

LAHP AHRC Collaborative PhD Studentship

Wasafiri: The history of a little magazine and the material conditions affecting the publication and reception of BAME writing in Britain, 1980-2020

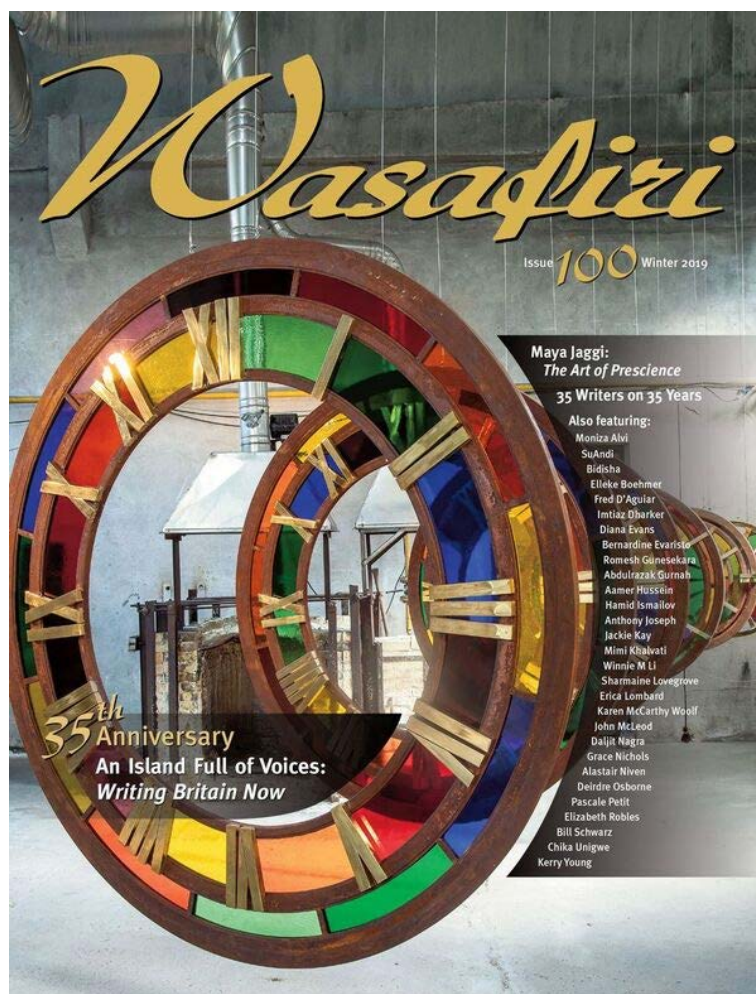
Partner: The British Library

Academic lead: Dr Susheila Nasta, Queen Mary University London

Email: s.nasta@qmul.ac.uk

Applications are invited for a LAHP/AHRC-funded Collaborative Doctoral Award at the **Queen Mary University London in collaboration with the British Library**. This fully-funded studentship will commence in October 2020.

This project will explore the background and history of *Wasafiri*, a 'little magazine' known since the early 1980s for its pioneering role in providing a critical forum and platform for Britain's black, Asian and minority ethnic writers. Drawing on unique archival sources, now housed in the British Library Contemporary Collections and not as yet publicly available, the particular history of this magazine will act as a paradigm to offer broader insights into the material conditions affecting the production, publication and reception of BAME writing in Britain from the fraught era of Thatcherism in the 1980s to the present. The project is particularly timely given the BL's recent acquisition of the archive, the magazine's celebration of 35 years of publishing and the scarcity of material currently available in tracking the history of this writing, including the early history of several now well-known figures, featured in the magazine long before they were to rise to national and global prominence. The prescience of the magazine's mission in terms of its global vision and inclusive aim to diversify the canon will be illuminating in the context of postcolonial studies now and moves to decolonise the curriculum across the educational and publishing sectors.



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The student will be based in the School of English and Drama, QMUL, where *Wasafiri* is currently housed, and will work collaboratively under the supervision of the Contemporary Archives team at the British Library. Interdisciplinary in scope, the doctoral research will involve collection of primary data and materials from the archive at the BL, and will draw on methodologies from postcolonial and global literary studies combined with book and magazine history, particularly the postcolonial history of the book and recent work on print/prize culture. Given the scale of the holdings, specific areas may take priority, such as: an examination of review culture across different periods; a study of how the magazine pioneered certain subject areas and approaches; or, an analysis of how the magazine's changing with the times (e.g. the shift from the use of African, Caribbean and Associated Literatures as sub-title in the 1980s to contemporary international writing in the 2000s) also reflects cultural and theoretical shifts in the literary landscape. Choices will be determined with the student. The project will offer further professional experience through cataloguing a subset of the *Wasafiri* archive, with support and training from BL curators.

The supervision team will comprise:

Professor Susheila Nasta FRSL (<https://www.qmul.ac.uk/sed/staff/nastas.html>),

Dr Rehana Ahmed; (<https://www.qmul.ac.uk/sed/staff/ahmedr.html>);

Helen Melody (BL Lead Curator for Contemporary Literary Archives).

Informal queries can be directed to s.nasta@qmul.ac.uk and rehana.ahmed@qmul.ac.uk.

Also see: <https://www.qmul.ac.uk/sed/aboutus/> and www.wasafiri.org

Interviews to be held on the 8th April.

Studentship details:

The AHRC-funded London Arts and Humanities Partnership (LAHP) brings together eight leading British research universities: King's College London, London School of Economics and Political Science, Queen Mary University London, Royal Central School of Speech and Drama, Royal College of Art, Royal College of Music, School of Advanced Study and University College London.

The studentship includes a stipend at the Research Council UK Home/ EU rate (£17,009 per annum 2019/20 rates) plus tuition fees for three and half years. The awarded candidate will also be entitled to a £550 per annum stipend top-up. As a LAHP student, the successful candidate will have full access to the LAHP Doctoral Training Partnership development activities and networking opportunities, joining a cohort of about 90 students per year. Studentships can be either full or part-time.

Applicants should have a good undergraduate degree in a relevant discipline, and a Masters-level qualification or equivalent which meets AHRC requirements for research training. Applicants with relevant work/professional experience who are considering doing a PhD are also encouraged to apply.

Closing Date: 27th March 2020

For more information and to apply for the studentship, please see the [LAHP website](#).

