

Art, poetry and memory: Contemporary UK Artists' Books

Reference: 2019-8-COO

Supervisor	Ian Cooke, Head of Contemporary British Publications
Department, Location	Contemporary British Collections - St Pancras, London
Start date/timeframe	This placement can take place any time in 2019.
Duration	3 months (or part-time equivalent). For a part-time placement, the student would be required to spend a minimum of 2 days/week on site at the Library.
Remote-working	If required, the placement could be undertaken working from home for 2 days per week (or part-time equivalent).
Context for placement	
<p>Contemporary British Publications is responsible for the Library's collections of all UK published works in the 21st century. This includes a diverse collection of Artists' Books, fine press publications and art and poetry publications from independent presses in the UK. All these types of publications can be thought of as "complex" and can be difficult to discover, but nevertheless present great opportunities to create a sense of wonder in our collections, and also to explore a wide range of themes and experience.</p> <p>In 2019, we would like to investigate how our contemporary Artists' Books collections can help us explore the theme of memory. We are looking for a PhD student to explore both what is in our collections and also the work that UK book artists are conducting on this theme. For example, we would be interested in finding out more about collaborations between book artists and scientists on the theme of memory, or collaborations between book artists and community groups on themes of shared memory. Our collections celebrate the diversity of experience in the UK in the 21st century, and we would encourage work that helps us build inclusivity in our collections.</p>	
Expected tasks and outcomes	
<p>The placement tasks will include:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • A survey of collections of UK artists books relating to the theme of memory (e.g. using our catalogue to identify relevant materials; desk research on related themes) • Research on current practice and projects, in particular where there is collaboration between artists and scientific research, or collaboration between artists and community projects • Generating ideas for public engagement with our collections; and supporting existing public engagement initiatives, such as the Library's event series 'Artists Books Now' • Other work related to public engagement with collections <p>Alongside contribution to activities within the team, the placement student will be supported in:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Writing blog posts related to the project • Producing a final report, with recommendations where appropriate • Planning and delivering public engagement activities 	
Training and experience expected to be gained by student through the placement	
<p>This placement offers an opportunity to work with nationally significant collection of UK Artists' Books that is hugely rich and varied. The student will have staff-level access to Library collections and will gain an insight into the day-to-day life of a busy curatorial team and an experience of working within a large cultural institution.</p> <p>The focus of the activity will be on wider public engagement, to audiences outside of Higher Education and the placement will thus offer a valuable opportunity to develop communication skills with varied audiences. The project will require the development of organisational and time management skills, to deliver a mix of activities within the timeframe of the placement.</p> <p>The student will be part of the Contemporary British Publications team for the duration of the placement and the student will be encouraged to participate in team meetings, meet with colleagues in other parts of the Library (including other PhD students), and contribute to the activities of the Contemporary British</p>	

Publications team as a whole. The Contemporary British Publications team covers a range of activities and specialisms, including digital maps, web archiving, independent press and zines alongside artists' books. The student will have opportunities to find out more about these activities and the roles involved with them.

The student will also be encouraged to take advantage of staff training opportunities available during the placement, for example in writing for the web and digital scholarship.

Required knowledge and skills

- Research interests in visual arts and writing
- Knowledge of, and an interest in, 21st century UK artists' books
- Experience of collaborations between scientific research, art and literature, or between artists, writers and community groups, would be an advantage.

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 in advance and, as part of their process, consult their HEI to ascertain what funding is available to support them.

Application deadline: 5pm on Monday, **18 February 2019**. Information on how to apply is available on our website: <https://www.bl.uk/news/2019/january/phd-research-placements-2019>