Venice Art Biennale 2017: Steward-Research Fellowships

The British Council is inviting applications for Steward-Research Scholarships to take place during the Venice Art Biennale 2017.

Successful candidates will spend a maximum of 31 days in Venice. They will work four days per week as an invigilator in the British Pavilion with the remaining time used for study and research around the theme, *Viva Arte Viva*. Fellows will receive a grant of £1,600 to cover travel, accommodation and living costs.

BACKGROUND

The 57th Venice Art Biennale will run from 13 May to 26 November 2017 (10 – 12 May for the preview, with the first group of Fellows arriving for induction on Monday 8 May).

Established in 1895, the Biennale Foundation is one of the most prestigious cultural institutions in the world and attracts an attendance today of over 300,000 visitors to its annual events. The Biennale takes place in two official sites in Venice: the Arsenale, which hosts the international exhibition, and the Giardini di Castello in the east of the city, which houses the national pavilions including the British Pavilion.

The director for 2017 is Christine Macel who has set the theme: *Viva Arte Viva*. Macel had described the theme as an exclamation, an expression of the passion for art and for the state of the artist. *Viva Arte Viva* is a Biennale designed with the artists, by the artists and for the artists. It deals with the forms they propose, the questions they pose, the practices they develop and the forms of life they choose. This year, the British Council and nominated selection panel is supporting Phyllida Barlow to show in the British Pavilion.

VENICE STEWARD-RESEARCH FELLOWSHIPS

For the Venice Art Biennale 2017, the British Council in partnership with art and architecture schools and institutions from around the UK is organising the third Venice Fellowships programme. (Full details can be found in the pdf brochure *Venice Fellowships* from 2016 Architecture Biennale).

Students and volunteers of programme partners will be entitled to apply for one of 50 Steward-Research Fellowships provided they meet specific eligibility conditions laid out by the Venice Fellowships partner schools and institutions (see below).

Successful candidates will spend up to 31 days in Venice as part of a group of up to nine individuals responsible for invigilating the British Pavilion and taking part in a dedicated study/research programme.

STEWARD-INVIGILATION

The British Council owns the British Pavilion in Venice, commissions the exhibitions for the art and architecture biennales, and has responsibility for maintaining the building and safeguarding exhibitions.

For the duration of the biennale we entrust safeguarding the exhibition to the care of the stewards, supervised at long distance by the British Council in London, by staff in the British Council Rome office, and by the British Pavilion Manager and British Pavilion Head Steward based in Venice.

For four days of the week, fellows will work on a rota system to steward the pavilion, with the remaining days dedicated to research and study.

STUDY-RESEARCH

At a biennale placing increased emphasis on learning and research, successful candidates will spend three days per week undertaking study and research.

We anticipate contributions to a research programme devised to tie in with the biennale theme of *Viva Arte Viva* with core themes shaped by Phyllida Barlow’s approach and practice, and will ask fellows to consider site specific art and its production. Fellows will devise a research proposal in advance of their travel to Venice, to receive feedback from the exhibition curators and the British Council Arts.
In consultation with their academic institution, some candidates may wish to use this study opportunity to contribute to academic work, such as an existing project or a dissertation – although there is no obligation to do so.

The research is intended to be cumulative and a selection of research will be made publicly available at the end of the programme as an important contribution to the global research project represented by the Biennale and the British Council’s Venice archive.

TIMING & LOGISTICS
The Biennale opens with pre-preview on 9 May with the Vernissage on 10, 11 and 12 May. The exhibition is open to the general public from 13 May until 26 November 2017.

Successful applicants will be responsible for making their own travel, accommodation and insurance arrangements. They will be given a payment of £1,600 for the month towards these and other expenses while in Venice.

INDUCTION
Selected candidates will attend an induction afternoon in London during the summer, where practical training will be provided on invigilation duties. Information will be provided to help prepare for the study aspects of the fellowship.

RESPONSIBILITIES

Invigilation responsibilities
- Circulating inside and invigilating the Pavilion paying special attention to delicate or interactive exhibits
- Ability to discuss the exhibition with press and professional visitors
- Maintaining a front desk; selling exhibition catalogues, bags and other exhibition related materials
- Book keeping; banking and stock control
- Condition reporting of exhibits
- Weekly reports back to London and to the British Pavilion Head Steward
- Light cleaning and general upkeep of the Pavilion
- Liaison with Venice Biennale staff, caretaker and cleaners
- Capturing audience feedback
- Monitoring visitor numbers
- Opening and locking up the Pavilion
- Any other duties as required

Study Programme responsibilities
- Attend induction in summer 2017
- At least one month prior to your departure for Venice, submit a one page brief setting out what you would like to research and how you will achieve your objectives within the 12 days available for study. (Please note, this brief should not be written as part of this application)
- In Venice, undertake a short piece of site-specific or archival research that contributes to the Viva Arte Viva research programme
- Exercise due care and attention when using archives, libraries, or any other facilities made available to you under the fellowship programme
- Where the invigilation rota allows, attend any lectures and talks arranged under this programme
- Within one month of your return, submit a short (maximum 2000 words) written and illustrated essay detailing your fellowship research, findings and conclusions. Other formats of research presentation are encouraged and will be considered in addition or in place of a written piece, but should be discussed and agreed in advance with the British Council team
- Disseminate the results of your Fellowship widely, ensuring you and your institution achieve the maximum benefit of the fellowship

APPLICATION CRITERIA

This opportunity will suit confident, reliable and trust-worthy candidates. Working as part of a self-sufficient team is essential; stewards are responsible for the care of the exhibition on a daily basis and must be confident in this task. Applications should demonstrate that candidates have high levels of initiative and problem solving.

Candidates should have an interest in art, architecture and culture and an interest in gaining experience of exhibition work and public programming or project work. Some knowledge of Italian is desirable but not essential.

Candidates must be ready to work long invigilation hours (10.00 – 18.00 daily), four days a week. The Biennale (Giardini and Arsenale) is closed on Mondays.

Applicants should be available for the Venice tour: 29 October – 26 November 2017
Candidates should convincingly demonstrate their suitability with reference to the responsibilities and criteria outlined above, and also demonstrate their interest in and some knowledge of the biennale theme of *Viva Arte Viva* and the exhibiting artists.

**WHO CAN APPLY?**

Fellowships are open to students that are currently studying or volunteering at one of the Venice Fellowships 2017 partner institutions.

No application can be accepted by the British Council without prior approval by a valid partner institution.

**SELECTION PROCESS**

Birkbeck College, University of London will in the first instance check all applications received for eligibility and forward nominations (approximately four) to the British Council.

The British Council will interview shortlisted candidates. The interviews will take place in London in early June. Should you be selected for interview you will receive at least one week advance notification.

The decision of the British Council is final. Successful applicants (hopefully two) will be notified by the end of June 2017.

**HOW TO APPLY**

To apply for a position please send to Celia Hatton, c.hatton@bbk.ac.uk, a completed application form and a one-page CV.

The closing date for applications is 31 May 2017, 5pm.

If you have any questions relating to the fellowship programme or application process, please email Laura Broderick, the Venice Fellowships Programme Manager at the British Council, laura.broderick@britishcouncil.org, or Dr. Kate Retford, Head of History of Art, who is overseeing the application process in the School of Arts (k.reford@bbk.ac.uk).

**Key Documents**


Venice Fellowships Brochure 2016

Venice Fellowships Application Form

**Useful Websites**

[www.britishcouncil.org/arts](http://www.britishcouncil.org/arts)

[www.britishcouncil.org/venicebiennale](http://www.britishcouncil.org/venicebiennale)