

Decolonising the Archives Research Residency Programme 2020

CALL FOR PROPOSALS

University of the Arts London
UAL Decolonising Arts Institute in partnership with
UAL Archives, Museum and Special Collections

About the Residencies

Decolonising the Archives is a new collaborative initiative at University of the Arts London (UAL), developed by UAL Decolonising Arts Institute in partnership with UAL Archives and Special Collections Centre (ASCC). We are pleased to announce a joint call for proposals for a series of nine-month research residency opportunities in 2020.

Decolonising the Archives builds on ASCC's ongoing residency programme (2017-2022), supported by the Museums, Galleries and Collections Fund, Research England), and UAL Library's wider initiatives to decolonise the curriculum. The collaborative partnership with UAL Decolonising Arts Institute seeks to place questions of decolonisation and decolonial praxes at the core of collections practice and research:

- *What does it mean to decolonise the arts?*
- *How do we decolonise the curriculum and the university from within?*
- *How can we work to dismantle and transform what we know and what we do?*

We understand decolonisation in an expansive sense suggested by Arundhati Roy:

Whose colonisation of whom are we talking about? Some countries have colonised other countries, some cultures have colonised other cultures, some races and castes have colonised and enslaved others, some languages have colonised other languages, some religions have eviscerated others, some ideologies have wiped out others, some genders have dominated and oppressed others. The categories are infinite, the hierarchies complicated and intersecting, the project of domination ongoing.

(Arundhati Roy, 2017, *The Guardian*)



The **Decolonising the Archives Research Residency Programme** will award bursaries of £6,000 to three postdoctoral researchers (including curatorial and creative practice-based). Researchers will be in residence for a period of up to six months from January 2020, at one of three locations: UAL Archives and Special Collections Centre and London College of Communication Library (LCC); Central Saint Martins Museum & Study Collection (CSM); special collections at Chelsea College of Arts Library, including the African-Caribbean, Asian and African Art in Britain Archive. Researchers will spend a further three months writing up and/or producing research outputs for publication and dissemination in autumn 2020. The residencies are opportunities to interrogate UAL's archives and special collections through critical and creative research strategies that engage decolonial thinking/doing and questions of decolonisation. We invite proposals that focus on a specific collection or aspect of a collection, and/or artwork(s) or archival object(s) held at ASCC, LCC Library, CSM or Chelsea Library. We welcome approaches that challenge, for example, dominant narratives of identity, nation, culture, language, heritage, Britishness, whiteness, blackness, race, class, gender, sexuality, dis/ability, age, belief, feminism, modernism, radicalism, activism...; as well as the politics of institutional memory and archival silences.

About UAL Archives, Museum and Special Collections

Within the wider context of UAL Library's initiatives to decolonise collections and curricula, UAL Archives and Special Collections Centre (ASCC) promotes the preservation and interrogation of archive collections, and develops programmes of activity and engagement to inspire and provoke creative and critical practice. Encouraging collaboration with research communities at UAL and beyond, ASCC works with collection managers to share perspectives and strategies in the area of decolonisation.

Based at the London College of Communication (LCC), ASCC holds unique and diverse archives and collections that offer rich resources for research spanning screen and print histories, graphic design, media and sound arts, including the Stanley Kubrick and Lindsay Cooper archives, and the Her Noise and London Musicians' Collective archives. Collections include the work of Dick Scott Stewart (photography), Ann Kaplan (printmaker and filmmaker), Barbara Sawyer (textiles), Robert Crumb (graphic illustrations), and UAL alumni.

The LCC Library houses the *Printing Historical Collection* (PHC), a teaching collection of 5,000 books charting the technical, aesthetic and design development of the western book, and organised chronologically, from 1485 to the present. The foundations of the PHC were laid in the 1960s-1970s at a time when LCC (formerly the London College of Printing) supported the technical education and vocational training of both local and Commonwealth indentured apprentices from the printing and publishing industries. The LCC Library also includes a number of historical journals, and over 4,000 zines and fanzines as part of the collection's alternative publication section.

