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## Exploring medical and artistic depictions of disease

A Northumbria University project that will turn medical practice into artwork has received funds from the Arts & Humanities Research Council.

Dr Marianne Wilde, who recently completed an Arts and Humanities PhD at Northumbria, will carry out a three-month project filming research scientists at work in order to produce artworks in film, print and sculpture.

The project is being financed as part of the AHRC's Cultural Engagement Fund pilot scheme which supports collaboration between universities and

cultural organisations as well as providing career researchers with opportunities to develop a wide range of skills.

Dr Wilde's research project, entitled *Skin Deep: Archaeologies of the medicalised body in art and science visualisation*, will explore the creative processes that occur during the narration and visualisation of scientific experimentation on disease diagnostics. Dr Wilde will film the research scientists at the Institute of Genetic Medicine in Newcastle as they go about their processes and experiments, capturing the working methods and narratives that emerge in the laboratory environment.

The images and recordings from these interactions will be entitled, *Conversation Pieces*, and displayed at BALTIC 39 to instigate a conversation between scientific and arts professionals around the ideas of process, making and finding out at a round table event. It will be facilitated by the BALTIC Professor, Christine Borland.

The work follows a three-year AHRC funded Research PhD that established working relationships between Northumbria University, the International Centre for Life and the Institute of Genetic Medicine in Newcastle through an arts practice that looked at the visualisation of disease caused by genetic mutation.

Dr Wilde said: "This project provides a fantastic opportunity to further explore the research context between art and science methodologies, in particular, the ways in which we look at and tell the stories of things that are often complex and/or actually invisible, such as DNA.

"This research time will also enable the networks and relationships that are so important in a collaborative project such as this one to strengthen and expand."

Northumbria is one of 45 universities supporting the AHRC's Cultural Engagement Fund pilot scheme, awarded to contribute to the costs of individuals working on short three-month Cultural Engagement projects. Each participating university receives £40,000, which can be used to cover the full economic costs of employing a single individual for three months, or used in combination with other funding to support individuals on two or more projects.

Dr Ian Lyne, Associate Director of Programmes, said: “The range of projects and the variety of local partners involved has been terrific. We have been hugely impressed by the number of Universities that have decided to co-fund projects in order to create more opportunities for their recently completed PhD students.

“If this pilot proves to be successful, there is the potential to repeat it in future years, depending on the availability of funding.”

Each project will report back on their experiences and skill development later in the year.

A second Northumbria University project that has also received funding from the scheme will investigate a private collection of decorative arts by world-renowned designer Christopher Dresser, recently acquired by the Dorman Museum in Middlesbrough.

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## Contacts



### **Rik Kendall**

Press Contact

PR and Media Manager

Business and Law / Arts, Design & Social Sciences

[rik.kendall@northumbria.ac.uk](mailto:rik.kendall@northumbria.ac.uk)

07923 382339



**Andrea Slowey**

Press Contact

PR and Media Manager

Engineering and Environment / Health and Life Sciences

[andrea.slowey@northumbria.ac.uk](mailto:andrea.slowey@northumbria.ac.uk)

07708 509436



**Rachael Barwick**

Press Contact

PR and Media Manager

[rachael.barwick@northumbria.ac.uk](mailto:rachael.barwick@northumbria.ac.uk)

07377422415



**James Fox**

Press Contact

Student Communications Manager

[james2.fox@northumbria.ac.uk](mailto:james2.fox@northumbria.ac.uk)

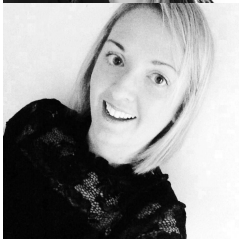


**Kelly Elliott**

Press Contact

PR and Media Officer

[kelly2.elliott@northumbria.ac.uk](mailto:kelly2.elliott@northumbria.ac.uk)



**Gemma Brown**

Press Contact

PR and Media Officer

[gemma6.brown@northumbria.ac.uk](mailto:gemma6.brown@northumbria.ac.uk)