

# At Home with Angelica Kauffman: The Material and Print Culture of an Eighteenth-Century Artist



National Trust

WRoCAH funded Collaborative Doctoral Award between the Department of English and Related Literature, University of York and the National Trust

## Lead Academic and Partner Organisation Supervisors

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## Project summary

Angelica Kauffman was one of the most renowned and recognizable artists in the eighteenth century. Her oil paintings, prints, and engravings were widely reproduced for and by British consumers. This project seeks to reexamine the reproduction, retranslation and consumption of Kauffman's visual artworks, focusing on three-dimensional, small-scale works including ceramics, needlework, textiles (embroidery and needle pictures), and fans, among others. Drawing on the National Trust's extensive collections, including print and manuscript sources, the project will show, for the first time, the rich and varied depth of Kauffman's influence on aesthetics and the domestic interior.

## PhD Project description

Angelica Kauffman has long been acknowledged for her important contributions to eighteenth-century visual culture. An innovative portraitist and history painter, she was one of only two women artists to be founding members of the Royal Academy. Scholarship on Kauffman has emphasised her place within hierarchies of eighteenth-century visual culture and metropolitan exhibition practices. This project will shift scholarly and public understanding of Kauffman's much broader influence on eighteenth-century aesthetics and the domestic interior by showing the depth of her visual and social reach. It will take an interdisciplinary approach, shaped by material culture studies, to

unearth the wealth of material, print, and manuscript responses to and adaptations of Kauffman's artworks.

The project will uncover how Kauffman's artworks stretched beyond the walls of the Royal Academy and into the everyday domestic lives of eighteenth-century Britons when they were reproduced by professional and amateur artisans and makers. It will attend to the generative creative partnership between Kauffman and Francesco Bartolozzi, whose distinctive use of stipple engravings, oval shapes, and coloured inks, helped to define the Kauffman look as it circulated in popular culture and was applied to other media. Kauffman's art was importantly applied to a range of materials in the home, becoming part of its very fabric and people's everyday lives.



Porcelain figure group, *Two Virgins Awakening Cupid*, by William Duesbury & Co, Derby, after Angelica Kauffman, c1778-90 © National Trust / Robert Thrift

This project seeks to understand Kauffman's visual and material presence in the eighteenth-century domestic interior. It will ask:

- What was the influence and impact of Angelica Kauffman's paintings on the material culture of the late 18th and early 19th centuries - from factories to homes? How can this be read in the context of the artist's gender?
- What role did print culture and manuscripts (e.g. letters) play in the meaning and circulation of Kauffman's visual artworks?
- What might it mean for artisans and consumers to handle Kauffman's works in different forms, such as carrying a Kauffman fan in a pocket or drinking from a Kauffman teacup? What role did scale play in those experiences? What cultural meanings were attached to these objects by their owners and how did they shape social interactions?
- What significance was attached to the original source as it was retranslated and consumed by different hands? What was the role of prints and engravings as intermediaries in this process?

The project will identify and facilitate the documentation of decorative art objects in the National Trust's collection that incorporate, or are based on compositions by Kauffman, with scope for the student to make new connections and further develop visual, material and cultural themes. Research could encompass pieces produced in industrial contexts by manufacturers such as Wedgwood and Derby Porcelain, through to those of individual amateurs. The National Trust has significant holdings of artworks by Angelica Kauffman, notably at Saltram, as well as Stourhead, Nostell, Osterley and Petworth. Their collections also include an abundance of prints and engravings after Kauffman which were often used to inform designs. Print and manuscript records also document the consumption practices, circulation and understanding of Kauffman's aesthetics, and will help with the interpretation of how Britons encountered and responded to Kauffman in the home. The research will also draw on works (through digital databases) in other public collections to contextualise the Trust's holdings. This project will place Kauffman at the cutting edge of new approaches to material culture studies that seek to break down barriers between high art and popular culture.

