‘Bristol: The Bigger Picture’ Digital Exhibition Workshop, and Glasgow Museum Association Conference

Glasgow & Bristol, United Kingdom
7 – 11 November 2016
**Museums of world stories**

In November 2015, CSMVS Mumbai and the British Museum co-hosted a workshop entitled *Creating museums of world stories*, with the support of the Getty Foundation, to celebrate the 10th Anniversary of the International Training Programme. The workshop saw museum and heritage professionals brainstorm and debate new forms of ‘encyclopaedic’ displays presenting familiar local and national histories in the context of global stories.

It also provided an opportunity for past ITP fellows to reconnect with colleagues and to introduce them to alumni from across the ten annual summer programmes (2006–2015), as well as offering a forum for networking with museum and heritage professionals from around India and the rest of the world.

As part of their remit, delegates were split into groups of mixed nationality and asked to create exhibition proposals based on the concept of *Your city and the world* – examining how national and international stories are interconnected, through the lens of material culture.

The final exhibition cities and titles were:

- **Shanghai, China** - "From Blue Dragon Harbour to Sin City"
- **Tehran, Iran** - "Tehran: Jaan-E-Man"
- **Bristol, United Kingdom** - "Seeing the Invisible"
- **Usak, Turkey** - "Carpet Connections: Usak and the World"
- **Bhopal, India** - "Untold Connections"
- **Jerusalem, Israel** - "Reality and Imagination"
- **Istanbul, Turkey** - "Istanbul: City and Empire"
- **Mombasa, Kenya** - "Mombasa: Point of Contact"
- **Ismailia, Egypt** - "The Suez Canal: The Early Days"
- **Erbil, Iraq** - "A Past from the Blast"

One year on, ITP fellows Rige Shiba (India, ITP 2013), Ishaq Mohamed Bello (Nigeria, ITP 2012), Wendland Chole Kiziili (Kenya, ITP 2013), Manisha Nene (India, ITP 2011) and Jana Alaraj (Palestine, ITP 2011) from the Mumbai exhibition team ‘Bristol: Seeing the Invisible’ were invited back to the United Kingdom by the British Museum to attend the annual Museums Association Conference in Glasgow and to work with Sue Giles, Senior Curator of World Cultures, Bristol Museums, Galleries and Archives to develop their proposal into a viable online exhibition.
Our aims

After bringing five ITP alumni to deliver a session and attend Leicester University’s “Museums in the Global Contemporary” conference in 2015, we wanted to offer our ITP fellows further platforms to network and gain knowledge beyond what is traditionally offered through the Summer Programme. With the Museums Association conference, our aim was for fellows to attend a new range of skills-building sessions, hear from colleagues globally about current practices and projects, to engage in debates around the future of museums and their audiences, and to create networks which may be outside our usual remit.

The Bristol online exhibition project developed from conversations after our 10th Anniversary conference in Mumbai, where we re-emphasised the aims of our future plan to keep our network talking and working together. We identified the need to support fellow-initiated projects that emphasised collaborative work and global perspectives, feeling that “Bristol: Seeing the Invisible” was a promising example of strong partnership between UK museums and ITP fellows. It also marks a desire to support work with tangible outputs which could be shared across the network.

THE CONFERENCE

With generous support from the Marie-Louise von Motesiczky Charitable Trust, the first half of the week was spent at the Museums Association Annual Conference & Exhibition hosted in Glasgow, a city with a strong museum culture and home to one of seven ITP partner institutions.

The conference offered delegates a series of sessions focusing on the themes of People and Places: stories, communities and collections; Being Brave: courage, innovation and risk-taking; and Health and Wellbeing: impact, evidence and delivery.

Particularly valued by the group were sessions which focused on community participation, such as Connecting People, Objects and Place, and those dealing with difficult topics such as Free to Speak: Confronting Censorship and Controversies, Seeking Refuge, Museums and Peacebuilding: Can we Really Help? and Nation Builders or Breakers.

“(The conference) touched upon areas which otherwise are rarely encouraged for discussions amidst the traditional set of predicted topics in museum conferences.

Just to name a few, themes like Free to Speak, Nation Builders or Breakers and My Primary School is at the Museum were a few of the themes which completely struck a chord with me and many others.” – Rige Shiba, India, ITP 2013

Also appreciated was the Conference’s focus on smaller museums, inviting ideas and making suggestions for institutions often with fewer resources and facing similar challenges to fellows’ own museums.

