



AHRC-funded Midlands4Cities Collaborative Doctoral Award PhD opportunity

## **To The Streets: effective interventions in the community arts ecology of the West Midlands**

China Plate is an independent producing studio based in Birmingham and working across the UK. We are an arts charity. We help people to make creative projects happen – from theatre shows, to audio anthologies, to bus stop galleries. Our mission is to develop a new model of creating and producing theatre that opens up the way performance is made, who makes it and who it's experienced by.

We are looking for someone who is interested in rehearsal and performance processes and making work in applied and community contexts to undertake this PhD project. You could be an artist, a producer or an academic. You could be working in engagement, as a community leader, an emerging theatre maker or working with young people. We are very open to conversations with individuals who may not have conventional academic experience but are excited by the prospect of undertaking this research.

If there is something not covered here, please don't hesitate to get in touch:

- Contact Lead University (HEI) Supervisor Prof Adam Ledger on [a.j.ledger@bham.ac.uk](mailto:a.j.ledger@bham.ac.uk), in the first instance.
- Contact Co-Artistic Director Ed Collier on [ed@chinaplatetheatre.com](mailto:ed@chinaplatetheatre.com) for questions regarding China Plate.
- Contact Midlands4Cities for funding enquiries or questions regarding their recruitment portal / application process - details available [here](#).

### **FAQs**

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## Who are Midlands4Cities?

The AHRC-funded [Midlands4Cities Doctoral Training Partnership](#) (M4C) brings together eight leading universities across the Midlands to support the professional and personal development of the next generation of arts and humanities doctoral researchers. M4C is a collaboration between the University of Birmingham, Birmingham City University, University of Warwick, Coventry University, University of Leicester, De Montfort University, Nottingham Trent University and The University of Nottingham.

Through their Open Doctoral and Collaborative Doctoral Awards Midlands4Cities will fund and support outstanding research for 86 doctoral researchers across the breadth of Arts and Humanities starting in October 2024. There are 70 PhD studentships available through an open competition and M4C is also awarding 16 Collaborative Doctoral Awards (CDA) which provide diverse and unique project opportunities with national, regional, and local partner organisations. UK, EU, and international applicants are eligible for both routes for 2024 entry. Further details on the funding provided are available on the [M4C website here](#).

## What is a Collaborative Doctoral Award?

These awards are jointly developed and co-supervised between an M4C university and an external partner organisation. CDAs offer diverse and unique research projects that support the work of the partner organisation. This CDA (PhD project) is between China Plate, University of Birmingham, and University of Warwick.

## Where and when will the PhD be taking place?

The PhD is predominantly located in and around Birmingham and the West Midlands region and can be undertaken on a full or part time basis, with a start date of October 2024.

China Plate is based in Birmingham and works across the UK. We have an office in Digbeth, Birmingham and Aldgate East, London - both of which have desks available for the researcher to use during their tenure. The



UNIVERSITY OF  
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Midlands4Cities  
Doctoral Training Partnership  
Birmingham Coventry Leicester Nottingham



Arts and  
Humanities  
Research Council

researcher will be expected to work in-person as well as remotely, attending rehearsals, workshops, company team meetings etc.

There is also an expectation that the researcher travels in line with project activity and is present in some of the places that is happening but does not necessarily need to be based there. Due to the nature of theatre production schedules, we are unable to state where we will be operating between 2024-2027. Work produced in 2022/23 has included Birmingham, Coventry, London, Northampton and Mainz in Germany.

For more information about place of tenure and timelines, please visit the [Midlands4Cities website here](#).

### **Is the PhD funded?**

Yes, it is an AHRC-funded Midlands4Cities Collaborative Doctoral Award.

Awards for UK residents cover UK tuition fees and provide a stipend at the UK Research and Innovation (UKRI) rate – this year it is £18,622 per annum – this is a tax-free payment. There are also additional funding opportunities available for research expenses.

AHRC/UKRI funding is open to international applicants, who will have fees covered. If you would like to discuss this further, please contact Prof Adam Ledger, Lead University (HEI) Supervisor on [a.j.ledger@bham.ac.uk](mailto:a.j.ledger@bham.ac.uk)

For more information, please visit the [Midlands4Cities website here](#).  
For enquiries about M4C funding, email: [enquiries@midlands4cities.ac.uk](mailto:enquiries@midlands4cities.ac.uk)

### **Who will support the PhD candidate?**

The researcher will be supported by Ed Collier, Co-Artistic Director of China Plate, and jointly supervised by Adam Ledger from the University of Birmingham and Bobby Smith from the University of Warwick, with project support from Shahnaz Akhter from the University of Warwick.

### **What Training & Development opportunities are available as part of the PhD?**

There will be opportunities to benefit from China Plate's training programmes, including [The Optimists](#) (annual ten-week training programme), [People Focused Producing](#) (year round training events) and [Young Producers](#) (co-curated training programme with young people at Warwick Arts Centre).

