

## **AHRC Collaborative Doctoral Award in History of Art: 'The Virgin's House and other Architectural Narratives in Renaissance Marian Painting'**

Department of History of Art, University of York, and the National Gallery, London

The Department of History of Art at the University of York and the National Gallery, London, are pleased to offer a three-year AHRC-funded doctoral studentship to commence in October 2011 to investigate the fictive architecture inhabited by the Virgin Mary in Italian Renaissance Painting. The research will be supervised by Dr Amanda Lillie (University of York) and Mr Luke Syson (National Gallery).

Whereas studies of Marian cults and imagery have tended to focus on the body of the saint and its representation, or on churches, cities, pilgrimages, civic rituals and intercessory processes, this PhD will examine how images of the Virgin are often dependent on the representation of architecturally defined places and spaces. Its broader aim is to contribute to a study of the representation of architecture in painting. This is a surprisingly neglected field through all art historical periods, but one which offers new insights into the relations between the arts and the interface between architecture as experienced and imagined. It can also add an art historical dimension to the burgeoning new scientific field of socio-spatial visualisation.

Taking as its starting point a series of key works in the National Gallery in London, this project will explore why painters incorporated buildings in their pictures, what these imagined buildings did for the paintings, and what technical means were employed by painters to construct fictive architecture? It will also consider how painted architecture created sacrality within the image and what role architecture played in the definition of time and place within visual narratives of the Virgin Mary?

We are looking for a highly promising student who will relish the opportunity of combining academic research on this topic with involvement with a leading national museum. The successful candidate will meet the [AHRC's criteria for eligibility](#) and be able to demonstrate the potential to develop advanced research skills. The award pays tuition fees and a maintenance grant each year (£14,090 in 2011-12) for a maximum of three years of full-time doctoral study, subject to evidence of satisfactory progress.

### **Department of History of Art, University of York**

The department has a strong research and teaching record and the recently published Research Assessment Exercise (RAE) has confirmed History of Art at York as one of the top-ranking research departments in the UK. The Department currently has 16 members of academic staff and recruits around 100 undergraduate students per year to the Single Subject degree and the Combined Honours degrees with English and History. At graduate level the Department admits about 30 MA students a year, and has about 40 PhD students at any one time.

### **National Gallery, London**

The National Gallery is the pre-eminent museum in Great Britain for the study of European paintings (c.1250-c.1900). The Gallery has a long tradition of research, beginning with the pioneering work undertaken by the Director and Keeper in 1855. In 2007, a National Gallery Research Committee was formed and, in 2009, a new role, Head of Research, was created.

The Gallery has a thriving research culture with a long-established programme of specialist seminars, public lectures and academic conferences. It currently supports three research strands, 'The Meaning of Making', 'Art and Religion' and 'Buying, Collecting and Display'. The first two strands, particularly 'Art and Religion', are of direct relevance for this PhD project. There are currently 3 other doctoral students affiliated to the Gallery.

### **The Collaborative Research Partnership between the National Gallery and History of Art Department at the University of York**

During 2010 the History of Art Department at York and the National Gallery established a collaborative research partnership. This studentship will therefore be part of this collaboration between curators and scholars focusing on areas of mutual interest and expertise. It also relates closely to an exhibition project on 'Architecture in Renaissance Painting planned for 2014'. You can find further information about the History of Art department at York at [www.york.ac.uk/history-of-art](http://www.york.ac.uk/history-of-art) and about the National Gallery, London at [www.nationalgallery.org.uk](http://www.nationalgallery.org.uk).

### **Research Resources and Supervisory Arrangements**

The award holder will gain first-hand knowledge of working in a national museum environment, including hands-on curatorial and exhibition experience, and a thorough understanding of the methods and issues associated with documenting, conserving and exhibiting object-based collections. S/he will enjoy a high level of access to the Museum's collections and archive, and will be in regular contact with Luke Syson, who will advise on the practicalities of working at the National Gallery.

The student will also 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 Dr Lillie and Mr Syson; attend twice-yearly meetings of a Thesis Advisory Panel which includes at least one member of academic staff apart from the supervisors of the thesis; and be able to attend the department's research training programme run by the PhD Director.

The award holder will be warmly encouraged to attend the research events organised by the department, by the Research school in Architecture and Theory and by the Interdisciplinary Centre for Renaissance and Early Modern Studies (CREMS). The student will also be invited to attend the workshops on dissertation writing; give research papers in the department; and attend graduate theory reading groups which meet regularly throughout the year.

### **Applying**

For any related questions please contact Dr Amanda Lillie, History of Art Department, University of York, York, YO10 5DD ([amanda.lillie@york.ac.uk](mailto:amanda.lillie@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 the National Gallery, London, 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 London in early July 2011.