

PHD SCHOLARSHIP

PHD Scholarship on Artist Live / Work Scheme

PhD Scholarship evaluating artist-led Live/Work scheme: commencing September 2016. Fees paid plus a bursary of £10,400 per annum. Deadline 15th March 2016. For informal enquiries please contact Karen Watson: Karen@esamail.org.uk or Professor Steve Swindells: s.p.swindells@hud.ac.uk.

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Introduction

Whilst research about community-public art tends to focus on the aesthetic, cultural and political intentions and processes that shape its production, this research also examines the challenges of how to measure the impact of Live/Work and associated artistic production in a domestic/community location and, in parallel, working with the community, analyse the effectiveness of communal co-interpretation of Live/Work as artistic endeavour and as a process for public engagement. These two strands of the project have not previously been considered together and will thus be inextricably connected.

The aim of Live/Work is to provide good quality Live/Work space that encourages artists to live in an area and become active citizens in their community: to stimulate the locale and resident communities by supporting artists to create physical and wellbeing impact in the neighbourhood. The project is thus a unique opportunity for a doctoral researcher to engage with an established artist-led organisation and their audiences, to understand their priorities in relation to cultural and economic regeneration.

The Partnership: East Street Arts and the University of Huddersfield

The rationale for establishing a partnership and collaborative funding for the Scholarship is to ensure that i) East Street Art's work is supported by interdisciplinary, rigorous, academic scholarship and ii) that scholarship about the Live/Work scheme reaches a broad public and related professional audience to inform interpretation and policy and iii) that research questions and outputs are jointly directed by East Street Arts, their Live/Work artists, community stakeholders, and the student to benefit the communities and physical locale.

The Scholarship

Commencing September 2016: Fees paid plus a bursary of £10,400 per annum for three years. The scholarship is only available to UK home/EU applicants. Dependent on successful related and appropriate funding applications East Street Arts and the University of Huddersfield will seek to increase the bursary to reflect RCUK collaborative doctoral awards: please note an increase in the bursary is not guaranteed throughout the three years 2016 to 2019.

Aims and Objectives

- To design, collaboratively, a piece of high-quality academic research about Live/Work that responds to the interests, values, and priorities of ESA, artist-led organisations and their nonacademic stakeholders.

- To understand current critical and historical knowledge of community-public art in relation to the Live/Work scheme and in the contexts of public engagement and cultural leadership.
- To undertake research in an academic environment with periods of the researcher being 'embedded' at East Street Arts (to be decided by the researcher).
- To train a doctoral researcher in negotiating the needs and priorities of an artist-led organization alongside academic methodologies and expectations.
- To examine the national and international activities of Live/Work schemes for high-quality academic research.
- To produce, in addition to an academic thesis, public-centred outputs (eg. relational exhibition, workshop, symposium) that adds value to the Live/Work scheme, related communities and relative public and voluntary sector professionals.

Research Questions

The underlying question is to measure the impact and social/cultural value of the Live/Work scheme. A series of developments have created a historical moment in which the arts are expected to have greater public utility. The global financial crisis and austerity measures have put significant pressure on public expenditure and have led to the view that public funding for the arts should result in both good value and broader demographic accessibility. At the same time, there have been significant expectations from cultural organisations, service users and community organisations of various types – to be allowed to participate in research processes, including design and delivery. Crucially, the research questions will be established by working with East Street Arts, their Live/Work artists, related communities and Local Authorities to ensure that the research responds to the priorities of non-academic stakeholders.

Indicatively, some starting questions for the researcher will include:

1. What happens to a neighbourhood when an artist (and their families) are placed in social housing projects, long-term, beyond conventional art residencies, to live and make their work?
2. What is the significance of positioning Live/Work schemes in relation to broader community public art criticism, urban design, urban sociology disciplines and Local Authority policies?
3. What opportunities arise in the communal co-interpretation of Live/Work, and what are its limitations?
4. What can be learnt about co-producing research with non-academic collaborators through this project, when in the past so much research has been conducted in lone scholar model?
5. What might be lost in widening research from the lone researcher context to this collaborative model of public engagement and cultural leadership?
6. How can institutions like universities and local government move away from

the voice of an institutional author and become more in tune with and reflect the different voices and interests of its users and community?

