

The British  
Museum

# International Training Programme

Reflections on the  
International Training  
Programme, 2006-2010

# Towards a global network

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The façade of the  
British Museum

## **Preface**

Neil MacGregor  
Director of the  
British Museum

Founded in 1753, the British Museum has always been for everyone, with a collection from across the world, for use by the citizens of the world. This is now more true than ever, with nearly 6 million visitors every year, and countless more engaging with the collection through touring exhibitions, our website and other activities. The collection is used in myriad ways, whether by schools learning about ancient history, or as a starting point for conversations about contemporary issues.

The Museum has long worked in partnership with institutions across the world, on exhibitions, excavations or other collaborative projects. The richness of the collection, and the specialist staff who work on it, represent a wonderful resource that can be used to form and to inform the curators, exhibition designers, education staff and conservators of the future. The British Museum is also a setting where conversations and debates between people from different backgrounds can and should take place. Since 2006, the International Training Programme has been a highlight of the British Museum's year, when the corridors, storerooms and offices of the museum resonate with specialists from different corners of the globe discussing museums and wider issues of culture. In these face to face encounters, friendships are formed, ideas exchanged and collaborations conceived. Preconceptions are dispelled, and connections revealed. The British Museum becomes truly a museum of the world.

The network of this programme's alumni is a testament to the bright future of museums across the globe. Six years on, they now form a world-wide network of professionals, with a shared passion for presenting world cultures to diverse audiences.

Neil MacGregor  
Director, British Museum

## Global Conversations in the British Museum

Neal Spencer,  
Claire Messenger  
and  
Shezza Edris,  
British Museum

‘The ITP has been especially helpful in building good relations with colleagues in Turkey. Through it we have been able to both consolidate existing friendships and make entirely new friends. Long may the ITP continue to flourish as the United Nations of the world of museums.’

Ian Jenkins, Curator,  
Greece and Rome,  
The British Museum

In early 2004, the British Museum was approached to help train young curators for the new Grand Egyptian Museum, destined to become one of the largest museum spaces in the world, in the shadow of the Giza Pyramids. The following two summers witnessed seven young curators and archaeologists spending six weeks in London, being introduced to a wide range of activities across the British Museum.

Though recognised as a successful programme, both inside the British Museum and amongst colleagues in Egypt, we realised there was an opportunity to do more, and offer training that would really harness the potential of the British Museum’s collection and staff. The collection of over 7 million artefacts from across the globe and the span of human history can be used to tell many histories of the world through galleries and exhibitions, publications, online and with other programming. But the Museum can also be a forum for a range of conversations transcending cultural boundaries. Though there is a long history of departments engaging with specialists across the world, this typically occurred within geographical or cultural boundaries. The International Training Programme (ITP) was, from its inception, designed to foster conversations across these boundaries, alongside skills sharing, between curators from across the world, from very different institutions and backgrounds. It was to be a platform for mutual learning, discussion and collaboration – but also a place where friendships and networks could flourish – rather than a prescriptive training course.

Looking back on five years of the Programme, the participants – and all those who have generously donated time in the British Museum and across many other institutions in the UK – have achieved all of this, and more, though there is also much more that can be done. Skills have undoubtedly been learnt – and applied, as is evident from every contribution in this book. But it is those moments where we see a Chinese ceramic specialist explaining the cultural context of a Ming vase to an exhibition designer from Kenya, or when the ancient cultures of Sudan are unravelled for an Indian archaeologist, that one realises the potential impact of such a Programme.

Since its inception, 93 participants have come from 16 countries: China, Egypt, Ethiopia, Ghana, India, Iran, Iraq, Kenya, Mozambique, Nigeria, Palestine, South Africa, Sudan, Turkey, Uganda and the United Arab Emirates. A clear focus on the Middle East, Africa and south and east Asia reflects the strengths of the British Museum’s collection, the expertise in its staff, but also areas of the world that are a priority in

‘Every summer we take the ITP fellows to Kenwood then walk across Hampstead Heath to my home for tea, and every year I experience the pleasure of seeing them come together as a community of many personalities, talents and nations. The programme is building a worldwide web of expertise and friendship for all concerned: the participants, their institutions and colleagues in the source countries, the British Museum and the museums around the UK that have taken part from the beginning of the programme.’

Frances Carey, Senior  
Consultant for Public  
Engagement, The British  
Museum

the Museum’s international strategy. This strategy informs our research, fieldwork, public programming and the creation and hosting of travelling exhibitions. But the Programme is of course primarily designed to help with the development of museum and heritage specialists in those countries where opportunities are limited. Despite significant interest, places have not been offered to participants from countries where training or degree programmes in museology exist, such as in North America, Europe or Australasia.

The selection process varies. Once the range of countries for a given year is agreed upon, taking into account the British Museum’s activities, we work closely with relevant government ministries, but also individual museums and academic bodies, to select participants. In some cases interviews are held for the position, in others participants are identified through other collaborative programmes, such as when the British Museum worked on the redevelopment of the storerooms in the National Museum of Kenya. The interviews to select Egyptian participants in Cairo have become quite an event within the halls of Ministry of State for Antiquities: 171 candidates were interviewed one year! It is encouraging that unsuccessful applicants return the following year, with more experience, skills and a confident idea of how they would benefit from being selected. There are few stipulations for candidates – other than a passion for interpreting culture for diverse audiences, and having decent spoken and written English, in order to take full advantage of the programme.

The British Museum covered the costs of the first Programme in 2006, but thereafter the generosity of donors and charitable trusts have enabled us to expand the scale of the training, while also ensuring participants do not have to cover any travel, accommodation or subsistence costs while in the UK. In some years, where vacancies permit, additional participants have been directly funded by their own museum, notably from the National Museum of China and the Bank of Uganda Money Museum.

### At the museum

Naturally, such an ambitious Programme is a fluid entity, as we learn what works and what does not, guided by the participants themselves. The criticisms of one year have always underpinned improvements for those who would arrive the next summer. But the framework put in place for 2006 has remained fundamental to the programme. Approximately half of the trainees’ time is spent together as a group, being exposed to a range of museum practices. A sample schedule

can be found in the Appendices. Each of the conservation and scientific studios at the Museum is visited. The intention is not to provide training in conservation of, say, wall plaster. Rather, we hope to reveal how curators can work with conservators and scientists to inform understanding of objects, and how this information can then be disseminated to different audiences. This concept runs through all of the other sessions, whether learning about museum security, the Portable Antiquities Scheme, how the volunteer programme is administered, or the research undertaken by the Museum's Interpretation Unit to inform new galleries and exhibitions.

Hands-on learning is a key part of the Programme, whether being taught about mount-making and label production with our Museum Assistants, or how objects are packed for travel – the latter with shipping agents Constantine. While in London, we also ensure that the trainees see beyond the British Museum. The Horniman Museum in south London is always a particular highlight, with its emphasis on local visitors, a ground-breaking musical instruments display and the beautiful gardens. The British Library and Royal Botanical Gardens, Kew, have also played an important role, as many of the participants work with paper archives and botanical collections.

Funding from the World Collections Programme (2008-2010) provided the impetus for a more formal involvement of five national institutions in London: the British Library, Natural History Museum, V&A, Tate Galleries and Kew Gardens. This saw the introduction of the Friday afternoon seminars, a forum for presenting and discussing aspects of museum work on a particular theme. In 2010, we discussed 'museums and new technologies', 'research and archaeology in museums', 'new buildings, refurbished spaces – challenges for museums' and 'audience survey and development'.

Bringing all the participants together for these sessions, which makes up half of the Programme, maximises the opportunities for dialogue, learning about each other's working challenges and solutions to problems that arise. But the ITP is successful because there are changes in pace, and different environments. Each of the participants is assigned to a Department in the Museum, within which they spend the remaining half of the programme. Collections departments are a natural fit for most participants, so a Chinese curator is assigned to our Asia Department, or a Nigerian curator takes her place in the Department of Africa, Oceania and the Americas. This part of the Programme can then be individually tailored. Research time, using the libraries of

'One of the great strengths of the programme has been the links it has built between international partners and regional museums in the UK. Experience and expertise has been shared and strong, lasting relationships built. The British Museum is always looking to make connections between the local, national and international spheres and the ITP is a fantastic way of doing this.'

John Orna-Ornstein,  
Head of London and  
National Programmes,  
The British Museum

the British Museum, is always in demand, but individuals also work on defined projects, such as the cataloguing of Palestinian archaeological sites, or translating Arabic inscriptions on tombstones from Egypt. The Programme has never been strictly curatorial, and many participants have benefited from placements in non-collections departments, whether it be with Legal Services, in the Department of Exhibitions, or that of Learning Volunteers & Audiences.

The culmination of the ITP is a series of presentations given by the participants, to an audience of fellow trainees but also a range of staff from across the British Museum and beyond. Six weeks earlier, during their first morning in London, each had given a five minute presentation on their work back home. For many this is their first public presentation in English, and an opportunity to show their new colleagues and friends where they work and a brief introduction to their research interests. The prize for the most spectacular office goes to Sun Miao, whose desk is in a historic room within the Forbidden Palace in Beijing! The final presentations, in contrast, see each participant propose an exhibition on an aspect of their own culture. They are encouraged to use as many ideas from what they have seen in the last weeks, and guidelines are kept to a minimum, to ensure the presentations reflect the different style and approach of each participant. The small Room 3 displays near the entrance to the Museum are used as a template in terms of space. The results are often stunning, even in the more confident manner in which the talks are delivered. In a mere 5 minutes, a polished presentation of an exhibition concept can be delivered. A small selection of presentation titles evokes the wonderful variety of specialisms and approaches.

*Beads speak: Beads from Ghana*  
*Spreading light and beauty – the Mishkah of Sultan Hassan*  
*From Nature to Culture, Ndumi as a tool of identity in the*  
*Agikuyu initiation rites*  
*The Voice of the Rickshaw*

Throughout, the learning is multi-directional: not just towards and between the participants, but British Museum staff also benefit significantly. While this may be the result of a specialist in cuneiform tablets from Mosul University spending time in the Department of the Middle East, we are also constantly reminded of how similar are the problems facing museums all over the world – and the commitment and energy of those willing to find solutions. We learn of the intricacies

'An excellent opportunity for me to learn about different museums and meet the curators. I hope that this programme has brought all of us together and made the future of museology more bright.'

Riza Abbas, India

of museum administration across the globe, but also valuable insights into improving how training can be delivered. The contribution of the partner museums across the UK in this regard is notable – much of what participants encountered on recent incarnations of the ITP was shaped by what we saw being done elsewhere. The expectations session on the participants' first day in Newcastle became a standard feature of our own schedule, while a project where trainees worked on star objects from Glasgow Museums inspired our final-day exhibition presentations.

### Beyond London

The British Museum has always collaborated on a wide variety of research, exhibition and programming with other museums and institutions around the UK, now termed the Partnership UK scheme. From day one, it was hoped a number of these partner institutions could participate in the Programme, to provide trainees with a broader understanding of the UK museum sector, but particularly to see innovative ways of working.

The first intake of participants in 2006 had the opportunity to spend two weeks at one of Tyne & Wear Archives and Museums, Lincoln: The Collection and Amgueddfa Cymru – National Museums Wales. These placements have proved one of the highlights of the Programme for all concerned. The smaller groups of trainees, generally four at each museum, led to more opportunities for individual engagement, but also revealed how multi-site organisations functioned, a model familiar to many from their own countries. With a smaller group, the participants gain more hands-on experience, whether installing an exhibition at The Collection in Lincoln, or excavating Roman remains at Llanmaes near Cardiff. We have since been joined by Birmingham Museum & Art Galleries, Bristol Museums Galleries & Archives, Glasgow Museums and the Manchester Museum and Whitworth Art Gallery. It is a testament to the success of this element of the programme that, almost without exception, the participants return to London feeling that they had been to the best organisation. The contributions by past participants in this book are interspersed with reflections from the participating organisations, written by those who helped plan and deliver the Programme outside London.

**'It is fantastic and exciting to work and live for 40 days with people of different nationalities. Every day we learned more about the languages, habits and traditions of each other.'**

**Soad Fayez Mahrous, Egypt**

### After work

While the Programme seeks to encourage dialogue and create a global network of museum specialists fascinated with disseminating knowledge about world cultures, we recognise that many of the most important discussions happen beyond the confines of the museum spaces in which the scheduled training takes place. As such, we have always organised a limited number of excursions in and around London – whether it be to a Proms concert at the Royal Albert Hall, a riverine progression up the Thames on the way to Kew Gardens, or the popular visit to Stonehenge. But it is impromptu events that are most fondly remembered. A visit to a historic London pub. The decision to hold a potlach at Schafer House on the last night before flying home – each person preparing a typical dish from their national cuisines. 'Schafer House' are words indelibly marked in the minds of those who've been on, or worked on, the Programme. The student accommodation a short walk from the British Museum makes up for its lack of luxury with a sense of collegial togetherness. We hear snippets of conversations that have taken place, but only the trainees know the full extent of what happened in the kitchens, dining rooms and corridors of Schafer House – whether debates about the interpretation of Islam, an evacuation when a rice-cooker caught fire at 2am, or discussing where to buy bagpipes to bring home as gifts.

### Towards a global network?

This book was born – like the Programme itself – in Cairo, deep in the alleyways of the Islamic town, framed by slender 14<sup>th</sup> century AD minarets echoing to the sounds of the call to prayer. Past participants and staff from various UK museums were deep in discussion: fifty-two alumni had responded to an invite to gather in Cairo for a three-day workshop in March 2010. The seminar was generously funded by the World Collections Programme, and hosted by the Egyptian Supreme Council of Antiquities (SCA). As the genesis of the programme lay in a request from Dr. Zahi Hawass, then Secretary General of the SCA and now Minister of State for Antiquities, this was a fitting setting in which to look back on what participants had been doing since their experiences on the ITP, and especially how what they had learnt and experienced may have informed their work. In two sessions of presentations, we heard a fantastic array of illustrated talks, with several themes emerging again and again, including education, community outreach, teamwork and partnerships, whether seen through research projects, exhibitions or other

**'These colleagues have become our friends. Generously they have shared their knowledge helping us to understand their organisations better, as well as to question the ways in which we work and live in the UK.'**

**Jessica Harrison-Hall,  
Curator, Department of  
Asia, The British Museum**



public programming. It is these themes that lie behind the organisation of this book. Naturally, all the contributions touch on a variety of subjects, so the arrangement of the essays is not a strict classification.

The seminar was striking in how bonds were created across the year-groups, and truly underlined how much of a community this group of specialists had become, something made easier with the ITP blog and a dedicated Facebook group, both tools unimaginable ten years earlier. Alongside the working sessions in Cairo, we visited the Citadel of Mohammed Ali, the Coptic, Islamic and Egyptian Museums, and of course the pyramids of Giza. Our Egyptian alumni were the perfect guides to these 5000 years of history.

All 93 participants of the 2006-2010 programmes were invited to submit essays for this book; it is unsurprising many could not contribute due to work commitments. Nonetheless, the 45 stories included here provide a fascinating snapshot of museum and related work across the Middle East, Asia and Africa in the early 21<sup>st</sup> century. A list of all past participants can be found in the Appendices.

This book can only capture a moment in time: as you read this, many will be embarking on other exciting projects, and of course the International Training Programme continues. New participants will share ideas, thoughts, skills and insights amongst the collections of the British Museum and other institutions in Birmingham, Bristol, Cardiff, Glasgow, Lincoln, Manchester and the Newcastle area. The range of countries supplying participants will broaden too: 2011 sees specialists from Afghanistan, Brazil and Mexico join the Programme for the first time.

‘It is important to draw on experience from others rather than close our door to the outside world. Standing on the shoulders of a giant will make you see further and think deeper.’

Sun Jing, China

[www.britishmuseum.org](http://www.britishmuseum.org)

For more information on the International Training Programme, visit:  
[http://www.britishmuseum.org/the\\_museum/museum\\_in\\_the\\_world/curatorial\\_training\\_programme.aspx](http://www.britishmuseum.org/the_museum/museum_in_the_world/curatorial_training_programme.aspx)

To contact the International Training Programme team:  
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 The International Training Programme blog can be found at:  
<http://bmtrainingprog.wordpress.com>

‘It seemed for me I was visiting these countries and seeing their museums through the conversations and questions.’

Shadia Abdu Rabo, Sudan





**A global network reunited**  
Former ITP participants,  
staff from The British  
Museum and UK museums,  
outside the Egyptian  
Museum during the Cairo  
seminar in 2010



# Display

‘The idea of making museum exhibitions available to the socially excluded members of society will be a welcome development in our museum. In one of our ITP seminars a video showed a controversial object from Africa, called the *Throne of Weapons*, being showcased in a prison. Stories of how some of the convicts ended up in prison, accompanied by pictures and drawings made by these convicts ... were very touching.’

Cynthia Iruobe, Nigeria

**Eileen O Musundi**  
Exhibition Designer, National Museums of Kenya, Nairobi

At a seminar of museum researchers and curators discussing ideas for new exhibitions, it was said to me that a designer is not a ‘museum person’. Having newly joined the museum world, this caught me by surprise and had me thinking of various ways I could earn my place as a ‘museum person’. Four years later, I think I am well on my way to earning that title – through on-the-job experience, but also the confidence gained through the ITP. The programme created a forum for making contacts with fellow museum professionals across the world, and exchanging ideas for holding and/or contributing to future joint exhibitions.

We also discovered unexpected common ground, for example, my institution, the National Museums of Kenya, has signed an MOU with the National Museum of China to hold joint archaeological excavations along the Kenya coastline, where the ship of a Chinese navigator, Zheng He, is believed to have sunk in the 15<sup>th</sup> Century AD. Similarly, it was during our tour of the Egyptian Museum in Cairo, as part of the Cairo seminar in 2010, that I finally understood the significance of the Rosetta Stone, and how it helped all those inscriptions be translated and understood.

In London, I had to make my first presentation to an international audience. Since then, I have gained confidence in presenting, and use shorter, more focused presentations to convey my point. I have twice participated in joint British Museum, National Museum of Ethiopia and National Museums of Kenya training, where we shared knowledge on exhibition planning and delivery.

From my training at the British Museum, I acquired a well-rounded view of looking at exhibitions, i.e. the handling and display of objects, conservation issues and public programmes aimed at children and communities. I also sought and received much assistance from professionals



A display on the wildlife of Sibiloi National Park, Kenya

at the British Museum on design issues, such as lighting, and on display units for a travelling exhibition, *Kanga Stories*.

The National Museums of Kenya underwent a rigorous restructuring in the not too distant past. One of the ways this is most visible is in fresh, interactive exhibitions that will optimise our museums’ educational and recreational goals. I am part of a very vibrant and busy group of exhibition designers, and together we have worked on several areas of the museum.

## The importance of the object:

Rather than just looking at an object for its aesthetic value, we listen and try to understand the story the object is telling. Only then will we be able to present it without diminishing its value. For example, a simple leather jacket and a pair of handmade leather shorts – that was likely to be passed over in favour of a smart military jacket – actually turned out to be the more valuable object. It belonged to a renowned Kenyan freedom fighter, Dedan Kimathi, and it now occupies a proud place in our new *Historia ya Kenya* Gallery (History of Kenya).

## Handling and displaying objects:

No matter how commonplace an object is, as soon as it is acquired in a museum collection, it is handled almost reverently, as if it were the only object of its kind in the world. We are also careful not to damage it during display, as it is to be on display for 100 years and more. Care is taken so that neither the object nor the handler is harmed – for example, the old method of mounting coins using heavy glues has now been replaced with mounting using stainless steel pins.

Care is also taken that the object is positioned in such a way that it respects the community from which it was taken, and that it does not offend these communities. For example, Kanga, a popular printed cloth with a written message, should be displayed flat with the message in its proper reading position. It should not be shown upside down – no matter how aesthetically pleasing that is, even if space is limited. We are also exploring various ways of displaying texts and graphics to encourage wider readership, such as using highlights within thematic areas of exhibitions to create points of interest, and encouraging audience participation through the use of questions and handling objects.

## Audience participation:

When designing exhibitions, we create areas of interest around which organised groups can gather and take time to get in depth information about a particular theme, e.g. the school tree in the new *Historia ya Kenya* exhibition, which refers to the early learning that took place under a wide, shady tree. The recreation of the early railway line is also a favourite with both children and adults.

## Community participation:

The exhibitions we make are not just for the community. They are about communities and we try to involve them at every stage, from the curator’s initial research and acquisitions to the local artists who paint murals and sculpt figurines for upcoming exhibitions. At the installation of a regional museum in Wajir in northeastern Kenya, we visited a traditional Somali nomadic community in the hope of understanding how mobile houses were constructed. We then recreated one within our exhibition, using local materials and techniques.



A display in the *Historia ya Kenya* gallery, National Museums of Kenya.

## Xu Jing

Researcher, Court History Department, The Palace Museum, Beijing, China

Cultural festivals also enhance static exhibitions by bringing the objects to life. During these festivals, cultural practices can be demonstrated, such as song and dance, sustenance, spirituality and interaction, and both war and peace. An example is the Loiyangalani Cultural Festival, on the coast of Lake Turkana in southeastern Kenya, which annually brings eight diverse communities together in peaceful celebration.

At all our various museums around Kenya, the host communities not only provide resources, they also assist at the installation stages. Communities can also utilise cultural heritage to create wealth – tourism revenue is particularly enhanced by cultural festivals, with communities providing transport, accommodation and catering services. The festival also serves as a forum for nurturing talents, especially in the arts and crafts, as well as research. Through all of these activities, cultural awareness is further enhanced, the ‘old’ ways should not always be abandoned in favour of the ‘new’.

So... I am not just a designer but a museum professional!

In my museum, my main job is creating exhibitions, including drafting themes, selecting objects and writing explanatory text. From last year, I have been preparing my new exhibition, which consists of two parts. One section is on the Dowager Empress Chong Qing, and will feature paintings, with labels, behind glass. The other part represents the interior spaces of Shou Kangong Palace where the Dowager Empress once lived. My time in the UK prompted many new ideas that I will use in this and future exhibitions.

The Royal Pavilion in Brighton took me back in time. In my exhibitions, designers generally want to use music, video, and digital technology within the Palace. I disagreed with this approach, preferring every room to be recreated as it was in the Dowager Empress's period. So we did not use labels, just boards (to indicate directions for visitors) and a few touch screen applications, which held the images and information on the Palace.

In our museum exhibitions, we do not display many objects in one exhibition, as we believe visitors will be bored and overwhelmed with a large number of artefacts. For example, one of my exhibitions had seven separate galleries of around 100m<sup>2</sup>, but with only 20-30 objects in each one. We tend to display the most typical objects to explain our exhibition, to achieve the maximum impact on visitors. In some places in the UK, I found a very different approach. I was deeply impressed by the Chinese Ceramics of the Sir Percival David Collection in the British Museum where a great number of objects are displayed in the galleries, and the same technique is used in the Horniman Museum with the musical instruments gallery. In the V&A, there are also galleries bustling with objects. My photographs of these displays shocked my colleagues, but also excited them, and we hope to try this with future exhibitions, possibly after seeking feedback from visitors.

In my exhibitions, there is always a lot of text to provide information for visitors, but I was surprised to see no labels at all in the textile exhibition of the Whitworth Art Gallery in Manchester. Rather, there was a book beside every cabinet. Frances Pritchard, the curator, explained ‘not every visitor wants to see labels. Some of them just want to see the objects. If someone wants to know more about these objects, they can look them up in these books. But these books cannot be permitted to be taken away, visitors

Xu Jing at work at The Palace Museum, Beijing, China



‘Every museum has its own view, and the more you see the more you learn.’

Sayan Bhattacharya, India

just read them in the gallery.’

The books used in the Whitworth Art Gallery can satisfy different needs for different visitors, so I employed a similar approach with our latest exhibition, producing simple books with object information. This made the display more striking, and we also saved money.

In one of the weekly seminars at the British Museum, we were asked the questions: ‘Should museums do research?’, ‘Should research in museums be different to research done by universities?’ and ‘How should museums do research?’ In my museum, we also think about these questions all the time. In fact, in the course of creating an exhibition, I often find there are so many subjects that deserve thorough research. At the end of 2008, I finished the exhibition *Emperors’ Scholarly Life*, and from the beginning of this exhibition until now, I have continued researching the scholarly life of emperors, including how they studied every day, what subjects they studied, and what kind of teachers they selected. I hope to produce two or three academic papers discussing these questions.

## Ghalia Gar El-Nabi Abd El-Rahman

Deputy Director, Sudan National Museum, Khartoum



Pink granite ram-headed sphinx outside the Sudan National Museum, Khartoum.

John Arkell was the first to hold the job of full-time Commissioner for Archaeology and Ethnography in Sudan, beginning in 1939. He organised the antiquities into an exhibition in the corridors of Gordon Memorial College, now the University of Khartoum. This exhibition formed the basic nucleus of the first modern museum in Sudan - the Khartoum Museum - set up by his successor, Peter Shinnie. But at the end of the Nubian campaign (1964), in which archaeologists aimed to record and salvage ancient sites to be flooded by the Aswan High Dam, a new museum was deemed necessary to exhibit the complete historical sequence of the Nubian and Sudanese cultures. The idea was realised in the Sudan National Museum, opened in 1971, with two galleries, one for ancient cultures, and the other for the Christian and Islamic periods.

Since the museum opened, the ancient cultures gallery has witnessed only minor changes and limited cosmetic modifications (adding or removing objects and showcases), but a re-appraisal of the gallery has not been undertaken, nor effective security measures put in place. Yet during the last four decades, archaeological research on Sudanese cultures has brought to light a lot of new data and information which should be made available to the wider public. Therefore we should think about new and modern methods for displaying the material in our ancient cultures gallery.

The gallery is limited not only by the traditional arrangement of the exhibition, but also the material it contains, the bulk of which comes from the excavations of the Nubian dam campaign. As such, it does not really represent the ancient cultures of Sudan. We need to prepare a well studied, detailed scenario for what we intend to realise, based on a clear idea about what we want to say and what we want the people to know about Sudanese civilisation.

