

GRADUATE RESEARCH ASSISTANTSHIPS 2009-10

Graduate Research Assistantships at the Yale University Art Gallery and the Yale Center for British Art are designed to provide Yale University doctoral students, in their second through sixth year, the opportunity to work as part of the 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 or intended only for those students who wish to pursue a museum career, students gain in-depth knowledge of the scholarly and logistical aspects of exhibition preparation as well as 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. Six research assistantships will be awarded, four at the Center and three at the Gallery.

Applicants for research assistant positions at the Gallery may also be considered for Gallery curatorial assistantships.

Curatorial assistantships are different from research assistantships at the Gallery in that they are open to students from all disciplines, involve a flexible number of work hours, and may not be substituted for teaching requirements.

Process of Application

The application process for research assistant positions 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. Short-listed applicants will be called for an interview with representatives from the faculty and museum staff. It is suggested that students seek the approval of their Director of Graduate Studies (DGS) before applying.

DEADLINE FOR APPLICATIONS:

March 27, 2009

Short-listed applicants will be called for an interview in mid-April.

Financial Terms and Duration

The stipend for each semester will be commensurate with the 2009–10 graduate student teaching fellow stipend for 17.5 hours per week.

Research assistantships are normally held over two semesters. They are initially awarded for one semester and are renewed for the second semester after a mid-year 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 semester, the student may be allowed to continue on a part-time basis, but the term “research assistant” will not apply during this third semester.

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/she holds the position.

Depending on the project that is selected, please send or e-mail (as an attached Word document) a letter of application and curriculum vitae to the appropriate museum coordinator:

YALE UNIVERSITY ART GALLERY

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203.432.0941

YALE CENTER FOR BRITISH ART

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Yale University Art Gallery

Project 1

John La Farge exhibition and African-American art exhibition
Department of Prints, Drawings, and Photographs
Supervised by Lisa Hodermarsky, the Sutphin
Family Associate Curator of Prints, Drawings, and
Photographs, and Pamela Franks, Deputy Director for
Collections and Education

The Gallery is seeking a research assistant to work on two exhibitions that focus primarily on American works on paper: the first, an exhibition of the work of John La Farge (1835–1910); the second, a student-organized exhibition of African-American art from the Gallery’s collection, to be coproduced with graduate students from the University of Maryland. The research assistant would divide their weekly 17.5 hours between these two exhibition projects.

The exhibition *John La Farge’s Second Paradise: Voyages in the South Seas, 1890–1891* (Yale University Art Gallery, October 19, 2010–January 2, 2011; Addison Gallery of American Art, January 22–March 27, 2011) focuses on the artist’s watercolors, oils, and sketches from his fifteen-month journey in 1890–91 to the islands of the South Pacific with the historian Henry Adams. The exhibition will examine the “lure of the Pacific” for artists and writers of the nineteenth century who were drawn there by notions of a tropical paradise that had perpetuated since the “discovery” of Polynesia by eighteenth-century explorers such as Captain James Cook, Louis-Antoine Bougainville, and Samuel Wallis. The research assistant will work under the supervision of exhibition organizer Lisa Hodermarsky, the Sutphin Family Associate Curator of Prints, Drawings, and Photographs. Becoming immersed in the scholarship on this aspect of the artist’s career, the research assistant’s responsibilities will include authoring the exhibition brochure and working on the final stages of catalogue preparation. A background in American art of the late nineteenth century, as well as an interest in (and preferably some knowledge of) the fin-de-siècle cultures of Samoa, Tahiti, and Fiji, are required.

The research assistant will also be a coorganizer of the student-organized exhibition of African-American art from the Gallery’s collection. This select group of students – primarily graduate students from Yale University and the University of Maryland – will work under the supervision

of Pamela Franks, Deputy Director for Collections and Education at the Gallery, and Robert E. Steele, Executive Director of the David C. Driskell Center at the University of Maryland. The students will be responsible for all aspects of the exhibition, including the selection of objects, writing of catalogue entries and wall texts, and installation of the exhibition at both the University of Maryland (fall 2010) and at the Gallery (spring 2011).

Project 2

Charles B. Benenson Collection of African Art

Department of African Art

Supervised by Frederick John Lamp, the Frances and Benjamin Benenson Foundation Curator of African Art

The research assistant will aid the curator in a project that will result in a catalogue of the collection of Charles B. Benenson, B.A. 1933, who donated a group of 587 objects of African art to the Gallery in 2004. A text will be written by the curator and research assistants concerning the history of Benenson's collection, using testimony from his professional advisers, family, close friends, and African-art dealers. The focus will be on the personal experiences of Benenson's family and associates, who have lived with or rubbed shoulders with the objects in his collection before and during his ownership, and on the continuing life of objects after having left Africa to reside in dealers' hands and in private collections, acknowledging that the histories of most African-art objects lie as much outside Africa as within. Collected by the curator, museum assistant, and the research assistants, the stories will emphasize human interaction, emotions, and aesthetic enjoyment. This will be an excellent opportunity for a graduate student to contribute to a major publication, *Continuing Life Histories of African Art: The Collection of Charles B. Benenson at the Yale University Art Gallery*, to be published in 2012.

