

## *Encounters 2023:* Creative Practice as Research Method

### *The IAS/SCCI Creative Fellowship programme\**

#### Overview

The Institute of Advanced Studies (IAS) at UCL's Bloomsbury campus, together with the recently created School for the Creative and Cultural Industries (SCCI) at UCL East, is seeking to appoint two Creative Fellows to work with us in 2023. The *Encounters* programme of Fellowships, which has been running since 2019, offers creative practitioners the opportunity to explore new directions in their own practice in partnership with UCL academics. This year - besides an open-ended exploration of the relationship between creative practice and research - these grants also invite practitioners to work with UCL academics in setting the agenda for ARIEL, a new research centre in this field, based jointly at IAS and SCCI, and launching in 2023. ARIEL aims to open up a space for dynamic new interactions at the intersections of creative practice and academic research (please see Prospectus below).

\*The 2023 Creative Fellowship programme is funded by UCL Faculty of Arts and Humanities from the generous bequest of Professor the Lord Charles Randolph Quirk, 1920-2017, linguist and life peer, who began his academic career as a lecturer at UCL and was Professor here from 1960 to 1981. Professor Quirk was renowned for his pioneering *Survey of English Usage*, which resulted in a series of publications that became standard works of reference on the English language. We hope that he would have approved of the Creative Fellowship programme's focus on diversity of practice and on communication between different communities, which echo his own approach to linguistic analysis.

#### The *Encounters* programme

The *Encounters* programme aims to unpack creativity and the creative method, and to explore how creative practice operates as a form of knowing, exploring or discovering as well as doing, seeking to recognise the value of creative practice as knowledge creation and knowledge disruption. For our Fellowships, we are looking for creative practitioners who are excited about exploring, through their own creative practice, one or more of the following questions:

- What is the value of creative practices as forms of knowing, exploring or discovering, and how do these forms relate to more conventional modes of research?
- How might creative or artistic practices be used to transform or amplify more conventional modes of research in the humanities?
- How can academic research learn to speak more clearly to the needs of creative practitioners and to the Creative and Cultural Industries?
- How can creative practice map the future? How can it help map the future of research both at UCL and more widely?

The programme is broadly focused on the fields of performance, creative writing, visual arts or media. This year, we are especially keen to allocate one of the fellowships to a musician, to complement our UCL-wide initiative Music Futures, a cross-disciplinary research network exploring the potential of music as a research method. Music Futures is coordinated jointly by the IAS and the European Institute, with support from UCL Grand Challenges: please see our website: <https://www.ucl.ac.uk/institute-of-advanced-studies/music-futures>. Both of the appointed Fellows will be asked to respond creatively to the questions posed above and then to plan and deliver at least two events aimed at staff or students at UCL, and, as appropriate, a wider public. These could be seminars, creative workshops, performance events or any other medium that allows people to collaborate in exploring creativity. How you respond to the ideas you encounter at UCL is up to you; we will not expect you to follow any prescribed format; we are keen for you to experiment, as long as some of our community of researchers and students can be involved in the process. Fellows will also be expected to help imagine future directions for ARIEL.

We are particularly interested in working with practitioners who may not have any prior experience of working with a university, and we are committed to providing support to help the Fellows to navigate our university 'walls' and engage meaningfully with our communities.

### Creative Fellowships 2023

Two Fellowships of up to six months are available for 2023. The exact dates will be agreed at appointment stage.

There will be two Fellowships of £10,000 each, which require Fellows:

- To engage actively with UCL academic life, linking up with academic staff or students to explore, through their own creative approaches and practice, the relationship of creative practice to the Humanities
- To respond creatively to their experiences of meeting and sharing ideas with academics and students at UCL
- To plan and deliver at least two events that engage different groups at UCL in an exploration of creative method(s) and the questions posed by the Fellowship. One of these events should also be aimed at a broader public.
- To serve on one of the Working Groups developing ARIEL (estimated time: 3 x 2-hour meetings, plus preparation)
- To prepare a short report (1,000-1,500 words) on the work done during their Fellowship

The grants will be paid in two instalments – the first soon after the beginning of the Fellowship on agreement of an outline plan for the Fellowship; the second halfway through the Fellowship.

