

## Welcome to the International Training Programme (ITP) Newsletter for 2021.

In March 2020, in response to the COVID-19 pandemic, the Museum temporarily closed to the public and staff began working from home. As a result, British Museum Director Hartwig Fischer took the difficult decision to postpone the 2020 summer programme and participants were invited to join a rescheduled programme in 2021.

But while 2020 was both challenging and unexpected, the ITP team found new and exciting opportunities to engage with the entire network of 299 fellows, as well as our UK and programme partners and the wider heritage and cultural community.

One of the connections we were able to make was to support each other by sharing the unprecedented ways in which COVID-19 was affecting our lives across the globe. ITP Fellows shared their creative COVID-19 response projects and programmes which saw conferences and seminars, volunteering, fund-raising, exhibitions, workshops to raise awareness around COVID-19 safety, COVID-collecting and mental health, and accessibility awareness, learning, education, and training, all going online.

Working with the ITP network, the British Museum and UK partners, we held an online session to discuss collecting objects relating to the varied global responses to the pandemic. Colleagues shared their collecting stories, aims and objectives, ethical considerations and reflections on their learning for the future.

Following the collecting session, a small working group convened to look at how to take these discussions forward. We considered outputs which reflected the impact of the pandemic on societies and museums, through both tangible and intangible heritage. The group, below, have kindly taken on the roles of this year's guest editors, creating the themes and helping shape content and the 8th ITP Newsletter will be tying these conversations together.

- Khadijeh Zohreh Baseri, Specialist, Ministry of Cultural Heritage (Iran, ITP Fellow 2007)
- Ishaq Mohammad Bello, Assistant Chief Technical Officer: Education, National Museum Kaduna (Nigeria, ITP Fellow 2012)
- Shambwaditya Ghosh, PhD Scholar, University of Delhi (India, ITP Fellow 2012 & Senior Fellow 2015)
- Solomy Nansubuga Nabukalu, Conservator, Kabale Museum (Uganda, ITP Fellow 2018)
- Shreen Mohamed Amin Taher, Director of the Children's Museum, Egyptian Museum, Cairo (Egypt, ITP Fellow 2016)
- Siddhant Shah, Museum Access Consultant and Founder, Access For ALL (India)



This issue of our newsletter will consider the following COVID-related questions:

- How has the pandemic affected physical and mental health and how have museums been able to support both staff and visitors?
- How has the virus affected museums relationships with their local communities?
- How can the arts and culture sector remain accessible and inclusive during this time?
- What measures have museums taken around the world to rise to the challenge of COVID and protect their staff and visitors whilst continuing to deliver their projects and programmes?
- What has been the online response to the pandemic – how have museums used digital tools to support and engage both staff and visitors?

We also asked our fellows to share their stories about their own COVID collecting projects and to focus on objects around the world that tell a 'pandemic story.'

We hope you enjoy the latest issue of our newsletter and that the inspiring stories from our network demonstrate the creativity and hard work taking place across the sector.

**Claire Messenger**

International Training Programme Manager  
British Museum



## In Digital Conversation

During the global pandemic we have all increased our digital communication and the ITP team felt that, in some ways, we had more contact with the network than ever before, albeit online. For me personally, talking regularly with ITP Fellows and the wider network using video communications for meetings, projects and catch-ups over the last year has really helped me get to know people individually and learn more about their work as it happens, all over the world.

As the ITP Coordinator, I regularly conclude legacy projects with reports and sometimes these projects were developed before I started my role. One example of this is Abiti Adebo Nelson's [Curator and Senior Conservator, Uganda National Museum (Uganda, ITP Fellow 2013)] ITP Collaborative Award project, *The Road to Reconciliation: a collaborative workshop and community exhibition in Uganda*. The ITP Collaborative Awards highlight projects which aim to strengthen the British Museum's International Training Programme network by encouraging ITP alumni to network and engage with one another. The grants are open only to past fellows of the ITP, UK or Programme Partner Museums and British Museum staff who successfully propose a group project which is then co-managed by ITP alumni.

This legacy project was awarded to Abiti through an open, competitive process in 2017, before I started my role with ITP, but I had in fact already met Abiti during my time working in the Africa, Oceania and the Americas Department (AOA) at the British Museum when he came for a cup of tea in the office with my then manager, who knew Abiti from the British Museum's Africa Project. The UK programme partner on the project was John Giblin, Keeper of the Department of World Cultures at National Museums Scotland and former Head of the Africa Section at the British Museum, who I also knew from AOA.

I had various links to the people involved but I didn't feel I knew enough about this legacy project, directly funded by the Marie-Louise von Motesiczky Charitable Trust. But upon receiving Abiti's final report I realised that the project would be perfect for the first of the ITP *In Conversation* film series. A reaction to the recent increase in online museum content and positive responses to our online sessions and social media campaigns, the *In Conversations* series is a new legacy project for the ITP, where we're using film for the first time. The *In Conversation* series is exactly that: a conversation about a particular, museum subject between two people from the ITP network and beyond - Abiti and John's collaborative project was ideal for episode one.

John and Abiti met with me on Zoom and I recorded them talking about the project's aims, achievements and plans for the future. Hearing their conversation and watching the film back enabled me to really imagine their time working on *The Road to Reconciliation* in Uganda. It was brilliant to see such a great rapport between Abiti and John on screen.

This digital output gave me a deeper insight into a legacy project, even without working on it initially. The film is available to watch on the ITP blog alongside Abiti's final report and I hope that it takes you on a journey as it did for me – we are all very much looking forward to travelling, getting together again and going back to work in 'real life' but in the meantime, digital technology has been doing a good job filling the gap.

### Anna Cottle

International Training Programme Coordinator  
British Museum



The Road to Reconciliation project.

## Staying Connected with the ITP Network Online

The disruption caused by the COVID-19 pandemic forced the ITP to rethink how it remains connected with its global network. With the closure of the British Museum, the postponement of the ITP Summer Programme and legacy projects for 2020/21, we were unable to connect in-person with members of the ITP global network at the British Museum or at other venues. With many of our colleagues experiencing similar disruptions around the world – including museum closures and stay at home orders – we decided to expand our online offering. By thinking of new ways of using our social media presence and other online platforms, over the past year we have been able to take skill sharing and networking, which normally happens at the British Museum, and move it online.

Since October 2020, we have been delivering online subject specialist sessions, aiming to continue sharing knowledge, skills and experiences with our global network. These sessions have included virtual discussions, workshops, 'show and tell' tours and presentations and have been led by British Museum colleagues, UK and programme partners and our ITP Fellows. To date, we have delivered 24 sessions on a variety of topics. These have included, contemporary collecting around COVID-19, interpretation and panel writing workshops, museum accessibility and inclusion, and virtual museum tours conducted by ITP Fellows. All the online sessions are recorded and are available, along with any additional resources, to view on the ITP website.

One of the main ways the ITP communicates with its global network year-round is through social media. The focus on engagement and communication online has become more important than ever during the global pandemic and raised the question: how can the ITP use its social media presence to encourage greater online interaction, networking and engagement among its global network? One of the big successes of our social media engagement over the last year was #ITP28. This was a 28-day social media campaign which challenged ITP alumni to share updates every day in February. Participants were encouraged to post images and stories about themselves, their work, their experiences of lockdown and working from home, and their experiences of the ITP. Each day had its own prompt or 'theme' which gave the participants a schedule to follow through the month.

The aim of #ITP28 was to help the ITP global network feel better connected to their international colleagues, learn more about each other and exchange knowledge and memories. The response to the #ITP28 was overwhelmingly positive. We saw 630 unique posts from 59 members of the ITP global network from 25 countries. A full report of #ITP28 can be found on the ITP website.

The ITP team has also incorporated video projects into its online offering over the last year. To celebrate ICOM's International Museum Day for 2021, we created a short film with the help of a group of ITP Fellows. Nine ITP alumni shared short videos of themselves reflecting on the theme for International Museum Day: the future of museums. The aim of this video was to bring together global interpretations about the future of museums and consider how museums can address some of the present challenges in the global sector. It was a great way to bring ITP colleagues from around the world into one project and share ideas and knowledge through a different medium.



The responses and feedback to all our online projects this year have been incredibly encouraging. We would like to thank all our ITP colleagues for participating in our online programmes over the last year and engaging with ITP digitally. In many ways we have felt more connected to our international colleagues than ever despite the limitations on travel and physical interaction. When the COVID-19 pandemic finally comes to an end, the online projects we have delivered over the past year will remain as part of ITP's regular annual programming.

### George Peckham

Assistant, International Training Programme  
British Museum

Images shared by ITP Fellows for #ITP28.



## Museum responses to COVID

### Working with students during COVID-19

Students have always been my favourite museum audience. Although the National Museum in Sudan is closed for a while due to COVID-19 and a renovation project, we still managed to work with our most important target audience through our education programme, conducted in collaboration with the National Commission of UNESCO and the UNESCO associated schools.

The programme targeted 500 students from grades five, six and seven and from 10 different schools, in addition to a group of children with special needs. The programme covered six different activities that aimed to give the students information about their history through a fun and wholesome experience. The activities focused on different aspects of history and culture, from music to pottery making.

The students got the chance to learn about a range of traditional musical instruments, first learning about their background, then trying to play them. For ancient languages, the students were taught the basic letters and phonetics and had the opportunity to write their names in the language. In between the different activities they listened to a traditional storyteller, who passed down ancient legends and tales from Sudan.

Pottery, being a central aspect of Sudanese culture, was also part of the experience. The students were introduced to different types of clays and muds used in poetry and sculpting and they used a traditional pottery wheel to make objects of their choosing.

Most importantly, the students learnt the importance of findings from archaeology, highlighting that without these discoveries we cannot draw conclusions about history. The most exciting activity for the students was the experience of being an archaeologist. We built a model excavation site, with pieces of pottery and other objects buried within it and the students got the chance to make use of archaeological tools to dig up these objects and get the full experience of being an archaeologist.

#### Ikhlas Alkrm

Head of Documentation Unit, Sudan National Museum  
(Sudan, ITP Fellow 2016)



## Museum responses to COVID

### National Museum Kaduna



The majority of cultural institutions have been forced to close their doors at some point in the COVID-19 pandemic and the cultural sector has been one of the most affected. Tourism has largely ceased, impacting surrounding communities both socially and economically, and plunging artists and cultural professionals into a state of extreme economic and social fragility. Confined populations are unable to share and celebrate their heritage and it is notable that their intangible cultural heritage has suffered the loss of fundamental and structuring cultural elements of their daily social and individual lives.

Despite the challenge posed by this unprecedented crisis, many cultural institutions and professionals have continued to act as a source of resilience and support to communities by devising new ways for people to access culture and education under new restrictions and containment measures. However, it should be noted that these innovations have not addressed the severe economic shortfalls experienced by cultural professionals. Moreover, almost half of the world population currently has no access to the internet resulting in unequal access to cultural resources.

According to UNESCO, museums have been particularly affected by the COVID-19 pandemic with nearly 90% of the 85,000+ institutions worldwide closing their doors during the crisis. The impact of these closures is not only economic but social. Museums play a vital role in our societies. Not only do they preserve our common heritage, they also provide spaces that promote education, inspiration and dialogue. Based on the values of respect and cultural diversity, museums strengthen social cohesion, foster creativity and are conveyors of collective memory. Their role in the promotion of tourism is also a key driver of sustainable economic development both locally and nationally, which will be essential to overcoming the crisis in the coming months and years.

While a global pandemic has been a looming risk for decades, COVID-19 has come as a shock to society, health systems, economies and governments worldwide. In the midst of extraordinary challenges and uncertainty, and countless personal tragedies, leaders are under pressure to make decisions on managing the immediate impact of the pandemic and its consequences, decisions that will shape the state of the world for years to come.

During the first months of the year, but especially from March 2020 onwards, most states took radical measures to counter the spread of COVID-19, resulting in the closure of museums and cultural places to the public. Despite their differences, museums have been affected on all continents, and, at the time of writing, containment measures and physical distancing rules are still in place in most countries, even though several states have already begun to reopen their institutions. The closure of the vast majority of the world museums was an exceptional event and, as in many sectors, has had considerable economic consequences, with a very large number of museums largely dependent on the income generated by visitors. The museum sector fears numerous bankruptcies in the coming months and, according to the International Council of Museums (ICOM), more than one in ten museums may never reopen.

