



Collaborative Doctoral Award The History of the Photographic Picture Postcard

**The British Museum
The Department of History, University of Nottingham**

The British Museum in partnership with the University of Nottingham invites applications from suitably qualified UK/EU candidates for a full-time Collaborative Doctoral Award, funded by the UK Arts and Humanities Research Council, to conduct research on the following theme:

Site-Seeing: Postcards of the Middle East & the Visual Construction of Place, 1890s to 1990s

How is a sense of place visually constructed and communicated? How do certain views of places or landscapes become iconic, transforming 'sites' into 'sights'? How do these authoritative images evolve in the context of wider political, social and economic changes? The PhD research will examine the role of the picture postcard as a crucial technology of twentieth-century visual culture and modern place-making. To do so, it will draw principally on the British Museum's expansive new collection of postcards of the Middle East, spanning colonial and postcolonial periods, and analyse the production and use of these postcards both as visual media and as material objects.

Indicative research questions. 1. *Postcard production.* (i) What key visual tropes did postcards employ in their representation of Middle Eastern landscapes and sites? (ii) How did images of place, people and nature evolve over time, and how did changes relate to wider political, social, cultural and economic shifts? 2. *Postcard use:* (i) How did postcard senders relate their personal experiences to the generic viewing norms and conventions articulated by the postcard? (ii) How do postcard senders' inscriptions or collectors' captions relate to the pictorial language of the card? (iii) Can we identify patterns in the purchase, circulation and collection of postcards over time, in the context of wider historical changes?

In the first six months of the award, in consultation with the supervisors, and on the basis of their own expertise, training and interests, the student will determine the geographical and chronological focus of their research; the precise research questions and source base; and appropriate research methods, drawing on art historical and visual cultural approaches, archive-based historical analysis and other relevant approaches.

The three-year studentship, to start 1 October 2015, and based in the vibrant research community of the Department of History, Nottingham, offers a unique opportunity for the award-holder to undertake original research leading to a PhD. The student will also be part of the British Museum's lively research environment where they will receive museum induction and curatorial training and will contribute to developing and promoting the museum's postcard collection for public display and engagement.

Supervision will be provided by [Dr. St John Simpson](#) (British Museum) and [Professor Maiken Umbach](#) and [Dr. Nick Baron](#) (both Department of History, University of Nottingham).

Applicants must have:

- A First Class or high Upper Second BA Hons degree in a relevant discipline, such as History, Middle Eastern Studies, Cultural Studies, Art History, Human Geography or Archaeology.
- An MA with Merit or Distinction in a relevant discipline by 1 October 2015.
- Research experience in at least one of the following areas: cultural history (in particular, the history of visual or material culture), the history of the twentieth century Middle East, cultural or historical geography, the history of travel and tourism.
- Residency status meeting AHRC eligibility requirements, as set out in the AHRC 'Student Funding Guide' (see link below). EU students may be eligible for fees-only awards.

Preference may be given to applicants with expertise in the use of digital technologies in research or for research communication and public engagement.

The award will cover University of Nottingham tuition fees and provide the standard AHRC maintenance award for three years. Additionally, the student will receive support from the British Museum of up to £1000 p.a. for approved travel and expenses, as well as a staff pass, a workspace with computer, research library access and staff privileges. Further funding may be available should the student need to undertake fieldwork in the Middle East

Application procedure

Candidates should submit an online University of Nottingham PhD application form, attaching a statement (up to 3 sides of A4), outlining their academic qualifications, relevant research experience and expertise (including language skills), motivation to pursue this Collaborative Doctoral Award and a provisional outline of a research topic within the thematic, chronological and regional parameters given above. The outline should set out indicative aims and objectives, research questions, scholarly context, methods and sources. Candidates must also arrange for two academic references to be submitted to the University of Nottingham by the deadline.

Application and reference forms are available at:

<http://www.nottingham.ac.uk/pgstudy/apply/apply-online.aspx>

In Section 1, please write 'PhD in History' and 'School of Humanities (History)'. In Section 3, please indicate source of funding as 'CDA (British Museum)'.

The deadline for funding applications is **12 noon on Friday 27 February 2015**. Interviews will be held for shortlisted candidates in Nottingham on Tuesday 24 March. Skype interviews will be possible for candidates unable to attend in person.

Informal enquiries regarding the award can be addressed to any of the three supervisors:

- Dr. Simpson (ssimpson@thebritishmuseum.ac.uk)
- Professor Umbach (maiken.umbach@nottingham.ac.uk)
- Dr. Baron (nick.baron@nottingham.ac.uk).

For more information on the AHRC Collaborative Doctoral Award scheme, please [see here](#), and for students' eligibility requirements, please see the AHRC [Student Funding Guide](#).

For more information on the British Museum's current Collaborative Doctoral Awards, [see here](#).

For more information on the Department of History, University of Nottingham, [see here](#).

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