

M4C DTP Collaborative Doctoral Award (CDA) Marketing Template

Project Title				
Global Leicester: The Dryad Craftwork Collection at New Walk Museum and Art Gallery				
LEAD INSTITUTION				
Name of HEI institution	University of Leicester			
Lead regional city	Birmingham <input type="checkbox"/>	Coventry <input type="checkbox"/>	Leicester <input checked="" type="checkbox"/>	Nottingham <input type="checkbox"/>
PARTNER ORGANISATION				
Name of organisation	Leicester Museums			
Website URL	https://www.leicester.gov.uk/leisure-and-culture/museums-and-galleries/			
THE RESEARCH PROJECT				
<i>(Max 750 words)</i>				
<p>‘Global Leicester’ explores and illuminates the objects and archives of New Walk Museum’s Dryad Craftwork Collection. This comprises approximately 300 objects, collected by Harry Peach between 1907 and 1936. They are extraordinarily diverse, ranging from fabrics and clothing to basketwork, ornaments, wooden figures, toys, boxes, gourds, and coconuts. Peach founded Dryad Furniture and Dryad Metal Works in Leicester, and was a significant benefactor in the founding of University College, Leicester (now the University of Leicester). He was interested in the Arts and Crafts Movement, and sourced his collection from Britain and Europe, as well as East Asia and British colonies in Australia, Africa, South Asia, the Pacific, and Malaysia. Peach planned to use it to found a new museum, but this never happened and Dryad donated the materials to New Walk Museum in 1969. Since then, they have been curated in a range of ways, most recently as part of the Museum’s ‘World Gallery’.</p> <p>‘Global Leicester’ seeks to generate substantial new research, to explore what the Dryad Collection reveals about the linkages between Leicester and Empire and about changing understandings of Empire over the twentieth century. The PhD student will explore why and how Dryad collected specific objects; investigate their provenance and manufacture; find out how the objects travelled to Leicester; and explore what their past curation and display (since the 1970s) can reveal about changing post-colonial environments and relationships.</p> <p>The project will contribute to three key areas of historical enquiry. First, it will offer a new material history of the British Empire, through analysis of a little-known but voluminous and important national collection of imperial objects. Second, it will offer a means of changing current meanings and interpretations of the Dryad objects, by foregrounding the history of empire in their development and interpretation. Third, it will build on and contribute to the dynamic field of global material culture history and histories of imperial collecting and display by tracking a diverse and understudied collection through its hitherto unused set of archives.</p> <p>The student will handle and interpret the objects, and conduct archival research, including in the collections of New Walk Museum, the Special Collections of the David Wilson Library, which contains a few materials on Harry Peach, and the Record Office for Leicestershire, Leicester and Rutland, which has some photographs from Dryad Metalworks.</p> <p>The student will also collaborate with the Museum, which is working towards the reinstallation and redisplay of the ‘World Gallery’ by the end of the project. This will include the re-interpretation of the objects, and the development of its soon-to-be launched new website, which may include an associated digital/ online exhibition. Working with the Museum’s education team, other extended engagement opportunities may include the delivery of talks and guided tours, study days for the collection at the store, and working with the documentation officer to enhance database records with the research gleaned during the placement.</p> <p>Being part of this high-profile programme, and working alongside a range of staff, the student will not only work towards their PhD, they will gain invaluable career development opportunities - in terms of exposure to a range of</p>				

colleagues and expertise in the Museums service and its various stakeholder groups. New Walk Museum is the city's flagship museum and contains some of the most locally, nationally and Internationally significant collections in the region. This is an exciting opportunity to complete a PhD and gain invaluable experience in working with the museum sector.

HOW TO FIND OUT MORE

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