A global network
Afghanistan, Armenia, Azerbaijan, Brazil, China, Colombia, Croatia, Egypt, Ethiopia, Georgia, Ghana, Greece, Guatemala, Hong Kong, India, Indonesia, Iran, Iraq, Kenya, Kurdistan, Lebanon, Lesotho, Libya, Malaysia, Mexico, Mozambique, Myanmar (Burma), Nepal, New Zealand, Nigeria, Oman, Pakistan, Palestine, Philippines, Romania, Rwanda, Saudi Arabia, South Africa, Sri Lanka, Sudan, Tajikistan, Tanzania, Turkey, United Arab Emirates, Uganda, Uzbekistan, Yemen, Zimbabwe

International Training Programme
Annual Report 2019
Introduction

The annual summer programme is at the core of the International Training Programme (ITP). Here, fellows are introduced to a global network of colleagues and exposed to a variety of museum practices. This summer the British Museum and nine UK Partner Museums welcomed 23 fellows from 16 countries to the UK from 8 July to 16 August.

Our network
The 14th annual ITP summer programme saw the addition of five new countries to our growing global network, which now totals 299 fellows from 48 countries. This year we were joined by fellows from Colombia, Georgia, Romania, Sri Lanka and Uzbekistan – new connections that we hope will develop into long-term, sustainable and rewarding partnerships.

Our fellows
ITP fellows come from countries that have identified themselves as needing support to develop their museum services. Fellows tend to be in the early stages of their careers or in positions of influence to develop others. They are passionate about collaboration, working internationally and pursuing careers in the museum and cultural sectors.

Our mission
Through sharing knowledge, skills and experiences, the ITP is working to create and promote a sustainable global network of museum and heritage professionals. While the scope and range of the ITP has grown and developed over the past 13 years, the aims and motivations for the programme remain the same.

Our supporters
The British Museum’s International Training Programme is entirely externally funded through the generosity of individuals, companies, trusts and foundations. Their support allows the Museum to cover the costs of travel, visas, accommodation and subsistence as well as resources for fellows’ personal research and their institutions’ libraries. It also provides future opportunities for our fellows to join additional development and sustainability projects that aim to ensure the continued development of both our alumni and their institutions.
This summer the British Museum and nine UK partner museums welcomed 23 museum professionals from 16 countries between 8 July and 16 August. Fellows took part in sessions, workshops, working groups, behind-the-scenes tours and study visits, all designed to give a broad overview of museums and cultural heritage in the UK.

As I visit the Museum, I feel that the Museum is getting bigger. It’s like a magic box. I feel lucky and happy to spend six weeks in this magic box. What I have learned and the experiences I have gained have been incredibly amazing.’
Asuman Alpagut (Turkey, ITP Fellow 2019)
Museum Researcher and Anthropologist, Museum of Anatolian Civilizations

ITP summer programme 2019
For six weeks over the summer, the 2019 cohort were provided with a detailed overview of all aspects of the Museum’s work, both front of house and behind the scenes. Sessions for 2019 ranged from audiences and archives to security and temporary exhibitions.

The programme was also able to continue reacting to contemporary issues and challenges in the museum world through workshops that change to reflect current thinking in the sector. Workshops in 2019 focused on:

• Cultural heritage and peacebuilding
• Equality and diversity
• Museum future planning
• Train the trainer

Subject-specific sessions enabled fellows to work together with colleagues in the 2019 cohort who had similar projects, programmes and personal interests. In smaller groups opportunities to discuss, debate and deal directly with personal and institutional challenges are enhanced. Working groups this summer looked at:

• Archaeology and fieldwork
• Conservation
• Contemporary collecting
• Fundraising
• Human remains
• International engagement
• Leadership
• Practical photography
• Staff engagement
• Volunteer programmes

Fellows with specific individual specialisms were able to spend time in both the Department of Coins and Medals, and the Department of Prints and Drawings, talking to curators and looking at collections. Groups were also kindly welcomed to the London Mithraeum Bloomberg SPACE, the Petrie Museum of Egyptian Archaeology, and the Royal Mint Museum.

Throughout the programme fellows were able to attend the Museum’s weekly staff talks, which offer an ideal way to catch up with colleagues and to hear more about projects being worked on around the Museum. The subjects are wide and varied, and an excellent way for the ITP fellows to learn more about the Museum and its current and future programmes, and to network internally.

At the start of the ITP the fellows take part in an expectations session and at the end, an evaluation, but it is important that the team continue to monitor the programme throughout the six weeks. Therefore, the ITP included weekly breakfast drop-in sessions where fellows could share thoughts, questions and concerns with the ITP team – and their programme colleagues – over a coffee in an informal setting before the daily programme began.

An important part of the programme are the social events for the fellows which give an opportunity to spend more time as a group and with the ITP team. Evening and weekend events provide an informal setting, and a memorable experience, that the fellows can enjoy together, while promoting friendships and collaboration.
New for 2019

In 2019 we saw the addition to our global network of five new countries – Colombia, Georgia, Romania, Sri Lanka and Uzbekistan – new relationships we hope will continue and develop in the future.

This year, to include a wider range of voices and experiences to the summer programme, we invited a number of external speakers and session facilitators. Jasper Chalcraft, University of Sussex, led a session on Cultural heritage and peacebuilding. Cultural heritage has the potential to act as a focus for community-building, reconciliation and national cohesion. However, heritage is often implicated in conflict dynamics and has the potential to impact either positively or negatively on a conflict-affected environment. The session looked at how individuals and institutions who work with cultural heritage resources are well-placed to help unlock the positive potential of heritage, and facilitate the development of inclusive and sustainable heritage sectors. Amandine Merat, freelance curator, gave a tour of the new Albukhary Foundation Gallery of the Islamic world to share her experiences as project curator for the gallery refurbishment. Annabel Jackson, of Annabel Jackson Associates, delivered a session on the importance of evaluation followed by a workshop focusing on a logic model exercise. While Sara Kayser, museum consultant, Kultur IT, led a session on museum documentation which aimed to help fellows broaden their understanding of how to develop, manage and deliver a documentation system to help manage their collections.

Each year our fellows are asked to plan and propose a temporary exhibition, drawing on their existing museum experience and the skills learnt during the programme. This year fellows designed their Object in focus exhibition around an object from the Museum’s collection selected by their project mentors, working within the theme of journeys. Fellows were asked to work in partnership with a colleague from another country, and together to work with an object from outside of their areas of expertise. These continued developments to the project aim to encourage fellows to think not just about methods of research and the history of the object, but also about concepts, interpretation, audiences, marketing, merchandising and events. Working on an object from another country and culture also meant that the fellows work together as a group – across their pairings – to help and support one another.

Working on the project proposal together provided yet another excellent opportunity to build strong working relationships. It demonstrated the benefits and challenges of working collaboratively and helped to enhance the ITP global network. The exhibition proposal project always proves to be a highlight of the programme; it clearly demonstrates the work and creativity that goes into all the fellows’ proposals, and the Supporters’ Reception is a wonderful opportunity for our participants to share their ideas.

This summer we welcomed Mohamed Mokhtar (Egypt, ITP 2015) back to the British Museum for 10 weeks as the seventh Senior Fellow. This role has now become vital to the ITP for each summer programme, as well as contributing to the planning of the summer programme before they arrive in the UK, and working with the team during the programme, the Senior Fellow role also includes a commitment to guest edit and help to develop the theme of the following year’s ITP newsletter.

Mohamed has worked in heritage and culture in Egypt since 2000. In that time he has gained skills and experiences at sites and museums across the capital Cairo, including the Giza Plateau and the National Museum of Egyptian Civilisation. He also spent time in the office of the Minister of Antiquities before taking on the role of Senior Curator at the Abd al-N problal Palace Museum, a former royal palace and residence and workplace of the Egyptian President.

While here in the UK, as well as offering Mohamed the opportunity to gain further insight into the ITP, we were also able to arrange for him to connect with UK Partner staff at Norfolk Museums Service and to travel to National Museums Northern Ireland in Belfast, to discuss their collection and storage and to share expertise. He was also able to renew existing relationships, spending time with colleagues at the Petrie Museum of Egyptian Archaeology and at Manchester Museum, discussing their current plans for redevelopment.

In the evening we all wore our most beautiful dresses for a special event – attending Her Majesty’s Theatre to see the musical, The Phantom of the Opera. I have seen many musicals in my life but this was different; watching a real musical in a real London theatre. You can’t imagine how I felt; it was a breathtaking moment for me. The costumes, lighting, stage, decor and even the special effects – not to mention the performance – were absolutely amazing. Another great moment to be remembered after we leave the programme!
At the British Museum

For the fellows, one of the highlights of the ITP is the allocated departmental time, where they can work closely with staff and collections directly relevant to their professional specialisms. This summer they were able to tour galleries and store rooms with specialists, learn more about curators’ current projects and programmes, and share skills and expertise on the Museum’s collection. In many cases, departmental colleagues were able to give fellows the opportunity to see, and work with, objects from the collection that they expressed a desire to see in their preprogramme paperwork.