The exhibition should not merely be a collection of fine and interesting objects from different periods. The arrangement of the cultural sequence from the Upper Palaeolithic to the Post-Meroitic period must give visitors easily understandable information about each of these periods and phases, how the people lived, how their communities developed, and their contribution to Sudanese cultural heritage. Bearing in mind the vast territories in which these cultural groups developed, the multi-cultural and societal composition of these ancient communities should be exposed. The sequence should start with the Upper Palaeolithic, Mesolithic and



Neolithic periods. Next are the historical eras of the A- and C-groups, characteristic cultures of Lower Nubia, between the First and Second Nile Cataracts. Old Kush (the so-called Kerma culture), the first organised African Kingdom in sub-Saharan, needs special space and attention in the gallery. Egypt's role in Nubia is represented by two periods (Middle and New Kingdoms) and the display would show both the positive and negative influence of the pharaonic presence in Nubia. The second and third phases of the Kushite Kingdom, the Napatan and Meroitic periods (9<sup>th</sup> century BC – 4<sup>th</sup> century AD), were some of the most important chapters in Sudanese history, characterised by a mixture of influences from Pharaonic, Hellenistic, Roman and Byzantine Egypt, in addition to indigenous traditions. The presentation of these two periods must reflect this cultural melting-pot. The last part of the exhibition, on the Post-Meroitic period (350-550 AD), will represent the last stage of Kushite history, and should reflect the problems of the period, the cultural changes and the reasons behind the disintegration of the Meroitic state.

Sufficient funding will be needed for any such redevelopment. A new display must demonstrate different types of human activities in each period. We should bear in mind that the museum's visitors comprise various levels of knowledge, especially in a country with low literacy rates. Therefore, written labels and texts must be clear and accompanied by drawings or photos to explain certain aspects of daily life. Video and other multimedia, as well as panoramic scenes, can also be of a great help in the gallery. Disabled visitors should be catered for. The changes in the gallery should not concentrate entirely on the pleasure of visiting the past, but also on education, as the museum has a responsibility towards the younger generations. A special place should be prepared for the school pupils, where educational programmes can be organised for them.

## Anjan Dey

Assistant Curator,  
Design & Display, Mehrangarh  
Fort Museum, Jodhpur, India

New signage at the  
entrance to the Mehrangarh  
Fort Museum, Jodhpur, India.



I have been working in the Mehrangarh Fort Museum for three years, but the ITP has provided me with much more confidence to present myself as a museum professional and take decisions at work. Following my return to India, I was involved in an evaluation of the travelling exhibition organised by the V&A, *Indian Life and Landscape*, which was exhibited here in 2009. Meeting staff from the other host museums gave us a chance to understand each other's limitations and strengths, but interacting with so many experienced museum professionals reminded me of my days spent on the ITP.

'At the end of the training, we were asked to design a small exhibition each, this was an opportunity to practice [what we learnt]. We could combine our thoughts about the training with our cultural background and the understanding of the British Museum's collections, along with improved English, to expound fully. It was also a chance to learn about other participants' knowledge structure, approaches to exhibition planning and a sense of the knowledge they had gained.'

Ding Pengbo, China

(Below)

Light designs projected  
onto the walls and floors of  
the exhibition *Splendours  
from the Yongle and Xuande  
Reigns of China's Ming  
Dynasty* at the Palace  
Museum, Beijing, China.

## Sun Miao

Deputy Head of Design Studio,  
Department of Exhibitions,  
The Palace Museum, Beijing,  
China



During my time in the UK, I keenly observed the signage systems at different museums, and after returning, developed new signage for our fort and its exhibition galleries. One very useful visit was to Cardiff Castle, where I took ideas for the colours and materials of exterior signage, and especially where information is placed. Returning to Jodhpur, I started spending more time at our museum entrance gate, so as to understand the visitors' requirements when they first arrive. After discussions with colleagues and senior staff members, I developed and installed signage at the gates to help visitor flow, but also to help people get a better idea of the activities and facilities that our museum offers.

In December 2010 our curatorial team completed documenting and photographing all the miniature paintings in our storage, which will soon be moved to a new location in the museum. One aim of the photo documentation is to enter all of the information on a database and upload it to our new website, which will feature an online collection of textiles and miniature paintings. Eventually, other parts of our collection will be added. The brief time spent in the British Museum's photography studio taught me to carefully consider light and background when photographing, and also to ensure the quality of images produced. Although we are not using the cameras available to the British Museum, we have obtained good results with a Sony Alpha 200 and minor Photoshop editing. These new images can now be included in the online database.

After the ITP, my approach to work has become more focused, and I have begun to work towards bridging the gap between the museum and its visitors, especially in developing educational activities for children. The ITP helped me understand the varied functions of museums, which I always read about in books but had not experienced personally. It also provided a platform to discuss these ideas with professionals from around the world, probably the most beneficial aspect of the Programme.

In the late 19th century, William Morris launched the Arts and Crafts Movement, combining practicality with beauty through handicraft. Beautiful things help nourish people's minds, so as to solve some social problems. These ideas, a hundred years later, still have a positive significance. China is undergoing a period of rapid economic development, yet the lack of cultivation in traditional arts, and the lack of proper awareness of the protection and inheritance of traditional craftsmanship, remains widespread. Under such circumstances, the museum has an obligation to play a key role in these fields.

The exhibition *Splendours from the Yongle and Xuande Reigns of China's Ming Dynasty*, held in the Palace Museum in September 2010, presented a panoramic picture of early Ming Dynasty art (1403-1435 AD). Our exhibition aimed to interest visitors in traditional art, but also to reflect on life today. Therefore I chose a multi-layered exhibition design. First, using the most representative of the decorative elements as the starting point for a visual thread, then using background information on the time as a way to interpret the emperor's realm of thought. Finally, traditional materials, techniques and new technology were integrated with each other to create new works of art in the exhibition.

The decorative patterns of the art of this era are rich, and the same template often appears in different types of artefacts. We selected two of the most representative objects, a blue-and-white jar with entwined lotus design and a red-lacquer plate with camellia design, and used these



Textures and colours from the exhibition  
*Splendours from the Yongle and Xuande Reigns of China's Ming Dynasty* at the Palace Museum, Beijing, China.

motifs for the visual theme of the exhibition hall. The modern decorative appearance that resulted from this choice is more easily accepted by visitors. It looks fashionable: those young people who do not understand Ming dynasty art might still be interested!

The entwined lotus pattern thus appears on the official posters, while the folding walls in the entrance/exit corridor featured both the lotus and camellia pattern, on opposite sides to impress those arriving or leaving. At the entrance of the exhibition itself, I designed a screen wall with decorative painting, echoing the theme and helping to create an ambiance. In the gallery itself, the wall surface was filled with a red camellia pattern as if it were wallpaper at home. In addition, a different method was used to project designs on the walls, and large photographs of lotus patterns were projected on the floor of the gallery. Amongst visitors, the silence was broken and the sense of interactive fun was obvious, causing a flutter in people's hearts.

People interested in history must want to know about the relationship between the emperor's preferences and heritage. In fact, the two emperors intended to express their ideas of social stability and cultural fusion through works of art. A small scene was thus set up at the start of the exhibition, with an image of the Great Yongle Bell. The real purpose of casting the bell was to promote the universal policy of Buddhism. In addition, the exhibition screens were used to support other meaningful scenes from some paintings in the Palace, such as *Ming Emperor Xuande Enjoying Himself in Spring Outing*, in which the emperor is shown hunting in spring, illustrating his love of pleasure.

The exhibition climaxes with statues of Buddha, and the lighting ensures not only that the Bodhisattva from Qutan Monastery is aesthetically pleasing for visitors, but also highlights the naturalistic carving of the face, backed by a background wall of red that is both grand and imposing. On the other hand, *Kesi Thangka of Great Compassion Lord of Dharma*, a Tibetan scroll painting, is placed nearby to create a sacred scene, and fully demonstrates the emperor's efforts in promoting national culture and safeguarding the country's borders.

Sophisticated materials and techniques are the most important characteristics of Ming art. Richly textured rice paper is used as a contrast for the smooth surface of porcelain. Maroon lacquer looks tranquil on a black base. Buddhist statues with a background of rich red paper appear to shine. And a shiny brown bronze censer is more profound on a dark gray cloth. The exhibition is introduced with a modern lacquered screen, a work of art in itself. No doubt this is a reflection of how our traditional art continues to flourish and develop. Exhibition visitors are allowed to touch the screen, leading to inspiration from both modern and traditional art.

So the exhibition is the performance of two times: we trace the past and think about today. We do not expect that an exhibition can wholly change attitudes towards our traditional craftsmanship, but it might increase some peoples' awareness of cultural heritage, increase their love for traditional crafts and promote art integrated into the modern life. Only in this way can artefacts stored in museums be imbued with new vitality and life: this should be one of our responsibilities in the Palace Museum.

## Vandana Prapanna

Curator of Indian Miniature Painting, Chhatrapati Shivaji Maharaj Vastu Sangrahalaya, Mumbai, India

Miniature painting sticker kit from Chhatrapati Shivaji Maharaj Vastu Sangrahalaya, Mumbai, India



I work in one of the leading and most progressive museums in India, where we cherish a dream to place our museum on the international map as one of the world's most active cultural institutions. Forty days of training in London and Cardiff afforded me huge confidence in handling difficult situations across different areas of my curatorial work.

Back in Mumbai, I supervised finishing touches to the newly refurbished *Indian Miniature Painting* gallery. This project lasted over 18 months and incorporated metal showcases, LED light bars, and a 3D diorama re-creating a miniature painting. We worked towards an integrated display with a view to present paintings not only as objects for aesthetic enjoyment, but also as sources for socio-cultural history. Alongside the paintings, weapons, textiles and decorative art are displayed. The miniature paintings present interesting representations of these materials in terms of design and the various ways of using them.

One distinct feature I noticed everywhere in the UK was the effective use of electronic media on different levels, for example in the musical instruments gallery at the Horniman Museum, at the Amgueddfa Cymru - National Museum Wales, and at the Museum of East Asian Art in Bath. Along similar lines, we installed an electronic device in the interactive corner of the Miniature Painting gallery. Visitors can make a sketch of any selected painting with electronic pens on a touch pad, and take home a printout as a memory of their museum visit. In the future, such devices will be deployed in our textile and sculpture galleries.

Taking inspiration from the St Fagans: National History Museum near Cardiff, where a corner for children to try on costumes and admire themselves in a mirror has been created, we added a 'fun activity corner' for our visitors to try on different types of turbans resembling the ones seen in the paintings – an activity much enjoyed by all!

Labels are the most obvious means of communication. Museums are the centres of informal education but generally we find rather formal and uninteresting text panels in the galleries. The Horniman Museum anthropology gallery employs a different approach: object labels feature quotations by the people who owned the objects, adding emotional value to otherwise dry labels. Similarly, the selection of words is also very important in the gallery text. In the Amgueddfa Cymru - National Museum Wales, the Pre- and Proto-History gallery began with a very nice piece of poetry and then the title says 'Story of our ancestors'!

The museum shops at the British Museum are not only a source of income but also are great outlets to communicate and reach out to wider audiences. Shops help us to transport the image of the museum to far



off places and to those who may not get a chance to visit the museum – people can access the museum through its educational products, books and gift items. Impressed with the products and shop development strategies of the British Museum Company, I participated in the development of a shop at my museum. This outlet currently offers books, greeting cards and souvenirs, but we will now add a section for children, with interesting games and gifts to make learning more enjoyable. We developed a miniature painting kit with paint, brush, line drawings and stickers – the stickers represent the characters in the miniature paintings. This was inspired by the Egyptian sticker book of the British Museum.

When I joined ITP my mind was full of questions and one of the most important ones was how to communicate effectively with the large number of school children who visit museum through schools. After having a chance to work with the Learning department of the British Museum I obtained the answer to my question. The department emphasises supporting teachers by providing them with educational aids on different levels. On a similar line we are developing school loan kits. Presently we are working on a kit based on the Harappan Civilisation, containing replicas of the artefacts, charts, enlargements and a short interactive documentary film. I hope this kit will make class room teaching more fun-oriented.

The Museum is producing twelve educational documentaries with the support of Department of Culture, Government of India, under the Metro Museum Modernization Grant. The topics are mainly based on the Indian visual arts. Inspired by the short comic film of five minutes duration at the Roman Legion Museum in Wales, on the life of the Roman Emperor, I decided to incorporate short animation films on art history to appeal to young audiences and visitors in general. I feel these short films will be quite effective and engaging.

Another project I am involved with is the scanning of the miniature painting collection, as a first step towards making our whole collection available online. A museum should make its collections available to the scholarly community. The programme is progressing well, with nearly 70% of the collection of 2500 paintings now scanned.

The ITP gave me a lot of new ideas in relation to presentation, communication, and other aspects of Museology but the most important is in my attitude towards our profession and the enthusiasm to share professional knowledge. In the museum profession, we not only deal with the art objects but also deal with people, their cultures, emotions and traditions. This makes the museum profession more exciting and special.

I have many plans for the future which will see the light of reality.

## Rose Lee

Curator of Chinese Antiquities,  
Hong Kong Museum of Art

Soon after my return to Hong Kong, the British Museum exhibition *The Ancient Olympic Games* opened at the Hong Kong Heritage Museum. To enhance the educational value of the exhibition, curators in the British Museum's Department of Learning and Audiences produced a range of teaching kits for school teachers. Two sets of worksheets were targeted at primary and secondary school children; besides sending printed copies to the schools, online versions were posted on the museum website.

In 2009 I returned to the Hong Kong Museum of Art where I had worked until 2006. The post of Curator of Chinese Antiquities looks after three collections and their programming is managed by three teams of curatorial staff: Chinese Antiquities, Historical Pictures and the Museum

of Tea Ware (a branch museum). Hence, the following achievements are a result of team work as well as my own efforts.

Every exhibition poses different challenges to the curator: the number of objects, the amount of information, and the ways to present them to target visitors. Visiting the galleries of the British Museum and other UK museums allowed me to see the many approaches and solutions adopted. In particular, the planning of the Sir Percival David Collection of Chinese Ceramics in the British Museum, and of the new Ceramics Galleries at the V&A, exposed me to some current trends, such as the use of computer terminals in accessing textual information, the display of large number of objects in ceiling-to-floor cases in the style of open storage, the organisation of themes, and the use of space. On the other hand, the *Object in Focus* displays in Room 3 at the British Museum can feature a single item with contextual material. These are now points of reference when I plan new exhibitions and work on the refurbishment of existing galleries.

At the Hong Kong Museum of Art, we opened *Glittering Beauty: Chinese Accessories from the Hong Kong Museum of Art* in 2009, showing items which would have been worn by men and women, ranging from headdresses, hairpins, court beads and archers' rings to purses and belt hooks. The exhibits are generally small in size, so they are displayed in table cases and wall cases, which allow visitors to see the objects up close. Objects are grouped by function and explained with texts telling the history and usage. In another example, *The Grandeur of Chinese Art Treasures: Min Chiu Society Golden Jubilee Exhibition* (2010), was a loan exhibition from a collectors' society which featured Chinese antiquities, painting and calligraphy. The exhibition featured 340 objects in various media, from small to very large pieces. We decided to group them according to material, allotting a special area to each group. The layout and the showcases were arranged to allow objects to be seen from three sides. Even so, a careful grouping within each large showcase is needed to entice visitors to look at a series of objects, or to compare and contrast artefacts. Visitors could listen to the stories of highlight objects in an audio guide. We also researched the makers and owners of the works, and passed this information to the volunteer guides for preparing their guided tours, so that visitors can learn about

Display of *Touching Art: Louvre's Sculptures in Movement* at the Hong Kong Museum of Art.



the context, and thus appreciate the object from different perspectives.

In the UK, access information is publicised on museums' websites so that visitors with special needs can check and pre-arrange their visit, so as to ensure enjoyment of the museum visit. In Hong Kong, the work of the Equal Opportunities Commission is encouraging the local community to focus attention on access for various groups to public facilities, including museums. There have been numerous improvement works at the Flagstaff House Museum of Tea Ware to increase access, including building a ramp for wheelchair access, adding tactile guidance paths, installing audio prompting in the lift, re-fitting the toilets for persons with disabilities, and providing Braille labels and tactile objects in the galleries. An Access Officer is appointed to monitor the works. In the Hong Kong Museum of Art, a guided tour service using sign language has been provided since December 2009, allowing those with impaired hearing to access information and to enjoy art. An interesting exhibition, *Touching Art: Louvre's Sculptures in Movement*, allowed visually impaired visitors to touch the sculptures, and was supplemented with Braille captions, audio guide and a guided trail. For the fully-abled visitor, this was an invitation to use touch to appreciate art.

I have maintained contact with staff from the British Museum's Department of Asia, and colleagues from other institutions we visited. Concrete results from this network have been referring contacts to my colleagues for further cases of overseas training: two of my colleagues subsequently visited the British Museum, the V&A, the Museum of East Asian Art in Bath, and the Bristol Museum and Art Gallery, in 2008 and 2010. The Curator from the Museum of East Asian Art in Bath visited us when he came to South China to research Shiwan ceramics.

I also keep in contact with fellow participants, to stay up-to-date with events at their venues and to explore the possibility of cooperation.

## Assayed el-Banna

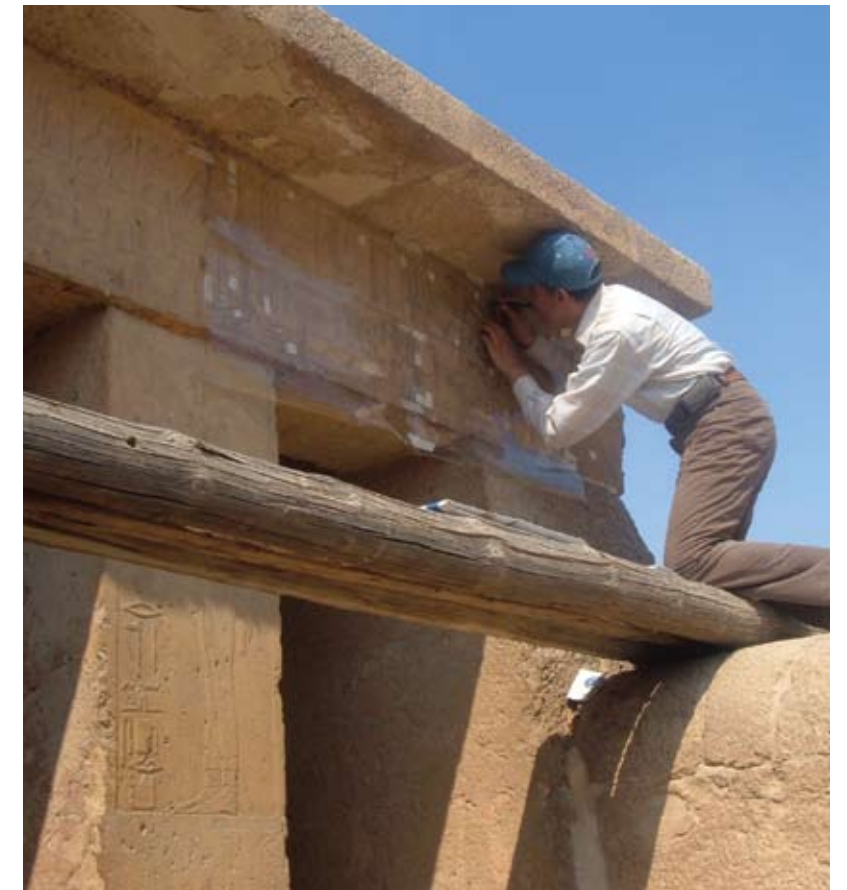
Inspector (Kafr es-Sheikh),  
Ministry of State for  
Antiquities, Egypt

Returning from the ITP, I have of course continued to participate in excavations in my region. I had the opportunity to train with the German Archaeological Institute project at the important settlement of Buto during spring 2008. Working in both prehistoric and first millennium BC layers, I learnt how to make site plans at both 1:50 and 1:20, but also the way in which pottery and small finds are documented. I was especially involved with recording the fabrics and shapes of pottery vessels, which provide important chronological markers. On another training programme, with the Ancient Egypt Research Associates at Giza, I learnt how digital drawings of finds and pottery could be achieved with programmes such as Adobe Illustrator and Coral Draw.

I have recently proposed several projects in my inspectorate: (1) a development project for Buto to stop destruction of the edges of the site, and improve the experience for visiting tourists, (2) a project to mark site boundaries with signs, (3) a database of images relating to the sites in my governorate, (4) a proposal to restore the Ghobaze baths and (5) the transfer of the Sakha sphinx to a better location.

But my experiences in London have particularly informed my work on a new local museum in the principal town in the region, Kafr es-Sheikh. This is under construction, inside the Sunaa Gardens, and budget difficulties have caused some delays. The building is of circular form, with a large open court and two small halls for special exhibitions – dedicated to material from Buto, and a display of coins. In addition, there is a meeting

Assayed el-Banna  
copying ancient  
inscriptions and scenes,  
as part of the AERA  
field school at Giza,  
2009.



hall, storeroom, conservation and restoration laboratory, a space for lifelong learning programmes, and administrative offices. We hope the museum can house objects from across archaeological sites in Kafr es-Sheikh, from all periods of Egyptian history, including ethnographic material from more recent times. I am presently working with the museum director to select objects for the museum, and then document them. Perhaps around 300-350 artefacts will be displayed, and this will be a chance to introduce some of the display ideas I saw in London and Lincoln.

Finally, I have just completed my PhD, on the verb *iw* in ancient Egyptian. The library of the Department of Ancient Egypt and Sudan at the British Museum was a fantastic resource for scholarly publications not easily accessible in Egypt. My study has led to some conclusions about the relationship between the ancient verb and the term in Arabic grammar. This is evident because of how the two are used at the start of many sentences, but also how the presence of the verb affects the syntax of the sentence, with both the ancient and Arabic words.





Birmingham Museum  
and Art Gallery.

## **Birmingham Museums and Art Gallery**

Fiona Slattery,  
Curator,  
Applied Art

We joined ITP in 2009, welcoming two museum professionals from India and two archaeology students from Palestine, followed by four participants from Egypt and Turkey in 2010. The ITP is only one aspect of Birmingham Museums & Art Gallery's (BMAG) wider partnership working with the British Museum, which includes the development of temporary exhibitions, permanent galleries and loans.

Birmingham is located in the West Midlands in the heart of England, about 177km from London. Its geographical location in the middle of the country has defined and shaped its character and identity throughout its 800 year history. From a market town in the 12<sup>th</sup> century AD, Birmingham grew to become the 'Workshop of the World' during its Victorian heyday, establishing itself as a centre for manufacture and trade, especially in the production of metalwork, guns, buttons and 'toys' (e.g. buckles, chatelaines, purses and other small personal items). Today Birmingham is the UK's second largest city with a diverse population of over one million. Currently 30% of the population is non-white, with significant numbers of people of Asian, African and Afro-Caribbean descent.

BMAG is part of Birmingham City Council and is the largest local authority museums service in England, attracting over one million visitors between 2009 and 2010. The service is delivered across eight sites, including six community museums and the Museum Collection Centre. The main site, Birmingham Museum & Art Gallery, is located in an original Victorian Grade II listed building in the city centre. It opened to the public in 1885 and was extended in the early 20<sup>th</sup> century, when the number of galleries increased from four to 40. There are currently over 500,000 objects in the permanent collection, dating from 250,000 years ago to the present, and originating from each of the continents. The permanent collection includes fine and applied art, history, archaeology, antiquities, numismatics and world cultures, with many areas designated as nationally or internationally important. BMAG is probably most famous for holding the largest collection of paintings and drawings by British Pre-Raphaelite artists in the world.

We have a track record of offering training for a variety of people, including those participating in the Museum Association's Diversify scheme, Museum Studies students from several universities, volunteers and work experience students. Our part in the ITP was conceived as involving staff from across our service at all levels, in order to provide the trainees with a wide-ranging experience of museum practice. In 2010,

six departments involving 23 members of staff participated in the programme. Based on the advice and experience of colleagues at the British Museum and the other regional partners, the programme was devised to offer practical sessions and hands-on experience. In the photography studio, the trainees were shown how to illuminate and photograph a large framed oil painting, while in the conservation studio they were invited to operate the x-ray machine which identifies materials. There were also one-to-one sessions with staff to discuss ‘real life’ situations in the workplace, such as the application of the UK’s Portable Antiquities Scheme to the recent archaeological discovery of the Staffordshire hoard.

Full days were balanced by shorter ones; guided tours and talks offset with practical demonstrations. Visits to the Community Museums and the Museum Collection Centre provided a change of scene to BMAG. There were also opportunities for personal study or writing assignments, for which computer work stations and internet access were made available. The programme was flexible, with planned excursions changing to suit the trainees’ interests.

The programme involves six departments within Birmingham Museums & Art Gallery: Collections Management, Collections Services, Community Museums, Directorate, Interpretation & Exhibitions, and Visitor Operations. The opportunity for one-to-one sessions with members of staff from other departments, including Commercial Operations, Learning, Projects & Development, is also available. Over 20 members of staff participate in the programme. Their involvement ranges from guided tours, talks and demonstrations, to informal welcomes and administrative support. All members of staff really welcome the opportunity to engage with the trainees.

*‘We were really pleased to welcome the trainees to the Museum of the Jewellery Quarter (MJQ). I enjoyed talking to them about the development project we did at MJQ in 2008-9 and showing them round the site. They were enthusiastic and responded well to the new displays. I was impressed with their professional manner and friendly approach. I think it was a very useful and productive experience for all concerned’.*

Laura Cox, Deputy Curator Manager,  
Museum of the Jewellery Quarter



Mostafa Kamal Mousad Gademoulaa, Veronika Vlkova Antoniou (Conservator, Inorganic Materials), Khaled Ahmed Sadek Ali, Bülent Gönültas and Pinar Kuşseven visiting Birmingham Museum and Art Gallery’s conservation studio, 2010.

Nilanjan Banerjee visiting the Museum of the Jewellery Quarter, Birmingham, 2009.



*‘I thoroughly enjoyed meeting the international trainees and taking them on a guided tour of Blakesley Hall. It was really enjoyable to share our experiences of the heritage sector, both here and abroad, and to chat in general. I would love to take part in the programme again!’*

Anne-Marie Hayes, Museum Assistant,  
Blakesley Hall Museum

*‘My experience with the international trainees was brief but positive. They were keen to see how we do documentation here at BMAG, and were interested to see the scope of a high-specification collections management system’.*

Lucy Blakeman, Documentation Manager, BMAG

*‘Meeting and working with the international trainees was again a pleasure and extremely interesting. I carried out a tour of the photographic studio and conducted a presentation about photographic workflow, projects and development. I demonstrated the lighting and photography of a large framed oil painting. I answered questions from each of the trainees regarding BMAG’s photographic work for exhibitions and publications, as well as technical questions related to their own photographic requirements. I find the work rewarding and unusual, compared to my basic weekly work’.*

David Rowan, Museum Photographer, BMAG

As Project Manager, I devoted the greatest amount of time to the ITP in Birmingham – hours went into planning and internal communications, compiling information packs, and background research on the National Museum of Egyptian Civilisation, and Turkey’s Ministry of Culture and Tourism, before attending the trainees’ first day presentation at the British Museum. During the ten-day placement in Birmingham, I focused solely on the participants. This was a rare opportunity for me to devise a training programme and manage a group of people from different cultural backgrounds.