During period of lockdown in Nigeria we've carried out various activities to help keep people engaged with the museum. Like many other institutions, the Kaduna Museum has taken advantage of digital communication and digital tools, digitising existing collections and showcasing documentation and records. Museum staff share resources through various media platforms, especially social media, which has been regularly used by nearly all our staff.

Kaduna Museum created special programmes for lockdown inviting politicians, celebrities and their families to the museum for tours and an interactive Q&A. These events were recorded and shared among the general public. One of the prominent personalities invited during this period was Shehu Sani, a former senator of the Federal Republic of Nigeria and a video of his visit was recorded and shared over social media.

Kaduna Museum, as well as other museums around the world, must develop strategies to keep people close to their culture and heritage. Some of the strategies discussed above have helped in fostering this objective.

#### Ishaq Mohammad Bello

Assistant Chief Technical Officer, Education, National Museum Kaduna  
(Nigeria, ITP Fellow 2012)



## Museum responses to COVID

### How museums in Egypt are responding to COVID-19: safety measures



In the museums of Egypt the health and safety of visitors and staff is a top priority. Several initiatives undertaken in response to COVID-19 have been applied in the Museums of the Egyptian Ministry of Tourism and Antiquities (MoTA). These risk prevention measures, for the safety and security of the museums, their staff, and visitors, are one of the main approaches to tackling the pandemic. Several changes have been made to ticketing and operating procedures, to promote physical distancing and reduced contact, based on guidance from the Egyptian Ministry of Health. This is in addition to the development of a variety of digital tools including virtual tours, social media posting, live streaming, online exhibitions, and online videos. The changes also include the installation of floor signs for social distancing, measuring visitor numbers and taking staff temperatures daily.

Museums in Egypt have been closed since March 2020 because of the COVID-19 pandemic. They then started to receive visitors again between 1 July – 1 September 2020 under strict anti-coronavirus measures. During the period of closure, measures were taken to curb the spread of the COVID-19 such as sterilisation and disinfection procedures (following the guidelines of the Egyptian Ministry of Health and the MoTA). Special materials were used to clean and protect the artefacts in restoration labs, where they were kept behind locked glass as staff proceeded with the disinfection procedures.

The reopening of museums in Egypt comes after the precautionary measures approved by the MoTA. In order for visitors to enter any museum, they must wear a facemask and physically distance. For this reason, signs have been placed inside the museums to maintain social distancing

and the museum is only able to accept fifty percent of the total visitor capacity to prevent overcrowding. Working hours have also been reduced in regional areas, where working hours are from 09:00 to 15:00 and in the main museums, where working hours are typically from 09:00 to 17:00.

There has also been a new focus on digital activities. Egypt's MoTA offers virtual tours of museums and archaeological sites in Egypt via its websites and social networking platforms. The tours are organised in cooperation with partners from scientific and archaeological institutes such as the American Research Center in Cairo. The virtual and video-guided tours are offered in English with Arabic subtitles (see [egy monuments.gov.eg](http://egy monuments.gov.eg)). UNESCO praised Egypt's MoTA e-initiative #ExploreEgyptFromHome and called on the people of the world to explore it and discover the wonders of Egyptian civilisation.

The work in museums in Egypt continues. Workshops, events, education programmes and curatorial works in the museums of Egypt are happening under COVID-19 safety measures. Body temperature scanners and hand sanitisers are at the entrance, while face masks and social distancing are mandatory inside. To comply with anti-COVID measures, visitors in the museums in Egypt have to follow an authorised path supported by floor signs. Similar provisions have been put in all the galleries of the museums and around the showcases.

#### Shreen Amin

Director of the Children's Museum, Egyptian Museum (Egypt, ITP Fellow 2016)

## Museum responses to COVID

### The response to COVID-19 at Victoria Memorial Hall, Kolkata

The pandemic has been a massive shock for the whole world. Museums across the globe are rethinking themselves, including those in India, in terms of how to face the challenges created by the pandemic. After the first wave, people everywhere are now facing the challenges of further waves. As museums have been closed for a long time, most of them face two challenges – the shortage of visitor footfall and of funding. Most museums of the world are overcoming this by taking the museum to communities: into their living rooms via interesting, but simple, virtual and digital programmes alongside outreach activities for people of different ages and backgrounds during lockdown. The positive side of this is that audiences who cannot visit museums or join programmes, despite their strong interest, are now able to join in more easily. For example, during the pandemic, ITP fellows have been able to attend various online talks, lecture series and workshops, which may not have happened before. It could be said that the whole world is fighting against one invisible enemy and is becoming more united as a result.

My museum, the most visited museum in India (Hindustan Times), Victoria Memorial Hall, in Kolkata, is no exception. The museum arranged approximately 15 online events, talks and lecture series (details may be found on the Victoria Memorial Hall website, Facebook and Twitter page). Details of every programme have been shared on the official museum website as well as via social media, well in advance, with several reminders and communication through email in the run up to the event and afterwards – in order to keep in touch with the audience.

It should be mentioned that before COVID-19, museums across the world, including my museum, had already prepared digital content and innovative digital programmes on a small scale. But due to the pandemic museums are embracing digital platforms and enhancing their virtual presence. Museums are now trying to be both authorities in art and culture but also straightforward, simple and warm in order to welcome greater audiences. Hopefully through these steps communities will feel more welcome in museums.

Lastly, we must be hopeful that soon the whole world will overcome this crisis and footfall and funding in museums across the world will increase dramatically. Let us hope for a better world where people can breathe normally.

#### Joyee Roy (Ghosh)

Documentation Officer, Victoria Memorial Hall (India, ITP Fellow 2011)





## Museum responses to COVID

### Responding to COVID-19 at Tyne & Wear Archives & Museums (TWAM)

Tyne & Wear Archives & Museums (TWAM) has added a range of interesting, and in some cases obscure, items to our museum and archives collections to reflect what life has been like during a global pandemic and to give a voice to its community.

Hair cuttings, a toilet roll, rainbows and personal diaries are just some of the objects that TWAM has collected over the past year to reflect everyday life in the time of COVID-19, to convey the story of our times for future generations. People across Tyneside submitted over 30 digital images of the rainbows that they created at home during the first lockdown in 2020 – out of these, 5 pictures, with their donors' stories, will join the collection.

Keeper of History at TWAM Kylea Little said "collecting for museums to reflect contemporary life has been even more crucial this past year. We still have much more to collect to tell the story of life during the pandemic and have several acquisitions in the pipeline from personal protective equipment (PPE) to Newcastle City Guide uniforms, and personal stories from people across Tyneside."

Tyne & Wear Archives conducted two surveys asking for in-depth responses to specific questions about people's personal experiences across Tyneside and Wearside and have had over 1,040 responses, more surveys are planned this year.

Lizzy Baker, Archives Lead said "we are delighted with the amount of people who have engaged with us so far and offered their personal insights into what they have experienced. Their answers provide a unique snapshot of an extremely unusual time. Many of them are very moving, and we found a lot of the respondents were happy to share their emotions and feelings."

Sue Cree from Newcastle donated her lockdown diaries to Tyne & Wear Archives, of three physical volumes, the last is illustrated. Meanwhile South Shields Museum & Art Gallery collected hair cuttings from four people's first lockdown haircuts across South Tyneside and all the donations join the museum collection with oral histories. The museum already houses globally celebrated South Shields author Catherine Cookson's plaits.

Adam Bell, Assistant Keeper of History at South Shields Museum & Art Gallery said "for each person who either donated their hair or their rainbow we also captured an oral history, to put their donation into context by capturing their memories and reflections of the pandemic and how they and their family coped. I have heard, and captured for the museum collection, so many different stories, from the heart-breaking, to the hopeful, to the funny."

Supermarket signage for food shortages, road signage and lockdown birthday banners are also joining the museum's collections. Plus TWAM has been in talks with a variety of groups across Tyneside to collect PPE made by Northumbria University and scrubs made by Barbour in South Shields, among others.

**Bill Griffiths**  
Head of Programmes & Collections  
Tyne & Wear Archives & Museums

## Museum responses to COVID

### The impact of COVID-19 on the National Museum (Yangon)

I work in the conservation department of National Museum (Yangon), Myanmar, focusing on caring for collections and conservation of textiles and paintings. During COVID-19 we have been faced with damage to the collections in our museum. In Myanmar the government officially declared a public health emergency in response to COVID-19 on 23 March 2020 and the museum was closed to visitors from the end of February 2020. The security staff and museum staff remained working at the museum from 24 March to 14 May 2020.

Before the museum closed, sticky traps were placed in the exhibition rooms, storage and conservation rooms to prevent pests. When we returned to the museum, we found a venomous snake that died in a sticky trap near my desk. If we had not left it my life would have been in danger. In this case the sticky trap had protected against pests as well as saving my life.

Another challenge is the termites. The climate in Myanmar is very humid, and it is very wet during the rainy season, so we are often affected by termites. Some of the ethnic photographs in the painting storage were slightly damaged by the termites during the COVID-19 periods of closure. We also found fungi growing on the fossils inside display cases due to the temperature and relative humidity fluctuation.

The above situations occurred in the first wave of COVID-19. In the second wave, we worked from home from August to the end of October 2020. From November to the end of January, we carried out textile conservation and repaired collections damaged in the first wave. Then we discussed how to lessen the impact of COVID-19 in the future when the museum reopened. Unfortunately, the museum has not been able to open due to political issues in Myanmar.

In conclusion, just as healthcare workers fight to protect lives, so must the culture sector fight to protect and preserve cultural heritage.

**Khine Mon Kyaw**  
Assistant Curator Grade 2, Yangon National Museum  
(Myanmar, ITP Fellow 2019)

## Museum responses to COVID

### Facing the pandemic at the Islamic Arts Museum, Malaysia



When the COVID-19 outbreak was declared to be a global pandemic, the Islamic Arts Museum Malaysia was closed for the first time since its founding in 1998. The prime minister of Malaysia made an official statement on 16 March 2020 that the Malaysian Government would take preventive measures to combat the spread of the virus in this country. On 18 March 2020, the Movement Control Order (MCO), under the Prevention and Control of Infectious Diseases Act 1988 and the Police Act 1967, was officially launched. Under the MCO, the government and its departments are responsible for the safety and wellbeing of the nation's citizens as well as foreigners who currently reside in Malaysia. The government's swift action forced many public premises to immediately halt their operations.

The Islamic Arts Museum Malaysia also closed its doors to visitors. From 18 March 2020, the permanent galleries, special exhibitions, restaurant, museum shop and other facilities were closed to the public throughout the MCO period. A museum without visitors was a new challenge, not only for us but for cultural and heritage institutions across the globe. This unprecedented phenomenon created a new and unexpected reality: that we could no longer allow the physical presence of visitors at our museum. Nevertheless, as museum professionals we were determined to enable our visitors and the public to have access to the museum and to benefit from our collection. Although we were fully compliant with social distancing during this time, we did not allow our institution to be distant from the public – our purpose is to stay connected.

Several measures have been taken to ensure that the Islamic Arts Museum Malaysia stays connected throughout the MCO period. One of the most important was to strengthen our social media sites and their content. Our official website was also constantly updated to provide the latest announcements and information. Finally, we also had to diversify our online presence in order for the public to have continuous fresh experiences and to enjoy our collection by visiting the museum virtually.

The MCO period has been a blessing in disguise for most of us, especially the curatorial, media and education teams. We have had to work hand in hand to experiment and come up with online content for our website and social-media platforms. Our official Instagram page (@islamicartsmuseummalaysia) has become a key platform for sharing our collection online. In addition to our normal posting that features high-resolution images of artefacts, we have been producing documentary-style videos about many of the fascinating objects in our collection. We have also produced several videos featuring our special exhibitions that opened before the MCO was imposed. Our official website, in the meantime, has been running its virtual tour function, which allows the public to have a glimpse into the museum's 12 permanent galleries. We are also regularly refreshing our website with the latest updates, such as the museum's quarterly e-newsletter.

As a country Malaysia has been praised for successfully and efficiently managing the outbreak of the first wave of COVID-19. The efforts of the government and its machinery, together with the support and sacrifices of its people, in combating this global pandemic, gives Malaysia hope for a better future. As for the Islamic Arts Museum Malaysia, at the time of writing we are now back to business as usual. In Malaysia, all state museums across the country have resumed operations – definitely a positive development for the museum sector in the country. For us to continue our operations, we must ensure the safety and wellbeing of our staff and visitors. To achieve this, the Islamic Arts Museum Malaysia will employ preventive measures and standard operating procedures on its premises as issued by the World Health Organization (WHO) and the Government of Malaysia.