### **About the National Trust**

With more than five million members, the National Trust is the largest conservation charity in Europe. We manage 350 historic buildings, a collection of over a million objects and a diverse portfolio of landscapes across England, Wales and Northern Ireland. We look after the nation's coastline, historic sites, countryside and green spaces, working to protect nature, beauty and history across towns, cities, villages and countryside. [See here for more about us.](#)

The National Trust co-supervises dozens of collaborative PhD students at any one time. Working across the arts, humanities and sciences, they are helping us to protect our historic places and green spaces – and to open them for everyone to enjoy.

### **Engagement, outreach, dissemination and impact initiatives**

The student will work closely with the National Trust throughout their PhD. The project offers avenues for public engagement at a number of Trust properties, including Beningbrough Hall (close to York). Digital outputs will be explored with the support of the Trust co-supervisor, including the potential development of an online exhibition that brings together NT objects after/by Kauffman with those in international collections, potential podcast content or a programme of dedicated social 'behind the scenes' media content. In addition, the Trust co-supervisor would mentor the PGR in developing small scale displays of objects, for which additional interpretation could be developed at specific properties; this might also include developing spotlight talks and sharing with volunteer room guides to support engagement with visitors. The development of cataloguing records for the identified works, with notes on their context and production, will also be a core form of

dissemination. In addition to improving public access to the collections, these enhanced records will impact display and new interpretations at properties, with specific opportunities for this supported by the mentorship of the NT co-supervisor.

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### **Financial support**

Studentships for doctoral research are 40 months in duration for full-time study. Awards are subject to satisfactory academic progress. Awards must be taken up in October 2025; no deferrals are possible as this is the final round of recruitment to WRoCAH CDAs. Awards will comprise fees at Research Council rates and a tax- and national insurance-free maintenance grant (£20,780 in 2025/26). The grant pays the fees at the Home/UK rate; international students are, however, eligible to apply for this Studentship. Awards may be taken up on a part-time basis if a student is eligible to undertake part-time study; international applicants may be required to study full-time under the terms of their visa.

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### **Qualifications**

Strong applicants will have a good first degree in an appropriate subject, as well as a Master's degree (or be working towards one), usually at Distinction level, or professional experience relevant to the scope of the project. We are looking for a well-qualified student with a background in any of the following disciplines: English, History of Art, History.

Applicants must be able to demonstrate an interest in the heritage sector and potential and enthusiasm for developing skills more widely in the areas of heritage and community engagement.

### **Requirements of the Studentship**

This opportunity is being offered as a full time studentship but part time study may be an option subject to agreement with the supervision team.

WRoCAH students are required to undertake a bespoke training package and to complete a Researcher Employability Project of at least a month and a Knowledge Exchange Project.

**All WRoCAH students must submit their thesis for examination with the funded period.** This is a requirement of the Arts & Humanities Research Council, which provides the funding for WRoCAH, and is a condition of accepting a Studentship.

Before applying for any WRoCAH Studentship, please first ensure that you have read the WRoCAH webpages about the WRoCAH training programme and requirements, as well as other funding opportunities

<http://wrocah.ac.uk/>

## How to apply

By 12 noon Wednesday 5 March 2025, applicants are required to submit to WRoCAH an Expression of Interest, which should include:

1. A CV with details of academic qualifications
2. A covering letter comprising a two-page statement to convey your motivation and enthusiasm for the project, and to demonstrate your suitability for your intended PhD studies with the University and Project Partner.

*The covering letter should specifically highlight the following:*

- Your interest in the project and details on why you have chosen that University and Project Partner.
  - How you will apply your current skills, knowledge and experience to undertake a PhD and the approach you would take to develop the project.
  - How the project fits into your career plans and ambitions.
- 17 March 2025: decision on short-listing  
The short-list of candidates to be invited for an interview will be announced on Monday 17 March 2025.
  - *Short-listed candidates must complete a PhD programme application before interview.* If you are short-listed for an interview you will be sent details of how to apply for a place at the University of York. At that point you will need to submit the names and contact details of two referees, copies of transcripts of your academic qualifications and (if applicable) an IELTS certificate.
  - 24 April 2025: interviews

Interviews will involve the academic supervisor, Project Partner supervisor and a member of the WRoCAH Studentships Committee. They will be conducted

online.

**For more information about this project contact**

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