Working in smaller groups means that close relationships between museum colleagues are developed. These relationships that begin during the summer programme can lead to future collaborations, which have ranged from fieldwork and excavation support, publications, further collections research projects to loans and exhibitions.

Departmental colleagues also participate in the Object in focus project, using their time to mentor fellows who, working in pairs, plan and propose a temporary exhibition around a British Museum object to present at the Supporters’ Reception on the penultimate night of the summer programme.

Departments for 2019 were Africa, Oceania and the Americas; Asia; Coins and Medals; Egypt and Sudan; Greece and Rome, and Middle East.

Africa, Oceania and the Americas

The aim guiding our work with the ITP fellows based in AOA—including both our own fellows and our Object in focus mentees—has been to support their own initiatives by providing space for interaction and collaboration. Even though this is still a work in progress, we continue brainstorming about creative alternatives to facilitate participation and knowledge exchange among participants and between participants and Museum staff. I believe that we have begun to successfully move towards this ideal during the 2019 ITP. As an ITP departmental representative, I planned four different activities for the departmental days, one at the British Museum (BM), two in locations where elements of the AOA collection are stored, and one in another institution.

At the BM, we gave short tours to various galleries focusing our talks on community engagement (Living and Dying, The Wellcome Trust Gallery, Room 24), gallery design and current projects (North America, Room 26 and Mexico, Room 27), the World Conservation and Exhibitions Centre (WCEC), Africa storage project and art-based curatorial narratives (The Sainsbury African Galleries, Room 25). The fellows also visited the AOA pictorial room and the strongroom. All the talks included a Q&A section and a short discussion on the topic informing each visit.

At Blythe House and Orsman Road, the fellows had an introductory tour by collection managers followed by hands-on activities focusing on object handling, object care and curatorial decisions for object documentation purposes. For these activities, we used objects from the fellows’ countries and related them to the material they work with at their museums.

For our trip to an external institution we chose the Sainsbury Centre for Visual Arts in Norwich which focused on contemporary approaches to the display of African material culture. The main gallery at the Sainsbury centre has an experimental layout where objects from different regions of the world and different time periods are presented together, mimicking an art gallery. Our objective here was to encourage the fellows’ participation in a discussion about the future of ethnographic gallery curation and whether or not a solution could be found within the field of arts curation. After a lunch at the centre, we visited Norwich castle.
Working with our Object in focus mentees, we followed the same fellow-led approach. We introduced the objects to the fellows and allowed them to handle them for an extended period of time, hoping to inspire them around the theme of journeys and how these objects served as mediators within human encounters. After giving them enough time to read the material and think about their exhibition concept, we reunited to discuss the contents of their panels and labels. Based on this discussion, the ITP departmental representatives worked together with the fellows to produce their final texts.

The fellows found the Object in focus project a very useful exercise, although not necessarily an easy one. The way we structured the sessions worked well, and the mentees seemed both well-prepared and confident; they also enjoyed the challenge of working on an exhibition with an object they previously knew nothing about.

The feedback from the fellows was very positive, and some of them were kind enough to give us some suggestions for the future of the ITP departmental time. The most common suggestion was to create activities in which they could be more actively involved as Museum professionals. They also want to be able to put the information learned in context with the practicalities and realities of their work in their institutions, by being able to ask British Museum staff ‘what if’ questions in reference to things that are different in their museums. They all agreed that they were keen to engage with staff across the Museum, and beyond the ITP summer programme, to find opportunities for future collaboration.

We both found the whole ITP experience very enriching and would love to continue exploring creative and more productive ways of engaging with the fellows next year.

Maria Fernanda Esteban Palma, Project Curator, Santo Domingo Centre of Excellence for Latin American Research

Helen Anderson, Project Curator: Africa
Asia

At this year’s ITP we worked with the Emperor Qinshihuang’s Mausoleum Site Museum (Y e Y e) and Tianjin Museum (Yue Qiao) from China. Travelling with a group of ITP fellows from the Middle East and Asia, we enjoyed an extremely interesting day out at the Pitt Rivers Museum and Ashmolean Museum in Oxford. It was the most beautiful sunshine-filled day and we were lucky enough to have talks by curators in both institutions. We had lively discussions about the different approaches to display and learned a lot from sharing stories of all the many and varied institutions involved. Time spent at the British Museum always feels too short but I am sure we will all work together in the future on exhibitions and loans.

Jessica Harrison-Hall, Head of the China Section and Curator of Chinese ceramics

Two colleagues from Southeast Asia also attended the programme this year – from the National Museum in Myanmar (Khine Mon Kyaw) and from the Ayala Museum in the Philippines (Aprille Tijam). Working with the fellows on their Object in focus project generated a lot of discussion about labels and language, as well as how to develop themes in order to distil a large amount of information into the space of a label. There was also a visit to storage at the Bloomsbury site to look at the Southeast Asian collections, and a trip to Blythe House with the Middle East fellows to look at textiles from Southeast Asia and the Middle East. The visit also included learning about textile care, handling, and storage.

Alexandra Green, Henry Ginsburg Curator for Southeast Asia

In addition, this year, we were excited to work with colleagues from the Bihar Museum in India (Vishi Upadhyay) and the National Museum in Sri Lanka (Sanjeewani Widyaratne). Our discussions about the many different approaches to displaying aspects of ancient and contemporary South Asia were thoroughly enjoyable and we each learned a great deal from one another. We spent time looking at the Museum’s South Asia collections in the Sir Joseph Hotung Gallery during a tour of this newly refurbished space. Going through the Sri Lankan collections in storage was hugely beneficial to us all and a great opportunity to share knowledge about the objects as well as think about ways in which we can collaborate in the future.

Sushma Jansari, Tabor Foundation Curator: South Asia
Coins and Medals

Ketevan Chitashvili, from the Money Museum of the National Bank of Georgia, was the 2019 ITP fellow based in Coins and Medals. During the time she spent with us, she was able to acquaint herself with various coins that are part of the Middle Eastern coin collection. She also helped to edit some of the Georgian coins entries on MI+, the Museum’s collection database. She met a number of colleagues in the department and was able to see how coins were cared for, and also discussed potential research projects in numismatics.

Keti was very excited to see an iconic coin of David IV (1089-1125), King of Georgia, in the British Museum collection. This copper coin came to the British Museum in 1857; it will be on display at a special single object exhibition at the National Museum of Georgia in Tbilisi from mid-September 2019.

On two occasions Keti was joined by Vishi Upadhyay, Curatorial Associate with a focus on numismatics at Bihar Museum, India. Both ITP fellows were able to discuss coins-related issues with Helen Wang, the Curator of East Asian Money and Vice President of the Royal Numismatic Society; and Gareth Williams, Curator of Early Medieval Coins and Project Manager of Money and Medals Network. Keti and Vishi also visited the Royal Mint in Llantrisant near Cardiff in Wales, where Abigail Kenvyn, the Exhibitions Manager, together with her colleagues, gave the ITP fellows a VIP tour of the Royal Mint. On another occasion, they visited the Museum of the Bank of England in the city.

In addition, I was able to mentor two other ITP fellows working in Coins and Medals in connection with their Object in focus project. Ioan Oprea from Romania and Benedicta Gokah from Ghana were given an Iranian banknote to prepare and design an exhibition. They were totally unfamiliar with the object when they started, but soon became interested in this 1944 banknote, which had on the back an image of the ancient Persian ruins of Persepolis dating to the 5th century BC. It was wonderful to see how their initial worry about a totally alien subject matter from an unknown culture and region turned into real interest and enthusiasm. They soon realised how modern banknotes could be associated with power authority and political propaganda. In the preparations of their exhibition proposal, including label writing, poster and panel presentations, they were greatly assisted by our two Assistant Collection Managers, Ashvini Sivakumar and Maria Howell.

It was a pleasure to work with all the ITP Fellows in the Department of Coins and Medals, and to meet those in other departments; and, as always, Claire Messenger and the ITP team were delightful to work with.

Vesta Sarkhosh Curtis, Curator of Middle Eastern Coins

Egypt and Sudan

The Department of Egypt and Sudan hosted four ITP Fellows as part of the Summer 2019 ITP programme – Nagwa Abdelzaher Mohamed Baik and Yasser Abdelrady from Egypt – Diana Dinga and Abdulrahman Sedeed from Sudan.

Of our four departmental days three were spent in the department with introductions to the work of the curatorial team and tours of the stores and gallery spaces. One day took us off site to Kew Gardens, where we were lucky enough to be given a behind-the-scenes tour in the Economic Botany archives – including organic materials from the tomb of King Tut – by Philippa Ryan and Mark Nesbit.

