

International Training Programme Final Report
By Haneen Saleh, Media and Marketing officer, the Palestinian Museum
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As part of my ITP training with the department of Middle East at the British Museum, I visited the department's stores area where I met Venetia Porter, Project Curator, Modern Middle East, busy preparing artworks to show us. She was describing them with such passion and admiration as if they were her own work. There were many artworks from the Middle East and Arabian region and one would wonder what they could be? Embodiment of a lost freedom? Barricades with many different meanings? Deceased revolutions? War ridden faces? When Venetia started explaining Hazem Harb's artwork titled [TAG 09](#), I started crying. She stopped her explanation, and everybody was silent. After they left, I started thinking deep inside on what pushed me to cry? Why did such heavy feelings hit me so suddenly? I realized that it was that artwork. The lady in the artwork with an unclear look in her eyes and the way all the elements of the artwork blended simply together yet exquisitely, together with Venetia's explanation and the way she presented the artwork coupled with her view made all the emotions reach me so clearly. I understand that working in museums is like cinema: one can create a story with an artwork or an object where you put it in the right context as you research the idea and give a perfect presentation for the audience to explore; now one can feel that they are in front of an impartial, poetic and perceptual experience.



How did I experience the British Museum?

When I think of the time I spent at the British Museum in a month, I feel the concretion of knowledge, the diversity of the presented topics, well planned tours of different sections in the Museum, the open-mindedness of discussions to allow a better understanding of work and productivity. I enjoyed the diversity and combination of both technical and conceptual aspects of the Museum and taking on the role of setting up a small exhibition/display; this I broadened my views, for example: on how to organise a traveling exhibition, how to show well planned work through social media and interpret it, how to make good and long term relationships with colleagues in the museum, how to enter collection information into a database system, the basics of photographing objects, and I learnt of and visited many more museums and other cities and more.



I once met a member in the British Museum membership committee in my friend's home in London by accident, and he asked about my training at the British Museum; he was surprised about the experience I had and things I did and learnt.

I now have more confidence and conviction that I really am working at a museum and I believe more in our Palestinian Museum's ability to create more change and development in its way of working. This type of experience gave me assurance that we are on the right path and both museums have many similarities in the variety of views that they share.

Now, I have a better understanding of museum work which will enable me to participate more in fast paced meetings where we brainstorm ideas at the Palestinian Museum, and I can give many views on production methods or interactive shows for children, seeing the benefit of dividing work into smaller

parts for more productivity and finally a better way to write exhibition text. For example, I used to think that writing content for an exhibition would be more complicated but after my online and onsite training and good guidance about building the idea then interpreting it into writing, I have confidence, particularly from creating the Object in focus exhibition/display at the end of the training.

How will this training improve my work?

Field of media:

- I have started rebuilding the media strategy and social media strategy based on my meeting with the social media team at the British Museum.
- I will give more space to the Palestinian Museum blog to gain more momentum in writing about exhibitions.
- I started an account for the Palestinian Museum on [Smartify](#) which I didn't know about before my meeting in the Riverside Museum in Glasgow with Tracey McDonald, Digital Curator who urged us to create digital content, showing us what she does for Glasgow Museums.
- I also started making many accounts on different types of social media that I didn't use before.
- I have considered how to attract more visitors and achieve a higher percentage of visits by the end of current year and beginning of the next.
- I started making changes in order for the accounts of our museum on social media to improve with more creative visual identity.



Riverside Museum

Field of exhibitions:

- I shared with my colleagues in the exhibitions department, my notes and the information provided to us in the online and onsite training, on the steps to create a successful exhibition and the way to work with other departments; more so, I

provided them with some examples from the trip to the museums where I viewed many marvelous interactive experiences.

- We are currently preparing for an exhibition about music, and when I was at the National Museum of Scotland, there was a music exhibition with an interactive aspect that I liked and I filmed this for my colleagues to take note of.

- We had an interesting discussion with Nadja Race about International Touring Exhibitions on how to prepare for one and build relationships with other museums, and how to make a traveling exhibition happen, and this is very important for the Palestinian Museum because we depend a lot on traveling exhibitions outside of Palestine to reach a bigger audience.

- I am developing a proposal for partnerships through seminars with different museums like GOMA Museum.



GOMA Museum

In general:

- On the local server at our museum, I uploaded all the materials I got from my online and onsite training for all my colleagues to learn from.

- I will give a comprehensive presentation of all the knowledge I experienced in Britain, what I saw in all museums in general and what I learnt in the British Museum, especially.

- I will give recommendations to my colleagues who intend to take this training.

- I have some ideas for upgrading the Museum's gift shop.

I feel that what stalls the implementation of some ideas is the traditional view that the management of our Museum, for example, impose with their point of view in our social media content, which gives the social media pages a feeling of being a news company rather than a museum.

This training gives me the ability to dive more into ideas and information provided to me rather than focus on the surface of things; it also gives me courage to stand at the front of meetings and say what I have in my mind and blend more with people of other cultures. I also made very important friends from Easter Island and Nigeria which made me able to work and achieve many things and break the boundary of language. The experience of the Object in focus display gave me a big boost to try more and work towards better achievements through teamwork.



I will for sure continue to play my role in this international circle and I hope to organise a meeting or cyber tour in our museum exhibitions; also I will contact other museums like Glasgow Museums to have talks about topics that everybody will be interested in; moreover, I am thinking of making content both readable and audible on the ITP blog and I will apply for other opportunities that may come up with the ITP.

Thank you, ITP team, and thank you Altajir Trust for giving me this chance; I am now back to Palestine excited and working non-stop .



P.s: I am the ITP fellow who is always late; maybe because I am so excited, and I worked on many tasks at the same time in Palestine! Thank you for having me and being patient.