**Zulkifli Ishak**  
Curator, Islamic Arts Museum Malaysia  
(Malaysia, ITP Fellow 2017)



## Museum responses to COVID

### COVID Collecting by Glasgow Museums and Collections

A multi-disciplinary team from Glasgow Museums, Glasgow City Archives and Glasgow Libraries Special Collections has been working over the last 12 months to document the COVID-19 pandemic both in Glasgow and globally. From the start of the pandemic, we have been collecting a wide range of objects encompassing social history, contemporary art, transport history, world cultures, documentary photography, archives and paper ephemera. Everything acquired will go into Glasgow's civic collections, to represent and help future generations understand this time of crisis.

From the museum's perspective, we were inspired by media coverage of Indian folk artists who were using their art as a means of storytelling and strength as their initial response to the pandemic. Working with our partners in India, we acquired five narrative pieces representing different art styles. As the situation unfolded, it became apparent that the reality of the pandemic was provoking very different cultural and political responses across the world and through the Canadian First Nations' online *Breathe* project, we connected with Cynthia Boehm, a Metis artist, from whom we acquired her beadwork mask *Resilience*.

As Glasgow Museums' staff have been working from home for most of the last year, our collecting methods have been many and varied. We often pursue suggestions from colleagues about things they have observed locally, leading to some noteworthy acquisitions. In some areas, such as health services, we already had professional contacts to pursue. Social media, press and television have also been important in surfacing interesting objects and stories, although sometimes it has been challenging to track down contacts.

Both Glasgow Museums and the City Archives issued public appeals for donations. Although the museum appeal did not generate large responses, it did lead to offers of some unexpected and poignant objects. One example is a small home-made altar which kept its creator connected to her faith when places of worship were closed. The City

Archives asked people to keep lockdown diaries as a record of everyday life in these times, which will be a fascinating resource for future generations.

Some of us also went out during and immediately after the first UK lockdown in 2020 to take photos which show what the city looked like and how it had changed. We have also contacted some of the contemporary photographers based in Glasgow to purchase some of their works.

When we started our COVID collecting project in the spring of 2020, we believed that the pandemic would soon end and that things would go back to normal. We thought that we only had a small window of opportunity for collecting. As we all know, this has not been the case. We are now considering what our next steps should be and what we should acquire now – perhaps materials relating to the vaccination programme. We acknowledge that time may be needed for a true perspective and that people may be offering us items months or years down the line but believe that our rapid first response will give us a unique historical archive that will be invaluable in documenting this global crisis.

#### Isobel McDonald

Curator of Social History  
Glasgow Museums

#### Patricia Allan

Curator of World Cultures  
Glasgow Museums

#### Further reading

[Museum wants to collect Covid memorabilia](#)

[Scottish first for Glasgow Museums as artwork sums up message at heart of pandemic](#)

[Breathe. together](#)





## Museum responses to COVID

### Home and the world

Memory makes us aware of ourselves. It subconsciously decides our behaviour and drives us to respond to the world. Most interestingly, memories are imperfect – there is a difference between well-articulated thought and the expression of memory. Perhaps memory might not be the precise representation of any past or present events. Our memories are concocted, filtered and distilled into a unique brew formulated by our individual, emotional backgrounds. We create our own world distinct from reality.

When a major event happens each of us create individual memories of it and while we might not all share the same perspective, we each contribute to one another's constructed worlds. That means even in isolation, we are not truly separated. Perhaps during COVID-19 our isolation and intense connection with our surroundings has made us each consider our position in the world. Does saving ourselves and staying inside make us safe and secure? Are we still responding to the world even when we're isolated at home?

For the last year my world has shrunk into my home. I have isolated myself but not disconnected – in fact it is not possible to disconnect, especially when my surroundings are full of pain, loss, and uncertainty. The trauma of isolation has made us vulnerable, but the positive side is that it has also helped us connect with the world and taught the value of compassion and care.

We feel as if we want to reach out to the world with solutions, recognise which powers are in play, and actively create a powerful bond with the world. We cannot become numb and let the world become a spectacle. That's why I have been trying to connect with researchers, archaeologists and museum specialists through different virtual platforms. Since libraries, archives and museums are closed, the window of virtual conversation and exchange is now open to all of us. As a research scholar, while browsing through the webpages of museum collections, I came across objects connected to epidemics, trauma and death. These are not just images or an inventory of information, but repositories of memories of human suffering. These images of objects directly represent trauma more effectively than information.

We are in the midst of a historical event, rare and exclusive because of its worldwide effect. This pandemic has rewritten our world's rules. Many of us have lost loved ones and we have also lost 'frontline workers' who dedicated their lives to their service. For those who stayed at home every day, even

when distancing from the world, there was suffering. There was worry for distant friends and relatives, anxiety for their health and concern about managing life. There was anger at seeing the failure of governance. There were feelings of helplessness from realising we are indeed sometimes helpless.

Currently, I am unable to go to libraries or museums for my research, but my professional sphere has expanded as I'm able to communicate with people from other parts of the world while at home. It may be different in terms of communication, but these conversations have significant emotional impact. We talk about museums, objects, histories, cultural beliefs and practices, with the common factor being humanity.

Even at home we are not isolated from the world. When the news comes on, even from different parts of the world, it shines a spotlight on our wider reality. And it is not only the news, sometimes objects and images are expressive. Sometimes an image of an empty bowl can say more than any news coverage. We have been asked to cover our faces and it feels like a metaphor: we must not speak of failure.

When I see a massive exodus of people, their panic, I do not see it as only them returning to where they came from or a migration – it is a journey to live! My world shatters into pieces seeing men, women and children running for the destination they call their own home. Some of them were not able to reach it and they left the world stranded in the middle. Will their struggle be the subject of a future exhibition? Their objects and belongings considered for museum collections? The pandemic is all about them, they are the ones who inspire art, literature and music and provoke our thoughts. But for them we have only prayers – the last thing that will rescue them.

Our museum world requires a new approach – a people-centric approach, considering the struggle and suffering of people labelled labour, immigrants and workers. Their narratives should be a subject of an exhibition. It might not be easy but there must be a home for people's objects and belongings related to the pandemic, and that should be a museum.

#### Shambwaditya Ghosh

PhD Scholar, University of Delhi  
(India, ITP Fellow 2012 & Senior Fellow 2015)



Shambwaditya Ghosh during the ITP in 2015.

India covid migration.



## Museum responses to COVID

### Health and wellness in a pandemic

COVID-19 has been a bitter experience for many, but it has also brought positive learnings. I found the first few days of the lockdown creative, happy and relaxing. But I have realised that eventually I was mentally drained and felt purposeless. This got me into exploring new skills and thinking about contributing something to society. The National Health Mission (NHM) were looking for volunteers to monitor people who were returning home for good from hospital. The initiative was taken over by the Assam police in collaboration with a local trust dealing with cancer patients. This opportunity was a fulfilling experience for me having been able to work with medical professionals and the police force. Every week we were trained over Zoom and given a list of ten people to monitor by phone and video, or sometimes even visiting them to offer help if they needed rations, medical assistance and so on. This helped me feel mentally stable because I was talking to a lot of people – we shared our stress, happiness and loss.

As a museum professional, being away from our office space and doing something different helped me connect to different people from various professions. I remember giving virtual walkthroughs of galleries as a mindful therapy. My major learning from volunteering was the importance of compassion and self-care. Another realisation was that I was collecting stories from people I never would have usually encountered. The first wave of people returning home had difficult journeys since travel connections were closed – they travelled by their personal vehicles, buses and some even walked back to their homes covering a thousand kilometres. I remember a volunteer expressing his grief about losing his pet dog on his journey back home from Bangalore to Guwahati by road. It's most likely the long bus journey did not suit the dog and he died. He mentioned about doing his funerary rituals in the middle of nowhere and returning home feeling empty.

Another interesting story emerged about fish. Assam is home to a wide variety of aquatic life and fish are crucial to the local ecology, diet and village economy so their presence is everywhere. With the arrival of COVID-19 the government began using English terms not understood by local Assamese people, our mother tongue being Assamese. This created a communication gap affecting awareness to do with the pandemic and implementation of proper health protocols. A village man in Assam misunderstood between 'maas' (fish) and wearing a mask (face mask). The fact that he misunderstood 'mask' for 'maas' is understandable as for him fish is more familiar. It also perhaps points to the innocence and naivety of the local population in a developing world.

I hope someday I shall be able to express these stories through an exhibition and I am thankful to the ITP that I get to share them here.

#### Namrata Sarmah

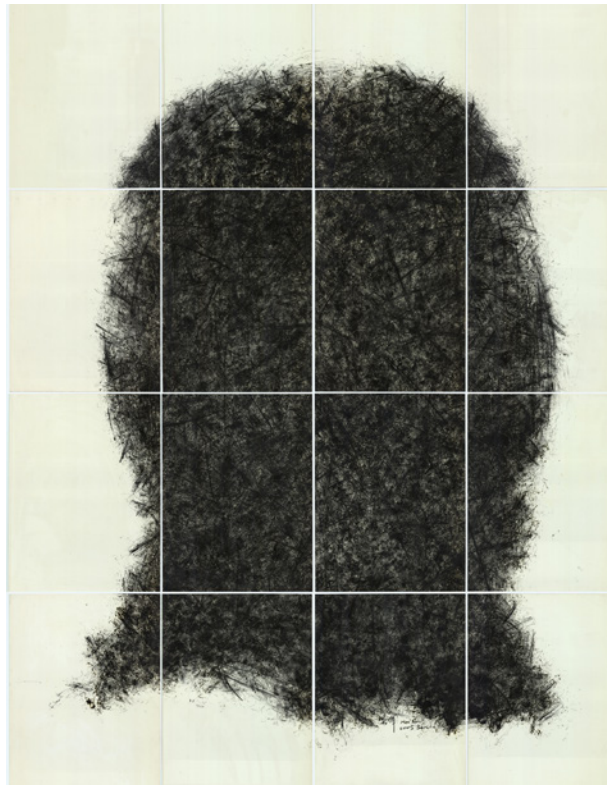
Project Curator, Assam State Museum  
(India, ITP Fellow 2018)



My felicitation for volunteering for COVID-19 to home quarantinees. Felicitated by Assam Police.



Museum responses to COVID  
**Introducing *As if in the Circumstance***



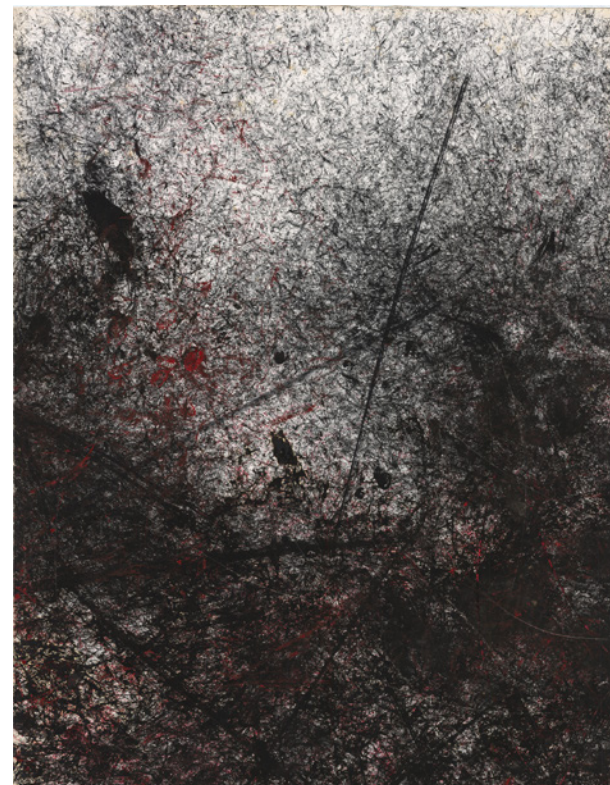
Hubei Provincial Museum is found in the city of Wuhan, which was strictly locked down on 21 January 2020 to control the spread of COVID-19.

In the post-pandemic period, Wuhan is no longer the most dangerous city in the world, however people here are still suffering from what they experienced. To use art to help with healing, to encourage people, to help people get away from feeling helpless and discriminated against, in December 2020, a new exhibition project was launched by Hubei Provincial Museum, which focused on how to use art to help people recover in the post COVID-19 period. Through varied forms of art, including photography, art installations, abstract art, interviews and related activities, the exhibition explores the story and complex circumstances of COVID-19 in Wuhan, then and now.

