

Specific research areas of interest to Royal Museums Greenwich (RMG) for possible Fellowship projects 2026-27

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.

Caribbean, African and Atlantic histories and material cultures

- Black Atlantic histories, with a particular focus on the period between Abolition to the post-war era. This period is richly represented in RMG's collections but is currently underrepresented in the Atlantic Worlds gallery.
- How Indigenous histories of the Atlantic are both represented and obscured in RMG's collections, including across art and material culture. We particularly welcome projects from Indigenous scholars and perspectives, including creative responses to the collections.
- The maritime impact on Africa and South America during the 16th-19th centuries, which is currently under-represented in our research.
- Maritime histories of non-human life, for example the relationship between humans and marine species, alternative histories of whaling or the Black Atlantic histories of salt cod.

Global maritime histories and material culture

To complement staff research (including new research guides) on global maritime histories within RMG's collections, and in support of our [Unlocking Collections](#) project, 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 and South Asian History in the context of the East India Company (1600-1947).
- Representations of Sri Lanka and Sri Lankans in RMG's collections (1880-1940): exploring how Sri Lanka was depicted in photographs taken or collected by British visitors to the island, especially but not limited to naval officers (includes images produced by commercial photography studios).
- Histories of the Indian Ocean represented in RMG's collections.
- 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.
- Research that illuminates marginalized and under-represented LGBTQ histories in our collections.

Maritime histories and technologies

- 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.

- The impact of the transition from sail to steam on seafarers and seafarer communities.

Art and identity; The Queen's House

- Histories of the Queen's House and Greenwich Palace with an emphasis on untold and underrepresented stories relating to any aspect of the site's history.
- Diverse and marginalized histories represented in RMG's paintings collection (including, for example, histories of race, gender, sexuality)
- Inclusive histories of empire as represented in the fine and decorative art collection, especially relating to the extractive activities of empire in for example, in the East India Company and Pacific voyages of 'discovery'.
- 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):

- **Observatory calculating machines:** how did astronomers respond to the introduction of mechanical and later electronic calculating machines? How do the calculating machines and occultation machine within our collection fit within the broader history of observatory calculation technologies?
- **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.
- **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?
- **Technological transitions in navigation:** how did navigators respond to changing technologies such as radio signals, DECCA, gyroscopic navigation on submarines and early satellite navigation techniques? What were the key milestones, successes and failures of these transitions in navigation?