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The [CSM Museum & Study Collection](#) tells the story of the College's rich history through archive material and work produced by staff and students and alumni. The Museum also houses a teaching collection which spans the 13th century to the present day, and includes early printed books, manuscripts, 1920s German film posters, textiles and garments. Information about the collections can be found in our searchable online catalogue. The Museum has a strong track record in experimental practices, particularly around object-based learning and object-led wellbeing. More recently, the Museum has developed a programme of work around decolonisation, encompassing collaborative curatorial projects and an audit of existing collections, and the representation of marginalised communities in UK archives.

The internationally renowned [Special Collections at Chelsea College of Arts Library](#) include artists' books and magazines, multiples, ephemera and a range of archives: The African-Caribbean, Asian and African Art in Britain Archive, established in 1985, is a key historical resource documenting the Black Arts movement and other artists from diverse backgrounds working in the UK from the 1970s onwards. In addition to supporting use of these collections in teaching, learning and research, we are currently working with students and staff in a range of decolonisation initiatives, including the [Reading Collections](#) reading group and the publication project, [Decolonising the Arts Curriculum](#).

About UAL Decolonising Arts Institute

UAL Decolonising Arts Institute is currently in development and due to launch in autumn 2020. The Institute seeks to enhance the visibility, understanding and impact of postcolonial, decolonial and intersectional practices, histories and theories. It aims to address historical amnesias and contemporary silences, to amplify voices, and gather strengths. Building on the success of the recent [AHRC Black Artists & Modernism](#) research project (2015-18), the Institute will continue to work closely with museums to challenge the stories our collections tell. It will also develop collaborative connections with related practices, research, pedagogy and activism across UAL (historical and contemporary), to drive social, cultural and institutional change.

What are we offering to Researchers in Residence?

- A bursary comprising a £5,000 fee to cover all expenses, and access to an additional £1,000 towards production costs, subject to the needs of the output
- Access to UAL Archives and Special Collections for the duration of the residency
- Access to other facilities at UAL, to be confirmed
- Support through regular advisory research and curatorial support meetings

What are we expecting from Researchers in Residence?

Researchers will

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- Undertake an agreed programme of research for a period of up to six months
- Write up and complete the proposed outputs within a further three months
- Participate in research sharing seminars at beginning and midway points of the residency
- Providing regular updates on their progress through the Residency, posting to the 'Into the Archive' blog and UAL social media and contributing to UAL's annual Research Fortnight festival of research
- Contribute to debates on decolonisation within UAL's research community
- Present their research at a public symposium event in autumn 2020
- Produce one or more outputs to demonstrate their research findings. Outputs must include a substantial text for first publication by UAL (e.g. a 6,000-8,000 word paper; alternative 'essay' forms and outputs can also be proposed, such as a performance, film or soundwork)
- Participate in evaluation and feedback at the end of the programme

Who is eligible to apply?

The call is open to post-doctoral researchers with a relevant arts background from any UK-based University. Applications from current PhD students will be considered if the opportunity clearly aligns with their research. Secondments from other Higher Education Institutions will be considered. The applicant must be able to work in the UK and remain resident until 31st March 2021.

How do I make a submission?

Your submission should provide:

- The name of the applicant and affiliated institution or organisation (if applicable)
- A full CV including relevant links to related past projects
- The proposed project title
- A summary of the proposed project (max 100 words)
- A detailed project proposal (max 500 words) outlining:
 - Your interest in a particular UAL archive or collection, if already known
 - Your preliminary research question(s)
 - Your anticipated approaches and methods
 - How your project meets the aims of the residency
 - How your project engages questions of / and approaches to decolonisation
 - An estimated budget to support the production of outputs (up to £1,000),

Submissions will be accepted by email only, with the subject line:
'Decolonising the Archives – Research Residency Submission'

Please email to both:

decolonisingartsinstitute@arts.ac.uk and s.mahurter@arts.ac.uk



The deadline for submissions is 14 November 2019.

Timeline

Deadline for submissions: 14 November 2019

Interviews: 27 November 2019

Residency dates: from January 2020

Symposium: October 2020 tbc

Further information

Details of UAL Archives and Special Collections can be found [here](#), with further links to archive stories and the online catalogue.

Details on UAL's work on critical librarianship and decolonising the arts curriculum can be found [here](#).

Details on the UAL Decolonising Arts Institute can be found [here](#).

For any queries or an informal discussion about the residency, please contact:

- Sarah Mahurter, Manager, UAL Archives and Special Collections Centre
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- Monica Sajeva, Academic Support Librarian, London College of Communication
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