

## AHRC Collaborative Doctoral Studentship – Further Information

### “Curating Art and Science: New Methods and Sites of Production and Display”

This project is a joint venture between the Department of Geography at Royal Holloway, University of London, and The Arts Catalyst, London. The PhD is funded through the Arts and Humanities Research Council (AHRC) under its Collaborative Doctoral Awards scheme. The project will be co-supervised by Dr Harriet Hawkins (Lecturer in Human Geography at Royal Holloway), and Nicola Triscott and Dr Rob La Frenais at The Arts Catalyst.

This studentship is one of three linked doctoral awards the AHRC made to Dr Harriet Hawkins and Professor Dixon (University of Glasgow) to explore the production and curation of art-science projects. It is anticipated that the successful students will benefit from this extended network, including an extended academic advisory team consisting of Dr Hawkins, Prof. Dixon and Prof. Woods (Aberystwyth University).

#### Project Summary

This studentship will address the practices of curation and cultural production that are demanded by art-science projects, by which we mean art projects that experimentally or critically engage with science. The student will explore the challenges raised by these projects including: the need to negotiate access to the spaces and sites of science, the need to develop appropriate spaces for the display of the work (whether gallery or community based), the demands posed by the new knowledge and practices required by these projects, and, the moral and ethical questions that such collaborations can pose to artist and curator alike.

Broader research questions include:

- *How do art-science projects engage and extend the practices of curation?*
- *What sorts of critical engagements with the spaces of scientific research and artistic production do these projects generate?*
- *What lessons can be learnt about the challenges and possibilities these projects raise for cultural producers and curators?*
- *How do art-science projects contribute to our understandings of the geographies of art and science?*

Utilizing the archive and library of The Arts Catalyst, as well as the knowledge and curatorial expertise of its staff, the student will identify and research a series of case studies. Carrying out a pilot under the guidance of the supervisory team, the student will develop a methodology to implement across these case studies, to include participant observation of the cultural production and curating process, analysis of the final work and its display, and an exploration of audience response. It is anticipated that at least one of these case studies will involve the student participating in the development and curation of a current project by The Arts Catalyst.

#### Aims and Objectives

The project's overarching aim is to produce an investigation of art/science projects through a sustained partnership with The Arts Catalyst, affording a particular perspective on the interlinked aspects of the production of art/science projects and their audience engagements. Deploying ethnographic and practice-based research in the context of intellectual frameworks provided by, for example, geography, art theory and history, curatorial theory and practice, social studies of science and science communication, the four generic aims of the studentship are to:

- 1) Explore the imaginaries, practices and spatialities that animate art/science projects
- 2) Ask how the organisations that produce these projects meet the diverse challenges they pose
- 3) Assess how art/science projects engage diverse audiences
- 4) Realize new methodologies for the study of art/science projects and their audience engagement

### Research Context

Art-Science projects are engagingly diverse with respect to their topic, the mechanics and goals of their processes, and their chosen audiences. Furthermore, the spaces of artistic production and consumption are no longer confined to the studio and the gallery, rather, diverse laboratory and field, and community-based sites become the locus for the production and consumption of these trans-disciplinary projects. These extend the spaces and boundaries not only of arts practice, but also of the teams who manage their production and interface with a range of audiences. Whilst research on the dynamics of collaboration and other research and production processes is now proceeding apace, the practices and discourses of audience engagement with respect to these art-science projects remains less well understood. This studentship aims to provide insight into the production of art/science projects, and to catalyse discussions around the challenges and potentials these projects pose with regard to contemporary curatorial practices, and practices of science communication.

### PhD Responsibilities

- To deliver a doctoral thesis that examines contemporary and emerging aspects of the theories of curating, producing and displaying art and science projects.
- To contribute to the internal curatorial discourse within The Arts Catalyst through participation in meetings and seminars.
- To take an active role within The Arts Catalyst, such as co-curating and coordinating small-scale seminars, guest lectures, e-publications, workshops or screenings relating to student's research interests.

### Proposed Methodology and timescale

<b>Year 1-generic</b>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Induction to The Arts Catalyst</li> <li>• Literature review, case study discussion and selection</li> <li>• Critical evaluation of methodologies and pilot of proposed methods, including audience research and practice-based methods</li> <li>• Upgrade processes (ongoing into year two)</li> </ul>
<b>Year 2-generic</b>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Ethnographic work on chosen case studies</li> <li>• On-going practice-based curatorial work</li> <li>• Ongoing methodological development</li> <li>• Ongoing meetings and feedback to The Arts Catalyst</li> <li>• Knowledge transfer of preliminary findings to the teams</li> <li>• Conference paper at RGS-IBG Annual Conference</li> </ul>
<b>Year 3-generic</b>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Writing up</li> <li>• Knowledge Transfer to project partners fulfilled and final contributions to projects completed</li> <li>• Conversion of RGS-IBG conference paper into journal submission</li> <li>• Conference paper at Association of American Geographers conference</li> <li>• Address legacy and deliver Knowledge Transfer to partners and stakeholders</li> <li>• 'Engaging Art/Science' Symposium for all students and partners and invited stakeholders</li> </ul>