On a personal level, I thoroughly enjoyed all aspects of the ITP: networking with colleagues at BMAG and the British Museum; devising the training programme; speaking to museum professionals from various countries during the presentation sessions at the British Museum; and supervising the trainees during their stay in Birmingham. Admittedly, the language barrier was exhausting; I was constantly thinking of my vocabulary and the clearest ways in which to express myself, as well as making a concerted effort to slow down my speech when in the company of the trainees.

I found the international nature of this project very exciting. What a wonderful opportunity to engage with museum professionals from other countries, learn about museum developments overseas and different cultures! The ITP was the highlight of my work last year.

## Education

*‘I learned how to make the museum a place for the family. I noticed that on the weekend the family goes to the British Museum to spend the whole day and the museum provides facilities for that day.’*

Soad Fayez Mahrous Ebid, Egypt

### Ayman Eltayeb Eltayeb Sid Ahmed

Curator, Sudan National  
Museum, Khartoum

The first museums in Sudan date to the end of the 19<sup>th</sup> century, during the era of the Mahdi, when antiquities were kept in a building known as the Beit el-Antikat (‘the house of antiquities’). The Museum of Khartoum was the first official museum in Sudan, organised and administrated by the English government which then ruled the country. By the end of the 20<sup>th</sup> century, there were museums across the country, and a large number of new museums were at planning stage, or being conceived. The National Corporation for Antiquities and Museums (NCAM) now manage these museums, and is responsible for new projects. Of course, these require qualified and trained people to deliver various projects relating to the collections of objects, their restoration, storage, documentation and their use in displays, presentations, and educational programmes, and of course, research. NCAM has sent two or three curators each year to the ITP since 2006, to be exposed to different methods and ideas of museum work.

In contrast to the UK, the majority of people in Sudan have a lack of awareness about museums and their purpose. Since my return from the ITP, I am attempting to make a difference in this area, especially in regards to the social and economic role of museums. I completed a Masters degree at the University of Khartoum on the subject of *Museums in Sudan and their role in tourism*. I felt that the British Museum could be a model to follow in terms of the management and display of its collections, and its significant role in attracting tourists to the UK, which then has an effect on the economy. Elements of this model could be applied in Sudan, by giving attention to good design of museums and showcases, attractive displays, appropriate lighting, targeted visitor services, promotion and media, festivals and temporary exhibitions, tourist guides, effective administration, and investment.



Ayman Eltayeb Eltayeb Ahmed documenting the excavations at El Hassa, Sudan.



I have given lectures in universities to spread awareness of museums, and also edited and published a book about the museums in the Sudan, *Introduction to the Museums in Sudan*. This book is now being used in Sudanese universities, and presents the concept of museums, their history and their main activities. It also includes details and statistics about the museums in Sudan and the numbers of visitors to each.

Museum	Visitors in 2008
Sudan National Museum	34429
Khalifa House Museum	3847
Sultan Ali Dinar	2050
Jebel Barkal Museum	4000
Natural History Museum	6200
Republican Palace Museum	11598
Darfur Museum	3780
Kerma Museum	10952
Ethnographic Museum	5580

A project has been proposed to link school children with museum education programmes. Of course, many schools already visit museums, but we want to create a programme of activities to increase the learning outcomes of these visits. This programme will promote the national identity of students through linking them to the heroism and achievement of their ancestors; help develop a spirit of creativity and imagination in them through the objects produced by man in the past; and give them opportunities for learning around objects. This can be achieved in several ways. Through brief and simplified explanation, putting forward questions about some important objects which they have seen in the museum; and by the use of certain materials such as clay, plaster, colours, and paper, to draw and make copies of some museum objects.

Of course, the relationships and connections we now have with curators and specialists from across the world, partly through the ITP, allows a better exchange of information about different kinds of activities, which can help us all with developing new ideas. In addition, as museum curators in Sudan, we have the opportunity of participating in archaeological fieldwork projects carried out by foreign missions. There are dozens of foreign missions from different countries in Europe and America each year. Recently, I participated in the University of Lille (France) excavations at the Meroitic temple and settlement of El Hassa, 200km north of Khartoum. Their project included a field school where we learned about modern excavation techniques, surveying, and archaeological drawing and documentation. I have also had the opportunity to work at Jebel Barkal, an important ancient sacred site with temples, palaces and pyramids, during which I helped train students from the Department of Archaeology at the University of Dongola.

**Lydia Nafula**  
Research Scientist, National Museums of Kenya, Nairobi

In December 2010, the National Museums of Kenya opened its newly refurbished collections storage, the result of a three year collaboration with the British Museum’s Africa Programme, which provided staff training and technical advice.

Measures have been taken to prevent harmful UV light from reaching our collections by installing UV film on all windows, and pest control measures are also in place, with mesh barriers on doors and windows. Light, temperature and humidity levels are constantly monitored both in the stores and exhibition galleries.

This partnership began way back in 2006, with a collaborative exhibition *Hazina: Traditions, Trade, and Transitions in Eastern Africa*, which focused on trade, leadership, wellbeing and contemporary art in Kenya, Uganda, Tanzania, Southern Sudan, Southern Ethiopia, Somalia, Mozambique and Burundi. The partnership eventually led to a colleague and me participating in the ITP. Two projects highlight the range of work I am undertaking in my museum.

A Yaaku warrior (morán) playing a stringed musical instrument then donated to the Yaaku Community Museum.



**Yaaku Community Museum Project**

The Yaaku are a Kenyan community of hunters, beekeepers and gatherers, whose language is classified as ‘endangered’ by UNESCO. Only the elderly now speak their traditional language, with the younger generation preferring the language and culture of their more dominant Maasai neighbours. However, community schools are now promoting the teaching of the Yaaku language, and in a further bid to preserve and promote their culture, the Yaaku people have set up a community museum. The National Museums of Kenya, along with the help of a local non-governmental organisation *Laikipia Wildlife Forum*, collaborated with the community in the collection, documentation, and conservation of the collections for the museum. The collections cover a wide range of cultural items including containers, stools, headrests, ornaments, garments, tools, weapons, bee hives and donkey panniers.

**Kanga Stories Research Project**

A *kanga* is a rectangular printed cloth with four borders and a central image, and a text on the bottom inner side. It reflects a long history of influence from cultures and traditions around the Indian Ocean trade. For example, the cashew nut or paisley design is thought to have been influenced

by Asian and Persian textiles. Our research project looks into various stories around these objects: their history, production, styles and patterns, symbolism and the different ways the *kanga* is used as a communication medium in terms of both text and images. We are currently in the process of developing an exhibition on this subject for our Nairobi Gallery. The knowledge acquired in the UK about exhibition development, design, and education programmes has been invaluable in this process, and we continue to collaborate with the Africa specialists at the British Museum. In December 2010, the Africa Programme conducted a one week training workshop for staff from the Cultural Heritage Department, the Exhibition Department and a number of regional museums in Kenya, with a focus on textile installation and mounting.

A kanga cloth in the National Museums of Kenya, commemorating the election of Barack Obama as the first African-American president of the USA. The words on the cloth are: “*Congratulations Barack Obama*” and “*God has granted us love and peace*”.



#### Lamu Cultural Festival

This annual Cultural Festival in the coastal town of Lamu, a World Heritage Site, aims to promote cultural activities in Lamu, where Swahili is the dominant culture. Yet there are influences from across the Indian Ocean, through Omani Arabs, Indians, Portuguese and Chinese. The cultural activities during the festival include *dhow* and donkey races, traditional dance, music performances, poetry, handicraft displays, exhibitions, among others. My department participated in the Festival by installing a temporary installation of the *Kanga Stories* exhibition, as the *kanga* is an integral part of the Swahili culture.

It is true to say that the museum is for the people. It is also true to say that visitors are now expecting a great deal more from museums in terms of involvement and participation in museum activities. What then is the relationship of the museum with the people it serves?

The National Museum Lagos is located in a wealthy area of Lagos Island and is host to thousands of visitors yearly. Its mandate is to serve both the young and old, and one cannot overemphasise the role of museums within the communities in which they are located, leading to social, political and cultural benefits. Museums can and should serve as a cultural focus and a centre of learning, thereby enhancing people's

### Cynthia Iruobe

Senior Curator,  
National Museum Lagos,  
Nigeria

National Museum  
Lagos, Nigeria.



lives and playing a major role in developing a sense of identity in the population. Surveys have shown that children make up the most important proportion of our visitors.

The concept of bringing the museum closer to the people was enhanced when I travelled to London in June 2010. It was during the ITP that the idea for a mock excavation site, for children in Lagos, was born. As a curator, I had never visited an excavation site, and so was particularly thrilled when I visited Arbeia Roman Fort and Museum in South Tyneside, outside Newcastle. In addition to archaeological excavations at Arbeia, they also have a mock excavation site for children.

Upon returning to Lagos, I proposed a similar activity area in the Lagos Museum, which should be very beneficial to children as they are more likely to remember what they can touch and feel than what they read. It will be an ideal way to teach children about the many cultures of our people and to ensure that they have a rich educational experience in a relaxed and exciting way, through a range of emotional and sensory responses to the collection. It gives them an opportunity to observe the object, analyse it and brainstorm ideas as to its material, its uses, provenance and how it was found, and of course by whom it was made. It will be open year round and use replicas of objects from the collections. We hope to change these replicas on site periodically to allow repeat schools visitors to learn about the wide variety of cultures in Nigeria.

Funding will be raised by Friends of the Museum and both public and private organizations. This is my own small step to help society, through my museum.

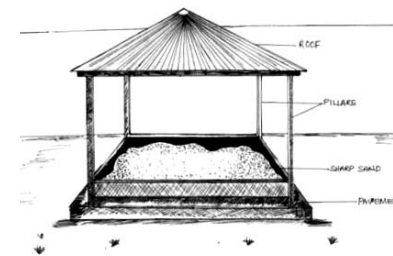


Diagram of the proposed mock excavation site for children, at the National Museum Lagos, Nigeria.

### Amer Khattab

Birzeit University, Palestine

Currently I am a BA student at Birzeit University in the Departments of History and Archaeology. I will be completing my degree in the next few months, but I will also finish a diploma so that I can work as a teacher. Initially, I was planning to do a Master's degree in Early Islamic History while working as a history teacher in one of the local schools, but following my participation in the ITP, I am now determined to obtain a Master's degree in Museum Studies, hopefully in one of the UK's leading universities.

In UK museums, I saw for the first time the role that well-managed museums could play in archaeology and history. In my country, Palestine, which is rich in archaeological artefacts and antiquities, the skills that are needed to help interpret and teach using these objects are rare. Perhaps through studying for a museology Masters, I shall be able to make a modest



contribution to Palestinian museums.

It is less than a year since I attended the training programme, but it feels like much longer because of the many things I have been doing. Firstly, upon my return, I volunteered in the Museum of Birzeit University. This ethnographic and art museum promotes visual arts within the Palestinian community through exhibitions and education programs, and hosts all the University collections.

Amer Khattab during Birzeit University's archaeological survey at Hisham's Palace, Jericho, Palestine.



I have been able to convey some of the knowledge I brought back from the UK to both staff and students. Secondly, I have been trying to improve my English, which will be necessary if I am to undertake a Masters degree in the UK. Perhaps most importantly, however, is that my attitudes, perceptions and outlook towards archaeology have dramatically changed. I now realise how serious and how important this area of science is. Frankly, I have made an important and strategic decision to specialise in the study of archaeological artefacts: my aspirations, plans and above all my expectations lie in this area, and I am determined to make a career in the subject.

## António Luis Ntimbanga

Education and Exhibition Department, National Museum of Ethnology, Nampula, Mozambique

In 2010, the Education and Exhibition department worked on two temporary exhibitions: *Technology in the Hands of Children* and the *The World of Masks*. The former highlighted children's recreational art, on the subject of transport and entertainment. We opened the exhibition on International Museum Day (May 18), in a ceremony attended by the Chancellor of Unilurio University as well as primary, secondary and university students. In contrast, *The World of Masks* illustrated different types of masks and their functions, since the time of our ancestors up to now, with a special focus on the Makonde people, a distinct ethnic group in southeast Tanzania and northern Mozambique. Apart from the masks' religious and ceremonial ritual significance, linked to initiation rites for both boys and girls, they are also worn during the sowing and harvest as a form of celebration and to thank the ancestral spirits. This exhibition also opened on an auspicious

'One key thing I learnt was to consider the use of space in the museum for visitors' comfort – rearranging what we have.'

Eileen O Musundi, Kenya

António Luis Ntimbanga giving a lecture to schoolchildren in Mozambique to promote the importance of museums.



day, August 23, which is the anniversary of the opening of the National Museum of Ethnology in 1956.

Our department was also involved in a variety of temporary exhibitions in collaboration with other organisations in Mozambique: *Workmanship Exhibition*, which was opened by the Vice Minister of Tourism of Mozambique in celebration of the International Tourism Day; *The Legend of the Origin of Makonde*, a photographic and craft exhibition from Nairucu Arts, a non-profit association for the development of Makonde Art, and *Together Face to Face*, a photographic exhibition of the work of Spanish artist Helena Catalan. *Life in the open air*, a photographic exhibition, was organised with the Juvenile League, a non-profit association of young volunteers aiming to help educate young people. *Clan of Bantu* illustrated some of the traditions of the Emacua tribe women when they are in the menstruation period. For example, the placement of a strainer and mortar in the bedroom serve as an announcement of the menstruation period, by so doing, the husband is then informed, and the end of the cycle is shown by the removal of these objects from the bedroom.

We are also prioritising education initiatives, with primary and secondary schools students in different districts, presenting lectures promoting the importance of museums in general and indeed announcing the very existence of the National Museum of Ethnology in Nampula. The lectures in schools were based around two themes:

### Museums and their Contribution to the Formation of the Modern Man

This theme was chosen due to the fact that many people with high education levels do not value their history, origins, and culture. This is ridiculous for someone with a high education level because even if you are well-educated, if you do not know about your history and culture, I believe you immediately cease to be a modern man.

### Museums and Social Harmony

This theme was aimed at bringing about awareness of the important role museums play in the development of social harmony in our societies. This harmony should be present in each and every museum professional around the world because we are in fact educators of society as well as the new generation.

Many primary and secondary schools students had never visited, nor heard of a single museum, but these activities allow schoolchildren to visit museums without travelling to the city of Nampula. In fact, students quickly take an interest following our activities, as broadening their knowledge about cultural issues increases their respect for their cultural identity. Other educational activities are held in the museum itself, whereby visiting primary school children are asked to make drawings inspired by the artefacts displayed in the permanent exhibition halls.

Soad Fayez  
Mahrous Ebid

Curator, Beni Suef Museum,  
Egypt



Soad Fayez Mahrous Ebid  
looking at Middle Kingdom  
coffins in the Beni Suef  
Museum, Egypt.



Bilingual label for a  
statue in the Beni Suef  
Museum, Egypt.

After returning to Egypt, I tried to remember everything I could that would help me and my museum. Each day on the ITP, I had written down the main points of the sessions and imagined where I would start, particularly as the Beni Suef Museum, which has been undergoing reconstruction for two years, is now going to renew its galleries.

I have already made some small changes in the Beni Suef Museum: we have been able to start storing and packing objects in safer ways, and I have also ensured that all the objects have labels. With some objects I decided more background information was needed.

I particularly liked the way the British Museum’s *A History of the World in 100 Objects* described the various objects, such as the royal statue known as the Younger Memnon (Ramses II). So for the main objects in my museum, such as monuments of the great Pharaohs Hatshepsut and Thutmose III (c.1450 BC), I have re-written the labels to add extra material about them in addition to the standard information. Rather than just listing material, size, location and object number, I have added descriptions, period and a brief explanation of the object. From time to time I observe visitors to see their reactions: if they seem interested in this more detailed information, I will continue to create new labels in this manner.

Currently I am working to redesign some showcases, paying particularly attention to the needs of visitors and making them feel that objects are displayed in a new and exciting way, because it is important that people return again and again to our museum.

Now, I feel I have become a friend of the British Museum. Colleagues from every museum I visited in England send me their news and tell me what is on every month. In early 2011, I travelled to the USA to help move our exhibition *Queen Cleopatra* from Pennsylvania to Ohio. There I was able to use the skills that the shipping agents Constantine taught us in London. At the Cincinnati Museum in Ohio, I oversaw the unpacking of objects for the exhibition, in my role as head of the Egyptian committee for unpacking. I now have a much better idea about how to best secure the objects and which materials are suitable for transportation. The American team of packers asked us during our work about the style of packing, and I was able to discuss with them what we need and what needed special care. For example we asked them to change some of the packing materials because they were too rough and could have damaged a gilded mummy mask.

As a museum educator, after returning from the ITP, I held a summer festival entitled *Crafts and Craftsmen in Ancient Egypt*. Children were divided into groups by age, to learn about the crafts of ancient Egypt. In a workshop we made models such as a chair with designs depicting the pharaoh and his family. The museum carpenter helped us make these models and we tried to make examples that could be used today: pharaonic style is still in fashion! The children are still young and I hope to help them discover the true history of Egypt.

Additionally I am trying to make connections between the ancient Egyptians and present Egyptians using art workshops and object handling, which is very attractive to visitors of all ages. Now, I am writing an illustrated report on Beni Suef Museum to take to schools to explain to them about the museum and its objects. There are people from the town I live in who do not visit our museum, or even know where it is, so this modest step will help bring the museum to them.

The ITP has taught me how to voice my opinion and ask questions without fear.

Huzoor Choudhry  
Huzoor D’signs, India



Indian roadside  
signage inspired by  
heritage designs.

As a designer of signage and other graphic material across a range of museums and heritage sites around Bhopal in India, my time in the UK was an eye opener to global designs - not only at the British Museum but also at the partner museums and through the work of fellow participants and colleagues. Getting to know these people, their cultures and cities, and sharing a variety of design ideas and thoughts, opened a new dimension in my thinking.

I have used the knowledge gained to interpret heritage within a modern context and by using historic cultural motifs in a modern way. For example, I developed a product which I call *Road Backdrops*. Using leaf-shaped motifs from the ceiling frescoes in Sadar Manzil Palace in Bhopal (1870), I have designed installations that appear in the city’s roundabouts. On the city’s roads, an arch-shaped sign for a central verge mirrors the architecture of local historic buildings.

I have also developed signage for the Archaeological Survey of India, the World Heritage Site of Sanchi, Mandu, and steel interpretation panels for the Madhya Pradesh State Tourism Development Corporation. In addition, I designed signage for the holy heritage city of Ujjain for the Indian National Trust for Art and Cultural Heritage (INTACH) and directional and signage leading to the Mahakal Temple (one of the 12 Jyotirlingas or Shiva Temples of India), which also employed heritage motifs.

Other than signage, I created brochures for the Archaeological Survey of India sites of Sanchi and Kajuraho (both World Heritage Sites), and Mandu and Gwalior. The city of Chanderi in Central India is a walled-in medieval textile town, famous for its Chanderi saris. Chanderi is unusual in having preserved architecture of the 14<sup>th</sup> to 19<sup>th</sup> centuries AD, built by the Sultans of Delhi and Mandu, Rajput Bundela Kings and Maratha Scindia Kings. I designed the proposal document for its consideration as a World Heritage City by UNESCO.

Travelling to Egypt for the Cairo seminar in 2010 was an opportunity to meet colleagues again and share insights into others work. The architectural heritage of Egypt is very rich, for example the style of window decoration in some mosques prompted me to wonder about creating signage and road backdrops for Egypt.





Bristol City Museum and Art Gallery.

## Bristol Museums, Galleries and Archives

Tim Corum,  
Deputy Head,  
Bristol City  
Museum and  
Art Gallery

One of the reasons that Bristol's Museums, Galleries & Archives exists is to share ideas, objects and stories from all over the world with the city. It has been doing this in one form or another for over a century, mostly through its collecting and exhibitions.

The collections include exquisite artefacts of great geographical and cultural diversity such as Egyptian sarcophagi from the 3rd millennium BC, imposing Assyrian wall reliefs, ceramic bowls from Sung dynasty China, Benin bronze work, and paintings by Renaissance masters. These are set alongside great scientific collections of geology and natural history that have revealed and defined environments from all parts of the world.

Despite this long standing commitment from the museum service to developing international collections, until recently there has been less emphasis on the direct exchange of ideas between the museum and colleagues in other countries. This has changed over the last five years with an increasing commitment from Bristol to develop international partnerships. As well as providing colleagues from China and the Sudan with the opportunity to see how a regional UK service works, the ITP enabled us to better understand how colleagues from abroad understand museums, and through their insight we were able to reconnect with what is essential about the preservation and sharing of a community's history and identity.

Pengbo, Abdelrahman, Ghalia and Ke stayed with us for ten days in the summer of 2010, our first year on the ITP. In that time they were able to get to grips with the city, its culture and the museums. Central to what we hoped they would get out of the experience was an understanding of the relationship between a museum service, its collections and the city in which it sits. Their experience of the British Museum in London was, for most of them, their only experience of a UK museum. We thought we could offer the chance to see how close a museum can be to its communities. It helped that we had spent three years wrestling with the concept of M Shed - our new city history museum which was in construction during the visit of our Chinese and Sudanese colleagues. Through the M Shed project we had been able to reconnect a city with its collections: this became a core strand in the ideas and experiences we shared with Pengbo, Abdelrahman, Ghalia and Ke.

The four specialists were shown all our sites, and were surprised at the diversity and extent of the buildings and collections. As well as seeing our museum sites we also wanted

Visitors in the  
Bristol City Museum  
and Art Gallery.



to give the group an appreciation of the different elements of a regional service. So we showed them the intensive use of the service by schools, of particular interest was the use by schools of collections from China, Egypt and Sudan. Two of the group spent time with our community engagement team getting to see the museum services' contributions to the city's neighbourhood programmes. We gave them a chance to work in our collections care team – and to understand the balance between setting the highest standards of care and the need to ensure access. They all shadowed a development meeting revising our documentation process and explored the impact of new technologies on how our collections are being re-categorised by community groups and used in new ways. By giving them a chance to attend our monthly programming meeting we hoped to make sure that the group understood how the different strands of the service fitted together to create a rich public offer.

In addition to the city's sites and service we also showed the group the historic steamship SS Great Britain as an example of an independently run service, which offers a story-driven and heavily contextualised interpretation in contrast to the more traditional approach at Bristol Museums Galleries and Archives. One day, for comparison, we were invited to Bath Heritage Services, providing a different, more commercially aware model for how a city cares for and benefits from its historic collections and buildings. Throughout the week – despite being presented with a mind-jangling diversity of experiences, people, and ideas – there was a single question which they kept returning to. 'How does a city museum connect with the people who live in that city?'

At the end of the week the group presented to the museum management their responses to four questions.

What had they found most memorable?

What would they change or challenge?

What idea will they take back with them?

How can we best develop sustainable partnerships?

The responses were very revealing. The size and range of collections was a surprise to the group as was the diversity of sites. They found the way we made links between different collections fascinating and were very impressed with the story-led approach of SS Great Britain. The strong commitment of all staff to access, engagement and learning was also a surprise as were the strong links between the museum and Bristol communities. They were impressed by the willingness of staff to experiment and take risks, and surprised that we were active in collecting and exhibiting across all collection areas. They found M Shed, our new city history museum, the most memorable element of the programme. They were all very polite about challenges but clearly thought that the size of the collection and storage could in the long term become a problem. There was also a clear challenge that the bulk of the international collections was gathered as a result of colonialism and that this should be recognised in the way that they were documented and interpreted. A strong feeling existed that our programme should engage with curators from countries associated with the collections, and that this might be the best way to sustain partnerships. There was a great interest in taking back evidence of the commercial value of museums and the value museums bring to cities and place making.

The programme also affected Bristol Museum staff. The obvious passion and enthusiasm the group had for the collections, and in particular the Egyptian and Chinese collections, brought a new personal perspective. The group also reminded us of how unique and unusual the Bristol collections are and how different our approach to city collections is from the majority of encyclopaedic museums. From a personal point of view I made some good friends who I remain in touch with, which is perhaps the most important test and legacy of any project like this.



M-Shed, Bristol.



# Archaeology

‘Being an archaeologist, the major impact of the ITP was the realisation of how archaeology can be incorporated with ethnography to tell rich stories of human lives and their activities. I now realise how data from my discipline can be taken beyond academic boundaries and made meaningful to the general public, including children, within a museum context.’

Joyce Dartey  
Assistant Lecturer,  
University of Ghana, Legon

## Hesham Mohamed Hussein

Inspector (Sinai), Ministry of State for Antiquities, Egypt



Hesham Mohamed Hussein excavating at Tell Hebua, an archaeological site in North Sinai, Egypt.

I have been working for more than 10 years, moving from site to site to collect information and excavate archaeological sites in Sinai, in the northeast of Egypt. Though I have a good range of experience and skills in Egyptian archaeology, I knew very little about museums.

In archaeology, I am in direct contact with objects, smelling the scent of the human history with every piece. Yet I wondered how a global museum like the British Museum could deal with thousands and thousands of objects and monuments that tell the whole history of humanity. What is the proper way to display the objects? How can they be preserved? During my forty days in London and Manchester I learnt how museums can be a major source of education and entertainment for a cross section of people.

But returning home was a real challenge for me. I have dreams and wishes but have to be realistic and work within certain limitations. I conveyed my experiences to my colleagues in the Ministry of State for Antiquities. I participated in an archaeological field school for undergraduate students, communicating the new ideas and fresh subject matter which I had seen in UK, such as using new methods and techniques in restoring archaeological objects. I also participated in the committee for the development of archaeological sites with new museum displays: we plan to set up new open air museums at many sites, including the city of Pelusium. These will include large objects (for example, decorated columns and door lintels) that can inform visitors about the stories of ancient towns. Within the object stores, I realised the need to carefully plan and organise space, so we have started rearranging the objects. It is hoped that these stores can become galleries with small displays for visitors. We are also updating our archaeological archive and digitising old excavation photos to preserve information for the next generation.

Haytham Dieck (far right) and colleagues from Birzeit University conducting an archaeological landscape survey at Jericho, Palestine.



## Haytham Dieck

Graduate Student,  
Birzeit University, Palestine

But we also intend to offer the opportunity for school students to visit the scientific centres, archaeological sites and open-store museum at Sinai. This contact between children, museums and archaeology will convey the important role that history plays in our life. I hope one day to participate in solving our problems and seeing our scientific institutions further improved.

