

The Royal Museums of Fine Arts of Belgium & Université libre de Bruxelles are recruiting a

Researcher – PhD Student (m/w/x) (project BRAIN 2.0: ProvEnhance – WP4: Art market history, 2023-2027)

Context

The PhD project is part of the larger research project *ProvEnhance: Enhancing the provenance data of the collections of the Royal Museums of Fine Arts of Belgium (RMFAB) since 1933. Scientific study, digital valorization and narrative in context*. It is a 4-year research project funded by the BRAIN 2.0 program of the [Belgian Science Policy PPS](#) (see [project page](#)), coordinated by the Royal Museums of Fine Arts of Belgium with as partners the Université libre de Bruxelles (ULB), the Technische Universität Berlin (TU) and the Belgian State Archives /CegeSoma (see below for more information about the partner institutions).

The project ProvEnhance aims to lay a global scientific and methodological frame for provenance research in Belgium for artworks acquired around WWII. As a real case-study, it will systematically study and enrich the provenance data of artworks entered in the collections of the RMFAB from 1933 on, concentrating on the pre-, war and postwar periods, but possibly extending until the 1990's for subsets of acquisitions that could have a story related to the (pre)war-period. Another objective of the project is to improve transparency by displaying the research results in the digital and physical museum environment.

The PhD-research position is part of the work package "Study of the Belgian Art Market 1933 – 1960" (WP4). It will provide the opportunity for a PhD candidate to analyze the Belgian art market during WWII and thus address research question(s) such as: who were the actors of the art market in Belgium? What were their international connections? How did the market evolve during the period under study (prices, quality, fakes etc...)? The research will rely on both quantitative and qualitative approaches. The study of the pre-, war and immediate post-war institutional, political & legal framework (spoliations, restitutions, art import/export) on the basis of prior research and national and international archival sources (Office for economic recuperation, archives of the postwar purges etc.) will provide the context. The creation of sales database (on the basis of published sources (Almanacs and Fine Arts Directories, Belgian Sales Catalogs ...) and databases created by partners) will provide a first overview of the importance of each actor on the art market. It will also serve as basis for the quantitative network analysis and reveal the strength of the connection between actors. The creation of prices indices using hedonic regressions will allow the PhD candidate to determine the general price movement of the market and whether the price paid for a specific artwork was in line with prices for similar artworks sold at the same time. Other econometric methodologies will be used when necessary, depending upon the research questions and the quality of the available data.

The PhD candidate will rely on the project team's expertise in history, digital humanities, and economics as the analysis of the Belgian art market's complexity requires a transdisciplinary approach.

The PhD-research will be conducted under the supervision of a professor at the ULB and the successful candidate will be enrolled as a PhD in this university and defend a doctoral thesis at the end of the 4-year research.

Job duties

- To study and analyze the art market in Belgium during WWII, including the mapping of the actors and an economic analysis, as well as the legal and political context, in the framework of the ProvEnhance project as described above. He or she will write a doctoral thesis on the topic / enrollment in a doctoral school at ULB depending on the profile of the candidate - each doctoral school has its prerequisite
- To contribute to the scientific activities and academic outputs of the project such as conferences and publication of article(s), including the organization of and communication about these activities through appropriate channels
- To participate in the project management and reporting, with regular feedback to the project team on progress
- To collaborate with the other project researchers, a.o. in structuring and sharing the network data on the art market during WWII
- To collaborate with other museum departments according to the project needs, e.g. the mediation and communication teams, etc.
- To collaborate with international research networks on art market
- To participate to the university PhD program requirements (ULB)
- To support the project advancement through other administrative tasks as well as other duties that may be reasonably requested

Profile

- Master's degrees in Art history, History, Economic History, Digital Humanities, , Business, Economics, or any other disciplines related to the project
- Strong interest and possibly research experience in European Art Market history (20th century). A familiarity with Belgian history during WWII is an asset
- Strong interest or experience in using econometric methodologies for market analysis
- Fluency in French as well as a professional command of English; knowledge (at least reading skills) of German and/or Dutch is an asset;
- Excellent written and oral communication skills
- Excellent information literacy skills or willingness to learn quickly (use of research and historical databases, bibliographic management tools)
- Proficiency in the use of Microsoft Office / Microsoft 365, Internet usage and social media communication
- Self-motivated with ability to meet deadlines and to work on own initiative
- Excellent organizational skills, ability to work in team
- Ability to write project reports and make presentations to diverse groups

Conditions of service and compensation

We offer a two-years renewable contract as PhD candidate, with a fellowship paid on a monthly basis. The annual amount of the fellowship is based on the ULB and FWB scale.

