

compendiums aimed at the young-adult market. *The Forgotten Women* series by Zing Tsjeng, editor of *Broadly*, Vice Media's women's interest channel, dedicates each volume to women's

profiles in the volume on artists, which is released this month — was overlooked in her lifetime but has been rediscovered regularly since the 1980s, a decade that took in retrospectives in

celebrating, imagining, live years ago, a profile of the medieval poet Christine de Pizan getting commissioned alongside a round-up of the best celebrity Instagrams.

How the experts show and tell

Curation | Andrew Jack
reports on a British Museum initiative to spread its know-how around the world

In a corridor beneath the main hall of the British Museum, out of sight of regular visitors, a group of curators recently held an exclusive exhibition. For just one evening, they put on display a selection of unusual, valuable and often fragile objects normally hidden away in the store-rooms. Unlike the blockbuster shows upstairs, there was no attempt to pull in the general public: admittance was restricted to the museum's own staff.

It was the concluding event of an initiative held each summer to nurture the next generation of curators from around the world. Over the past 15 years, the International Training Programme (ITP) has brought together 276 people from 43 countries for six-week sessions at the British Museum and others around the UK. It is one of several partnerships that the museum hosts to train younger and mid-career specialists internationally.

Yohana Frias of the National Museum of the Philippines pointed to the unusual firing technique and the symbolism of a bird in flight on the elaborately decorated Hunt Krater. The ancient Greek vase, designed to mix water and wine, dates from about 570BC.

"It's beautiful," she said, before drawing my attention to the mock-up merchandising she had produced. One lesson she had drawn from her few weeks in London was the potential to create reproductions of crowd-pulling objects, both to generate income and to draw in visitors. "We have no museum shop," she said.

On the next stand, Solomy Nansubuga from the Kabale Museum in Uganda showed off the wooden canopic chest of Amenemhat, a 3,500-year-old box from ancient Egypt. Next to it were word puzzles, colouring-in-sheets and drawings of scales to weigh the heart it would have contained. She was inspired by the British Museum's efforts to engage children, as well as by simple conservation techniques. "One of the things I'll do when I get back is to open the windows," she said. "We can't even afford an X-ray or freezers, but air is good."

Frias and Nansubuga were among 25 curators picked this year for the ITP. Neal Spencer, keeper in the Ancient Egypt and Sudan Department, traces the origins to 2003, when Egypt's then head of antiquities asked for help in training future leaders of the planned Grand Egyptian Museum. "We had Egyptians going to our Egyptian department and Chinese to our Asia Department," he says. "We started to ask why we shouldn't bring them all together."

While other international training programmes linked to prestigious museums exist — such as the Clare Leadership Programme and the Getty



From top: Corinthian 'Hunt Krater' vase (575-550BC); participants in this year's course; alabaster kouros (580-570BC) found in Egypt; bronze prow terminal from ceremonial barque in the form of a goddess



'We wanted to prepare professionals for the aftermath of this ghastly destruction'

Leadership Institute — they tend to focus on senior museum managers. "They don't have the diversity or the global reach," Spencer says.

Since its formal launch in 2006, the ITP, by contrast, has sought to bring together younger future leaders drawn mainly from low- and middle-income countries, raising money from various sponsors to cover the £10,000-£12,000 cost for each fellow. This year, the programme included participants from Myanmar, Azerbaijan, Sudan, Rwanda, Nepal, Croatia and Oman, as well as China, India, Turkey and Mexico.

Applicants describe what they hope to achieve, and while in some countries they are recommended by their bosses, in others the British Museum runs open, competitive applications to avoid the risk of nepotism. "We make it clear this is not an end-of-career jolly to London," Spencer says.

The successful applicants attend joint sessions on subjects as diverse as conservation, education, fundraising and working with volunteers. They also spend one-on-one time with their British Museum counterparts to improve particular skills.

The programme includes placements in regional museums, whose more mod-



est resources can sometimes be easier to relate to. "The British Museum is so big, and applying its lessons to use with us who are very small with a limited budget is difficult," said Chantal Umuhzoza from Rwanda, who spent time with the National Museums of Northern Ireland.