Beyond the collection of masks and related materials, we aim to use the power of contemporary art to help people consider the dynamic relationships that exist between each of us as well as between the individual and society, nature and relics. Although it isn't common in historical museums, we aim to introduce a narrative and embrace contemporary art.

*As If in the Circumstance* reflects on the effect of COVID-19 in four sections. The first section is named *Wing of Angel* and shows, in a Chinese context, nurses and doctors represented as angels devoted to saving lives. The narrative starts with an abstract painting – a wing. The contrast of white and black creates a sense of paying tribute to those who worked so hard to save lives during this pandemic.

The second section is named *In the Circumstance* and is made up of photos and videos that portray the situation in hospitals in Wuhan. Instruments from hospitals are also used as scenery to immerse people in the circumstances of the hospital.

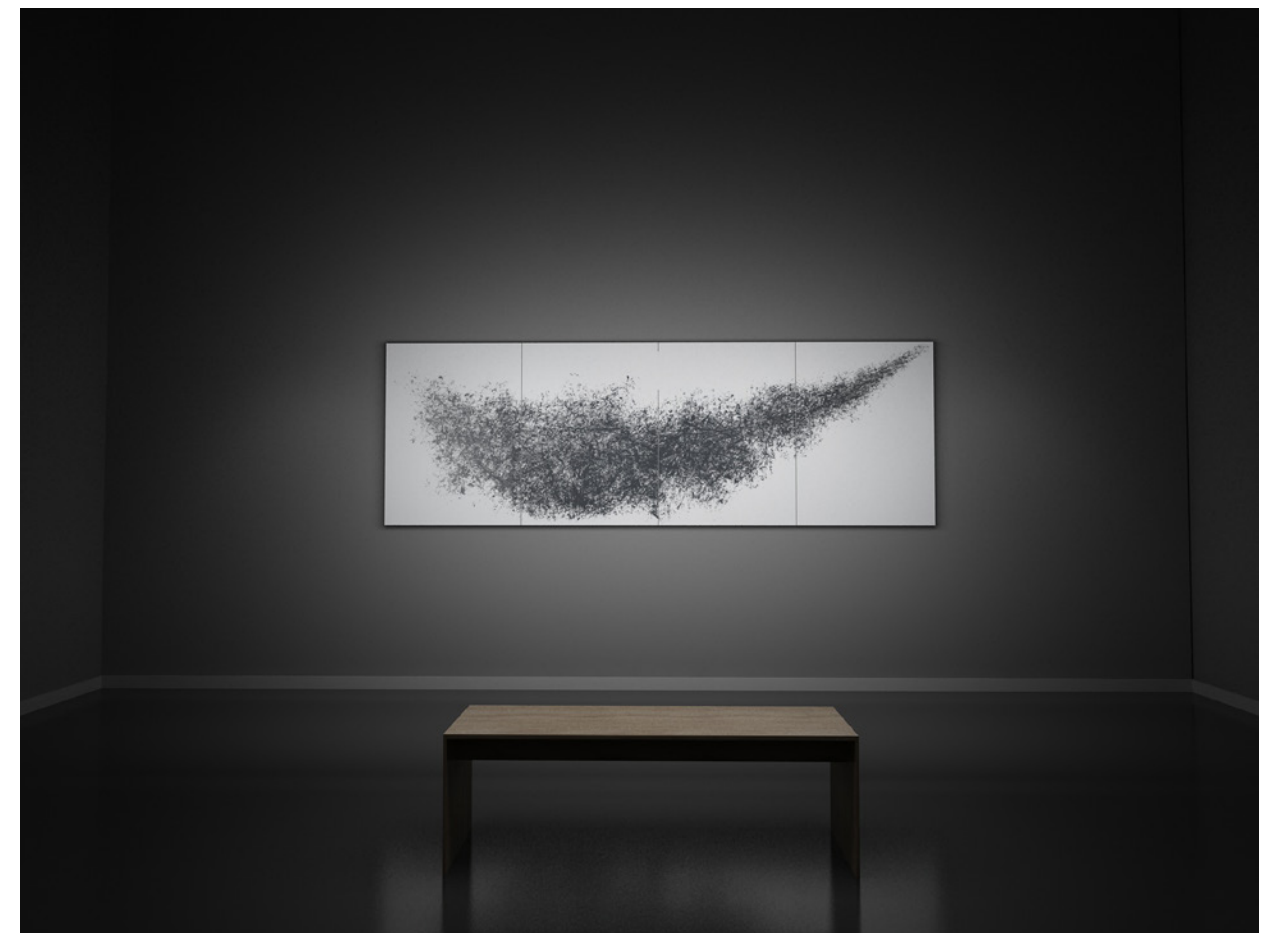


Section three is titled *Ideal Garden*. On 8 April 2020, after 77 days, Wuhan lifted some of the toughest restrictions in human history and people had to recover from social isolation. Section three uses a series of abstract paintings to show the possibility of an ideal place to settle, which should be flexible, kind and warm. Here is the place where you are able to follow the flow of the heart – where we are no longer panicked from fear and disorder but already know how to live with the virus and chaos.

COVID-19 has forced human society to face the same problem – from travel control to border restrictions, our society is being separated more and more. Section four relates to the situation of human society at present and is titled *Relationship*. Here, a huge abstract artwork will be shown that captures our changing and dynamic relationships. Will our identities become ambiguous or clear? Standing in front of a person who has no identity we are able to recognise our inner selves. We become distinct through being identified.

It is the first time Hubei Provincial Museum has embraced contemporary art and by using art as a means of healing we hope, as a historical museum, to be more inclusive and encourage diversity. As the curator of this exhibition, this is from the perspective of crossover (跨界). We aim to prioritise society and community, to care for people using the power of art. This exhibition is being prepared and we hope to open in late 2022.

**Yu Miao**  
Head of Public Communication Center,  
Hubei Provincial Museum  
(China, ITP Fellow 2014)



Unidentified  
Person, Fa hui,  
2008, Berlin, 16  
pieces, oil & metal  
wire striking on  
Germany Paper.  
H480cm, W360.

Lightness Artist  
Fa hui, 2008,  
Berlin, oil & metal  
wire striking on  
Germany paper,  
H120cm, W90 cm.

The effect of  
Exhibition design.  
Photos by Fa hui,  
2020, Wuhan.

Wing of Angel, Fa  
hui, 2005, Berlin,  
4 pieces, oil &  
metal wire striking  
on Germany  
paper. H120cm,  
W360cm.



## Communities

### Rwanda museums

In March 2020, like other public spaces, due to COVID-19 prevention measures a total lockdown was declared around Rwanda. Museums closed their doors and staff were forced to work from home. When the museums reopened in late May 2020, everyone could see how the pandemic had affected everything. Only a certain percentage of staff could go to museums while others continued to work from home and some projects were postponed. Due to safety protocols (no public gatherings, limitations on transport) and visitors not wanting to risk their health, the number of people visiting in person reduced. Before March 2020 Rwanda museums averaged 74,500 visitors monthly but during the pandemic there was an average of just 4,600 monthly visitors.

The pandemic also affected the museum's relationships with local communities because there were some activities that were cancelled, for example people missed well known and regular cultural events organised or held at the museum. Missed events included a public open day on International Museums Day in May (where people visit museums for free) and Umuganura (National Harvest Day) a public festival, jointly organised by Nyanza District and the King's Palace Museum where people share harvested food and recognise the annual progress made in different sectors. There were also no holidays in museums for the youth in December, no performance from the Urugangazi Troup, and no physical meetings with the local population in Nyanza when Rwanda museums launched Nyanza Cultural Trails.

In response Rwanda museums adopted some innovative solutions. On International Museums Day, 18 May 2020, the exhibition, *Message of Women Artists – Each for Equal* was launched online using the Webex platform (which is also used for staff meetings). We've expanded our use of social media, proving different information and updates to help stay connected with audiences. Rwanda museums have also conducted several outreach programmes using live streams on Instagram and Facebook where we provide educational information about cultural and natural objects and encourage people to visit museums.

Rwanda Art Museum has also worked to address social issues and remove gaps in our collections through photography. In December 2020, in collaboration with MOJA photography, Rwanda Art Museum hosted a two-day workshop, *Reaching the extra mile*, that trained 20 young photographers. Based in Luxembourg, MOJA is a fashion photographer who has gathered around him a team of passionate professionals specialising in aesthetics, fashion, performing arts, graphic design and plastic arts, architecture and decoration.

At the time of writing the museums are also accepting visits in person but with strict measures in place to limit the spread of COVID-19.

#### Chantal Umuhoza

Curator, Rwanda Cultural Heritage Academy  
(Rwanda, ITP Fellow 2018)



Urugangazi,  
museum cultural  
Troup performing.

## Communities

### How the COVID-19 pandemic has affected the Kabale Regional Museum's relationship with the local community



Culture never stops and it's crucial that museums keep going, especially in the face of COVID-19. Ernesto Ottone R., Assistant Director-General for Culture at UNESCO notes that, "museums are more than just places where humanity's heritage is preserved and promoted. They are also key spaces of education, inspiration and dialogue. At a time when billions of people around the world are separated from one another, museums can bring us together."

In Uganda, museums and the communities they serve have felt the impact of COVID-19, after people were requested to stay at home and large gatherings were prohibited. On 25 March 2020, the President of the Republic of Uganda, His Excellency Yoweri Kaguta Museveni, announced the virus outbreak and a national lockdown beginning the following day "until further notice." All the cultural institutions across the country were indefinitely closed (or at least had services radically curtailed), and in-person exhibitions, events, and performances were cancelled or postponed.

Kabale Regional Museum also had to close. The museum faced tough challenges including protecting its collection, ensuring staff safety and health, dealing with financial issues and staying engaged with the community. COVID-19 is a pandemic affecting everyone and we needed to be wise. The Kigezi community contributed by proposing innovative ideas and inspiring everyone in a difficult and uncertain time.

Museums might be struggling financially, but they are still able to attract people. At a time when millions of people around the world are separated from one another museums can bring us together. We will come through this and after COVID-19, the reprogramming of activities in our museums is something we must keep in mind – by saving culture, we save society and its diversity, vitality and creativity. Since the Museum closed due to COVID-19, we have been engaged with the community to encourage object collection and storytelling. The Kabale Museum started a new collecting initiative that allowed the people of Kigezi to share stories that reflect their experiences, for the benefit of future generations. We collected objects, personal stories, written works, artworks and photos from the people of Kigezi which can be documented and exhibited, and we've stored them at the museum.

Our aim was to increase the collection material and to file and exhibit what has been happening during this unique historical time. It is vital to find creative ways to serve the community by engaging them with the museum as, despite a crisis, culture keeps going so museums must too. We noted the big impact of COVID-19 on peoples' livelihood, their health and on the food system.

Some of the  
items collected.

We also considered the impact of COVID-19 on children, who are Kabale Regional Museum's most regular visitors. Children are not the most at risk in this pandemic health-wise, but they risk being amongst its biggest victims in the long term as children's lives are nonetheless being changed in profound ways. Children of all ages, countrywide, are particularly affected by the socio-economic impacts of the pandemic and in some cases, by mitigation measures that may inadvertently do more harm than good.

Lockdown and confinement measures exposed children to a range of risks including family breakdown. Measures have resulted in heightened tensions in households, added stress on caregivers, economic uncertainty, job losses and disruption to livelihood, alongside social isolation. According to UNICEF, the risk of violence against children has also increased.

The pandemic has changed the shape of all our lives, and it has dramatically affected the tourism industry, threatening the survival of many museums. In the culture sector, the lockdown has particularly affected museums. Kabale museum has witnessed its greatest financial loss ever during the COVID-19 period. We have also encountered problems with the preservation of the objects – daily aeration of the building is required, which could not happen during the lockdown.

While other museums in the world moved online to maintain social distancing and allow employees to work from home, the employees at Kabale Regional Museum took the opportunity to carry out object collection, not only relating to COVID-19 but in general. We wanted to build the collection and, because people were in lockdown, we gained many stories from the community.

A variety of questions led us to start this collecting project with the community including how can we engage the community in order to improve the museum, despite the pandemic? What new things could the museum show people after the COVID-19? How can we interact with the community in order to understand what they've gone through, and how can we bring this into the museum? In summary, the museum discussed how the pandemic would impact the Kigezi community and how we could approach the documentation and collection of objects, not only around this seminal event but also on other themes. Unsurprisingly, we have seen the museum and the community we serve become more resilient, resourceful and innovative.

