

# INTERNATIONAL TRAINING PROGRAMME

ITP+ and ICOM UK Conference 2026  
Biographies

## Alsu Akhmetzyanova

Independent Curator and Art Manager  
Uzbekistan  
ITP 2019



Alsu Akhmetzyanova is an independent curator and art manager from Uzbekistan working across contemporary art, crafts and cultural heritage. Her most recent work includes serving as Assistant Curator for the first Uzbekistan Pavilion at the London Design Biennale 2025, where she developed curatorial storytelling, research, and international coordination under the theme *The Once and Future Garden*.

Alsu currently works as Art Manager in the Regeneration Art Gallery (Tashkent, Uzbekistan), where she develops international strategy, builds institutional partnerships, and represents artists on global platforms. Her work focuses on expanding exhibition opportunities, residency placements, and market access for Central Asian artists, strengthening their visibility within international contemporary art networks.

Previously, Alsu worked at the Arts and Culture Development Foundation under the Ministry of Culture of Uzbekistan, where she was Project Manager of the country's first National Pavilion at the Venice Architecture Biennale, and later headed the Education Department. At the Foundation, Alsu oversaw major cultural initiatives, including the establishment of Uzbekistan's first Centre for Contemporary Art, and professional development programmes in partnership with Goldsmith's University and the Smithsonian Institute.

As an independent curator, Alsu continues to collaborate with artists and institutions on research-based and cross-disciplinary projects. Beyond her curatorial practice, Alsu is known for her art blog on Instagram *@alsuinwonderland* where she documents exhibitions and artistic life across Central Asia, promoting accessible conversations about art and culture for a wider audience.

### *At the British Museum*

During her time on the International Training Programme in 2019, Alsu was based in the Middle East Department. Her UK Partner Placement was spent at Glasgow Museums.

### *Continued Engagement*

In 2020 Alsu conducted an Online Subject Specialist Session for the International Training Programme. Alsu led a session titled *The Samarkand Half Marathon, Cultural Accessibility and 'Going Digital'* during COVID-19

Alsu also attended these online sessions in 2020:

Collecting COVID-19

Egyptology in Lockdown: Connecting collections with isolated people

Setting up a Subject Specialist Network

In November 2022 Alsu participated in the ITP MA Conference programme in Edinburgh. With fellows from Armenia, Egypt, Romania and Rwanda, Alsu attended a programme structured around the 3-day MA Conference *Make Change Happen*.

## Barbara Vujanović

Chief Curator  
Meštrović Atelier (The Ivan Meštrović Museums)  
Croatia  
ITP 2016



Barbara Vujanović is a Chief Curator at the Meštrović Atelier (The Ivan Meštrović Museums) in Zagreb. Her research background is in art history and French language and literature, and she wrote her doctoral dissertation on '*From antique models to neoclassicism: a classical component in the work of Ivan Meštrović*'.

She has recently been heavily involved in creating the concept for the new permanent display at the Meštrović Atelier. The museum reopened on December 13<sup>th</sup>, 2025. Her work included selecting artworks, designing the thematic sections, and coordinating all activities related to the project. Additionally, she has prepared interpretive texts that are grounded in contemporary museological approaches and methodologies.

Since participating in the ITP, Barbara has presented the exhibitions, *Ivan Meštrović: Adriatic Epopee in Krakow* (2017); *Corporeality and Eroticism in Sculpture* in Ljubljana (2018); *Ivan Meštrović (1883–1962)*; *Sculptor and Citizen of the World* in Prague (2022–2023); *Ivan Meštrović – the Retrospective in Zagreb* (2023–2024); and *Ivan Meštrović and Tomislav Gotovac. INTIMACY OF THE PUBLIC* in Zagreb (2025).

She also authored the exhibitions *Ivan Meštrović – Portraits of Contemporaries – Universes of personal encounters and social involvements* (2021–2022), *The Sign of Meštrović in Zagreb – Architecture: The 80 Years of the Meštrović Pavilion* (Zagreb, 2018–2019). She is the author of the book *The Mark of Meštrović in Zagreb* (2017) and co-author of the book *Ivan Meštrović and the Czechs: Examples of the Croatian-Czech Cultural and Political Reciprocity* (2018).