“The conference provided a lot to every museum and every museum worker, no matter how small your institution is, or what level you are in your institution.” – Ishaq Mohammed Bello, Nigeria, ITP 2012
The chance to network with UK partners and international colleagues at smaller “smart-working sessions” and at social events was also seen as a positive way to strengthen fellows’ professional relationships and to come up with ideas for possible collaborations, another key aim of the conference.

Study visits to various museums in Glasgow were a particular highlight. Visiting institutions such as Kelvinhall, the Riverside Museum and St Mungo Museum of Religious Life encouraged the group to examine Glasgow’s inclusive approach to its audiences, focusing on local visitors and placing a high importance on daily life and social history, often with objects selected and interpreted by residents.

“I am particularly interested in understanding the museum scene outside of India, the new approaches, so I attended sessions like seeking refuge, museums and peace building, the museum activist, connecting people and objects and places.

By attending all these sessions I realized that we in India, as museum professionals, have to go a long way to utilize museums in the best possible manner, transforming them from store houses to active community centres.” – Manisha Nene, India, ITP 2011

A full conference guide is available on the Museums Association website here: https://www.museumsassociation.org/conference

DIGITAL EXHIBITION WORKSHOP - The remit

Bristol: Seeing the Invisible was an original exhibition concept created by Sue Giles, Kiziili Chole, Rige Shiba, Jana Alaraj, Ishaq Bello and A. Nagender Reddy, Director of the Salar Jung Museum in India and BM Leadership Training Programme fellow, during the Creating museums of world stories workshop in Mumbai.

“The Mumbai workshop started with presentations of the proposed India and the World exhibition at the CSMVS. Then we started on our own ideas of a city and the world. Our team with two exceptions had come to Bristol as their ITP partner museum. Bristol was not however the first choice for our city: we started with Rio de Janeiro, thinking carnival and migrations, but came to a halt as we realised no one knew the city well enough to build on that theme. Then we looked at Bethlehem, thinking about religion, textiles and poverty, but again the initial idea ran out as we couldn’t think of the themes and objects that would make the exhibition. As third choice, we worked on Bristol, and it all fell into place. Using the huge painting of The State Entry, recording the Delhi Durbar of 1903, as our inspiration, we started thinking about diaspora communities (Empire creating the Motherland people could move to) and how cultures survive in new places but are unnoticed by most in that place. Hence our exhibition, Bristol: seeing the invisible, a community exhibition celebrating the different cultures in Bristol that usually pass unnoticed.” – Sue Giles, Senior Curator of World Cultures, Bristol Museums, Galleries and Archives.
Upon arriving in Bristol the team was able to visit *The State Entry into Delhi*, the key ‘gateway’ object of their original exhibition proposal, currently on display at Bristol Museum and Art Gallery, in order to engage in curatorial discussions about the significance and meaning of the painting and how its themes of integration, social cohesion and intercultural dialogue would form the basis of the upcoming online exhibition.

At workshop headquarters in M-Shed, the team was asked to consider aims and objectives, project scope, timescales, risks and benefits, key themes and what kinds of objects might help to support these. By the end of the workshop the team had successfully identified and planned a viable online exhibition with clearly structured themes, key messages and learning objectives, developed a work distribution and timeline, including strategies to overcome challenges, and created a framework to assess the success and sustainability of the project.

**The project**

*Bristol: Seeing the Bigger Picture*

Early on in the workshop it was clear that the team were eager to create an exhibition ‘from the people, for the people’. As in Mumbai, the focus on world stories by exploring the coexistence of different communities in Bristol, with active community participation, was vital. It was also clear that the original title *Bristol: Seeing the Invisible* needed to be reconsidered, as the communities in focus were not necessarily invisible but instead under-examined or ‘hiding in plain sight’.

Discussing these key aims, we were able to establish our three ‘Big Ideas’:

- Looking at communities and culture inside and out.
- Celebrating the co-existence of different cultures.
- Searching for stories which are hidden in broad view.

