

Six-Month Curatorial Fellowship

Hosted by the Herbert Art Gallery and Museum,
Coventry Heritage and Arts Trust
Initiated by The Contemporary Art Society for
The Centenary Programme

The Bursary for the six month Fellowship: - £9,000

Fee to include the Fellows time in planning and managing programming outcome. The Fellowship to take place during 2010 programming outcomes are likely to take place during 2011.

Curatorial Practice and the Museum

The development and initiation of a Contemporary Art Strategy for
collecting and programming at The Herbert

The Contemporary Art Society will be celebrating its centenary throughout 2010. The Centenary Programme will include a range of events activities and opportunities that will take place in partnership with our sixty-three member museums across the UK.

Working closely with the Contemporary Art Society, the Herbert Museum & Art Gallery is offering a six month Curatorial Fellowship. We would welcome applications from curators who can bring fresh knowledge, thinking and ideas to the museum teams at the Herbert Art Gallery and Museum. The following information provides some background and context for this Fellowship.

Aims and Objectives of the opportunity:

The Contemporary Art Society has received support from Arts Council England to initiate three curatorial fellowships as part of the organisation's Centenary Programme. Two six month fellowships will be hosted within museums; the Fellow will work closely with the museum collections including developing strategy and new ways of working with contemporary, modern and sometimes historic collections. The participating museums are the Herbert Art Gallery and Museum and Art Gallery, Coventry and Nottingham Castle Museum and Art Gallery. The third Fellowship will be based within the offices of the Contemporary Art Society and will work with the team to generate an on-line facility for our museum members and to work with us to further develop the programme for the National Network. A national programme of professional development of arts professionals that takes as its starting point the 'idea' of the collection.

The Fellowships, based within the collections, aim to bring new contemporary art expertise right to the heart of the teams working within the museums. The initiative is designed to offer the Fellow experience of working with a collection of modern and contemporary art. The Fellow will play an important role in planning the development of and the access to the collection for a mainstream audience and have the opportunity to contribute to the creative programme in 2011.

The Background to the Opportunity at the Herbert:

The mission statement of Coventry Heritage and Arts Trust is to work with the people of Coventry to explore and celebrate the creativity and cultural heritage of all of its communities. The Trust manages three museums: the Herbert Art Gallery and Museum, the Priory Visitor Centre and the Lunt Roman Fort.

In October 2008, the Herbert completed a £20m re-development that saw new temporary exhibition galleries and redisplay of the permanent collections. In addition to the art gallery and museum, the Herbert includes creative media studios, learning facilities and a history centre housing the city's archives and local history materials.

The activities of the Coventry Heritage & Arts Trust are predicated on the following beliefs and principles.

- That this publicly funded cultural service has a duty to provide a resource for the whole community that it serves and that the social, educational, cultural and recreational aspects of the service we provide are of equal value and importance.
- That our buildings will be a place for the people of Coventry to meet, celebrate and understand the nature of themselves and their communities.
- That the galleries & museum should endeavour to reflect truthfully and recreate poetically the world and its people, beliefs, ideas, conflicts, and cultures.
- That we have a duty to dedicate energy and resources to those groups that have been under-represented in this country's galleries & museums tradition, on the grounds of gender, age, disability, class, race and sexual orientation.
- That the development of both intellectual & emotional empathy through the use of the imagination is an important factor in personal and social health.

- That the arts and heritage can enable a change in the framework within which an individual sees their life and that this change can help to alter & reframe difficulties.
- That everyone has creative and artistic abilities, and we should endeavor, through encouragement, participation and example, to enable people, both within and without our profession to fulfil their creative potential.

Aims & Aspirations of the Herbert:

To create work of quality, daring, delight and accomplishment.

To present and create work in our buildings and elsewhere, that offers a diverse mix of entertainment, and aesthetic enjoyment.

To offer the buildings, and our knowledge, skills and experience as a resource to local people.

To encourage both viewing and participation in the cultural work we engage in.

To give best value in all aspects of our operation, including the work in our galleries, education and community projects, and visitor facilities.

To work in active partnership with business, education, community and arts organizations, and local authority service providers to extend both the range and reach of our work.

To invite a wide range of artists and other professionals to explore the creative possibilities of working at the Trust's facilities.

To expand the service offered to existing and potential customers by developing the building as a venue for touring theatre, concerts and other events.

Background to Visual Arts and Digital Media in the Herbert

1. The Collection

The strengths of the visual arts collection are in certain areas of modern and contemporary visual arts and include some world arts. They include:

British Life & Landscape Collection - Of particular importance are Stanley Spencer and Lowry. Items acquired by the City Council before the opening of The Herbert Art Gallery and Museum in 1960 – these include European Old Master paintings such as 'Bacchus and Ariadne', (1677) by Luca Giordano, portraits, views of the city, sculptures, prints, images of Lady Godiva, British and non-British Still-life, Landscape, Seascape, History and Genre paintings, Asian artistic crafts, civic gifts from other cities and work by local artists.