Barbara regularly publishes reviews and articles, writes prefaces for catalogues and devises the curatorial conceptions for independent and group exhibitions of 19th, 20th century and contemporary art. She has also presented research on the life and work of Ivan Meštrović at conferences in Croatia as well as abroad in the United Kingdom, France, Germany, Norway, China, Czech Republic, Latvia, South African Republic and Malta.

In 2017, Barbara presented alongside fellow 2016 ITP participant Ana Šverko on the experience and knowledge gained during their time at the British Museum in a lecture organised by Prokultura: Observatory of Cultural Politics, Ivan Meštrović Museums and Art History Institute, and the Centre Cvito Fisković.

### *At the British Museum*

During her time on the International Training Programme in 2016, Barbara was based in the Department of Greece and Rome. Her UK Partner Placement was spent at Manchester Museum and Manchester Art Gallery.

*Continued Engagement*

Barbara was invited back to the British Museum in 2017 to help deliver a Spotlight Loan Project. To coincide with the British Museum's blockbuster exhibition Rodin and the art of ancient Greece, Barbara worked on Rodin: rethinking the fragment, which toured to three UK venues – Abbot Hall Art Gallery, Kendal; Holburne Museum, Bath and The New Art Gallery, Walsall – from summer 2018 – 2019.

Barbara has returned to the British Museum many times and visited BM UK partner venues to participate in meetings, conduct research and deliver curator's talks.

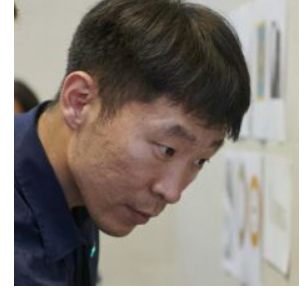
In 2023 the British Museum hosted an event in celebration of the International Training Programme and the Marie-Louise von Motesiczky Charitable Trust's vital support of the programme over the years. Barbara delivered a speech at the event to share her experiences of the ITP and the work she has gone on to do since completing the programme.

*ITP Newsletter Publications*

ITP Newsletter Issue 5 (2018), Bulletin Board

## Gao Rui

Researcher  
The Palace Museum  
China  
ITP 2023



Gao Rui has been working for the Department of International Exchanges at the Palace Museum since 2016. Gao Rui is driven by a deep passion of classic art, and the history of the Forbidden City – upon which the Palace Museum was established, alongside his interest in the study of mutual exchange and learning between Chinese and foreign civilisations. These passions were all big motivators in starting his career at the Palace Museum. His main duties include managing international projects, and communications with international museums for devising exhibitions and loans.

Since joining the Palace Museum in 2016, Gao Rui has managed a series of international loans and collaborative exhibitions with institutions from Finland, Monaco, Russia, Singapore, the UK, etc. With his deepening engagement in the Palace Museum’s international cooperation projects, Gao Rui has – over the past several years – devoted particular focus and substantial effort to coordinating the Museum’s exchanges with British cultural institutions. A major part of his work has centred on reciprocal loan exhibitions between the Palace Museum and museums in the United Kingdom.

One of the most remarkable projects was the 2024 collaborative exhibition with the Science Museum, for which the Palace Museum loaned 23 timepieces from its renowned clock collection. Held from February to June 2024, the exhibition explored the artistry, aesthetics, and imagination embodied in 18th-century clocks – those produced in Britain and brought across the seas to the Chinese court, as well as those locally made in China. The show received high praise from British audiences, and its success laid a solid foundation for future collaborations between the Palace Museum and the Science Museum, expanding into broader fields and more inspiring themes.

In 2023, Gao Rui served as a curatorial team member for the exhibition *Tea World*, during which he coordinated the loan of over twenty tea-related artefacts from the Victoria and Albert (V&A) Museum.