The team’s primary concerns included ensuring that daily life and customs were at the forefront – to have transposed cultures in a global city as a thread running through each exhibition theme. Therefore, an emphasis on the social and domestic spheres were central and allowed the concept of ‘who makes Bristol’ to shape how the exhibition was developed.

Challenges throughout the workshop included ensuring our themes were clear, avoiding confusion between object types and abstract concepts, clarifying terminology (whether too broad or too narrow) and the importance of relating back to our main themes and objectives. The high level of engagement and the skills and knowledge each team member brought to the project ensured that the end result was a clear, concise and exciting exhibition plan.

“During the process we realised the main title is misleading and therefore we changed the title to, *Bristol: The Bigger Picture*. In this project we want to create through the use of different objects and artefacts a new rich perspective on looking at different communities and cultures in Bristol in particular, as well as other places in our countries or elsewhere.” – Jana Alaraj, Palestine, ITP 2011

For more information, please refer to our digital worksheet in Appendix 1.
Looking ahead – Future Outcomes

Our ITP fellows are currently considering the kinds of objects and supporting material they would like to include in the online exhibition, bearing in mind the themes and key aims of each section.

By spring, all fellows will have chosen a list of objects from their own collections – one for each of the six exhibition sections, which will be considered and discussed with Sue Giles before continuing to write panel text and object labels for completion during the summer.

We hope to have images and text finalised and uploaded onto our digital platform, ready for an exhibition launch by the end of the summer 2017.

For a more complete timeline, please refer to our digital worksheet in Appendix 1.

‘Born Digital’ Toolkit

Notes and discussion points from our exhibition workshop in Bristol will be one of a series of toolkits - resource materials based upon various ITP legacy projects, to share with colleagues across the sector globally and among ITP alumni. These toolkits aim to support institutions in planning, developing and delivering their own learning and engagement offerings.

The Born Digital toolkit will include detailed notes on the planning and delivery processes of our online exhibition, as well as further ‘things to consider’ and step-by-step guidelines for colleagues using the toolkit as a template for their own work. This will be available as an online resource and will be shared among our global network.

Evaluation

We will be undertaking an evaluation to discuss the format, content, and processes of the workshop in Bristol, as well as our measures of success. We will also use the evaluation to consider the benefits of supporting ITP alumni attendance at major museum conferences and networking events.

In the meantime, conversations around the programme highlighted an appreciation of the smaller group format, allowing for more focused attention to be given and for all voices to be heard, and the value in having ITP alumni reunite with their Partner Museums and forge stronger bonds and further potential partnerships.

Legacy

While we are still in the process of developing the ‘Bristol: The Bigger Picture’ online exhibition, there are already clear results in terms of legacy:

- The eventual publication of our ‘Born Digital’ toolkit to be shared among colleagues throughout the ITP network.
- Enhanced relationships across the ITP network between fellows, UK and programme partner museums and the British Museum.
- Insights into how ITP projects might use new media and technology, such as Google Cultural Institute, and social media platforms such as Tumblr for future projects. This could include digitising fellows’ Asahi Shimbun Room 3 display projects, created during the ITP.
- A framework for future ITP workshops.
- A positive precedent, through attendance of the MA conference, for future ITP attendance at national and international museum events where appropriate.
- Proposal ideas for an ITP-delivered session at the Museums Association Conference 2017.

“It is my first time to develop an online exhibition, and through the process of one week, I have learned so much from every team member in the group. Choosing an object to be exhibited online is not an easy task, it needs a lot of sensibility and attention especially when an exhibition representing different cultures or communities. Being with such an international team I have learned a lot, been inspired and motivated to create and try something new with other colleagues or staff. Bristol is a land of art, a land of history and a land of melting cultures, therefore I would simply say: thank you Bristol for inspiring us.” – Jana Alaraj, Palestine, ITP 2011
Supporters, sponsors and partners

We would like to thank our supporters, sponsors and partners below for making this project possible.