Four aspects of work have come to the fore since I participated in the ITP in the summer of 2009: communication, research, projects and fieldwork.

### Communication

I keep in touch with ITP participants through Web 2.0 media such as facebook and the ITP blog. I have been a regular author for the blog and since March 2010, administer the ITP facebook group. This group allows ITP participants to stay in touch, along with British Museum staff and colleagues from around the UK. Members can share their news through posting on the group wall, and uploading photos: it is a truly international group with 73 members from 16 countries. Despite the different cultures and languages, all share the same interests in museums, archaeology and history. As well as professional updates and advice, we also mark special occasions such as weddings and births. The facebook group can serve as an introduction to future participants: in 2010, we sent a welcoming PowerPoint presentation to the chosen participants ahead of their travel to the UK, as a way to convey the view of past participants.

### Research

I authored a paper on *The Palestine Archaeological Museum, Jerusalem (Rockefeller Museum)*, in English, based on knowledge obtained from the advanced archaeology course at Birzeit University. It focused on studying the Palestine Archaeological Museum, its artefact collection, its origins, how it presents its collection, but also the legislative and political situation of the museum after it had been occupied by Israeli military authorities during the war of 1967. I also wrote a research paper on *Umayyad Jerusalem*, tracking the change in the city's landscape at this period (660-750 AD) and the transformation process from the Byzantine era (324-634 AD).

### Projects

For the past six months, I have worked with the Centre for Cultural Heritage Preservation (CCHP) in Bethlehem on registering *Bethlehem – Birthplace of Jesus: the Church of the Nativity and the Pilgrimage Route* on the UNESCO world heritage list. My work as a Research Assistant was principally concerned with the Church of the Nativity, and its history and archaeological context. This was the first Palestinian site to be nominated. On January 26<sup>th</sup> 2011 the nomination file was submitted to the World Heritage Centre, with a press conference held at Peace Centre in Bethlehem on February 7<sup>th</sup>. CCHP then nominated me for a full scholarship, sponsored by the Hopus Organization, to pursue a Master's degree in the Management and Preservation of Artistic Cultural Heritage in Italy. The programme is in cooperation with three Italian Universities (Università Del Piemonte Orientale in Vercelli, Università Cattolica di Milano and Università Luigi Bocconi of Milano).

### Fieldwork

In January 2010, the Department of History and Archaeology at Birzeit University conducted a second season of landscape survey in the area of Khirbat al-Mafjar (Hisham's Palace) in Jericho, under the supervision of Mahmoud Hawari and in collaboration with University College London. The purpose of the survey was to give an extended view of Hisham's Umayyad Palace and a new understanding of its archaeology, history and culture. In addition, it served as archaeological training for students, and towards developing the Palestinian Institute of Archaeology at Birzeit University. I also participated in an excavation at Khirbet Birzeit on the West Bank. This hilltop site is a settlement compound that includes a large mosaic dated to Byzantine period (324-634 AD), alongside remains of the Mamluke (1260-1516 AD) and Ottoman (1517-1917 AD) eras.

## Gertrude Aba Mansah Eyifa

Assistant Lecturer/Curator of Archaeology Museum, Department of Archaeology and Heritage Studies, University of Ghana, Legon

The ITP brought me in to contact with a lot of people in the museum profession with diverse experiences and expertise, especially my fellow participants. Upon my return home, the exposure, knowledge and skills I gained proved beneficial to me and my work: my interest in museum work and heritage issues was truly revived. The major impact it had on me was - and still is - the desire to bring out the potential in our Archaeology Museum to educate the wider public about our past and rich culture.

Once back in Ghana, I was appointed as the curator of the Archaeology Museum. I have tried to improve upon the displays in the museum, using photographs I took at various museums in the UK as teaching and learning aids during in-house training of National Service Persons. These people are posted to the museum, and learn about proper object handling, display, mounting and the preparation of object labels. With the help of my assistant, Gideon Agyare, and the National Service Persons, we have gradually changed the museum's display: rearranging and remounting objects, preparing new labels and adding pictures to the display to make it more meaningful, and especially to provide context for the objects.

For instance, some of the artefacts on display are *nyame akuma* – polished stone axes – from Kwahu in the Eastern Region of Ghana. A coloured map of the area and sites from which some of the axes have been retrieved has been added to the display to enhance understanding of where these Stone Age tools had been used. Also on display is material culture from

the Kintampo Culture Complex, depicting the first 'farmers' in Ghana and in West Africa. Kintampo sites and artefacts have been discovered from the Coastal strip to the north of Ghana, and in Togo and the Ivory Coast. A map in the gallery shows the location of these various sites. The cultural complex is associated with the earliest manifestations of figurative art and personal adornment, semi-permanent 'village settlement' and food production in the Late Stone Age of the savanna-forests of West Africa. The artefacts have been arranged and mounted in a manner that reflects this categorisation. Radiocarbon dates for the sites in Ghana cluster around 2000-1500 BC.

With these modest changes, the museum now receives more repeat visitors, especially school children and their teachers. Feedback from visitors has been very encouraging. These are some of the responses of both local and international visitors, left in the museum's Visitors' Book:

'Everything tells a story connecting the modern to antiquity. I very much enjoyed taking the small journey ...'  
(UCLA, USA).

'Very impressive. The children have learnt a lot and this helps to facilitate their understanding of the Stone Age'  
(Ghana International School).

'This place is exquisite, it teaches a lot and seeing things of the past is the experience of a lifetime'  
(University of Ghana).

'So different from last year. A good display. Keep up the good work!' (Ghana International School).

'To know the African story, it is interesting to come here'  
(Senegal).

In addition, I have been assigned to co-teach practical museum courses in my Department. By sharing the experiences gained and observations made during the ITP, again with many photographs in PowerPoint presentations, I can convey points in a simple, interesting and easy to understand way. Students become more interested and engrossed in the museum course with such photographic material, and thus their learning experience is greatly improved.

I have also served as a facilitator for local and international museum training workshops organised by the British Museum's Africa Programme team in Ghana, to refurbish galleries in the Volta Regional Museum in Ho, and at the Ghana Armed Forces Museum in Kumasi. I led some of the introductory sessions in the workshops, including ones focused on 'Care of Museum Textiles' and 'Mounting and Displaying Textiles'.

Through these textile workshops, I have gained additional experience and skills, and feel proud to be part of the group that completely changed the display in four galleries at the Ghana Armed Forces Museum. One masterpiece of the work of the international textiles workshop is currently on display at the Armed Forces Museum in Kumasi, and makes me very proud. The group visited Ntonso in the Ashanti Region of Ghana – Kumasi to learn how Adinkra cloths or stamped cloths are made. Each participant had the opportunity to use an Adinkra cut symbol to stamp a

Gertrude Aba Mansah Eyifa during a *Care of Museum Textiles* workshop in Kumasi, Ghana.





strip of Kente cloth. Now the strip bearing the name of each participant is beautifully mounted in one of the museum galleries.

Finally, my approach to museums and heritage has totally changed after the ITP. As a result, I applied for a degree in Museum Studies to further assist me in my responsibilities at the University, and to practically support my Department's newly restructured programmes, which include museum courses at both undergraduate and graduate level.

## Heba Tallah Ibrahim

Inspector (Abu Simbel),  
Ministry of State for  
Antiquities, Egypt



Heba Tallah Ibrahim  
surveying during  
excavations near the  
pyramids of Giza.

I would like to touch on three areas of my life that were affected by my experience on the ITP back in 2006.

The personal experiences I gained during my stay in the UK affected my character, helping me to have a more open personality and better able to deal with completely new situations. I have become sufficiently confident to participate in international conferences outside of Egypt. So for the first time, I spoke on my fieldwork in the prehistoric Nabta Playa area in the far southwest of Egypt, at the prestigious *Third International Colloquium on Predynastic and Early Dynastic Egypt at its Origins*, at the British Museum in 2008. That was only possible through improving my language skills and the support of friends. Scientifically, my MA thesis has benefited through using all of the British Museum's libraries, a mass of data concerning Neolithic architecture in Egypt and Europe, but also field trips to important archaeological and Prehistoric Sites.

I gained precious friendships from all over the world: people from China, England, Iraq, South Africa and Sudan, as well as meeting outstanding museum professionals in the British Museum and other UK museums. This has allowed cooperation and consultation, and removes the borders that can limit the exchange of professional and scientific ideas. Personal contacts have helped to create the opportunity for future collaborations between the participants themselves and between us and the British Museum. Also, I now read more about other cultures and history, traditions and heritage.

Professionally, I gained a complete understanding of the activities, potentials and scientific facilities of museums, and the role they should play in the surrounding society. This was complemented by knowledge about proper conservation, storage facilities, loans and exhibitions. Through workshops and seminars, I became familiar with the stress-free environment at the British Museum departments, libraries, and archives, which helps to encourage study and research. This gave me a clear idea about how museums should be, the importance of scientific, cultural, and educational life, and the awareness for the need to preserve heritage and cultural sites. As there are several museums in Egypt under construction, I would be delighted to work in them, and will bring my own views on sharing knowledge and skills.

The ITP has offered us strong bridges of friendship and cooperation between young generations of archaeologists from all over the world.

## Murtada Bushara Mohamed Bushara

Curator, Jebel Barkal Museum,  
Sudan

The sacred mountain of  
Jebel Barkal, Sudan



The ITP has hosted a number of curators from the Sudan National Museum, but I am responsible for the Jebel Barkal Museum. This small museum lies in the shadow of the flat-topped Barkal mountain, a sacred place that was embellished with temples, palaces and cemeteries from the second millennium BC onwards. The museum building was built in 1979, but it was used as store room until 2005 when the museum was opened. The museum consists of two galleries and a storage room. One of the galleries is a dedicated permanent exhibition, and the other is for temporary exhibitions. The Museum displays and stores archaeological objects, including statuary, reliefs, pottery and other small artefacts, mainly from the Jebel Barkal site itself. To help provide further context for the museum, I founded the Jebel Barkal Museum Archaeological Mission with a first season of fieldwork in 2010. We are currently focusing on a possible royal tomb at the site of el-Tamer, across the Nile opposite Jebel Barkal. It seems to date to the pre-Napatan era (c. 1300-900 BC), and its architecture (descending staircase, carved doorways, and corbelled burial chamber) reflects the gradual change from Egyptian forms of tombs to those found in the Napatan period. It may well be a unique type of tomb, and I aim to collaborate with various foreign missions working at other cemeteries in northern Sudan, to place the tomb in context. It seems that the tomb was plundered, so no skeletal remains have been found yet, but various types of pottery were excavated dating from New Kingdom, Napata, Meroitic and post-Meroitic periods, and also a small faience cup; all of the objects were found in fragments.

This archaeological project is supported by the Sudan Archaeological Research Society (based at the British Museum) and we are considering a field school to teach excavation methods to local students of archaeology. The work will all form part of a new archaeological mission for Jebel Barkal Museum.

## Moamen Saad Mohamed

Inspector (Luxor), Ministry of  
State for Antiquities, Egypt

Many of those who have participated in the ITP return to their native countries with an enriched knowledge, bringing back information that can inspire their own organisations. For me, it built on knowledge obtained from other programmes run by the American Research Center in Egypt and the Franco-Egyptian Centre for the Study of the Temples of Karnak.

One of the most important things for me was seeing how to carefully work with, and also preserve, fragile papyri as they are encountered during

Moamen Saad  
Mohamed excavating  
pottery near the  
corniche in Luxor, Egypt.



excavations. In particular, the recording of inscriptions and vignettes, and details of the physical structure of the papyrus, are crucial steps that can help with any later conservation work. Seeing the excavation techniques and methods used and practiced by the wonderful archaeologists in the city of Cardiff was quite an eye-opener. As an Egyptian, always working in the heat and sunshine, it was a strange to see excavations in a less ideal climate! However, the practical organisation of the site is something that impressed me. In particular, it was interesting to see how the sites were prepared for viewing by the general public, and the practical conservation techniques employed at the end of the excavation. I am constantly wondering how these could be applied in my own excavations.

In being exposed to people from different regions and cultures, my character has also changed: I see how we can learn from one another, exchanging ideas and cultural experiences. Freedom to express oneself within the confines of the workplace was something that I was not used to – I now realise how such freedom of expression can benefit not only my own working environment but also that of my fellow colleagues. In terms of working practices, the organisation of projects at the British Museum and the National Museums of Wales was fascinating, seeing individuals work towards a joint goal. I returned to Egypt with a better sense of planning and direction within my work.

I have been very busy with fieldwork since returning, on excavations in and around the ancient temples of Luxor and Karnak (c.1800BC-1200 AD), in particular conducting salvage archaeology and copying ancient inscriptions and scenes.

## Joyce Dartey

Assistant Lecturer,  
University of Ghana, Legon

Immediately after the training programme, I participated in a two week training course organised by the British Museum's Africa Programme for museum staff at Ho Museum, one of a number of regional museums in Ghana. This allowed me to pass on what I had learned from the programme to staff of that museum. This session also culminated in a re-organisation and re-display of the museum galleries, which had remained unchanged since they were opened in 1978. The museum has a large collection of ethnographic objects, mostly from the surrounding region, and a small number of archaeological objects. The objective of the training project was to de-install several objects, improve the cases by re-lining or repainting,



Joyce Dartey presenting  
a paper at the Cairo  
Seminar, 2010.

## Mona Radwan

Inspector (Luxor), Ministry of  
State for Antiquities, Egypt



Mona Radwan during  
excavations in an  
ancient temple at Luxor.

and then re-mount the objects in a different arrangement, to refresh the exhibition. Most importantly the project created a new theme around which the exhibition was re-displayed and this necessitated moving some objects into new positions. This practical process, which involved all staff, provided the opportunity to realistically discuss best practice in theme formulation, display, and labelling, bearing in mind the peculiar local situation of the museum. The teamwork and enthusiasm with which new ideas were tried, and the refreshing results at the end, were very rewarding and exciting.

I have now enrolled for a Masters degree in the Sainsbury Research Unit, University of East Anglia, UK. This programme focuses on analysing the aesthetic characteristics and the ethnographic or functional contexts of objects from Africa, Oceania and the Americas. The trajectory of objects from their places of origin into various museums or collections, and the roles they play in these new contexts, is also an important aspect of the course.

In December, I began archaeological fieldwork towards my dissertation and this is focused on researching terracotta figurines from a 9<sup>th</sup> Century AD site at Zoboku in the northern part of Ghana. These figurines stylistically belong to the Komaland Complex, an enigmatic cultural complex which was produced by people who inhabited large portions of northern Ghana in the 9<sup>th</sup> Century AD. Because there are no historical or cultural links to societies living in the area now, there are exciting questions to be explored. Who were the makers? What were the uses of the figurines? Why were the sites abandoned?

Returning to Egypt, I continued working in Karnak, a massive complex of pharaonic temples dating from 1800BC - 1200AD. Having seen how people work as teams in UK museums, I have tried to be a productive team member, particularly in large-scale excavations along the Avenue of Sphinxes in 2008, and in excavations in the Valley of the Kings.

Some of the ideas I saw in the UK could be applied to my work as an inspector. The system of storing objects in museums is relevant to our archaeological storerooms, particularly the arrangement of hundreds of small *talataat* blocks (which measure 54x27x27cm). I helped organise the storerooms of both the American Research Center excavations and those of the Franco-Egyptian Centre for the Study of Karnak Temples.

We visited the conservation department in the British Museum. In London, we learnt about packing museum objects for travel to exhibitions, but these skills are also relevant on site. Working with an American mission in the Mut temple in southern Karnak, we found a sandstone door lintel with gilded decoration. I helped in the packing of this object, using a foam-lined wooden crate to protect it during transport to the Luxor Museum. In the coming years, many objects from the museums and stores at Luxor are being moved to the new Grand Egyptian Museum and the National Museum of Egyptian Civilisation, both in Cairo, so it is important that objects are suitably packed for travel.

The levels of documentation in the British Museum and at The Collection, Lincoln were impressive, and prompted me to keep a day-to-day diary of my work and make regular reports to my supervisor.

In the UK, it was amazing to see how old buildings were often standing side-by-side with modern ones, and it is a pity that parts of Luxor have been changed so quickly to make new hotels, without consideration for how buildings of different eras could co-exist.





National Museum Cardiff.

## **Amgueddfa Cymru - National Museum Wales**

Melanie Youngs,  
Exhibitions  
Researcher and  
Administrator  
Michael Tooby,  
Director of  
Learning,  
Programmes &  
Development

Amgueddfa Cymru – National Museum Wales has been involved in the ITP since 2006. Over these five years, we have welcomed fourteen participants from seven different countries – with the programme changing as each new set of participants arrive.

Amgueddfa Cymru is made up of seven museums together with our collections centre, spread throughout Wales. These offer different experiences – from galleries to open-air sites, insects to double-decker buses, coal mines to military spectacles. We research and present local and national history hand in hand with caring for our international collections. These cover the disciplines of Art and Applied Art, Natural History and Geology, Archaeology, and Social, Cultural and Industrial History.

During the ten day placement our participants are based in Cardiff, the capital of Wales. Much of their time is spent at National Museum Cardiff where our Art, Natural Science and Archaeology & Numismatics collections are currently housed. Departmental sessions with Exhibitions, Events and Learning happen alongside discussion meetings with curators and conservators.

Every year we try and link trainees with their equivalent in the Museum. Discussion often begins with practicalities. Our Exhibition Designers have met their counterparts in Kenya and India, swapping ideas on exhibition cases and graphic design. While most of our objects focus on Wales, we do have a number of international works, most notably from our Art collection. It is always rewarding to hear stories from participants about objects that they are more familiar with than we are. We have discussed Kalighat paintings with Anjan Dey and Vandana Prapanna, and have shown our small Egyptian collection to Mohamed Aly Abd el-Hakim Ismail and Moamen Saad Mohamed. Their fresh comments add to our insights and can be shared with audiences - a Canaan pot discussed with Amer Khattab was subsequently added to the BBC/British Museum website *A History of the World in 100 Objects*.

This shared learning has been built into our visits. In order for our teams to find out more about our visitors, we arrange an introductory session to initiate discussions. This simple device generates ideas and encourages shared learning, as well as expressing differences and contrasts. It is often valuable to reflect on what the trainees find different about the experiences they gain in London with the British Museum. One obvious example is language. As Wales is bilingual, every text is produced in both Welsh and English. While this introduces the



participants to a language they may not have previously heard, it has been equally interesting to learn how many participants work in Museums where two or more languages are used in their work and their public material.

Due to the number of museums it is never possible to visit them all, and so for practical reasons we tend to focus our visits on southeast Wales. Always on the programme is a visit to St Fagans: National History Museum. This is one of Europe's leading open air sites, focusing on the people of Wales. Along with over 40 re-erected houses, there are many craftsmen on site who provide one-to-one interaction. Last year's participants met the clog maker, the weaver and the dyer who all demonstrated their crafts and answered questions. Vandana said of her time at St Fagans

*'This visit gave me the opportunity to understand Wales's houses and interiors through the ages and also the problems and challenges to run and maintain Museums. It was good to see that they are giving patronage to the local craftsmen.'*

Media interview with Li Zhongmou at The National Eisteddfod of Wales, an annual Welsh cultural festival.



Other visits include Big Pit: National Coal Mining Museum, National Roman Legion Museum and National Waterfront Museum Swansea; all very different museums offering a variety of histories. Eileen Musundi said of her day at the coal mine in 2008

*'We came away with vivid images of the history of the region and meeting the miners who worked there brought the event to life.'*



Ayman Eltayeb Eltayeb  
Sid Ahmed and  
Nimat Mohamed El  
Hassan Abdelrahman  
at an excavation in  
Llanmaes with  
Adam Gwitt (Later  
Pre-historian), 2009.

We have learnt that it is the people they meet that create the biggest impact; from talking to staff members to engaging with former industrial workers and craftsmen.

Trainees have, when possible, also visited the National Collections Centre where our larger industrial objects and paper archives are stored. There are double decker buses, helicopters and cars in the large storage and conservation site. A 1850s coal tram from Ffos-y-Fran opencast coal site was being conserved during the 2010 visit. Excavated under rubble a few years ago, the conservators were busy cleaning it and could talk through the process that they were using. Anjan commented that

*'it was a very different experience to witness a storage area so big which has papers to helicopters. I felt like a dwarf standing next to those shelves.'*

In two years, we were able to visit a nearby Pre-historic and Romano-British settlement in Llanmaes being excavated by Museum staff. Finds have included flint scrapers, decorated pottery, brooches and cauldron fragments. Both visits provided very different perspectives on excavating in Wales. In 2008, Moamen and Mohamed, both archaeology inspectors in Egypt, visited the site during heavy rainfall that had stopped activity – a challenge that they had not been confronted with back home. As a result, our focus shifted to the packing and labelling of finds, and the ensuing documentation. The weather improved for our 2009 trip to Llanmaes, so Aimen el-Tayeb and Nimat Mohamed El Hassan could watch the archaeologists excavating and compare practices to those in Sudan.

Through the ITP, we have developed contacts and friends which have often helped in other projects unrelated to the programme. Trying to remain in touch has been difficult, but is now easier through the ITP blog, Facebook and the Cairo seminar that reunited past participants in 2010. It has been a great experience not only working on the programme and developing it to suit each individual, but working with different participants, the British Museum and representatives from the other Partnership UK Museums.

Meeting fellow colleagues from around the World has been beneficial not only to the Museum, but on a personal level too. It has meant sharing knowledge of museum practice and of each others' cultures. We have exchanged customs, learned phrases from each others' languages, tasted traditional dishes and, above all, made friends.

# Strategy

‘[Understanding] different concepts applied in the different museums of the world can improve the vision of a curator.’

Fatma Doğruer, Turkey

**Sayan Bhattacharya**  
Centre for Archaeological Studies  
& Training, Eastern India

It’s not raining but drizzling outside. I am flying out of Mumbai. I can see the Victoria Memorial, the Indian Museum and Race Course of the City of Joy (Kolkata) from the little window of my plane. My destination is London to attend the ITP: I feel tremendous excitement, a bit of nervousness mixed with much hope, as I am going to visit the British Museum, founded in 1753, after flying over the Indian Museum Kolkata, founded in 1814.

There are going to be participants from all over the world and I am going to meet them in the heart of the United Kingdom. I know it will be a great experience because museums form a vital part of any civilised and cultured country and play a dominant role in representing the heritage of a country. India is a country with a rich legacy of culture and heritage and the different museums have been able to promote the study of the glorious past of my country. My mind and soul are deeply involved with museum related issues: I am eager to learn more about them and to use this information in my work.

I know, after coming back from the UK, I will not be able to change the present system. I am not a decision maker (not yet), so while things may be a bit cloudy, I am heartened by the words of Rabindranath Tagore

‘Clouds come floating into my life, no longer to carry rain or usher storm, but to add colour to my sunset sky’.

There is always a hope to change the system.

The training added colour to my life and introduced me to a world of cultures: twenty colleagues from ten countries participated with me, leading to discussions on all aspects of museums and cultural heritage. I can still

The *Street Children Activity Programme* at the State Archaeological Museum, West Bengal, India.



‘Children are like wet cement. Whatever falls on them makes an impression’

These words, of Haim Ginott, have now taken on particularly relevance for me. I believe it is our moral responsibility to build an impression of our heritage. In this context, I want to discuss some of the programmes undertaken by Indian institutions.

The Centre for Archaeological Studies and Training, Eastern India, collaborated with the State Archaeological Museum, West Bengal to devise the *Street Children Activity Programme* within the museum. About thirty street children, aged 10-15, participated in the programme. The various activities including a drawing and clay-modelling competition, where the participants were encouraged to recreate artefacts exhibited in the museums. They also hosted a learning session for the children, to introduce the fundamentals of archaeology and the human past – I created an animated video to make the subject more vivid to them. The session was highly interactive in nature. The organisers have plans to carry this programme forward at regular intervals, in order to raise the consciousness of the young about their human past and their nation’s heritage.

The Indian Ministry of Culture is working to change the present situation of museums in the country, organising workshops, lectures, meetings, and also providing funds for the promotion of cultural heritage. We are working on a project regarding museum development, entitled *Museum Reforms*, funded by the Indian Museum Kolkata and Ministry of Culture. The project looks at the various problems and prospects of the museums in India through a global perspective. My part of the project was



initiated in October 2009, with Gautam Sengupta, Director General of the Archaeological Survey of India. Three colleagues and I compiled relevant data available online and published documents looking at issues relating to museum management. This included collection and storage management, museum shops and souvenirs and audiences, including students and children. We have submitted the report to the Ministry and are hopeful for great changes in the museums of India.

The photographic archive of N K Bose, Tarapada Santra of North East India is now under my supervision. I have tried to apply my knowledge from the British Museum, along with my own innovative ideas, to organise this archive. My main aim is to offer centralised access to this treasure of information which will be, for the first time, open to the public and the scholarly community. I believe it represents an invaluable record of historical times. I have personally organised two photographic exhibitions, but following my experiences in Birmingham and London, I hope to do better for my next exhibition.

One of my major aims is to promote my institution in a courteous and interactive way, as done by the British Museum. A good museum with outstanding facilities is what we are all trying to create – but the main question is for whom do we want to do all this? The answer is surely ‘for the public’. That is why I am very keen to create and maintain relationships with our potential visitors to publicise our library, training courses, photographic archive and the associated West Bengal State Archaeological Museum. Currently, public relations and communications is somewhat lacking in our system.

Websites are an important tool for promoting and sharing views, products and ideas to a large audience, at a relatively low cost. I admire the Research section on the British Museum website, and I plan to develop more sections on our website to attract virtual visitors. But the British Museum also produced a range of printed material to illustrate the past cultures of the world. We are also trying to produce similar examples for wide circulation as I believe that one good design can say so many things, which can also touch people’s hearts and minds.

