



Post: Postdoctoral Research Associate, Provisional Semantics Project
Reference: TG2572
Salary: £26,485 per annum (i.e pro rata to the full-time equivalent of £33,106 per annum)
Band: 3L
Department: Research
Contract: 18 months fixed-term
Hours: Part-time
Reporting to: Head of Research
Location: Millbank, London

Background

Tate's vision is to serve as artistically adventurous and culturally inclusive art museums for the UK and the world. We deliver this through activities in our four galleries across the UK (Tate Liverpool, Tate St Ives, Tate Britain and Tate Modern), our digital platforms and collaborations with our national and international partners. At the heart of Tate is our collection of art, which includes British art from the 16th century to the present day, and international modern art from 1900 to the present day.

You can find further information about Tate on our website: www.tate.org.uk

Tate Research

Tate Research is part of the Tate Learning and Research Directorate and works with all Tate divisions and galleries to create a vibrant research culture and programme of pioneering research. Tate is a leading centre for research in art history, curatorial practice, collection care, conservation, museology and learning. Tate Research acts as a hub to support research activity across all Tate sites, departments and divisions, working with a broad range of partners, including practitioner researchers and academic scholars. Our ambition is to enhance practice at Tate, contribute to scholarly and practice communities and enrich the knowledge and experience of the public. Tate Research is at the forefront of defining what it means for a museum to be a research institution and seeks to contribute to ongoing and urgent debates at Tate and in the museum and heritage sectors more widely.

You can find more details of Tate Research on our website: <https://www.tate.org.uk/research>

This position forms a key part of the research team that will deliver an important AHRC funded research project *Provisional Semantics: Addressing the challenges of representing multiple perspectives within an evolving digitised national collection*. *Provisional Semantics* is one of eight Foundational Projects that have been funded under the ambitious UKRI Strategic Priorities Fund programme *Towards a National Collection: Opening UK Heritage to the World* that is exploring what is needed to create a digitised 'national' collection. You can find more details of 'Towards a National Collection: Opening UK Heritage to the World' here: <https://www.ukri.org/news/first-steps-towards-an-integrated-virtual-national-arts-collection/>

Provisional semantics is a collaboration between Tate, The National Trust (NT), the Imperial War Museum (IWM) and the Decolonising Arts Institute (DAI) at the University of the Arts London. The project focuses on how museums and heritage organisations can engage in decolonising practices to produce search terms, catalogue entries and interpretations fit for purpose for an evolving digitised national collection. Currently, many subject index terms, catalogue entries and associated captions of artworks, visual media and artefacts have been informed by colonial contexts, attitudes and modes of perception. These can be outdated and/or offensive to present day audiences, not least people of African and Asian descent in the UK, whose diasporic histories are intertwined with Britain's colonial and imperial past. Many in the heritage sector recognise the need to interrogate and redress problematic language and representations. Yet at present the lack of research examining what is required in terms of ethical methodologies and practical and attitudinal shifts prevents sustainable change from taking place.

Provisional semantics seeks to address these challenges by (1) examining what methodological, ethical and practical changes heritage organisations need to make to accommodate the multiple and provisional interpretations necessary for a sustainable digitised national collection to genuinely represent UK Heritage. And (2) testing what methods and approaches that engage intellectually and practically with the decolonial agenda can heritage organisations employ to produce search terms/catalogue entries and interpretations.

The project will undertake a wide-ranging literature and practice review and utilise three case studies centred on specific collections at the NT, IWM and Tate that address the histories, representations and artistic practices of people of African and Asian descent. Through workshops and a study day, each case study will test a different approach to collaborating with key stakeholders of each collection whose expertise as people of African and Asian descent can help provide more equitable, multi-perspectival interpretations.

Purpose of the Job

To contribute to all aspects of the research, management and delivery of the project, supporting and liaising closely with the Principal Investigator (PI) and Co-Investigators (CIs). The RA will be based at Tate and line-managed by the Principal Investigator (Head of Research, Tate).

Main Activities/Responsibilities

Project Management

- Provide comprehensive project management support for *Provisional Semantics*, including managing progress to ensure that project milestones are met
- Liaise with the PI, CIs, stakeholders at Tate, IWM, the NT and DAI and external project partners to convene and deliver the case study workshops and study day
- Work with the Tate Research Grants Manager to manage and maintain comprehensive administrative and financial systems for *Provisional Semantics*
- Work with the PI and Tate Research Grants Manager to prepare and maintain project documentation including fulfilling grant reporting requirements and delivering project plans

Research

- Undertake a literature and practice review to map and compare key historic developments and current debates regarding decolonising and diversification initiatives in heritage organisations, archives and libraries in the UK and internationally
- Contribute summary reports from case study workshops and the study day
- Work with the PI and CIs to interrogate and bring together findings in a final ‘state of the art’ report that outlines the key challenges and provides evidence-based recommendations in relation to (1) and (2) above to inform the wider SPF programme
- Research for, and contribute to scholarly articles for publication in collaboration with the PI and CIs

Communication

- Ensure good communication and regular liaison with internal and external partners, including partners across the UKRI SPF programme to enhance project development and delivery
- Report on project progress through project review meetings
- Cultivate good relationships across Tate, the NT, IWM, DAI and externally, act as an advocate for ‘Provisional Semantics’, sharing knowledge and expertise developed in relation to the research

