



Art, Poetry and Politics – Contemporary British Artists’ Books

Reference: 2018-2-COO

Supervisor	Ian Cooke, Head of Contemporary British Publications
Department, Location	Contemporary British Collections, St Pancras
Start date/timeframe	The placement can take place any time between April 2018 and April 2019 and a mutually convenient start date can be agreed with the supervisor.
Duration	3 months (or part-time equivalent – see below) <i>For a part-time placement, the student would be required to spend a minimum of 2 days/week on site at the Library</i>
Remote-working	An element of remote reworking would be possible for this placement – to be agreed with the supervisor.

Context for placement
<p>Through its collecting, the British Library represents all types of publishing in the UK, including small and independent press and artists’ books. The Contemporary British Publications team works to ensure that these collections encompass the diversity of life, experience and expression across the UK.</p> <p>Poetry pamphlets, produced by small and independent presses across the UK, play a significant role in stimulating innovation and experimentation in contemporary literature. The Library is a founding partner and host to the Michael Marks Awards for Poetry Pamphlets, which will celebrate its 10th anniversary at the end of 2018.</p> <p>However, small press and artists’ books can present challenges in terms of visibility within collections and, correspondingly, in public awareness. We are therefore looking for a research placement student to contribute to our plans to celebrate the 10th anniversary of the Michael Marks Awards for Poetry Pamphlets, and to help develop and generate ideas for wider public engagement with our collections.</p> <p>In particular, we would like the placement to help develop ideas around the interaction of poetry and art, and the ways in which artists and poets collaborate to reflect and comment on social and political concerns. The student would be encouraged to explore possibilities offered by the British Library’s engagement with other national and public libraries through the Living Knowledge Network.</p> <p>Contemporary British Collections represents the diverse range of experience and culture in the UK, and we welcome applications from candidates that help us broaden our own experience within the team.</p>
Expected tasks and outcomes
<p>Tasks and outputs will be discussed with the student, but will likely include:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Investigation of Library holdings of contemporary British artists’ books and poetry pamphlets; • Background reading on the subject of British artists’ books and poetry pamphlets; • Contact with libraries, authors, artists and publishers; and • Contribution to planning for a public event on artists’ books. <p>Outputs will include:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Posts for the BL’s blogs and related material on poetry publishing and artists’ books; • A public event on artists’ books (this will be developed with Contemporary British Publications team) • A proposal for an engagement activity on the themes of art, poetry and politics – suggesting publications, people and topics to cover and opportunities to engage with other libraries in the UK; and • Written and other outputs in support of the 10th anniversary of the Michael Marks Awards for Poetry Pamphlets.

Training and experience expected to be gained by student through the placement

The student will have the opportunity to work with, and learn from, the Contemporary British Publications team. Induction will include an introduction to artists' books collections at the Library and to small press and poetry pamphlet collections. The student will be part of the Contemporary British Publications team and will be included in team meetings and other communications to understand how their work fits with the wider objectives of the team and with policy and strategy for Contemporary British Publications.

The student will have access to wider training across the Library, for example in Digital Scholarship skills.

This placement will develop the student's skills in delivering impact from research through engagement with diverse audiences. The student will be encouraged to plan and take a leading role in one public event on contemporary poetry or artists' books. Through the placement, the student will gain insight into the collection policies (and decision making) in Contemporary British Publications, and engagement strategy development. The student will work with a rich collection of artists' books and poetry pamphlets, providing insight into the wider ecology of publishing in the UK.

Required knowledge and skills

Existing research knowledge and interest in contemporary art and poetry in the UK would be desirable, but is not essential.

This is a training and development opportunity open to current PhD students only. It is not intended to lead to a permanent post at the Library. Please note that the Library is unable to provide a stipend for PhD research placements. Applicants must obtain the support of their PhD supervisor and Graduate Tutor (or someone in an equivalent senior academic management role) in advance and, as part of their process, consult their HEI to ascertain what funding is available to support them.