### What you will bring to the Fellowship

- Creative curiosity about research and creative practice: how these two processes operate and influence one another within a university context, and what value the creative arts and humanities bring to wider society
- Openness to working with academic researchers, educators or students to explore the relationships between research, learning and creative practice

- Willingness to plan and then lead some events that explore themes of creative practice and creative methodologies
- Willingness to share insights into your creative practice and insights into how UCL can better integrate creative practice and research through our vision for ARIEL and how its research can contribute meaningfully to the work of creative practitioners and the Creative and Cultural Industries.

### What UCL will bring

- Support for you to meet and develop creative collaborations with academics who are interested in creative practice from across the Faculty of Arts and Humanities
- Membership of the Institute of Advanced Studies community, including access to all IAS events
- Access to UCL library and archival collections and museums for the duration of the Fellowship
- Access to facilities at SCII in UCL East (1 Pool Street, Olympic Park)

### Making an Application

If you are interested in this opportunity, please apply as follows:

1. Complete the application form with basic information about you and the nature/mode of your creative practice (e.g. poetry, visual art, performance, etc.)
2. Respond to the open questions on the application form. You can either offer written responses or send us a video/audio recording (max. 7 mins). These questions ask:
  - a. What the term 'Creative Humanities' means to you, and why the inclusion of creative practice in research is important
  - b. Why you are interested in working collaboratively with researchers and students at UCL. Please specify if you have identified particular researchers relevant to your practice (see further information below about IAS and SCII).
  - c. Any experience you have of making connections with non-practitioners and talking with them about the creative process
  - d. What you hope to get out of the Fellowship
  - e. A couple of ideas for creative and engaging 'encounters' with members of the UCL community
  - f. What you imagine ARIEL could do to engage creative practitioners

**Deadline:** Midnight on Sunday 5 March 2023.

**Contact for enquiries/applications:** Catherine Stokes, IAS Administrator and Executive Assistant to the Director: [c.stokes@ucl.ac.uk](mailto:c.stokes@ucl.ac.uk)

## Creative Arts and Humanities at UCL

UCL has a long history of practice-led research within the Humanities, from artistic practice as a form of research in the Slade School of Fine Art, to practice-led PhD programmes across a number of disciplines.

The Faculty of Arts and Humanities is committed to strengthening the role of creative practice within research and teaching, fostering greater dialogue between humanities researchers and creative practitioners; and foregrounding the value of creative practice as research.

The Faculty has also developed a new undergraduate degree programme in the Creative Arts and Humanities that launched in Autumn 2023 as part of the School for the Creative and Cultural Industries at UCL East. This degree will allow students to draw upon the richness of the Humanities disciplines at UCL to engage with both critical and creative practices as well as active engagement with the creative industries.

On ARIEL, please see the prospectus below.

## The School for the Creative and Cultural Industries at UCL East

The School for the Creative and Cultural Industries at UCL's new campus in East London's Queen Elizabeth Olympic Park draws together research, learning, public engagement and enterprise focused on art and technology, media, history, heritage and cultural production.

The School for Creative and Cultural Industries will support and develop the next generation of practitioners to work across the cultural and creative sectors, and more widely for careers where creativity and critical thinking are valued. The brand-new spaces of the school will be creative and collaborative gathering places for students, academics, professionals and activists with a common passion for shared exploration, a belief in the power of creative practice and the importance of role of heritage and public history in creating new futures. We will work with community partners, creative practitioners and organisations across the creative and cultural sector in East London and beyond.

## The Institute of Advanced Studies

UCL's Institute of Advanced Studies in the Humanities and Social Sciences (IAS) was founded in 2015 as a research-based community of scholars from diverse fields committed to working across conventional disciplinary and organisational boundaries. As one of our Creative Fellows you would join this community and be encouraged to engage with researchers and research students to explore shared areas of interest, for example at our weekly Residential Seminar, at which our staff and visiting scholars present their work in an informal cross-disciplinary discussion. We also run an extensive and varied programme of events, in which you would be encouraged to participate.

