



Museum Studies *connect*

THE LEICESTER GRADUATE NETWORK

Museum Studies Connect membership continues to grow

Since the launch of Museum Studies Connect last autumn the number of members of the network has steadily grown to over 400. Currently the membership represents 41 different countries, as illustrated on the map found on page 3. We have been delighted by the response to this initiative and look forward to providing even more benefits to members in the coming months and years as the network develops. Naturally, it has been easiest to contact our more recent graduates but we are thrilled to have graduates from as far back as 1978! The vast majority of members have given consent for their professional details to be shared with other members so if you would like to gain access to these details simply send a request to msconnect@le.ac.uk.

We know there are lots more of our graduates out there who we have been unable to contact so please do spread the word and encourage your Leicester friends and colleagues to sign-up to the network via the School's website.

Reconnect 2014

Celebratory event for all network members – Leicester, Tuesday 1st July, 2014

Following the launch of Museum Studies Connect in Autumn 2013, the School is now organising the very first MS Connect event, Reconnect 2014. Full details of the programme on the day are still being finalised but central to these will be a private viewing and curatorial presentation of a new gallery at New Walk Museum Leicester showcasing the world renowned German Expressionist Collection.

The origins of the collection were the result of a remarkable combination of local and historical circumstances and the contributions of individual museum staff members. The museum staged an exhibition of this work in 1944 with the help of artists and collectors who had been persecuted by the National Socialists in Germany. This was followed by the museum making key acquisitions and the addition of modern German art in the museum's collecting policy in 1975.

In 2013 Leicester Arts & Museums Service received a large Arts Council England grant to further the understanding of and public access to the collection, including the creation of a dedicated new gallery. This uses film and digital interpretation to tell the remarkable story behind the collection and explores how and why German and other Expressionist artists revealed their innermost emotions through art, dance, music and drama. The gallery will also embody the ideas of the 'Gesamtkunstwerk' (the total artwork) by incorporating a dedicated performance space.

Reconnect 2014 will also provide an opportunity to view a new University



Red Woman, (Rote Frau), by Franz Marc, 1912, oil on canvas. Image courtesy of Leicester Arts & Museums Service

funded exhibition in the School – '100 Stories of Migration'; a learning and networking activity held in conjunction with the Distance Learning Summer School; an insight into the development of the city's new Richard III Visitor Centre; a celebratory networking reception with a variety of wines and light refreshments provided.

The event is free of charge, open to all network members, and will run from 3 – 8pm with further opportunities for networking into the night. If you would like to make a night of it, University accommodation, at just £35 for bed and breakfast, will be available to book in advance.

So why not take the opportunity to catch up with old friends and make new ones by joining us for this inaugural event on Tuesday 1st July. To book your place at the event simply e-mail: msconnect@le.ac.uk

David Fleming appointed as new External Examiner

The School of Museum Studies is delighted to welcome David Fleming who joins Nigel Llewellyn, Theano Moussouri, and Pam Meecham as External Examiners for the School's Masters programmes. David is well known within the museum sector for his transformative work on social inclusion and human rights, and is the Founding President of the Federation of International Human Rights Museums, in addition to being a past President of the UK Museums Association. Since he took up his current role as Director of National Museums Liverpool he has supervised the completion of several major capital projects, including the £45 million *Into The Future* project, which featured major refurbishment of both the Walker Art Gallery and World Museum, and the opening of the International Slavery Museum. He has also recently overseen the creation and opening of the new £74 million Museum of Liverpool.

The School is looking forward to putting David's vast experience to good use as a 'critical friend' in the external examiner role.



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The Leicester Museum Studies programme is the best of its kind in the world – it's the one that all the others watch, emulate and would like to be! I never fail to be impressed at the excellence of the students, and I know that the staff are where they need to be, which is at the top of the game. It's an honour to have been asked to be External Examiner.”

David Fleming delivers a keynote lecture to the School's current campus-based Masters students

Engagements with Objects in Museums in India and the UK

Museums in India are on the rise, and Sandra Dudley (School of Museum Studies, Leicester) and her Indian colleague Dr Manvi Seth (Department of Museology, NMI, New Delhi), have recently been awarded grants from the British Academy and the UK-India Education and Research Initiative (UKIERI), to conduct two separate but closely related research, networking and capacity building projects in India and the UK.

Sandra explains; 'The projects revolve around a desire to look more closely at museum visitors' engagements with objects. In our preliminary field research in India and the UK, we want to push forward questions and methodologies that explore what

objects do in museums, ask how this might differ across cultural settings, and examine what the answers might contribute to both museum practice and object theory. In the process, we are also keen to contribute to developing India-UK networks in museum studies and museum practice, and to build future capacity by providing significant training opportunities for research students in India and the UK and for young museum practitioners in India. We will be developing a programme of intellectual exchange through workshops in India and the UK, bringing together practitioners, students and academics beyond, as well as in, our individual institutions'.