## Wang Yi

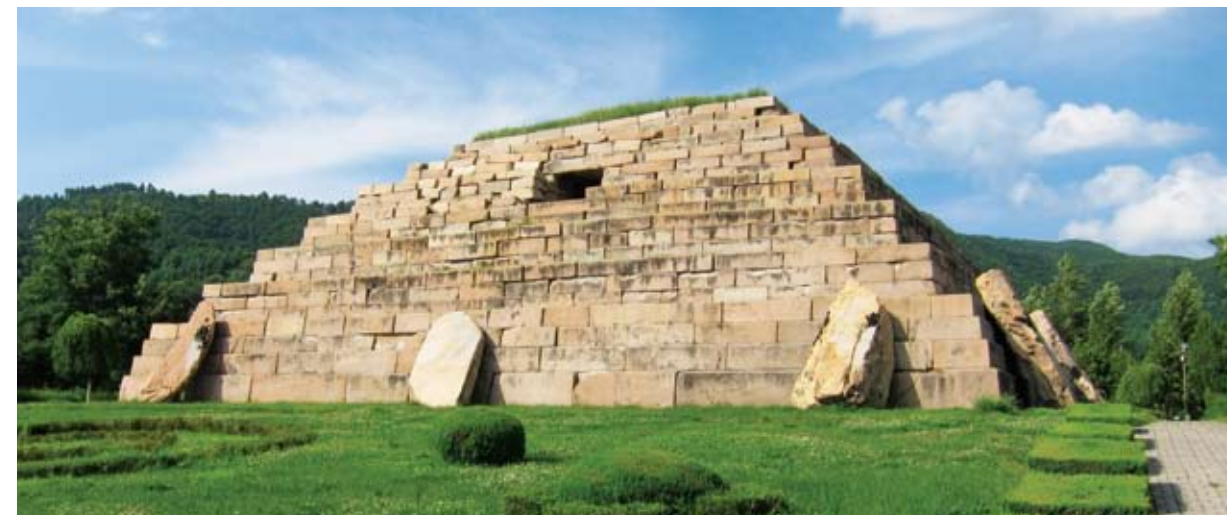
Programme Officer,  
ICOMOS China

I might be one of the most ‘mobile’ persons among all past ITP participants, as I now work as Programme Officer at the Secretariat of the Chinese National Committee of the International Council on Monuments and Sites (ICOMOS China). Looking back, my time in the UK poured new impetus into my life and career.

First of all, to see the British Museum’s approach to exhibition design, funding and education was very instructive, and I wrote a detailed report when I returned to the National Museum of China, which was circulated to all the directors.

Secondly, I saw so many objects and cultures previously only known to me through books, if at all. With such close contact to human cultures and civilisations, I pledged more devotion to academic study and so made the difficult decision to leave the National Museum of China and undertake a Masters degree. The focus of my research was on *A Study on Images of Foreigners in Tombs of Northern China during 5th to 7th Centuries*, which reflects my wish to work on material within a broad context.

Thirdly, I had a brilliant opportunity to meet new friends, including experts at the British Museum and other specialists visiting from China. I am especially grateful to Zhao Feng, now Director of the China National



The pyramid-shaped tomb of an ancient Koguryo king, located in China’s northeastern Jilin province.

Silk Museum in Hangzhou, who was studying the Dunhuang textiles in London. Later he offered me an internship at his museum, and we worked together on the nomination of Sericulture and Silk Craftsmanship of China as Intangible World Cultural Heritage.

After I completed my postgraduate studies, I joined ICOMOS China in August 2009, which mainly deals with China’s world cultural heritage nominations, conservation and management. In the past 18 months, I participated in proofreading the nomination dossiers of China’s candidate world heritage sites, accompanied ICOMOS experts to the nominated sites and acted as one of the main writers for a research report on World Heritage Cultural Landscapes. This has been a fantastic way of visiting many important heritage sites in my vast country.

Focused mainly on sites and monuments, my current position seems to be quite detached from the museum sphere. Nonetheless, both areas of work are devoted to the preservation of cultural heritage handed down from our ancestors, or being created for the future generations, and they are both aimed at the general public. Nowadays, it has become typical to build museums at world heritage sites, to facilitate the presentation and interpretation of the monument itself. For instance, when I accompanied the ICOMOS officer to the West Lake Cultural Landscape, nominated by China for World Heritage inscription this year, the first place we went to was not the Lake, but the West Lake Museum. Therefore, I firmly believe that my museum experience, including the impressive methods I saw in the UK, will help me in thinking about bringing the two spheres closer together.

When I visited the tombs of the ancient Koguryo Kingdom, a world heritage site in north-east China last year, I couldn’t help notice the similarities between tombs of ancient Koguryo kings and Egyptian pharaohs. The cultural diversity and harmony of the world is far more magical than we can imagine.

## Pinar Kuşseven

Culture and Tourism Expert,  
General Directorate for Culture,  
Heritage and Museums,  
Ankara, Turkey

The activities of museums – other than housing, caring for and displaying objects for the public – differ according to need, resources, cultures, target audience, purpose, existing technology, budget and also the concept as perceived by the staff and managers. However, some museums are akin to an Institute, combining educational activities, scientific studies, restoration and

conservation work. The British Museum is one such museum, thus a fantastic place to be exposed to museological practice. All ITP participants availed of the opportunity to exchange information and to visit a variety of museums, leading to different ideas then brought back to their own institutions.

Besides creating the best environment for artefacts and their protection, the British Museum creates an ambiance for museum visitors which enables them to leave with a high level of satisfaction and enjoyment, and allows them to see the stories behind objects. I also found the activities outside the Museum important in terms of enhancing public consciousness related to cultural property. In this light, I would like to consider some possible implementations in the context of Turkish museums.

In terms of creating the best environment for an exhibition, I saw useful ideas for temporary exhibitions such as informing visitors about a specific theme, by focusing on a group of objects through audio-visual technologies. The planning, interpretation, promotion and advertising, but also the creation of merchandise for income generation, are all crucial for such exhibitions, and I hope that these will become widespread in Turkey. Visitor evaluation is obviously very important, as it allows curators to assess the satisfaction levels of visitors at the end of an exhibition, and thus help plan better exhibitions. I believe it is a matter of priority to learn more about visitors' expectations.

Considering the role of museums in society, the British Museum hosts volunteers from different age groups and social contexts who are enthusiastic about working in museums; their contribution cannot be undervalued. By giving information to the visitors, volunteers have become major contributors to the museum and help the museum achieve its work. In return, volunteers gain work experience and expand their knowledge. In Turkey, such a system does not yet exist. While it could contribute to museum work, such a programme would also be a particularly attractive opportunity for retired persons and students.

The majority of museum visitors in Turkey consist of primary and secondary school children, and the ITP showed us some useful ideas for children's activities, together with their parents. For examples, interactive play and web pages designed specifically for children.

In these times, of course, the role of museums in society is not limited to their visitors. In the UK, the British Museum and the Portable Antiquities Scheme are charged with enhancing public consciousness of the policies of the country towards antiquities, and people's obligations and rights related to cultural properties, laws and regulations. It was a good opportunity for me to meet and learn about this scheme and their activities: not only informing people but also documenting archaeological finds and evaluating them. Having a rich cultural heritage in Turkey, with archaeological material deriving from ancient civilisations through to the present day, the educating of local people through a scheme such as the Portable Antiquities Scheme would bring many benefits.

Museums are places where one has a very enjoyable time, but museums also have an informative role in society. In this framework, curators assume great responsibility for visitors' seeing and understanding an object. My time in the UK not only showed me some useful techniques such as storage methods, security systems and conservation facilities but also gave me inspiration to initiate good projects for the visitor. As I learnt at the Horniman Museum,

'those who look but do not see go away no wiser than when they came.'



A poster for the temporary exhibition *Discobolus* at the Istanbul Archaeological Museums (Istanbul Arkeoloji Müzeleri), Turkey.

## Sun Jing

Foreign Affairs Office,  
National Museum of China,  
Beijing

The National Museum of China has gone through renovation and expansion between 2007 and 2010 to become the largest museum in world, with 49 galleries across 191,900m<sup>2</sup>. The museum primarily focuses on history and art and aims to display the splendours of China's history and culture and world civilisation. In the future, it will be an important public venue for cultural recreation and enjoyment. The benefits of the ITP are especially evident in our museum – not only in collection departments, but also the education department, research centre and even the legal office – as colleagues from all these departments have participated in the programme.



The National Museum of China, Beijing.

The summer of 2008 enhanced my understanding of the practice and theory of museums, and more importantly made me part of a global network of museums and colleagues. It was the first time I spent time in an English-speaking environment. After my return, I carefully studied my notes and photos of museum signage and panels. I have since been busily involved with a lot of translation work, such as signage design, newsletters, panels and labels for the permanent exhibition *Ancient China* and its catalogue.

I am working in the Foreign Affairs Office of the museum, responsible for communications between our museum and counterparts around the world. Our work is to establish and strengthen good relations and cooperation with foreign organizations and institutions, and actively promote cultural exchanges through museum activities. In these globalised times, it is perhaps surprising that our museum has almost no foreign objects amongst our 1,050,000 artefacts. Exhibitions restricted to Chinese cultures are no longer enough to satisfy our audiences, therefore we try to bring exhibitions on other cultures to Beijing, with the new museum featuring space dedicated to international exhibitions.

After re-opening in March 2011, the exhibition *Art of Enlightenment* brought over 600 objects from museums in Berlin, Dresden and Munich to convey the stories of the Enlightenment Movement and its contributions to the world progress. Next, *Ancestors of the Incas: Ancient Peru from the 1st Century to 7th Century AD* will showcase 180 carefully selected pieces. A long-term loan of Italian material is now under negotiation.

While in London, the renovation of the porcelain gallery at the V&A inspired us, and we proposed an exhibition on *Sino-west Porcelain Exchanges* with the British Museum, to be shown in China on the occasion of our museum's centennial in 2012. Thanks to the good partnerships existing





National Museum of China Director Lu Zhangshen (third right) and Ministry of Culture, Bureau for External Cultural Relations, Assistant Director-General, Xiang Xiaowei (fourth left), with the British Prime Minister David Cameron (fourth right) and British Council Chair Sir Vernon Ellis (second left), British Museum Director Neil MacGregor (third left), Victoria and Albert Museum Director Sir Mark Jones (second left) in front of the new National Museum of China, November 10, 2010.

## Abdul-Nasir Al-Khatim

Curator, Republican Palace Museum, Khartoum, Sudan

New panels with historic photographs, in the Republican Palace Museum, Khartoum, Sudan.

between UK museums, the V&A joined this collaboration, allowing a rare opportunity to see porcelain of both Chinese and European origins together and learn about this art form through masterpieces from two of the world's greatest museums at the same time.

Based on the fact that many Chinese antiquities are in collections overseas, a research project has been instigated to publish a multi-volume *Selected Records of Overseas Chinese Antiquities* in order to promote China's traditional culture, and to study Chinese antiquities around the world. Agreement was reached with the V&A early in 2010, and nearly 190 objects have been selected by experts from both sides. The first book of this series is due to be published this year; the British Museum has been approached for a similar collaboration.

Good cultural cooperation with the UK museums brought political attention from the government to our museum in November 2010, when British Prime Minister David Cameron came to our museum to discuss cultural exchange with three museum directors. The same year saw the initiation of an Underwater Archaeological Project in Lamu Archipelago Areas, with the contract signed in March between the National Museum of China and the National Museums of Kenya for a period of three years. The first underwater archaeological team was sent to Kenya at the end of 2010 to carry out archaeological investigations.

Though nearly three years have passed since my participation in the ITP, a lot of work has been done through my efforts and huge change is taking place at our museum. The ITP seminar in Cairo allowed fellow participants' reflections to inspire each other, our friendships were further strengthened, and confidence and passion for our global network was confirmed.

I work in the Republican Palace Museum in Khartoum, housed in a sandstone cathedral built in 1912, during the period when Sudan was under Anglo-Egyptian rule (1898-1956). The collections comprise original furniture and paintings of that era, but also gifts to the presidents of independent Sudan, including a collection of state cars.

My participation in the first ITP provided me an opportunity to better understand the relationship between Sudan and Britain, so important given the history and purpose of my museum. I was able to obtain information, photographs and documents to use in the preparation of a permanent exhibition inside the museum which tells of the rule of Britain in the Sudan. For this exhibition, I prepared a series of banners around the side



of the main gallery to present maps, archival photographs and information about the history of Sudan containing text (in English and Arabic), but also reproduction of archive images of the palace.

Having seen the way objects in showcases are numbered in the British Museum, I introduced a similar method in my museum – this allows more space for the objects inside the cases, providing a more aesthetically pleasing display. I was also inspired by the method of using many pictures, maps and graphics in the display.

We have now developed an educational policy based on linking teacher supervisors with visiting school groups. Each is given a guide outlining the purpose of the museum and its collections, but also copies of a questionnaire so that we can understand the impact of the museum on students. It was clear that we need to co-ordinate with schools prior to their visit. In an attempt to encourage schoolchildren to visit the museum, we work with the Agency for Student Activities and the Student Union of Khartoum State to promote the museum, particularly amongst public schools in and around the capital Khartoum. In 2010/11, we hosted 5000 school children, a big increase on previous years.

One of the stated objectives of the ITP was to create and develop relationships between the participants, their institutions and the British Museum. In this regard, I published several newspaper articles in Sudan about the evolving relations between the British Museum and a number of Sudanese institutions, especially the role of the British Museum in studying, publishing and publicising the ancient civilisations of Sudan. Further afield, I joined a group of curators from Arab countries in a museum management seminar in Beijing. This exposed me to the Chinese experience of museum work and gave me the chance to see important monuments of ancient Chinese culture, while also exchanging views and ideas with colleagues from other Arab countries about the present and the future of museums in the Arab world. While in China, I also helped organise the *Pavilion Gallery, Sudan* at the 2010 World Expo in Shanghai. This display showed aspects of Sudanese folklore, with traditional clothing, craftwork and music, but also samples of crops such as cotton and gum Arabic, alongside images of cultural landmarks, archaeological sites and recent development projects.

Presently, I am working for the Association of Museums (Sudan), with the goal of improving cooperation in museum work in the country, sharing experiences and awareness of the importance of museums in society and education, but also helping to convey the knowledge of museum specialists to a wider public. I contribute to the government's development of policies on the establishment of museums and their standards, which will be adhered to by all Sudanese museums. In addition, I help train other curators, and participate in conferences relating to internal and external museum work.

An upcoming project is the conversion of the presidential palace into a public museum, as a new palace is being constructed outside Khartoum over the next two years. My personal responsibility is research into old documents and maps about the old palace since its foundation in 1899, an inventory of its holdings, and thereafter helping with the design of the converted palace and its displays.

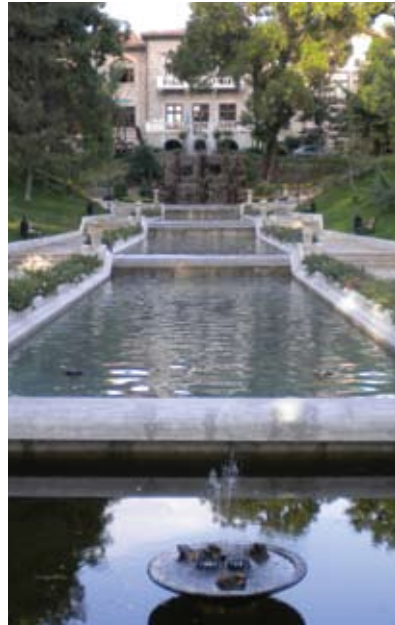
Abdel-Nasir Al-Khatim on the Great Wall of China.





## Bülent Gönültaş

Culture and Tourism Expert,  
General Directorate for Cultural  
Heritage and Museums, Ankara,  
Turkey



General Directorate for  
Cultural Heritage and  
Museums, Ankara, Turkey.

## Omar Abou Zaid

Inspector (Luxor), Ministry of  
State for Antiquities, Egypt

I am an archaeologist, but am not working in museums, rather within a government Directorate responsible for all museums in Turkey, especially concerned with Museum Services Enforcement and Development. A very recent creation, this department's role is to 'produce and implement *new ideas* for Turkish museums.'

The phrase 'new idea' is very important for me. In Turkey, unfortunately, museological perspectives are rather standardised and unchanging, and this has been the situation for many years. Now, however, a new generation of young specialists are working in museums and in government departments which oversee museums. As our Directorate now oversees exhibitions, the ideas and information I gathered during the ITP will prove of great use for the country's museums and their specialist staff.

When I returned home, I began an expansive research project to produce a situation analysis of Turkish museums. This included a presentation about ideas that could be applied in Turkish museums (exhibition, storage, security, volunteers, museum management), on the basis of my ITP observations. I recognised that important information about our national museums – on staff, equipment, statistics about museum buildings, conservation needs, security, visitor numbers etc. – were absent in our General Directorate. At the end of 2010, I designed a *Museum Information System* (MBS) to gather this data together. This should help us identify resources lacking from specific museums, and inform the implementation of any new strategies.

In Turkey, a museum specialist tends to work on many aspects of museum work: inventory, exhibition, storage, publication, presentation, photography, conservation, along with other tasks outside the museum proper, such as survey and excavation. Both the museum and staff suffer from this widely varied workload, and I hope to help work on a better definition of staff roles.

Upon returning to Luxor in southern Egypt, I put together a site management plan, working with the Supreme Council of Antiquities and the American Research Center in Egypt, to look at the temples of Medinet Habu, taking into consideration heritage, local community and tourism. This important site includes the monumental memorial temple of Ramses III (c. 1160BC), where there are two main problems: the effects of ground water and the impact of birds. The first problem was solved by a large dewatering project, but the second persists, despite several attempts to implement solutions.

During my time in the UK, many historical and religious buildings caught my attention; the design, height and the types of the porticos which front these buildings, specifically the column capitals, were in many ways similar to the scale of those found in ancient Egyptian temples. Although thousands of years separate the pharaonic monuments and those buildings I saw in Britain, the conservation protection measures in place for the British buildings were applicable to the problem of the temple birds.

I chose two memorial temples on the West Bank at Luxor as case studies for my project. Overlooking the cultivated fields and traditional village houses, the environment is ideal for flocks of birds, helped by the presence of pigeon towers on the roofs of many houses. With tourism driving the local economy, many pigeon towers had fallen into neglect, and the birds found new homes in the temples. These included pigeons, crows, starlings, swallows and sparrows, and they cause a range of problems. Droppings



Birds nesting in  
the coloured reliefs  
of the temple at  
Medinet Habu.

and other deposits obscure and deface the finely coloured decoration and inscriptions. Interactions between droppings and ancient pigments further affect attempted restoration treatments. In addition, the sharp claws of birds can deface the sandstone walls of the temple. Finally, some of the deeply cut hieroglyphic inscriptions provided ideal nesting places for the birds. This damage was particularly acute in the upper parts of walls, around gateways and in structures with gaps between the stone masonry.

The solution to this problem in the ancient Egyptian temples should be treated like many historical buildings in the UK, where two types of iron mesh nets are used, one fixed vertically on the exterior surfaces of the walls and the second horizontal nets fixed on the capitals of columns. The net should be of fine mesh, a suitable colour, soft material and able to withstand the hot Egyptian summers.



Kelvingrove Art Gallery  
and Museum.

## Glasgow Museums

Martin Bellamy,  
Major Projects &  
Research Manager

Kelvingrove is the flagship venue of Glasgow Museums. There are seven other museums in the service including the Burrell Collection, the Gallery of Modern Art and the Glasgow Museum Resource Centre. Glasgow Museums has proudly hosted three groups of participants on the ITP. At first we were rather unsure of what to expect, but over the last few years we have enjoyed a great time with the British Museum and the programme. At times it has been challenging, and we have had to learn and adapt our approach, but ultimately it has been a rewarding and stimulating experience, both for us and hopefully for all the participants we have worked with.

In 2007, we welcomed Fatma and Sahar from Egypt, and Khaled from Iraq. For nearly two weeks we had a full programme of visits to museums around Glasgow and discussions with our conservation, education and other teams. Perhaps we tried a little too hard to show and explain everything we were doing and we ended up with some rather exhausted participants. We also arranged a trip to Edinburgh, and at the weekend my family joined them on a visit to Stirling Castle to experience a little bit of Scottish history and countryside. This really helped to forge a bond of friendship between us all. Khaled is a specialist in cuneiform and spent the last day with our curator at the Burrell Collection, identifying and translating tablets, passing on his expert knowledge.

We hosted three participants from China in 2008: Haikun, Rose, and Jing. Again we provided something of a whistle-stop tour of the various departments and buildings in Glasgow Museums. But this time we gave the participants a project to complete in their second week. As the Burrell Collection has one of the finest Chinese collections in the UK, and at the time we were developing our online Collections Navigator, we asked the three participants to select an object, carry out a little research and write a web entry for it based on their own perspectives. In this way we were able to harness their expert knowledge and opinions to further our understanding of the collection. It was not all hard work though. I am sure we all have fond memories of driving around the outskirts of Glasgow tracking down parts of the Antonine Wall – and enjoying some fine cakes in a nearby garden centre café.

The following year, 2009, I handed responsibility for organising the programme to my colleague Philip Tonner, who welcomed Abdülmecit from Turkey and Layla from Iraq. Catching up with them in the second week, it was clear that they had particularly enjoyed their visits to Kelvingrove

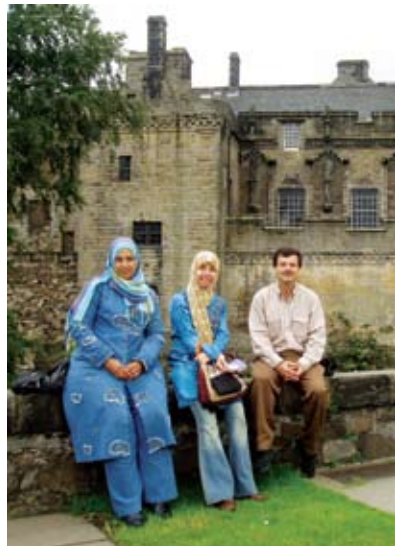


and Glasgow Museums Resource Centre. They also spent time with the Collections Management and Conservation sections and visited the Burrell Collection, where a big tapestry research project was then underway. Noorah al-Gailani, our curator of Islamic Civilisations, played an important role in helping overcome language difficulties – and offering hospitality – for the Iraqi and Egyptian participants.

We always arrange a variety of special sessions for the participants, and allowed them to attend management meetings to get a sense of how the museum service works in practice. We are very conscious that it can be a bit daunting to show just the new and successful aspects of our work and so we have deliberately shown both good and bad aspects of Glasgow Museums. So, for example, we have proudly toured our state-of-the-art new storage facility at Glasgow Museums Resource Centre, but also visited other stores to show the scale of work still ahead. This allows us to compare what we are doing with what the participants may be facing at home. By being honest we can hopefully make the process of development less daunting and more achievable.

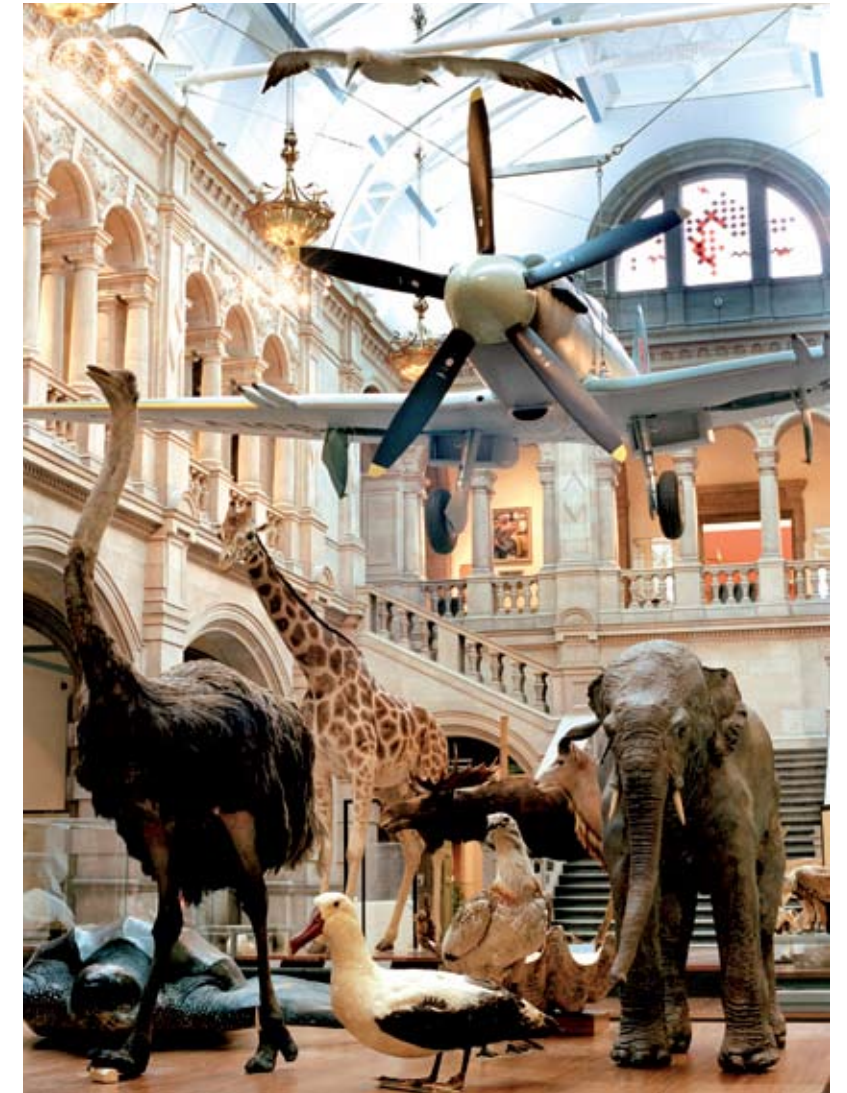
The Cairo seminar of 2010 was a great chance to catch up with old friends from earlier years, but more importantly it was an eye-opener in terms of the global impact that the programme is having. The partner museums have a very different relationship with the participants than the British Museum. We are not seen as part of the ‘official’ organisation of the programme and so our relationship can be much more relaxed and informal. Hosting a small number of people over a week or two can also allow a much more personal understanding to be developed. This is good in terms of allowing a more intimate experience for both the participants and for us as hosts. However, it can also give us a slightly narrow experience of the programme as a whole. Seeing so many participants from all over the world – all together and sharing their experiences – really brought home the great impact of the programme, and what a major role the partner museums can play in fostering good practice, friendship and understanding across the world of museums.

Glasgow Museums has benefitted from participating in the programme in a number of ways. We have had some direct input into the understanding of our collections, and learnt a great deal about how museums operate elsewhere. With so many enquiring minds questioning us about our own practice, we have been able to think again about how our approach could change. We have also used the experience from the ITP to help improve the way we deal with other placements



Sahar Ibrahim el-Sayed, Fatma Abdelaziz Hegab and Khaled Ismael visiting Stirling Castle in 2007.

The stunning new displays at Kelvingrove Art Gallery and Museum.



Abdülmeçit Arigüzel and Layla Salih with the Open Museum team in 2009. The Open Museum provides Glasgow Museums' outreach service.



and to shape a new course in Museum Theory and Practice, in partnership with the University of Glasgow. The learning process has been very much a two way thing.