As well as hosting our own departmental fellows we additionally hosted four fellows from other departments for their Object in focus project. Ciprian-Mircea Dobra and Ketevan Chitashvili presented a late period New Year’s flask from Naukratis that was given as a gift in new year festivals, whilst Catalina Cavelier and Alsu Akhmetzyanova worked on an ancient Egyptian soul house from a tomb – their journey theme required them to do a considerable amount of study of the unfamiliar cultures, producing some excellent displays. The experience was both exciting and fulfilling for all and the opportunity for the fellows to work on objects that they may otherwise not have had the opportunity to experience was rewarding.

The fellows this year, our departmental and our Object in focus groups, were enthusiastic, open to new experiences and opportunities and challenged us to engage with them on many levels. It was an enriching experience for us all and we have made connections that we will continue to explore and benefit from.

Louise Ellis-Barrett, Ann el-Mokadem librarian Acquisitions & Projects, Collections, Projects & Resources

Manuela Lehmann, Project Curator: Amara West Artefacts and Documentation
Greece and Rome

The Department of Greece and Rome (G&R) hosted four ITP fellows this year: Asuman Alpagut and Buket Babatas Aydin from Turkey, and Ciprian-Mirea Dobra and Ioan Oprea from Romania.

After meeting the delegates at the departmental lunch (held within the Department of Coins and Medals) and learning about their backgrounds at their presentation day, the fellows were welcomed and introduced to the Department of Greece and Rome by Keeper Neal Spencer at the start of the first departmental day. This was dedicated to the collection and galleries of G&R and was followed by a tour of the reserve collection and the basements by Peter Higgs and Ross Thomas, to give fellows an impression of the range and scale of the objects. Later, a discussion on Displaying Cyprus was held in the A. G. Leventis Gallery of Ancient Cyprus (Room 72) by Thomas Kiely – Charo Rovira discussed the G&R archives and Ian Jenkins provided a tour on the history of the Museum and its galleries.

The second departmental day was dedicated to G&R research projects and exhibitions. Ross Thomas provided a summary of the range of G&R research projects, and this was followed by a presentation on the the upcoming BP exhibition Troy: myth and reality by Vicky Donnellan. Thomas Kiely then discussed documentation and research on the Cypriot collection. Finally, Aurélie Masson-Berghoff discussed the Western Nile Delta Project, and provided a summary of some of the research undertaken by the Naukratis Project and new fieldwork at Naukratis.

The third departmental day was spent in Portsmouth, visiting the historic naval dockyards in Portsmouth to compare the different display strategies – and the narratives emphasised – within the Mary Rose and HMS Victory. A special exhibition on scientific analysis of human remains at the Mary Rose was also visited during this trip. Issues of audience expectation, narratives, conservation and the practicalities of having a public museum display within an object (in these two cases, historic warships) were discussed. This led to a discussion of how their approach to interpretation, design and display was guided by their audiences, particularly the resources for families, children and local groups.

The final departmental day was prepared to give the delegates access to specific collections that were aligned with their interests and expertise. Ciprian-Mirea Dobra and Ioan Oprea spent the day documenting iron sword fragments and Roman pocket knives from the G&R and ES collections respectively. Buket Babatas Aydin documented Palaeolithic tools from Turkey in the BEP collection. Asuman Alpagut, a physical anthropologist and curator, visited the Bioarchaeology labs with curator Daniel Antoine. In the afternoon, Buket and Asuman visited Nicholas Ashton in Franks House, to see the lithic collection kept off the Bloomsbury site.

This year’s Object in focus project meant that the Greece and Rome team assisted ITP fellows from different regions who had chosen objects from our department, in order to discuss object journeys. Vishi Upadhyay (India) and Jacob Nii Marley (Ghana) worked with the original photograph of The Lion of Knidos (currently in the Great Court). Elizabeth Asadu-Abelji (Ghana) and Tamara Alateya (Iraq) were given a wall painting depicting Odysseus and the Sirens from Pompeii, Italy, which they used to discuss the Odyssey as a metaphor for the journey from war to peace.

ITP 2019 was a very positive experience for all involved in the Department of Greece and Rome. We recognise that this programme continues to have a positive impact on maintaining good relations with delegates, their museums and various antiquities services across the world. I greatly enjoyed my time with the delegates, and the discussions were stimulating and inspiring. It felt far too soon when the programme ended. However, I am confident that we will keep in touch and I eagerly await more news about their exciting research and future projects.

Ross Thomas, Curator
Middle East

The Middle East department hosted four ITP fellows this year: Alsu Akhmetzyanova, Balqees Nakhla, Tamara Alattiyah and Nyaz Azeez Awmar. The fellows seemed to fit in seamlessly within the department. They participated eagerly in all sessions and activities and shared opinions on various aspects of museum work freely.

As part of their departmental programme, they were given introductions and tours of the collection, both at the British Museum and at Blythe House, which enabled them to gain an insight into the breadth of the department’s holdings, the challenges of housing a collection on different sites, and the issues involved in preparing collections for big moves. They met a number of curators who discussed with them in detail specific objects, projects, exhibitions and acquisitions. They, like fellows in previous years, particularly seemed to enjoy the hands-on sessions and practical activities.

The new format for the Object in focus projects enabled fellows from Sudan, Myanmar and the Philippines to work with objects from the Middle East (ancient and modern), objects usually outside their comfort zones. Although apprehensive at first, the fellows quickly overcame their fears and approached their projects with great enthusiasm. They worked in a focused and positive manner, coming to terms with the challenges their objects presented, frequently coming up with novel ideas for research and suggestions for accompanying activities. Some fellows brought in personal elements from their own backgrounds and cultures that resonated with their allocated objects adding a cross-cultural dimension to their projects.

The fellows enjoyed their discussions with the audience during the final presentations and engaged warmly with whoever stopped to talk to them. The projects seemed to embody their experience at the Museum, and their sense of achievement and pride was palpable in the actual public presentation of their projects.

It was a pleasure to work with Alsu, Balqees, Tamara and Nyaz, and already, just a few weeks after the end of the 2019 session, we are developing and furthering the contacts established and trying to find ways of cooperating on various projects. These links with the fellows are essential for the reciprocal exchange of information as we aim to fill gaps in our collection and as we aim to improve the records on the Museum’s database.

Zeina Klink-Hoppe
Phyllis Bishop, Curator for the Modern Middle East
Gareth Brereton
Curator of Mesopotamia
Each summer, 10 days of the ITP are spent at UK partner institutions, allowing fellows to explore regional museums across the UK. Time away from the British Museum and London presents fellows with a very different set of benefits and challenges as museum professionals. Fellows often find regional museums more relevant to their home institutions, holding strong local—as well as international—collections and having to be constantly creative in their approach to developing and engaging with their audiences.

Placements are decided in consultation with our UK partners, ensuring that suitable partnerships are made and that fellows can make the most of their experience. As with departmental time at the British Museum, partners deliver programmes to smaller groups (this year three and four), which enabled them to tailor their programmes and be reactive to the needs of individual fellows.

This year two of our UK partner museums were unable to take part in the programme—the Ashmolean Museum of Art and Archaeology and Bristol Museums—as both had projects over the summer that meant they were unable to participate in 2019. We look forward to welcoming them back into the ITP in 2020.

As demonstrated in the reflections by our UK partner museum colleagues, these placements provide valuable skill and knowledge sharing opportunities for our fellows and partners and will ensure that the ground is laid for potential future collaborations.
Being part of the British Museum’s International Training Programme is an amazing experience. This year it was wonderful to meet and welcome Ioan Oprea, Khine Mon Kyaw, Diana Digna and Nyaz Azeez to the University of Nottingham Museum. The fellows always visit Nottingham for a couple of days after spending time at The Collection, Lincoln. This means that we try to give an introduction to Nottingham, the museum and focus on the areas of interest and expertise of the fellows.

The fellows visited the Manuscripts and Special Collections Department, and the School of Computer Science at the University. Externally we were taken on a tour of the Peel Street Cave by City Archaeologist, Scott Lomax. He shared his research of the cave and explained all the work he has undertaken to enable public access.

It really is a privilege to be part of this very special and important programme, which enables us to be introduced to incredible international colleagues and have the space and opportunity to share experiences and build friendships. It is enjoyable, thought provoking and creative. It is also great to be able to continue to build and develop our relationship with our fantastic regional colleagues, Andrea and Dawn, at the Collection in Lincoln.

Thank you ITP!

Clare Pickersgill, Keeper, University of Nottingham Museum
Glasgow Museums

This year Glasgow Museums were fortunate to host Alsu Akhmetzhanova (Uzbekistan), Elizabeth Asafo-Adjei (Ghana), Yasser Abdelrady Mohamed (Egypt) and Ye Ye (China).

