Digitisation Volunteer – Ashmolean South Asian Archives

About the Opportunity
The Ashmolean Museum is seeking to recruit a small number of regular volunteers to assist with the digitisation of its South Asian archives – important cultural assets and historical resources from photographers, surveyors, colonial officers, curators, collectors, and scholars associated with the Museum’s Indian collections. Comprised of five collections, these archives contain over 20,000 individual items dating from the 1860s to 1980s and include photographs, negatives, letters, diaries, registers, notebooks, lists of objects, and receipts. In supporting their digitisation, volunteers will contribute to preserving and making these collections more widely accessible in the future.

Working with the Research Assistant for the Indian Collections, the volunteers will be expected to scan a range of paper documents and photographs, apply image standards to the newly created digital assets, and record completion of scans in the relevant spreadsheet. They will be based in the Eastern Art department at the Ashmolean Museum, and will be seated while operating the scanner. All relevant training will be provided, and volunteers will be supervised and supported by departmental staff.

The volunteer role will involve:
- Careful handling and scanning of paper archives
- Checking the standards of the images and recording key metadata
- Recording details of completed scans in the department’s archives spreadsheet
- Other archival related opportunities as the project develops

About Digitisation Volunteers:
- You will be patient and careful when handling delicate papers.
- You will enjoy working methodically and with attention to detail.
- You will be computer-literate and able to accurately follow file name conventions.
- You have a passion and interest for archives and/or digitisation and are looking to gain more experience in this area.
- You might have a keen interest in Eastern art or South Asian art research, though this is not a requirement for this role.

Why volunteers might enjoy this role:
The opportunity to:
- Join a friendly team within the Ashmolean Museum.
- Contribute to making these archival collections more accessible, not only for teaching and research, but for the public more widely.
- Gain experience of working with archives and paper handling.
- Learn about digitisation and image standards.
- Be involved in a very rare opportunity to work with archival collections within the Ashmolean Museum.
Timings:
It is likely that sessions will be offered for the morning and afternoon on certain weekdays only. Please indicate in your personal statement an estimate of times and days you may be able to offer for volunteering. Please also let us know if you are looking for regular sessions or on a casual basis.

Training:
The Research Assistant will demonstrate how to handle and scan the archives at your first session, and will continue to be on hand to provide support, check progress, and answer questions as the project continues.

Please allow 30 minutes before your first session with us for training in this role.

Other practicalities
- Volunteers can claim reimbursement of up to £5 for travel expenses upon presentation of travel tickets with a completed expenses form.
- This opportunity is open to volunteers aged 18+.
- This role does not require a Right to Work check.

How to apply
Please send a short statement (max. 200 words) explaining why you are interested in the role and what you would bring to it. Send this to Joy at volunteering@glam.ox.ac.uk by 5pm on 20th December 2023. Please note that CVs are not necessary for this role.

She will then send expressions of interest on to the Research Assistant, who will invite shortlisted applicants for a short, informal online interview on either the 8th or 10th January 2024.

In the event that this opportunity is popular, please note that there may not be time to meet all volunteers who apply.