From a personal perspective the programme has not only given me a much greater insight into how museums operate around the world, but it has also given me a much broader understanding of the people and cultures of the world. Seeing Mosul on the news, I immediately think of Khaled and Layla, and during the 2011 revolution in Egypt I felt I was not observing events in a far off land, but seeing what was happening in Fatma and Sahar's home.

In 2010, Glasgow Museums had rather too many other commitments to take part in the programme, but we look forward to welcoming a new group of participants in 2011 and future years.



# Care of Collections

‘During the training I learnt many techniques that will help me to improve the quality of my work and also that of our museum...techniques on object handling and cleaning, or keeping collections in categorised storage... documentation, on how to display textiles and how museums in the UK work to involve schools and teachers in order to fulfil educational goals.’

António Luis Ntimanga,  
Mozambique

**Shadia Abdu Rabo**  
Curator, Sudan National  
Museum, Khartoum

Having completed a degree in archaeology at the University of Khartoum, I was selected for a position in the National Corporation of Antiquities and Museums, which is responsible for all archaeological sites and museums in Sudan. I chose to work in the Museum section, which would provide both the opportunity to work in the museum and participate in archaeological excavations throughout the country. The first few years were, however, frustrating. My education was in archaeology, not just Sudanese archaeology: Neolithic cultures, methodology of excavations, dating methods, early civilisations, urbanism ... However, I rarely studied objects, and was not asked to consider the purpose of museums. My initial tasks did not give any real insights into museums: I was to show visiting delegations around, manage museum technicians and labourers, and occasionally see objects from the collections being packed for exhibitions abroad.

In 2002, I was sent to Mombasa to participate in the Programme for Museum Development in Africa, and took courses in Conservation, Documentation and Movable Culture. I was one of two curators amongst a group of technicians, photographers, folklore specialists and artists, but in spite of my lack of experience, I found myself conveying ideas about museums, collections and objects to the rest of the group, and even giving a presentation on Sudanese museums.

Invited to the ITP in 2006 – travelling outside Africa for the first time – I did not know whether the Programme would be useful, but was excited about visiting London and seeing collections such as those at the British Museum. Amongst all the experiences in London, at the Bowes Museum and at Tyne & Wear Archives & Museums, two aspects had a particular impact upon me, and would encourage my future work back in my own museum.

The main store in  
the Sudan National  
Museum, Khartoum.



Firstly, storage. The storerooms in the Sudan National Museum, which house a growing collection (currently 35,000 objects), have always been organised by chronological period and archaeological site, with little consideration for object size, or the conservation requirements for different materials. Upon my return from the ITP, I managed to implement small changes, but since April 2010, my colleague Ikhlas Abdullatif and I have started a project to re-organise the storeroom, with the help of volunteers who spend time in the Museum as part of compulsory military service for men and women. We are keeping the chronological framework spanning 300,000 years – Prehistory, A-Group, C-Group, Kerma, Egyptian Middle and New Kingdoms, Napatan, Meroitic, Christian and Islamic – but creating a better storage system within each period. For example, with the Kerma Period objects, the large pottery has been put on separate wooden shelves, with smaller pieces and fine objects placed within cut-outs in conservation-approved foam. These are set on trays inside new cupboards with glass doors and locks – making it easier to see when objects are missing.

Beside each object we write the registration number, and the reorganisation of the storeroom has also offered an opportunity to upgrade the documentation of our collection: adding information from excavation reports, correcting wrongly dated objects, and other mistakes. This information goes on the object cards and in the register books, and then on the digital database.

This reorganisation really helps visiting scholars and archaeologists who wish to study material, but it is equally important that all my colleagues in the Museum understand the benefits of our work – the stored objects are at the heart of the museum, between display cases, archaeologists, visitors and conservators. With this in mind, we plan to hold informal lectures on object types for archaeological inspectors, curators, conservators and volunteers, and we are already suggesting alternative objects for display, that can better illustrate exhibition themes.

Secondly, education. It was striking how much impact educational programmes (for both children and adults) have achieved in museums in



Shadia Abdu Rabo with  
pottery bowl (c.1100 BC)  
excavated in the town at  
Amara West, Sudan.



England. Once back at work in Khartoum, two colleagues and I formed a working group to develop ideas about a programme. Previously, school groups would just visit quickly, without a clear idea of what the children could learn from our museum. In 2008, we had the opportunity to work again with British Museum colleagues, as part of a workshop on education, sponsored by the British Embassy in Khartoum. Seeing Nick Badcott of the British Museum help create pamphlets for schools, and how different activities, such as games, can be used to teach children, inspired our working group to continue trying to improve our programmes. Now, over 14,000 children visit our museum every year.

However, my time in London did not just change my ideas about museum work, but also the importance of collections and research on objects. I decided to embark on a Masters course at University of Khartoum. My dissertation was the first catalogue of faience objects in the Sudan National Museum, and explored the chronology, iconography and symbolism of over 1000 objects. I have now commenced a PhD, in which I hope to explore the production and technical aspects of faience in the Meroitic period. In my research, it has been a great help having colleagues in London to help with references and new publications.

Since 2008, I have been part of the British Museum research excavations at Amara West, a pharaonic site in northern Sudan, working with Neal Spencer from the Department of Ancient Egypt and Sudan. During this work, I have excavated graves in the cemeteries and parts of houses in the ancient town, and learned the recording system, from stratigraphic units to archaeological plans.

Fieldwork, research and museum work all help each other – how objects are documented, the contexts in which they are used, and how we can communicate an understanding of past cultures to different types of people.

## Diana Tumusiime Rwomushana

Assistant Curator, C N Kikonyogo Money Museum, Bank of Uganda, Kampala

Our museum mainly covers two themes: the *Evolution of Currency in Uganda* and the *History and Functions of the Bank of Uganda*. The artefacts in our museum include traditional currency used in the 17<sup>th</sup> Century AD – like cowrie shells, bark cloth and crude salt – but also notes and coins from 1905 to the present, old equipment used in the Bank (for counting coins or signing cheques) and scanned photographs of the first headquarters and former Governors of the Bank. There are also commemorative memorabilia available in our souvenir shop.

After the ITP, the collaboration between our museum and the British Museum has continued to develop. I applied new display techniques to our exhibition space, and practiced mounting and labelling. When British Museum staff visited our museum, we sought local materials in Kampala for use in mounting and labelling. These included a staple gun and staples, paper in various sizes, appropriate cardboard, nails, fabric, a variety of tape and MDF boards made by our local carpenters. Benjamin Alsop and Eleanor Bradshaw also recorded interviews with me and Miriam Ssebanakitta, Curator of the C N Kikonyogo Money Museum, which are to be edited and posted on the British Museum website.

I have also made much progress in the documentation of the collection, with information in a spreadsheet, alongside photographs of the artefacts on display. A lot remains to be done! Catherine Eagleton, Eleanor Bradshaw and Tom Hockenhull from the Department of Coins & Medals visited our museum again in March 2011, advising us on improving our

‘The ITP broadened [my] insight to museum work and also the opportunity to see how to apply local materials in my museum in terms of storage and installation.’

Gertrude Aba Mansah Eyifa,  
Ghana

A display in the  
C N Kikonyogo Money  
Museum, Bank of  
Uganda, Kampala.

documentation and basement storage, including the need for humidity and temperature control. During the week they spent in Kampala, we prepared artefacts for deep freezing to kill pests, made pest traps, re-strung cowrie shells, padded shelves in our storage basements, and re-arranged notes, coins and medals in plastic containers. Again, we used easy-to-obtain local materials.

Later that month, Miriam and I attended a British Museum Africa Programme workshop at the Uganda Museum, entitled *Museum Connections: Visitor Engagement and Reaching Out*. The facilitators/trainers were Sarah Longair, Laura Phillips, Emma Poulter, all from the British Museum, and Doris Kamuye and George Juma Ondeng from Kenya. The course covered audience management and looked at communities, both those who visit and those who do not, objects, and how people with various levels of power and interest could help us improve visitor numbers through outreach programs. Finally, we drew up project proposals which helped us map the way forward and make plans for the coming months and years.



After my recommendations to the Bank to help better preserve our artefacts, the basement area was inspected, measurements taken and the existing mechanical ventilation was serviced and revamped. Six display cases have already been upgraded, and air conditioning has been installed in the exhibition space. In the future, air conditioning may also be installed in the basement, but we feel mechanical ventilation is adequate for now. The latest additions to our museum are three information panels about the museum and the bank. They were designed and written in collaboration with the British Museum. This includes introductory text and panels on the *Evolution of Currency in Uganda* and the *History and Functions of the Bank of Uganda*.

The museum is currently closed, and there is a decision that has to be made as to whether visitors should come by appointment. We will also have pre-arranged group visits, for example, by schools. The security of the museum needs to be improved upon. We have written recommendations to senior management. More sensitive artefacts such as the commemorative

coins of Uganda could then be put on display. In the long term, we are looking at use of audiovisual materials in our museum, as I had seen at the Bank of England Museum.

## Gilda Jorge

Digitisation Officer, The National Museum of Art, Maputo, Mozambique

The National Museum of Art is an institution using artwork, including paintings, sculptures, drawings, ceramic and silkscreen, to create public exhibitions. The museum also has sections devoted to storage, conservation, restoration, education and digitisation. During the ITP, I saw many of the same areas, and how they are organised within the British Museum. Since April of last year, entrance to the museum is 20 Mozambican meticals, approximately one dollar. However, admission is free for students, school visits, children under 12 years old and those over 65.

Sculptures in the National Museum of Art, Maputo, Mozambique.



Created on 18 May 1989, the museum is a non-profit public institution, with a scientific and cultural role, serving the community and social development. Our role is to acquire, document, conserve, research and exhibit works of art. And our aim is to study, provide education on, and collect art of different mediums and genres. In March 2011, we opened a temporary exhibition of the painted works of Hortêncio Langa, in honour of his 60<sup>th</sup> birthday. In most of these works, Langa tries to convey his feelings since the loss of his wife in 1977. He was so struck by the event that he did not re-marry; also a musician, he currently lives in Maputo, in the south of Mozambique.

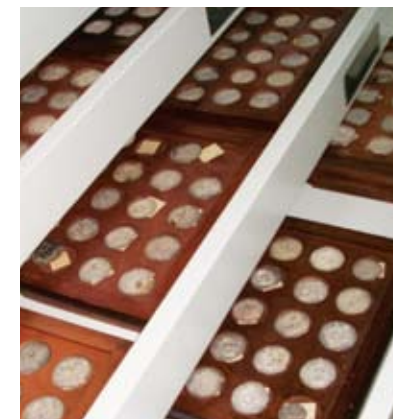
I have been working on a database of the Cultural Information System of Mozambique, about art in general and artists in particular. This database introduces the identification of each artist and their area of action: I research where the artists are now, gather information about them, and input it onto the system. I am also involved with another project of the information bank. I am part of a small group working on an artwork project that will be opened for the public to use for research. The experiences gained during the ITP were very useful since it prompted me to improve my level of research, and thus that of the whole museum, but also helped other areas such as conservation, museum guiding and more. We are also making scans of newspaper clippings and other documents

relating to culture, art, artists and exhibitions. After that I organised it in folders ready for enquiries. It is very promising that all of this information will soon be available to any member of the public interested in art.

In storage areas, I have worked on the documentation of artworks, recording conservation treatments and studying objects to see whether they need further conservation – I can then alert the relevant conservator. We are also trying to improve the experience of schoolchildren who visit our museum, with guided tours allowing them to better understand exhibitions. We use activities such as drawing with pencils, paper and board, in which the children reproduce artworks. This contact with children at the point of learning and discovery brings home the impact a museum like ours can have on people. In January and February we hold an annual exhibition comprising the works of these children, the visible fruit of their commitment during museum learning programmes.

## Zohreh Baseri

Keeper, Coins and Seals, National Museum of Iran, Tehran



New specialised storage cabinets for the coin collection in the National Museum of Iran, Tehran.

Zohreh Baseri arranging coins for exhibition in the National Museum of Iran, Tehran.

Since I participated in the ITP, I have been promoted to Head of Department. As Keeper and Curator of coins and seals, I am responsible for a collection of more than 30,000 artefacts spanning Iran's history, both before and after Islam. The recent transfer of a large collection of Achaemenid coins (550-330 BC) has further increased the collection.

In this role, I am also responsible for three members of staff, as well as several interns. I have been able to supervise the re-arrangement of all the coins and seals in special cases and cabinets made of galvanised stainless steel, in order to protect and conserve them. Inside the drawers and cabinets, the coins are arranged within wooden trays. Last summer, our collection of seals went online for the first time ([www.jamichto.ir](http://www.jamichto.ir)); the website is proving very popular with scholars investigating the history of Iran.

I have helped prepare exhibitions in Tehran and provincial towns in Iran. In the National Museum, these include *The Glory of Iran*, *Women in the Course of History*, and *Iran and the Silk Road*. In Semnan, in the north of Iran, we worked on an exhibition looking at memories of childhood, while in Urmia in West Azerbaijan province, I helped prepare an exhibition of the treasures of art and civilisation of northwest Iran. Another exhibition in Tabriz covered the story of man in early history.





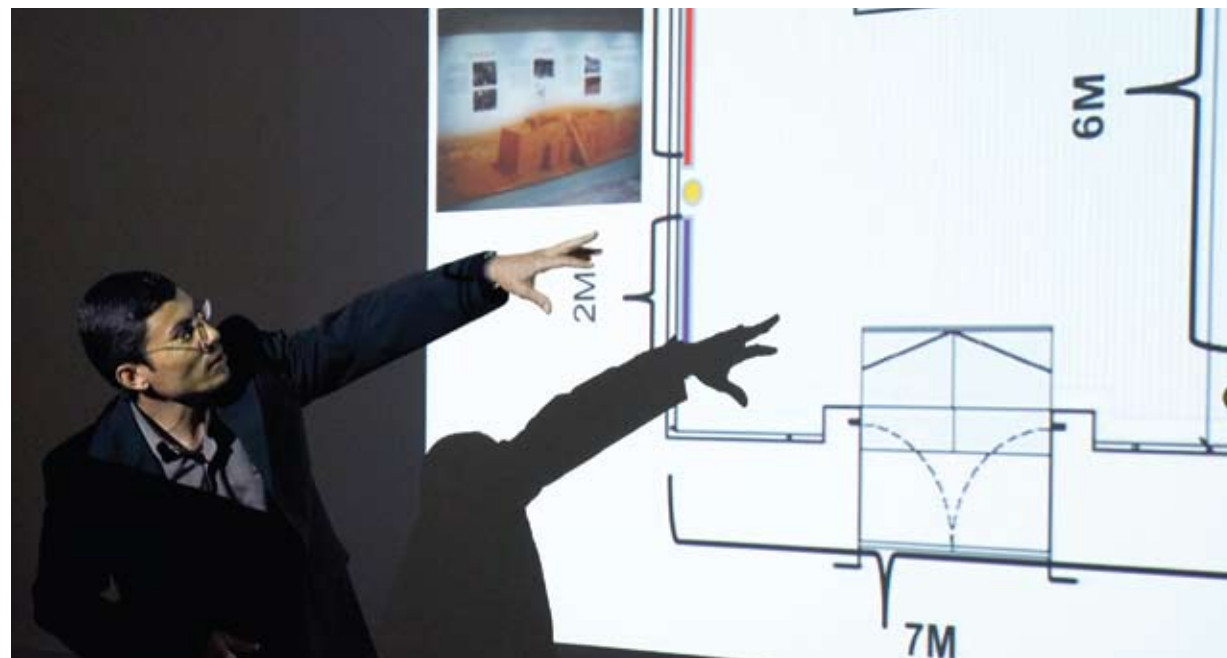
In Uremia, Azerbaijan, I curated, handled and packed objects excavated in Hasanlu, an ancient hill town with a history dating back to 6000 BC. The objects had to be transported by air so I was able to use techniques I had seen during the ITP, transporting artefacts in wooden crates, set into layered sheets of foam for protection.

Finally, I am hoping to be accepted for a doctorate at Tehran University looking at archaeological fieldwork and historical trends in Early Islam.

## Qahtan Al Abeed

Director, Basra Museum, Iraq

Perhaps I am slightly different from other participants, because I joined the programme having already been in London to work on a new museum for Basra in southern Iraq, supported by an organisation called the Friends of the Basra Museum. I was concerned with how museums are managed, with a particular focus on how the Basra Museum would be set up, what the displays of Mesopotamian artefacts would look like, and how to make visitors so happy they don't want to go home! However, the ITP caused me to change my ideas and to think about the wider roles a museum could play.



Qahtan Al Abeed showing exhibition plan during his ITP final presentation.

When originally planning the layout of Basra Museum, I did not envisage space for temporary displays, but I have now included it, as it is an important element of any modern museum. Perhaps the best idea I took from the ITP was the range of educational activities for children and school students: drawing classes, archaeological activities, lessons in cuneiform writing, historical story-telling – and even temporary exhibitions designed for children. These things will be a new experience for my city.

It is very important share our human heritage with other peoples, but also to bring other civilisations to our people through hosting travelling exhibitions. These artefacts from other civilisations all belong to humanity – but travelling exhibitions can of course also provide income for the museum.



Qahtan Al Abeed in the Iraq Museum, Baghdad.

After seeing a variety of museums in the UK, I was inspired by new ideas for the showcases, with more artistic flair through colour inserts, which are at the same time cost effective. These will hopefully provide a striking impression for museum visitors. I also wonder about making open stores. Taking into account the classification according to material, size or historical periods, complemented by a database, researchers can be provided with an important resource for studying artefacts, which also remain accessible to general visitors.

In addition to all the academic and museological information gained from this programme, what I learnt from the other participants about developments in their countries – museums, archaeology, cultural matters – was fascinating, even to find out about why certain projects failed or succeeded.

My main aims for the Basra Museum are to educate people about the culture and history of Iraq and Basra. The museum should be a vibrant place where education, training and development takes place for different audiences (schools, universities, scholars and the general public), but also providing facilities for researchers and archaeologists to study the collections. Finally, the staff will have to work together: their special skills will give them different roles in the museum. And flexibility is key, as these duties are likely to change depending on the needs and views of visitors and researchers.



The Collection:  
Art and Archaeology in  
Lincolnshire

## Lincoln The Collection

Andrea Martin  
Community  
Engagement  
Officer,  
Lincolnshire  
Archives Office;  
Dawn Heywood  
Collections Officer,  
The Collection  
and  
Antony Lee  
Collections Officer,  
The Collection

‘Must Give Else Never Can Receive’ is one of our school mottos – and it certainly rings true with the ITP: we have given a lot of ourselves and have received a great deal in return.

We are now in our fifth year of partnership with the British Museum; this programme, which started in 2006, has become embedded into our yearly service planning. Our aim has been to deliver a programme of events, with colleagues, to show the workings of Lincolnshire County Council’s heritage service, which is spread across this large and very rural county in eastern England. It has provided an opportunity to discuss commonalities and different ways of working across the partner countries that has enhanced the learning, skills and knowledge of all. This has allowed reflection and evaluation for all concerned, as to the services we provide to our prospective audiences.

Curators and specialists from Egypt, Ethiopia, Turkey, Iraq, Sudan, Kenya, South Africa, Iran and Mozambique have now spent time in Lincoln. The programme is very much a team effort with each member of staff bringing their own knowledge, expertise, experiences and personality to develop and be part of this programme. Each year we are quizzed ‘are the curators arriving this year?’, ‘how many will be with us?’, ‘where are they from?’, ‘when are they arriving?’, ‘do you need any assistance?’.

While other institutions have larger collections with specific relevance to the areas of expertise of the curators, we aim to give a broader outlook on the museum sector. The Collection, where the programme is based, has a national and international reputation for its collection of archaeological artefacts that shows the development through time of the County we work and live in. During the short time the specialists are with us, we try to give them an experience that covers the work we undertake in collections management and object interpretation, but also the relationships with other areas of our service. We show the diversity of sites and collections from the art held at the Usher Gallery, to sites such as the medieval Old Hall in Gainsborough and Lincoln Castle, and visits to other local history museums. We also look at external organisations such as Burghley House, offering a unique glimpse of the way our great houses have been furnished and inhabited, in this instance from the time of Queen Elizabeth I to the present day. The National Trust property Tattershall Castle, a medieval building rising dramatically above the fen landscape, provides another viewpoint. Where possible we have tried to visit local archaeological digs where the participants can gain hands-on experience.



Discussion with Mona Radwan, Bongeka Hlengwa and Vuyani Boozi around the aerial photograph of Lincolnshire that lies in the centre of the museum's archaeology gallery.



On these trips and in the activities we do on site, we try to give the widest view possible of what is available and how differently a regionally based service works, often in comparison to their own national museums. We have endeavoured also to show them our county and the history associated with it – what was classed on one trip as a very ‘British’ day out.

Each year has brought a very different set of individuals with different expectations and differing experiences. Flexibility has always been key and an adaptability to blend in subjects that suit all interests, including ours. It has been particularly enlightening to hear each curator talk about their own museum and working life. The time in Lincoln has provided an excellent forum for sharing opinions, expertise and knowledge – from a professional but also personal standpoint. We learnt about underwater archaeology, but also how to create a museum from scratch, in a palace building.

We have found it extremely important and enlightening to get to know individuals, gaining insights into the workings and collections of their museums but also learning about their home lives and families. It has been a very personal experience

for each one of us and enabled us to grow as people as well as a service, having a wider, more global view, which has struck home most recently with current political activity across the world. Amongst the experiences that remain with us – beyond museums and culture – are picnicking in the grounds of a stately home, being in goal for a united nations football team, or discussing whether vibrant green mushy peas are really vegetables.

It has promoted team working and partnerships and given links across the County that are sustainable. For example, we combine a tour of the museum and town of Stamford with the visit to Burghley House set on the outskirts of the town, where the curator comes to talk to the group about the house and his work. We also involve one of the City's green badge guides in presenting a tour of Lincoln – his knowledge and enthusiasm for his subject refreshes and inspires us all.

The Cairo seminar in 2010, which felt like a meeting of old friends, was a fantastic opportunity to hear how they have used experiences from their visits and incorporated them into their work at home. Activities around creating learning resources have been put into practice as has a more hands-on approach with interactive school activities. Our collections data management system was also something that seemed to hit the mark, as were the hands-on conservation days. On a very personal level it has shown how we belong to a large global museum community and how very small the world is when faced with similar issues on a day-to-day basis

First year of the International Training Programme in Lincoln, 2006.



# Partnerships

‘I have gained a network of museum professionals from around the world whom I can contact with queries on various challenges I face in the process of doing my work. I can also look to them for inspiration.’

Lydia Nafula, Kenya

## Nilanjan Banerjee

Officer, Rabindra-Bhavana  
(The Institute of Tagore Studies),  
Visva-Bharati, India

On my way from Kolkata to London, I tried to fine-tune my queries and the purpose of attending the ITP, but my eyes were suddenly drawn to a street-side hoarding with a quotation by Albert Einstein:

‘I do not need to know everything, I just need to know where to find it when I need it’.

I flew to London with these words in mind and they guided me throughout my stay in London and Birmingham. I was excited to meet outstanding museum professionals and also some very enlightened and most humane fellow trainees from countries like Sudan, Egypt, Palestine, Ghana and Mozambique. My eyes were constantly opened through the sessions, the free time we were given to see museums and galleries, and of course regular discussions with British Museum staff and other participants. I spent countless useful moments in museums diving deep into the mysterious and curious worlds of art and creativity, civilisations, life and death.

I returned to Santiniketan as ‘a difficult boy’, as my former Director told me during a debate over certain policy decisions to be implemented at Rabindra-Bhavana on the basis of my UK experiences. Rabindra-Bhavana is the Institute of Tagore Studies at the University of Visva-Bharati, which also runs several small museums, archives, and special libraries. The Institute also looks after the historical houses, gardens, sculptures, murals and frescos at Visva-Bharati. Despite the controversy I instigated by proposing certain changes, I managed to introduce several developments, convincing higher authorities of certain essential requirements to run a modern museum. While implementing many of those changes, I continued

Nilanjan Banerjee  
being interviewed.

to consult experts whom I had met during my stay in UK, including fellow participants.

I sought to improve the culture of work by offering professional training, a clear definition of roles, and supporting intra-departmental cooperation and consultation. I encouraged frequent meetings with departmental heads, creating an awareness of the ethical principals governing museums, and thus the role and responsibilities of a museum and its staff. Regular workshops, seminars, training programmes and exhibitions further impart knowledge about varied subjects and also create awareness about the need to preserve heritage and cultural properties. Looking to the future, I reviewed the promotion and recruitment processes, to make sure we can attract the best talent to our museum.



Conservation standards have also been improved, through guidance from Indian and international experts and expert agencies including the British Museum, National Archives of India and the National Research Laboratory for Conservation. A democratisation of our collections has been achieved through digitisation, but also the planning of visible storage systems, and the galleries themselves have benefitted from the introduction of innovative curatorial perspectives. Just to cite one example, we are going to create a special corner on stolen objects in our Museum. Rabindranath Tagore, the founder of the University, was a Nobel Prize winning poet and philosopher. In 2005, Rabindranath’s Nobel Medallion was stolen from our museum, along with four dozen other important objects. We have been facing numerous queries regarding this high profile theft. The new museum gallery will answer such queries in a hitherto unexplored manner. I have also taken the initiative to introduce a few other exhibits at the museum exploring Rabindranath’s connections with Japan and Bangladesh. We are currently applying for the status of UNESCO World Heritage Site, in association with the Ministry of Culture of India, and are formulating policies for working with other museums and sending major collections abroad on loan.

Before participating in the ITP, I was a disillusioned museum enthusiast. I returned a confident museum activist, with a series of ideas in mind and ways to put those ideas into practice.



## Li Zhongmou

Vice Director, Shanghai Museum, China



Li Zhongmou standing on the roof of the Shigatse Museum in Tibet.

After the opening of an Assyrian art exhibition organised jointly by the British Museum and the Shanghai Museum in July 2006, I was invited to join the first ITP. As the deputy chief of exhibitions, I was interested in the management of exhibitions at the British Museum; as a curator in ancient Chinese ceramics, I hoped to visit various collections and collect information for my research. But I was also particularly keen to meet museum colleagues from the Middle East, and learn about Islam. The ITP provided me with such a great chance to achieve these three targets; these five weeks were really a special experience.

