

AHRC Collaborative Doctoral Partnership (CDP) Studentship

**Paduan Renaissance Bronzes at the V&A: Exploring New Critical Approaches
with the Victoria and Albert Museum and Courtauld Institute –**

Application Deadline: 24 April 2026

Courtauld Induction and Welcome Week: 21 September 2026

CDP Studentship Start Date: 1 October 2026

Interviews will take place on **the mornings of Tuesday 12 May and Wednesday 13 May 2026.**

The **Victoria and Albert Museum** and the **Courtauld Institute** are pleased to announce the availability of a fully funded collaborative doctoral studentship from **1 October 2026** under the AHRC's Collaborative Doctoral Partnerships (CDP) scheme. The Courtauld's Welcome Week will begin on 21 September, and the student will benefit from attending events dedicated to the new cohort of Post Graduate Research Students (exact dates to be confirmed).

The dissertation project is expected to focus on a selection of Paduan Renaissance bronzes from the V&A's collection, about which the successful candidate will write extended research-based catalogue entries and a critical essay that contextualises and interprets them as products of the specific artistic culture of the city of Padua.

This project will be jointly supervised by **Dr Rachel Boyd** and **Dr Kira d'Albuquerque** at the **Victoria and Albert Museum** and by **Prof. Guido Rebecchini** and **Dr Felix Jaeger** at the **Courtauld Institute**. The student will be expected to spend time at both the Courtauld Institute and the Victoria and Albert Museum, as well as becoming part of the wider cohort of CDP funded students across the UK.

The studentship is open to both home and international applicants and can be studied either full or part-time. Please note that if you require a Student VISA to attend this studentship, it is not possible to undertake it part-time, due to VISA requirements.

We encourage applications from a diverse range of people, from different backgrounds and career stages.

Students should meet the Courtauld Institute's **entry requirements** of having been awarded at least 65% overall in their Master's degree in a relevant subject, with at least 70% in the dissertation or thesis (or the international equivalent). We welcome applicants with other forms of equivalent relevant academic and professional experience. A working knowledge of the Italian language and prior engagement with sculpture will be considered as advantageous.

If your first language is not English, we require proof of English language proficiency; please see our [English Language Requirements page](#).

Project Overview

This project investigates a corpus of about 40 fifteenth- and early sixteenth-century small-scale bronze sculptures from Padua, Italy, in the V&A. Padua was home to some of the most creative and original artists experimenting with this genre, including Andrea Riccio (c.1470-1532) and Severo da Ravenna (active by 1496, died before 1543). Encompassing statuettes and practical objects (e.g. lamps, inkstands, salt cellars), these diminutive but sophisticated artworks challenge common artistic categories and have received relatively little scholarly attention. They are often noted for their obscure iconography and idiosyncratic renderings of antiquity and folklore, fantastical creatures, non-normative bodies and genders, and erotic content. Considered abject or grotesque, these objects manifest a severely under-researched 'anti-classical' tradition that points beyond the Renaissance canon.

In contrast to the elite production of northern Italian courts – for instance, that of Antico (1460-1528) in Mantua – innovative approaches to metalworking emerged in Padua, where material and design experimentation was facilitated by the city's vibrant university and intellectual ebullience. Building upon important new work in this field, which frames Paduan bronzes as early examples of life-casting technologies, the Post Graduate Researcher (PGR) will investigate the artisanal knowledge of bronze casting and the human-animal iconographies of Paduan bronzes, exploring connections with disability, animal, and environmental studies. Grounding their findings in close observation and archival study, the PGR will catalogue this portion of the V&A's collections, exploring new approaches to cataloguing as well as inclusive display strategies that make these remarkable sculptures more accessible to a range of audiences.

Research questions include:

- How are Paduan bronzes distinct from those made elsewhere during the Renaissance?
- Is the traditional distinction between 'functional' and 'sculptural' bronzes useful?
- What can we deduce about workshop practices and markets by studying variants and multiples?
- How were these objects used and displayed?
- How did the appeal to non-visual senses inflect the experience of the bronzes (holding them, inhaling perfumes emitted by them, using them as sources of light, etc.)?
- How might depictions of satyrs and other hybrid creatures inform understandings of Renaissance attitudes towards the human body, animals, and the environment?
- How might we engage a more diverse range of museum visitors with these collections today?

