Internship Focus: Sculpture and Race

Collaborating Institutions/Academic Departments:

- Yale Center for British Art
- Smithsonian American Art Museum

Advisors:

- Martina Droth, Curator of Sculpture, Deputy Director of Research and Exhibitions, Yale Center for British Art (YCBA)
- Karen Lemmey, Curator of Sculpture, Smithsonian American Art Museum (SAAM)

Internship type: Graduate

Internship Description:

This internship is offered as a fall semester Graduate Student Research Assistantship (GRA) based at the Yale Center for British Art with travel time to visit and undertake research at the Smithsonian American Art Museum. This collections-focused internship will examine the history of sculpture through the lens of race, contributing to research for a major exhibition being developed at SAAM, *Skin Deep: Race and American Sculpture*, curated by Karen Lemmey. This exhibition will be the first of its kind to explore the profound historical connections between race and sculpture. While the SAAM exhibition will ultimately focus on American sculpture, the complex relationship between sculpture and race requires a wider scope of inquiry that brings global perspectives into dialogue. Constructions of whiteness and the symbolic significance of white marble in neoclassical allegories of “purity” and “piety” are universal problems in “Western” sculpture, as is the conflation of media with skin tones, such as bronze and terracotta standing for skin in early nineteenth-century depictions of Native American, African, and African American figures. At a time when public sculpture is under intense scrutiny – with the dismantling of confederate monuments in the United States and colonial statues around the world – this project will offer a forum for considering the wider history of sculpture’s role in the history of racial ideologies.

The graduate student will have the opportunity to participate in a workshop at the Smithsonian and to spend time with Karen Lemmey and other curators in the Smithsonian collections. The student will also work with Martina Droth at the Yale Center for British Art and in other Yale collections to research objects. The student will collaborate with the project leaders on the development of a workshop focusing on relevant works in the collections. An important goal of these workshops will be to build links between faculty, students, curators, and other scholars.
At Yale, this will include YCBA, Yale University Art Gallery, Peabody Museum, the departments of History of Art and African American Studies, and Yale’s cultural centers; in DC, it will include SAAM, the Smithsonian National Museum of the American Indian, the Smithsonian Natural History Museum, and the National Museum of African American History and Culture.

Internship Learning Objectives:

1. Researching the history of sculpture and race, including the development of a bibliography
2. Undertaking object-focused research in the Yale and SI collections
3. Taking part at an SI workshop in relation to the project, and collaborating with the PIs on conceptualizing an interdisciplinary workshop at Yale
4. Presenting research at the workshop

Length: 18 hours per week during the fall 2019 semester (as required for Graduate Student Research Assistantships offered by YCBA and YUAG); this will include three weeks in DC during fall 2019 semester to research SAAM and other SI collections; plus three days in DC in June to participate in the first project-related workshop.

Stipend: The stipend for a GRA matches the TF stipend (currently $11,625 per semester). Additional funding will be offered for the student to travel and stay in DC for up to three weeks.

To apply: To apply: Submit a completed application online (https://britishart.yale.edu/yale-smithsonian-internship-application). Your complete application must include:

- A cover letter describing your interest in the internship and the relevance of the internship to your larger goals.
- A transcript of your graduate record (unofficial transcripts are acceptable).
- Two confidential letters of recommendation. Each referee should e-mail the letter directly to Research (ycba.research@yale.edu) by the deadline and include the applicant’s name in the subject line.

Application deadline: February 15, 2019