The museum's work in the region has also provided an opportunity to learn about people's experiences during quarantine and it has shown there is a responsibility to ethically preserve the memories and stories of those most affected by the pandemic. It is clear that community building requires a long-term commitment, and we must honour and foster existing and new relationships that have emerged during this crisis.

#### Solomy Nansubuga Nabukalu

Conservator, Kabale Museum  
(Uganda, ITP Fellow 2018)



## COVID & inclusion

### Will COVID make museums more accessible?



We are 14 months into a new era of social isolation, which fluctuates with lockdown restrictions, alongside limited mobility and remote working conditions. Many people across the world have changed the way they work, study or take time off for recreation during the coronavirus pandemic, but for some people with disabilities this has brought certain challenges and opportunities. Specifically in the museum world technology has improved. The pandemic has forced institutions to innovate, making it possible for almost all people to interact and engage with museums.

With millions under lockdown many non-disabled people are experiencing, for the first time, how it feels to be restricted by external barriers which stop them from participating in everyday life. I personally feel that these restrictions will help create a more accessible museum space. COVID-19 restrictions have changed how people access physical and digital museum spaces.

For instance, remote online exhibitions are now common. People with disabilities, including those with mobility restrictions and parents/carers of children with disabilities, often cannot travel to their favourite exhibitions, museums or openings. They can now be part of these events via live screenings over mobile phones or laptops, making it easier for them to be there digitally and enjoy the art and objects with everyone.

There has been greater accessible outreach too. Children with disabilities who could not attend museum outreach sessions, can be now part of these wonderful programmes through digital mediums while in the comfort of their homes, as well as under the supervision of their care giver.



Digital accessibility has also been boosted. There have been tremendous improvements in accessible technology such as artificial intelligence software that provides real-time museum tours and talks, on-screen transcription of video calls, and closed captioning and the presence of sign language interpreters during webinars. I believe this is only the tip of the iceberg. While there are some concerns that not all video enabled platforms and apps are following the digital accessibility protocols, there has been significant progress and it will only improve from here.

The pandemic is also changing the way spaces are planned and developed, with a need to keep social distancing and no touch mobility options. If all pathways and spaces become wider to accommodate these new COVID-19 based requirements, it will make many more spaces accessible to wheelchair users and those with neurodiverse backgrounds who do not enjoy crowded spaces. If the doors also start opening automatically (no touch), it will also allow ease of movement for multiple groups with physical disabilities. Social distancing may also make the museum spaces more comfortable for people with autism with quiet viewing spaces and timeslots that are specifically created for them. However only time will tell if COVID-19 will be a force that makes museum spaces more positive for people with disabilities.

**Siddhant Shah**  
Museum Access Consultant and Founder  
Access For ALL (India)

## COVID online

### Digitisation in Indian museums

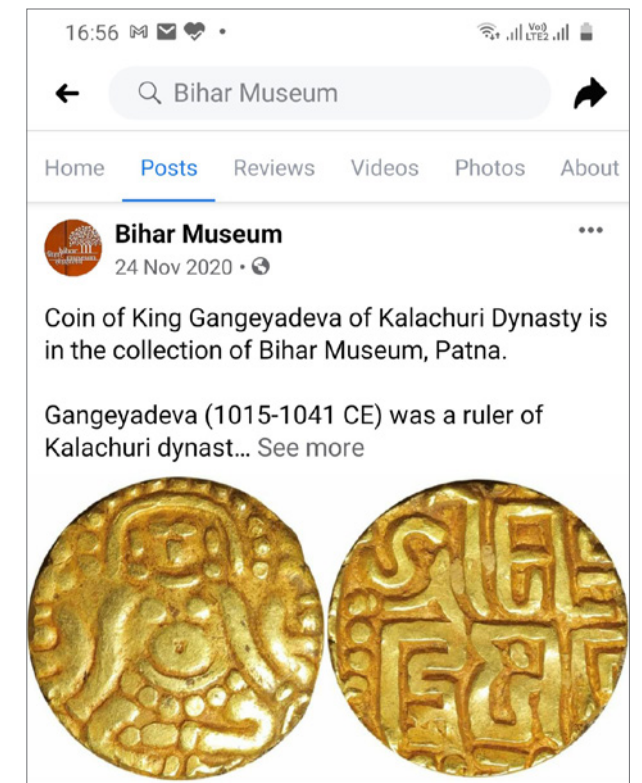
Digitisation has proved fundamental to museums while we face a 'mobility crisis' due to the COVID-19 pandemic. Before this, time, distance and local weather affected public engagement and museum outreach. This crisis has switched museums into virtual mode, providing visitors access to museum information in a controlled online environment. It's also meant cultural heritage is now inevitably being digitally recorded and preserved for posterity.

Indian museums are adapting to this operational change, but it is not easy as the creation of a digital infrastructure and workforce is not always a priority. During the pandemic neither museums nor people are financially able to continue age-long practices. With a lack of public investment, private museums in India face a financial crisis as they encounter a similar situation to public museums in terms of digitisation. That being said, a handful of museums have made their collections partially available online and continued to run their public outreach programmes and training courses virtually. The impact on heritage dissemination, employment or revenue is yet to be determined but there is hope that digitisation may help museums become more inclusive.

Going online, aided by multimedia and text (tricky in terms of engaging audiences) is a new challenge for museum curators. My own recent venture, *Goddess Tara*, an online exhibition made for the American Institute of Indian Studies (with the support of Alsdorf Associate Curator, Dr Madhuvanti Ghose of the Art Institute of Chicago, USA) changed the perception of virtual exhibitions and inspired similar works to be done at the Bihar Museum in India. The exhibition was for different age groups who have access to the internet, hence an emphasis on jargon-free language and the clear delivery of the concept. The texts were multi-layered with background music, pop-up, enlarged and high-resolution images, and hyperlinks to primary sources, making it easy to understand the historical data without being an ardent reader or using dictionaries. The selection of objects for online curation and designing for different audiences is an important part of this process, requiring technical skills. One must anticipate that a wide variety of viewers and reviewers will see the exhibition on the internet without geo-historical restrictions.

Rapid digitisation is a welcome trend in this unwelcome pandemic. There are great financial and employment costs for museums, but it costs next to nothing (and certainly less than before), for researchers and audiences to access the museum collections from within their own four walls.

**Vishi Upadhyay**  
Curatorial Associate, Bihar Museum  
(India, ITP Fellow 2019)



Bihar Museum's collection online during lockdown 2020.

Bihar Museum Biennale programme in virtual mode.



COVID online

## The National Corporation for Antiquities & Museums (Khartoum) and the Circulating Artefacts project

Since April 2018, the National Corporation for Antiquities & Museums (NCAM) in Khartoum has partnered with the British Museum in the Circulating Artefacts (CircArt) project. CircArt was launched to fight the widespread global trade in illegally excavated artefacts, with a special focus on those looted and smuggled from Sudan and Egypt. Between 2018 – 2019 four senior members of NCAM staff did three months of training at the British Museum to become acquainted with the aims, challenges and methods of the project. The training included meetings with a wide range of relevant parties but the focus was on the documentation and study of objects in the international art market. The training sessions were followed by the creation of a dedicated CircArt unit within NCAM, fully equipped by the British Museum.

NCAM and the British Museum then co-organised two workshops in Sudan. The first took place in December 2018 and was attended by representatives of the Ministry of Antiques and Tourism, and law enforcement. In October 2019, a second workshop was co-organised by NCAM, the British Museum and the Association for Research into

Crimes against Art (ARCA). This was principally aimed at security, police and justice officers concerned with the illicit antiquities trade.

In January this year, a further workshop took place called *The Trade in Illegally Excavated Artefacts: How to Fight It?* This had to happen online due to the COVID-19 lockdown. UNESCO's Khartoum office kindly hosted the trainees, a group of National Museum curators, antiquities inspectors, and the inspector of National Economic Security, British Museum curator Marcel Maree, gave a series of presentations from London about looting, the global art market, key organisations that fight the illicit trade, and ways of spotting and recovering looted artefacts. This was followed by an introduction to CircArt's newly created e-learning course. The day was concluded with a short assessment by the trainees.

### Ikhlas Abdillatief Ahmed

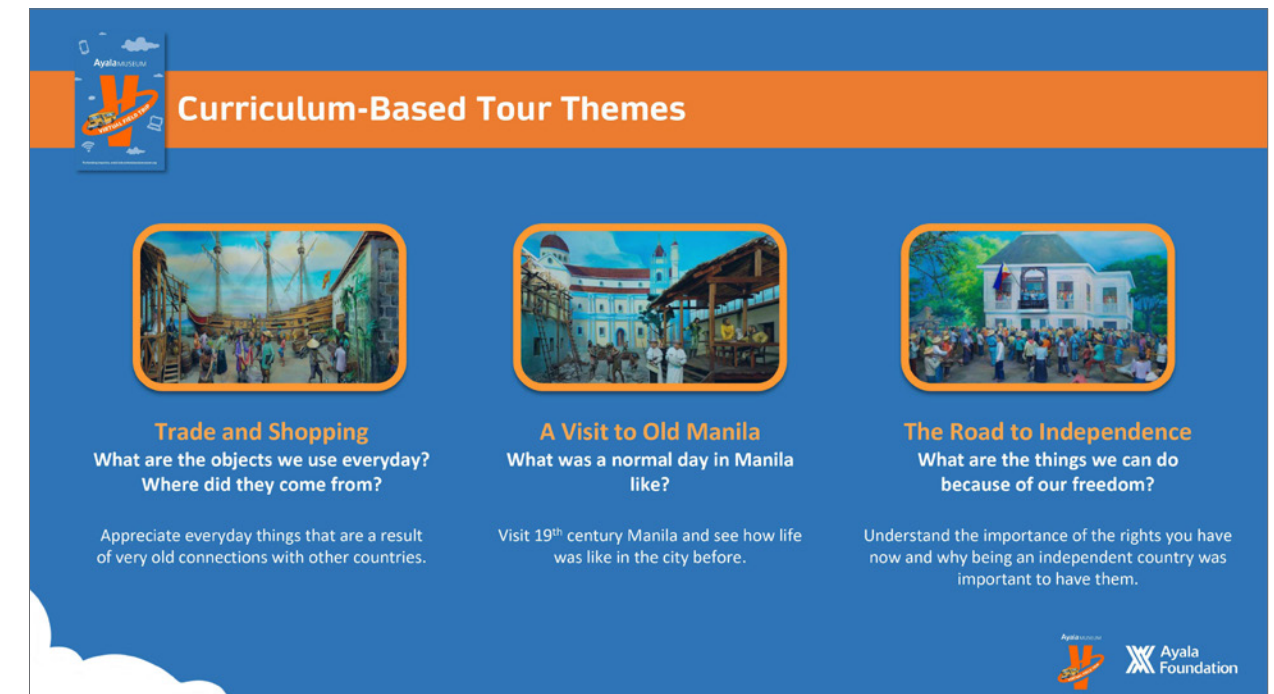
Chief Curator and Deputy Director, Museum Section, National Corporation for Antiquities and Museums (NCAM) (Sudan, ITP Fellow 2006)



Ikhlas with the Circulating artefacts project team at the British Museum in 2018.

COVID online

## Ethical use of digital images in Ayala Museum's virtual programmes



In compliance with the quarantine measures mandated by the Philippine government, museums and cultural centres closed in March 2020. The Ayala Museum closed for renovations in mid 2019 and, with uncertainties brought about by the pandemic in 2020, the museum was faced with the challenge of how to create a more engaging virtual experience.

Prior to COVID-19, we were reaching out to virtual audiences through the Virtual Collection of Asian Masterpieces (ASEMUS VCM), Google Art Project, Google Fashion Project, and social media. While working from home during the pandemic, our learning programmes fully transitioned online. We revisited old, existing materials on past exhibitions, Collections Corner notes, videos such as ATIN (Access to Information Network): Stories from the Collections (YouTube), and IN FOCUS: Arts and Objects Explained (YouTube). We continued to use these as tools for learning experiences, offering calming activities during this stressful period as well as alternative learning activities for children and families confined in their homes during the longest period of lockdown observed globally.

Additionally, diversified online learning programmes were developed using different apps and platforms. Virtual Field Trip (VFT) took students to different locations around the Philippines and other countries through Zoom and Google Maps, re-introducing them to Philippine history and culture. Ayala Museum Kids offered art activities on YouTube, inspired by artifacts and artworks from the museum's collection. Virtual Visits consisted of annotated YouTube video tours of past exhibitions, offering insights into curatorial vision and exhibition design.

