

Research Associate on the Alhambra Palace in the 19th century**Temporary Employment Service Worker Assignment**

The assignment will be conducted through the University of Cambridge Temporary Employment Service and will be based and managed within the Fitzwilliam Museum.

RATE OF PAY: £16.47 PER HOUR

DURATION OF ASSIGNMENT: 16 weeks (full time), or longer part time (to be completed by 30 September)

CLOSING DATE: 29th March 2022, 12:00 noon

ONLINE INTERVIEW DATE: 1st April 2022. Applicants are asked to be available on this day.

METHOD OF APPLICATION: Please email fr306@cam.ac.uk by 12:00 noon on 29th March 2022 with (1) a letter of interest in support of your application, (2) a brief CV including relevant archival research skills, and (3) the name of two referees (including email address and phone number).

LOCATION: Remote working, with at least one visit to Cambridge. A brief trip to Spain to attend meetings, and travel to UK-based archives will be required during the assignment.

Global Connections: the Alhambra at the Fitzwilliam Museum**Background:**

The Fitzwilliam Museum houses the principal collections of art and antiquities of the University of Cambridge, and holds over half a million objects in its care. It is also one of the eight museums that comprise the University of Cambridge Museums consortium (UCM). The Fitzwilliam Museum is being transformed. Last year we welcomed a new Senior Leadership Team, and are playing a leading role in a new University Strategic Research Initiative on *Collections, Connections, Communities*, making this an exciting and busy time to be joining the research team at the Museum.

As part of the larger project titled 'Global Connections: Art from the Islamic World and the Fitz', the assignment holder will research the history of an important collection of life-size casts exemplifying the ornamental decorative programme of the Alhambra Palace in Granada. Gifted to the University in 1841, these are the earliest known such casts in a UK collection, and pre-date an extensive restoration programme carried out by the Spanish architect Contreras, from 1847 to 1889.

The city-fortress of the last Muslim kingdom in Europe, the Alhambra Palace is recognised as one of the most prominent surviving artistic expressions of Nasrid culture. A critical re-assessment of the

history of the building and its reception, through a collection of casts in the Fitzwilliam Museum, will contribute to our understanding of how Islamic artistic traditions were codified, interpreted and presented to Western audiences in the 19th century, setting the foundations for dominant frameworks in the history of the relationship between 'Islamic' and 'Western' art.

Largely neglected after the 16th century, the Palace gained extreme global popularity in the late 19th century, chiefly through the work of travelling artists and antiquarians, who reintroduced Islamic design to Northern European audiences. The Fitzwilliam Museum's casts are uniquely important in documenting the decorative programme of the Palace as it appeared in the 1830s, before creative restoration works by a Spanish architectural team radically altered the site.

The Assignment:

The assignment holder would compile a visual and documentary repository of the site and its architecture, that focuses on its physical state before Contreras' restoration programme and its use by its various inhabitants.

Building on existing research, they would investigate the nature and motivations of English antiquarian interest in the Alhambra in the earlier part of the 19th century, and particularly of Sir Grenville Temple, who collected these casts, in the context of contemporaneous approaches to the built heritage of the Islamic world.

The ideal candidate should demonstrate experience in archival research and be proficient in English and Spanish.

They should either be working towards a postgraduate research qualification, hold a PhD or have equivalent experience in history of art and/or architecture, history of Spain, or a related field. A background in one of these topics is desirable: Islamic art and architecture of al-Andalus, history of casts and casting techniques, the historiography of the conservation and preservation of Islamic monuments, and literatures of the Grand Tour.

A brief trip to Spain to attend meetings, and travel to UK-based archives will be required during the assignment.

This assignment is advertised as full time, but part-time applications are welcome.

The assignment involves:

- Compiling relevant bibliography on the history and materiality of the casts and models of the Alhambra to better contextualise the Fitzwilliam's collection.
- Carrying out archival research on the Alhambra in the 18th and 19th centuries to contribute to existing scholarship, by contextualising Sir Grenville Temple's patronage and ownership of these casts.
- Researching the Palace's position within contemporaneous approaches to conserving and presenting Islamic heritage, particularly the work of the Spanish state through its academy.
- Subject to progress on above research, there may be opportunities to share research for both general and specialist audiences (e.g. online, presentations, articles)

The University of Cambridge is committed in its pursuit of academic excellence to equality of opportunity and to a proactive and inclusive approach to equality, which supports and encourages all under-represented groups, promotes an inclusive culture, and values diversity. We believe that diversity strengthens and enriches us, and are committed to helping to make the arts and cultural sector a more diverse and equal place. To this end we are actively seeking to diversify our staff and would particularly welcome applications from women and those from Black, Asian and Minority Ethnic background, and people with disabilities. If you wish to self-identify, please do so in your personal statement.

The University has a responsibility to ensure that all employees are eligible to live and work in the UK. The assignment-holder will start the assignment as soon as the above checks have been carried out.

Further information about the Fitzwilliam Museum and its collections can be found at <https://www.fitzmuseum.cam.ac.uk/>

Informal enquiries are welcome: please email Flavia Ravaioli on fr306@cam.ac.uk