

M4C Collaborative Doctoral Award

Project Title			
Sound as Cultural Artefact			
LEAD INSTITUTION			
Name of HEI institution	University of Nottingham		
Lead regional city			Nottingham <input type="checkbox"/>
PARTNER ORGANISATION			
Name of organisation	Nottingham Contemporary		
Website URL	https://nottinghamcontemporary.org/		
THE RESEARCH PROJECT			
<p>The project explores issues in the curation of sound, and how sound contains, opens, hides and reveals histories, practices and politics of both present and past. It expands on how sound can communicate not merely content or form, but the material presence of other moments captured in sonic structures.</p> <p>The project will consist of an exhibition, to be worked on with the project leads and the curatorial team, scheduled to take place in late 2024. In addition, there will be a written thesis of c. 40 000 words. The successful candidate will be a central part of the curatorial development, in its practical realisation and its theoretical grounding. The student's work will be self-reflective and attuned to live social issues, including: global sound, diasporic cultures, identity positionings, ecological responses, diagnostic creative work in general. In so doing, the project works at the intersection of two modes of research: creative-curatorial and academic, each richly informing the other. The research question will build on the pioneering work of sound studies scholars such as Jonathan Sterne, who identified the central role of sound capture as part of anthropological, orientalist 'discovery' of traditional cultures around the world. It will also take its cue from Kofi Agawu's writings on the place of difference and strategic similarities between musics and musical cultures. Finally, it will address ideas of post-digital culture's technological placement in a post-pandemic listening environment that is a hybrid of physical/analogue and digital space, sound and affordance. Experimental artists have probed these questions since the early 2000s and the current cultural centring of these ideas makes this project exceptionally timely, as the PhD researcher will analyse how the development of new work, new collaborations and methods operationalises that thought. Underpinning the work will also be a current of decolonial awareness of the dangers of presuming normativity within listening, within access, within sound and music making, sound gathering, and the idea of evidence. To summarise the methodology: it is from sound studies, and therefore consists of a mix between cultural studies, critical theories, music and material histories. It also presents the chance for co-creation (between artist and researcher as well as the curatorial aspect with Nottingham Contemporary), and for creative practice as research.</p> <p>Approximate timeline:</p> <p>Year 1 (22–23): develop partnership, establish how exhibition and CDA project can combine. The researcher has twin focus in working on 21st-century critical cultural thought (the successful candidate will have some experience in this area already), directed by supervisors and addressed in monthly supervision meetings. In parallel, the researcher learns collaborative process through regular meetings with Nottingham Contemporary, understanding the demands and aims of the broader programme. They will attend programme meetings, attended by curators and programmers from the exhibitions, live programmes and learning teams.</p> <p>Year 2 (23–24): Researcher embedded in exhibitions team at NC, supporting the research and development of the exhibition (to be presented autumn 2024). This research will include: accompanying curators on studio visits and collection visits around the UK, which will be fundamental to establishing the scope and focus of the exhibition;</p>			

developing a bibliography and checklist of artists and artworks for potential inclusion; defining the parameters and methodologies of the PhD research; supporting the Live Programmes Curator on devising and delivering a public programme of events in the run-up to the exhibition. At start of year 2, researcher begins to work directly on the written part of the project, developing the critical framework through continued consultation and monthly meetings with supervisory team, and presentation of work via work-in-progress seminar.

Year 3 (24–25): Working towards the presentation of the exhibition in autumn 2024. Work will include: corresponding with lenders to confirm artworks; supporting curatorial team in production of any new commissions; writing and editing exhibition interpretation, e.g. wall texts, exhibition notes, extended labels. Develop live programme, both in-person and online, around the exhibition presentation. The researcher will also have the opportunity to contribute an article to the exhibition catalogue, and will gain important editorial experience by working on the development of the publication, in dialogue with the team at NC.

Year 4 (25–26) write-up, complete any collaborative creative projects (if relevant), ensure legacy for programme. The researcher will be in a position to publish at least one academic article.

HOW TO FIND OUT MORE

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