



National
Portrait
Gallery

AHRC Collaborative Doctoral Partnership (CDP) studentship:

Slave-ownership and the National Portrait Gallery, London

Start date: 1 October 2020 [or later, depending on situation]

Application Deadline: Wednesday 3 June 2020, 2pm

Interviews will take place online on Tuesday 16 June, 2020

Birkbeck and the National Portrait Gallery are pleased to announce the availability of a fully funded collaborative doctoral studentship through the REACH Consortium from October 2020 under the AHRC's [Collaborative Doctoral Partnership Scheme](#).

This project examines the links between the National Portrait Gallery and historical transatlantic slavery. In particular, it seeks to understand the impact of wealth derived from slavery on its founders, donors, and the sitters represented in its portraits, thus acknowledging a history that has long remained hidden.

This project will be jointly supervised by Dr Sarah Thomas and Dr Lucy Peltz and the student will be expected to spend time at both Birkbeck and the National Portrait Gallery, as well as becoming part of the wider cohort of CDP funded students across the UK.

Project Overview

The National Portrait Gallery (NPG) was founded in 1856 to collect portraits of those people who made a notable contribution to British history. By closely scrutinising the early history of one particular institution – its personnel, and the collecting choices of its trustees – through the lens of slave-ownership and its profits, this project will have broad implications for the wider museum sector, exploring in particular issues of national identity and the ethics of funding that have particular currency in today's decolonising debates.

The studentship will offer access to the NPG's expertise and collections, working with a range of colleagues under the direction of Dr Lucy Peltz, Head of Collection Displays (Tudor to Regency) and Senior Curator 18th Century Collections. This is a particularly timely moment for a research project of this nature as the Gallery will be in the process of developing *Inspiring People*, a major refurbishment and redisplay of its collection which will see the Gallery relaunch in 2023 as an exciting public cultural space in which to participate, challenge and debate British history, culture and contemporary life. Consequently, this research project's focus and findings will contribute to the Gallery's stated commitment to increasing

institutional transparency and raising important questions about the legacies of empire in British society today.

Research questions

The student will be encouraged to pursue their own original enquiries, situating their thesis within research questions and areas of interest that will include some or all of the following:

- Which of the NPG's founders, donors and sitters had direct links with the transatlantic slave trade?
- What was the nature of these links?
- Are there references to slavery that can be identified in the NPG collection?
- To what extent were the foundation, direction and collections of the NPG influenced by the proceeds of transatlantic slavery?
- How does this history resonate across Britain's cultural sector, past and present?
- What methods might the NPG adopt to articulate and reflect upon the role of the slavery-based economy in the formation and communication of Britain's cultural heritage?
- What implications might this have for other art museums and heritage organisations in Britain?

Placement Opportunities

Alongside training provided by Birkbeck, University of London and the National Portrait Gallery, sector-specific training will be offered through the consortium of museums, galleries and heritage organisations affiliated with the AHRC CDP scheme.

The CDP funding model encourages professional development. During the course of the studentship the student will have the opportunity to undertake a placement at the NPG and to contribute to several interrelated projects:

- research, administration and interpretation development for *Inspiring People*
- identifying links between the collection and the profits from slavery to be integrated into the Gallery's interpretation of sitters both on display and accessible primarily through the website
- helping research and develop proposals underway for future display and exhibition opportunities.
- organising a one-day workshop with the REACH consortium (NPG, British Film Institute, Historic Royal Palaces, National Trust, Royal Museums Greenwich) on approaches to museum decolonisation and the impact of slave ownership on REACH institutions.

Details of Award

CDP doctoral training grants fund full-time studentships for 45 months (3.75 years) or part-time equivalent. The studentship has the possibility of being extended for an additional 3

months to provide professional development opportunities, or up to 3 months of funding may be used to pay for the costs the student might incur in taking up professional development opportunities.

The award pays tuition fees up to the value of the full-time home/EU UKRI rate for PhD degrees. Research Councils UK Indicative Fee Level for 2020/21 is £4,407.

The award pays full maintenance for UK citizens and residents only. The National Minimum Doctoral Stipend for 2020/21 is £15,285, plus a CDP maintenance payment of £600/year plus London Weighting of £2,000/year.

Further details can be found on the UKRI website:

<https://www.ukri.org/skills/funding-for-research-training/>

The student is eligible to apply for additional travel and related expenses during the course of the project courtesy of the National Portrait Gallery worth up to £850 per year for 3.75 years (45 months).

The project can be undertaken on a full-time or part-time basis.

Eligibility

- This studentship is open to UK/EU students who meet the residency requirements set out in the UKRI Conditions of Research Council Training Grants: <https://www.ukri.org/funding/information-for-award-holders/grant-terms-and-conditions/>
- We want to encourage the widest range of potential students to study for a CDP studentship and are committed to welcoming people from BAME backgrounds to apply.
- Applicants should ideally have or expect to receive a relevant Masters-level qualification, or be able to demonstrate equivalent experience in a professional setting. Suitable disciplines are flexible, but might include Art History, Museum Studies, or History.
- Applicants must be able to demonstrate an interest in the museum sector and potential and enthusiasm for developing skills more widely in related areas.
- As a collaborative award, students will be expected to spend time at both the University and the National Portrait Gallery.

NB. All applicants must meet the AHRC's academic criteria and residency requirements. See:

<https://www.ukri.org/funding/information-for-award-holders/grant-terms-and-conditions/>

How to Apply

All applications are made, via the Birkbeck application portal, to the MPhil/PhD History of Art programme here:

<http://www.bbk.ac.uk/study/2020/phd/programmes/RMPAHIST>

The application will prompt you to confirm details of any scholarships or grants (for your proposed study at Birkbeck).

Please ensure you respond with: AHRC REACH CDP BBK/NPG

Please note that if this section is not clearly marked, your application may not be picked up for assessment.

1. We request the following documents from each applicant:

- Curriculum Vitae.
- A covering letter including a statement concerning eligibility for this fellowship.
- A research proposal up to 2,000 words. This should identify how your current academic interests relate to the doctoral project, explaining your reasons for wishing to undertake this research. The research proposal should also indicate critical contexts for the project. It can also outline how you might wish to refine the project so as to meet specific research aims of your own.

The three documents above should be uploaded as one complete document under 'research proposal.'

- Transcripts of relevant studies and – where appropriate – a letter from your course coordinator predicting the expected degree result (for those who still have to complete their current Master's-level programme);
- A sample of writing such as your MA dissertation, or similar.

2. References

Referees will be automatically prompted to upload their references when you submit your application.

Please note that all references must be uploaded by **2pm Wednesday 10 June, 2020**. We strongly encourage you to contact referees as early as possible to ensure they are prepared to upload their reference following submission of your application.

Submission of application

Closing date for applications: Wednesday 3 June, 2pm

Deadline for references: Wednesday 10 June, 2pm

Interview date: Tuesday 16 June 2020

Only complete and timely applications received, with both references, can be considered. For informal queries please contact Dr Sarah Thomas on sarah.thomas@bbk.ac.uk.

The successful candidate will be eligible to participate in [CDP Cohort Development events](#).

All new CDP students will be expected to attend the CDP Student Launch Event on Monday 21 September 2020 at the British Museum.