

AHRC Collaborative Doctoral Award in History of Art: William Burrell, Thomas & Drake, and the Transatlantic Trade in Stained Glass 1900-1950

Department of History of Art, University of York and Glasgow Museums

The Department of History of Art at the University of York and Glasgow Museums are pleased to offer a three-year AHRC-funded doctoral studentship for research into William Burrell, Thomas & Drake, and the Transatlantic Trade in Stained Glass 1900-1950. The research will be supervised by Sarah Brown (University of York) and Vivien Hamilton (Glasgow Museums).

William Burrell, Thomas & Drake, and the Transatlantic Trade in Stained Glass 1900-1950

The medieval stained glass collection of industrialist and connoisseur Sir William Burrell (1861-1958) was formed largely in the years 1900-1950, part of a much more extensive collection donated to the city of Glasgow in 1944. The stained glass at the heart of the Burrell Collection is of exceptional quality and world-wide significance. Assisted by Glasgow-based collector and dealer Grosvenor Thomas (1856-1923), Burrell was able to acquire treasures from some of Europe's most important sites and monuments, including Abbot Suger's St Denis, St Peter Mancroft in Norwich, and the churches of Rouen. Thomas was at the same time supplying glass to major US collectors, including George D. Pratt, Edsel Ford and the Metropolitan Museum. The third figure in this extraordinary relationship was glazier and stained glass restorer Wilfred Drake (1879-1948), through whose hands most of the Burrell Collection passed. Thomas and Drake formed a business partnership that was continued after Thomas's death by his son, Roy Grosvenor Thomas, who, based in New York, turned the business into a truly transatlantic trade, with Drake acting as British anchorman. The triumvirate continued to collect throughout the Second World War and the acquisition in 1939 of stained glass from Boppard in Germany from the collection of the bankrupt William Randolph Hearst made Burrell's collection 'the finest private collection in existence'.

Through the exploration of the relationship between Burrell and his agents, drawing on Burrell's purchase books, the Museum's extensive archive of correspondence between Burrell, Thomas and Drake, together with the newly accessible stock books of Thomas & Drake, recently purchased by the Worshipful Company of Glaziers, this project will explore the origins of the collection and its relationship with the collecting activity of other great collectors, connoisseurs, dealers and Museum curators. It will reveal in detail the connections between the panels in the Burrell collection and related pieces in other museums (notably the Metropolitan Museum in New York and the Victoria & Albert in London). For the first time the role of the restorer in the formation of these stained glass collections will be examined.

Specific aims and objectives include:

- To establish the workings of the complex network of dealers, collectors and restorers whose activities in the period 1900-1950 contributed to the formation of three of the world's great museum collections.
- To assess the relationship between William Burrell, Grosvenor Thomas and Wilfred Drake, within this context. The sometimes murky relationships between dealers in Europe, the UK and the US will emerge with greater clarity and the commercial impact of this trade will be revealed for the first time.
- To assess Burrell's personality as a collector, together with the way in which he envisaged his stained glass relating to works in other media that he was acquiring in the same period.

- To examine for the first time the role of the glazier/restorer Wilfred Drake in determining the appearance and appeal of individual pieces, within the wider context of contemporary principles for museum display, but also the art market.
- Through a better understanding of the transatlantic commerce that dispersed some of the great glazing schemes of medieval Europe across three continents, the task of repatriating these collections through research and digital dissemination will commence.

Department of History of Art, University of York

The University of York's Stained Glass Research School is the headquarters of the Corpus Vitrearum Medii Aevi (CVMA) in Great Britain, home of an innovative MA in Stained Glass Conservation and Heritage Management and the centre of stained glass scholarship in the UK. The department of History of Art is therefore well-placed to support and supervise this exciting project, facilitating the international research network that will ensure success. The University already has extensive experience of collaboration with museums, working currently with Tate Britain, the V&A and two members of the York Museums Trust. The successful applicant will benefit from the lively research culture of a department in which three members of the teaching staff are engaged in stained glass research, supervising seven doctoral candidates working on stained glass subjects.

For more information about the department see: <http://www.york.ac.uk/history-of-art/research/schools/stained-glass/>

Glasgow Museums

The City of Glasgow owns one of the largest civic museum collections in Europe, displayed in fourteen venues. In 2008, this collection was recognised by the Scottish Government as being of 'National Significance'. Glasgow Museums is involved in a broad range of fundamental research projects to help understand and disseminate understanding of the collections. The Burrell Collection contains the world's third largest collection of historic stained glass. It is an exceptional collection of international importance. It includes late Gothic and early Renaissance stained glass from Switzerland, Germany, France, the Netherlands and England. The glass dates from the fourteenth to the nineteenth centuries, with the majority of pieces from the fifteenth and early sixteenth century. It contains an excellent representative sample of European and English stained glass production of the later medieval period with many first class pieces.

For more information see: <http://www.glasgowlife.org.uk/museums/Pages/home.aspx>

Research Resources and Supervisory Arrangements

The student will be jointly supervised by Sarah Brown (University York) and Vivien Hamilton (Glasgow Museums). S/he will work both at York and Glasgow, completing a number of extended placements with Glasgow Museums. The student will benefit from the long-established supervisory arrangements in place at the Department of History of Art at York. S/he will: attend regular meetings with Sarah Brown and Vivien Hamilton (held alternately at York and at the Burrell Collection); attend twice-yearly meetings of a Thesis Advisory Panel, which features at least one member of academic staff other than the supervisors of the thesis; and be able to attend the department's research training programme, run by the PhD Director. When on placement in Glasgow, the student will be embedded formally in the Glasgow Museums Research section. In this period the student will use the Burrell archive and stained glass collection to investigate the themes of the doctorate and will also work with relevant staff members to develop their knowledge and experience of museum practice. The period with the Glasgow Museums' team will develop the student's wider skills in

dissemination and communication. In the final year the student will be encouraged to present at appropriate conferences and prepare an article for publication as well as complete the writing up of the thesis.

The award holder will also be warmly encouraged to attend the research events organised by the Department of History of Art in York, by the departmental Research Schools, by the University's Interdisciplinary Centres and by other Humanities departments within the University. The student will also be invited to attend the workshops on dissertation writing and the graduate research events organised by the department; give research papers in the department; and attend the graduate theory reading groups which meet regularly throughout the year.

Applying

For informal enquiries, please contact Sarah Brown, Department of History of Art, The King's Manor, York, YO1 7EP: sarah.brown@york.ac.uk.

Applications should be made on paper and should include the following documents:

- A covering letter, stating why you are applying for this PhD and why you think your academic interests qualify you for this award
- 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)
- Contact details for two referees

Please make it clear in your application that you are applying for a collaborative doctoral award with Glasgow Museums, and send it to:

Susanna Frater
Postgraduate Administrator
Department of History of Art
University of York
Heslington
York
YO10 5DD

The closing date is **5.00pm on 17 June 2011**. We expect to interview candidates for this studentship in York on during the week commencing 18 July 2011.