

## AHRC Collaborative Doctoral Partnership (CDP) Studentship

### Imperial Intimacies: Portraiture and the East India Company, c.1757–1857, with Tate and the Courtauld

**Start date:** 1st October 2025

**Application Deadline:** 6th April 2025

*Interviews will take place, preferably in-person, on 24th April 2025. Alternative arrangements will be made if in-person attendance is impossible.*

*An online drop-in session with the supervisors for applicants invited to interview will be available on request on 14th April 2025*

The Courtauld and Tate are pleased to announce the availability of a fully funded Collaborative doctoral studentship from 1 October 2025 under the AHRC's [Collaborative Doctoral Partnerships \(CDP\) scheme](#).

This studentship will explore portraiture produced in connection with the East India Company between 1757 and 1857, to uncover new stories about the individuals impacted by, or involved in, British imperialism in South Asia, and to rethink the role of portraiture within 'British' art histories.

This project will be jointly supervised by Dr Tom Young, the Courtauld, and Dr Alice Insley, Tate, and the student will be expected to spend time at both the Courtauld and Tate, as well as becoming part of the wider cohort of CDP funded students across the UK.

The studentship can be studied either full- or part-time, and it is open to both home and international applicants.

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

Students should have a Master's Degree in a relevant subject or be able to demonstrate relevant equivalent experience.

Any candidates considering applying should feel welcome to contact the supervisors, Alice Insley ([alice.insley@tate.org.uk](mailto:alice.insley@tate.org.uk)) or Tom Young ([Tom.Young@courtauld.ac.uk](mailto:Tom.Young@courtauld.ac.uk)), if they have any further questions about the project or application process.

## Project Overview

The history of the East India Company lies at the heart of more expansive stories about Britain and its place in the contemporary world: the history of imperialism, globalisation, liberal reform, and the making of the modern state. Yet, in many of these stories, the actual lives and experiences of individuals – both Indian and British – appear only faintly. This project will use the extraordinary

array of portraits produced in connection with the East India Company between 1757 and 1857 – including those within Tate’s collection – to uncover new narratives about a wide array of individuals involved in, or impacted by, British imperialism in South Asia. In doing so, the project will recover the lives of forgotten and often deliberately marginalised people, attempting to reconstruct their personal beliefs, experiences, and aspirations. Making a portrait typically involved a personal encounter – one that frequently collided the power differentials of Indian and Briton, colonised and coloniser. This project will consequently use portraits as evidence of such engagements: as an imperial archive that offers vivid insights into the everyday experience of empire, as well as individual moments of control and resistance. In doing this, it will re-examine the role and position of portraiture within British art histories, engaging with its global and imperial contexts.

**Research questions include:**

1. What new information can be found about the portraits with East India Company connections that are already in Tate’s collection; and what stories can this new information bring to light?
2. Through focussing on individuals and the contexts of particular portrait sittings, can the idiosyncratic identities and moments of encounter revealed enable a reconceptualisation of British imperialism in South Asia – one more attuned to the complex, non-national identities and politics associated with the worlds of corporate colonialism?
3. Related to this, does such complexity demand a reimagining of ‘British’ art and its legacies?
4. To what extent is it possible to recover stories associated with unnamed sitters or unacknowledged makers, or to capture the politics and social dynamics mediating the portrait sitting?
5. Can the student develop approaches that not only answer the above questions, but also take this research in new directions?

**Research with Tate**

This research studentship is one allocated to Tate by the AHRC. The successful student will be expected to spend time carrying out research and gaining relevant experience within Tate. You will join our [community of doctoral researchers](#), benefitting from access to Tate’s collection, resources and events. You will be embedded within Tate Britain’s curatorial department and will develop an advanced understanding of working with historic British art and within a national museum. The studentship will provide an opportunity to contribute to the interpretation and display of the permanent collection, as well as participating in the development of future exhibitions and displays.

You will also be expected to engage in a minimum of 3-6 months professional development throughout the studentship period (such as a work placement or other development opportunity), allowing you to nurture your career, gain transferable skills and expand practical knowledge alongside your studies. Throughout the PhD, you will also have the opportunity to

engage in networking and events with Tate and the wider network of museums, galleries, and heritage organisations affiliated with the [AHRC CDP scheme](#) as part of the CDP Cohort Development programme.

## **Details of Award**

CDP doctoral training grants fund full-time studentships for 4 years (48 months) or part-time equivalent up to a maximum of 8 years.

The award pays tuition fees up to the value of the full-time home fee. Students with an ‘overseas’ fee status are welcome to apply and the Courtauld has agreed to waive the difference between home and international tuition fees. The student 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 2025/2026 is £20,780 plus London Weighting of £2000/year. There is also a CDP maintenance payment of £600 per year.

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 Tate worth up to £1,300 per year for four years.

The successful candidate will also have full access to the Courtauld’s Wellbeing Team, which includes two councillors. The wellbeing team help with many practical issues, such as registering with a UK GP, or applying for the Disabled Student Allowance to support the purchase of necessary equipment. The team also offers screenings to assess special learning requirements, and offer adjustments to assessments where necessary. If specific needs are identified, students can access specialist mentoring and a team of study skills tutors.

The successful candidate will 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:
  - o Be a UK or Irish National (meeting residency requirements), or
  - o Have settled status, or
  - o Have pre-settled status (meeting residency requirements), or
  - o 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. The Courtauld has agreed to waive the difference between what the AHRC provides to the university for tuition and the charge made by the university for tuition fees for 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 Masters-level qualification in a relevant subject like Art History or History, or be able to demonstrate equivalent experience in a professional setting such as a museum or art gallery. Those with a Masters awarded in the UK will normally have received at least 65% overall, with at least 70% in the dissertation or thesis.
- Applicants must be able to demonstrate an interest in the cultural sector 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 and Tate.

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/>

### **Reasonable adjustments**

Should you require any reasonable adjustments or support throughout the application process, please contact Dr Tom Young ([Tom.Young@courtauld.ac.uk](mailto:Tom.Young@courtauld.ac.uk)).

Support or adjustments may include opportunities to speak with supervisors or relevant contacts regarding the project and process, institutional support systems and spaces, and the interview process.

### **Project details and how to apply**

For more information and how to apply see [\[link to University application process\]](#)

Applicants will be asked to submit:

- A full CV, of no more than two A4 pages
- A statement of interest, of no more than 1,000 words, outlining their interest in the topic, why they would like to partner with Tate and engage with the museums sector more broadly, and how their experience to date is relevant to the project
- A writing sample of up to 4000 words

- Details of two referees
- An academic transcript
- If relevant, proof of English-language proficiency

We ask all applicants to complete a voluntary EDI monitoring form [here](#). All responses are anonymous.