

## Global connections and local contexts: the material culture of Saltram, c.1725-1840

The global links of country houses have attracted considerable attention in recent years, but the furore over colonialism has tended to overshadow the supply and materiality of global goods and the ways in which these artefacts were integrated into a wider array of goods of local and European provenance. Saltram, with its mix of British, European and global objects, forms a perfect collection through which to explore these issues.

The project explores global-local interaction through the belongings and consumption practices of the Parker family in the period 1725-1840. Perhaps best known for its Robert Adam interiors and Reynolds paintings, Saltram also has a range of Asian objects, including Chinese wallpapers and porcelain, and items of high quality European furniture and porcelain, as well as a large collection of mahogany furniture made in British workshops. These combine with a varied archival collection that is especially rich in family correspondence.

The project seeks to entangle the global with the local by exploring the consumption practices and motivations of the Parker family. This will provide a better understanding of the significance of global goods as one part of the material culture of the country house, set within the context of locality, domestic space, and family relations, the broader influences of taste and fashion, and the commercial worlds of international trade and manufacturing.



### Project aims and objectives

The project is framed by four key research questions:

1. *What was the origin of goods within the collection and what were the routes of supply through which they came to Saltram?* This allows the shifting relative importance of global goods to be assessed and places the house at the centre of local, national, European and global networks of supply.
2. *What were the material and behavioural contexts in which these things were displayed, used and consumed?* This means: assessing where things were located in the house and garden, how were they used and by whom; and exploring the history of display.
3. *How were individual and assemblages of objects linked to personal identity and how did they reflect and shape the character of the house?* What motivations underpinned the consumption of these goods, and what meaning did they hold for their owners?
4. *How can these tangled histories be related to visitors to include and engage local and diverse audiences?* This involves understanding and evaluating audience expectations and engagement.

The student is encouraged to define their own doctoral research project within these broad parameters. The research results will inform a range of public-facing outputs at Saltram. Indeed, a core aim of the project is to identify ways to quickly embed new research findings into public programming and the student will work closely with the engagement as well as the curatorial team. The project thus has the potential to make an important contribution to how the National Trust at Saltram tells a greater variety of stories to more diverse audiences.

The student will receive training from the curatorial and conservation team on object handling and the NT's collections management system and from the engagement team on audience engagement and partnership working.



### Specific requirements of the candidate

In addition to our [standard entry requirements](#) applicants should have:

- Masters in an appropriate discipline at merit or distinction OR equivalent experience working in the heritage sector.
- Knowledge of the history/arhistory/heritage of the English country house
- Experience of undertaking research using archives or material objects
- Ability to work independently, as an effective part of a team, and with members of the public

The student will need to be willing and able to travel between Manchester and Saltram

### Student eligibility

This opportunity includes fees funding plus an annual stipend at the Research Council minimum rate (set by UKRI), which for 2021/22 is £15,609 per annum for home and overseas applicants.

### How to apply

Interested applicants should contact are welcome to contact [Professor Jon Stobart](#) for an informal discussion.

To apply you will need to complete the online application form for [PhD History – full time](#) (or download the [PGR application form](#)). You should also complete the [PGR thesis proposal](#) (supplementary information) form: addressing the project's aims and objectives, demonstrating how the skills you have map to the area of research, and why you see this area as being of importance and interest.

If applying online, you will need to upload your statement in the supporting documents section, or email the application form and statement to [PGRAdmissions@mmu.ac.uk](mailto:PGRAdmissions@mmu.ac.uk).

**The closing date is 20<sup>th</sup> February 2022**

Please quote the reference: **ArtsHums-JS-2022-Saltram**