The programme began with an introduction to Glasgow Museums and a tour of Kelvingrove Art Gallery and Museum, led by Research and Curatorial Manager, Martin Bellamy. After lunch the group arrived at the Glasgow Museums Resource Centre (GMRC) for a tour of the stores led by Assistant Curator, Ed Johnson. The afternoon concluded with a session entitled Designing stories, led by Julie Taylor, Senior Programme Manager, and Patricia Allan, Curator of World Cultures. Designing stories provided an introduction to Glasgow Museum’s approach to planning and delivering engaging displays and exhibitions. Patricia Allan then led an interactive, object led element, in which the group chose objects, and through facilitated discussion, decided upon a title for an imagined display, the key messages and the factors to consider in developing the display.

On Wednesday, John Messner, Curator of Transport, received the group at Glasgow’s purpose-built museum of transport, the Riverside Museum, for a tour of the building and galleries, during which, aspects of community involvement, co-curation, display development, collections management and visitor feedback were discussed. In the afternoon they visited Kelvin Hall, where Jude Graham, Programme Manager for the venue introduced them to the facility with a tour, looking at objects and handling kits in the stores. They spent time in the ‘T-Rex in Town’ exhibition in the venue’s temporary exhibition space, and finished with a visit to the National Library of Scotland’s, Moving Image Archive.

Thursday was spent at Kelvingrove, where Pat Allan introduced the fellows to display styles, interpretation and design on a limited budget through the African style and Ancient Tea Horse Road displays. Clare Gray, Learning and Access Curator, then provided an overview of the formal and informal learning which takes place across Glasgow Museums. This included an introduction to the schools programme, holiday programmes for families, workshops for early years and older audiences, and a look at some of the displays and gallery spaces designed for these groups. In the afternoon the group assisted in delivering a programme, targeted at 5–12 year-olds, in a busy gallery.

Friday was spent with Fiona Hayes, Curator of Social History, and began with a look at the temporary travelling exhibition, Linda McCartney Retrospective, where the role and importance of temporary exhibitions was discussed. In the afternoon Fiona and the group visited the People’s Palace, Glasgow’s museum of social history, for a tour and discussion of the building’s history, and the museum’s role in reflecting community identity and representing the different or hidden histories of the people of Glasgow. In the evening, the group accompanied Patricia to the preview of Un!t, a major exhibition by the African-American artist Nick Cave, at Tramway, Glasgow Life’s Contemporary Arts venue. The group were all inspired and enthusiastic about the possibility of adopting a similar approach in their own institutions.

The final day began at the GMRC, where Sonja Taylor, Special Projects Officer, talked about the Burrell Collection Refurbishment Project. This included the opportunity to view some examples of the prototype equipment. The group then met with Brian Weightman, Project Curator for the Burrell. Brian spoke of the potential of museum storage for both formal and informal education, and the opportunities presented by the ‘behind the scenes’ nature of the facility. In addition, they explored the use of digital tools, in the interpretation and investigation of objects. The afternoon began at Pollok House with a tour of the collection by Noorah Al-Gailani, Curator of Islamic Civilisations, Patricia Allan and Ed Johnson. This was followed by a site visit to the Burrell, where Noorah discussed the current building works and plans for the new galleries. For the final session, Angela Masaafa, Learning Assistant at the Gallery of Modern Art (GoMA), gave a tour of the exhibitions, shared a history of the building, and provided an introduction to GoMA’s learning programmes.

As always, we enjoyed hosting our ITP fellows. It was a fun and informative few days for our staff and we hope that the participants learned something about our practice and found it as worthwhile and enjoyable as we did.

Ed Johnson, Assistant Curator – Collections, Glasgow Museums Resource Centre (GMRC)
Manchester Art Gallery, Manchester Museum and Whitworth Art Gallery

Once again it was a joy to welcome the new ITP fellows to Manchester. Vishi (India), Ketevan (Georgia), Nagwa (Egypt) and Benedicta (Ghana) settled in quickly and not only eagerly met the teams at the gallery, but happily shared insights into their own museum cultures and backgrounds. Their visit was a real cultural exchange as the gallery team learnt how engagement programmes for women are being set up in Cairo; what it is like to work at South Asia’s largest museum site in Bihar; how the Georgian National Bank Museum describes how a country’s legal tender is seen as the national business card, and how Ghana is a land of visual culture.

In return, I can’t comment too much on what the fellows picked-up but their questions were really incisive, some returned in their own time to catch up on more activities, and at their request, we added on a session about KE EMu. I think we can surmise that it was genuine learning experience for all involved, one that made the international world of museums a closer knit and better networked one.

Ronan Brindley, Head for Learning and Engagement

The four fellows also spent two days at the Whitworth Art Gallery as part of their programme in Manchester. I was their host during their time at the Whitworth and in addition joined the fellows for a visit to Old Trafford football stadium and museum.

The fellows were a very warm and lively group, engaging with all colleagues at the Whitworth, eager to learn and share knowledge. They were able to develop their particular areas of expertise and interests. It was an absolute pleasure to host them. The sessions that were probably the most useful this year were around fundraising and working with communities and volunteers.

Uthra Rajgopal, Assistant Curator, Textiles and Wallpapers

The fellows then arrived at Manchester Museum to a now-traditional welcome tea party with staff, who highlighted current challenges and opportunities with a partially-open building. Curators led tours of our Living Worlds and Nature’s Library galleries and the Vivarium, as well as our Living Cultures and Egyptology stores – prompting discussion about the museum’s actions of decolonisation. This was followed by an hour-in-the-life of our Visitor Team, a shop-floor perspective that is sometimes missing from other museum tours. There was a chance to meet our entire learning team, and hear about recent innovative ‘liberations’ of objects – including Egyptian shabtis loaned to schools, and our Asian elephant Maharajah making an appearance in Manchester’s main train station, at Piccadilly. Fellows got an insight into preparations for our first major international tour in our conservation lab. A definite highlight – for several years in a row now – was a trip to our workshop to see mount-making in action, with the production of personalised keyrings being especially memorable. There was some time to look around our galleries, and temporary exhibition on the Jallianwala Bagh massacre of 1919, before a final debrief on the museum’s plans for the future.

Campbell Price, Curator of Egypt and Sudan

‘In 10 days, I participated in many sessions linked directly to my work with community and learning programmes. I have been inspired by many great ideas about art exhibitions and how art changes life – museums in Manchester are free spaces for communities to come and express their needs, and speak about their problems. I like that there is a space in the Manchester Art Gallery to help homeless people to come and speak. Also there is a programme for babies which astonished me as it was my first time to see this age group in a museum.’

Nagwa Bakr (Egypt, ITP Fellow 2019)

Community Exhibition Officer, Ministry of Antiquities
As part of the 2019 ITP experience, National Museums NI welcomed:

- Catalina Cavelier-Adarve (Colombia), Cultural Heritage Institute of Bogota
- Sanjeevani Upaka Widyaratne (Sri Lanka), Colombo National Museum
- Tamara Alateya (Iraq), Basra Heritage Office
- Asuman Alpagut (Turkey), Museum of Anatolian Civilizations
- Mohammed Mokhtar (Egypt), Abdeen Palace Museum and Senior ITP Fellow.

The fellows had opportunities to explore the shared and contested culture and heritage here via: collections and spaces, learning points and aspirations, and stories and chat. To this end the fellows spent time across National Museums NI sites:

- Ulster Transport Museum – to explore Titanic, our dedicated Titanic exhibition, with a view to contrasting their visit there with their visit to Belfast’s Titanic experience.
- Ulster Folk Museum – to explore our storage, traditional buildings, and experience traditional craft demonstrations (linen weaving, baking, blacksmithing, basket-making) and our first-person interpretation.
- Ulster Museum – to explore all we have to offer, from Irish Art to the Egyptian Mummy with the Elements Exhibition and the V&A touring The Art of Selling Songs exhibition in-between.
- Ulster Museum – to explore all we have to offer, from Irish Art to the Egyptian Mummy with the Elements Exhibition and the V&A touring The Art of Selling Songs exhibition in-between. This time helped them put into context the legacy of the Troubles here, in parallel or contrast with their own countries – as well as being able to inform their taxi and walking tours in the city.
- Ulster American Folk Park – to be guided through the site by the Curator of Emigration, exploring the landscape and push and pull factors that lead to Irish emigration to America and reflecting on emigration themes, historically to present day, from Ireland and their own countries.

During the programme the fellows participated in sessions broaching: leadership and management; interpretation; audience insights and evaluation; research; human resources and community engagement. Their time organisationally concluded with lunch with Kathryn Thomson (CEO), Colin Catney (Chief Operating Officer), Hannah Crowdy (Head of Curatorial), and Donald McAnallen (Community Engagement Officer) and Louise Smyth (Training & Development Advisor), to reflect on their time on the ITP with National Museums NI and their next steps for completing the ITP and returning home.

Principally the time with the fellows throughout the programme was one of dialogue, widening perspectives and experiencing each other’s culture – including social time. The fellows were able to experience a lot of what Northern Ireland has to offer through walks and tours in Belfast and the North Coast; City Hall; the Titanic Experience; Pride; dinners out and home-cooked meals; local delicacies (Stews, 15s, Belfast Baps and wheaten bread); Late Night Art and St George’s Market.

