

Be brave, be creative, take risks!

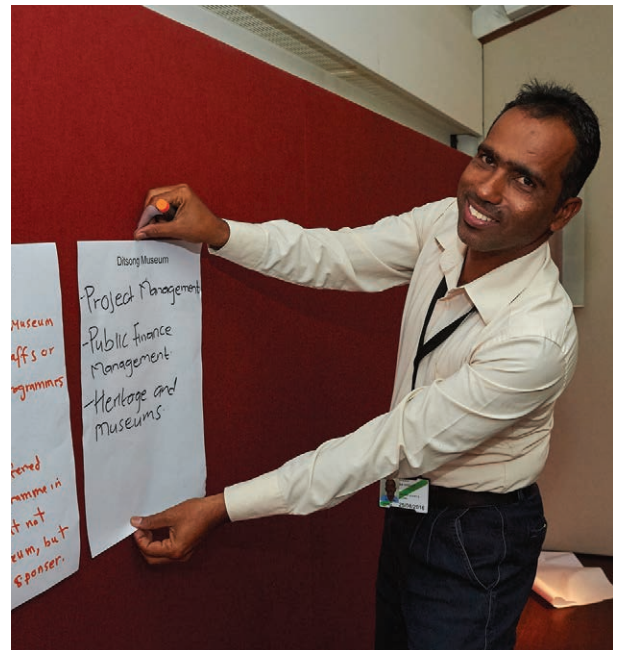
This year's newsletter focuses on how culture and heritage can provide a platform for new thinking, inviting challenging conversations and addressing current issues – both local and global.

Inspired by the theme of ICOM's International Museums Day – 'Museums and contested histories: saying the unspeakable in museums' – we asked our alumni to think about object displays that provoke discussion and debate, delivering a project that requires innovation or courage, and how their museums can be topical and address current – and sometimes difficult – issues. As you will see, it's a theme that caught the imagination not only of our fellows, but our UK and programme partners too. Thank you all for your wonderful contributions.

As well as asking our cohort to think creatively, 2017 has been a year for reconnecting and networking. Whether responding to our call for applications for our first ITP+ course (*Temporary exhibitions and permanent displays*, 15–19 May), the Collaborative Awards or the Senior Fellow role, our ITP alumni have been keeping us up to date with their professional and personal news. As such we have been able to add to our alumni database and share updates with colleagues around the British Museum, the UK and our global network.

Finally, over the past 12 months we have been working on an analysis of our 228 fellows from 33 countries. We have focused predominantly on which of our alumni keep in touch – and why and how – and we hope this will give us even more scope for our legacy programme, help us plan for the future and deliver more of the projects and programmes that our alumni tell us they need. We'll share the report with you in the next few months.

Claire Messenger
International Training Programme Manager



ITP 2016 and beyond

It has been a productive and exciting year for the ITP. Our eleventh summer programme took place from 18 July to 26 August 2016, with the British Museum and ten UK partner museums welcoming 21 fellows from 13 countries.

Given the themes of this newsletter, it's fitting that contemporary issues in cultural heritage played a prominent role in the 2016 summer programme. For the first time Michelle Kindleysides, Health and Wellbeing Coordinator at Beamish Museum, explored the role cultural heritage can play in addressing issues around health and wellbeing, focusing largely on people living with dementia and other cognitive impairments. Jasper Chalcraft from the University of Sussex returned to deliver a session on cultural heritage and peace-building, and a workshop on collecting the 'modern world' explored how objects can address contemporary themes. We also welcomed colleagues from Croatia and Yemen in 2016, and we hope these new relationships continue to grow in the future.

In October 2016, *Learning, engagement and museums*, a collaboration between ITP alumni from Armenia, Manchester Art Gallery and the British Museum, took place in Yerevan. Including a mix of presentations, group workshops and facilitated discussions, the conference focused on museum learning and engagement programmes, as well as professional development, and offered colleagues both in Armenia and internationally the opportunity to share stories, ideas and challenges in their current work. Over 30 delegates from seven different countries and 28 institutions were in attendance, including ITP fellows from Egypt, India, Lebanon and Turkey.