In 2025, marking the centenary of the Palace Museum, Gao Rui, as project manager, co-organised the exhibition *Journey of a Century: From the Forbidden City to the Palace Museum*, in partnership with Durham University. Through a series of historical photographs, the exhibition narrated the transformation of the Forbidden City from an imperial palace to a museum open to the public and is emblematic of modern China. It opened successfully on September 25th, 2025, at Durham University’s Oriental Museum, becoming the first overseas exhibition dedicated to the Palace Museum’s institutional history at this milestone moment.

Beyond exhibitions loans, Gao Rui continues to foster and expand partnerships between the Palace Museum and museums in Britain. He led the *Memorandum of Understanding (MoU)* between the Palace Museum and the British Museum, which was signed on October 10, 2025 – the

very day marking the Palace Museum's 100<sup>th</sup> anniversary. The event not only held symbolic significance for the two institutions but also represented a memorable milestone in Gao Rui's professional journey. Taking this moment as a new beginning, he remains committed to deepening exchanges between the Palace Museum and British cultural institutions, spearheading even more meaningful and inspiring collaborations in the years ahead.

Gao Rui holds an academic background in English literature. Beyond his responsibilities in organising and coordinating various international projects, he remains deeply interested in exploring British classical literature and artistic movements – particularly the social transformations brought about by the Industrial Revolution since the 18<sup>th</sup> century, and their reflections in literature and art. During this period, exchanges between China and Britain also became increasingly frequent. Tangible evidence and archival materials of these interactions are now preserved in numerous museums in both countries – especially in the UK. This subject continues to fascinate expertise and scholarly background; he hopes to collaborate with experts from British cultural institutions to explore these shared histories more deeply.

Professionally, Gao Rui is interested in organising international exhibitions and loans as it gives him the opportunity to experience new cultures and be in new environments. He enjoys being close to artworks and objects from other countries and likes to exchange ideas about the management and running of exhibitions with colleagues from across the globe.

#### *At the British Museum*

During his time on the International Training Programme in 2023, Gao Rui was based in the Department of Asia. His UK Partner Placement was spent at North East Museums.

## Levent Boz

Specialist

Republic of Türkiye, Ministry of Culture and Tourism, Directorate  
General of Cultural Assets and Museums

Türkiye

ITP 2011



Levent works as a Specialist in the unit responsible for organising national and international exhibitions for the Turkish Ministry of Culture and Tourism. His responsibilities include coordinating temporary exhibitions that international museums wish to organise; by borrowing artefacts from Turkish museums, providing support in the selection of objects and the development of exhibition concepts, and overseeing intergovernmental bureaucratic and diplomatic procedures to ensure the smooth resolution of any issues that may arise. In addition to these duties, he carries out curatorial research for the creation of new exhibitions within Türkiye.

Levent joined the ITP in 2011 as an Archaeologist for the Turkish General Directorate for Cultural Heritage and Museums, while working on his Master's on *Ottoman Turkish Rugs in Transylvanian Protestant churches*. In 2015, Levent completed his Master's degree in Art History and received an honorary award from the Romanian Ambassador for his contributions to the cultural relations between Türkiye and Romania. In 2023, he was awarded his PhD with a dissertation titled *Ottoman and Safavid Carpets in 16th and 17th Centuries Europe: Interaction and Competition*.

Additionally, Levent is involved in digital cultural heritage projects which focus on preserving and documenting cultural assets, drawing on his strong IT background. He was part of the team that implemented the *Museum National Inventory System (MUES)* and the *Immovable Cultural Assets National Inventory System (TUES)*.

Levent has produced multiple publications, including:

(2013) *Suggestion of RFID technology for tracking museum objects in Türkiye*, co-authored by Levent Boz, Nurdan Atalan Cayirezmez, and Hakan Melih Aygün, 2013 Digital Heritage International Congress (Digital Heritage).

(2014) *Romanya'nın Transilvanya Bölgesi Protestan Kiliselerine Halı Bağışlama Geleneği*, Levent Boz, Vakıflar Dergisi, December 2014.

(2015) *A Short Story of a Master's Thesis in Art History (Die Entstehungsgeschichte einer Masterarbeit im Fach Kunstgeschichte)*, Levent Boz, Carpet Collector Magazine Issue 4, 2015.

