

## M4C DTP Collaborative Doctoral Award (CDA) Marketing Template

<b>Project Title</b>				
Chisenhale Dance: recovering the origins of independent and experimental dance in the UK				
<b>LEAD INSTITUTION</b>				
Name of HEI institution	Coventry University			
Lead regional city	Birmingham <input type="checkbox"/>	Coventry <input checked="" type="checkbox"/>	Leicester <input type="checkbox"/>	Nottingham <input type="checkbox"/>
<b>PARTNER ORGANISATION</b>				
Name of organisation	Chisenhale Dance Space			
Website URL	<a href="https://www.chisenhaledancespace.co.uk/">https://www.chisenhaledancespace.co.uk/</a>			
<b>THE RESEARCH PROJECT</b>				
<i>(Max 750 words)</i>				
<p>This project builds a collaboration and partnership between C-DaRE at Coventry University and Chisenhale Dance Space (CDS) in London. CDS has played a key role in supporting independent dance artists since the early 1980s. In 2018 it celebrated its 35<sup>th</sup> birthday as a charity. Many of the UK's leading dance practitioners have had a connection with CDS, reflecting its unique role in providing space for artistic experimentation that has supported an ethos of community, open-ness and trust in artists to take the lead. CDS is under-recognised for its influence on the dance sector today, and there has been no thorough survey of the complete history of who has worked there, and how the wider political, social and economic environment has shaped dance artists' working practices. The project will create a detailed historical and cultural analysis of CDS's contribution to the dance sector culminating in a thesis, an online exhibition, a series of public workshops, conference papers and other published materials.</p> <p>CDS has extensive but poorly maintained and underused archives, which this year have been assessed and sorted with the V&amp;A Theatre and Performance department. The V&amp;A has identified that the content is valuable for research. The archive offers a rich resource for investigating how CDS has worked in collaboration with artists over four decades, revealing the hidden dimensions to how artists have worked, survived and been supported, and how this has shaped the current dance ecosystem. The archive also charts the cross-artform experiments, including theatre, Live Art and performance art, as well as community and education programmes that CDS has promoted that have been highly influential on major artists today.</p> <p>The collaboration between CDS and C-DaRE have long sought ways to partner and to 'reanimate' the archive. This collaboration will provide opportune and unique access to resources and materials, knowledge and expertise based on the close relationship between the HEI supervisors and others in C-DaRE who have been active at CDS. The key role of CDS in the collaboration will also provide a timely opportunity for a PhD student to obtain first-hand experience of work outside the university while researching the content of the archive to reveal new knowledge about CDS and the broader independent dance ecosystem. Due to ongoing financial and resource limitations, CDS has never been able to tell its story coherently, and so this research will bring to light forgotten archival content, whilst simultaneously organising the archival content so it can be made more accessible. The HEI supervisors have direct insight to CDS's ethos and activities and their expert knowledge across professional and scholarly environments will enhance the student's employment-related skills and training.</p>				

As part of the analytic process, the candidate will create and curate an online exhibition of archival content, reflecting a core theme identified by the candidate, and charting the expansive and interconnected artistic impact made by those who have come through and been associated with CDS. The exhibition will be used as a model for CDS to increase public understanding of its work and to make an ongoing case for the value of its work as a collaborative, creative workspace for performance. The exhibition will be the focus of a series of public workshops at Birmingham Dance Network, Dance4 (Nottingham), C-DaRE (Coventry) and People Dancing (Leicester) to share the outcomes of the project, and with events at Chisenhale Dance (London)

The research questions are:

- what influence has CDS as a space-based organisation had on the dance sector today?
- who has worked at CDS and what artist journeys has the organisation supported?
- how has the evolving dance sector shaped CDS and contributed to the organisation's survival and what are those strategies of survival modelled by CDS?
- what is the relationship between the organisation and its archive? How does the archive reveal more about how CDS has evolved as an 'artist-led' organisation?

Research methods include desk and archival research, fieldwork, interviews and creative curation.

### **Timeline:**

**Year 1:** Months 1-6 Scoping and building the contextual framework, initial archival research. Devise PhD structure, write literature review. Months 6-12 Identify themes from archive and other archives to research (e.g. Arts Council England archives). Identify informants (artists, programmers) and conduct interviews with artists, founders and CDS employees. Participation in M4C training activities.

**Year 2:** Archival research, Revise structure.

Continue with interviews. Draft early chapters. Plan online exhibition, identifying platform, themes, content, design. Give a conference paper.

**Year 3:** Complete online exhibition. Carry out public workshops

**Year 4:** Complete draft and final thesis. Identify publication opportunities. Submit and viva.

### **HOW TO FIND OUT MORE**

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