A budget for research-related travel will be available as well.

Work place

Université libre de Bruxelles (Av. Franklin Roosevelt 50, 1050 Brussels). The candidate's research unit will depend on his/her academic background.

The candidate will also be encouraged to work at least part-time with the project team at the Museum of Fine Arts of Belgium, Museum street 9, 1000 Brussels.

Working hours

Monday to Friday.

The contract will start on 1 September 2023.

Application Instructions

Candidates are invited to submit their application in English, consisting of:

- a cv, including a detailed list of course marks/grades of bachelor and master studies
- a letter of motivation stating the candidate's qualifications and reasons for applying
- a writing sample (published article, MA thesis, ...)
- the contact information of two reference persons (including information on relationship with the applicant).

Interviews with a selection of the applicants are scheduled in the month of July.

Closing date for receipt of applications: 30.06.2023 via aude.alexandre@fine-arts-museum.be (ref. ProvEnhance PhD WP4)

Interested?

More information

...about the project and the position?

Aude Alexandre or Ingrid Goddeeris - project coordinators

Phone 02/508.33.98 or 02/508.33.20

mail : aude.alexandre@fine-arts-museum.be

... about working conditions at the ULB?

Email : spes.philoscsoc@ulb.be

... **about the partner institutions:**

RMFAB

The Royal Museums of Fine Arts of Belgium form the oldest art museums of Belgium and are situated in the heart of Brussels. The Museums have both a scientific research and public service mission. They preserve and study the collections comprising more than 22.000 works of art (paintings, sculptures, and drawings dating from the end of the 14th century to today). About 2,500 of these works are on display, spread over the Old Masters Museum, the Museum of Modern Art, the Magritte Museum, the Fin-de-siècle Museum, on the main site, and two artist's studios turned into museums off-site: the Constantin Meunier Museum and the Antoine Wiertz Museum. The RMFAB also manage the largest library in Belgium specialized in art history as well as many important historical archives from artists, artist's associations, art critics or art dealers and documentary files. Part of the museums' mission is the

transmission of knowledge through the organization of temporary and permanent exhibitions for the widest possible audience and the publication of catalogues.

More info: <https://fine-arts-museum.be>

ULB

The Université libre de Bruxelles was founded in 1834 and currently has over 35,000 students. With its 12 Faculties, all of which include bachelor's degree, master's degree, advanced master, and PhD programmes, ULB is truly a complete university. ULB has a world-renowned research programme. Prizes it has won over the years include 4 Nobel Prizes in science, 2 Nobel Peace Prizes, 1 Fields Medal and several Francqui Prizes and Marie Curie Prizes. ULB is open to the outside world, international and cosmopolitan. A little over 30% of our students are foreigners (Europe and outside of the EU). The philosophy of ULB is based on free inquiry and critical thinking which postulates independence of judgement and rejection of arguments of authority. Our University contributes to its social, societal and scientific missions by combining high-level teaching and research

More info: <https://www.ulb.be/>

TU Berlin

TU Berlin has a long and rich tradition and is recognized globally as an excellent research university. Her goal is to continue to develop science and technology for the benefit of our society. The members of the university are wholly committed to the principle of sustainable development which tackles contemporary challenges without further burdening future generations. Research and teaching are inseparably linked.

Using innovative, technology-oriented and holistic methodologies TU is contributing to the shaping of a better future. It is against this background that research and teaching in the natural, planning and engineering sciences are inextricably linked with the humanities and social sciences. All our research and teaching activities serve civilian purposes exclusively.

More info: <https://www.tu.berlin/>

Belgian State Archives / CegeSoma

The Study- and Documentation Centre for War and Contemporary Society is the Belgian expertise centre for the history of 20th century conflicts and the fourth operational direction of the Belgian State Archives. CegeSoma conducts fundamental historical research, develops public history projects, conserves archives and documentation and is engaged in societal debate. Its priority lies with the history of the First- and the Second World War, including their causes, their longer term consequences and impact, the issues of collective memories and broader social debat regarding their legacies. CegeSoma holds a specialized library on the history of 20th Century conflicts in general and the Second World War in particular. CegeSoma has collected archives on the history of the Second World War and its aftermath in Belgium in particular of private persons and organizations having played a key role during the Second World War (as the Devisenschutzkommando). CegeSoma has moreover an extensive photo collection, which is for a large part digitized. The Belgian State Archives, of which CegeSoma is a part, keep the archives of ministries and official institutions, including these institutions tasked with dealing with the legacy of the Second World War in Belgium.

More info: <https://www.cegesoma.be/en/>