

Egyptology in Lockdown: Connecting collections with isolated people
Tuesday 3rd November 2020, 1.00 – 2.30pm
Campbell Price Curator of Egypt and Sudan, Manchester Museum

Attendees

UK

Julie Anderson, British Museum
Sarah Gore, Norfolk Museums Service
Campbell Price, Manchester Museum

ITP Fellows

Alsu Akhmetzyanova, Arts and Culture Development Foundation (Uzbekistan, ITP Fellow 2019)
Ayman al-Shweiki, Brandenburg University of Technology Cottbus–Senftenberg (Palestine, ITP Fellow 2012)
Waed Awesat, University of Paris 1 Sorbonne (Palestine, ITP Fellow 2014)
Shubha Banerji, President House Museum (India, ITP Fellow 2014)
Khadijeh Zohreh Baseri, Golestan Palace (Iran, ITP Fellow 2007)
Ishaq Mohammad Bello, National Museum Kaduna (Nigeria, ITP Fellow 2012)
Pankaj Protim Bordoloi, Rashtrapati Bhavan Museum (India, ITP Fellow 2018)
Ketevan Chitashvili, Money Museum of the National Bank of Georgia (Georgia, ITP Fellow 2019)
Gertrude Aba Eyifa-Dzidzienyo, University of Ghana (Ghana, ITP Fellow 2009)
Beimote Ngozi Etim, Currency Museum, Central Bank of Nigeria (Nigeria, ITP Fellow 2017)
Ma. Yohana Rosales Frias, National Museum of the Philippines (Philippines, ITP Fellow 2018)
Amalia Kakissis, British School at Athens (Greece, ITP Fellow 2018)
Rana Ramadan Mahmoud, Graeco-Roman Museum, Alexandria (Egypt, ITP Fellow 2018)
Jacob Nii Marley, Leventis Digital Resource Centre for African Studies, University of Ghana (Ghana, ITP Fellow 2019)
Fadzai Muchemwa, National Gallery of Zimbabwe (Zimbabwe, ITP Fellow 2017)
Lydia Nafula, National Museums of Kenya (Kenya, ITP Fellow 2008)
Balqees Abdul-Hakeem Nakhla, Birzeit University Museum (Palestine, ITP Fellow 2019)
Saadu Hashim Rashid, National Museums of Kenya (Kenya, ITP Fellow 2012)
Joyee Roy, Victoria Memorial Hall, Kolkata (India, ITP Fellow 2011)
Namrata Sarmah, Directorate of Museums, Government of Assam (India, ITP Fellow 2018)
Dilek Karaaziz Şener, Hacettepe Art Museum (Turkey, ITP Fellow 2018)
Esther Solomon, University of Ioannina (Greece, ITP Fellow 2015)
Shreen Mohamed Amin Taher, Egyptian Museum, Cairo (Egypt, ITP Fellow 2016)
Ala Talebian, Tehran University (Iran, ITP Fellow 2017)
Chantal Umuhoza, Institute of National Museums of Rwanda (INMR) (Rwanda, ITP Fellow 2018)
İrem Yıldız, University of Oxford (Turkey, ITP Fellow 2017)

Introduction

Campbell Price is Curator of Egypt and Sudan at Manchester Museum. He joined the Manchester Museum in 2011 as Curator of Egypt and Sudan. His responsibilities include care of the Museum's

18,000 Egyptology objects and making these accessible to a wide variety of audiences.

<https://www.museum.manchester.ac.uk/>

Manchester Museum has, for the past 6 months, been pioneering a 'Manchester Museum in Quarantine' <https://www.mminquarantine.com/>, as a way of bring collections and conversations to visitors unable to visit physically during the COVID crisis. As curator responsible for Egypt and Sudan, Campbell has rediscovered the power of social media channels - particularly a weekly 'Egyptology in Lockdown' broadcast on 'Periscope', Twitter's streaming service. Building on this work, he is now embarking on a funded project to connect Manchester's Egyptology collections with vulnerable audiences they have been starting to reach out to in Lockdown.

Read more about Campbell's weekly live streams and watch his previous broadcasts here:

<https://www.mmfromhome.com/egyptology-in-lockdown>

What are the benefits of an online broadcast?

Online content allows museums to reach new audiences which they may not have been connecting with at their physical building. For example, Manchester Museum found they were reaching audiences in care homes through their online content.

Questions/discussion points and comments

The discussion looked at the following:-

- How can we make connections accessible remotely?
- What is the biggest lesson to learn from widespread closure?
- How might interpretations change in light of a global pandemic?

Shreen Amin: At the Egyptian Museum we have learned how social media is an active tool on communication

Yohana Frias: I just want to share what we at the National Museum of the Philippines have been doing for the past months to give access to our galleries while we are closed:

See a 360-degree virtual tour of the National Museum of the Philippines:

<http://pamana.ph/ncr/manila/NMA360.html>

Pankaj Protim Bordoloi: Will the use of technology or social media maybe affect the 'physical interpretation' of objects in post Covid world and also impact visitor's footfall? Mostly in countries like India where visitor footfall is already less compared to other countries.

Will audiences lose touch with the physical museums and interpretation of museum objects? And with collections being online will audiences still want to physically come to museums in the post-covid world?

Sarah Gore: My feeling is that it drives visits (or desire to visit) rather than replace them. All I want to do is to see the actual lioness goddess having seen it on that slide.

Museums should not use online content to replace their physical collections – they should work together in a post-covid world to improve connections with different audiences.

Chantal Umuhoza: I think it will motivate audiences to come.

Ala Talebian: I believe the best accomplishment of online communication is that museums are able to attract visitors they won't normally come for a visit.

Joyee Roy Ghosh: I think before Covid period also online exhibitions and other online activities had been done by the Indian museums and during Covid period also they are doing it successfully. So is there a reason to worry?

It is a good point to say that many museums around the world already created online exhibitions and content before the pandemic. Global lockdowns and museum closures have just highlighted the need to stay connected with audiences online.

Jacob Nii Marley: Ghanaian museums are not used to online systems. Now there is limited movement due to the pandemic, we cannot access galleries. Some institutions do not have even a social media presence. Lack of motivation and confidence for institutions to embrace online platforms and technology.

Are museums on the wrong side of digital divide? Read the section which covers the reasons why a museum might not be using technology as much as they could be in our ITP blog covering day 1 of the Museums Association Conference 2020:

<https://bmitpglobalnetwork.org/2020/11/02/museums-association-conference-2020-day-1-exploring-the-future-of-museums/>

Projects and resources mentioned in the discussion:

Museums Worcestershire's Volunteers at Home project which offers 'access not isolation' to their body of volunteers during the pandemic:

<https://www.museumsworcestershire.org.uk/2020/10/15/groundbreaking-new-project-volunteers-at-home/>

Power to the People: a framework created by the Museums Association designed to help museums understand and improve their participatory practice and community engagement.

<https://www.museumsassociation.org/campaigns/museums-change-lives/power-to-the-people/>