History of Art @Nottingham

Department of History of Art Newsletter 2014-15

Celebrating art history and visual culture

- **Peer mentoring scheme**
  - Helping students settle into university life

- **Photography after dark**
  - Work by leading artists on show in campus gallery

- **Professional placements**
  - Gain valuable creative industry experience
Welcome to the Department of History of Art

The Department of History of Art has a unique and friendly ethos and you'll be taught by and research alongside staff who feel as passionately about the subject as you do. We have a proven track record of employability with students beginning a diverse range of careers across the cultural industries and beyond.

Our academic teaching is second to none: in the last National Student Survey, the department achieved a 95% student satisfaction rating, and in the last Research Assessment Exercise, the research of our staff placed us in the top 10 of UK History of Art departments. We're committed to providing student support and training; we have a peer mentoring scheme to guide new students through their first year and a student-run curatorial group called Crop-Up Gallery.

Dr Mark Rawlinson
Head of the Department of History of Art

Crop-Up Gallery 100 heroes

An exhibition celebrating the centenary of Nottingham’s Students’ Union was organised by Crop-Up Gallery, our very own student-run curatorial group.

The major 100 Heroes exhibition represented members of the University community past and present who have made a special contribution to life at Nottingham. Among those nominated by staff and students for inclusion in the exhibition were History of Art lecturer Dr Gabriele Neher, and the student founder of Crop-Up Gallery, History of Art alumna Charlotte Hopson.

Charlotte was recognised and represented in the exhibition by a work of art commissioned from the contemporary cake artist Connie Viney.

Crop-Up Gallery offers its members the opportunity to gain valuable professional experience and to build links with the thriving local arts community, by taking up temporary residence at established exhibition spaces in the city.

Peer mentoring scheme is a success

An innovative peer mentoring scheme pioneered by the Department of History of Art has been rolled out across the University’s three international campuses following its success in helping new students settle into university life.

Initiated in 2012, the peer mentoring scheme pairs first year students with more experienced colleagues in their second or third years. Mentors then advise their younger colleagues on everything from module choice and extracurricular activities to local transport and takeaways.

As well as benefiting new arrivals, the scheme allows mentors to develop valuable leadership skills, encourages a sense of community and social responsibility, and improves students’ overall engagement with their degree.

The expansion of the scheme across all departments in the UK, China and Malaysia has been spearheaded by Dr Gabriele Neher.

She said: “For 2015/16, every student coming into The University of Nottingham for their first year, regardless of course and irrespective of which campus, will have the opportunity to work with a senior student as part of their transition into university life.”
An exhibition showcasing the work of three leading American photographers has been curated on campus by our own Dr Mark Rawlinson.

And Now It’s Dark: American Night Photography features photography from Jeff Brouws, Todd Hido and Will Steacy. The exhibition charts an ongoing interest in photographing the world at night, from early photographs that celebrate the newly electrified landscape of cities such as New York, to those that present the darker side of nocturnal landscapes, revealing both the optimism felt at the turn of the 20th century, and its decline.

The works explore the ways in which light transforms the darkness, turning the metropolis into an illuminated spectacle, or revealing what’s hidden, overlooked or unacknowledged.

Brouws’ road journeys through America are captured in images of glowing headlamps and neon signage, the illuminated attractions and distractions of the American roadside combining to produce a troubling picture of commercial encroachment and the reshaping of the landscape. Steacy’s Down These Mean Streets series, produced during a series of ‘night walks’, document abandoned places and ‘peripheral’ resident populations. And Hido’s night photographs are imbued with a psychological tension and emotional drama that underpin the suburban American landscape.

And Now It’s Dark is the result of Dr Rawlinson’s research into American photography and visual culture, and is the latest event in a long-standing collaborative relationship between the Djanogly Art Gallery and the Department of History of Art. The exhibition runs until November 2014. Find out more at www.lakesidearts.org.uk

Art, Theatre, and Opera in Paris, 1750-1850: exchanges and tensions

This collected volume of essays (Ashgate, 2014) maps the complex and vivid connections between art, theatre, and opera in a period of vigorous social, political, and cultural change and contestation in the 18th and 19th centuries, when the status and role of the arts and their interrelation came to be a matter of passionate public scrutiny. Scholars from art history, French, theatre studies and musicology trace some of those connections and clashes, making visible the intimately interwoven and entangled world of the arts. It was co-edited by the department’s Richard Wrigley and Sarah Hibberd.