Organisers
Bristol Museums, Galleries and Archives
The British Museum

Partner Museums and Organisations
Birzeit University, Palestine
Chhatrapati Shivaji Maharaj Vastu Sangrahalaya, India
Kitale Museum, Kenya
National Commission for Museums and Monuments, Nigeria
National Museum New Delhi, India
University of Applied Arts, Austria

Supported by
The Marie-Louise von Motesiczky Charitable Trust

And the British Museum remains grateful to the range of trusts, foundations and individuals who support the annual International Training Programme each summer.
# Appendix 1

## The Worksheet

### Framework for your project:-

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Task</th>
<th>Notes</th>
</tr>
</thead>
</table>
| **Working title**  
Proposed title for your exhibition. | **Bristol: The Bigger Picture** |
| **Project scope – the Big idea**  
Create a project outline that briefly explains your plans.  
Who will be your target audience and why? | Looking at communities and culture inside and out.  
Celebrating the co-existence of different cultures.  
Searching for stories which are hidden in broad view. |
| **Aims and Objectives**  
What do you hope to achieve? | To enable audiences to understand the role we all play in making a community.  
To share stories.  
To not be scared of difference – to enjoy/celebrate it.  
To celebrate ‘ones’ uniqueness despite culture and national identity.  
To learn/understand Bristol more.  
To help the audience to learn about their own culture through the perspective of others.  
To prepare younger generations to respect each other.  
To break stereotypes.  
To pass on knowledge and experiences.  
To use different perspectives to explore Bristol's culture.  
To ‘share’ experiences and knowledge - the essence of the ITP.  
To encourage audience co-production through interaction, suggestions, objects/stories. |
| **What will your key messages be and why?**  
Key messages are an essential part of your communication with the public. What do you want your visitors to learn? | Audience should be inspired; understanding; self-aware and challenged.  
They should be encouraged to take action and to participate (is celebration and acceptance of difference ‘enough’? What next – what more needs to be done?) |
| **Team structure & processes**  
Who will you work with on this project? Who will be your partners and why? Who will lead? | India; Palestine; Nigeria; Kenya; UK.  
Other communities (and potential partnerships) will come from feedback. |
| **Resources**  
People, time and money. | India; Palestine; Nigeria; Kenya; UK to provide time, text and images.  
UK (ITP) to provide finances to any design/web work required.  
Costs to consider:  
Future in-person meetings  
Potential initial design cost if done externally  
Potential ongoing cost - hosting of exhibition on web platform |
| **Assumptions**  
What needs to happen for your project to be successful? | All of the team will contribute as agreed.  
Text and images supplied by team members will have all the necessary permissions  
All team members will support each other.  
We will find and agree on an online platform to use.  
Management/team members will make sure time is allowed for this project.  
Team members will keep to deadlines and communicate well. |
<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Hierarchy</th>
<th>1. <strong>My generation:</strong> 1(^{st}), 2(^{nd}) and 3(^{rd}) generations coming to Bristol and why, Crafts, Sports and Games</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>2. <strong>Marking the moment:</strong> Birth, Marriage, Death</td>
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<td>3. <strong>Sounds of the city:</strong> Chants, Prayers, Instruments</td>
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<td>4. <strong>Bristol speaks:</strong> Graffiti, Script, Folk tales, Oral tradition</td>
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<td></td>
<td>5. <strong>Looking the part:</strong> Dress, Costume, Hair &amp; adornment, Body art, Gender</td>
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<td></td>
<td>6. <strong>Laying the table:</strong> Spices, Crockery and utensils, Table arrangement and decoration</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Process and timescale</th>
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<tbody>
<tr>
<td><strong>What is process and who will take ownership of each part? List your goals and milestones</strong></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>December 2016 onwards&lt;br&gt;Emma will act as liaison for all text and images; be the point of contact for any queries or questions, help or support and will begin investigating and sharing what the exhibition might look like.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>By end January 2017&lt;br&gt;Each team member will choose one object for each of six sections (see themes and sub-themes below) and complete SHEET 1 and return it to Emma.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>By mid-March 2017&lt;br&gt;Sue will sift the objects and come up with a suggested ‘final’ list for the group to share and discuss.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>By end May 2017&lt;br&gt;Sue will have written the introduction and the label text for the Delhi Durbar.</td>
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<tr>
<td>Ishaq will write the panel text for the first section - my generation – and the text for his object labels</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Rige will write the panel text for the second section - marking the moment – and the text for her object labels</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Jana will write the panel text for the third section - sounds of the city – and the text for her object labels</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Sue will write the panel text for the fourth section - Bristol speaks – and the text for her object labels</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Kiziili will write the panel text for the fifth section - looking the part – and the text for his object labels</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Manisha will write the panel text for the sixth section - laying the table – and the text for her object labels</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Please send all text to Emma using SHEET 2 as your guide.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>By end June 2017&lt;br&gt;Sue will have edited all the text.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>By end July 2017&lt;br&gt;The project team will have given final approval to the text and provided images as requested.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>August 2017 onwards&lt;br&gt;The process of putting the exhibition online will begin.</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
**Press and marketing**  
*What are the potential sources of media coverage?*

