**Project Cataloguer: Decorative Art (fixed term)**

**Background**

Eton College is an independent boarding school for boys aged 13 to 18 years. It was founded by King Henry VI in 1440 for 70 King’s Scholars. In addition to the King’s Scholars housed in the earliest boarding house, ‘College’, there are now 1,240 ‘Oppidan’ boys at the school in 24 other boarding houses.

Eton is governed by a Provost, Vice-Provost and ten Fellows, many of whom are appointed by outside bodies such as the Universities of Oxford and Cambridge and the Royal Society. Uniquely, the Provost and Vice-Provost are resident in the college. Both take an important part in Eton’s collective leadership. The Head Master is the CEO; management responsibility is devolved to him.

There are 150 full time academic staff and 550 other permanent staff, including domestic staff (in the boarding houses and in the central dining hall), technicians, grounds-men, administrative staff, security, cleaners and a large Buildings department. There are also 100 part-time and temporary teachers, including visiting music teachers. The school and its immediate grounds and playing fields extend over 400 acres, from the north end of Eton High Street to the M4 by Slough, bounded to the east by the Thames and to the west by a railway. There are some 400 school buildings, including staff accommodation, and a 2,000m rowing lake at Dorney. Maintenance work to buildings and grounds is continuous.

**College Collections**

The College Collections include books and manuscripts, art and artefacts and natural history specimens, ranging from the prehistoric to the present day. The quality and scope of the Collections are unique among schools, and they are of national and international significance. As part of a living institution, they play a role in the everyday life of the college, and they are used extensively in teaching. Today, the Collections are also open to the global research community and serve—through exhibitions, events, visits and educational programmes—as the first point of contact with the college for many schoolchildren, students, art lovers, history buffs and specialists.

Henry VI’s original vision for Eton included **College Library**, which houses important collections of rare books and manuscripts. Alongside it is the **College Archives**, which serves as both guardian of the college’s institutional memory and its working administrative archive. The Archives is complemented by the **Photographic Archive***,* comprising the photographic record of the college’s history. School life, both historic and contemporary, is further represented in the **Museum of Eton Life**. The **Fine & Decorative Art** (FDA) collection encompasses paintings, drawings and prints, as well as sculpture, ceramics, stained glass and furniture. Many of these works of art adorn Eton’s school rooms, residential areas and public spaces, and the College **Silver** is still used on the chapel altars and displayed at dinners on days of celebration. Two further collections are displayed in purpose-built museum spaces. The **Natural History Museum** organises thousands of specimens around themes including local wildlife, biodiversity, evolution and ecology. The **Museum of Antiquities**, housed in the new Jafar Gallery, exhibits not only the fine collection of Egyptian artefacts at its core, but also many other remarkable objects, covering a vast geographical and chronological range.

**Fine & Decorative Art Collections**

A notable collection of several hundred oil portraits, dating from the 16th century to contemporary works. In addition to royal and other portraits, there is the extensive group of 'Leaving Portraits' of former pupils. The majority of these portraits are displayed in the various historic rooms of the college buildings. Amongst other notable oil paintings in the collection are a panoramic view of Venice painted in 1611 by Odoardo Fialetti, and George Frederick Watts’ *Sir Galahad*, presented to Eton by the artist in 1897.

The core of the impressive collection of English watercolours results from gifts and bequests made by Old Etonian collectors. These are housed in the Print Room, together with an extensive collection of mezzotint portraits and topographical prints. The substantial 18th-century collection of drawings after the antique, formed by Richard Topham, survives in its original arrangement in College Library.

Other examples from the Fine Art collection are the 15th-century wall paintings in College Chapel, a 16th-century wall painting in the Head Master's Chambers and sculpture dating from the 15th to the 21st centuries.

Rare survivals of furniture date from the early history of the school. Further examples of the rich holdings of decorative art include 17th to 20th century English furniture, College Chapel’s original 15th-century brass lectern, important tapestries from the Merton Abbey studios, and sacred and secular stained glass from the 16th to 20th centuries.

Items from the collection are frequently lent to outside exhibitions or displayed in exhibitions within the college. More than half of the FDA collection currently catalogued is displayed or in use in locations throughout the college buildings and grounds.

**JOB DESCRIPTION**

**Job Title:** Project Cataloguer, Decorative Art

**Department:** Fine & Decorative Art, Collections

**Location:** Eton College

**Resporting to:** Keeper of Fine & Decorative Art

**Main Duties and Responsibilities**

* To work with the Keeper and Assistant Keeper of Fine & Decorative Art (FDA) to systematically create new catalogue records for furniture and other decorative art objects not currently recorded on the CollectionsIndex+ database.
* To ensure new records contain core catalogue information, including dimensions, media, title, location, brief description and, where possible, the names of any makers/designers, in line with the cataloguing manual.
* To give regular updates on the progress of the project and liaise with colleagues in the FDA department.
* To file new information as it arises, and maintain good documentation.
* To ‘clean up’ existing records for furniture on the database, ensuring that each object has one distinct record and is illustrated on the cataloguing database by at least one photograph.
* To ensure objects are individually numbered, following the agreed object marking method.
* To coordinate and oversee the work of volunteers or other staff involved in activities relating to the gathering of cataloguing information, photography and numbering of objects.
* To upload individual reference images for all objects, processing them for internal or online use.
* To liaise with a wide range of college staff in order to arrange access to uncatalogued items, located throughout the college buildings and grounds.
* To create and maintain records for any items found to be missing from the collection.
* To participate in relevant internal and external meetings and events.
* To assist FDA Keepers in any way as may be reasonably requested.

**Personal Specification**

**Essential**

• A degree or higher education qualification in the history of art, history or similar.

• Significant experience of object handling and cataloguing within a museum, gallery or auction house.

• Experience in the use of museum cataloguing databases.

• Strong skills in the use of English, computer use, keyboarding and communication.

• A high level of accuracy and attention to detail.

• Ability to write clearly and succinctly in an accessible style.

**Desirable**

• A specialist understanding of furniture styles and construction methods; the ability to distinguish between different timbers and to identify a range of materials.

• Extensive knowledge of and enthusiasm for furniture and the decorative arts.

• Knowledge of and enthusiasm for Eton College’s collections and historic properties.