

## The Research Chair on Beauty Studies Launches Second Call for Applications for Doctoral Contract

*The aim of this call is to recruit one doctoral candidate.*

### Description of the Chair

*Run by PSL and financed by L'Oréal corporate sponsorship, the Research Chair on Beauty studies provides a forum for research and education that brings together researchers from a variety of disciplines connected to the concept of beauty. It widely disseminates the results of its work, its seminars, conferences, technology transfer initiatives, and a final product.*

For the researchers, the fundamentally elusive nature of beauty offers a fertile breeding ground for questioning our cultural, civilizational and geographical depictions of beauty.

What is beauty? How is one thing beautiful and another is repellent? What are the scientific and social phenomena behind the distinction we draw between them? What are the institutions that preserve, create or reinvent beauty? What will beauty be like in the future, in an increasingly hybrid world? Under what formal conditions can beauty be exemplified in the sciences? Are there invariants in beauty, despite its multi-faceted manifestations that thwart any normative definition?

There is a consensus surrounding beauty in public opinion: it is seen as a slightly passé notion that involves seeking extra sparkle for oneself or in one's environment. In its new appearance as a social value, beauty seems to have lost its formerly radical nature: by Kant's definition of beauty as the only subjective universality that does not depend on a concept, it could be convulsive, deadly or divine. Today, it has become diluted, losing its aura and distance until it often calls to mind only a standardized mode of appearance. Correlatively, 20th century art detached itself from the notion of beauty, preferring instead to cultivate engagement, take an avant-garde stance, or break with accepted norms.

So why devote a research chair to this outmoded notion of beauty? Because contrary to this diluted, standardized conception, we believe that there are scientific invariants to beauty, which can be shared by researchers across all fields, and even more importantly that "beauty will save the world," as Dostoevsky claimed.

On this basis, the chair treats beauty as an heuristic and prospective notion. This means not only affirming that beauty has a future, and that with persistent inventiveness (via new beauty technologies, bio-art, the ecology of beauty, etc.) tomorrow's beauty is still to be discovered, adapted, and dreamed, but also accepting that the future, and our image of the future needs beauty as a compass to ensure that we remain in touch with what makes us uniquely human.

Connecting beauty to the specific definition of being human removes it from the sole purview of the arts and aesthetics, opening it to a truly cross-disciplinary approach that embraces everything from the exact sciences and applied creation to the humanities, political science, and social science. This multidisciplinary flourishes at PSL, which has historically developed its cross-disciplinary expertise, and the Research Chair on Beauty studies draws upon the university's outstanding schools with the aim of becoming an incubator for cross-disciplinary and prospective thinking.

## General terms of the call for applications

One doctoral candidate will be selected from this call.

	DOCTORATE
Diplomas	- French Master's degree - Master's degree or equivalent, from a French or international school - Graduate diploma from a French or international school
Specific criteria	- Applicants must not already be registered for a thesis - There is no age limit for Applicants - Candidates must be admitted to a Doctoral School related to one of PSL's member or associate institutions
Applications to be submitted	By the candidate
Contract	PSL contract, 3 years.
Language	French and English (working language and publications)

Applicants may be graduates of PSL programs or any other school or institute in France or internationally.

### Doctoral Contract Terms

The monthly stipend for doctoral contracts is €1,758 gross, in addition to an annual sum of €5,000 for the doctoral candidate, which shall be used exclusively to cover expenses related to his or her research activities.

Within two years after beginning the thesis, the doctoral candidate must have published at least one article in a scientific journal as the primary author of original research and at least one article of a popularized version as a prerequisite to thesis defense.

The doctoral candidate must participate in running the Chair (help organize scientific events, conferences, etc.).

### Selection Criteria

All disciplinary fields of research are eligible. **Applicants from the exact & natural sciences (mathematics, physics, chemistry, computer science, biology, etc.) and arts/creation (practice-based) are particularly encouraged.**

The steering committee for the Research Chair on Beauty studies meets as a jury to recruit junior researchers for the chair. The committee is composed of Rémi Carminati (physicist), François Jouen (neuroscientist), Alexandra Palt (General Manager of the L'Oréal Foundation and Chief Sustainability Officer for L'Oréal), Kaouther Adimi (writer and program manager for the L'Oréal Foundation), Anne-Marie Turcan-Verkerk (textual historian), Frédéric Worms (philosopher), Clélia

Zernik (professor of aesthetics and chair of the steering committee) and may call on external experts as needed.

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The jury will also pay close attention to interdisciplinarity and to how well the research fits into the scientific framework of the Chair.

### Timeline

- Application deadline: **May 31, 2020 at midnight**; applications must be sent to: [chaire.beautes.cd@psl.eu](mailto:chaire.beautes.cd@psl.eu)
- Preliminary results: June 15, 2020
- Interviews: first week of July
- Start of doctoral contracts: September 2020

This timeline may change depending on the evolving status of public health restrictions.

### Documents to include (in English or French):

- Proof of deliverance of required diploma or copy if available (Master's 2 or equivalent);
- Master's 2\* academic transcript;
- Personal statement explaining the benefit to the candidate of continuing his or her doctoral research within the framework of the Chair;
- A CV;
- A letter indicating the support of the intended thesis director attached to an institution that is a member or associate of PSL\* (for applicants in art/creation, the thesis director, who will necessarily be affiliated with the Graduate School 540 (ED540), should not be approached until an applicant has passed the first round of selection);
- The thesis project (10 typewritten pages, maximum 20 pages with visual documents), which must include: formulation of the topic as a problem, overview of the state of the art, planned methodology, proposed data or corpuses, and a projected timeline.
- A summary of the thesis project (one page);
- The PSL information form, downloaded and filled out;
- A copy of the applicant's ID card, passport, or residence permit;
- For applicants from non-French-speaking countries, a certificate issued by an entity approved by the French government certifying a sufficient level of ability in French;
- Anything else that is deemed necessary, such as an art portfolio for a research and creation thesis.

Incomplete applications will not be considered.

**\* The scope of Université PSL includes eleven institutions:** Collège de France, Conservatoire National Supérieur d'Art Dramatique, Dauphine, École nationale des chartes, École nationale supérieure de Chimie de Paris, École nationale supérieure des Mines de Paris, École normale supérieure, École Pratique des Hautes Études, ESPCI Paris, Institut Curie, Observatoire de Paris.

**Partners :** Ecole Française d'Extrême-Orient, Ecole nationale d'administration, Ecole nationale supérieure des Arts Décoratifs, la Fémis, Beaux-Arts de Paris.

### Legal Considerations, Ethics, and Access to Data

The personal information collected as part of this call for applications will be handled in compliance with the French Data Protection Act.

By submitting an application to the committee, the applicant authorizes PSL to access the information provided via the platform. The coordinator of the Chair has the right to access and use

the information required to contact applicants and researcher references. This information includes the salutation, first and last name, and information of the applicant and the researcher reference. Use of this information shall not be tolerated for any purpose other than administration of this call for applications.

### **Welcome Desk**

Are you an international student with lots of questions about life in Paris, how PSL works, and what administrative formalities you should expect? The international Welcome Desk team is here to orient you and offer guidance so that you can settle into Paris life as quickly and seamlessly as possible.

Before your arrival, the PSL Welcome Desk and its partner Study&Co (see box) will help you through most of the administrative formalities (visa, Student Life and Campus Contribution (CVEC), transportation, etc.), support your housing search, and put you in touch with current PSL students via the Partner@PSL Buddy Program.

Contact:

[welcomedesk@psl.eu](mailto:welcomedesk@psl.eu)

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