(2016) *The Departure of the Prodigal Child from Venice by James Tissot (Die Abfahrt des verlorenen Kindes von Venedig von James Tissot)*, Levent Boz, Carpet Collector Magazine Issue 1, 2016.

(2017) *Anatolian Carpets in the Historical Photos of Transylvanian Protestant Churches*, Levent Boz, Bruckenthal. Acta Musei 12(2): 419-429, 2017.

(Conference Paper 2017) *SETTING NATIONAL STANDARDS FOR THE NATIONAL MUSEUM INVENTORY SYSTEM OF TURKEY (MUES)*, Hakan Melih Aygün, Nurdan Atalan Cayirezmez, Levent Boz, ICOM CIDOC Annual Conference ‘Documentation – Past, Present, Future...’ 2017.

(Conference Paper 2019) *Transylvanian Rugs and the Relation with Architecture*, Levent Boz and Stefano Ionescu, 16th International Congress of Turkish Art, October 2019.

(2020) *White Ground ‘Bird’ Carpets of Selendi and Their Reflections in European Art and Lifestyle*, Levent Boz, *Studia et Documenta Turcologica III–IV*, December 2020.

#### *At the British Museum*

During his time on the International Training Programme in 2011, Levent was based in the Department of Greece and Rome. His UK Partner Placement was spent at Manchester Museum and Manchester Art Gallery.

#### *Continued Engagement*

In November 2015 Levent attended the ITP Mumbai Workshop *Creating Museums of World Stories*. The workshop was held at CSMVS and was attended by many ITP fellows from different years and countries, UK partners and British Museum Colleagues.

In 2016 Levent attended the Leicester University Museum Studies Conference with the ITP team and fellows from China, Egypt and Uganda. The group gave a workshop at the conference on *Shared Histories and Global Voices*.

#### *ITP Newsletter Publications*

ITP Newsletter Issue 1 (2013), Bulletin Board

ITP Newsletter Issue 2 (2015), Bulletin Board

ITP Newsletter Issue 2 (2015), *Collections in focus: Hüseyindede relief vase from Çorum Museum, Turkey, 16th century BC*

ITP Newsletter Issue 10 (2023) Bulletin Board

## Mattie Reynolds

Department Chair and Associate Professor, Museum Studies  
Institute of American Indian Arts  
USA  
ITP 2024



Mattie is a member of the Choctaw Nation of Oklahoma, a Native American tribe from the Southeastern USA. Mattie is the Department Chair and an Associate Professor for the museum studies programme at the Institute of American Indian Arts (IAIA), a Native American arts college that serves Indigenous students from around the world.

Mattie is responsible for managing the needs of the department; developing lectures and classroom activities; and seeking partnerships with organisations both nationally and internationally, to support the growth of the students and faculty. Her teaching focusses on curation with an emphasis on community engagement, research and repatriation, all of which center Indigenous history, culture, and ways of knowing into Western museum theory and practice.

Mattie's research interests focus on the international comparison of museum best practices related to exhibition development and collections management for institutions with Indigenous collections and how practices have changed over time due, in part, to community collaboration. She is additionally interested in how that comparison can be translated into higher education curriculum.

During her time on the ITP, Mattie looked forward to broadening her approaches to teaching museum studies, and understanding the British Museum's approaches to education, training, and outreach. She also looked forward to connecting with the other ITP participants and learning about their experiences and approaches to museum practice, as well creating a space for sharing Indigenous perspectives.

Recently, Mattie helped to develop an international partnership between Outer Space Gallery, located Magandjin/Brisbane, Australia, and IAIA. Supported by a Creative Australia grant, the partnership will result in an Indigenous artist exchange and two collaborative exhibits, one in the US and one in Australia.

### *At the British Museum*

During her time on the International Training Programme in 2024, Mattie was based in the Department of Africa, Oceania and the Americas. Her UK Partner Placement was spent at Manchester Museum, Manchester Art Gallery and Whitworth Art Gallery.

