



## JOB DESCRIPTION

Job Title:	Assistant Curator: Photographs (Art Fund)
Division:	Research & Collections
Department:	Word & Image
Salary:	£22,227 per annum
Contract:	Fixed term for 12 months (full-time)
Reporting to:	Curator: Photographs

### Background

With support from Art Fund, the Victoria and Albert Museum runs a programme to help the development of curatorial expertise in the art and culture of photography, working with regional museum partners. The programme has been in place since 2014, and has resulted in collaborations with Nottingham Castle Museum & Art Gallery and Museums Sheffield. The curatorial training post provides practical training in photographs curatorship and equips a Curator with specialist knowledge of photography and the ability to care for and develop photography collections.

### Purpose of job

The post will last for a period of 12 months. The participant will spend six months in the Photographs Section of the Word and Image Department at the V&A with a V&A Curator as mentor. This will be followed by a six months' placement at the Royal Albert Memorial Museum, Exeter working on an agreed project. The post-holder will report to the Curator, Photographs at the V&A.

### V&A Photographs Section

Photographs is one of the Sections that make up Word & Image (WID) Collections. It is a small and dynamic team with a high profile within the museum because of the international significance of the collection (approximately 800,000 photographs and 6,000 pieces of photographic equipment), photography's wide audience appeal, the museum's commitment to photography as a key area and the implementation of the new V&A Photography Centre, phase 1 opening in autumn 2018 and phase 2 completing the project in 2022. The Section maintains and develops the world-renowned national collection of the art of photography which includes the Royal Photographic Society collection, runs displays in the Photography Centre galleries, contributes to the V&A's public programme through preparation of and support of temporary and touring exhibitions, and participates in WID core activities, in particular the Prints and Drawings Study Room.

### The Royal Albert Memorial Museum and Art Gallery, Exeter

The Royal Albert Memorial Museum & Art Gallery (RAMM) is a service of Exeter City Council. RAMM is a place of discovery which encourages curiosity and connects people to the world around them through local and global collections. The City's world-class collections are placed at the heart of everything the museum does. RAMM will acquire collections that document the natural and cultural history of Exeter set within its regional and national context as well as those that represent the City and region's connections across the world. The museum holds collections in trust for present and future generations, managing and caring for them for the public benefit.

RAMM's photographic collections are in three main holdings: fashion and costume photographs, fine art photographs and glass plate lantern slides. This project will concentrate on the latter two.

RAMM's collection of nearly 5,000 glass plate lantern slides covers both mass-produced slides and the work of professional and amateur photographers. It was amassed to aid RAMM's education and outreach role in the 19th and early 20th century. The collection was recently studied as part of a 3-year Arts and Humanities Research Council/Cultural Heritage European initiative called A Million Pictures: Magic Lantern Slide Heritage as Artefacts in the Common European History of Learning. This project focused on the use of such collections for entertainment and instruction in the 19th century. Outcomes of the project included full digitisation of the slides, documentation in the Lucerna database <https://www.slides.uni-trier.de/> and inclusion in RAMM's online database <http://rammcollections.org.uk/>.

There are just under 100 photographs in the fine art collection. These include 19th century images made using various early photographic processes such as silver bromide, crystoleum process and the wet collodion process. The subjects of these are studio portraits of artists, Exeter dignitaries, Victorian children and the Devon landscape. There are some striking photographs of the Dartmoor landscape, stone crosses and prehistoric monuments, including images by the artist T.A. Falcon. More recent acquisitions include a triptych photograph of Orcombe Point by Philip Moody, photomontages by Joanna Brown and Seeing Believing by Garry Fabian Miller in 2018.

## **Main tasks at the V&A**

### Collections

1. Ensure the care of the collections.
2. Assist in planning and implementation of displays in the Photography Centre and other V&A galleries.
3. Support preparations for the programme of UK and international touring photography exhibitions.
4. Assist with the preparation of publications.
5. Develop expertise and forge links with museum and external colleagues working in related areas.
6. Work with colleagues in Learning and Interpretation on museum educational initiatives.
7. Work with the Development Office on activities for the Photographs Acquisition Group.
8. Support and assist the work of the Curators and Senior Curator, Photographs.

### Access

1. Respond to public, official and professional enquiries.
2. Assist in providing public opinions service for photographs.
3. Contribute to the Photography Section web pages.
4. Contribute to the development of photography resources for Prints and Drawings Study Room.

