

YALE CENTER FOR BRITISH ART/YALE UNIVERSITY ART GALLERY

GRADUATE RESEARCH ASSISTANTSHIPS 2012–2013

Graduate Research Assistantships (GRA) at the Yale Center for British Art and the Yale University Art Gallery are designed to provide Yale University doctoral students, in their second through sixth year, the opportunity to work as part of an intellectual team on a major scholarly project at one of the museums. These research positions enhance the educational experiences provided by academic course work and teaching assistantships at the University, allowing students to extend their range of academic specializations and expertise, and to augment research skills by direct contact with objects in the collections.

Although the positions are not restricted to those students who wish to pursue a museum career, students gain in-depth knowledge of the scholarly and logistical aspects of exhibition preparation and develop other professional skills. Research assistantship positions at the Center are open to graduate students in all disciplines, while positions at the Gallery are restricted to students specializing in the history of art. Four GRAs will be awarded, three at the Center and one at the Gallery. Applicants for research assistantship positions at the Gallery may also be considered for Gallery curatorial internships. Curatorial internships are different from research assistantships in that they are open to students from all disciplines, involve a flexible number of work hours, and may not be substituted for a teaching requirement.

PROCESS OF APPLICATION

The application process is formal and competitive. Research assistantships are equivalent to University teaching assistant positions and cannot be negotiated through conversation with curators. Students who wish to apply should submit a statement of intent and curriculum vitae. It is suggested that students seek the approval of their Director of Graduate Studies (DGS) before applying.

DEADLINE FOR APPLICATIONS

March 2, 2012

Short-listed applicants will be contacted for interviews with faculty and museum staff representatives in April.

FINANCIAL TERMS AND DURATION

The stipend for each term will be commensurate with the 2012–13 graduate student teaching fellow stipend for 17.5 hours per week. Research assistantships are normally held over two terms. They are initially awarded for one term and are renewed for the second term after a midyear review, at the discretion of the supervising curator and DGS. At the discretion of the DGS, students in their second and third years may substitute up to two terms of research assistantship in lieu of fulfilling the teaching requirements. If, in an extraordinary case, a student wishes to pursue the same project for a third term, he or she may be allowed to continue on a part-time basis, but the term “research assistant” will not apply during this third term. No positions beyond those described here can be financed at full stipend level or counted in lieu of teaching requirements. If a student holds a University fellowship, the research assistantship replaces the fellowship for the year in which he or she holds the position.

Please e-mail (as an attached Word document) a letter of application and curriculum vitae to the appropriate museum coordinator:

YALE CENTER FOR BRITISH ART

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YALE UNIVERSITY ART GALLERY

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PROJECT 1

USING OBJECTS IN THE ANALYSIS OF BRITISH HISTORY AND CULTURE: TEACHING WITH THE COLLECTIONS OF THE YALE CENTER FOR BRITISH ART

Department of Research and Education and all curatorial departments

Supervised by Martina Droth, Head of Research and Curator of Sculpture; Lars Kokkonen, Postdoctoral Research Associate in the Department of Research; and Joseph Roach, Sterling Professor of Theater and English, Chair of the Theater Studies Advisory Committee and Director of Theater, Yale University

The Graduate Student Research Assistant will work with the Department of Research and Education to assist Joseph Roach, Sterling Professor of Theater and English, to develop a future course on the theme “Art and the Stage In Britain,” which will include theatrical portraiture, paintings, and prints featuring theatrical scenes (including opera and ballet), topographical views and architecture plans of theaters and theater districts, stage designs (scenery and costume), and theatrical ephemera. Research will focus especially on the dynamic stylistic reciprocity of art and the stage in the eighteenth century, but key collaborations in earlier and later periods will be investigated also for historical context and perspective. Using the Center’s rich resources and working closely with the curatorial staff, the student will assist Professor Roach in identifying relevant works in the collections, researching specific objects, collating bibliographies, and performing other related tasks.

PROJECT 2

RESEARCH IN THE RARE BOOKS AND MANUSCRIPTS COLLECTION: INTERPRETATION AND ACCESSIBILITY

Department of Rare Books and Manuscripts

Supervised by Elisabeth Fairman, Senior Curator of Rare Books and Manuscripts

The collection of rare books and manuscripts contains approximately 35,000 titles, consisting of material relating to the visual arts and cultural life in the United Kingdom and former British Empire from the sixteenth century to the present. Particular strengths include illustrated color-plate books from the renowned J. R. Abbey Collection, sporting books and manuscripts, early maps and atlases, early printed books by William Caxton and his contemporaries, private press books, and contemporary artist books, drawing manuals, and archival and manuscript material relating to British artists of all periods. The Graduate Student Research Assistant will work on one or more projects, creating detailed descriptions of manuscript and archival material within the collections. These descriptions will facilitate immediate scholarly access to the material. The goal of this project is to make the Department’s manuscript and archival collections more accessible to students and researchers by identifying subjects of interest not only to art historians but also to social, political, and cultural historians. The Department will attempt to identify primary materials that match the student’s academic interests. Possible projects include working on material related to eighteenth-century exploration, eighteenth and nineteenth-century artists’ correspondence, twentieth-century book arts, maps, and atlases, or ephemera from all periods. The duration of the GRA may be either a year or a term. It is funded by the Andrew W. Mellon Foundation, and may include travel for any necessary related research in other collections.