## Olena Shevchenko

Senior Researcher and Head of the Archaeological Collections  
Management & Research Department  
Odesa Archaeological Museum  
Ukraine  
ITP 2025



Olena is the Head of the Archaeological Collections Management & Research Department at Odesa Archaeological Museum, where she oversees the curation, preservation, and study of artifacts in the museum's collection.

Currently, Olena is on secondment in London, working on a research project at King's College London's Department of Classics. Her primary task is creating a trilingual version of the Inscriptions of the Northern Black Sea Region (INBS) database, which involves translating inscriptions and developing a database of technical terms using Oxygen XML in Ukrainian. As well as this, Olena is currently researching Sarmatian funerary practices, building on her PhD studies.

Despite being abroad, Olena maintains an active role in supporting the Odesa Archaeological Museum. This includes consulting on new exhibitions, assisting with grant applications, advising on artifact preservation, and supporting colleagues working with catalogues. A significant part of her role involves mentoring junior colleagues in all aspects of museum work, from research methodologies to collection management. This dual position allows Olena to bridge academic research with practical museum operations and gives her the opportunity to foster international collaboration and knowledge exchange in the field of archaeology and museum studies.

### *At the British Museum*

During her time on the International Training Programme in 2025, Olena was based in the Department of Greece and Rome. Her UK Partner Placement was spent at Lincoln Museum and University of Nottingham Museum.

### *Continued Engagement*

In October 2025 Olena participated in the ITP MA Conference programme in Cardiff. With fellows from Egypt, Ghana, Iraq and Lebanon, Olena attended a programme structured around the 3-day MA Conference on *Perthyn – Belonging*.

## Roshan Mishra

Director/Curator  
Taragaon Next  
Nepal  
ITP 2018



Roshan is the Director of Taragaon Next and a visual artist based in Kathmandu. He began working at the Taragaon Museum in 2013 and played an instrumental role in transforming it into Taragaon Next in 2022.

Roshan heads the Nepal Architecture Archive (NAA), which is run by the Saraf Foundation for Himalayan Traditions and Culture, a patron organization of the Taragaon Next. For the past 11 years, he has been affiliated with the institution, working with its permanent collection, launching the Contemporary Art Gallery, and creating an archive and library.

In 2014, Roshan officially opened a contemporary art gallery at Taragaon and began curating works of Nepali contemporary art. Since then, he has curated numerous exhibitions. In 2024, he co-curated an exhibition titled *Reimagine: Himalayan Art Now* at the Rubin Museum, working with 32 artists from the Himalayan region.

In 2018, after returning from the British Museum's ITP, he initiated the Object in Focus exhibition series at Taragaon Next, focusing on contemporary art, he has organized seven series so far. In 2019, he launched the Taragaon Artist in Studio program, providing dedicated working and exhibition spaces at Taragaon Next.

Roshan is also actively involved with Sagarmatha Next, where he supports the resident artists and art projects. He is also the founder of the Global Nepali Museum and Nepalian Art and an initiator of the Mishra Museum. He is a visiting faculty member at Kathmandu University, specializing in research, documentation, and archiving programs.

Roshan studied Fine Arts in Nepal, Japan, and the UK and holds a Master's degree in Digital Art. Roshan is a board member of ICOM Nepal and is a general member of CIMAM, IKT, the British Art Network, and other organizations.

In 2020, along with four other members, he formalized the Nepal Heritage Repatriation Campaign. Since then, he has been actively involved in efforts to bring back Nepal's lost and stolen heritage. The campaign has successfully recovered almost 60 artefacts from museums, private collections, and auction houses within four years and has identified over 200 Nepali artefacts that illegally left the country.

### *At the British Museum*

During his time on the International Training Programme in 2018, Roshan was based in the Department of Asia. His UK Partner Placement was spent at Glasgow Museums.

*Continued Engagement*

In October 2019 Roshan participated in the ITP MA Conference programme in Brighton. With fellows from Egypt, India, Armenia and China, Roshan attended a programme structured around the 3-day MA Conference on *Sustainable and Ethical Museums in a Globalised World*.