We have enjoyed meeting and spending time with the fellows and as we reflect on their time with us we see real benefit and opportunities in sharing our journey with the fellows and vice versa – and look forward to the continued and developing partnership with the ITP and British Museum.

Thanks to all National Museums NI colleagues who supported and contributed to the welcome and delivery of the 2019 ITP.

Hannah Crowdy, Head of Curatorial
Louise Smyth, Training & Development Advisor

The beautiful thing that adds a great value to the visitors’ experience [at Ulster Folk Museum] is having the museum staff wearing traditional local costumes, demonstrating traditional crafts and lifestyles. I had almost believed that I am in an Irish village in the 1800s, until my phone rang, then I jumped back again into the year 2019!’

Tamara Alattiya (Iraq, ITP Fellow 2019)
Museum Project Manager & Museum Volunteer, The Basra Heritage Office

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Tamara Alattiya (Iraq, ITP Fellow 2019)
Museum Project Manager & Museum Volunteer, The Basra Heritage Office

Catalina Cavelier during her UK partner placement in Belfast.

ITP Fellows at the Ulster Folk Museum, Northern Ireland.
The message that always comes through strongest at the ITP evaluation session is that fellows would like to participate in hands-on activities and real work during their partner placement. I don’t think I am alone in finding it quite a challenge to deliver, but this year we scored a big hit when our three fellows and Senior Fellow went to the Norfolk Collections Centre, rolled up their sleeves and got stuck into the annual deep clean.

The deep clean usually happens in May/June but I had managed to persuade Wayne Kett, Collections Development Officer, to push it back to July so that our ITP guests could join in. The Norfolk Collections Centre is our open access storage facility which houses many of our larger objects. Apart from getting their hands dirty and going at furniture, farm machinery and at-one-time new-fangled domestic equipment—with the low suction vacuum cleaner and hog’s hair brush—our fellows were treated to a tour of some star objects. These include the West Runton Mammoth and the famous Norwich Snap Dragons which have appeared at street festivals in the city, off and on since the 15th century. The museum is on the site of a Victorian workhouse and incorporates a working farm so the day was rounded off with a cart-ride, courtesy of one of our Suffolk Punch horses.

The visit to Gressenhall Farm and Workhouse was one of the highlights of our 10 day stint hosting Abdulrahman, Buket, Balqees and Mohamed (the latter being the Senior Fellow only stepping with us for a couple of days before joining another group in Belfast) which was, fascinating, enlightening, great fun and exhausting as ever.

The turn out from colleagues in Norwich for fellow presentations was gratifying as was the enthusiastic way in which they were delivered and received. I had also arranged one-to-one meetings with NMS ‘opposite numbers’, which gave both parties a better chance to get to know each other and discuss the shared and differing aspects of their similar job roles.

This was our third year as host partners for the ITP and it was as rewarding as ever. I feel that the programme is now established in the consciousness of colleagues across the service who understand the part they can play in it and are keen to take part.

Sarah Gore, Teaching Museum Manager

Norfolk Museums Service

We went to the Norfolk Museums to start a training day with representatives from the museums. The subject of this training was decolonisation in museums and sessions varied between presentations, activities and talks. I found the subject very interesting and the discussions with different members of the staff enriched my knowledge about it.

Mohamed Mokhtar (Egypt, ITP Fellow 2015, Senior Fellow 2019) Curator, Abdeen Palace Museum

Day one was a full day of training with 25 or so colleagues from across the service, on the subject of decolonisation and museum collections. We are at the early stages of writing a decolonisation policy and it was valuable for us to have colleagues from Sudan, Palestine, Turkey and Egypt with us in the room, joining in discussions and sharing their views. In the afternoon a colleague from the Learning team conducted a series of ‘taboo’ tours in our decorative arts galleries which have been developed to confront and discuss stories of racism, exploitation and Britain’s imperial past.

Our fellows had expressed a wide range of interests and this was reflected in the way they took part in everything that had been organised for them. The general focus was a broad mixture of engaging with different audiences, storage and collection management, as well as trying to cover as much of the service (spanning the entire county) as possible. The rest of the visit included trips to Time and Tide Museum of Great Yarmouth with a presentation from Learning and Youth Engagement colleagues and a seafront walk taking in some of the heritage highlights of the town. On our visit to Thetford we found out about some of the ways in which colleagues engage with young people in the town. It was also an opportunity to immerse ourselves in the escape game which has been developed by Ancient House Museum’s Teenage History Club, under the supervision of Learning Officer Melissa Hawker. Some of us were novices to such activities and had very little idea what was going on, we just knew we were looking for clues and keys and needed to do it double-quick or something terrible was going to happen. I am happy to report that all clues and keys were found and we made the train home in time for our appearance on Sophie Little’s Friday evening show on BBC Radio Norfolk, where the fellows shared news of their time in Norfolk.

The message that always comes through strongest at the ITP evaluation session is that fellows would like to participate in hands-on activities and real work during their partner placement. I don’t think I am alone in finding it quite a challenge to deliver, but this year we scored a big hit when our three fellows and Senior Fellow went to the Norfolk Collections Centre, rolled up their sleeves and got stuck into the annual deep clean.

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Sarah Gore, Teaching Museum Manager
Tyne & Wear Archives and Museums

Tyne & Wear Archives and Museums (TWAM) had the pleasure of hosting four fellows for 2019: Aprille Tijam – Senior Manager of Exhibitions and Collections at the Ayala Museum in the Philippines, Jacob Nii Marley – graduate and Technical Assistant for the University Of Ghana, Museum of Archaeology. Jasmine Yue Qiao – Collections Curator at the Tianjin Museum, China and Cipran-Mircea Dobra, Guide of Principia Museum, Romania.

TWAM is made up six museums, three art galleries and one archive service. Discovery Museum, in Newcastle upon Tyne tells the history of Newcastle and Tyneside through permanent displays and temporary exhibitions, focusing on the area’s maritime, scientific and technological importance to Britain and the rest of the world. Discovery Museum is the headquarters of TWAM, which is where the fellows visit began. Bill Griffiths, head of programmes & collections, started the programme with an overview of TWAM, explaining how the service is managed and delivered.

Our day started with a presentation from two TWAM Communications Officers, Rachel Booker and Jonathan Loach. They shared information about TWAM’s marketing strategy and the use of Culture segments, a psychographic segmentation tool to help better understand and engage with attenders and non-attenders. This can be used by performing arts venues, galleries, museums and heritage organisations of all sizes. https://ruhminsight.com/culture-segments/survey

Our planned trip to see the Angel of the North sculpture was nearly hampered by the weather, which was not being to kind and kept us guessing when it would rain, but we managed to visit the Angel in between showers, running from the taxi, taking photos and running back again!

The fellows had a guided tour around the Great North Museum: Hancock, which is a museum of natural history, archaeology, geology and world cultures and benefited from the expertise of Andrew Parkin (Keeper of Archaeology), explaining the various galleries and exhibits in the museum.

We spent a whole day visiting Alnwick Castle and Gardens in the market town of Alnwick, Northumberland. Alnwick Castle is a magnificent castle and country house which is the seat of the 12th Duke of Northumberland, built following the Norman conquest and renovated and remodelled a number of times. We also visited Alnwick Garden, which is the formal gardens adjacent to Alnwick Castle. The garden provides a inspiring landscape with beautifully structured foliage, fantastic water features and even a ‘Poison Garden’.

We had a great day out at Hadrian’s Wall in the beautiful Northumberland countryside, warm and sunny weather made it a perfect day out. We also had an extra fellow join us on our visit, Ioan Oprea, curator and archaeologist from the National Museum of the Union Alba Iulia. We visited Birdoswald, a Roman Fort in Cumbria, where we saw the remains of all of Hadrian’s Wall and its defining. We were also fortunate to have the company and expertise of Tony Wilmott, Senior Archaeologist, Excavation and Analysis at Historic England, who explained the history of the Roman fort, which had been garrisoned by troops from Dacia (modern day Romania – so particularly significant to Ioan and Ciprian). Tony has led the important excavation work undertaken at Birdoswald over the last 30 years.

The fellows spent a day with TWAM learning officers Vicki Allan and Tom Elwich, to finding out all aspects of TWAM’s learning programmes, in particular the Boxes of Delight, which are artefact loan boxes and are all very different; they contain a combination of real and replica objects and most include some costumes too. We have a range of science, natural history, local history and curriculum linked history topics, in addition to class sets of costumes.

The last day was spent in South Shields, at Arbeia Roman Fort, situated along the main sea route to Hadrian’s Wall. It was a key garrison and military supply base to other forts along the Wall and is an important part of the history of Roman Britain. Alex Croom, Keeper of Archaeology, gave a wonderful walking tour of Arbeia outdoor site before we finished the day standing at the mouth of the River Tyne looking out towards the North Sea.