ITP participants also take part in sessions for other international programmes, including one created for Iraqi archaeologists two years ago. "Knowing that we couldn't do anything on the ground to protect cultural heritage in Iraq, we wanted to prepare professionals for the aftermath of this ghastly destruction," says Jonathan Tubb, keeper in the British Museum's Middle East Department, who runs the scheme.

In one seminar last month with the Iraqis — all women this year — Andreas Pantazatos, from the Centre for the Ethics of Cultural Heritage at Durham University, discussed the restorations of the Acropolis, the Mostar Bridge and the Bamyan Buddhas before focusing on the damage done by Isis, and on Saddam Hussein's "restoration" of Babylon.

"People are wary of restoration now," says Tubb. "It's not ethically acceptable and there are other things you could do with your money. It's a bitter pill, but if you have money available, is it sensible to plough it into reconstructing one or two monuments to restore them to their state before Isis, or is it more valuable to open up a new archaeological area?"

Spencer insists that the ITP is as much about participants providing insights to British Museum staff as it is about the reverse, and he identifies lasting connections as another benefit. "I've seen Egyptian curators meeting their Sudanese counterparts for the first time, and Iranians and Iraqis who say they grew up thinking of each other as the enemy," he says.

While the British Museum has lent objects to ITP fellows' institutions and worked on joint exhibitions, a number have also organised their own events with each other. As Sarah Abdolatif Elsheekh from Sudan said, "This is the first time I can meet people from different countries. Now I have 22 friends around the world."

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Reviews

POP

Noname
Koko, London
★★★★☆

Noname once described her fragmented rapping style as "scramble-think". Her 2016 debut mixtape *Telefone* intersperses introspective digressions with anecdotes from her Chicago childhood, advice from her grandmother, and references to literary influences (Toni Morrison, Patricia Smith) as well as musical "relatives": Nina Simone, Missy Elliott, André 3000 and Lauryn Hill. Across 10 tracks, her easy, conversational delivery is underpinned by the spare, drowsy sounds of neo-soul and modern R&B: warm bass tones, jazzy dinner pianos, and hip-hop grooves gently accentuated by hand claps or finger snaps.

Noname's show at Koko initially revealed a more assertive sound and performer. At times this undermined the subdued sensitivity of her studio recordings. The glitchy doo-wop backing vocals of "Sunny Duet" were muffled by booming sub-bass and an overly punchy snare. Occasionally her delivery seemed too lackadaisical, too unwavering in emphasis. Social commentary, such as hopes of finding "something holier than black death" in "Yesterday", didn't resonate as it could have. An early attempt to hype up an already-hyped crowd was an unnecessary concession to convention; otherwise she preferred informal chat and humour to an overblown stage persona.

Noname was best when faithful to *Telefone's* dialled-down reserve. During a medley of "Casket Pretty" and "Bye Bye Baby", her band's mellow accompaniment

CLASSICAL MUSIC

Royal Liverpool Philharmonic Orchestra/Petrenko
BBC Proms, Royal Albert Hall, London
★★★★☆

There is generally no mistaking music written for the BBC Proms. Faced with this huge, popular audience and the vastness of the Royal Albert Hall, composers like to respond with big orchestral pieces that go off like fireworks. A Proms commission involving a singer is a rarity, possibly because it can be so hard to hear the words.

Iain Bell is the exception. His *Aurora*, a concerto for coloratura soprano, commissioned jointly by the BBC and the Royal Liverpool Philharmonic Orchestra, had its premiere on Wednesday and came up with a neat solution. There were no words at all.

The title evokes the northern lights of the aurora borealis. Against the dark, orchestral backdrop of the night sky, a solo soprano lights up the musical textures with a beam of sound. The concerto's three movements chart the night's progress from the first glimmers of the electrical display to its height and back. Despite specifying a coloratura soprano, Bell writes music for his soloist that starts out