

Session notes

'In conversation'
Subject Specialist Networks;
helping you care and share

'In conversations' focus on a particular theme or current issue in the culture and heritage sector. They work alongside our e-learning modules and will add an extra dimension to your 'core skills' sessions. They are informal discussions with colleagues across the sector and while we can't deliver 'live' sessions the ITP team aim to ask the questions you would be asking if you were in the room with us!



In this 'in conversation' George Peckham talks to Jessica Jukes, Coordinator of the British Art Network at Tate Gallery about subject specialist networks and how they can help you care for and share your collections.

Introduction

Subject Specialist Networks (SSN) bring together specialists in a particular area of museum work or collections research. In the UK, the wide range of SSNs includes Dress and Textiles, Islamic Art and Material Culture, Rural Museums, and Plastics!

Specialists can often feel isolated within their institution and local museum ecology. SSNs offer a way for people to link up and share knowledge and ideas with people across their region or nation who are doing similar work.

At a time of great economic difficulty worldwide, with staff cuts and contracts not renewed, many specialists may be asked to take on a more generalist role in their museums. Engagement with an SSN allows specialists the time and space to continue developing their area of specialism. It also gives the chance to support to those who have been given responsibility over an aspect of the collection or museum work that is newer to them.

Involvement with an SSN can also offer real benefit towards museum workers' wellbeing, enabling them to encounter people facing similar challenges and foster solidarity, mutual support and collaboration.

Course resources

The links below will provide you with more information on the theme of the session. Additional resources are provided with this session which aim to give you reading material that you may find useful – both now and in the future.



Sharing expertise, research and ideas on British art.

The British Art Network (BAN) promotes curatorial research, practice and theory in the field of British art. Our members include curators, academics, artist-researchers, conservators, producers and programmers at all stages of their professional lives.

<https://britishartnetwork.org.uk/>

Paul Mellon Centre, British Art Network's funder and joint partner with Tate:

<https://www.paul-mellon-centre.ac.uk/>

Subject Specialist Network Consortium for information about existing subject specialist networks in the UK.

<https://www.subjectspecialistnetworks.org.uk/>

Arts Council information on SSNs:

<https://www.artscouncil.org.uk/supporting-collections-and-cultural-property/subject-specialist-networks>

Online platform where you can emulate networking like in the real world!

<https://www.highfidelity.com>
<https://www.kumospace.com/>

In the UK, there is the University Museums Group (UMG) which is open to researchers, museum staff for general heritage. Providing support to museums and staff. Private collectors making monthly presentations. Outreach to local schools in remote areas and online newsletter.

<http://universitymuseumsgroup.org/>

In the UK the DCN: Disability Collaborative Network for Museums offers consultancy and advocacy work.

www.musedcn.org.uk

At the British Museum we are home to the Money and Medals Network. For museums in Britain with coins and medals collections - they train and produce a newsletter for numismatics in Britain. Currently running training classes via Zoom (which some of our ITP network have attended).

<http://www.moneyandmedals.org.uk/>