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Jackie Bland
Training & Governance Officer

‘Meeting Iain Watson, director of TWAM, at the end of our stay, we had a great conversation about our thoughts and experience on the programme so far and how best we could possibly incorporate that back at our home museums. Without doubt I would say Newcastle was the best placement for 2019, I really enjoyed it!’

Jacob Nii Marley (Ghana, ITP Fellow 2019)
Technical Assistant, Department of Archaeology and Heritage Studies, University of Ghana
Programme partners invite fellows to visit other institutions, to meet staff and explore collections or give them an introduction to an area and the cultural sector with particular current relevance. Working with institutions outside of the British Museum provides a change in dynamic to the programme and allows fellows to explore as much of the cultural sector in the UK as possible. They also often cover areas of expertise, outside the range and scope of the Museum.

This year fellows made day trips to Brighton Museum & Art Gallery – Royal Pavilion, Horniman Museum and Gardens, Kenwood House and Stonehenge. In Brighton fellows toured the galleries at the Museum & Art Gallery, followed by an audio tour of the Royal Pavilion. At Horniman Museum and Gardens they were able to speak with the curators of the newly refurbished World Gallery, the Natural History Gallery and the Music Gallery before meeting with staff relevant to their specialisms in small groups. At Kenwood House, the group were met by Frances Carey, Chair of the Marie-Louise von Motesiczky Charitable Trust, who explained the fascinating history of the house and its wonderful collection. Fellows were able to enjoy a self-guided visit and spoke extensively to the extremely knowledgeable Volunteer Guides situated in each room. Finally, at Stonehenge, as well as being able to take the audio tour of the prehistoric monument, fellows were able to explore inside the Neolithic Houses and visit the exhibition and visitor centre which expertly put the stones into context.

‘I was particularly impressed by the Archaeology Gallery (at Brighton Museum and Art Gallery) – so much that I got caught up in there and didn’t have enough time to visit other exhibitions! The objects in the room were given meaning and context through very interesting resources, such as demonstration videos and 3D models of the people that could have inhabited Brighton in the past. It was easy to actually imagine life in those periods and to relate with those imagined humans.’

‘I went to the London Transport Museum. I really didn’t know what to expect before going to the museum, but it exceeded all of my expectations. It was fun! It is not a large museum, but they made me feel like I was going back in time with their presentation. And also it helped me to understand London better as a city, by showing the historical development of transportation. I can clearly see that the children in the museum were enjoying the museum as much as I did.’

Buket Babataş Aydın (Turkey, ITP Fellow 2019), Independent researcher and PhD candidate

Based on individuals’ needs and professional interests, fellows also made visits, in smaller groups, to a wide range of institutions including the Ashmolean Museum of Art and Archaeology, Kew Gardens, London Mithraeum Bloomberg SPACE, Museum of the Bank of England, Norwich Castle Museum, Petrie Museum of Egyptian Archaeology, Pitt Rivers Museum, Portsmouth Historic Dockyard, the Royal Mint Museum and Sainsbury Centre for Visual Arts. At some of these institutions, fellows were able to meet and speak to staff while at others, tours were led by colleagues from the British Museum.

Meanwhile, at the British Museum, programme partners provided a variety of sessions. Jasper Chalcraft, University of Sussex, led a session on Cultural heritage and peacebuilding looking at how individuals and institutions who work with cultural heritage resources are well-placed to help unlock the positive potential of heritage and facilitate the development of inclusive and sustainable heritage sectors. Amandine Mezet, freelance curator, gave a tour of the new Albukhary Foundation Gallery of the Islamic world to share her experiences as Project Curator for the gallery refurbishment. Annabel Jackson, of Annabel Jackson Associates, delivered a session on the importance of evaluation followed by a workshop focusing on a logic model exercise. While Sara Kayser, museum consultant, Kultur IT, led a session on museum documentation, which aimed to help fellows broaden their understanding of how to develop, manage and deliver a documentation system to help manage their collections. The session looked at the benefits and challenges of effective documentation; how to choose an appropriate Collections Management Systems (CMS) and a variety of documentation tools. Discussion groups also took place to consider the current challenges at fellows institution and how they could benefit from good documentation, to consider what documentation tools their institution currently has, and to consider whether they are up-to-date and comprehensive in use.

Ahmanson Project Day provided another opportunity for fellows to visit London-based museums, this time with the aim of encouraging fellows to use their experiences from the ITP and as heritage professionals to consider their displays and collections.

This year, increased activism in the UK and abroad with the aim of tackling climate change guided the choice of museums. Fellows were asked to focus on a range of aspects of the selected museums’ offerings to its audiences, and to think specifically how environment and sustainability – whether directly through a special exhibition or more indirectly through the permanent displays – was represented. What stories are told about our environment? In what ways do these museums ask us to look towards the future? Do these museums make us think about changes we can make to improve our environment? And how could their institutions look to tell similar important, global stories?

Fellows were assigned a museum to visit in their UK partner placement groups and presented their findings to their colleagues in an afternoon session at the museum. Appendix 2 has a list of the institutions visited with a brief overview of what our fellows had to say.
A continuing dialogue

Working to develop a sustainable global network of inspired museum and heritage professionals is a key aim of the International Training Programme. Post-fellowship opportunities are essential for ensuring that those in our network keep communicating. These initiatives provide further training and research opportunities and open up potential collaborations. They promise a lifelong commitment to our network from the Museum, from our partners and from our fellows.

Senior Fellow 2019

Working on my master thesis in the Gayer Anderson Museum in a very peaceful location in Cairo and my phone lights-up with an email that I’d been accepted to be the International Training Programme 2019 Senior Fellow. Different feelings and thoughts come into my mind remembering the good times I spent as a participant in 2015 and the challenges and responsibility that this role may require.

I was very happy to be back and to take part in this amazing experience again as the first time it had helped me a lot to reshape my ideas regarding working as a museum professional.

The Senior Fellow role is vital and important to facilitate the communications between the ITP team and the fellows, answering many questions fellows ask during their time on the programme. The opportunity to be back as a Senior Fellow and to create connections with new countries and new people is only available through the ITP. As well as meeting a new group of ITP fellows, I had the chance this year to visit Norwich, Oxford, Belfast, Bath and Manchester to meet UK and programme partners. The opportunity to talk about my museum in different cities around the UK was very important as it enabled me to try to ensure possible collaborations in the future.

I also had the chance to participate in behind-the-scenes work for the programme; from preparing and organising the delivery of the content to the ITP fellows, to managing the posting of fellows’ blog posts. I will also continue my role after returning home by working with the ITP on the network newsletter for 2020.

I was also lucky that the ITP team are based in the Department of Egypt and Sudan and I spent the whole time working in a place surrounded by very helpful colleagues supporting and helping all the time, including the ITP team – Claire, George and Emily – who always made me feel that we are one family.

Finally, I am really grateful to the Marie-Louise von Motesiczky Charitable Trust, for giving me the opportunity to come back to the ITP in this vital role as a Senior Fellow.

Mohamed Mokhtar, Senior Fellow 2019
ITP+ course – museum interpretation
The third ITP+ course – short courses that focus in depth on specific parts of the current summer programme – took place from 23–26 October at the Nubia Museum in Aswan, Egypt. The workshop focused on looking at new thinking in interpretation and object display, and offered further opportunities to cascade skills sharing outside of the ITP network to 13 museum professionals, selected by the Ministry of Antiquities, from institutions across Egypt. It also helped 14 selected ITP fellows and their institutions to continue developing new skills and experiences.

The course was structured around a mixture of case studies, seminars, workshops and facilitated discussions, and was delivered by specialists from the British Museum, Manchester Museum and the Petrie Museum of Egyptian Archaeology, alongside ITP Fellows from India, Sudan and Uganda, and sessions included:

- Visitor research and community engagement
- Identifying audiences
- Defining key messages
- Constructing narratives
- Label and panel writing and the potential use of ‘gateway objects’
- Incorporating other voices and perspectives

Taking these core learning strands, the course focused on project-based learning and these key issues in museum interpretation were delivered through the context of the Museum and its UK and programme partners’ current and recent projects and programmes.

To end the workshop the group enjoyed a very active evaluation session – involving lots of post-it notes, of course!

‘I enjoyed the inspiring enthusiasm and examples of great work.’

Our thanks go out to the Ministry of Antiquities, Egypt and the Nubia Museum for so kindly hosting us.

ITP+ course – museums and education
Museums and education – a three-day ITP+ course – was held from 28–30 March 2019 at Chhatrapati Shivaji Maharaj Vastu Sangrahalaya (CSMVS), Mumbai, following the kind invitation of the Director, Mr Sabyasachi Mukherjee.

The course, which marked the opening of CSMVS’s new children’s museum, saw the presentation of a series of case studies to provide perspectives on engaging and educating young audiences, and offered participants interesting and common themes, benefits and challenges, that could inform their own institutions’ strategies.