- Link the exhibition to all the team’s websites.  
- ITP team can promote the exhibition among the alumni.  
- It will be promoted in the ITP Report 2017; the Newsletter 2017 and the ITP Bulletin (coming soon).  
- We can contact embassies – UK and abroad.  
- We can use twitter, the ITP blog, Facebook etc.  
- Local news sources (Bristol and others) and community groups.

**Supporting events**  
*Might there be events inspired by this online exhibition?*

- This can be developed around feedback (objects and stories) from the audience.  
- There could be a quiz/game linked to the exhibition.  
- We should look at events around accessibility for the show for those with sight loss.

**Benefits, challenges and risks**

**Benefits**  
- Working together - engagement and collaboration.  
- Partnerships – new and existing.  
- This is an ITP/Mumbai outcome.  
- Research and new information on objects and themes that might otherwise not be done.  
- Put objects on a public platform that might otherwise be in storage.  
- More visibility for the collections and institutions.  
- A new context for the objects.  
- Skills development.  
- And see above exhibitions aims and objectives.

**Challenges and risks**  
- An institution does not want to take part.  
- Control – Letters written to Directors explaining the project and permissions sought.  
- Mitigation – look for objects from other institutions and partners.  
- Lack of time.  
- Control – structured timeline and consensus on workload.  
- Mitigation – adjust workloads and use any help other team members, particularly the ITP team, can provide.  
- Permissions not being given for staff time and use of images.  
- Control – see above.  
- Mitigation – long lead-in time to find a workable format and input from the whole group.

**Measuring success**  
*What will success look like and how will it be measured? What will be your evaluation method – visitor numbers, tracking, questionnaires, interviews*

- Number of ‘hits’/’clicks’. Things to think about – how many is ‘good’, and how to measure?  
- Feedback both on the site and from colleagues – ongoing throughout lifecycle of exhibition, not just at end of the project  
- Team evaluation after the project to assess impact on the group.

**Outputs, outcomes & legacy**

- Exhibition goes online.  
- Create a toolkit on ‘creating an online exhibition – ‘Born Digital’  
- Report on the process to share online with the ITP alumni and other colleagues.  
- Evaluation.

**Sustainability**

- Further ‘online’ exhibitions from Mumbai.  
- Could this model apply to the ITP exhibition proposal projects too?
## SHEET 1

**Objects:**

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Object (Description &amp; image)</th>
<th>Collection reference</th>
<th>Key points this object will cover</th>
<th>‘Lending’ institution</th>
<th>Theme</th>
<th>Additional supporting material (Images, maps, film)</th>
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## SHEET 2

**Introductory statement** - word count: 180–200

**Writing panels** - word count: 150 - 250

**Labels** - word count: 50 – 80

### Labels:

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Title</th>
<th></th>
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<tbody>
<tr>
<td><strong>Country of origin, culture, date</strong></td>
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</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>Provenance</strong></td>
<td></td>
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<tr>
<td><strong>Material</strong></td>
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</tbody>
</table>
| **Brief commentary**  
50 - 55 words | |
| **Donor, lender, bequest information** | |
| **Collection number** | |
Useful resources

Examples of virtual exhibition platforms:

http://info.omeka.net/showcase/
http://www.bl.uk/onlinegallery/onlineex/index.html
http://www.nationalarchives.gov.uk/online-exhibitions/
https://www.google.com/culturalinstitute/beta/
https://owlstand.com/

Guidelines and frameworks:

http://www.indicate-project.eu/- “Handbook on virtual exhibitions and virtual performances”
http://www.museumsassociation.org/museum-practice/17102011-practical-tips-for-creating-online-exhibitions
http://ii.library.jhu.edu/tag/online-exhibitions/


“Build It Once: A Basic Primer for the Creation of Online Exhibitions” - Sarah Goodwin Thiel