research Council to commence in October 2015.

This doctoral research project focuses on the visual history of the Russian Revolution and its aftermath, especially how its impact, propagation and celebration were pictured. The primary resource will be the unrivalled David King Collection formed over the last forty years and newly acquired by Tate. The variety of the collection provides many avenues for investigating the troubled history of the Soviet Union through different registers and media, and contrasting the optimism of official propaganda with the actuality revealed through documentation. Histories of artistic activities in the period have tended to continue a long-held fascination with the avant-garde alongside the complex politics of the revolutionary moment. The range of source material available invites a re--consideration of these narratives bringing them closer to the first-hand experience of the public consumption of posters, illustrated newspapers, periodicals and limited editions, prints and drawings as well as a rich archive of photographs.

Candidates should have a strong interest in modern art from Russia and the Soviet Union. Ability to read in Russian at a scholarly level is essential and familiarity with other languages of the region advantageous. It is also desirable that candidates should have a strong grounding in the visual culture or political histories of the region, and experience with independent archival research

The PhD supervisors are Dr Klara Kemp-Welch (Courtauld Institute of Art) and Dr Matthew Gale (Curator, Modern Art, & Head of Displays, Tate Modern). The student will examine the David King collection within Tate's collection, library and archive, utilising the museum's records, as part of his or her thesis. The student will also produce forty summary texts about individual artworks for publication on Tate's website, following existing guidelines. Such texts will relate closely to the themes and areas that the student is researching, and should form the basis for display and in-

-gallery texts. The experience of writing for a broad public about the works will provide valuable training. The student will be asked to share research findings with staff at Tate, both informally and formally, through seminars and a range of possible publishing outcomes with Tate.

Further Particulars
The David King collection has immense potential for opening up as yet untold histories.The 1917 revolution will be either the focal point of the project or serve as a fulcrum within a wider project devoted to some or all of the period 1905-1928, ending with the inception of Stalin's first Five Year Plan, which entailed strong new directives for media, even before socialist realism was introduced as official orthodoxy. More extended periods might also be considered in those cases where the strengths of the collection make a proposal for extension justified. Some of the following questions might frame the proposed thesis:

- What were the roles of individual image producers, such as Dimitri Moor, Viktor Deni and Nikolai Kogout, in the service of mass society?
- What was the role of commissioners of posters in the centralised directing of propaganda during, for example, the Civil War?
- What was the impact of posters as reported through other media and what was the role of ephemeral media as a vehicle for public debate and transformation of popular values?
- How should the mass production of imagery and message in the service of political expediency be assessed (in particular, was the concept of mass production illusory in relation to, for example, stenciled posters)?
- How can the complex negotiations between producers and consumers of propaganda be reframed to produce a more nuanced understanding of ideological messaging today? How did certain images migrate across media?
- What is the relationship between word and image in the posters? Did the words verbalise the image or illustrate the slogan?
- How best to analyse how the febrile birth of the new society was reflected in the ways in which a distant future was imagined.
- What were the visual manifestations of political ruptures c.1917?
- What does the history of ephemeral objects and materials in pre- and post-revolutionary periods tell us about the hierarchies of culture within visual histories of the Soviet Union?
- How innovative were the systems developed for the circulation of different media at different times?
- To what extent was the mass produced image geographically specific? How far were perceived local purposes universalised?

In pursuing these or other possibilities, the researcher is expected to elucidate fresh cultural constellations, reposition neglected artists and designers, and foster a nuanced understanding of the historical relationships between the design, dissemination and reception of print media and propagandising material before, during, and after the 1917 Revolution.

We are particularly keen to encourage innovative approaches to the material and to the historical period itself, as witnessed through this material. A key aim is to think about how and why ephemeral media might tell different stories from those found in literature, painting, sculpture or cinema. We welcome proposals that cut across disciplines and explore intersections between design

and art across the revolutionary divide. In this respect the student will be encouraged to take a comparative approach to the material, studying how certain themes running through different parts of the collection are differently inflected in different media and/or time periods and /or by different producers. In addition to working comparatively within the framework of the collection, the student will explore related material in other national collections in London, especially the Russian book collection of the British Library and the White Russian poster collection at the V&A, which provide points of contrast and comparison, as well as materials in Russian and US collections, where relevant. The student will be expected to consider critically the materiality of the documents, and will develop her/his own methodological approach in close consultation with the supervisors.

Entry criteria
We invite applications from candidates with a strong academic background in modern art from Russia and the Soviet Union, showing evidence of archival research skills and a clear and engaging research proposal that can be developed through the available research supervision. The candidate must have excellent command of English, spoken and written, and show evidence of an ability to write about artworks for a specialist and non-specialist audiences in an engaging and accessible way. The successful candidate would also have advanced reading ability in Russian.

Successful applicants would be 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 Masters degree at Merit or Distinction level, or international equivalent.

Please note that the award is subject to the AHRC's terms, to which applicants should refer before applying (see the AHRC's Research Funding Guide: http://www.ahrc.ac.uk/SiteCollectionDocuments/Training%20Grant%20Funding%20Guide%202014-15.pdf

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 on the AHRC website (http://www.ahrc.ac.uk/Funding-Opportunities/Postgraduate-funding/Pages/Current-award-holders.aspx)

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.

If you have any queries or would like to discuss this opportunity before applying, please contact Dr Kemp-Welch, klara.kemp-welch@courtauld.ac.uk or Dr Gale at Tate matthew.gale@tate.org.uk

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 in either MS Word or PDF format:

- A covering letter, stating why you are applying for this opportunity and why you think your aca-

demic interests qualify you for this award.
- A research proposal of 1,000 words in length.
- A curriculum vitae.
- A transcript of your qualifications to date (and anticipated results if still studying for an MA).
- 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.

Note: Please ensure the files are labelled as follows: 'surname, first name, application component (e.g. writing sample / CV).

Further details are on http://www.courtauld.ac.uk/vacancies/2015/DoctoralAward/index.shtml

Closing Date: 17 May 2015
Interview Date: 29 May 2015, at Tate Modern

Reference:
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