These case studies were delivered by colleagues from the British Museum, UK and programme partner museums, alongside fellows from the ITP network. They highlighted creative and innovative approaches around the world through shared learning, challenges and impact.

Workshop groups were then given time to debate and discuss key issues around museum-based learning and were challenged to conceive and formulate a programme with learning outcomes for young audiences, which could be shared throughout the ITP network and beyond.

‘The workshop provided a melting pot of individuals who work within a museum learning role alongside a range of individuals who work in associated fields – from curatorial fields and access specialists to school teachers and professionals working within charities. The variety of perspectives this allowed to flow into the debates and discussions was the highlight of the workshop. It ultimately provided the foundations for the concepts that were worked up throughout the workshop to be as fully-formed and well-considered from a spectrum of different viewpoints as they possibly could be.’

Anonymous, ITP evaluation

Bhara Kulkarni (India, ITP 2015) introducing the ITP+ course, museums and education.

The ITP+ museum interpretation group at the Nubia Museum in Aswan.
Museums Association Conference and Exhibition, Brighton

In previous years ITP fellows have joined us at the Museums Association (MA) conferences in Glasgow (2016), Manchester (2017) and Belfast (2018). Feedback among the alumni to these opportunities has been overwhelmingly positive.

In October 2019 six ITP fellows from Armenia, China, Egypt, India, Nepal and Malaysia joined us in Brighton for this year’s MA conference which focused on Sustainable and Ethical Museums in a Globalised World. Sessions and workshops examined museums’ roles in a changing world and in addressing challenging issues being faced globally. This included thinking about social and political upheaval, demographic changes, rising inequalities and climate change.

From 30 September to 2 October the fellows took part in a tailored programme of visits to museums and heritage sites in East Sussex, followed by the Museums Association Conference and Exhibition from 3–5 October.

Within the ITP network, the MA conference provides an excellent opportunity to reaffirm existing relationships made during the summer programme and externally, and it also hopes to increase the potential of the programme. It offers further opportunities to exchange knowledge, skills and experiences and will support participating fellows to continue to develop both professionally and personally. We also hope it will create networking opportunities with the hope of stimulating potential future collaborations.

‘This trip [to Belfast] was a great opportunity for me and my colleagues to experience a new exceptional city and culture, and a fruitful chance to network, communicate and build new inspiring relationships with other museums and professionals.’

Heba Khairy
(ITP 2017, Egypt)
Curator, The Grand Egyptian Museum

Rodin spotlight loan

Back in January 2017 the International Training Programme team were delighted to be approached by the Department of Greece and Rome (G&R) and Learning and National Partnerships (LNP) to collaborate on a Spotlight loans project. Following on from the wonderfully creative Object in Focus project that she worked on while here on the ITP, Barbara Vujanović (Croatia, ITP 2016), Senior Curator, The Ivan Meštrović Museums – Meštrović Atelier, Zagreb, was invited back to the British Museum to co-curate a touring exhibition to follow on from the British Museum (BM) show Rodin and the art of ancient Greece.

The Museum’s series of Spotlight loans and tours across the UK form an integral part of the British Museum’s strategy and approach to sharing its collection with the nation. The programme gives UK museums the opportunity to borrow objects free of charge and it is an excellent opportunity for the Museum to display its objects in different contexts, which can bring out new approaches and interpretations, as well as drawing on other museums’ collections, experiences and expertise.

This collaboration, which culminated in 2019, gave Barbara the opportunity to understand, in principle and practice, how a Spotlight loan was created, organised and delivered working alongside colleagues in the departments of G&R and LNP. It also gave her the chance to share skills and experiences and to meet new colleagues at UK partner museums and enlarge her professional networks.

Over the past two years it has been amazing to work with Barbara again. From the early meetings with British Museum curators and the LNP team to choosing the objects for the show, creating a project specification, working with the venues, and to the show itself touring around the UK. It has been a pleasure to work on such a wonderfully collaborative legacy project.

Barbara’s show, Rodin: rethinking the fragment, supported by the Dorset Foundation in memory of Harry M Weinrebe, toured to three venues around the country, Abbot Hall Art Gallery, Kendal, the Holburne Museum, Bath, and the New Art Gallery Walsall. Each venue interpreted Barbara’s story differently depending on their own collection and creative thinking.

At Abbot Hall in Kendal, the aim was to interact with and include the museum’s visitors who were asked to consider the question – ‘What’s The Thinker thinking?’ – and add their answers to the display wall.

While Holburne Museum contributed to the exhibition by adding objects from their collection. The selected pieces revealed Sir William Holburne’s interest in the arts of ancient Greece and Rome, which informed his collecting throughout his life.

Finally, at the New Art Gallery Walsall, 2019 – to coincide with the 60th anniversary of Jacob Epstein’s death – the gallery was showcasing sculpture in all its forms through a season titled Sculpture in Focus, and this provided a perfect setting for Barbara’s show.

At each venue, Barbara gave a curator’s talk which introduced the subject and gave her the opportunity to share her thoughts and expertise.
Collaborative Award

In 2016 Nelson Abiti, Uganda National Museum (ITP 2013) was awarded a grant for his project proposal Ruad to Reconciliation. With Hadeer Belal (Egypt, ITP 2013), John Giblin (former Head of Africa at the British Museum), Wendland Chole Kizili (Kenya, ITP 2013), Jackline Nyiraciza (Uganda, ITP 2013); and Shadia Rabo (Sudan, ITP 2006), Nelson is working towards creating a touring community exhibition, permanent display refurbishment and a school exhibition kit for South Sudanese refugees in northern Uganda.

In February 2018 the group met at Uganda National Museum in Kampala for a preparatory meeting and community workshop, attended by Uganda National Museum staff, community representatives from northern Uganda and a South Sudanese resident of a refugee camp. The group shared experiences and ideas for the development of the community touring exhibition, engaged with community representatives, reviewed the project objectives and timetable, and developed an implementation plan.

Since then the team have been continuing to engage with the community and have begun preparing exhibition materials, ready for a pilot community exhibition tour in schools.

In June 2019 team member Hadeer Belal visited the Uganda National Museum to take part in a panel discussion and debate on cultural heritage in Uganda and to share her skills and experiences of museums and culture in Egypt.

This year the project will come to a close and a report on the team’s work – sharing their successes and learning outcomes over the past two years – will be shared with the ITP global network.

“I gained a lot of information about Uganda’s culture and was surprised with the audience’s many ideas to develop their country and raise the awareness of the local community about the importance of museums as a way to protect their culture heritage.”

Hadeer Belal (Egypt, ITP 2013)
Curator, Coptic Museum, Cairo

Worcester Polytechnic Institute partnership

The International Training Programme has worked with Worcester Polytechnic Institute in Massachusetts (WPI) since 2017 and this year four more students arrived at the British Museum in March to work with the ITP team for seven weeks. Jacob Koslow, Cormac Lynch-Collier, Matthew Puentes and Michael Sidler came to the Museum to support the ITP team, developing their online exhibition project – based on one of the projects that came out of the workshop Creating museums of world stories, that celebrated the 10th anniversary of the International Training Programme in Mumbai in 2015. The workshop saw museum and heritage professionals discuss and debate new forms of ‘encyclopaedic’ displays, presenting familiar local and national histories in the context of global stories.

Working with the wonderful objects and information selected and put together by the project team Jana Alaraj, Palestine, ITP 2011; Ishaq Mohamed Bello, Nigeria, ITP 2012; Sue Giles, UK Partner Bristol Museums; Wendland Chole Kizili, Kenya, ITP 2013; Manisha Nene, India, ITP 2011; Rige Shiba, India, ITP 2013; and the ITP team, Jacob, Cormac, Matthew and Michael researched user-friendly Collection Management Systems and input the exhibition information into an online platform to share with the network as an online exhibition.

As well as supporting the ITP, this project was part of the group’s university studies; the project is carried out in one university term, working with the ITP team from the US before coming to the UK in March to volunteer on the project full time for seven weeks.

As the project developed, Jacob, Cormac, Matthew and Michael were in contact with members of the wider ITP network for advice and input into the project which has made it a truly global collaboration.
Communications

Each year the International Training Programme global network continues to expand both in numbers and its geographical spread and now encompasses 299 fellows from 48 countries. It is incredibly important to keep our fellows connected, with the British Museum, our UK and programme partners and with each other. Consequently, we have developed a new ITP Wordpress site with the aim of addressing key areas of importance in advocacy, outreach and community.

The site continues to have a space for blog posts where we can share network news and views. Now it also contains new sections that we hope will promote the ITP, provide more information on our network and provide more opportunities for our fellows to engage through a directory of fellows and partners, images and videos and a space for network publications. As a way to ensure all the ITP fellows – whenever they joined the programme – stay up-to-date and continue to share skills, there is a password-protected resource space, where we can upload materials to support cascaded training, development and e-learning.