Proposed Methodology

At one level, the methodology will utilise traditional ethnographic and sociological research, in that the student will seek to embed herself/himself as researcher within the specific social setting of Live/Work for a prolonged period of time, in order to develop a richer understanding of the dynamics and complexities involved in the project. Within the Live/Work scheme the student will observe, listen, record and try to experience and understand ideas, practices and perceptions from the perspective of the non-academic stakeholder. The methods will respect the irreducibility of human experience that acknowledges the role of theoretical perspectives as much as the researcher's role in conducting the project. Adopting an iterative-inductive research process that evolves in design through the study, the research will draw on multiple methods, such as comparative narrative and discourse analysis of material gathered from meetings, interviews and recording what happens (including film and photography), listening to what is said and asking questions in relation to specific situations.

This methodology will be extended to develop appropriate measuring tools to analyse the impact of the Live/Work scheme upon the community, East Street Arts, the Live/Work artists, as well as voluntary and public sector professionals.

Community responses and interpretations to the Live/Work scheme as public art will be further considered for their effect upon reflecting different cultural representations, cultural leadership and place making: drawing on the research process of 'co-production' widely adopted in the social sciences. The student, at the heart of this project, will collaborate and participate in related Live/Work activities, talking to people in their 'natural' settings and collecting materials (photographs, texts, literature, statistics) to develop an understanding of the aesthetic, cultural, social and political context in which meanings and activities of Live/Work are embedded.

The student will thus learn to value multiple or competing interpretations, describing the project as process rather than focusing on singular conclusions. The student will be encouraged to combine rigorous archival, secondary and theoretical research with reflective writing, in order to produce a thesis and visual documentation that properly captures the innovative way of working deployed for this project. He or she will develop strong skills along these lines that are eminently transferrable in academia, working in cultural organisations, policy-making and community work.

Plans for Dissemination

The student will produce an academic thesis, which will be lodged with the university online repository on completion. A bound paper copy will be given to East Street Arts Archive, and there will be an opportunity to explore disseminating the research via a variety of on-line and physical publishing platforms. The student will also be expected to present their on-going findings through East Street Arts events calendar, opportunity will also exist to present the research via relational exhibitions and events organised by East Street Arts. The student will benefit from East Street Arts broader connections and networks across both arts and public-voluntary sectors to ensure wide dissemination.

The potential for a joint-authored articles with academic and non-academic supervisors also exists. Given the broad appeal of working with East Street Arts, with respect to their growing national and international profile, the student will be

encouraged to write and present for the arts sector media – (media training will be given as required). Opportunity also exists for the student's research to appear on both East Street Arts and University web pages.

A media and social media strategy relating to the presentation and dissemination of the research (eg: television, radio and newspapers/periodicals) will be devised in supervisory meetings and by the student, as well as inviting contribution to the strategy from all non-academic stakeholders. It is anticipated the research will be of interest to a broad audience as the research is of benefit to Local Authorities, social enterprise, voluntary and charity sectors, as well as the broader arts sector, including other overseas Live/Work schemes.

Confidentiality regarding individual stakeholder contributions to the process will be observed, unless collaborators wish to be named. The student will also be expected to consider the most appropriate digital outputs in collaboration with East Street Arts. A focus on the ethical use of such platforms will form an important part of the student's training.

Expected Outcomes

1. A trained academic researcher with the developed skill set to also pursue career paths in arts management, or artist-led organisations, or arts public sector.
2. Original doctoral thesis that establishes a close working relationship between East Street Arts and the University of Huddersfield.
3. Impactful scholarly research on the impact of contemporary art located in community settings, producing new knowledge on public art's relationship to urban sociology and urban governance.
4. Raised academic and public profile for East Street Arts via different media and publishing platforms, relational exhibitions and events.
5. Fruitful relationships between academics, East Street Arts and their stakeholders; opening the way for future collaborations.