

## **JOB DESCRIPTION**

Job Title: HERA Post-doctoral Research Fellow: Fashioning the Early Modern: Innovation and Creativity in Europe, 1500-1800

Division: Collections

Department/Section: Research/Furniture Textiles & Fashion

Pay band: £25,000 - £27,000 (within V&A Band 5)

Contract: 2.5 years fixed term

Reporting to: Senior Curator Textiles/Deputy Head of Research

### **Purpose of job:**

The HERA (Humanities in the European Research Area) Research Fellow will focus on gathering, analysing and presenting data on creativity and innovation in French fashion, 1500-1800 and on its transmission from one location to another via a number of methods and intermediaries. The research will take place mainly in archives and museums in London, Paris and Lyon. The primary sources will include dictionaries and commercial publications, extant garments and textile sample books, commercial correspondence and bankruptcy papers, inventories and wardrobe accounts. The findings will contribute to the reinterpretation and redisplay of the V&A galleries showing art and design in Europe, 1600-1800. The Fellow will collaborate with the Lead Curator /Principal Investigator and the Galleries Educator in presenting the research findings in appropriate forms and registers for the Museum's purpose, as well as contributing to conferences, workshops and publications organised under the aegis of the Collaborative Project described below.

### **Background:**

Fashioning the Early Modern (FEM) is a HERA Joint Research Project funded under the Innovation and Creativity Programme. This Collaborative Research Project asks how and why certain goods became fashionable in early modern Europe while others failed. It explores the mechanisms through which ideas about innovation and creativity in fashion were transmitted across linguistic, social and geographic borders and examines how these issues can be displayed in a museum context. It demonstrates how the humanities (history, art history, archaeology) help our understanding of creativity and innovation as an economic and cultural force both in the past and in the present. Its objectives are to form a new interdisciplinary European community of academics, museum curators and fashion and design professionals (both senior and early career) in order to debate issues concerning early modern fashion and its relevance to contemporary questions of innovation and creativity. The Principal investigators for the partnership are based at Queen Mary, University of London, the Victoria and Albert Museum, Stockholm University,

University of Helsinki, the National Museum of Denmark/ University of Copenhagen. Each partner takes responsibility for a theme that contributes to the overall objectives of the project.

The project themes are:

- Fashion networks, new technologies, patents and protection
- The designer and the merchant: names reputations and the language of innovation;
- Print-culture and fashion products
- Social groups and the circulation of fashion
- Creative traditions (knitting in Europe, 1500-1800)

The V&A strand focuses on *The designer and the merchant: names, reputations and the language of innovation*, and has two key components:

- the use of the considerable resources of the V&A collections to encourage debate between different communities about creative practices, asking how we can use objects from the past to inform and inspire present practice and support a network of early career scholars, curators and new designers. This discussion specifically feeds into a major museum initiative: the redisplay of the galleries showing art and design in Europe, 1600-1800.
- the examination of how reputations for innovative textile products were constructed and developed in early modern Europe, by investigating the mechanisms and vocabularies through which ideas about fashion were communicated across linguistic, social and geographic boundaries via analysis of objects, images and texts drawn from commercial archives, and a range of complementary archival museum sources.

**Main tasks:**

1. To contribute to the intellectual basis for incorporating fashionable dress into the V&A's new Europe 1600-1800 galleries (due to open in 2014)
2. To develop a better understanding of how French fashion innovations reached, shared and were assimilated into or were rejected by other European cultures, materially and linguistically
3. To contribute to the Collaborative Research Project's common data set and resources with evidence from actual objects held in museum collections and public archives and through linguistic corpora which document movements of innovations across Europe
4. To establish appropriate ways of making the V&A galleries relevant and inspirational to the creative industries (via debate at fashion workshops)
5. To contribute to the web trails and web content designed for the general public to complement the V&A galleries displays

6. To attend all HERA events and provide support for organising and managing HERA events held at the V&A
7. To contribute an article to the V&A On-line journal
8. To undertake training as required for the post
9. To be committed to health and safety and ensure familiarity with all of the Museum's health and safety policies and procedures
10. To be security conscious, ensure familiarity and co-operation with all museum security procedures and ensure you wear a security pass at all times when on museum premises
11. To promote equality and diversity in all aspects of your work by developing and maintaining positive working relationships, ensuring that colleagues are treated fairly and with respect/dignity and actively contributing to developments that support the museum's strategy for widening access, inclusion and diversity
12. To carry out as hoc duties as requested by appropriate managers within your section at V&A

## **PERSON SPECIFICATION**

### **Essential requirements**

1. A postgraduate degree (preferably a PhD) and a strong track record of scholarly achievement in a relevant field
2. A demonstrable understanding of the application of research in a museum environment
3. Evidence of the ability to be a successful ambassador for the project, communicating effectively at all levels, externally and internally, in written and oral form
4. Evidence of the ability to apply sound management principles to individual and collaborative projects and to complete on time
5. An excellent working knowledge of French and English (reading, writing and speaking)
6. Proven knowledge of word-processing, databases and digital photography

### **Desirable requirements**

1. Knowledge of early modern fashion and textiles
2. Experience of working in British and French archives and/or museums
3. Working knowledge of a third European language
4. Experience of conference, website and display planning and management
5. An interest in the V&A and its collections

## **OTHER INFORMATION**

### *Hours/Salary*

Net working hours (i.e. excluding meal breaks) are 36 per week.  
The salary will be between £25,000 and £27,000 per annum (within V&A pay band 5).  
Future pay progression will be in accordance with the V&A's Pay Agreement(s).  
Normal level transfer and promotion rules will apply for internal candidates.

### *Annual Leave*

28 days plus 8 days public holidays

### *Age of retirement*

The normal retirement age is 65.

### *Pension benefits*

The Civil Service offers a choice of either an occupational pension or stakeholder pension, giving you the flexibility to choose a scheme that suits you best. The occupational pension has a 3.5% member contribution rate and an employer contribution rate of between 17.1% - 26.5%.

The 'Partnership' pension account is a stakeholder money purchase pension with an employer contribution based on age. Further details are available upon request or appointment.

### *Other benefits*

Free entrance to all the major museums in London as well as many others.  
An interest free season ticket or bicycle loan is available after three months.  
Subject to the society's terms and conditions, V&A staff are entitled to membership of the Benenden Healthcare Society. Further information is available from HR or via their web-site on [www.benenden-healthcare.org.uk](http://www.benenden-healthcare.org.uk)

Closing date for applications: Midnight Thursday 9 September 2010

Date of interview: 30 September 2010

### Interview panel:

Professor Christopher Breward, Head of Research, V&A

Dr Lesley Miller, HERA Principal Investigator, V&A

Professor Evelyn Welch, HERA Project Director, Queen Mary University of London

Venue: Research Department, V&A