Based on the analysis and feedback from our ITP network, over the coming months, the ITP team will be working on some new social media interactive applications. Both Instagram and LinkedIn will be used to sit alongside the Wordpress site, Facebook and Twitter at the request of our fellows.

Supporting our network

Over the past year, fellows have received support from the International Training Programme in order to be able to attend and participate in conferences or return to the British Museum.

Marwa A. Bdr El Din (Egypt, ITP Fellow 2012), Head of the Registration, Collection Management and Documentation at the Egyptian Museum, Cairo, was able to attend the 20th CRE (Current Research in Egyptology) symposium 2019 at Alakal University, Spain. Marwa was able to apply for an ITP Conference Grant to attend this conference, where she presented on ‘The Ba houses in Ancient Egypt’ and networked with Egyptologists from all over the world.

Meanwhile, Omar Joseph Nasser-Khouri from Birzeit University Museum (Palestine, ITP 2013) was able to continue his Palestinian textile project here at the British Museum as part of the ITP Knowledge Exchange Fellowships. Omar continued to document and photograph the textiles at the museum Blythe House, and was also able to present his project to this summer’s ITP fellows, to highlight the opportunities available to the ITP network post-summer programme.

‘During the second phase of the project [Documentation of the British Museum’s Palestinian Textile Records] from June to August 2019, I was able to update more than 150 additional Museum records, bringing the total to more than 550 (approximately 55% of the collection). This phase, albeit shorter, was easier and progress was faster given my initial experience working on the collection in 2018, and especially with the assistance of volunteers who helped with folding and photographing the objects.

During this phase of the project I have also worked with curator Zeina Klink-Hoppe, Textile Centre Manager Helen Wolf, and Imogen Laing to choose some textiles for the next rotation of the Arab World cabinet in the new Albukhary Foundation Gallery of the Islamic world. Furthermore, a lecture in partnership with the Palestine Exploration Fund in January 2020 has been planned to discuss the project and share its findings and achievements with the public. At this point there is an interest in resuming the project in 2020 so as to have the records for the entire collection updated and improved before the eventual move from Blythe House.’

Both Marwa and Omar match-funded against the financial assistance provided by the British Museum which clearly demonstrated their commitment to the projects and programmes.
Support

For six weeks every summer, the International Training Programme brings together museum and heritage professionals from around the world to undertake placements at the British Museum and at partner organisations across the UK. The full scope of the programme is privately funded and without the generosity of individuals, companies, trusts and foundations, the ITP would not be possible.

The generous support of ITP donors enables the Museum to cover fully costs for travel, visas, accommodation, subsistence, resources for the participants’ research and a programme of legacy activity that further builds the ITP network and its skill set.

Our supporters

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Manchester Museum
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National Museums Northern Ireland
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‘The six weeks of the programme were fleeting, but the harvest it brought to me is extremely rich. It has greatly broadened my horizons, increased my professional knowledge and skills, and I have made friends with museum professionals from all over the world. It has had a very important guiding significance for the future of my work.’

Yue Qiao (China, ITP Fellow 2019)
Collections Curator and Custodian, Tianjin Museum

Alice Rugheimer with Alsu Akhmetzyanova (Uzbekistan) and Elizabeth Asafo-Adjei (Ghana).

Francesca Hiller discussing museum archives with the ITP fellows 2019.
Throughout the six weeks of the ITP, fellows undertake projects and programmes that enable them to work and spend time together. Enduring professional and personal relationships are forged while experiences and skills are shared that we hope will support our fellows into the future.
The ITP is not only training us participants according to our primary areas of interest but also equipping us with invaluable supplementary knowledge, skills and experiences to learn from and share with our colleagues back at home.

Jacob Nii Marley (Ghana, ITP Fellow 2019)
Technical Assistant, Department of Archaeology and Heritage Studies, University of Ghana

Ghana
Jacob Nii Marley, graduate student and Technical Assistant, Department of Archaeology and Heritage Studies, University of Ghana
Supported by the Edith Murphy Foundation

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Jacob Nii Marley (Ghana, ITP Fellow 2019)
Technical Assistant, Department of Archaeology and Heritage Studies, University of Ghana
Appendix 2
Project day: visiting London museums

The aim of the museum project day is for fellows to visit other London-based museums and use their experiences from the ITP and as heritage professionals to consider their displays and collections. The project brings the fellows together, not only to facilitate their visit but to engage with a new museum and then to develop a short presentation on their experiences.

Fellows were assigned a museum to visit in their UK partner placement groups and presented their findings to their colleagues in an afternoon session at the museum. Below is a list of the institutions visited with a brief overview of what our fellows had to say.

Museum of Brands: themes of environment and sustainability throughout the museum
- Overall experience: through effective storytelling, the display focuses on the development of brands and products from the Victorian day to the present. Many of the objects displayed and the stories told had great personal resonance – even to an international audience.
- Environment and sustainability: the museum raised awareness of plastic usage on one display by showcasing companies that try to reduce plastic usage via recycling.

London Transport Museum: themes of environment and sustainability throughout the museum
- Overall experience: from opportunities to climb aboard various vehicles, to the use of virtual reality and digital media, this museum is a highly interactive and fun experience that takes the visitor through the history of London transport. A great museum for families and children.
- Environment and sustainability: the display made a big effort on environmental education through its focus on the fascinating future of transportation in London.

V&A: special exhibition, Food: Bigger than the plate
- Overall experience: divided into four sections – compost, farming, trading and eating – and featuring installations by designers, artists, scientists and chefs, the exhibition was a very sensory experience that was effective in addressing our relationship with food today.
- Environment and sustainability: the whole exhibition was focused towards creating a more sustainable approach to food in the future; it was beautifully designed and hugely enjoyable.

Museum of Brands: special exhibition, Secret Rivers
- Overall experience: a well laid out exhibition that, through exploring London’s relationships with its waterways, shows London from a unique perspective. The museum ran a lot of workshops for both adults and children.
- Environment and sustainability: the temporary exhibition Secret Rivers looks at the future of rivers in London, unearthing some of London’s buried rivers. It was a fascinating and inspiring view of a possible future.

National Maritime Museums: gallery, Polar Worlds
- Overall experience: from interactive and digital displays to artwork, the museum is an energetic and user-friendly space.
- Environment and sustainability: displays address preserving Antarctic regions today and gave lots of new and engaging information.

Guildhall Art Gallery: special exhibition, Architecture of London
- Overall experience: an intimate and well-designed space that looks at the history of London through art, and how art reflects the city.
- Environment and sustainability: the exhibition draws on maintaining beautiful landscapes and was inspiring and informative.

Appendix 3
Exhibition proposals

The remit
Each year fellows are asked to plan and propose a temporary exhibition, drawing on their existing museum experience and the skills learnt during the programme. This year fellows designed their Object in Focus exhibition around an object from the Museum’s collection, selected by their project mentors, working within the theme of journeys. Fellows were asked to work in partnership with a colleague from another country, and together to work with an object from outside of their areas of expertise.

Working on a project proposal together provided yet another excellent opportunity to develop strong working relationships, enhancing the ITP global network and demonstrating the benefits and challenges of working collaboratively.

The exhibition proposal project always proves to be a highlight of the programme. It clearly demonstrates the work and imagination that goes into all the participants’ proposals and the Supporters’ Reception is an opportunity for our participants to share their ideas.

The idea of working around a single object that is not related to my country or culture has proved to be both challenging and interesting. It has been a good opportunity to combine my previous experience with the skills and knowledge gained throughout the programme, not only regarding curatorial or design skills, but also working collaboratively with a person you are just starting to know.’
Catalina Cavelier Adarve (Colombia, ITP 2019), Head of Intangible Heritage, Cultural Heritage Institute of Bogota
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Exhibition titles 2019

Colombia & Uzbekistan
*Eternal provinces for the Soul: Celebrating life in Ancient Egypt*
Catalina Cavelier Adarve and Alsu Akhmetzyanova

Turkey, Kurdistan & Sudan
*Journey Towards Belief*
Buket Balatçaj Aylin, Nyaz Azeza Awmar and Abdelrahman Sedeg
Adam Sharaf

Philippines & Sudan
*Life after Death: Treasures from the Royal Tombs of Ur*
Aprille Tijan and Diana Digna

Turkey & China
*The Journey of the Zande Pot*
Asuman Alpagut and Ye Ye

Pakistan & Myanmar
*Turkish Textile Journeys: Between identity and history*
Badges Nadha and Khine Moe Kyaw

Romania & Ghana
*Shakhushah: Money Talks*
Ioan Oprea and Benedicta Gokah

Ghana & Iraq
*The Never Ending Journey of Life*
Ciprian-Mirea Dobra and Ketevan Chitashvili

Ghana & India
*The Odyssey: An Encounter With Peace*
Elizabeth Asafo-Adjei and Tamara Alataya

Espa & Sri Lanka
*Spiritual Journey*
Nagwa Bakr and Sanjeewani Widyarathne

A flattened terracotta ball impressed with three large stūpas and six smaller ones.