Person Specification

- A relevant postgraduate degree (or demonstrable equivalent experience) and experience of academic research
- An interest in and commitment to collaborative, interdisciplinary and practice-based research
- A demonstrable grasp of debates relating to the decolonising of museums, libraries and archives
- Knowledge and experience of working with collections and cataloguing of collections
- Proven administrative and project management skills including budgetary control, tracking of project progress, risks and deliverables
- Excellent verbal and written communication skills and experience of writing detailed research reports
- Excellent interpersonal skills with the ability to build effective working relationships with a range of colleagues treating them with dignity and respect
- Ability to deliver clear messages about research, working with team members to ensure the visibility of the activities of *Provisional Semantics* across the research partnership and externally.
- Highly organised with the ability to prioritise, meet deadlines
- Ability to work unsupervised and under own initiative, with a proactive, collaborative and flexible approach to problem solving
- Experience of planning, organising and running events
- Good IT skills (MS Office) with experience of setting up, maintaining and improving efficient administrative systems
- An interest and commitment in the work of Tate

Summary of Terms and Conditions of Employment

Type of Contract

This post is offered on a fixed term contract of 18 months.

Working Hours

This post is offered on a part-time basis working four days a week.

Salary

This post is graded on Band 3L of the Tate pay scales.

An appointment to this post will be made at the minimum of the band at £26,485 per annum (i.e pro rata to the full-time equivalent of £33,106 per annum)

A review of pay is undertaken annually at Tate through negotiation with the recognised trade unions. Any increases to individual salaries, will be subject to the terms of Tate's annual pay settlement and will be applied from 1 April.

Annual Leave and Public Holidays

Annual leave is 25 working days per annum.

In addition, we offer paid time off for the 8 paid public holidays and 1 Tate day (on 24 December when the galleries are closed) on a pro rata basis according to the duration of the contract.

Pension Benefits

An important part of the pay and reward package Tate offers employees is the option to join the Civil Service Pension arrangements. These arrangements currently offer a choice of two types of pension:

- **alpha.** This is a defined benefit occupational pension scheme that currently has a member contribution rate which ranges from 4.6%-8.05% dependent on your salary. As your employer we meet the rest of the cost of the scheme. Further information about this can be found at www.civilservicepensionscheme.org.uk
- **partnership** pension account. This is a stakeholder pension with a contribution from ourselves. How much we pay is based on your age. We pay this regardless of whether you choose to contribute anything. You do not have to contribute but, if you do, we will also match your contributions up to 3% of your pensionable earnings. The contributions are in addition to the age-related contribution mentioned above.

If you have previously worked for an employer who participated in the Civil Service Pension scheme or other Public Service pension schemes different conditions may apply.

Other Discretionary Benefits

- Interest-free Season Ticket Loan.
- Cycle to Work scheme – enabling you to buy a bike in a tax efficient way, for travelling to and from work.
- Rental deposit scheme – an interest free advance to help towards the cost of a deposit for privately rented accommodation
- Subsidised staff catering arrangements and discounts in the Tate Restaurants and Cafes.
- Access to Tate Benefits which offers access to discounts in high street stores.
- Access to a 24/7 Employee Assistance Programme to support you with any work, personal or family issues. This includes telephone-based support, as well as comprehensive online resources.
- Free entry to paying exhibitions at Tate Galleries. Opportunities for family and friends to visit the major exhibitions out-of-hours.
- Discounts on items purchased in the Tate shops.
- Free access to a number of other galleries and museums throughout the UK on production of a valid staff pass.

Safer Recruitment

Tate is committed to providing a safe environment for all those who work at Tate and all those who come into contact with Tate as visitors to the galleries, as participants in Tate activities, and online. The safe recruitment of all those who undertake work on behalf of Tate is the first step to ensuring that we are fulfilling this commitment.

All positions at Tate are offered subject to the following conditions:

- Receipt of satisfactory references covering the last 3 years of your employment or education.
- Health clearance
- A satisfactory Disclosure Check.
- Proof that you are legally entitled to work in the UK

You can find out more information about our pre-employment checks and what they mean for you in our ‘Guidance Notes for Applicants’ document.

Diversity and Inclusion

Our aim is to become a truly inclusive organisation with a workforce and audience as diverse as the communities we serve. This is fundamental to Tate’s future success and our ability to continue to contribute to culture and society in the UK.

We want our workforce to be more representative of all sections of society at all levels in the organisation. The range of perspectives and experience diversity brings is an asset to our organisation and we want to create an inclusive, welcoming environment for visitors, artists and all those who work at Tate. Tate expects all employees to contribute to this aim as part of their role. More information about diversity and inclusion at Tate can be found on our [website](#).

How to apply

Our opportunities are open for you to apply online. Please visit:

www.tate.org.uk/about/workingattate/ to create an account by registering your details or if you are an existing user, log into your account. For all opportunities, we ask candidates to complete an online application form for the vacancy they are interested in. If you need an application form in an alternative format, please call us on 020 7887 4997. Once you have submitted your application, you can keep track of its progress by logging in to your account.

The closing date for the submission of completed application forms is **Wednesday, 29 January 2020 by midnight**.

Our jobs are like our galleries, open to all.