Project 3

Charles B. Benenson Collection of Modern and Contemporary Art

Department of Modern and Contemporary Art

Supervised by Jennifer R. Gross, the Seymour H. Knox, Jr., Curator of Modern and Contemporary Art, and Susan Greenberg Fisher, the Horace W. Goldsmith Associate Curator of Modern and Contemporary Art

The Department of Modern and Contemporary Art seeks a graduate research assistant to support the curators in the publication of a catalogue of the Charles B. Benenson, B.A. 1933, Collection of modern and contemporary art, which includes works by Jean-Michel Basquiat, Stuart Davis, Gilbert and George, R. B. Kitaj, Pablo Picasso, Kurt Schwitters, David Smith, and David Wojnarowicz, among others. Researching and writing scholarly entries on a selection of works for the publication, the research assistant will also compile a tombstone index of the entire collection and undertake research on Charles Benenson and his collecting practices in the late twentieth century.

Yale Center for British Art

Project 1

British Art and Literature at Yale: Teaching with the Collections

Research Department

Supervised by Martina Droth, Head of Research, and Imogen Hart, Postdoctoral Research Associate

This post, which is part of an Andrew W. Mellon Foundation initiative, will fund a graduate research assistant, preferably an art history major, to work with the Head of Research and the department's Postdoctoral Research Associate to assist Janice Carlisle, Professor of English, in designing a course to be taught from the collections of the Center. The research assistant will undertake such tasks as: exploring the collections for suitable material; researching bibliographic information; preparing reading lists; liaising between different departments of the Center, such as curatorial and conservation; and working with Professor Carlisle and the Research Department on the use of visual material in the classroom. In keeping with the interests of Professor Carlisle, the graduate student's research should complement the professor's interest in the connections between Victorian visual culture, ranging from history painting to graphic journalism, and Victorian fiction (1830s–1870), with an emphasis on Charles Dickens, which she will be using as her main focus.

Project 2

*Research in the Rare Books and Manuscripts Collection:
Interpretation and Accessibility*

Rare Book and Manuscripts Collection

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

The research assistant will work on one of two projects in the Center's Rare Books and Manuscripts Collection, either of which could be continued for the full year or just a semester. The research assistant must choose one of two specific collection areas: 1) the James Bruce Archive, which contains journals, letters, drawings, and watercolors relating to Bruce's eighteenth-century expedition to discover the source of the Nile; or, 2) a collection of eighteenth- and nineteenth-century artists' letters. The goal of this project is to make both collections more accessible to students and researchers by conducting research in the archive; identifying subjects of interest to not only art historians but also social, political, and cultural historians; and creating detailed finding aids for use by scholars. The Bruce Archive is of interest to students pursuing natural history, the history of scientific expeditions, exploration, or diplomatic history, particularly of the relations between Britain and Algiers in the eighteenth century; the artists' letters provide materials for a study of social and cultural relationships, life in cosmopolitan cities, and artistic practice and social networks in eighteenth- and nineteenth-century Europe. The research assistantship, which is funded by the Andrew W. Mellon Foundation, includes travel for any necessary related research in other collections.

Project 3

Thomas Lawrence exhibition

Department of Paintings and Sculpture

Supervised by Cassandra Albinson, Assistant Curator of Paintings and Sculpture

The research assistant will work with curator Cassandra Albinson, Assistant Curator of Paintings and Sculpture, on a retrospective of the portrait painter Thomas Lawrence (1769–1830). The research assistant's primary responsibility will be to assemble a bio-chronology of the artist's life that is meant to provide a much-needed road map of Lawrence's career for future art historians,

and its preparation will be of immense importance in the preparation of the exhibition. The bio-chronology will be a year-by-year accounting of Lawrence's major artistic and social achievements, allowing for a better understanding of the relationships between individual paintings and the wider social network within which the artist worked. Each year's entry will include a list of all known manuscript sources that can be dated to that year. Funds will be made available for a research trip to Britain to locate documents. The research assistant's work will be fully credited, including the possibility of publication of the bio-chronology in the exhibition catalogue.

Project 4

Johann Zoffany exhibition

Department of Prints and Drawings

Supervised by Gillian Forrester, Curator of Prints and Drawings, and Martin Postle, Assistant Director of the Paul Mellon Centre, London

The research assistant will work with Gillian Forrester, Associate Curator of Prints and Drawings, and Martin Postle, the Assistant Director of the Paul Mellon Centre in London, who is serving as the organizing curator on an exhibition at the Center focused on the history and work of portrait painter Johann Zoffany (1733–1810). The research assistant will participate in the shaping of a groundbreaking exhibition on this major European artist, whose career comprised extended stays in his native Germany, Italy, India, and Austria, as well as thirty-seven years in Britain, his adopted country. Funds will be made available for any research trips deemed necessary by the curatorial team.