These virtual programmes have been threads connecting us with our teams while we work from home and have renewed the relationship with our audience, helping limit feelings of isolation. Ayala Museum's omnichannel approach is supporting our aspiration to restore Philippine cultural heritage and history to the Filipino collective consciousness.

During the creation of our programmes, objects and artworks from the Ayala Museum collection – both permanent and on loan – became valuable resources. The 60 dioramas of Philippine history figured prominently in the VFT as well as in posts on Philippine history for #TodayInHistory on Facebook, Instagram, and Twitter. So, one very important aspect of my work was to ensure the ethical use of digital images online.

It was a major challenge to strike a balance between access and preservation – between protecting the images but making them available online. It required my colleagues and I to observe prudent measures while bearing in mind the overall vision of our virtual programmes.

The use of any digital image was subjected to careful review. We considered accuracy, appropriateness of use on the chosen platform, and legal documentation covering usage. Reproduction forms were updated to indicate details of use and proper attributions and served as a monitoring system for internal and external applications. Permissions from artists or heirs were secured for copyrighted images. In the Philippines, copyrights are maintained by the creator during their lifetime plus fifty years after death. Also, where necessary, watermarks were used on images.

As part of stakeholder management, donors and lenders were constantly updated of any virtual engagement with their donations or loans. It proved to be a rigorous process and certainly necessary to stay compliant with agreements with lenders and donors, and the copyright laws under the intellectual property code of the Philippines. During the creation of these virtual programmes, ethics were a key focus, helping us set important standards that will help us continue to show respect and nurture relationships with our stakeholders.

### Aprille P. Tijam

Senior Manager, Exhibitions and Collections, Ayala Museum (Philippines, ITP Fellow 2019)



Your collection in focus  
**Helmet with face shield**

The whole world is fighting this pandemic. Museums are no exception and are now taking different, new, simple but innovative steps to welcome communities virtually. Several museums are showcasing COVID-19 related objects digitally, to connect audiences around the world during lockdown.

My museum, Victoria Memorial Hall in Kolkata, India has also changed how it operates. It has 28,394 objects. Among them are objects linked with the pandemic. In my view, the terms 'COVID-19' and 'mask' are linked. Head and face shields, gloves, and PPE are now well known terms, which was not always the case prior to November 2019. Taking this perspective, I have chosen one object which is very much relevant to the COVID-19 theme. It is from the collection of Victoria Memorial Hall: 'helmet with face shield'.

Acquired from Raja of Hill Tippera in 1906, the helmet is made of iron with gilded decorative work and has two horns. There are two holes in the shape and location of the eyes and three where a nose would go. There is an iron rod on the nose to protect its soft upper portion and a lip shaped iron part to protect the lips. There is also an iron net around the neck and net that covers the ears. It is 47cm tall and 31.5cm wide and is around 150 years old.

This object might have been used in a battle to protect a soldier's body from injury caused by an opponent, who was very much visible. But now the whole world is fighting against an invisible opponent. It is totally unpredictable when and how it's attack will harm people but the way to win both battles, past and present, is more or less same: protect your body by using body shields.

Let's hope to win and overcome this shocking situation soon. I hope museums can connect with the community face to face again, interact, discuss and share ideas with audiences. Let's hope for a better world.

**Joyee Roy (Ghosh)**  
 Documentation Officer, Victoria Memorial Hall  
 (India, ITP Fellow 2011)



Helmet with  
 face shield.

Your collection in focus  
**A history of masks in Iran and the world**

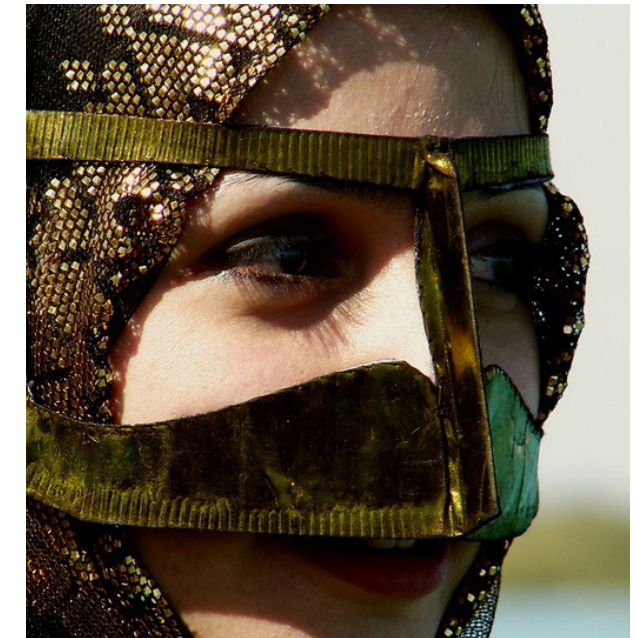
A mask can be a device used to prevent the contamination of others and the surrounding air by covering the mouth and nose. Zoroastrian priests would use masks to prevent the contamination of the sacred fire with a piece of cloth called *panam*. In Avesta and Pahlavi books a *panam* is two pieces of white cotton fabric that are hung over the mouth with two ribbons tied behind the head. The Zoroastrians of Iran call it a veil.

*Panam* in our classical poems means amulet – away from the evil eyes. The equivalent of a mask in Persian is *niqab*, *ruband*, *dahanband*, *rubandeh*, *pushieh*, *burqh-e*, *burke* or *batoleh*. The mask is made of fabric or other materials that some Muslim women cover their faces with. In the history of Iran, the Ismailia also used a mask. Outside of their house, ladies wear a large, black tent-like dress or a fringed purple and white or lace mask, with two eye-shaped holes at the front of the face.

*Bashlyks* – the hats of the Medes, the Achaemenids and the Parthians – were worn on the day of war. These hats were made of felt or linen, and the upper part was usually sharp and long and turned back or forward in the form of a conical bag. On the back of the hat there is a short neckline and also two pieces at the side to cover the ears. This hat was used to protect the king from the breath of those who are near, except during wartime.

In Baluch (east of Iran) and Hormozgani (south of Iran) women wear a *burqh/burkeh/batuleh/tabileh* which is a face covering for women and girls. Today this can be used to decorate the face or protect the skin against heat, as a kind of *hijab*. It also has medical and health properties because the fabric is impregnated with indigo which prevents insect bites.

**Khadijeh Zohreh Baseri**  
 Specialist, Ministry of Cultural Heritage  
 (Iran, ITP Fellow 2007)



Burga-or Burke.

Burga.

Tehran square  
 Meydan-e-  
 Topkhaneh,  
 Qajar period.



Your collection in focus

## Stela of the Artisan Bay and the universal value of the Egyptian Museum

The Egyptian Museum was built in 1901 and was designed to be the core of Egypt's urban centre with the aim of fostering greater sensitivity to national identity in the 20th century. The collections at the Egyptian Museum feature objects that reflect basic human values and ethics including truth, honesty, loyalty, love, peace and justice. Pottery, leather, porcelain, copper, metals, patchwork and mats at the Egyptian Museum all reflect the high artistic sense of ancient Egyptian craftsmen, bearing unique testimonies about the cultural traditions and industries in Egypt, and tracing the development of the ancient Egyptian civilization. The works also speak to the traditional crafts still practiced in Egypt now. The exceptional collection is further enhanced by the design and architectural quality of the buildings housing it, which adopt 19th-century Beaux-Arts architecture.

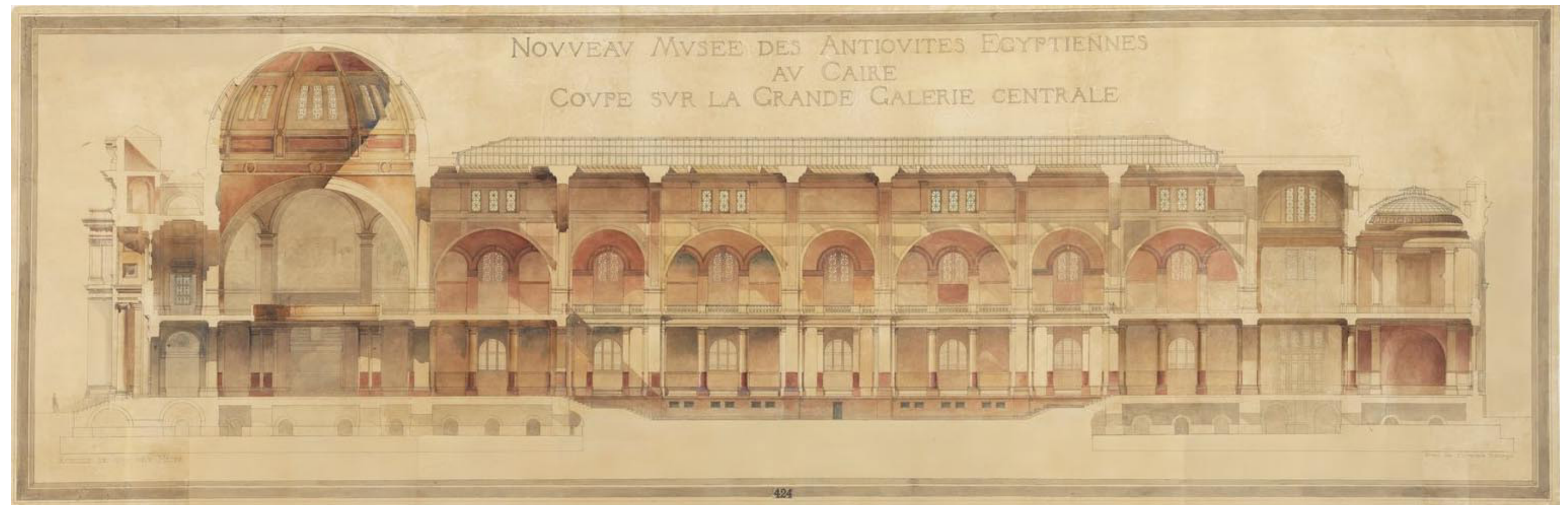
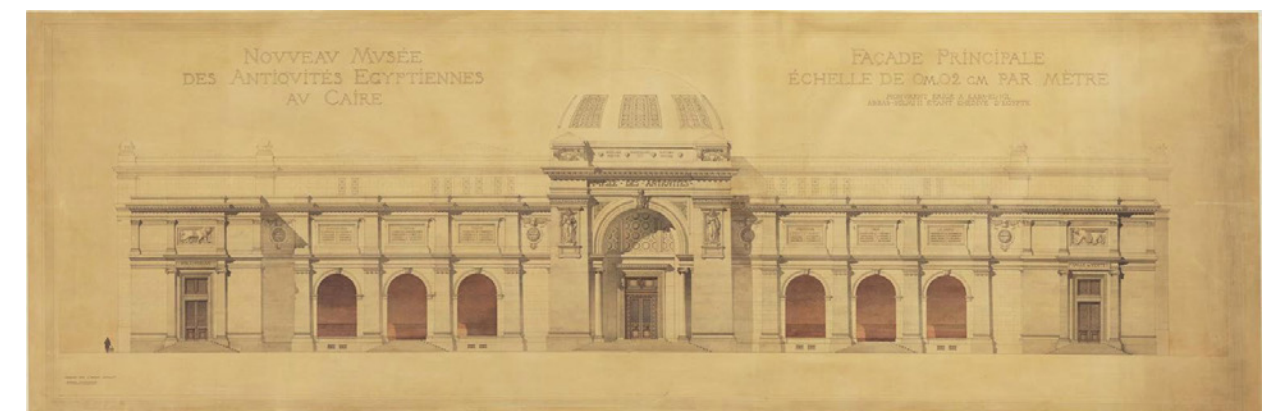
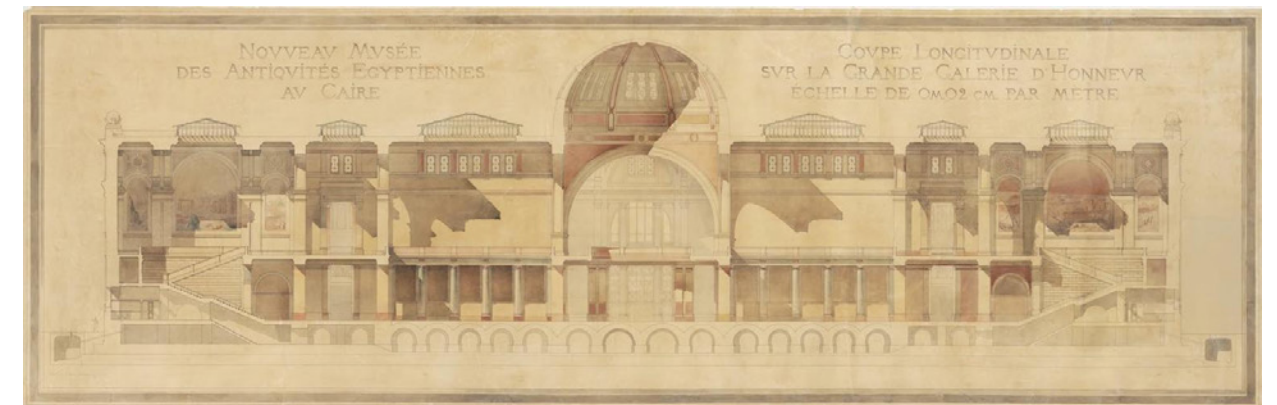
The cultural value of the Egyptian Museum is linked with its historic role and the interpretation and preservation of its tangible collection. The museum links historical background, cultural identity, and Egyptian living heritage, while the architecture shares an organic relationship with the collections on display. The objects enable the visitor to understand the attitudes, motivations, and behaviors

of the ancient Egyptians. But the objects also reflect universal values like compassion, consideration, morality and forgiveness, as well as social values like perseverance, brotherhood, equality, and respect for others.

