

Research Assistant, African and Caribbean Modern Art

Application deadline: Monday, August 14, 2023

Interview dates: Interviews to take place via zoom on August 24, 25, and 28

Position duration: September 5, 2023 – August 31, 2024 (end date flexible)

Weekly hourly commitment: 5 hrs

Hourly wage: \$23.15

Art Gallery of York University (AGYU) is a socially minded not-for-profit contemporary art gallery that is a space for the creation and appreciation of art and culture. It is a supported Unit of York University within the President's Division. We are externally funded as a public art gallery through the Canada Council for the Arts, the Ontario Arts Council, the Toronto Arts Council. Since 1988, the AGYU has operated at the forefront of contemporary artistic, curatorial, and educational practices with a dedication to presenting international artists within local contexts and bringing Canadian artists into international conversations. We are known for providing sustained support to artists, curators, and writers through long-term engagement that often begins with hosting residencies that tend to lead to exhibitions, performances, lectures, and publications. Through our collections, exhibitions, and public programs the AGYU acts as a rich pedagogical resource for students and faculty, as well as Toronto's contemporary artists and creative communities.

Position Summary:

The Art Gallery of York University (AGYU) invites an organized graduate student to apply to a research assistant role. This position will assist an AGYU curator with research, and administration for a grant project focused on the work of seminal Guyanese artist, anthropologist, and novelist Denis Williams (1923–1998). Across Williams lifetime, his drawings and paintings took on an array of styles from figurative works imbued with social commentary to works focused on geometric abstraction. Furthermore, Williams lived and worked across three continents, developing a distinctly transnational artistic practice that unfurled in dialogue with numerous artists and cultural figures including Mozambican artist Malangatana Ngwenya (1936–2011), art historian Ulli Beier (1922–2011), and Sudanese painter Ibrahim El-Salahi (1930–). This research project aims to examine the international significance of Williams practice through studying his illustrative works, their visual motifs, and their relationship to African and Caribbean literature.

The research assistant will assist the curator in organizing all aspects of the grant project which includes researching works of art through reviewing primary and secondary source literature, assisting with the coordination of the curator's research trips, corresponding with conservators to organize a technical study of a selection of Williams works on paper, and planning and hosting a two-day scholarly convening.

Duties and Responsibilities:

- Ability to independently conduct thorough, accurate, and historic research using primary and secondary resources
- Update working bibliography and source all related text
- Catalogue and fact-check artwork records, including exhibition and literature history
- Organize checklists of Williams work
- Correspond with individuals and organizations to locate artist works and relevant ephemera
- Meet with supervising curator on a regular basis to maintain ongoing communication regarding project progress
- Performs other related administrative duties as required

Qualifications:

- Demonstrated research interest and experience in one or more of the following areas: African art history, Caribbean art history, post-war modern art in Britain, drawings and works on paper, Caribbean literature
- Excellent written and verbal communication, strong email etiquette, and an ability to communicate with a wide range of individuals, including artist estates, private collectors, and institutions
- Highly organized; can easily record and keep track of research sources
- Competency with Microsoft Office
- Experience in various approaches to research from database research to visiting libraries and archives

Application process:

All applications should be emailed to dings@yorku.ca The email subject line should read "Research Assistant" followed by applicant's last name.

All applications must include:

- resume or CV
- Short statement of interest sharing any relevant coursework and what the applicant hopes to gain from this research assistant position
- Writing sample (8 pages or less)