If you would like to know more, you can contact Sandra Dudley on shd3@le.ac.uk

Royal Palace Museum, Udaipur, India



Graduate Profile: Sally Coleman (Graduate Diploma in Museum Studies 1990-1992)

When I left Leicester University Museum Studies Department back in the summer of 1992 I very much doubted I would return to the University, or even the city, ever again. This photo was taken outside the old Museum Studies building on Upper New Walk on our last day together as a group of part time Graduate Diploma students. We all swapped addresses and phone numbers (no email, LinkedIn or Facebook then!) and vowed to keep in touch.

This year I stepped back across the threshold of the School of Museum Studies once more, not as a student this time but as a potential project partner for a NESTA grant, hoping to secure an academic partnership for a digital R & D interpretation project for Leicester Castle. The School had moved on in the intervening years and, after a long career in the North West and Staffordshire, I had ended up as Heritage Manager for Leicester Arts and Museums.

I have very fond memories of my time at the Department. By the time I started my course I was on my third museum job and working as a Curator

of Social History. Entry-level jobs were a little easier to find then and all of us had gained a wealth of experience learning on the job. We were all there to improve our professional skills and gain that all-important diploma to help with career progression. By then I felt ready to turn to academic study, feeling I had gone far enough learning from colleagues at work and was eager to see how theory could improve my professional practice and open my mind to new ways of working.

The networks we formed over the two years at Leicester have survived the test of time. I'm still in contact with many of my fellow students and even gave a paper at a Museums Association conference with one of them. Some now work for the National Trust, others for independent charitable trusts, Nationals, Universities and local authorities. That is quite an enviable professional network of contacts. Most are now Senior Managers in their respective organisations and we still get to meet at conferences and special interest groups from time to time. We never forget to swap stories about end

of course parties at the Halls in Regent Road! After leaving the Museum Studies Department I spent a year studying for my Associate Membership of the Museums Association and later returned to university to study marketing.

Those two years in the Museum Studies Department gave me an excellent foundation from which to move forward in my museum career. It is a great privilege to return to benefit once again from the School that inspired me over 20 years ago.

Sally Coleman is Heritage Manager with Arts and Museums, Leicester City Council.

Old photo requests

We are indebted to Sally for providing such a brilliantly evocative photo (and one that illustrates so clearly the fashion styles and haircuts that were in vogue 20 years ago). Can any network member spot the current member of staff (then a student) amongst the group?

This got us to thinking, other MS Connect Members must have many other group photos from their time with the School. We'd love to receive them for future publication in this newsletter or online to help bring back the School's spirit of the 90's, 80's, 70's and even the 60's as the School moves closer to celebrating its 50th anniversary in 2016. Please e-mail your photos together with a year and caption to msconnect@le.ac.uk



Sally Coleman amongst fellow students outside the department in 1992



MS Connect members located in 41 countries

Stories of a Different Kind

January 2014 saw the culmination of a two year research project – Stories of a *Different Kind* - initiated and led by our Research Centre for Museums and Galleries that set out with a bold ambition – to engage the public in a reassessment of widely held assumptions surrounding disability and to challenge deeply entrenched negative and discriminatory contemporary attitudes towards disabled people. This ground breaking project, funded by the Wellcome Trust was a collaboration between RCMG and the Hunterian Museum at the Royal College of Surgeons, the Royal College

of Physicians Museum, the Science Museum and SHAPE, with advice and support from Dr Katherine Ott at the Smithsonian's National Museum of American History.

The project brought together experts in disability, medical history, museums and public engagement to shape and publicly present a new narrative of disability in the form of Cabinet of Curiosities: how Disability was kept in a box - a provocative live performance by internationally renowned artist Mat Fraser. This highly engaging, witty, unsettling and profoundly moving performance blended research, personal testimony, object stories, comedy, film, music hall pastiche and even rapping to explore the relationship between

medical thinking and practice (that has tended to view physical and mental differences as necessarily problematic and in need of fix or cure); disability rights and broader negative societal attitudes towards disabled people. More details can be found on the RCMG website at www2.le.ac.uk/departments/museumstudies/rcmg/projects

wellcome trust



Mat Fraser critically explores museum collections



Work Placement Market Place

January 2013 saw the pilot of a new innovation – the Work Placement Market Place, where we invited museums and galleries to come and talk about the experiences they could give our campus based students on placement. It was a small, select group of museum professionals who all agreed it was a worthwhile experience. So this year we extended the invitation to all the organisations on the LUMeN (Leicester University Museums Network). On the 29th January we welcomed 36 museum professionals from 29 organisations to the School of Museums Studies Building.

Everybody brought marketing materials including goody bags, stands, films and quite a few bowls of sweets! The Museum Studies Hall was literally buzzing. Our students had certainly done their preparation and knew which organisations would be attending and had lists of questions prepared for each of them. Both the students and museum professionals agreed that it had been a really valuable and enjoyable day.

Any members of MS Connect who would like to offer a work placement for our campus-based Masters students should contact Barbara Lloyd bl5@le.ac.uk



Students and museum representatives at the Work Placement Marketplace 2014