### **The Arts Catalyst [<http://www.artscatalyst.org/>]**

The Arts Catalyst is one of the UK's most distinctive arts organisations, distinguished by ambitious art commissions and its unique take on art-science practice. Commissioning contemporary art that experimentally and critically engages with science, the organisation plays a leading role in the development of artists' engagement with science and critical discourse around this field. An Arts Council England National Portfolio organisation, The Arts Catalyst produces provocative, playful, risk-taking artists' projects to spark dynamic conversations across disciplinary, methodological and expert/public divides to explore our changing world. Specifically, Arts Catalyst seeks new ways to involve artists, scientists and the wider public in a discourse about the direction and impact of science in society, and to explore new ideas and possibilities. The primary vehicle for these discussions is a programme of exhibitions, events, workshops, residencies, conferences, publishing, research, and learning and participatory projects. Issues of space are key, insofar as commissions and events are presented in a range of venues, from art galleries and museums to outdoor and other public spaces. To date, these sites have included Tate, the John Hansard Gallery, Cornerhouse Manchester, the Barbican Centre, Roundhouse, the Natural History Museum, the Science Museum, and Tramway Glasgow, as well as historic buildings, science institutions, outdoor sites, hospitals, schools, and online. Careful curating of these activities ensures that a large and diverse audience is engaged in the activities and investigations organized by Arts Catalyst, engaging not only artistic and gallery going audiences, but also scientists, those in the field of science communication, and a 'general' public.

This studentship will be embedded in the Arts Catalyst team, providing a context and ongoing contact with practice, practitioners and discourse, although the Arts Catalyst's activities will not necessarily be the specific focus of the research.

### **Department of Geography, Royal Holloway, University of London**

The successful candidate will be based at the Department of Geography at Royal Holloway, University of London. The Department is well-established as a leading UK centre in its discipline, with a national and international reputation for research of the highest quality. The 2008 UK Research Assessment Exercise (RAE) again placed the Department in the top tier of Geography departments. Its research environment was singled out as overwhelmingly 'world class' and 'internationally excellent' and reflects its commitment to facilitate research of the highest quality. Within the department, the successful candidate will join the Social and Cultural Geography (SCG) research group, one of four main research groupings. The Group is an international research centre, with a distinctive reputation for interdisciplinary geographical research in the arts and humanities as well as the social sciences. SCG includes nine academic members of staff. The Group run the successful MA in Cultural Geography (Research) and currently supervises over 30 PhD students. It convenes the fortnightly 'Landscape Surgery' meetings that are designed to enable postgraduate students to discuss their research in a supportive environment. Many leading journals in the field are edited by SCG group staff, including the *Journal of Historical Geography*, *History Workshop Journal*, *Cultural Geographies* and *Geoforum*. The group collaborates with a range of institutions beyond the academy; recent partners include the British Library, the British Museum, the Museum of London, the National Maritime Museum, the Royal Geographical Society, the Science Museum, and the Victoria and Albert Museum. The Arts Catalyst is an exciting addition to these partners.

### **Research training and support**

To ensure that the successful candidate receives appropriate and relevant preparation and support, her/his training and development needs will be considered as early as the interview stage. The precise details of training support will be established formally at the start of the project by means of a training log, as set out in Royal Holloway's Code of Practice, completed by the academic supervisor in

discussion with the student, the non-academic supervisor and the advisor. The student's needs will be reviewed periodically through a system of supervisory record forms, and the training log will be formally updated at the end of each year.

### **Funding**

The studentship is funded by the AHRC's Collaborative Doctoral Award scheme. Funding is available on a full-time basis for three years or a part-time basis for five years, and may include both student fees and a maintenance grant. Postgraduate fees at Royal Holloway will be paid by the AHRC. The student will also receive the AHRC's annual student maintenance grant.

### **Candidate specification and eligibility**

Applicants should have a minimum of a 2:1 degree at undergraduate level in a relevant subject (e.g. Anthropology, Architecture, Art, Art History, Cultural Studies, Geography; Sociology etc.) and should normally have undergone a recognized programme of research training at Masters level or have equivalent levels of skills-based experience in a relevant specialist area (e.g. curating; art practice).

The successful candidate will, ideally, have a familiarity with issues of art-science projects, curation, and/or geographical approaches to art, and would ideally received some research training in social/cultural research methods. An ability to work both independently and as part of a team, will be important to the success of the project.

The successful candidate must satisfy AHRC eligibility requirements, as to both academic standing and residence. UK residency is normally required. EU citizens may also be eligible for fees-only awards. Further details on basic eligibility requirements are available from the AHRC web-site.

### **Application process**

All candidates must apply on-line to Royal Holloway here <http://www.rhul.ac.uk/Registry/Admissions/applyonline.html>, where you must submit personal details and those of two referees, upload a CV and a response to the project proposal, including your suitability, relevant experience and particular interests (two page maximum). Please also upload a suitable writing sample of no more than 4000 words in length. Please specify 'AHRC CDA studentship Curating Art-Science (Geography)' in section E of the form.

**The deadline for receipt of applications (including two references) is 22nd October 2012. Interviews will be held in early November. The position will start in January 2013.**

Further enquiries can be made to  
Nicola Triscott: [nicola.triscott@artscatalyst.org](mailto:nicola.triscott@artscatalyst.org) and  
Harriet Hawkins: [harriet.hawkins@rhul.ac.uk](mailto:harriet.hawkins@rhul.ac.uk)