We are currently developing an online exhibition stemming from the original project proposal *Bristol: Seeing the Invisible*, created during the ITP's 10th anniversary workshop in Mumbai in 2015 with Rige Shiba (India, ITP 2013), Ishaq Mohamed Bello (Nigeria, ITP 2012), Wendland Chole Kiziili (Kenya, ITP 2013), Manisha Nene (India, ITP 2011), Jana Alaraj (Palestine, ITP 2011, Senior Fellow 2014) and Sue Giles, Senior Curator of World Cultures at Bristol Museum and Art Gallery. We're delighted to be working on our first 'born digital' project, and the exhibition should be online by the end of the summer.

The first round of the ITP Collaborative Awards was launched, with grants awarded for fellow-initiated projects which take advantage of ITP networks and partnerships. This year we awarded a major grant of £10,000 for a collaborative workshop and community exhibition entitled *The Road to Reconciliation*. Congratulations to all of you, and we wish you every success!

Finally, our inaugural ITP+ course on temporary exhibitions and permanent displays took place between 15 and 19 May 2017, with returning ITP fellows attending sessions on topics such as concept development, interpretation, marketing, press, fundraising and project management.

With much more to look forward to in the months to come, we hope to continue working with all of you, to grow and strengthen the ITP network.

Emma Croft

International Training Programme Coordinator



Being brave, taking risks
**Exhibiting a World Heritage Site
symbolising peace**



The Istanbul Land Walls, considered an area of outstanding Universal Value in Istanbul, has been listed as a UNESCO World Heritage Site since 1985. Built as a defence structure in the beginning of the 5th century AD, the walls bordered the city, home to various ethnicities. Churches, mosques, vineyards, gardens, springs and cemeteries were located side by side within the walls. Unfortunately, the city walls have been on the list of monuments in danger since 2008. They have long been at the centre of discussion among locals, scholars, urban planners, heritage professionals, and governing bodies for the dangers that threaten this important cultural icon. In 2013, partial demolition of the community gardens that lay next to the land walls for centuries was met with huge resistance by locals and activists.

To find a path to dialogue in the midst of current discussions, ANAMED organised an exhibition in the autumn of 2016 to concentrate not only on the heritage value of the walls but also the social and human factors reflecting their importance. Entitled *ON THE FRINGE: the Istanbul Land Walls*, the exhibition aimed to highlight the role this 1,600-year-old monument has played in the life of the city through urban legends, historical photographs, scientific reports and quotes from literary sources, based on the outcomes of a research project conducted by Anadolu University. The exhibition was designed to let scientific evidence and historic documents speak for themselves rather than simply being a part of ongoing discussions. This is ANAMED's exhibiting approach, taking advantage of being a research centre, where academic research reaches out to public. The exhibition was visited by numerous school groups, and became a topic for lectures in many high schools and universities. On top of public interest, the show caught the attention of both the metropolitan and county municipalities and initiated a peaceful conversation for a plurality of perspectives.

Seyda Cetin

Project and Event Coordinator, Koç University's Research Center for Anatolian Civilizations (ANAMED), Istanbul (ITP 2014)



The exhibition aimed to show the plurality of memories, perspectives and representations of the Istanbul Land Walls through urban legends, historical photographs, scientific reports and quotes from literary sources. Caner Aydođan, 2016, Koç University ANAMED.

A 1:500 scale, 13-metre-long 3D architectural model, produced specially for the exhibition, depicts the size and the location of the Land Walls and reveals their relationships with their immediate environments. Caner Aydođan, 2016, Koç University ANAMED.

Being brave, taking risks

Destination Tyneside



In 2013 Tyne & Wear Archives & Museums (TWAM) was possibly the first museum in the country to open a permanent gallery dedicated to immigration. This gallery, *Destination Tyneside*, has allowed us to develop new relationships with a wide range of audiences and communities and, although we did not recognise it at the time, has become increasingly important as a result of national and global events – in particular the international migration crisis.

TWAM was a founder member of the Social Justice Alliance for museums and has continued to work strongly in this area. Currently we are working on a project, *Home and belonging*, about the migration of refugees, the time it takes to achieve a sense of belonging in a new country, and the question of when one goes beyond the basics of food and shelter and begins to think about creativity and culture. This project is part of a Heritage Lottery funded activity programme associated with the redevelopment of the Hatton Gallery in Newcastle University and was inspired by Kurt Schwitters, whose seminal art work the *Merz Barn wall* is housed in the gallery. Schwitters arrived in the UK after fleeing persecution in Nazi Germany.

