Graduate Research Assistantship Proposals 2017–18

Graduate Research Assistantships 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 are open to graduate students in all disciplines. Up to five GRAs will be awarded: four at the Center, and one at the Gallery.

Applicants for research assistantship positions at the Gallery may also be considered for Gallery curatorial internships. However, curatorial internships, unlike research assistantships, involve a flexible number of work hours, and may not be substituted for a teaching requirement.

Deadline for Application
March 10, 2017
Short-listed applicants will be contacted for interviews with faculty and museum staff representatives in April.

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 send a statement of intent and curriculum vitae. It is suggested that students seek the approval of their Director of Graduate Studies (DGS) before applying.
Financial Terms and Duration

The stipend for 2017–18 will be $10,650 per semester.

Research assistantships are being offered for one or two semesters, as indicated. Full-year GRAs are initially awarded for one semester and are renewed for the second semester 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 semesters 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 or fourth semester, he or she may be allowed to continue.

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 the student holds the position.

Contact

Please email (as an attached Word document) a letter of application and curriculum vitae to: yuag.acadaff@yale.edu.

Inquiries may be addressed to:
Issa Lampe, the Bradley Senior Associate Curator for Academic Affairs, Yale University Art Gallery, at issa.lampe@yale.edu.

Yale University Art Gallery

Project 1
Surimono
Department of Asian Art
Supervised by Dr. Sadako Ohki, Japan Foundation Associate Curator of Japanese Art

The Department of Asian Art at the Gallery seeks a graduate research assistant to participate in the research for, and writing of, a small catalogue celebrating a recent gift to the Gallery of over 250 surimono, privately commissioned and exquisitely designed small prints. The catalogue will use these surimono to introduce the life and art of literary groups in the late Edo period (1615–1868). Produced in relatively small numbers, surimono often combine amusing—and at times enigmatic—images with poems, particularly those of the kyōka, or “mad song” genre. The research assistant should be familiar with Edo-period literature, have experience transliterating and translating Japanese poetry, and be able to read hentaigana and classical Japanese scripts. He or she will serve as a co-author for approximately twenty-five entries in the catalogue and will be expected to translate the texts on the surimono, identify the accompanying images, and analyze the relationship between the texts and images. The manuscript must be submitted in June 2018; publication is planned for the following year.

Yale Center for British Art

Project 2
Interpretation and Accessibility Research
Department of Rare Books and Manuscripts
Supervised by Elisabeth Fairman, Chief Curator of Rare Books and Manuscripts

The Center’s collection of rare books and manuscripts contains approximately thirty-five thousand 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 research assistant will work on one or more projects, creating detailed descriptions of manuscript and archival material within the collection. The descriptions composed by the research assistant will enable immediate scholarly access to the material. The goal of this project is to make the department’s manuscript and archival collections more available to students and researchers by identifying subjects of interest to art historians and also to social, political, and cultural historians. The department will attempt to assign the applicant to a project that matches the student’s academic interests and expertise. 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 research assistantship is funded by the Andrew W. Mellon Foundation and may include travel to other collections for related research.

**Project 3**  
*Dr. William Hunter*  
*Department of Exhibitions and Publications*  
Supervised by Nathan Flis, Acting Head of Exhibitions and Publications

The Department of Exhibitions and Publications at the Center seeks a graduate research assistant to help the Acting Head of Exhibitions and Publications in developing an exhibition and a related publication, scheduled for 2018–19, which will mark the three-hundredth anniversary of the birth of Scottish-born obstetrician and anatomist Dr. William Hunter (1718–1783). In addition to his medical contributions, Hunter is remembered as the first professor of anatomy at the Royal Academy of Arts, London; as a discerning patron; and as one of the most significant Enlightenment collectors of art, coins, medals, natural history specimens, anatomical preparations, and books and manuscripts. The exhibition will consist chiefly of objects loaned by the Hunterian, University of Glasgow, Scotland, where nearly all of Hunter’s collection is kept. However, the research assistant will be specially tasked with finding additional objects, held in collections at Yale and nearby institutions, to complement the international loans. The assistantship will involve managing and expanding the loan checklist; conducting research on relevant works in the Center’s collections; visiting and researching other collections at Yale and nearby institutions; and assisting with the loan request process. Limited funding for travel will be available.

**Project 4**  
*Museum Access and Community Practice*  
*Department of Research and Education*  
Supervised by Jaime Ursic, Assistant Curator of Education

The Education Department seeks a graduate research assistant to work with the Assistant Curator of Education to develop and teach interpretative programs for visitors of all abilities. This position will focus on fostering relationships with University and community partners for both established programs and new program initiatives, and engagement opportunities will include creating, leading, and evaluating strategies and best practices for working with specific audiences, such as individuals with autism spectrum disorders; individuals with physical, intellectual, and developmental disabilities; and individuals with dementia and their caretakers. In addition to researching, documenting, analyzing, and discussing accommodation strategies and best practices for audience inclusion, the position will open a dialogue about accessibility and inclusion in the university museum that serves both the University and the greater community.

**Project 5**  
*William Bartram*  
Supervised by Amy Meyers, Director

A graduate research assistant is sought to help prepare for the first major exhibition of the work of William Bartram (1739–1823), a Philadelphia-based naturalist and artist. Bartram was one of the first American-born naturalists to depict the flora and fauna of the North American continent extensively, and his drawings shed important light on the changing culture of natural history in the trans-Atlantic world, from the colonial period through the first decades of the new republic. The exhibition is co-curated by Amy Meyers, Director, Yale Center for British Art, and Therese O’Malley, Associate Dean, Center for Advanced Study in the Visual Arts, National Gallery of Art, Washington, D.C. The project is being developed in association with Bartram’s Garden, Philadelphia, and the Royal Botanic Gardens, Kew, United Kingdom, and will open at the Center in the spring of 2020 before traveling to Philadelphia and London.

The research assistant will participate in all aspects of exhibition preparation, including finalizing the selection list, scholarly research and writing, assisting in the production of the accompanying catalogue, and carrying out correspondence and organizational tasks. Within the wider context of the exhibition, specific research topics can be identified to suit the successful candidate’s interests and expertise, and some time may be spent on other projects that have a similar emphasis on the history and art of American natural history in the eighteenth and early nineteenth centuries.