

Press Release

£1 million awarded for collections research at the University of Glasgow

Researchers from the University of Glasgow have been awarded over £1 million for collections research. *Collections: an Enlightenment Pedagogy for the 21st Century*, financed by a Leverhulme Trust Doctoral Scholarships grant, will fund 15 PhD researchers over three years, from diverse subject areas, for museum and archival collections. The grant is one of only 14 awards given by the Leverhulme Trust in a nationwide competition.

Collections responds to a crisis in contemporary scholarship where subject specialisation has led to an increasingly narrow focus for researchers in Science, Arts and Humanities, creating an impoverished response from the academy to the complexity and scale of collections and object data. *Collections* will address this dilemma through multi- and trans-disciplinary investigative approaches, combining diverse empirical methods with consideration of live ethical issues. Researchers will operate between material collections in museums and galleries, statistical data, paper archives and medical data-banks and will secure the University and the City of Glasgow as a world-leading centre for research and creative engagement with collections. Through shared training initiatives, collaborative research and public engagement activities, the *Collections* students will work together to articulate an innovative pedagogic model that should serve as a paradigm for post-graduate collections research and engagement elsewhere.

The intellectual and operational hub for the project will be provided by the Collections Study Centre at Kelvin Hall in Glasgow (pictured right) being developed by The Hunterian, the University of Glasgow's museums and galleries service. Supported by a Heritage Lottery Fund (HLF) grant of £4.85m, the Kelvin Hall development will



bring together - under one roof - The Hunterian's internationally important study collections of 1.3m objects and specimens. The Study Centre will enhance delivery of UoG's post-graduate curatorial training programmes and host the Leverhulme students. The Centre, which will open in September 2016, will also attract visiting research staff and exchange students from around the UK and overseas.

Professor Karen Lury, Dean of Research of the University's College of Arts, said:

"The need for a holistic vision for the academy is all the more pressing now, as researchers confront an environment where advances in digitisation and an accelerating global connectivity have further increased the complexity and sheer number of accessible collections, whether these are artefacts, data or other kinds of 'collected' material.

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“It is becoming easier for disciplines to lose touch with each other when pushed into increasingly narrow specialisms, when there is much they might share and be able to benefit from.”

Hunterian Director, Professor David Gaimster, added

“The Award creates the first dedicated community of doctoral researchers for university collections in the UK, if not in the world. We anticipate the individual projects forging new methodologies and practice in collections research and fully exploiting the opportunities for cross-disciplinary investigation and collaboration”.

The Hunterian

University of Glasgow
82 Hillhead Street
Glasgow G12 8QQ

Open Tuesday – Saturday 10.00am – 5.00pm and Sunday 11.00am – 4.00pm
Admission free, admission charge for special exhibitions
www.glasgow.ac.uk/hunterian

Notes for Editors

The Hunterian

Founded in 1807, The Hunterian is Scotland's oldest public museum and home to one of the largest collections outside the National Museums. The Hunterian is one of the leading university museums in the world and its collections have been Recognised as a Collection of National Significance. It is one of Scotland's most important cultural assets. Built on William Hunter's founding bequest, the collections include scientific instruments used by James Watt and Joseph Lister; outstanding Roman artefacts from the Antonine Wall; major natural sciences holdings; one of the world's greatest numismatic collections and impressive ethnographic objects from the Pacific Ocean.

The Hunterian is also home to a major art collection ranging from Rembrandt and Chardin to the Scottish Colourists and contemporary art; the world's largest permanent display of the work of James McNeill Whistler; the largest single holding of the work of Charles Rennie Mackintosh and The Mackintosh House, the reassembled interiors from his Glasgow home.

The Hunterian continues in its Age of Enlightenment mission to be a central resource for research and teaching in the arts, humanities and natural and medical sciences, attracting scholars and visitors from around the world.

The Kelvin Hall Project

A unique partnership between Glasgow City Council, Glasgow Life, the University of Glasgow and the National Library of Scotland will transform Glasgow's historic Kelvin Hall into an exciting new centre of cultural excellence providing collections' storage, teaching and research, alongside a state-of-the-art Glasgow Club health and fitness centre. Safe, secure and publicly accessible museum storage will be created for The Hunterian, the University of Glasgow's internationally-important museum and art gallery, and for Glasgow's Museum's collections. Around 1.5million objects, currently stored in various locations around the city, will be relocated to the new facility. Together with The Hunterian's world renowned teaching collections of art, archaeology, world cultures, natural and medical sciences, the facility will house the only surviving complete suite of interiors by Charles Rennie Mackintosh for Mrs Cranston's Ingram Street tearooms which will undergo conservation works in public view. The National Library of Scotland's Scottish Screen Archive will also be partners in the project which will provide a new home for the archive and improved access for the public to more than 100 years of Scottish history on film and video. A new digital portal for all three partners will bring the collections seamlessly together online.

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A community learning base will be created where the public can explore and learn about the collections, while The Hunterian Collections Study and Research Centre will promote object-based research, teaching and learning. Using the strengths of the partner organisations, a Centre for Cultural and Heritage Skills will be created as a national hub for in-service training, staff development and knowledge and creative exchange.

College of Arts

To find out more about the College of Arts at the University of Glasgow, visit www.gla.ac.uk/colleges/arts/aboutus/