One such object is the stela of the Artisan Bay. Found at Deir El-Medinah, this carving is made from limestone and believed to be from the 20th Dynasty. It shows Bay kneeling in front of three large pairs of ears. The ears belong to the god Amun-Re who could hear people's petitions for healing and reconciliation, and requests for support. The ears embody compassion and are a tangible expression for those who are suffering and need help. The owner of the stela is given the name of 'Servant in the Place of Truth', a common title given to craftsmen and artisans who were working in the Theban Necropolis (west of modern Luxor) during the New Kingdom (the period known as the New Kingdom includes the 18th Dynasty, the 19th Dynasty, and the 20th Dynasty, about 1550 – 1080 BC.).

### Shreen Amin

Director, Children's Museum; Egyptian Museum (Egypt, ITP Fellow 2016)





## Bulletin board

### Changes to Rwanda Museums

In September 2020, the Rwanda Cultural Heritage Academy was established with the mission of preserving national heritage and safeguarding the Ikinyarwanda language and culture, as well as upholding national unity and dignity. This institution merged the former National Institute of Museums of Rwanda, Rwanda Academy of Language and Culture and Rwanda Archive and Library Authority. These changes reduced the number of staff. In future local associations will also be involved in the running of the museums, so the guiding staff and shop attendants were given contracts as we wait for the privatisation of some museum activities.

### Chantal Umuhoza

Curator, Rwanda Cultural Heritage Academy (Rwanda, ITP Fellow 2018)

### Continuing knowledge exchange

Since October 2020, the International Training Programme team have been delivering online subject specialist sessions, aiming to continue sharing knowledge, skills and experiences. These sessions have included virtual discussions, workshops, 'show and tell' tours and presentations and have been led by British Museum colleagues, UK and programme partners and our ITP Fellows.

The sessions have averaged 24 participants and had a high retention rate. We have welcomed 170 fellows, from every year of the programme, from 33 of our 48 network countries. 30 of our British Museum and UK and programme partners have also attended sessions.

All of the online events are recorded and are available, along with any additional resources, to view on the ITP website.

### Claire Messenger

Manager, International Training Programme  
British Museum



### The Grand Egyptian Museum: a new culture, heritage and community hub in Egypt

The Grand Egyptian Museum (GEM) is a new world class museum, which will present Egypt worldwide and nationally as a major dynamic cultural hub for ancient Egyptian history and heritage. It will be a must visit destination for local visitors and tourists from all over the globe. GEM will share Egyptian heritage worldwide, making contributions to Egyptology and archaeology in addition to the Egyptian living heritage. GEM aims to illustrate the broad story of ancient Egypt and its heritage.

GEM occupies a significant position – it's only two kilometres from one of the most famous and ancient heritage sites: the legendary Giza Pyramids plateau. It is also located among the boundaries of the UNESCO cultural heritage site Memphis and its Necropolis. GEM's proximity to these ancient sites is unique and offers multiple benefits – it creates a truly interactive experience for the visitor and opens a dialogue between the ancient and the modern. The museum aims to showcase Egypt and its cultural heritage at the same time as preserving, conserving and safeguarding Egypt's heritage wealth.

Considered the first prototype of the post-modern museum in Egypt, the GEM is full of potential. It will generate new visitor experiences through interactive and technological activities for the local community and beyond. Using object-based practice and theory, as well as creating community-based spaces and exhibitions, the museum aims to be transformative.

GEM will also demonstrate the progress, evolution and development of Egyptian civilization in the 21st century. It will be the largest museum dedicated to displaying a single civilisation in all its diversity and with all its glamorous heritage, tangible and intangible. GEM can easily use its unique resources and potential to become more responsive to the dynamics of modern Egyptian society. It can explore urban change and become a tool of progress, encouraging development in society through heritage.

### Heba Khairy

Curator, Grand Egyptian Museum (Egypt, ITP 2017)

## Bulletin board

### MA conference 2020

The ITP team would have been in Edinburgh in November 2020, taking part in the Museums Association Conference, with ITP Fellows from Armenia, China, Egypt, Romania, Rwanda and Uzbekistan. But due to Coronavirus the conference took place online, via Zoom, with shared talks, tours, discussions and debates on the theme of the *World Turned Upside Down: Exploring the Future of Museums*. The conference explored these changes, opportunities and how museums could rise to current issues including the pandemic, the Black Lives Matter movement and the climate crisis.

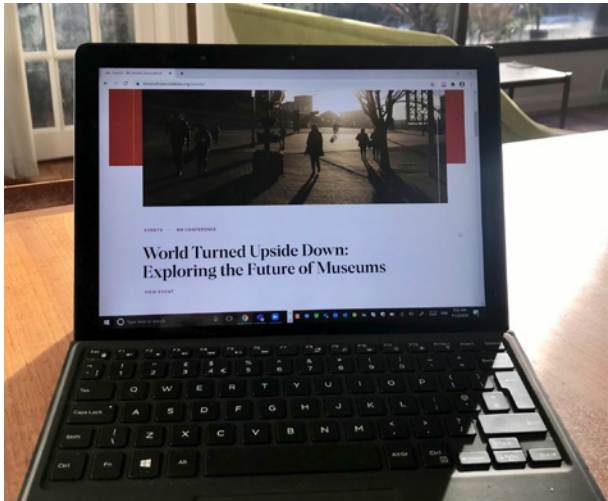
Considering the critical topics being discussed, the massive impact of COVID on society, and the critical need for reflection on the future and purpose of museums, we wanted to share as much of our conference learning with the ITP network as we could.

We posted daily on the ITP website and other social media channels with the aim of sharing useful and insightful information alongside resources to help our fellows rise to the challenges which have arisen in this incredibly turbulent year. The shared sessions covered a variety of topics including future museum skills, repatriation and restitution, decolonisation, climate change, reopening museums, digital collections, COVID-secure learning, diversity and inclusion, activist museums and the more generally the future of museums.

We are looking forward to welcoming our ITP Fellows to Edinburgh in 2022.

### Anna Cottle

Coordinator, International Training Programme  
British Museum



### The Fernando Zobel collection and donation to the British Museum

In September 2020 Aprille P. Tijam presented the results of her research on the Fernando Zobel collection and donation to the British Museum through the online Monday Studies Program (Session 20 from the Ayala Museum).

Monday Studies is Ayala Museum's in-house learning initiative that began in 2015 to discuss and present research on art and cultural material appreciation, exhibition management, exhibition and graphic design, collections management, conservation, photography, disaster preparedness, and more. It takes the form of lectures, workshops, and film screenings, forming part of the continuing staff development of the Ayala Museum and Filipinas Heritage Library teams (including the support of personnel such as security and administrative staff). Through this programme, key learnings from other training, conferences and seminars (both local and overseas) are shared more widely.

The research presented last September highlighted this unknown collection from Zobel. It is not cited in any Zobel book published in the Philippines. The donation affirmed Zobel's philanthropic nature, his influence and relationships with Spanish abstract artists and his vision of a continued dialogue with the world (as shown through his artworks in various institutions worldwide).

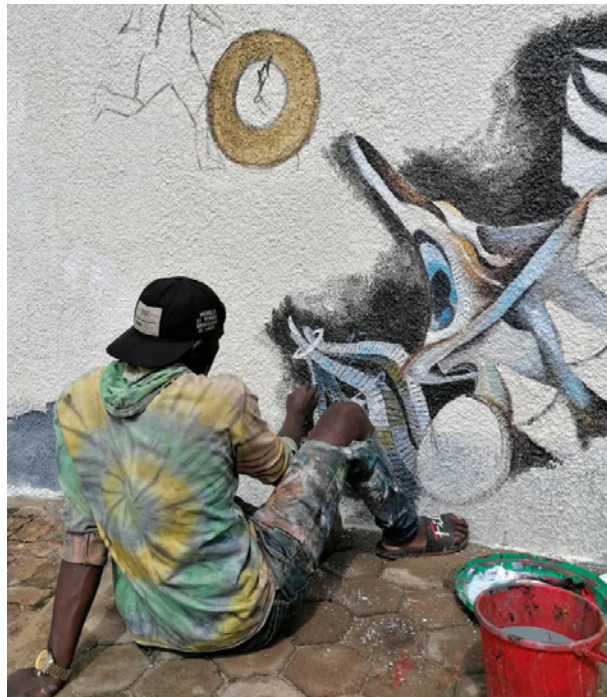
The research was supported by the Connections Through Culture UK – Southeast Asia Programme by the British Council. In attendance were members of the Ayala Museum Board of Advisors, Ayala Foundation ManCom Members, Ayala Museum and Filipinas Heritage staff, with the special attendance of officers from the Ayala Knowledge Management, British Council Philippines, and Claire Messenger, ITP Manager. Appreciation for this research was expressed by the audience and led to further discussions about art patronage – highlighting another important aspect of study on Zobel: the donations of his artworks and art collection to various institutions across the globe.

Upon the recommendation of Florina H. Capistrano-Baker, former Ayala Museum Director and Adjunct Assistant Professor at City University of New York (CUNY), the research was presented online in April 2021 to a selection of students at Harvard University through a seminar on Fernando Zobel organized by Professor Felipe Pereda, Professor of Spanish Art at the Department of History of Art and Architecture. Professor Pereda will co-curate an exhibition with Manuel Fontan del Junco, *The Future of the Past: Fernando Zobel and The History of Art*, at the Museo Nacional del Prado, in Madrid in 2021. The layered process of Zobel's printmaking and the old masters' influences on Zobel's drawings and prints were points of discussions in the class. It was the first time that Professor Pereda learned about this donation and was in agreement that it is definitely time that not only Zobel's prints, but his life and art, were focused on.

### Aprille P. Tijam

Senior Manager, Exhibitions and Collections, Ayala Museum (Philippines, ITP Fellow 2019)





#### Activities at Rwanda Museums during their closure

As museums were closed, Rwanda Museums put more effort into rehabilitation and thinking about and making new exhibitions. That was the case for Rwesero/Kwigira Museum in Southern Province, Mulindi/Liberation Museum in Northern Province and Karongi/Museum of Environment in Western Province. In March 2021 local artists, Louise Kanyange and Daddy, worked with foreign artists, Benjamin Swatez and Azerine Deluca, to paint two murals at the Rwanda Art Museum. These two murals were completed within four days and represent the beauty of dreams and the actualisation of them, embracing both the old and new, the pre-colonial and futuristic, the masculine and feminine.

From 16 April 2021 to 16 May 2021, the Rwanda Art Museum hosted a temporary exhibition: *Making Stones Talk* by artist Medard Bizimana. This is keeping the museum alive during the pandemic but also offers preservation and education for aspiring artists.

In celebrating Africa Liberation Day 2021 and International Museums Day, Rwanda Art Museum organised a temporary art exhibition with the theme *African Art Drawn from our Cultural Heritage*. This exhibition launched on 25 May 2021.

In 2020, Rwanda Cultural Heritage Academy signed a Memorandum of Understanding (MoU) with the Heritage Management Organization for activities linked to professional development. This institution offers different online courses related to museums and the heritage or cultural sector.