PROJECT 3

VICTORIAN SCULPTURE EXHIBITION

Department of Research and Education/Department of Paintings and Sculpture

Supervised by Martina Droth, Head of Research and Curator of Sculpture

The Department of Research and Education seeks a Graduate Student Research Assistant to assist in research toward the development of an exhibition on Victorian sculpture, scheduled to open at the Center in 2014. The exhibition will be the first comprehensive examination of sculpture produced in Britain and the British Empire during the reign of Queen Victoria. Presenting material that is often overlooked in the scholarship, and which will be unfamiliar to many audiences, the exhibition is intended not only to highlight the vibrancy and inventiveness of British sculpture across the period, but to demonstrate its political and cultural importance, both within Britain and internationally. The GRA's tasks will include exploring the Center's own collections for relevant materials; creating bibliographies that relate to or contextualize key loan objects; researching works in other collections nearby; and working on a time line of key commissions and exhibitions relating to Victorian sculpture. Limited funding for travel, possibly to the UK, will be available.

YALE UNIVERSITY ART GALLERY

PROJECT 1

JOSEF ALBERS PHOTOGRAPHS

Department of Prints, Drawings, and Photographs

Supervised by Joshua Chuang, Assistant Curator of Photographs

The Department of Prints, Drawings, and Photographs seeks a research assistant to participate in the development of the exhibition and catalogue *Josef Albers Photographs*, to be co-organized with the Josef Albers Museum in Bottrop, Germany. Known chiefly for his work in painting, design, and color theory, Albers began making photographs in the late 1920s and continued an active engagement with the medium throughout his career. Though he never exhibited his photographs, his prolific experimentation with the medium—in particular the exuberant photcollages made during his years at the Bauhaus, which do not fit comfortably in the standard narratives of the history of photography—reveal the important role photography played in his artistic practice. This exhibition will be the first in-depth examination of Albers's photographs in the context of his larger creative output and of the broader role of photography in art practice as it developed out of the classrooms of the Bauhaus, Black Mountain College, and the Yale School of Art, where Albers taught. The graduate research assistant will help the curators to research works of art and supplementary material at the Josef & Anni Albers Foundation, and in the Josef Albers Papers at the Sterling Memorial Library at Yale, and will be involved in all aspects of the organization of the exhibition and catalogue. While contributing original research to the project, he or she will also learn firsthand how an exhibition is planned and implemented.

PROJECT 2

THE HISTORY OF THE FURNITURE STUDY

American Decorative Arts

Supervised by John Stuart Gordon, Benjamin Attmore Hewitt Assistant Curator of American Decorative Arts

The department of American Decorative Arts seeks a research assistant to document the history of the Furniture Study, one of the Art Gallery's two study centers. Established around 1960, the Furniture Study was conceived as a laboratory for American furniture and has continually evolved to reflect shifts in theoretical and museological pedagogy. As the Furniture Study prepares for its eventual relocation, this is the ideal opportunity to document its physical formation and evolution, as well as the impact it has had on scholars of American decorative arts. The GRA will entail archival research to establish the origins of the Furniture Study and its early years; interviews conducted with current and past users of the space (both on campus and at museums and educational institutions across America); and exploration of the evolution of such study centers within a broader museological and cultural context. Research from the project will be added to the Gallery's archives and may be incorporated into the didactic material of the new study center. The project will result in a document that will serve as the standard history of the space.

PROJECT 3

"THE MAGIC WINDOW": THE LIGHT ART OF THOMAS WILFRED

Department of American Paintings and Sculpture

Supervised by Helen Cooper, the Holcombe T. Green Curator of American paintings and Sculpture

The Department of American Paintings and Sculpture, seeks a research assistant to help prepare a major exhibition on *lumia*, the highly inventive and pioneering form of kinetic art created by the artist-tinkerer Thomas Wilfred (1889–1968). In the early twentieth century, Wilfred was among the first and most successful artists of colored light in the United States. The exhibition will present him both as a man of his time and an innovative visionary, featuring the Art Gallery's three important works by Wilfred, which date to the late 1920s and early 1930s. His pieces from the 1920s reveal a preoccupation with theosophy and the synesthesia of rhythm and color. Later works suggest a kind of proto-television, with their window-like screens that glow from inside a box. After first experimenting with large-scale projections of light compositions in public venues, Wilfred adapted his *lumia*—the word he used to describe “silent visual compositions in form, motion, and color”—for home environments. Wilfred further dabbled in engineering, physics, astronomy, theology, psychology, musicology, and architecture, to design artworks not only unparalleled in their perceptual and technological effects, but also path-breaking for future experiments of kinetic and light art in the 1960s. The research assistant will research the approximately fifteen *lumia* pieces to be included, as well as participate in all aspects of the planning for the exhibition. Wilfred's papers, drawings, and other ephemera are in the Beinecke Library, which will serve as a resource for much of the research.