Research with the Victoria and Albert Museum

This research studentship is one allocated to the **Victoria and Albert Museum** by the AHRC. The successful student will be expected to spend time carrying out research and gaining relevant experience at the Victoria and Albert Museum as part of the studentship.

Details of Award

CDP doctoral training grants fund full-time studentships for **4** years or part-time equivalent up to a maximum of **8** years.

Tuition fees will be covered for home or international students. The successful applicant will be required to reside in the UK until completion of the PhD.

The award pays an annual stipend for all students, both home and international students. This stipend is tax-free, and is the equivalent of an annual salary, enabling the student to pay living costs. The UKRI Minimum Doctoral Stipend for 2026/2027 is **£21,805*** plus London Weighting of £2,000/year. There is also a CDP maintenance payment of £600 per year. (These figures may be subject to change for subsequent years after 2026/2027.)

Further details can be found on the [UKRI website](#).

The successful candidate is eligible to receive an additional travel, and related expenses grant during the course of the project courtesy of the V&A worth up to £1,250 over the duration of the project; additional research funding may become available through the Courtauld Institute.

The successful candidate must attend a Skills and Methods doctoral seminar which meets fortnightly at the Courtauld Institute. They will also be encouraged to participate in professional development events and activities organised for all Collaborative Doctoral Partnership students who are registered with different universities and studying with cultural and heritage organisations across the UK. These activities are organised by a coordination team based at the V&A and are designed to provide CDP researchers with the knowledge, networks, and skills to thrive in their future careers.

Eligibility

- This studentship is open to both home and international applicants.
- To be classed as a home student, candidates must meet the following criteria:
 - Be a UK or Irish National (meeting residency requirements), or
 - Have settled status, or
 - Have pre-settled status (meeting residency requirements), or
 - Have indefinite leave to remain or enter
- Further guidance can be found here based on revisions to Training Grant Terms and Conditions for projects starting in October 2025 - [Policy statement: review of the training grant conditions – UKRI](#)

- International students are eligible to receive the full award for maintenance as are home students. Tuition fees will be covered for home or international students.
- We want to encourage the widest range of potential students to study for a CDP studentship and are committed to welcoming students from different backgrounds to apply. We particularly welcome applications from people of Global Majority backgrounds as they are currently underrepresented at this level in this area.
- Applicants should ideally have or expect to receive a relevant Master's-level qualification in a relevant subject (e.g., Art History) that meets the entry requirements for the Courtauld Institute's PhD Programme (please see above).
- Applicants must be able to demonstrate an interest in the museum and academic sectors and potential and enthusiasm for developing skills more widely in related areas.
- As a collaborative award, students will be expected to spend time at both the Courtauld Institute and the Victoria and Albert Museum

NB. All applicants must meet UKRI terms and conditions for funding. See:

<https://www.ukri.org/funding/information-for-award-holders/grant-terms-and-conditions/>

Project details and how to apply

For more information and how to apply see: [PhD Funding & Scholarships](#).

All CDP applicants are asked to complete a voluntary [EDI monitoring form](#). All responses are anonymous.

Reasonable Adjustments

Support or adjustments may include (but are not limited to):

- Opportunity to speak with project supervisors at HEI and CDP Award Holder about the project and the process.
- Opportunity to speak with contacts within the HEI and/or CDP Award Holder regarding institutional support systems (e.g. neurodiversity, racial diversity and LGBTQIA+ networks, mental health support, support for carers).
- Access to interview questions and an insight into the interview process (e.g. selection criteria used).

- Opportunity to visit the relevant building and room prior to interview, as well as on-site guidance (demonstrating accessible routes and/or familiarity with building layouts for example)
- Opportunity to speak with active CDP students to ask questions regarding student experience as part of the CDP scheme.

Any candidates considering applying should feel welcome to contact the supervisors, Guido Rebecchini (guido.rebecchini@courtauld.ac.uk), Felix Jäger (felix.jaeger@courtauld.ac.uk), or Rachel Boyd (r.boyd@vam.ac.uk), if they have any further questions about the project.

For questions about submitting an application please contact pgadmissions@courtauld.ac.uk.