### Central Service

1. Ensure the processing and cataloguing of newly-acquired objects.
2. Ensure location control for photographs records on the museum's inventory and cataloguing Collections Management System (CMS).
3. Create catalogue records of the highest standard. Work with colleagues on tackling the cataloguing backlog for photographs and oversee discrete cataloguing projects.
4. Carry out annual audit tasks.
5. Oversee and maintain photographs storage at the V&A main site and at Blythe House.
6. Liaise with Conservation Department to maintain exhibitions and loans programme and Collection conservation priorities.

### **Main tasks at the Royal Albert Memorial Museum and Art Gallery, Exeter**

1. Undertake a collections review of RAMM's photography collections and share relevant information on public-facing platforms including RAMM websites and social media.
2. Contribute to the development of the policy for the future collecting of photography at RAMM by producing a report on the potential scope of the collection.
3. Working with a conservation specialist, produce a collections care assessment of RAMM's current collection.
4. Working with the photographer Garry Fabian Miller, research the work of contemporary artists who use photography and who have a particular relevance to RAMM and its audience.
5. Research early Devon photographers and advise on the potential for collecting the work of historical artists.
6. Be an active member of RAMM's Collections Team by attending team meetings, staff briefings and contributing to in-house communications (e.g. staff newsletter).

### **Other duties both at the V&A and the Royal Albert Memorial Museum and Art Gallery, Exeter**

1. Be committed to health and safety and ensure familiarity with the museums' health and safety policies and procedures.
2. Be security conscious, ensure familiarity and co-operation with all museum security procedures and ensure you wear a security pass at all times when on museum premises.
3. Promote equality and diversity in all aspects of your work by developing and maintaining positive working relationships, ensuring that colleagues are treated fairly and with respect/dignity and actively contributing to developments that support the museum's strategy for widening access, inclusion and diversity.
4. Carry out ad hoc duties as requested by appropriate managers within the museums.

## **PERSON SPECIFICATION**

### Essential requirements

1. Demonstrable knowledge of the history of photography.
2. Excellent grammatical English and oral and written communication skills.
3. Educated to degree level, preferably in an area related to the history of art or museum administration or equivalent experience.
4. Experience of curating exhibitions and displays and of writing exhibition texts.
5. Creative and innovative flair with analytical and project management skills. Experience of managing projects, personal time management and the ability to work to deadlines.
6. Knowledge of museums and the way they work, including some understanding object handling, storage, and documentation.
7. Excellent interpersonal and communication skills including the ability to make presentations to a variety of audiences both within the organisation and beyond.
8. Commitment, enthusiasm and responsiveness to opening up the collections to a broad audience, including non-traditional users.
9. Ability to work flexibly individually, and as a member of a team, with the capability to manage interns and volunteers.
10. Proven ability to undertake, complete and communicate research, and to communicate ideas to a wide audience.

### Desirable requirements

1. Experience of working with similar photographic collections in a museum or gallery environment.
2. Working knowledge of a second language.
3. In-depth knowledge of the history and techniques of photography and a developed interest in art and design.
4. Knowledge of the photography market and of fundraising.
5. Specific knowledge of an area of historic, classic or contemporary photography relating to the V&A or RAMM's collections.

## **OTHER INFORMATION**

### **Hours/Salary:**

Net working hours (i.e. excluding meal breaks) are 36 per week.

The salary for this role will be £22,227 per annum. Salaries are reviewed on an annual basis.

### **Annual leave:**

28 days plus 8 days public holidays

### **Pension benefits:**

You will be auto enrolled into the Museum's Group Personal Pension Scheme and have the opportunity on completion of Probation to an enhanced pension provision, including an employer contribution of 10%.

### **Other benefits:**

Non-contributory life assurance policy (to value of 4 x annual salary)

An interest free season ticket or bicycle loan is available after three months.

Free entrance to all the major museums and exhibitions in London as well as many others.

Subsidised staff restaurant

Discounts on purchases in V&A shops

### **Application process:**

Please apply online via the V&A's website at [www.vam.ac.uk/jobs](http://www.vam.ac.uk/jobs)

If you are having technical difficulties applying online, please use the online chat functionality which can be found on the bottom right hand side of the form. Alternatively, you can contact **Vacancy Filler** directly on **01509 236434**, and quote the role reference number and your application number (if known). Please note, Vacancy Filler are contactable, Monday – Friday between 9.00am – 5.00pm.

If you have any queries regarding the role and/or the V&A's recruitment process, you can email us – [contacthr@vam.ac.uk](mailto:contacthr@vam.ac.uk) or telephone us on 020 7942 2937 (Working hours Monday – Friday 9.00am – 5.00pm).

**Closing date for receipt of applications is 22 July 2018**

**Interview expenses will not be paid unless there is a prior agreement.**