

**National
Portrait
Gallery**



AHRC-funded PhD Studentship

The production, transmission and reception of engraved and photographic theatrical portraits in the mid-19th century and their contribution to the promotion of celebrity

University of Bristol (History of Art) & National Portrait Gallery, London

Applications are invited for an AHRC Collaborative Doctoral Award Studentship

This studentship is one of six awarded to the Thames Consortium, which comprises three London-based institutions: the National Portrait Gallery (NPG), The National Archives, and the National Maritime Museum.

This project aims to investigate popular forms of theatrical portraits (predominantly engraved and photographic formats) across the mid-19th century (broadly 1830-1870) and examine the ways in which visual representation of performers was transmitted and received and, through their transmission and reception, contributed to the construction of celebrity identity.

The following research questions underline the main issues to be addressed by the project, though the student has the scope to define the topic and approach in conjunction with the supervisors:

1. What is the relationship between conventional painted portraits of theatrical performers and more accessible popular printed and photographic forms by which they were depicted? The student will examine the conventions of composition, pose and representation, investigate how they were copied and varied between formats as technical processes evolved across the mid-nineteenth century, and explore what opportunities for presentation arose from new technologies.
2. What was the relationship between the representation of the performer as individual and their depiction in roles, and how did this iconographical dichotomy apply when public appetite for individual biography and achievement was increasing? The student will examine conventional portraits alongside those of the same sitters in roles and investigate their popular reception as individual performer and theatrical character.
3. What was the relationship between the invention of new technical processes for the creation of portrait images and the market for their consumption? The student will investigate the impact of their production and distribution, by examining how they were used by performers and theatrical establishments for purposes of publicity and advertising and how the transition from engraved to photographic processes affected

the way in which performers and their celebrity were perceived and understood by audiences.

The supervisors of this project are Dr Dorothy Rowe, Senior Lecturer in History of Art (University of Bristol) who specialises in painting and photography in the late-nineteenth and early twentieth centuries, and Robin Francis, Head of Archive & Library (National Portrait Gallery) who is responsible for the Gallery's research collections and whose interests are focussed on portrait prints and drawings and, in particular the performing arts in the nineteenth and twentieth centuries.

This studentship offers an excellent opportunity to pursue a fully-funded doctoral research project, with unparalleled access to the extensive primary source visual resources of the National Portrait Gallery and University of Bristol Theatre Collections. The student will be offered practical work-based training (such as understanding of visual resources and collections and curatorial practice, suitable for a potential career in the cultural sector), be encouraged to contribute to the NPG's Staff Research Seminar programme and to other staff and student training sessions, prepare blogs and other interpretative text for the NPG website and one or more display proposals for the NPG's Nineteenth Century Galleries. Sector specific training will be provided by the Thames Consortium to develop skills relevant to working in museums and galleries and the student will participate in training provided by the University of Bristol and be a member of the Bristol Doctoral College <http://www.bristol.ac.uk/doctoral-college/>.

The studentship is funded for three years full-time (or five years part-time) and will begin on 1 October 2014.

Applications

Applicants should complete the application form and send it to Dr Ruth Brimacombe (rbrimacombe@npg.org.uk). Please note that references must be submitted at this stage.

The closing date for applications is **5pm Friday 28 March 2014**. It is anticipated that interviews will take place **Wednesday 30 April 2014**.

Informal enquiries about this project may be directed to Ruth Brimacombe (rbrimacombe@npg.org.uk)

Supporting documents

Application form

Guidance notes