In July, the Nottingham Institute for Research in Visual Culture (NIRVC), based in the Department of History of Art, held a successful international conference on The Mobile Spectator: Viewing on the Move, organised by Dr Ting Chang and Professor Richard Wrigley. Scholars in a range of disciplines presented papers that focused on the relationship between art, vision, and movement across a wide range of periods and geographies.

Graduate profile: Chris Baker, BA Art History

“At some point in my final year of university I was asked what my plans were by a campus journalist, so I joked that my understanding of visual semantics would probably lead me to a career in advertising and marketing.

I got my first break in the communications team at Liberal Democrat HQ, where I got a taste of working in a national press office. Shortly after, I joined a small team launching The Lightbox, a new gallery in Woking, first as a volunteer, but soon in a paid position as a press officer.

A year later The Lightbox was long-listed for the Art Fund Prize for Museums and Galleries, run at the time by Colman Getty, a leading independent cultural PR agency. I got on really well with the team there and provided them with lots of information and ideas to help their campaign.

We won the prize, and two days later I had a call from one of the associate directors asking me to come in for an interview. I’ve been there ever since, working with a huge variety of clients across culture and campaigning.

Personal highlights so far have included working with Foyles, launching their new flagship bookshop in the summer; being part of the team that got the crowd-funded publisher Unbound off the ground; and three years with the London Art Fair and New Designers.

Along the way I’ve been given exactly the kind of insight into the creative industries I was looking for post-degree and feel very fortunate to have found a role in which I can apply my critical skills, knowledge and passion for the arts.”

A PhD student researching the cultural impact of the photocopier has spent six months studying in the collections of the Library of Congress in Washington DC.

Evan Jones was awarded a prestigious fellowship from the Arts and Humanities Research Council which also allowed him to visit the Special Collections at the University of Iowa and New York University. His research has unearthed an impressive array of copy art, comic books, fanzines and other works made with the Xerox machine that will be vital to his project.

Evan said: “Being able to spend six months using the archives held by the Library of Congress has been amazing. The scope of the collections I’ve worked with, the knowledge of the people and the ability to access materials only available in the USA has drastically altered the depth of my own knowledge and the direction of my thesis. The experience also afforded me the opportunity to further develop a network of people who I hope to keep in contact with throughout my academic career. All in all it’s been an experience I’ll never forget.”

Funding for research

The School of Humanities is delighted to be part of a successful bid to the Arts and Humanities Research Council of £14.6m to support doctoral research training.

The Midlands3Cities Doctoral Training Partnership will be offering 87 studentships for commencement of study in 2015 across six universities in Nottingham, Birmingham and Leicester. Find out more: www.nottingham.ac.uk/go/history-of-art/phd-funding

Art and the American Midwest

A new research project directed by Dr Lucy Bradnock and Dr Mark Rawlinson investigates the ways in which the American Midwest has been represented, visualised, and staged in art and visual culture. It explores the ways in which the cultural, economic, geographic and topographic specificity of the Midwest has been reflected in art and cultural production both within the region and without, and investigates what the Midwest has represented in the American cultural imaginary.

www.nottingham.ac.uk/history-of-art/american-midwest

Study abroad

Four undergraduate history of art students have been accepted onto the highly competitive Universitas 21 study abroad programme this year.

Costanza Bergo will visit the University of New South Wales, Georgina Lerego and Emily Ward will study at Australia National University, Canberra, and Iseabail Rowe will go to McGill University in Montreal. All will spend a full semester in 2014-15 at their host institutions. Find out more:

www.nottingham.ac.uk/go/history-of-art/study-abroad

Professional placements

Professional placements organised by our Graduate School can help postgraduates gain valuable experience in an arts environment.

MA student Holly Kemish undertook her placement as a learning officer at Nottingham Lakeside Arts. Holly, who plans to pursue a career in the gallery and museum sector, has gained practical skills assisting with family programmes at the Djanogly Art Gallery.

www.nottingham.ac.uk/history-of-art/placements

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t: +44 (0)115 951 5559
e: alternativeformats@nottingham.ac.uk

The University of Nottingham has made every effort to ensure that the information in this newsletter was accurate when published. Please note, however, that the nature of the content means that it is subject to change from time to time and you should therefore consider the information to be guiding rather than definitive.

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www.nottingham.ac.uk/studywithus

Get involved

University of Nottingham Art History
@nottsarthistory

For further information please contact:
Department of History of Art
University Park, Nottingham
NG7 2RD

t: +44 (0)115 951 3185
e: history-of-art@nottingham.ac.uk
w: www.nottingham.ac.uk/history-of-art