Crafts Collections – these include ceramics and bronzes from China, Korea, Japan, the Middle East and Native America, and also art and folk ceramics. *Design Object Collection* - include items relating to modern style and to the transition in art from the pre-Modern to the Modern. There are examples of objects in the Arts and Crafts, Art Nouveau and Art Deco style.

Figure Drawings Collection - A drawing by Fuseli is particularly important.

Industrial Art Collection - Started as a collection to celebrate Coventry's industrial heritage, works include 'Limekilns' by Joseph Turner and a version of 'Ironbridge' by Michaelangelo Rooker.

Modern and Contemporary Art Collection – this includes the Life Collection of Graham Sutherland's studies for Coventry Cathedral tapestry Also notable are works by David Bomberg

(paintings and drawings), a keynote Vorticist work by Roberts ('Shell Burst'), an important John Piper, a large Ben Nicholson painting, a large Hepworth bronze, and works by Joe Tilson, Terry Atkinson, Susan Hiller, Cornelia Parker and Mona Hatoum. There is a current focus on digital art and moving media typified by the CAS acquired piece 'Playground' by Maria Marshall.

Performance Object Collection – these include Far Eastern religious and South Asian performance scrolls, Japanese prints of the theatre and kites, and painted crafted, modelled and sculpted material.

Topographical views - the majority are of Coventry. Topographical views have also been collected as part of the Warwickshire Watercolours collection, the British Life and Landscape collection, the collection of work by local artists and as material supporting the understanding and interpretation of these collections.

Warwickshire Watercolours Collection - of note is a work by Holman Hunt.

Works by Local Artists

2. Creative Programme

The Herbert Art Gallery and Museum creative programme has a strong tradition of art-based exhibitions of a varied nature including digital art such as Kinopixel in 2008. 'Through Other Eyes' in 2009 saw contemporary artwork from emerging artists in India and Pakistan displayed in the UK for the first time. The temporary exhibition programme over the next two years include a varied number of contemporary art exhibitions: 'From Here to There' will display selected artwork from the Arts Council Collection. The Coventry Open and Coventry Arts Consortium sees the best of local and regional artists work displayed at the gallery. Street Art, a travelling show from the V&A will explore graffiti art. Models and Metaphors is an exhibition by local Art and Language artist David Rushton. Early in 2012 there will be an exhibition of new work by acclaimed Coventry-born artist George Shaw.

3. Herbert Media

Herbert Media was formed in Coventry in 1990 as the Depot Studios delivering film production, audio production, creative media training and media hire facilities. It relocated to The Herbert Art Gallery and Museum, Coventry in 2005 and is now an integral department within its newly refurbished £20 million development.

What Herbert Media does?

- Creation of content for gallery interactive and AV support and installations for exhibitions.
- Digital Art projects and exhibitions.
- Events production.
- Film production; from scripting and planning through to filming, editing and duplication.
- Recording studio sessions.
- Training in audio, video and a host of new media applications; including bespoke courses for groups and organisations, and in-house delivery of traditional qualifications for schools and colleges.
- Room and studio hire for talks, workshops, training and production.

- Film production equipment hires; such as cameras, microphones, lighting, tripods and other support equipment.

Facilities:

- Two broadcast standard video edit suites.
- A fully equipped new media ICT training suite running graphic design, video editing, web development, audio production and animation software applications.
- A professional digital recording studio.
- A full range of video production equipment including cameras, microphones, lighting and support equipment.

Job Description

General:

The advice and experience that the Fellow will be able to offer, after a period of being based within the Museum, will provide the Herbert with a strategic insight that will filter in to their long term plan. In return the fellow will have gained an understanding of the challenges and opportunities that are offered in relation to management and presentation of contemporary art in a large and public facing museum.

The Fellow will work on a part time basis (pro rata three days a week over six months) within the staff team at the Herbert. They will be based within the museum's offices.

The Fellow will bring with them adequate curatorial experience which will enable them to contribute to and produce elements of a long-term strategic plan towards the role and development of contemporary art at the Herbert. It will be this, in parallel to a more practical programming event or exhibition that will bring a legacy to the Fellowship that the Herbert and the CAS, in partnership, are keen to see.

There will be two primary outcome of the fellowship:

Firstly: to develop a strategy for contemporary art and the art collection at The Herbert. This should be done with the support of senior managers at The Herbert and be based on the existing collection and organisational objectives. Such a strategy should include a plan for managing and interpreting contemporary art both in the collection and through the creative programme, and include an approach to core staff development, identifying, through discussion, funding streams for collection development.