Returning to Shanghai, I was involved in bringing in external exhibitions, though our museums also lends artefacts for other exhibitions. Between 2007 and 2010, I managed twenty exhibitions, as our museum sought to introduce other arts, cultures and civilisations to Chinese people. For example, *Art in America: 300 years of Innovation* (2007), *From Titian to Goya: Great Masters of the Museo del Prado* (2007), *Rembrandt and the Golden Age: Highlights from the Rijksmuseum Amsterdam* (2007), *The Ancient Olympic Games* (2008), *Gold: Pre-Hispanic Art of Colombia* (2009), *Masterpieces from the Collection of the Uffizi Gallery: 15<sup>th</sup> century – 20<sup>th</sup> century* (2010), *India: The Art of the Temple* (2010) and *Star of North: Catherine the Great and the Golden Age of Russian Empire* (2010). My experience in the UK was particularly useful in five areas.

### Exhibition management

The management of exhibitions in the British Museum seems to follow a very structured process, with the Project Manager working with curatorial, design, education, conservation, and security departments. However, we had a different system in the Shanghai Museum, with no project manager, leading to problems of organisation and coordination of exhibitions. So I introduced this concept of project management which has improved our exhibition management.

### Fundraising for exhibitions

The Shanghai Museum budget comes entirely from the government, and sometimes falls short of what is required, especially for special exhibitions. So we seek sponsorship, but this is difficult for various reasons, particularly as we did not have an efficient system or an experienced fundraising team. My meetings in London with the Development Department of the British Museum were really useful, and I managed to convey new ideas to colleagues. We were not always successful in achieving sponsorship, but we have taken the first step in an international manner.

### Interpretation of exhibitions

A wonderful lecture by a British Museum expert on exhibition interpretation was really thought-provoking. Most exhibitions in the Shanghai Museum were organised in an academic style, and the exhibition texts written for scholars, not for the public. Too many professional terms were used, not easily understood by ordinary visitors, especially students. I told myself that we had to do something about this. So in exhibitions from 2007 onwards, my colleagues and I tried our best to think about the viewpoint of ordinary visitors, making texts more easily understood, and providing visitors with more types of information.

### Creating a shared interest amongst museum staff

I was very impressed by the Wednesday Staff Breakfasts at the British Museum, open to everybody, helping create a feelgood atmosphere around

many of the museum's projects. This could lead to an exchange of ideas. For exhibitions, curators and project managers could hear constructive suggestions from passionate colleagues. I introduced this idea of breakfast meetings to the Shanghai Museum directors, who are still considering it. Even if not yet implemented, it has encouraged the museum management to think how a shared interest of staff in museum projects is important for the development of the museum.

### Improvement of the relationship between the British Museum and the Shanghai Museum

My participation in the ITP was really the first fruit of a long-term cooperation between the British and Shanghai Museums, conceived at the opening of the Assyrian art exhibition. Since then, the British Museum has sent two loans to Shanghai in the past five years - *The Ancient Olympic Games* (2008) and *India: The Art of the Temple* (2010), while the Shanghai Museum sent one exhibition on early Chinese bronze and jade to London in 2009. As for training, the Shanghai Museum has sent three groups of curatorial staff to London to undertake research on coins, lacquers and ceramics, or receive training in the fields of conservation, archaeology and museum education. Meanwhile, the British Museum has also sent three employees to Shanghai to carry out study of Chinese paintings and the history of Shanghai Museum, or to be trained in mounting traditional Chinese paintings. Due to my achievements in exhibition work, I was promoted to the chief of exhibitions in the Shanghai Museum in 2008, and in 2010, further promoted to be a vice director of the Museum, taking charge of three departments - the Exhibition Department, the Crafts Department and the Library. Nine months ago, another change came to my life. I was sent by the Shanghai government to Tibet, working for a three-year cultural and museum project in Shigatse, the second biggest city in Tibet. I am now living on the 'Roof of the World', 4000m above sea level, and making contributions to what is possibly the highest museum in the world – Shigatse Museum, applying what I have learned during my time in both the Shanghai Museum and the British Museum.

(Below)

A display in the Matteo Ricci exhibition at the Capital Museum of China, Beijing.

## Bo Haikun

Curator, Temporary Exhibitions, Capital Museum of China, Beijing



What I saw and heard in the British Museum opened my mind: the human atmosphere, the great history and the beautiful landscapes of Britain inspired me.

Two weeks after I returned to Beijing, the 29th Olympic Games opened at the National Stadium of China, known as the Bird's Nest. In order to illustrate the brilliance of Chinese culture and the Olympic spirit to the many visitors from all over the world, the Capital Museum held a series of interesting exhibitions. Among them, an exhibition of *Chinese Treasures of Five Thousand Years* featured hundreds of the most famous and magnificent cultural relics, including pottery, bronze, gold and jade artefacts, as well as terracotta horses and soldiers, and beautiful silk paintings. Due to my experience in the UK, I was tasked with guiding foreign leaders who came to Beijing during that period, including the Presidents of Samoa, Iran, Singapore, Mauritius and Belgium. My time in London had clearly improved my English, especially talking in a museum context. In fact, I was given a special Labour Medal by the municipal government of Beijing for the outstanding contribution to the events during the Olympic Games – the only person in my museum to receive this award. Thereafter, I have been asked to guide further dignitaries - the US Secretary of the Treasury,

‘We started to understand each other’s countries, cities, museums and collections, as well as their work responsibilities from the first presentation... We had lived, worked, visited and talked together, deepened understanding between each other, forged a profound friendship and established a link for future exchanges and cooperation.’

Ding Pengbo, China

## Vuyani Booii

Senior Manager and Curator of Collections, University of Fort Hare, South Africa



Vuyani Booii

Timothy Geithner, and the former Italian Prime Minister, Romano Prodi.

My written English is also frequently used back in Beijing, as I now understand how to express information clearly on display labels. This led to me being transferred from the Education Department to the Research Department, responsible for translating material for temporary exhibitions (over 50,000 words in total) including *Archaeology and Discovery*; *Early China: Primitive Period of Chinese Civilisation*, and an exhibition called *Memory of a City*.

At the end of October 2009, I was transferred again to a new department in charge of planning and organising temporary exhibitions. Having seen the permanent exhibitions of the British Museum, and the temporary exhibition *Hadrian, Life Love Legacy*, I had many ideas for designing wonderful exhibitions. In early 2010, I organised an exhibition about Matteo Ricci, a brave Italian missionary who introduced western philosophy, art, science and technology to China at the end of the 16<sup>th</sup> century AD. Since then, I have been working on a an exhibition of Ancient Indian Buddhist Arts, which will show 127 exquisite stone carvings, bronze statutes, and a palm leaf sutra, all borrowed from India.

I have also published articles in local Chinese-language magazines, to try to convey the purpose of the British Museum to more people, and am planning a book on the British Museum. Finally, all the good friends from amazing places around the world - Egypt, Turkey, Iran, Iraq, India, Sudan, South Africa and Kenya – continue to provide me with information about museums in their own countries, so that I now have an extensive view of developments across the global museum community. For me, the British Museum is truly a wonderful place where inspiration comes from!

Under the auspices of the British Museum, my understanding of the museum and its functions and role in society has changed for the better. I emphasise this because after attending two universities in South Africa my knowledge about museums may have been polished but was too academic and theoretical. South African museums are not like British museums in terms of resources, facilities and the use of technology. I knew that more training and exposure to museum systems would benefit South African museums.

Returning to the University of Fort Hare, where I am curator of collections at De Beer’s Centenary Art Gallery, I had to conceptualise new exhibitions using the same collection as before - but now with the creativity and deep insights acquired during the training in the UK.

This new approach to museum exhibitions made our gallery a new cultural space that successfully attracted visitors from far afield, improving the image of the gallery and bringing life to the collections. I have managed to identify, select and mount the works according to exhibition themes, bearing in mind the target audience. For instance, the university museum has a diverse and unique range of collections, the *South African Black Art Collection*, dating from 1932-1990, but also a rare and unique collection of indigenous African artefacts going back to the early 1880s. The major challenge is how to bring life to this collection and how to make sure that the current generation is appreciative of its importance. These were the questions that confronted me just before travelling to the UK. I must say that the visits to various museums that housed diverse collections resulted in me having a more creative approach to the use of space and the installation of artefacts.

‘It brought to light the common problems that museums face and that my museum is not the only one with challenges. The biggest [benefit] of all are the contacts created and the ideas shared.’

Gertrude Aba Mansah  
Eyifa, Ghana

Our museum is now receiving more young learners from the local communities and students from the university. This improved number can be attributed to the quality of our education programme, which has been recognised in the corporate world, as it is now funded by MTN South Africa, a large mobile phone operator.

Currently I am also working outside the university assisting communities with the conceptualisation, designing and development of exhibitions whose focus is on community histories. It is encouraging to see that district and local municipalities call on my expertise and skills when they want to develop exhibitions about their communities. In the past few years I have trained students from the university’s Department of Fine Arts – most of them have since been employed by different state and community-based museums as curators and collections managers, thus my skills are truly having an effect well beyond my own museum.

The other training of note was on the management and promotion of heritage resources and sites, and I am now a recognised expert in this field within South Africa. This has led me to be involved in various national heritage transformation projects advising institutions, organisations and communities on better strategies to manage our irreplaceable heritage.

## Wang Zhan

Curator, National Museum of China, Beijing

National Museum of China staff packing a sculpture to be moved.



The ITP continues to influence my work and opinions in many ways. Immediately after my return to China, I authored a report on what I had experienced, emphasising four main points which I think are the most important: enhancing the learning ability of staff; ensuring the protection of the collections; developing relationships with other museums and companies; and the minute details important in building a first-class museum. My commentaries on these topics were published in our annual report.

I am always considering how to share what I learnt in the programme with my colleagues and other museums. I had the chance to participate in two conferences held by the Society of Museums of Beijing in 2009 and 2010. In the first conference, I introduced the British Museum and discussed the differences between museums in Britain and in China, leading to some useful feedback and discussion. The second conference was to celebrate the tenth anniversary of the foundation of the Society, and I spoke about the cleaning and protection of archives and documents. I emphasised avoiding mould, monitoring the condition of the store room and methods of cleaning paper, on the basis of booklets published by the British Library. The paper was published, but more importantly, I implemented the rules and guides in the storeroom which I am responsible for.

Object handling and packing was also an important lesson for me to learn. The National Museum of China has just received 400,000 objects from the State Bureau of Cultural Relics and we unpacked and moved all of these objects to our storerooms, from very heavy bronze sculptures of Buddha, to fragile porcelain vases and paintings. I showed my colleagues the appropriate handling methods for the various objects, and the pictures I took in the UK were useful guides resulting in more efficient work.

It is important that we keep in touch with our ITP colleagues. The Cairo seminar made our relationships stronger, and this continues through other means such as Facebook, Plaxo and MSN, which give us space to exchange opinions and publicise our work. Communication helps us refresh our knowledge and keeps us moving forward, and we all look forward to more chances of meeting in the future.



Manchester Museum



## Manchester Museum and the Whitworth Art Gallery

Karen Exell and Stephen Welsh, Curators, Manchester Museum; Frances Pritchard, Curator, Whitworth Art Gallery

Manchester Museum and the Whitworth Art Gallery joined the ITP in 2008, seeing it as an opportunity to strengthen already productive relationships with the British Museum. This had previously manifested itself in the form of object or exhibition loans, but the ITP provided a platform to exchange skills and experience in a very different way. It also presented a unique opportunity to host colleagues from institutions in a variety of countries and thus develop global relationships.

Both the Museum and Art Gallery are part of the University of Manchester but, as their names suggest, they are distinct institutions and have contrasting collections and histories. Manchester Museum is encyclopaedic in concept with collections ranging from numismatics and natural sciences to archaeology and ethnography, with a particularly strong Egyptology collection. The Whitworth Art Gallery houses works on paper (prints, watercolours, wallpapers and drawings), textiles and contemporary art. They are located within ten minutes walk of each other on Oxford Road, in the heart of the University campus. Both institutions have dynamic learning and outreach departments with community involvement, public engagement and family programming as high priorities, as well as working closely with various University departments to support teaching and research.

The trainees who visited Manchester thus far have come from China, Egypt, Ghana and South Africa. Their disciplines, backgrounds and museum roles have varied considerably, ranging from subject specialist curators to exhibition designers ... and much in between. Planning to accommodate the participants evolved from year to year as we learnt from feedback what had worked - and what had not worked! Initially group sessions predominated, with all the trainees taking part in the same talks and activities. These ranged from getting the most out of storage systems on a limited budget to layered approaches to interpreting displays for different audiences and age groups, best practice in community engagement, the treatment of human remains, collections care and management, and working with universities. It became clear that the participants were keen to learn practical skills, to take part actively in the work of the institutions they were visiting, and to develop further the areas in which they were specialising in their home institutions. Given the small number of trainees hosted each year, it has become possible to develop individually tailored programmes for each participant, something that is less feasible for the full complement of trainees hosted by the British Museum.

Whitworth Art Gallery



The benefits of participation in the ITP have not been one-way. In addition to further developing the relationship between us and the British Museum, the programme has bolstered cross-institutional collaboration between the Manchester Museum and the Whitworth, a prescient experience as the two institutions have now been re-structured to share many of their posts and services. The trainees have been encouraged to be much more than impartial observers - to participate in each session, and even offer criticisms of our working methods, creating a reciprocal experience with Manchester staff benefiting from the experience and knowledge of trainees. The trainees also shared stories of their own institutions and ways of working from which we in Manchester have learnt, or should learn – not least that in Beijing cats are ‘employed’ to keep the mice down in museums!

The experience of the trainees has not been limited to the everyday routine of the Museum and the Gallery: outside factors have also influenced the programming. In 2008, a four-year Aimhigher collaboration in Greater Manchester between schools, colleges and cultural organisations culminated in a performance at the Royal Exchange Theatre, which the ITP participants attended. As part of the Manchester International Festival in 2009, the Whitworth Art Gallery hosted ‘*Marina Abramovic Presents...*’ a challenging performance exhibition which occupied the whole of the gallery space, although it was only on view for three hours each day. In addition, the *Ancient Egypt Death and the Afterlife* gallery at the Manchester Museum was closed during the summer of 2009 for a few weeks due to essential maintenance work, just when one of the Egyptian participants was keen to study the mummies in the collection and see how they were displayed... These two factors led to the response: ‘Why have I come to Manchester where there are empty galleries and no mummies?’ However, it also resulted in questions on the use of space and transmission of ideas through the presence and absence of objects, as well as a discussion on the ethics surrounding the display of human remains in museums.

Each year the trainees have formed an enterprising group and early hesitance has soon given way to perceptive insights. Spare time has been exploited to experience Manchester’s distinctive cultural mix, whether it has been a bus ride out to Manchester United’s football ground, extensively planned shopping trips to the vast shopping centres (requiring the purchase of new suitcases to accommodate the shopping!) or a visit to view the exceptional manuscripts in John Rylands Library Special Collections on Deansgate. The one much



Hesham Hussein,  
Joyce Dartey,  
Sam Sportun  
(Senior Conservator,  
Manchester Museum)  
Aba Eyifa and  
Hayam Mohammed,  
Manchester Museum,  
2009.



Xu Jing,  
Frances Pritchard  
(Curator, Whitworth Art  
Gallery) and Sun Yue,  
Whitworth Art Gallery,  
2010.

needed missing freebie was an umbrella to cope with the incessant rain. Each year an outing to Liverpool offered a wider perspective on the North West of England. These visits have taken in a range of Liverpool’s attractions, including The Beatles Experience, The World Museum, which possessed a particular resonance for many, and unexpected events such as seeing Morris Dancers performing outside the Anglican Cathedral in 2008.

The seminar in Cairo in 2010 showed how rapidly knowledge gained through the programme had been implemented and developed by participants; the trainees are now in the vanguard of museum practice in their home countries. Collaborative approaches across continents were already in the pipeline and bonds lasting a lifetime had been forged. One sensed that a global network of museums and galleries was in the making.



# Research

‘The presentation of ceramics at the V&A is refreshing. When I went into the porcelain gallery, I was shocked. What a porcelain world here! I was surrounded by them! From the ground to the ceiling, there is dense porcelain in showcases, for all visitors to see. How can ceramics researchers like us not feel envy?’

Ding Pengbo, China

## Lu Pengliang

Curator, Shanghai Museum, China

My participation in the ITP provided me with an extraordinary opportunity to see the management of one of today’s leading museums, and this experience has since proved constructive for my career in the Shanghai Museum, and for pursuing my doctoral studies.

In the exhibition department of the Shanghai Museum, I have endeavoured to make exhibitions more accessible to the general public in multiple ways, building on what I had seen in Britain. In *Ancient Olympic Games*, a British Museum exhibition hosted by the Shanghai Museum in 2008, we added more Chinese interpretation to the labels, as most Chinese visitors are unfamiliar with ancient Greek myths. We also enriched the audio guide with more background information about the art, culture, and history of ancient Greece, to provide better context for the objects. A variety of museum lectures, student events and online content were programmed around the exhibition.

In terms of exhibition installation, my experience in London was complemented when British Museum staff came to install objects in the Shanghai Museum. There were many difficult objects, including the transportation and installation of *Discobolus*, the marble discus-thrower, which just fits through the doorways of the Shanghai Museum. We also safely installed many large oil paintings in exhibitions such as *From Titian to Goya* (Prado Museum, Madrid) and *Rembrandt and the Golden Age* (Rijksmuseum, Leiden).

I had also seen how the British Museum’s Development department cultivates trusts, companies and individuals into providing financial support for future exhibition projects and museum development. At the Shanghai Museum we are now building up a wide network of long-term relationships with Chinese and international companies. We successfully acquired

Lu Pengliang and colleagues during the installation of a Goya painting from the Museo del Prado, Shanghai Museum, China.

Lu Pengliang checking the condition of *Discobolus*, borrowed from the British Museum, Shanghai Museum, China.



sponsorship from Credit Suisse for the exhibition of *Five Hundred Centuries of Swedish Silver* in 2007.

The focus of my academic interests is Chinese decorative art, especially archaising bronzes and porcelain produced for export. While the former topic embraces the remote past (figures imitating older forms), the latter faces the outside world. Both aspects have been an important feature of Chinese decorative arts since 900 AD. I acquired lots of information on these two topics through visiting the British Museum and other institutions in UK, and at the same time, I was greatly inspired by the advice of many English scholars.

The British Museum and V&A hold important collections of archaising bronzes. I studied the Xuande censer, a special group of bronze incense burners traditionally thought to be made under the imperial order of Xuande Emperor (reigned 1426-35 AD). The authentication of the Xuande censer is one of the most contentious issues in Chinese decorative arts. Through research, I concluded that most of the censers bearing the Xuande mark were fabricated antiques, emerging from the booming art market after the late 16th century AD. My paper, considering the textual evidence and including a full stylistic analysis, was published in *Wenwu*, a prominent journal on Chinese antiquities. I also presented a paper on the cultural context of the appearance of the Xuande censer at a conference held by the Palace Museum (Beijing) in November 2010. Furthermore, I am developing my PhD topic on the archaising bronzes of the 14th century AD, in which I will explore the influence of the archaising taste of the social elite on the design of artworks, and the cultural meaning of Chinese archaism under Mongol rule.

Besides these bronzes, I was also impressed by the large quantity of high quality Chinese export ceramics in Western museums, and somewhat embarrassed by the scarcity of research and collections in China itself. During the ITP, I visited various collections of Chinese export porcelain and spent time in the British Library, conversing with senior scholars and reading the archives of the East India Company. During my doctoral study at Bard Graduate Center in 2009, I managed to develop a basic

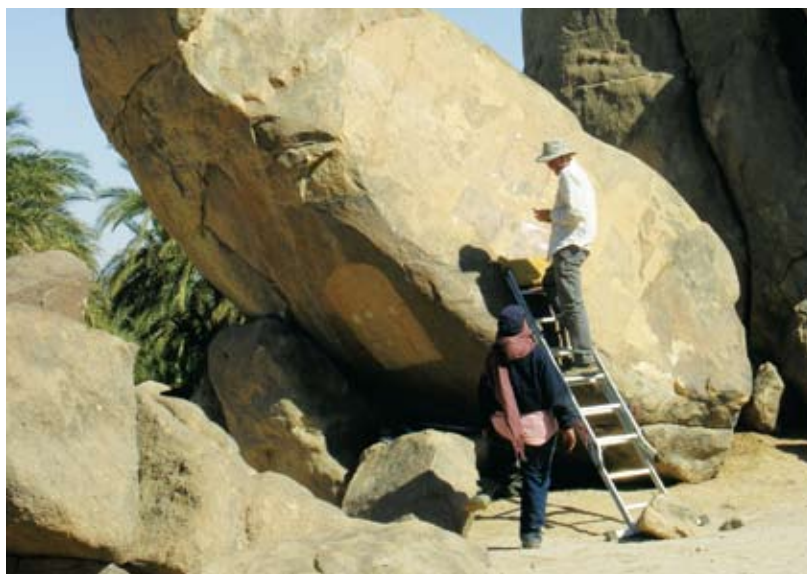
webpage to introduce Chinese export porcelain. As this research is not well developed in China, I plan to enrich my research page into a more comprehensive bilingual (English/Chinese) website – a tool for studying Chinese trading porcelain.

Finally, the network built up with various museum colleagues in the UK and other participants from Africa and Asia will be an invaluable treasure throughout my career.

## Ikhlas Abdullatif

Senior Curator, Sudan National Museum, Khartoum

Ikhlas Abdullatif and Liam McNamara (University of Oxford) discussing ancient inscriptions at Tombos, Sudan.



I had the good fortune to attend the first incarnation of the ITP with two of my colleagues, and encountered peers from Egypt, China, South Africa and Iraq. After one month in the British Museum, we spent a week at the Bowes Museum in Durham. This was part of an agreement which saw the exhibition *Sudan – Ancient Treasures* travel to both London and County Durham. This exhibition was entirely made up of artefacts from the Sudan National Museum. Thereafter we spent another week at Tyne & Wear Archives & Museums.

Throughout the intensive weeks of the ITP, and its myriad of topics, I plotted a path for my future work. Returning to my homeland, I felt my career revived, with my work now underpinned by a new breadth and depth of understanding of what could be achieved. Specifically, I focused my work on the application of what I had learned about the study of storage and documentation practices. This study became my first priority at the Sudan National Museum and I welcomed and trained all of my colleagues who were interested in learning about best practise in the following areas: the classification, labelling, conservation and storage of archaeological materials using the appropriate scientific methods. I now act as Chair of the Committee for the Storage of Archaeological Material at the National Corporation for Antiquities and Museums.

Prior to my time in London, my work focused mainly on the administration and supervision of the maintenance staff in the museum, with limited time spent on selecting pieces to go on display and loan, within Sudan and abroad. Afterwards, I yearned to return to my Egyptological research, inspired by friends and colleagues I had worked with in London. I was fortunate enough to be able to accompany Vivian Davies, Keeper

of the Department of Ancient Egypt and Sudan, in his fieldwork in northern Sudan, to improve the record and translations of ancient Egyptian inscriptions of 1500-1300 BC. He was generous in refreshing my knowledge of the ancient Egyptian language, and how to record inscriptions and monuments using acetate, tracing paper and photographs. The opportunity to use the world-class library of the Department of Ancient Egypt and Sudan at the British Museum allowed me to access the latest scientific literature. Through meeting fellow scholars in the UK, further opportunities have come my way, most notably an invitation to the University of Cambridge for a two-month intensive course on Old and Late Egyptian Language. During my stay in Cambridge, I had the opportunity to volunteer at the Fitzwilliam Museum to study and classify the Kushite material in the collection; I also authored a page on the museum's website, in which I outlined aspects of the Kushite culture of ancient Sudan.

All of this helped with my academic skills, leading to the award of my PhD in 2010, passing with honours. I was now more confident in my skills, and recorded the scenes and inscriptions from the stone coffin of King Anlamani in the Sudan National Museum. This was the first Sudanese study to tackle the complex decoration on the coffin, which dates to around 600 BC. In the same year, I presented an academic paper at the *12th International Conference for Nubian Studies*, held at the British Museum in 2010.

Looking forward, I continue to deliver lectures on Kushite culture for various Sudanese universities, and am beginning to collect material for a post-doctoral research project. All of these achievements are rooted in those steps I took in 2006.

## Rika Stockenström

Art Projects Leader, William Humphreys Art Gallery, Kimberley, South Africa

Rika Stockenström leading a children's art activity in a farm school near Kimberley, South Africa, as part of the William Humphreys Art Gallery's Outreach Programme.



I was appointed as Art Projects Leader at the William Humphreys Art Gallery (WHAG) in South Africa's Northern Cape in April 2003. Having studied Ceramic design, I was very happy to find myself in a museum that collected contemporary ceramics. In February 2007, I enrolled for a Masters in History of Art at the University of KwaZulu Natal, South Africa, with a thesis entitled 'A Catalogue of the contemporary ceramic collection of the William Humphreys Art Gallery, 1984 – 2009'. This research documents the contemporary ceramic collection from when the first pieces were purchased. In 2009, 301 new pieces were acquired. The end result will be the first complete catalogue of the contemporary ceramic collection.

The visit to the British Museum was, for my research purposes, perfectly timed, as I had the opportunity to experience different museums' approaches to collection management: how exhibition spaces are utilised, storage spaces are planned, works photographed and labels written, to name a few! While researching the contemporary ceramic collection, I realised that much work needed to be done to develop and extend the scope of what had been achieved by my predecessors. Staff that had worked on the collection had worked following very basic museum standards, as is often the case at South African museums. This is a result of limited resources, particularly at universities, where no museology courses are offered. As a result, database and acquisition cards are inconsistent, and often inaccurate or incomplete. While cataloguing the collection, I am compiling the relevant information but also setting up standards to work from in the future. In September 2009, I was invited to present a paper on my research at the University of KwaZulu Natal, as part of a Ceramic



A linocut printing workshop held by the William Humphreys Art Gallery for residents of Welkom, South Africa.



Conference held in Pietermaritzburg.

The visits to the storage facilities at the British Museum were an eye opener. At the moment we are having new flooring put in our Gallery, and as a result the complete ceramic collection is being put into storage. The ceramics are being packed into boxes and marked properly before being stored away – similar to what I had seen in the British Museum's stores for artefacts from Africa. We have been granted approval for the construction of a dedicated ceramic wing, for displaying the complete contemporary collection, one of the biggest in South Africa. The notes and photographs I took while visiting the British Museum and other museums will be consulted when we design the display areas. The hands-on label-making workshop we attended during the ITP will also help, as the existing labels for the contemporary ceramics are very basic and need to be improved. The rest of the labels are also being adapted to a standard format. The session with art shippers Constantine was particularly useful. We organise up to 14 travelling exhibitions a year, many featuring three-dimensional pieces. The basic principles illustrated to ITP participants, by staff from the art shippers Constantine, have now been implemented in our gallery. When we displayed work from the University of KwaZulu Natal at WHAG, we realised that there is a need to train students to pack their work properly, before it travels for exhibition. As a result, this year I have been invited, with a colleague who is responsible for packing two-dimensional work, to present a workshop on packing artworks for post-graduate students.