The IAS is also home to several specialist [research centres](#) and research themes, which change annually. This year's themes are '[Growth](#)' and 'Indigenous Ecologies and Environmental Crisis', which are potential foci for the work of the Fellowship; other areas of expertise include Knowledge Equities; the [Anthropocene](#); and Race and Racialisation (the [Sarah Parker Remond Centre](#)). We also work with the Centre for the Study of the Legacies of British Slavery <https://www.ucl.ac.uk/lbs/> and with departments across the Faculties of Social and Historical Sciences, Arts and Humanities, the School of Slavonic and East European Studies, the Institute of Education and the Bartlett Faculty of the Built Environment. The Institute will act as the base for the Creative Fellowships, providing access to a community of interdisciplinary researchers to expand the opportunities for creative dialogue that the fellowships provide.

## **ARIEL: UCL's Centre for Creative Practice Research**

Purpose: **A forum for intellectual exploration and exchange between academics of all disciplines and the creative and cultural industries.**

**Artistic  
Research for  
Inspiration  
Experimentation  
Learning**

Three aims:

**1) To provide a dedicated intellectual and physical space for UCL academics from any discipline to work with creative practitioners on specific research projects.** ARIEL will work to create optimum conditions for such partnerships by: i) harvesting and showcasing the work that has been done over many years, but which has often been small-scale and one-off, so that the learning does not outlive the specific project; ii) offering facilities for exchange of ideas, dissemination of best practice and networking; iii) supporting multi-disciplinary collaborations among academic and creative partners; and iv) providing training for academics, especially at early-career stage, in working with creative practitioners, including media training.

This first aim responds to the fact that a lot of work has been done at UCL, especially in the Slade School of Fine Art, the Bartlett Faculty of the Built Environment, Science and Technology Studies, the Institute of Education, and by individual academics in a wide range of disciplines who have worked with creative artists, writers or musicians, but to date there has been no institutional means of expanding and developing small projects, disseminating best practice or of helping people to develop skills in this area of work. ARIEL's coordinating role will enable all academics interested in this field to find new opportunities for their work and to build a legacy for it.

**2) To connect people in the creative and cultural industries with cutting-edge academic research to inform and fertilize their creative work**

There is currently a convergence of public demand for high quality intellectual content in the arts and the media alongside cutbacks in research departments at leading institutions, such as the BBC and national museums and galleries. Serious artists of all kinds undertake their own research, but it is often hard for them, especially freelancers, to access the research that is done in universities or, perhaps even more importantly, to enjoy conversations with academic researchers.

ARIEL would work to establish itself as the first port of call for e.g. a playwright interested in the latest developments in Space Science, or an opera director staging *Fidelio* who wants to learn about the latest thinking on prison reform, or a TV producer who wants to go beyond an authenticity check on language or costume to research the deep history of racism for their latest historical drama. Through specialist mediators who understand both the arts and the universities, ARIEL would put people in touch, help them to access university libraries and collections, and design bespoke workshops for their project. Through this work, ARIEL will harness the research power of London's leading multi-disciplinary university to enhance the

creative process and contribute to higher quality cultural experiences for the public. In time, this strand of Ariel's work could develop into a consultancy that could support its other work.

**3) To stimulate scrutiny of the creative-critical divide and to support collaborative research to develop new thinking about methods, outputs and pedagogies**

This third aim responds to the desirability of better coordination of the wide range of work already going on at UCL in this area, such as the PhD in Creative-Critical Writing, or the [Site-Writing](#) pioneered by Jane Rendell. UCL ARIEL will also provide a research context and an intellectual home for staff and students on the new teaching programmes in Creative and Applied Humanities at the UCL East-based School of Creative and Cultural Industries. More broadly, it responds to contemporary imperatives to generate new ways of knowing, thinking and communicating for the post-pandemic world.

Guiding principles of UCL ARIEL will be:

- excellence in both creative and academic work;
- diversity, both local and global, as the pre-requisite for high quality work;
- commitment to bridging divides; and
- sustainability in all senses.

Location: Ariel will be a virtual space, at least initially, strongly enhanced by the physical spaces of the Common Ground of the Institute of Advanced Studies (South Wing corridor) and the facilities at UCL East, 1 Pool Street. We could also make maximum use of other UCL facilities such as the Bloomsbury Theatre, exhibition spaces and so on.

This co-location ARIEL offers a uniquely advantageous combination of the IAS's outstanding track record in cross-disciplinary research with pioneering initiatives in Creative and Applied Humanities and community engagement at UCL East. It will thus help to ensure strong and constructive interaction in the wide field of culture between UCL Bloomsbury and UCL East.

Launch: Spring 2023: launch event, followed by one event on each of the three themes