Secondly: The Fellow will be offered the opportunity to research and deliver an exhibition or event at The Herbert linked to the public programme. This will be planned for a programming slot in 2011. The Herbert and the CAS will work with the Fellow to support this programming idea where this is required.

The Aims of the Strategy:

The Herbert Art Gallery & Museum (The Herbert) would like to use this opportunity of a six month Curatorial Fellowship to establish a strategy for the development of the contemporary art collection and how this would animate the modern and historic collections. The thinking for the strategy would consider the role of contemporary art at The Herbert, for the collection and for the exhibition and overall creative programme. The strategy should explore new ways of generating greater and varied opportunities for public access to the collection and help to enhance core staff skills and knowledge of contemporary art.

One particular area of focus for the Herbert is digital and media art, and the Fellow will have some specific experience and knowledge within this field. (For full list of person specifications see attached sheet). The Herbert has a dedicated media team and extensive facilities as well as an established partnership with Coventry University's School of Art and Design.

Some of the Fellow's time initially will be spent on practical and pragmatic aspects of managing and presenting the collection. At first you will be asked to spend some time liaising with different museum teams such as curatorial, conservation, learning and exhibition staff to establish an overall understanding of the way in which the museum works; what the priorities are and what the requirements are for the collection care, interpretation and display. This may include some research or discussion with existing experts outside of the museum to draw the knowledge in to the Herbert.

The Fellow will become familiar with the aims of the Renaissance-funded Herbert 2.0 project, and liaise with the team to consider synergies between the objectives of the project and the development of contemporary art in the organisation.

The Fellow will have the opportunity to contribute to publications and promotional material including the Herbert's web site.

A purchase for the collection:

As well as the bursary for the Fellowship the Contemporary Art Society will offer a sum of up to £5,000 to purchase a work for the Herbert's collection during the Fellowship or as a culmination of the Fellow's exhibition. The Fellow will work with the Herbert and the Contemporary Art Society to agree this purchase and to draw it in to the collection in an appropriate way.

Person Specifications

Requirement	Tested through Application (A) or Interview (I)
Knowledge and experience	
A specialist knowledge of Contemporary Art and in particular digital and media art	A, I
Three years minimum experience of working as a curator – some of this time within an institution or working within a mixed staff team	A
Awareness of issues relating to audience development	A, I
Experience of generating ideas through substantial research	A, I
Skills and Abilities Essential	
Ability to work effectively on own initiative and as part of multi-disciplinary team	A, I
Ability to lead on researching, developing and delivering projects as required	A, I
Excellent communications skills and an ability to assist other professionals to learn from your experience	A, I
Well organised and able to work on several projects simultaneously	A, I
Ability to work to tight deadlines	A, I
Ability to interpret the work of contemporary artists and make often complex ideas clear to a wide audience	A, I
Effective written communication skills	A
ICT skills sufficient to use a word processor and a database package	A
Ability to initiate partnerships and develop networks with other related institutions as well as museum professionals and professionals in other fields related to contemporary art	A, I
Experience, Skills and Abilities that are Desirable	
Some awareness of the challenges, possibilities and opportunities presented when working with a public collections of contemporary art in a curatorial capacity	A, I
Applicants must be able to show a sustainable interest in and dynamic sense of enquiry in to public collections of contemporary art and the possibilities and issues of collecting media & digital art.	A, I
Experience of developing a collections development strategy	A, I
Experience of identifying funding streams and making funding applications	A, I
Education	
A Postgraduate qualification in a related subject: - curatorial studies, contemporary art history or other related subject	A
Or: A substantial period working as a curator working within the specialism of contemporary art and the field of media and digital art	A

How to make an application:

We welcome applications from curators who have not had previous experience of working with collections, it is important however to demonstrate an interest in working with collections that could be sustained and developed throughout the Fellowship and beyond.

Please complete the application form provided. This Statement of Application should be structured around the following questions and take full account of the details provided within this pack and the person specifications.

1. How you would apply your existing curatorial research and current interests within the context of this Fellowship and the main priorities and opportunities that have been set out in the job description.
2. What is your curatorial experience to date and how can you use this experience in your approach to the Fellowship
3. What project management and organisational experience have you had and how would you bring this to work within the staff team at the Herbert
4. Why is this an important opportunity for you and how would you use this experience in the future

Applications should be submitted by 5pm on **Monday 1 February** by email to:
nationalprogrammes@contemporaryartsociety.org

The start date is negotiable, but is anticipated to be in April/May 2010.

Interviews will take place at the Herbert Art Gallery and Museum on Monday 15th February 2010

If you would like further information please contact:-

Chris Kirby at the Herbert Art Gallery and Museum christopher.kirby@theherbert.org

Lucy Byatt at the Contemporary Art Society lucybyatt@contemporaryartsociety.org

