



## Job Description

Job Title:	Curatorial Fellow in Photography, supported by The Bern Schwartz Family Foundation
Division:	Research & Collections
Department:	Word & Image/ Photographs Section
Salary:	£27,000 per annum
Contract:	Fixed term for 2 years (full time)
Reporting to:	Senior Curator, Photographs

## Background

The Bern Schwartz Family Foundation is funding an exceptional opportunity for an early career curator to gain curatorial experience and expertise in photography. This is a new position at the V&A and arises from The Bern Schwartz Family Foundation's desire to give emerging scholars of photography the opportunity to acquire invaluable museum experience and specialist knowledge through working alongside curators.

The V&A is Britain's national museum of art, design and performance, and is one of the greatest museums of decorative arts in the world. The V&A's purpose is to enable everyone to enjoy its collections and explore the cultures that created them; and to inspire those who shape contemporary design. We are currently recruiting for a Curatorial Fellow in Photography, supported by The Bern Schwartz Family Foundation, to work in Photographs, one of the Sections that comprise the Word & Image Department (WID). Before applying, candidates are encouraged to learn about this collection from the V&A website, [www.vam.ac.uk](http://www.vam.ac.uk).

Photographs is a small and dynamic team with a high profile within the museum because of the international significance of the collection, photography's wide audience appeal and the museum's commitment to photography as a key area. Phase 1 of the new V&A Photography Centre opened in autumn 2018, and phase 2 will be completed 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 the displays in the Photography Centre galleries; contributes to the V&A's public programme through preparation of temporary and touring exhibitions; and participates in WID core activities, including running the Prints and Drawings Study Room.

## **The Post**

The purpose of the Fellowship is to develop further expertise in the history of photography by researching the collections of the V&A while gaining vital curatorial experience working in a museum. The fellow will be fully integrated into the Photographs Section and will divide their time between key curatorial duties (including cataloguing, collections care, display, exhibition and publication preparation and researching potential acquisitions) and pursuing an independent research project based on the V&A's photography collection, which will culminate in a tangible output such as a conference, publication and/or web project.

In the first year, the fellow will be based in the Photographs Section as an active member of the curatorial team. In the second year, the fellow will have the opportunity to spend three months in the V&A Research Institute (VARI) to focus on completing the research project. Throughout the fellowship, there will be opportunities for the fellow to present research to internal audiences in WID and VARI, to students and the general public through lectures and gallery talks, and to supporters of photography at the V&A such as the Photographs Acquisitions Group (PAG). Using an accompanying travel fund, the fellow will have the opportunity to travel nationally and internationally to visit other photography collections as part of their curatorial and research work.

## **Research Project**

We invite candidates to consider how they would undertake an independent research project based on the Royal Photographic Society (RPS) collection, which was transferred to the V&A in 2017. We particularly encourage research on subjects relating to portraiture, colour photography or photographic processes, all areas of interest to Bern Schwartz and Foundation. The topic and scope of the project will be agreed at the start of the fellowship, depending on the fellow's expertise and the priorities of the Photographs Section. Possible topics include, but are not limited to, the following areas of strength in the RPS collection:

- Hill & Adamson
- Roger Fenton
- Henry Peach Robinson
- Women portrait photographers
- Autochromes
- Early colour photography
- Paper negatives

Some of the RPS collection is searchable on the V&A's online catalogue:

<http://collections.vam.ac.uk/> and two lists in the middle of this page contain further details about the collection: <https://www.vam.ac.uk/info/study-rooms>.

## **Main tasks**

1. Undertake research on and develop further expertise in the history of photography by working with the V&A's collection. A research project will be agreed at the outset of the fellowship and will be reviewed regularly.

2. Ensure that the outcomes of this research are fully documented, including creating relevant catalogue records of the highest standard on the V&A's Collection Management System (CMS) and for use on Search the Collections (<http://collections.vam.ac.uk/>).
3. Contribute to the care and development of the collections, including researching potential acquisitions.
4. Assist in the preparation of displays in the Photography Centre, UK and international touring photography exhibitions, and publications.
5. Respond to public, official and professional enquiries and assist in providing public opinions service for photographs.
6. Generate content for the V&A website and contribute to the development of photography resources for the Prints and Drawings Study Room.
7. Develop expertise and forge links with museum and external colleagues working in related areas.
8. Work with the Development Team on activities relating to the Photographs Acquisition Group and wider fundraising relating to the photography collection and Centre.
9. Provide periodic reporting and maintain relations with The Bern Schwartz Family Foundation and its representative regarding the progress and outcomes of the fellowship.

#### **Other Duties**

1. Be committed to health and safety and ensure familiarity with all the museum's 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 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. To carry out ad hoc duties as requested by appropriate managers within the Photographs Section.

## **Person Specification**

### Essential requirements

1. A post-graduate degree or evidence of equivalent expertise in the history of photography or a relevant discipline.
2. Demonstrable knowledge of the history of photography. Evidence of a commitment to developing further expertise.
3. Excellent oral and written English.
4. Proven ability to undertake object-based research, and to communicate ideas to a wide audience.
5. Evidence of practical and organisational skills. A keen attention to detail and an ability to work to deadlines.
6. Excellent interpersonal and communication skills including the ability to make presentations to a variety of audiences both within the organisation and beyond.
7. Commitment, enthusiasm and responsiveness to opening up the collections to a broad audience, including non-traditional users.
8. Ability to work flexibly individually, and as a member of a team, with the capability to manage interns and volunteers.
9. Demonstrable computer skills (Excel, Photoshop, Powerpoint, etc) and ability to manage information systematically and accurately.

### Desirable requirements

1. Knowledge of museums and the way they work, including understanding of object handling, storage, and documentation.
2. Experience of working with similar photographic collections in a museum or gallery environment.
3. Experience of curating exhibitions and displays and of writing exhibition texts.
4. Working knowledge of a second language.
5. Good general knowledge of the history of modern and contemporary art and design.

## **Other Information**

### Hours/Salary

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

The salary will be £27,000 per annum plus an annual travel fund of £5,000.

### 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

Childcare Voucher Scheme

### 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 27 May 2019**

Interviews will be held on w/c 10 June 2019

Start date for the role is 16 September 2019

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