

Specific research areas of interest to Royal Museums Greenwich (RMG) for possible Fellowship projects

Below are listed areas where the Museum has identified possibilities for further research in support of its public mission.

Please note that this is not an exhaustive list, and we are open to any fellowship proposals under the broad thematic areas listed on our Fellowship webpage

For further information on these themes, including suggestions for relevant collections, please contact the research team on research@rmg.co.uk

Caribbean, African and Atlantic histories and material cultures

- Research into Black Atlantic histories, with a particular focus on women's experiences. Examples might include:
 - The role and impact of pre-colonial African women as spiritual, tactical or military leaders.
 - Research which documents Black women's journeys from precolonial freedom through captivity and enslavement to rebellion/subversion and eventual emancipation. For example, the experiences of African women who serviced West Africa's slave forts as servants and 'wives' of resident Europeans; of those who participated in on-board rebellions during the 'Middle Passage'; and those who undertook onward journeys to Sierra Leone, Nova Scotia and elsewhere.
 - Research which highlights the experiences of women Abolitionists.
- Research into the complex histories of customization (fitting out) of ships in the context of transatlantic trade.

Global maritime histories and material culture

To complement staff research (including new research guides) on global maritime histories within RMG's collections, we welcome fellowship research that provides insights into the historical, economic and cultural contexts of objects and representations relating to specific cultural and religious identities, to support how we engage with complex histories and narratives and how we can better foreground these perspectives in our cataloguing and interpretation. Examples include:

- Representations of Japan and Japanese people in RMG's collections (1870s-1940s)
- Representations of South Asian people, including elites, in RMG's collections (1757-1947)
- Representations of Māori and Pacific Islanders in RMG's collections (1760s onwards)
- Representations of Chinese cultures and peoples in RMG's collections including with reference to the Cutty Sark's role in the tea trade and its broader contextualization within the complex histories of the Opium Wars.
- The Alan Villiers photographic collection from the period 1938-39 (and including his post-war visits to the Persian Gulf) from the perspective of Arab and Islamic cultural studies.
- North American indigenous material culture in RMG's collections including that associated with First Nations, Cree, Métis and Inuit people with a focus on the construction, symbolism and use of the objects, to facilitate foregrounding of indigenous perspectives in our cataloguing and interpretation. We are interested in research into:
 - Inuit-related material culture within our polar exploration collections and also where this intersects with other polar collections e.g. polar photographs
 - under-researched quillwork within our collection (likely linked to Cree and Métis)

- how RMG's collections can be utilized to support the cultural practices and activities of these communities today

Art and identity; The Queen's House

- Histories of the Queen's House with an emphasis on untold and underrepresented stories
- Diverse and marginalized histories represented in RMG's paintings collection (including, for example, histories of race, gender, sexuality)
- Research into the provenance of RMG's fine art collection including, but not limited to, the Dutch and Flemish Old Master painting collection, including histories of ownership and art dealership and their association with wealth accumulation.

History of science: navigation, astronomy and the Royal Observatory Greenwich (ROG):

- **Public perceptions of the ROG:** assessing levels of public interest, discussion and debate around the adoption of the Greenwich Meridian as Prime Meridian of the World in 1884.
- **Popularization of astronomy:** in 1890 a select group of Greenwich astronomers were involved with the foundation of the British Astronomical Association (BAA) to make astronomy more accessible to those excluded from professional societies. What do various archive materials tell us about the ongoing relationship between the BAA and the Royal Observatory and other public audiences?
- **Investigating the wider economic and colonial context of the Observatory's foundation** in 1675 and subsequent significance in global trade and imperial influence. How did the growth of colonial trade networks contribute to the impetus for better navigational astronomy? How did access to new materials, techniques and commodities affect the development of scientific instruments?

Ship and maritime technologies and histories

- **Naval architecture** – research which investigates how the Admiralty supported or rejected innovation in their warship designs in the late 18th to mid-19th Century, with reference to the Admiralty ship plan and ship model collections. A particular focus could be Robert Seppings, Surveyor of the Navy, and his associates.
- **Polar photography** within the collections, including early photographic techniques,
- **Exploratory research and scoping of business records relating to the tea trade**, including tea agents and cargoes, to investigate how Cutty Sark's tea cargoes were procured. RMG's collections (including the deed box of John Willis, first owner of Cutty Sark) might be used as a starting point, with scoping of other UK business archives e.g. the Jardine, Matheson & Co archive at Cambridge University to assess how they might be harnessed for this research.