

## M4C DTP Collaborative Doctoral Award (CDA) Marketing Template

<b>Project Title</b>				
Textures of Blackness in the Midlands: Excavating Regional Archives of Black Culture and Politics				
<b>LEAD INSTITUTION</b>				
Name of HEI institution	De Montfort University			
Lead regional city	Birmingham <input type="checkbox"/>	Coventry <input type="checkbox"/>	Leicester <input checked="" type="checkbox"/>	Nottingham <input type="checkbox"/>
<b>PARTNER ORGANISATION</b>				
Name of organisation	Serendipity			
Website URL	<a href="https://serendipity-uk.com">https://serendipity-uk.com</a>			
<b>THE RESEARCH PROJECT</b>				
<i>(Max 750 words)</i>				
<p>In a particular moment when our understanding of Black British history lends much to deciphering current debates about the status of the so-called ‘Windrush’ generation and the history of racialisation that has accompanied the creation of citizenship and immigration policies in a post-Brexit landscape, this project aims to unearth, explore and think innovatively about the co-production of archives designed to map, reflect and (re)present histories of Black cultural and political life in the Midlands. More specifically, this project is concerned with both generating resources of new knowledge about the textured histories of Black life in the Midlands and also critically attending to the process by which these resources are amassed, assembled and curated for wider audiences.</p> <p>This project will involve working within local communities and collaboratively with Serendipity, a Leicester-based cultural arts organisation with an international portfolio of projects designed to promote cultural awareness through the creative arts, to develop a wider archival terrain for understanding Black life in the Midlands. Mindful of some of the tensions that have existed historically between racialised communities and academic researchers, this project intends to engage underrepresented voices as bearers of knowledge, rather than as objects of study in dialogues and practices associated with developing and curating archives for inclusive public audiences. To do so, the research will employ methodological approaches used by archivists, historians, anthropologists, and cultural arts practitioners to explore a range of activity reflective of how Black communities capture, document, remember, preserve and (re)present their histories in public spaces. Key questions informing this project include the following:</p> <ol style="list-style-type: none"> <li>1) What types of sources constitute the archive of Black cultural and political life in the Midlands?</li> <li>2) In what ways does place and region inform and or disrupt conventional narratives about Black life in Britain and histories of race, racism, migration, and the making of citizenship?</li> <li>3) What types of archival practices and cultural processes exist within Black communities to preserve, memorialise and represent historical narratives reflective of the cultural and political interests of these communities?</li> <li>4) What are some of the cultural, social and economic drivers and barriers that affect how Black communities engage with archives, including their creation, points of access and their sustainability?</li> <li>5) How can collaborative work between academic institutions, cultural arts organisations, activists and community members reframe the way in which archival practices and processes are developed to decolonise the power relations that have historically excluded certain groups from being represented in archives and being seen as producers, bearers and curators of knowledge?</li> </ol> <p>It is expected that the selected researcher will be able to use Serendipity’s archive generated from their ‘Archiving the Past, Reflecting the Future’ project documenting the contributions of African and Caribbean communities to the artistic and cultural heritage of the East Midlands as a key site of skill-building and early analysis to understand what new lines of inquiry should be developed. From there, research will entail facilitating knowledge exchanges about archiving practices existing with target communities, conducting</p>				

ethnographic field research and developing partnerships with community stakeholders to identify new sources and It is also anticipated that this type of collaborative approach will provide possibilities for rich cross-sector exchanges that could inform ongoing work towards developing stronger regional archival links that would facilitate new historical research on Black/British history. Likewise, this type of project could lend itself towards offering a translatable blueprint for other institutions and organisations to develop community-based archives and strengthen relationships with communities which are oftentimes underrepresented in archives.

This project anticipates possibilities for a number of public-facing outputs including material and digital exhibitions and the production of educational resources that may be shared and potentially replicated for wider impact. Therefore, it is intended that this project will have value in practically demonstrating how universities, cultural organisations and local communities can collaborate to collect, curate resources and innovatively communicate and share ideas about local heritage and history.

#### **HOW TO FIND OUT MORE**

Lead HEI Supervisor:	Dr. Kennetta Hammond Perry
Lead HEI Supervisor Email:	<i>kennetta.perry@dmu.ac.uk</i>