# **Dissent Interventions: Artists’ Films & Videos commissioned by Channel 4, 1982-1992**

## **Birkbeck, University of London and LUX**

### **Aims and objectives**

The purpose of the CDA is to research a new television history and write curatorial practice into TV historiography, working with LUX’s collection of 350+ artists’ films & videos commissioned by Channel 4 (1982-1992).

This Collaborative Doctoral Award offers a matchless opportunity for innovative research into this under-investigated body of artists’ work produced in the context of the new public service broadcaster commissioning radical media in the 1980s.

LUX’s predecessor organisations, the London Film-Makers’ Co-operative and London Video Arts, were both supported as independent workshops to supply work to Channel 4, and LUX holds almost all of the key titles produced during this period. However, this material has yet to be properly catalogued and mapped, and thus its significance has been rather overlooked, particularly in television histories and historiographies. In the first instance the award holder will view and catalogue the film and video work. In parallel, the student will research the early history of Channel 4 to sponsor independent productions, to understand the original context in which these works were commissioned, as well as histories and theories of experimental TV programming.

Cataloguing and thinking conceptually and critically about the collection, the aim of the CDA is (1) to identify new routes into the early history of Channel 4 and its commissioning policy to support and diversify independent practices in the 1980s, providing a context and testing ground for many of the most significant UK artists working with the moving image today; (2) to reinvigorate debates about public service media as a democratic platform for giving representation to under-represented voices in British society and cultural public life; (3) in animating the archival material, to write a new television historiography through curatorial practice; and (4) to produce a curatorial intervention to reposition (intellectually, spatially) and re-present these works for contemporary publics.

Rigorously researching the collection as part of writing a new TV historiography as curatorial practice, the project offers the opportunity for knowledge exchange and public engagement. The successful award holder will be expected to present their work in research forums, but also organise exhibitions and screening programmes, with a discussion event with screenings (year 1), workshop with screenings (year 2) and more public-facing touring event as the final curated element. The completed project will contribute to ongoing thinking with LUX concerning the exhibition of its collection to the public. This will offer the

student the opportunity to add knowledge and renew understanding of LUX’s own collection.

The key outcome of the project is the completion of the **written thesis (60-80k words) and curated event (touring exhibition and screenings)**, which will enhance knowledge of a delimited corpus (350+ titles).

### **Available training opportunities**

The project will provide the applicant with extensive archival (LUX) and research skills (Birkbeck) training, expert supervision, privileged access to the collection, and experience of working directly inside an arts organisation like LUX.

### **Partner resources**

LUX will provide desk space for the applicant, privileged access to the LUX collection and archives, access to LUX international networks as well as curatorial and practical support.

### **Research environment**

The CDA offers a dual-site experience at Birkbeck, University of London and LUX, with each institutional setting complimenting the other, and mediated through a depth of expertise offered by the supervisory team. The supervisors include leading TV scholars in television (transnational) histories (Liarou) and theory (McCabe) and an expert in experimental media (Cook), whose combined skills and knowledge bring supervisory experience (McCabe), the benefits from previous research collaborations (Liarou, Cook, McCabe) and substantial experience in curatorial and archival work (Cook, McCabe and Liarou).