Roshan returned to the British Museum in 2022 in the role of Senior Fellow. He supported the ITP team in the build up to, during and after the Annual Programme, attended by 15 museum professionals from 12 countries. Following on from this Roshan also took on the role of guest editor of the 2023 ITP Newsletter.

Roshan is also a member of the ITP Advisory Board.

*ITP Newsletter Publications*

ITP Newsletter Issue 6 (2019) Connectivity in the 21st century: making collections accessible;

Global Nepali Museum – a database of Nepali objects

ITP Newsletter Issue 10 (2023) Contemporary art in traditional Museum space

## Tapunga Nepe

Director  
Tairāwhiti Museum  
New Zealand  
ITP 2017



Ko Puketapu te maunga	<i>Puketapu is my mountain</i>
Ko Te Ārai te awa	<i>Te Ārai is my river</i>
Ko Horouta me Takitimu ngā waka	<i>Horouta and Takitimu are my ancestral canoes</i>
Ko Rongowhakaata te iwi	<i>Rongowhakaata is my tribe</i>

“He whare tū ki te wā he kai nā te ahi;  
He whare maihi i tū ki te pā-tūwatawata, he tohu nō te rangatira”  
(A carved house standing inside a palisaded pā is the mark of a chief;  
one standing in the open is food for a fire)

This renowned proverb within Tapunga’s tribe in Tūranganui a Kiwa (Gisborne), Aotearoa New Zealand, holds multiple interpretations that are relevant in the context of museums today. Firstly, it signifies the role of museums in stewardship, preserving both the physical and cultural integrity of all artifacts and taonga—embraced by the fortitude of the very communities from which they originate. Secondly, it speaks to the role of leadership, manifested through the collective strengths and concerted efforts of the museum’s communities, stakeholders, governance, management, and staff. Thirdly, it reflects the idea of continuity, where the present is anchored in the past, providing a scope for the journey ahead, as a source of enculturation, adaptation, and innovation.

Tapunga’s admiration and passion for his indigenous heritage drives him to develop and enhance his understanding of all things Maori, in particular Te Reo Māori (the Māori language), Tikanga Māori (Māori customs) and Taonga Māori (Māori treasures). Deeply rooted in the values nurtured by his elders—the foundation of his intellectual growth and understanding. Tapunga firmly believes that a memory that does not aspire to remain relevant risks fading away, and that knowledge must remain in a state of flux to effect transformative change across all aspects of life.

With a background in education, he firmly believes that education is an essential tool in developing the capacity and capabilities of indigenous people, with the hope that one day, Māori or any other indigenous people can manage and care for their traditional taonga and truly fulfil the role of kaitiekitanga (guardianship), as an expression of identity and rangatiratanga (self-determination).

Tapunga is currently the Director of Tairāwhiti Museum. Prior to this role, he completed a Master’s in Museum Studies. His thesis, *He whare maihi i tū ki te pā-tūwatawata: Kaitiekitanga, an eternal thread of rangatiratanga — a Rongowhakaata perspective*, explores kaitiekitanga in relation to taonga Māori held in museums as a means of maintaining identity and strengthening whānau, hapū, and iwi self-determination.

A significant component of Tapunga's research was supported by the *He Whai Mātauranga Scholarship*, established by the British High Commission to enable Māori scholars to study taonga held in UK institutions. This experience, including visits to the British Museum, the Cambridge Museum of Archaeology and Anthropology, and the Royal Cornwall Museum, demonstrated the power of cross-cultural exchange in building understanding and trust.

#### *At the British Museum*

During his time on the International Training Programme in 2017, Tapunga was based in the Department of Africa, Oceania and the Americas. His UK Partner Placement was spent at Manchester Museum and Manchester Art Gallery.

#### *Continued Engagement*

Since ITP 2017, Tapunga has continued his international engagement. He is part of the British Museum Masterplan International Working Group (IWG) which has invited international museum and cultural heritage experts to collaborate with the Museum and support the development of new suites of permanent galleries at the Museum through online meetings and workshops in London. The IWG has provided a valuable forum for diverse perspectives to inform and contribute to future developments.