#### Chantal Umuhoza

Curator, Rwanda Cultural Heritage Academy (Rwanda, ITP Fellow 2018)

#### Conservation of Arabic manuscripts, a call for collaboration

The Director-General for the National Commission for Museums and Monuments, Prof. Abba Isa Tijani has called for a credible collaboration with Arewa House – a frontline centre for research and historical documentation found at Ahmadu Bello University in Kaduna. This call was fervently made during his official visit and engagement at the centre. He asked for the two institutions to come together, combining resources and expertise to help preserve, conserve and catalogue Arabic manuscripts from West Africa, along with other historical materials. This joint effort would improve access for researchers and other groups of users.

The Director-General, who was received by the Director of the Centre (Dr. Shehu Aliyu) solicited the cooperation of Arewa House as a centre of historical documentation, suggesting it join hands with the commission and support the conservation of these precious historical collections.

The Arabic manuscripts from West Africa are a rare collection dating back to the 19th and 20th centuries. They come mainly from Northern Nigeria, as well as Senegal, Ghana and Mali. Most are handwritten in Arabic and Ajami scripts and cover a wide range of subjects from Arabic grammar to history, theology, law and astronomy. They are an excellent example of West African literacy in Arabic.

Prof. Abba Tijani was accompanied by Malam Gimba Abdul Mohammed and Abubakar Usman, Ag. Director of Museums and Special Assistant to the Director-General respectively. They also visited the National Museum Kaduna on a working visit, assuring museum staff of an improvement to welfare in the new year. He commended the curator of the museum, Mr. Elkanah Buckley, his management and all the staff for maintaining a positive museum environment in Kaduna.

#### Ishaq Mohammad Bello

Assistant Chief Technical Officer, Education, National Museum Kaduna (Nigeria, ITP Fellow 2012)

#### Online exhibitions

The ITP's first online exhibition was *Bristol: The Bigger Picture* ([itponlineexhibitions.org/](http://itponlineexhibitions.org/)), a 2016 collaboration by representatives from the Academy of Fine Arts Vienna, Bristol Museums, Chhatrapati Shivaji Maharaj Vastu Sangrahalaya, the Kitale Museum, the National Museum Kaduna and the National Museum New Delhi.

In 2020 and 2021 the ITP have teamed up with students from the Worcester Polytechnic Institute (WPI) in Massachusetts, USA, to work on a second online exhibition legacy project for the network. The WPI group are working to create an online space to showcase the *Object in Focus* projects created by our ITP fellows each summer. This project has been developed remotely as the students were unable to travel to London.

#### George Peckham

Assistant, International Training Programme British Museum

#### Bread making at home during COVID-19: a subject for future research

We have all witnessed social media suddenly filling with photos and videos about making bread during the COVID-19 pandemic. For maybe the first time in history the people of this planet shared a very concrete crisis which changed everybody's lives at the very same time and in very similar ways. While they may have had slightly different responses according to differences in culture, there were ways in which the people of this planet reacted similarly.

One of these shared reactions was bread making. This activity went viral in many different parts of the world, and it happened in days dominated by the virus. A lot of people were already making bread at home before the pandemic, but the numbers are telling a very clear story that an enormous increase in breadmaking occurred among people at home, starting from the third or fourth month of the COVID-19 outbreak. Interestingly this then calmed down later.

So, why has this happened? Why did people react to an unknown crisis in a similar way, at the same time? Why did the trend calm at the same time in different locations? Were the first months of the pandemic a time of realisation and then people started to panic? Did people accept this new situation within a couple of months and become psychologically inured? What was the relationship between bread making and the realisation of a worldwide crisis? Are people from different parts of the world influencing each other to pursue the same activity? Does this panic bread making have any connection to the human mind and an archaic fear of hunger?

This is a cross-cultural shared behaviour, and it needs to be documented. A possible museum collection might include social media posts, statistical analysis (for instance figures showing the increase in consumption of flour and yeast), and interviews with people about this behaviour (could the interviews be expanded to understand behaviour more generally in precarious times?) Analysis from psychoanalysts could even be collected and reviewed (interview or literary research).

In conclusion bread making at home seems to be an activity that is practised during a crisis, worldwide. This has attracted attention and has already been noticed by other people and researchers (as you can see in the further reading below). Documenting this behaviour is important in order to understand the reasons behind it. The research could open a door to various debates and discussions and could also be the focus of an exhibition or part of a larger exhibition on COVID-19.

#### Nurcan Yalman

Assistant Professor, Department of History, Nisantasi University (Turkey, ITP 2017)

#### Further reading

[Why everyone is suddenly baking bread](#)

[COVID stories: sourdough bread with a purpose](#)

[Why Turks are baking more than usual during virus lockdown](#)

#### National Commission for Museums and Monuments Nigeria (NCMM) shines at Science, Innovation & Technology Expo 2021

The Science, Innovation & Technology Expo, held at the Eagle Square arena in Abuja, is an annual event bringing together young, promising and dynamic scientists, plus innovators and technologists from all over the country. It provides an open platform for them to exhibit and showcase their various innovations and discoveries.

The event is organised by the Federal Ministry of Science and Technology and has recorded many successes in the past. This year's edition was opened by the Vice President, Prof. Yemi Osinbajo.

For the National Commission for Museums & Monuments (NCMM), this year's event is historic and groundbreaking as the NCMM's flag was hoisted to signify the institution becoming an inventor/supporting agency. It is a rare occurrence for a heritage institution to be counted in this field and Mr. Charles D. Hyelda, Senior Monument Officer, made the NCMM proud by exhibiting his innovative machines and devices under the seal of the commission. Mr. Hyelda of Maiduguri Museum invented two devices – the crop dehydrator machine and the cold chain machine.

The crop dehydrator machine is designed to help Nigerian farmers in the area of food preservation as the device can dry food crops and items like cassava, yam, meat, fish and fruits which cost less during harvest seasons but more when out of season. The cold chain machine, on the other hand, is designed to regulate temperatures needed for long term storage thereby prolonging the lifespan of crops and commodities. This device could also be very useful in storage facilities where antiquities and cultural collections are kept and managed.

A high point of the ongoing exhibition was the visit of the Director-General, Prof. Abba Tijani, to the NCMM stand where he praised the inventor and gave encouragement by directing that media publicity be provided for him and his inventions immediately. With the presence of the media around his exhibition stand, Mr. Hyelda and the NCMM became instant celebrities at the event.

#### Ishaq Mohammad Bello

Assistant Chief Technical Officer, Education, National Museum Kaduna (Nigeria, ITP Fellow 2012)



## Global network news

We were devastated to learn in 2021 that we had lost two valued and loved members of our ITP global network. In January **Buket Babataş Aydın (Turkey, ITP Fellow 2019)** sadly lost her battle with cancer – a battle that she had fought bravely and stoically. And **Saeed Obaid Ba Yashoot (Yemen, ITP Fellow 2016)** passed away suddenly in June. Buket and Saeed will be greatly missed.

**Sibel Yasemin Özgan (Turkey, ITP Fellows 2013)** is now working as Assistant Professor in MEF University and is also a postdoctoral researcher in ETH Zürich.

**Cynthia Iruobe (Nigeria, ITP Fellow 2010)** is now head of the department of the export permit unit. This department issues clearance certificates and export permit certificates.

The ITP team were delighted to be joined by **Symphorose Guillon** for a Birkbeck University student placement with the ITP earlier this year. Symphorose worked on creating an online survey and a project proposal to feed into our future legacy projects.

**Rasha Ali Attia Abd El-Mageid (Egypt, ITP Fellow 2011)** moved to one of the major museums in Egypt, The Greco-Roman Museum in Alexandria.

**Miral Taha (Egypt, ITP Fellow 2013)** shared news of the renovations of their stores. The wonderful changes were based on information, materials and samples from her time at the British Museum.

**Alsu Akhmetzyanova (Uzbekistan, ITP Fellow 2019)** was promoted to the Head of the Education Department at the Arts and Culture Development Foundation.

**Heba Khairy (Egypt, ITP Fellow 2017)** is now Project Coordinator for the Follow up & Performance Development Department and is working on the relocation project for King Khufu's boat for the new Grand Egyptian Museum.

**Chantal Umuhoza (Rwanda, ITP Fellow 2019)** is preparing a temporary exhibition on insects. It will hopefully launch on World Environment Day (22 June 2022) for the Institute of National Museums of Rwanda (INMR).

**Shambwaditya Ghosh (India, ITP Fellow 2012 & Senior Fellow 2015)** started his PhD on museum archaeology and identity construction focusing on undivided Bengal (the state of West Bengal and Bangladesh).

**Jacob Nii Marley (Ghana, ITP Fellow 2019)** is currently working on an Endangered Material Knowledge Project (EMKP, the British Museum) in Ghana as a research assistant. The title of the project is *Indigenous Gold and Silver Forging in Kumasi, Ghana*. This project aims to research and document how the natural minerals are processed using indigenous techniques and tools.

**Congratulations to Suruchika Chawla (India, ITP Fellow 2018)** who completed her Doctorate in July 2020, and now holds a Doctor of Philosophy in archaeology and ancient history from Faculty of Arts, The Maharaja Sayajirao University of Baroda, Vadodara, Gujarat, India. The topic of her research was *The Role of Museum Education for Archaeological Learning in India*.

Congratulations also to **Asmaa Hassan Ahmed El-Rabat (Egypt, ITP Fellow 2014)** who obtained a Masters degree in 2020. Her topic was *The Treasures of the Egyptian Museum Archive – Theoretical, Practical, and Analytical Studying*.

Meanwhile, good luck to **Balqees Abdul-Hakeem Nakhlah (Palestine, ITP Fellow 2019)**, who has started just a Masters degree.

**Aprille P Tijam (Philippines, ITP Fellow 2019)** collaborated with ITP 2019 Fellows **Ciprian Dobra (Romania)**, **Nyaz Azeez (Kurdistan)**, and **Catalina Adarve (Colombia)** on a project titled *Collections Corner*. Ciprian, Nyaz and Catalina provided support with translations (French and Spanish) for inclusion in a *Collections Corner* featuring artworks from the Ayala Museum collection; Chula, painted by Juan Luna, and a 1734 Philippine map.

Aprille also attended online sessions on *Programs for children with Autism* presented by **Alsu Akhmetzyanova (Uzbekistan, ITP Fellow 2019)** and *Iconography* presented by Museikon on the invitation of **Ioan Oprea (Romania, ITP Fellow 2019)**.

We said a sad goodbye to **Rebecca Horton** who left the British Museum after 6 years working in the Department of Coins and Medals, on the International Training Programme, with International Touring Exhibitions and finally on the Museum's Circulating Artefacts project. Becca is now working at the City of London Police in the Next Generation National Fraud and Cyber Crime Programme.

**Ronan Brindley, Learning and Engagement Lead, Manchester Art Gallery (ITP UK Partner)** and **Fiona Slater, Equality and Diversity Manager, British Museum** took part in an online conference on museums and autism organised by **Alsu Akhmetzyanova (Uzbekistan, ITP Fellow 2019)**.

**Fadzai Muchemwa (Zimbabwe, ITP Fellow 2017)** received the first ITP Research Support Grant and met with **Motsane Getrude Seabela (South Africa, ITP Fellow 2016)** at Ditsong Museums of South Africa during the research trip.

**Roshan Mishra, Director, Taragaon Museum (Nepal, ITP Fellow 2018)** displayed two art installations as part of an ongoing project titled *#365Rotation*. These two installations include poetry written by Roshan and a collaboration with Nepali artist Bishowmbhar Basnyat. [#365Rotation](#)

**Abiti Adebo Nelson, Curator and Senior Conservator, Uganda National Museum (Uganda, ITP Fellow 2013)** featured in the first ITP *In Conversation* film discussing his ITP Collaborative Award project, *The Road to Reconciliation: a Collaborative Workshop and Community Exhibition in Uganda* with **John Giblin, Keeper of the Department of World Cultures at National Museums Scotland**. [The Road to Reconciliation, an In Conversation film](#)

Finally, in 2021 **Neal Spencer, Keeper, Egypt and Sudan**, who all of you in the ITP network will know well, left the British Museum – and the ITP team – to take on a new challenge as Deputy Director for Collections and Research at the Fitzwilliam Museum in Cambridge.

Note that restrictions/situations may have changed since the time of writing.



## Support

### A Partnership UK project

The Collection: Art and Archaeology in Lincolnshire  
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Glasgow Museums  
Manchester Art Gallery  
Manchester Museum  
Whitworth Art Gallery  
National Museums Northern Ireland  
Norfolk Museums Service  
Tyne & Wear Archives and Museums

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