Internship Focus: British Representations of Native Americans

Collaborating Institutions/Academic Departments:

- Yale Center for British Art
- Smithsonian National Museum of the American Indian

Advisors:

- Cécile R. Ganteaume, Associate Curator, National Museum of the American Indian
- Ned Blackhawk, Professor of History and American Studies, Yale University
- Jennifer Reynolds-Kaye, Curator of Education and Academic Affairs, Yale Center for British Art

Internship type: Either graduate or undergraduate

Internship Description:

Over the past several years, Yale University has begun to look critically at the way Indigenous American art and people are represented in its museums. The recent collaborations by the Yale University Art Gallery, History of Art Department, and Yale Peabody Museum, and the upcoming exhibition on contemporary Native American art at the YUAG point to progress. As a smaller contribution, the Yale Center for British Art in partnership with the National Museum of the American Indian, offered a Yale-Smithsonian summer internship last year for object-based research into the YCBA’s collections and related objects at the NMAI. The report that the intern, Joseph Zordan, produced after his 8-weeks has only begun to shape the conversations around display and interpretation of British representations of Indigenous Americans.

This internship builds on the collaboration between the YCBA and the NMAI and expands on Zordan’s object-focused research. At the NMAI, the intern would continue to examine the permanent collection of the YCBA to determine the strongest method for telling new stories about Indigenous Americans to the public as informed by the incredible work of the NMAI. The intern will focus on best practices of the NMAI for interpretation, educational program, and exhibitions. For example, the intern might develop a self-guided brochure or audio tour that highlights objects reflective of the fraught relationship between British and native North American people. Because the intern would be immersed within the field of British and native North American studies, they might suggest scholars, artists, and other individuals who the YCBA should consider engaging with. The capstone project would be jointly decided upon by the two supervisors and the student.

Internship Learning Objectives:
1. Understand contentious relationship between British settlers and Indigenous North Americans through primary and secondary sources
2. Grasp challenges that face different types of museums (culturally-specific institutions, art museums, anthropology museums)
3. Consider ways that difficult objects convey both knowledge and trauma, and how to thoughtfully manage these two poles in a public museum
4. Develop a familiarity with proposing an exhibition, education programming, and interpretive materials

Length: 8 weeks in summer

Stipend: $5,500

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 undergraduate or 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: Friday April 12, 2019