Other than curatorial tasks related to collections, I have been involved in our Gallery's outreach programmes. An exhibition of South African graphic prints is on display – with worksheets available for children. Basic art terminology and printmaking processes are explained and demonstrated. In June 2010, during the football World Cup in South Africa, we modified this programme. We went to four farm schools within a 100km radius and conducted art-related activities pertaining to the World Cup. An American soccer player, Peter Glidden from Grassroots, taught the children various ball skills. Soccer games were played and songs learnt and sung; these day-sessions proved to be a huge success. Our spring Outreach programming took us to the Kgalagadi National Park which

borders on Namibia and Botswana. A new component was included in this outreach, as we presented a linocut printing workshop to a group of adults from Welkom, a tiny village which is situated outside the park's borders. The adults were Khoi-San people, who have a rich cultural history: participants were asked to draw imagery which was then transferred onto linoleum blocks, and then carved and printed.

While I have been able to see best museum practice in the UK, it is encouraging to realise that in spite of our limited resources, we are not entirely uninformed in the heritage industry in South Africa. Different countries have different needs, and as long as museums keep this in mind, they will continue to play an important role in society.

## Sun Yue

Museum Fellow, The Palace Museum, Beijing, China

Sun Yue working in the storeroom of The Palace Museum, Beijing, China.



I visited 20 museums and 100 exhibitions during my time on the ITP – leading to a rich harvest of ideas, but here I will focus on exhibitions and research. Several aspects of UK exhibitions impressed me: the technical achievements and how exhibitions need to be popular, diverse and interesting, with interactive features being a useful tool to achieve these aims. It struck me that being an expert in your curatorial field was not enough – you also need to communicate well, and tell interesting stories about the objects on display.

Back in China, I worked on several exhibitions and led a project to create an accompanying catalogue. We invited several experts on history and heritage to write nearly ten academic papers for a catalogue that described the art of the early Ming Dynasty (15<sup>th</sup> century AD). In another catalogue, we are integrating the results from analyses undertaken by our scientific department – having seen such an approach with British Museum exhibition catalogues.

Next year, our department will hold an academic exhibition about Ge-ware ceramic, so I am collecting background information, identifying themes and artefacts, to help me write the outline narrative for the exhibition. All the time, I liaise with designers, researchers and publishers. It's more challenging than writing an academic paper or book!



Publication is necessary for professionals and enthusiasts, but, convening a symposium during an exhibition is a good way to highlight academic progress in a given subject matter, and promote support for that work. I hope we will hold relevant seminars for all future exhibitions. But there can be problems: if just one speaker presents on a subject, there is little communication with the audience – it is better to have a range of experts from different backgrounds, and really generate discussion.

Finally, I want to talk about my own work on the preservation and research of antiquities. The time in the UK broadened my horizons, as I have better awareness of material from all over the world. I try to keep learning, through reading publications, such as *Art of Asia* and *Oriental Art*, and the openness of European and American museums to scholars is really encouraging, especially with free access to online data about their collections.

Studying in the UK, I developed profound friendships with colleagues in the British Museum and fellow trainees from other countries. I will never forget them. In China, I continue to communicate amongst our network, whether sending images of Chinese traditional architecture to Anjan in India, or information on celadon-porcelain to Bülent in Turkey.



Detail from a meiping vase, featured on the cover of *Chinese Ceramics, The Culture and Civilization of China*.



## Ding Pengbo

Assistant Research Fellow,  
National Museum of China,  
Beijing

Chinese ceramic display  
at the National Museum  
of China, Beijing.

I am currently working in the Academic Research Center at the National Museum of China as an editor of the *Journal of National Museum of China*. This Center includes a research planning office and editorial office with 18 staff, responsible for planning and approval of research projects, organising academic seminars and the publication of academic books and the *Journal*. In addition, I wrote the exhibition catalogue for *Art of Ancient Chinese Porcelain*, which opened in March 2011 with an accompanying publication. Having seen the pictures and models used by the British Museum's Department of Exhibitions, I found it easier to present the ideas behind the porcelain exhibition to my colleagues.

I contributed to a section on 'Academic and Publishing (Activity)', in the *National Museum of China Yearbook 2010*, which includes the academic work of every department; again, it is reminiscent of how the British Museum departments work together. My other project is working on the porcelain collection at the V&A for the book *Masterpieces of Chinese Cultural Relics Overseas* which will introduce the V&A collection of fine Chinese porcelain to Chinese people. During my time in the UK, I studied these ceramics first hand, and took photos that could be used in publication.

Finally, I wrote a chapter on 'Ceramics of the Xia, Shang, and Western Zhou Dynasties and the Spring and Autumn Period' in the book *Chinese Ceramics, The Culture and Civilization of China* (Yale University and Foreign Language Press).





Sunderland Museum  
and Winter Gardens.

## Tyne & Wear Archives & Museums

Iain Watson,  
Director,  
Jackie Bland,  
Training Services  
Officer, and  
Bill Griffiths,  
Senior Manager -  
Regional  
Programmes

Tyne & Wear Archives & Museums (TWAM) provides a strategic museum and archives service across twelve venues for the five local authorities of Tyne and Wear, and Newcastle University, in the northeast of England. It serves a sub-regional population of approximately 1.1 million, and last year received 2 million visits. TWAM is one of the country's most successful museums services, housing collections designated as of national importance, and is committed to developing new practices and services, strengthening existing partnerships and building new strategic relationships at local, area, national and international levels.

TWAM is committed to focusing on the needs of its audiences as exemplified in its Mission statement:

‘ . . . . to help people determine their place in the World and define their identities, so enhancing their self-respect and their respect for others.’

It has also actively sought to establish a number of international partnerships. These partnerships raise the profile of TWAM, and museums in the region, by developing new national and international initiatives that serve to increase visitor numbers to the area, provide access to the national collections for audiences in the northeast, develop best practice through engagement with sector leaders (in the UK and beyond) and share excellence, in particular in learning and access.

These international relationships include:

*South Africa – TWAM has a formal partnership agreement with Nelson Mandela Bay Municipality in Eastern Cape. An exhibition of beadwork is planned for spring 2012.*

*Roman Frontiers – TWAM hosted the 2009 International Roman Frontiers Congress, and staff are active members of this international grouping. This has also led to various partnership programmes with Germany, Spain and Portugal.*

*Ongoing relationships with Banlieues d’Europe in investigating issues of access and inclusion across Europe*

*Participation in international events and conferences. Staff have presented the Culture Shock project, one of the largest digital storytelling projects in the world, at conferences across Europe. The Great North Museum is*

*shortlisted for the European Museum of the Year Award in Bremerhaven, Germany, in 2011. International staff visits and exchanges are facilitated as opportunities and resources allow. For example, the curator of Sunderland Museum and Winter Gardens has recently participated in a British Council programme with China.*

Increasingly TWAM is seeking to link these programmes in with Local Authority priorities and partnerships, including the city/town twinning programmes.

In this context, the relationship with the ITP has been particularly significant, with 17 trainees from a range of countries across the world spending time in Tyne & Wear since 2006. Particularly impressive has been their range of skills, from Islamic historians to field archaeologists, designers to numismatists, art specialists to monuments officers. The Programme has also linked to TWAM's wider partnership with the British Museum. So, just as the first trainees were arriving in 2006, a group of TWAM front of house staff were returning from a few days placement at the British Museum, and exchanges continue in both directions.

Each year we planned the programme to meet the needs of the visitors and to showcase particular aspects of our work in Tyne and Wear. We have always evaluated the programme, starting with an expectations meeting, and concluding with a session to catch up on anything missed out, as well as a review meeting and a questionnaire to complete. Wherever possible we have adjusted the programme as we went along to accommodate the needs and interests of the trainees.

Consistently, the trainees enjoyed:

*Asking questions and discussing issues on a one-to-one basis.*

*Handling objects, especially the opportunity to take part in conservation of objects.*

*Visiting and participating in ongoing field archaeology.*

*Opportunity for free-time to explore independently.*

*Being able to see and compare how different venues have different approaches to both collecting and exhibiting.*

*Chances to see the stores and speak to staff*

Where members of the programme followed on from colleagues who had previously been to Newcastle, they enjoyed visiting where colleagues had previously been, and the opportunity to see venues and to meet people whom colleagues had talked about from their visit. We have also been able to engage visitors with community groups from their own



Segedunum Roman Fort,  
Baths & Museum

countries living in the North East, helping build friendships and develop community links.

The learning outcomes vary depending on individuals' own interests so, not surprisingly, staff interested in learning particularly valued time spent with TWAM learning staff and finding out about our programming. TWAM's volunteer programme was also of great interest as there was no tradition of volunteering in a number of their museums. TWAM's approach to written interpretation - with a clear hierarchy of text and simple guidelines for word length and reading age - were also of great interest. Some participants developed particular ideas such as creating a handling collection, introducing audience consultation or improving access for disabled people. These were ideas to be followed up when back home.

Our learning was of course as important: we particularly valued the increased understanding of the similarities and differences between museums across the world. The experience helped us in developing an understanding of how social and cultural values impact on museums – as ever the experience of the other allows you to reflect on your own situation and practice. TWAM staff also benefited from the specific collections knowledge which international visitors brought with them – for example, Chinese curators worked with staff at Sunderland Museum researching the Museum's Chinese collections in advance of an exhibition on Ancient China developed in partnership with the British Museum.

Above all, we have had great fun with museum colleagues from around the world, developed friendships, some of which are still maintained, and developed our own skills in hosting international visitors. Some of the lessons learned are really simple but contribute hugely to the enjoyment and learning of the visitors, like avoiding the tendency to cram too much into the day's programme. Finally, we cannot emphasise enough how important the social side of the learning is – arranging to meet and eat together, co-ordinating a shopping trip or organising a weekend visit to Hadrian's Wall. These activities have all allowed us to find out more about each other and each other's museums. To end on one particular memory, a magical moment was taking a detour on an evening trip from Sunderland to Newcastle following an exhibition opening to allow a Sudanese colleague who had never seen the sea before to go for a paddle, or 'plodge', as we say in the North East, in the Arctic chill of the North Sea in July.



Huzoor Choudhry and  
Mehmet Yildiz handling  
objects at Tyne & Wear  
Archives & Museums.



# Appendices

‘It was a learning experience as each one has a different expertise and knowledge. Socially, we are now closer and one big family spread all over the globe.’

Njeri Gachihi, Kenya

**International Training Programme participants**

10 July –  
12 August 2006

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Curator, Egyptian Museum, Cairo, Egypt  
*Tyne & Wear Archives & Museums*

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One participant from Egypt, 2010 - 2012

**Department of Culture Media & Sport (UK)**

Two South African curators, 2006-2008

**Folkwang Museum, Essen**

One participant, 2011 - 2013

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One participant from Hong Kong, 2008

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One participant from Iraq, 2006-present

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One participant from Iraq, 2010

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Three participants from Africa, 2011 - 2013

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**Sample Programme**  
Each participant’s schedule is tailored individually according to their professional interests and the British Museum Department they are working with. The programme below is included to give an example of the range of sessions and events experienced by one participant.

**International Training Programme 2010**

21st June to 30th July 2010  
Schedule: Sun Yue, Department of Ancient Vessels,  
The Palace Museum, Beijing, China

<b>22 June 2010</b>	<b>09:30 - 11:00</b>	<b>Introduction to Training Programme</b> An introduction to the British Museum’s history and organisation Neal Spencer, Claire Messenger and Shezza Edris
	<b>11:00 - 11:45</b>	<b>Introduction to the project:</b> <b>A History of the World in 100 Objects</b> Ben Roberts, Frances Carey, David Prudames
	<b>11:45 - 13:00</b>	<b>Participants presentations (1)</b>
	<b>14:00 - 16:00</b>	<b>Participants presentations (2)</b>
	<b>16:30 - 18:00</b>	<b>Introduction to the Department of Asia</b>
<b>23 June 2010</b>	<b>08:45 - 9:30</b>	<b>Staff Breakfast</b> Meet the Trustees Breakfast Richard Lambert and Chief Anyaoku
	<b>10:00 - 11:00</b>	<b>Introductory tour of Galleries</b> Kusuma Barnett, Head of Volunteers
	<b>11:00 - 12:00</b>	<b>Tour of the roof of the British Museum</b> Mick Jones and Graham Allen
	<b>12:00 - 14:00</b>	<b>Free time to tour Museum Galleries</b>
	<b>14:00 - 16:30</b>	<b>Asia Departmental Session: Tour of Chinese jade collections</b> Carol Michaelson
	<b>18:30 - 20:30</b>	<b>Welcome Reception, John Addis Gallery</b>
<b>24 June 2010</b>	<b>09:30 - 13:00</b>	<b>Asia Departmental Session: Tour of 20th century prints, Asia</b> Mary Ginsberg. Tour of 20th century prints and discussion of a new collection
	<b>14:30 - 16:30</b>	<b>Asia Departmental Session: Tour of Printed Image in China Exhibition</b> Dr Clarissa von Spee Tour of <i>The Printed Image in China</i> exhibition.
<b>25 June 2010</b>	<b>09:00 - 10:00</b>	<b>Tour of the Department of Prehistory and Europe</b> Alex Garrett and Sylvie Seton
	<b>10:00 - 13:00</b>	<b>Session in the Department of Conservation and Scientific Research</b> Kenneth Uprichard. Introduction to the Conservation Group
	10:10 - 10:30	Fleur Shearman. Conservation of metal objects,
	10:35 - 10:55	Denise Ling. Conservation of ceramics and glass,
	11:00 - 11:20	Valentina Marabini. Conservation of Oriental Art, Hirayama Studio
	11:25 - 11:45	Tracey Sweek. Conservation of stone objects, Stone Studio
	11:50 - 12:10	
	<b>14:45 - 15:00</b>	<b>Presentations Project</b> Neal Spencer, Claire Messenger and Shezza Edris

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25 June 2010	15:00 - 17:00	<b>Afternoon Seminar: Museums and New Technologies</b> Speakers: Clive Izard, Head of Creative Services, British Library ( <i>Turning the Pages</i> software) Matthew Cock, Head of Web Team, British Museum Andrew Lewis, Senior Web Content Manager, V&A
26 June 2010	11:00 - 17:00	<b>London Bus Tour</b> Optional bus tour of London
28 June 2010	08:15 - 16:30	<b>Visit to Horniman Museum</b> Neal Spencer, Claire Messenger, Shezza Edris and Tania Watkins Horniman Museum Staff: Janet Vitmayer, Director Finbarr Whooley, Assistant Director (Curatorial & Public Services) Wayne Modest, Keeper of Anthropology Louise Bacon, Head of Collections Conservation & Care Margaret Birley, Keeper of Musical Instruments Louise Palmer, Schools Learning Manager
	10:00	Welcome and briefing about the Horniman by Janet Vitmayer and Finbarr Whooley
	11:00	Tour of Anthropology and Musical Instrument Galleries
	12:00 - 13:15	Choice of Tours: Learning Hands on Base, Louise Palmer Conservatory Laboratory, Louise Bacon Meet individual Curators, Wayne Modest and Margaret Birley Management discussion, Janet Vitmayer and Finbarr Whooley
	12:00 - 13:15	Lunch in the Conservatory Horniman staff, and time to enjoy the Gardens and Museum
	14:15	Feedback session in the Conservatory Janet Vitmayer, Finbarr Whooley, Wayne Modest and Margaret Birley
29 June 2010	08:45 - 10:00	<b>Tour of Department of Prints and Drawings</b> Mark McDonald, Curator, Early Prints
	10:00 - 13:00	<b>Session in Department of Conservation and Scientific Research</b> Greeting by David Saunders, Keeper of Conservation and Scientific Research library
	10:15 - 10:25	
	10:25 - 10:35	Catherine Higgitt, General introduction to scientific analysis at the British Museum
	10:40 - 10:55	Sue La Niece/ Quanyu Wang – Radiography
	11:00 - 11:15	Michela Spataro/Roberta Tomber Pottery and stone analysis
	11:20 - 11:35	Duncan Hook X ray fluorescence analysis, metals and glass
	11:40 - 12:15	Julianne Phippard/ Sharon Penton/ Joanne Dyer Conservation Science overview, materials testing/display, environmental monitoring, preventive conservation
	12:20 - 12:35	Rebecca Stacey/ Thibaut Deviese Organic materials; GC/MS and HPLC
	12:40 - 12:55	Nigel Meeks Scanning electron microscopy/ tool patterns

117	Appendices	
29 June 2010	14:00 - 16:30 16:30 - 19:30	<b>Asia Departmental Session: Individual Study</b> <b>London Eye</b>
30 June 2010	08:45 - 09:30	<b>Staff Breakfast</b> Presentation of the British Museum’s <i>Annual Review</i> Neil MacGregor and Joanna Mackle
	09:00 - 18:30	<b>Visit to Oxford, Ashmolean Museum</b> Ashmolean Museum Staff: Shelagh Vainker, Curator Far East Collections
01 July 2010	08:00 - 19:00	<b>Visit to Bath Museum of Far Eastern Art</b> Susie Quek, Volunteer Asia Dept Bath Museum of Far Eastern Art Staff: Michel Lee, Curator
02 July 2010	09:00 - 10:00	<b>Tour of Department of Coins and Medals</b> Megan Gooch, Project Curator: HSBC Money Gallery and Amelia Dowler, Curator of Greek Coins
	10:00 - 12:00	<b>Portable Antiquities and Treasure</b> Roger Bland, Head of PAT and Michael Lewis, Deputy Head of PAT
	12:00 - 13:00	<b>Loans Department</b> Robert Owen, Project Coordinator: Museum in Britain, Loans Department
	14:30 - 17:00	<b>Afternoon Seminar: Research and archaeology in museums</b> Speakers: JD Hill, British Museum Research Manager Christopher Breward, Head of Research, V&A Nicholas Ashton, Curator, Department of Prehistory & Europe, (research project <i>Ancient Human Occupation of Britain 3</i> ) Tour of human remains storage; Daniel Antoine, Curator for Physical Anthropology at the British Museum
03 July 2010	14:00 - 17:00	<b>Visit to Kenwood House, Tea</b> <b>Frances Carey Kenwood House, Hampstead</b> Frances Carey, Senior Consultant for Public Engagement
05 July 2010	09:00 - 10:00	<b>Room 3 exhibitions</b> Marcel Marée, lead curator for Room 3
	10:00 - 13:00	<b>The British Museum and its UK Partnerships</b> British Museum Staff: John Orna Ornstein, Head of London & National Programmes Robert Owen, Project Coordinator: Museum in Britain Frances Carey, Senior Consultant for Public Engagement Presentations: Mike Tooby & Melanie Youngs, National Museum of Wales, Cardiff; Zelina Garland & Fiona Slattery, Birmingham Museums and Art Gallery Tim Corum, Bristol’s City Museum and Art Gallery; Dawn Heywood & Andrea Martin, The Collection, Lincoln Jackie Bland, Tyne & Wear Museums Karen Exell, Manchester Museum Heather Birchall, Whitworth Art Gallery, Manchester
	14:00 - 15:00	<b>Schools Learning Programmes at the British Museum</b> Richard Woff, Head of Schools Learning, Department of Learning and Audiences



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05 July 2010	15:00 - 16:30	<b>Hands On Desk and Volunteers Programme at the British Museum</b> Kusuma Barnett	
06 July 2010	09:30 - 10:30	<b>Photographic Studio Visit    Asia Photographic Studio</b> John Williams	
	10:30 - 13:00	<b>Tour of the British Library</b> British Library Staff: Cat Finlayson	
	11:00 - 12:00	Meet the Curators and see the collections	
	12:00 - 13:00	Tour of the British Library	
	14:00 - 16:30	<b>Asia Departmental Session: Tour of the Royal Courts of Justice The Strand</b> Accompanied by Jessica Harrison Hall and Mhairi Letcher, Legal Department	
07 July 2010	09:00 - 17:00	<b>Day at Sir Michael Butler's Collection in Dorset</b> Jessica Harrison Hall and Jan Stuart	
08 July 2010	08:30 - 17:30	<b>Visit to Cambridge, Fitzwilliam Museum</b> Fitzwilliam Museum Staff: James Lin	
09 July 2010	09:30 - 11:00	<b>Adult learning Programmes at the British Museum</b> Rosanna Kwok, Adult Learning; and Jane Samuels, Access Manager, Department of Learning and Audiences	
	11:00 - 13:00	<b>Museum Assistant Training Programme, in theory and practice</b> Evan York, Senior Museum Assistant, Department of Ancient Egypt and Sudan; and Darrel Day, Senior Heavy Object Handler	
	14:30 - 17:00	<b>Afternoon Seminar: New buildings, refurbished spaces challenges for museums</b> Speakers: Tracey Sweek and Alec Shaw, World Conservation and Exhibition Centre, The British Museum. Donald Hyslop, Head of Regeneration & Community Partnerships, Tate Modern. Henry Kim, Project Curator on redevelopment of Ashmolean Museum, Oxford. John De Lucy, Head of Estates (British Library, including Centre for Conservation)	
10 July 2010	09:30 - 16:00	<b>Visit to Kew Gardens, by Boat</b>	
	14:00 - 16:00	Tour of Kew a Volunteer Guide	
12 July 2010	13:00 - 16:00	<b>Manchester: Arrival and orientation</b> Heather Birchall, The Whitworth Art Gallery and Karen Exell, The Manchester Museum	
13 July 2010	09:00 - 13:00	<b>Manchester: Chinese Arts Centre</b> Sally Lai	
	14:00 - 17:00	<b>Manchester: Tour of Whitworth Art Gallery and introduction to collections</b> Heather Birchall	

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14 July 2010	10:00 - 11:30	<b>Manchester: Learning and Interpretation at the Whitworth</b> Esme Ward	
	11:45 - 12:15	<b>Manchester: Meeting the Director of the Whitworth</b> Maria Balshaw, Director of the Whitworth Art Gallery	
	13:00 - 17:00	<b>Manchester: Meet Alison Copeland, Chinese ceramics at Manchester Art Gallery</b>	
15 July 2010	09:00 - 13:00	<b>Manchester: Introduction to the Textile Collection</b> Frances Pritchard	
	14:00 - 17:00	<b>Manchester: Introduction to collection storage and conservation of works on paper and textiles</b> Daniel Hogger and Ann French	
16 July 2010	10:00 - 12:00	<b>Manchester: Introduction to the Manchester Museum</b> Karen Exell Introduction to the Manchester Museum and tour of the galleries and collections.	
	12:00 - 13:00	<b>Manchester: Conservation and Storage</b> Sam Sportun, Senior Conservator	
	14:00 - 17:00	<b>Manchester: Conservation and Storage</b> Sam Sportun, Senior Conservator	
17 July 2010	09:00 - 17:00	<b>Manchester: Trip to Chester</b> Heather Birchall and Karen Exell Trip to Chester, including the Grosvenor Museum and Roman Amphitheatre	
19 July 2010	09:00 - 13:00	<b>Manchester: Chinese Collections and China: Journey to the East</b> Stephen Welsh, Curator of Living Cultures	
	14:00 - 17:00	<b>Manchester: Chinese Collections and China: Journey to the East</b> Stephen Welsh, Curator of Living Cultures	
20 July 2010	09:00 - 13:00	<b>Manchester: Darwin Summer School (Clippy Island)</b> Education Department	
	14:00 - 17:00	<b>Manchester: Darwin Summer School (Curation Workshop)</b> Education Department	
22 July 2010	09:30 - 10:30	<b>Feedback on Partnership UK programme</b> Neal Spencer, Claire Messenger and Shezza Edris	
	10:30 - 16:30	<b>Visit to V&amp;A Ceramics, Chinese and British galleries</b> V&A Staff: Luisa Mengoni, Curator Asian Department	
23 July 2010	09:00 - 16:30	<b>Tour of Airport Cargo Handling at Heathrow</b> International Shipping Agents Constantine	
		Tour of airport cargo handling at Heathrow and session on moving and packing objects for travel	

<b>24 July 2010</b>	<b>08:00 - 19:00</b>	<b>Visit to Stonehenge, Salisbury and Avebury</b> Optional tour of Stonehenge, Salisbury and Avebury Shezza Edris and Vicky Wood, Blue Badge Guide
<b>26 July 2010</b>	<b>10:00 - 13:00</b>	<b>Morning Seminar: Audience Survey and Development</b> Speakers: Stuart Frost / Iona Keen, Interpretation, The British Museum. Claire Eva, Head of Marketing, Tate Galleries. Jane Richardson, Marketing and Programme Manager, British Library. James Bailey, Head of Marketing, Natural History Museum
	<b>14:00 - 16:30</b>	<b>Department of Exhibitions: Designing an Exhibition</b> members of the BM's Design Team
	<b>18:00 - 21:00</b>	<b>BBC Proms Classical Music Concert</b> An evening of music from the National Orchestra of Wales, at the Royal Albert Hall
<b>27 July 2010</b>	<b>09:00 - 18:00</b>	<b>Visit to Brighton Pavilion and Museum</b> Hosted by Sarah Posey
<b>28 July 2010</b>	<b>08:45 - 09:30</b>	<b>Staff Breakfast</b> <b>International Training Programme</b> Presentation about the International Training Programme Neal Spencer, The British Museum Claire Messenger, The British Museum Shezza Edris, The British Museum Zelina Garland, Birmingham Museums & Art Gallery Iain Watson, Tyne & Wear Archives & Museums Cynthia Iruobe, Lagos Museum Vandana Prapanna, CSMVS, Mumbai
	<b>09:30 - 10:30</b>	<b>Asia Departmental Session: Tour of Chinese metalwork collections</b> Tour of Chinese metalwork collections and discussion of current projects
	<b>10:30 - 13:00</b>	<b>Asia Departmental Session: Tour of Sir Percival David Gallery, Chinese Ceramics and reserve collections</b> Jessica Harrison Hall
<b>29 July 2010</b>	<b>09:30 - 10:00</b>	<b>Evaluation Session</b> Neal Spencer, Claire Messenger and Shezza Edris
	<b>10:00 - 13:00</b>	<b>Participant Presentations</b> <i>Using your knowledge of your own cultures, please develop a proposal for a small temporary exhibition on some aspect of your own cultures. The exhibition should be based on British Museum objects.</i>

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