

M4C Collaborative Doctoral Award (CDA)

PROJECT TITLE				
'Hidden Voices': Visible and Invisible Women in The Shakespeare Birthplace Trust's Collection				
LEAD INSTITUTION				
Name of HEI institution		The Shakespeare Institute, University of Birmingham.		
Lead regional city		Birmingham <input checked="" type="checkbox"/>	Coventry <input type="checkbox"/>	Leicester <input type="checkbox"/> Nottingham <input type="checkbox"/>
PARTNER ORGANISATION				
Name of organisation		The Shakespeare Birthplace Trust		
Website		https://www.shakespeare.org.uk/education/research-scholars/		
<p>Project overview: The project is for a doctoral student to make visible the presence of women in the Shakespeare Birthplace Trust (SBT)'s extensive archive, library and museum collections. What 'hidden' women's stories will you extract from the holdings of female writers, scholars, activists and theatre practitioners. Whose narrative(s) will you tell?</p> <p>Project: This is your opportunity to make known the presence and significance of women in the nationally and internationally important archives, library, and museum collections of The Shakespeare Birthplace Trust. There you will be empowered to identify the 'hidden' stories of women over the centuries, for example, residents of Stratford-upon-Avon, writers, scholars, activists, and theatre practitioners. You will be encouraged to determine your own focus and theme from which you will produce a thesis narrative from the data you retrieve, the 'hidden voices' you identify. This will result in an 80,000 word this and, it is hoped, linked book that will break new ground, whilst also enabling the SBT to fulfil its research and collections strategies. Your work is expected to make professionally-focussed recommendations to the SBT for new acquisitions, cataloguing, curating, and intellectual access. Applicants should have a fascination in historical and archival research and should be ambitious to work out the stories that historical collections are telling about women, as well as the stories they are not.</p> <p>Process: The method of research will involve archival scholarship and historical knowledge; using the collection, collation and analysis of primary data; and the structuring of the results in an appropriate thesis-narrative (e.g., chronological, by subject, theme, or area of the collection). Your supervisors will enable you to articulate and form the methodology most appropriate to their research interests (e.g., new historicist, presentist, or shaped by the Feminist Theory Archive). There is scope for you to explore different and original creative pathways through the archives depending on whether your interests are material objects, written archives, books, buildings – or a mixture. Your main research questions are likely to range from:</p> <p>1 conceptual: How do we define a 'hidden voice'? How might 'hidden voices' form a narrative across a single collection?</p>				

How would ‘uncovering’ the ‘hidden voices’ change our historical narrative?

2 Practical:

What does the current cataloguing itself tell us, and how might this be improved?

How might our discoveries develop the SBT’s future curatorial practice and cataloguing?

How do we develop public access to the SBT’s collection material connected to women?

3 Methodological:

What are the dominant cultural narratives and intentions for working with ‘hidden voices’?

How *should* they be theorised?

Place:

Your project will be undertaken in two places: the SBT, which has the library and archives that are to be explored, and the Shakespeare Institute (SI), University of Birmingham, which has the academic library that includes the secondary holdings that will shape this project. The SBT has experts on its holdings and on the way documents and artefacts are catalogued and organised for museums; the SI has a focused concentration of world-standard Shakespeare experts, including scholars who specialise in archival scholarship, textual scholarship and architectural scholarship, as well as a range of engaged doctoral students with cognate interests. You will benefit from the collaboration, through encountering a range of practical and academic experts, and from the doubled opportunities for public engagement that you will have working in two places. Finally, your outputs will be academic, as befits a university (a thesis/book) but also quite possibly creative: The SBT has a good track-record of commissioning poets and publishing poetry. Your research would be disseminated through exhibitions, actual as well as on-line, student- and SBT-staff- organised symposia and other events, and social media engagement.

Person:

You need, above all things, to be curious and excited about making new discoveries. Experience of working within an archive is desirable but not essential, as assistance and training will be provided. You need to be practical and well organised because analysing primary data will be one of the things that you will be doing. You need to be keen to learn curatorial, rare book skills, artefact handling, and paleography. And you need to be a good writer. You should tell us in your application what excites you about the potential you see in the SBT’s collection with regard to your own research interests. How might you work creatively with the material, or and present it terms of an exhibition?

HOW TO FIND OUT MORE. Please email the lead university supervisor if you want to find out more about this CDA project.

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