If you have any questions regarding these programmes, please get in touch with China Plate's Co-Artistic Director Ed Collier on [ed@chinaplatetheatre.com](mailto:ed@chinaplatetheatre.com)



There are also additional funding opportunities available, which include a Research Development Fund (RDF) to support primary research activities, an Engagement Fund (EF) to enable students to undertake placements and other professional development activity and a Cohort Development Fund (CDF) which supports groups of M4C students to design training, development and research activities.

For more information, please refer to the [Midlands4Cities website here](#).

### **What qualifications do I need to be eligible to apply?**

There are four potential forms of eligible preparation that Midlands4Cities recognise – you can read about these in the guidance documents on their [website here](#).

China Plate is looking for someone who is interested in rehearsal and performance processes and making work in applied and community contexts. You could be an artist, a producer or an academic. You could be working in engagement, as a community leader, an emerging theatre maker or working with young people. We are very open to conversations with individuals who may not have conventional academic experience but are excited by the prospect of undertaking this research.

### **Do Midlands4Cities have specific requirements to consider?**

Yes, before completing your application, you should read and understand the application notes and scoring criteria. You will need to refer to these during the application process.

To read the guidance documents, visit the [Midlands4Cities website here](#).

### **What is required as part of my application?**

Detailed information about what is required as part of an application can be found on the [Midlands4Cities website here](#).

Things to note:

- You will need to create a Momenive account.
- The application does not need to be completed in one sitting, you can save and continue later.
- Part of the application asks Equality, Diversity, and Inclusion (EDI) questions, all of which are voluntary and if you would rather not answer, you can choose 'prefer not to say' every time.
- You will need to nominate two referees.

- Your two referees will need to provide their references via the portal, and these must be submitted with your application before Wednesday 10<sup>th</sup> January 2024 at 12 noon (GMT).

At the same time as applying to M4C, candidates should apply to the University of Birmingham for PhD study, in order that a University of Birmingham applicant number can then be stated on the M4C application.

This site and the video will guide you through the steps:

[birmingham.ac.uk/schools/calgs/postgraduate-research/index.aspx](http://birmingham.ac.uk/schools/calgs/postgraduate-research/index.aspx)

There will be a Q&A and application writing workshop with the University of Birmingham and Birmingham City University, taking place **online** on **Saturday 11th November** from **11.00am-16.00pm UK time**. This session will provide more information about writing a PhD project proposal and the M4C application process. The link to register to attend is available on the [M4C website here](#) (scroll down to the bottom).

If you encounter any issues using the online recruitment portal, you can email: [enquiries@midlands4cities.ac.uk](mailto:enquiries@midlands4cities.ac.uk)

### **Is there an opportunity to provide information about personal circumstances on the application form?**

Yes, there is a section in the application form which provides an opportunity to describe any barriers, circumstances, or important information you would like to disclose.

China Plate's mission is to develop a new model of creating and producing theatre that opens up the way performance is made, who makes it and who it's experienced by, and this is true of the candidate we are seeking to undertake our PhD project.

If you have any questions or concerns, you're welcome to get in touch with Prof Adam Ledger, Lead University (HEI) Supervisor on [a.j.ledger@bham.ac.uk](mailto:a.j.ledger@bham.ac.uk) for an informal discussion.

### **I need provision for access. How do I let you know?**

If you require access provision, whether in regard to your application, the interview process or undertaking the PhD, please contact University (HEI) Supervisor Prof Adam Ledger on [a.j.ledger@bham.ac.uk](mailto:a.j.ledger@bham.ac.uk) to discuss.

### **How do I apply?**

Please note China Plate is not involved in, nor do we have access to the administration of applications – all of this is done by Midlands4Cities.



You will need to apply via Midlands4Cities online recruitment portal, which opened on Monday 16th October 2023. To find out more information, please visit the [Midlands4Cities website here](#).

Applications close on **Wednesday 10th January 2024 at 12 noon (GMT)** – there is no exceptions or flexibility to this deadline set by M4C.

At the same time as applying to M4C, candidates should apply to the University of Birmingham for PhD study, in order that a University of Birmingham applicant number can then be stated on the M4C application.

This site and the video will guide you through the steps:  
[birmingham.ac.uk/schools/calgs/postgraduate-research/index.aspx](http://birmingham.ac.uk/schools/calgs/postgraduate-research/index.aspx)

Interviews are expected to take place in January/February 2024.

There are no other options available to apply – should there be a reason which will make it difficult for you to complete the online application form or should you wish to discuss the process, please contact University (HEI) Supervisor Prof Adam Ledger on [a.j.ledger@bham.ac.uk](mailto:a.j.ledger@bham.ac.uk)

If you encounter any issues using the online recruitment portal, you can email: [enquiries@midlands4cities.ac.uk](mailto:enquiries@midlands4cities.ac.uk)