In February the Discovery Museum housed a small display called *#NewcastleProtest*. This exhibition marked the event on 30 January 2017 when nearly 2,000 people attended the *Newcastle stands with Muslims and refugees* protest in Newcastle City Centre. It was one of the largest demonstrations in Newcastle in the last decade and part of hundreds of protests taking place across the UK and internationally. The display asked visitors 'Who is welcome in Newcastle?' and encouraged them to offer their perspectives on migration and refugees.

The subtitle of *Destination Tyneside* is 'you belong here'. This is a powerful message which we aim to project through all our engagement with visitors and it has been incredibly well received by the diverse communities on Tyneside. Our *My Tyneside wall* provides a great opportunity for people to record how they or their families first arrived on Tyneside and has been incredibly popular across a wide range of communities. Inspired by the *My Tyneside wall*, we are now working with the North East Chinese Association to plan a future display about the Chinese community in Newcastle and the establishment of the City's Chinatown.

Iain Watson

Director, Tyne & Wear Archives & Museums

Being brave, taking risks New cultural frontiers for Turkey

The third National Culture Council was held between 3 and 5 March 2017 in Istanbul by the Turkish Ministry of Culture and Tourism in order to direct the new cultural policies of Turkey. The aim was to revive and enrich our national culture with the hope to mark a turning point in producing new cultural policies according to the needs of today. One of the commissions handled was the Commission of Cultural Heritage, Museums and Archaeology.

Being brave and taking risks, the conclusion report of the commission offers:

- to set up units to provide senior museum management and business stakeholders with up-to-date research, measurement, evaluation and reporting
- to appoint professional experts and staff who are qualified to speak foreign languages and have the capacity to speak publicly and scientifically on museum collections
- to train museum personnel on the protection of artworks
- to recruit more museum specialists, conservation and restoration specialists
- to increase the numbers of conservation and restoration laboratories in museums
- to manage museum storage areas in a scientific, professional way
- to equalise rights for different specialists serving in museums, to keep employee engagement alive and increase the quality of services provided
- to establish an institute for scientific research and practice in the field of conservation and restoration in Turkey
- to maintain museums as educational institutions beyond conserving and exhibiting
- to provide a policy of sustainable cultural landscapes, including museums and ruins
- to set up policies for 'cultural assets', not only as a source of tourist income but also for permanent gains in cultural site protection and use
- to shape the maintenance and renovation of museums together with museum specialists, to design with the needs of collection in mind
- to consolidate, continually standardise and update cultural inventory databases
- to prioritise professional approaches on branding, corporate identity, resource creation and marketing in light of today's scientific data
- to provide accreditation systems as a means for professional development
- to invest in visitor management, and to highlight education, publication, communication and presentation in addition to collections management
- to increase access for researchers from Turkey and abroad

Fatma Sezin Dogruer

Culture and Tourism Expert/Architect,
Ministry of Culture and Tourism (ITP 2009)



Being brave, taking risks

Innovation and bravery in exhibitions – *Good horn, good brakes, good luck II*



The Directorate of Museums, Assam, in collaboration with Microlima, an Italian contemporary art organisation, developed the exhibition *Good horn, good brakes, good luck II*, held from 7 to 31 March 2017 at the Assam State Museum. The event was inaugurated by Sri V B Pyarelal IAS, Additional Chief Secretary. The exhibition showcases the work of seven artists (six Italian and one English), on diverse contemporary issues such as culture, economy, industry, tourism, landscapes and environments. 60 students from a local orphanage, Snehalaya, were involved in the exhibition's opening events, working with the Director, artists and the Assamese actor Adil Hussain. The artists exhibited were Giuseppe Abate, Riccardo Banfi, Alessandra Messali, videomakers Matteo Stocco and Matteo Primiterra, Paolo Rosso and William West.

Giuseppe Abate presented *Bhujia*, a series of embroidery textiles started during his residency between January and March 2016. Abate documented and collected images from the urban environment, focusing his attention on local brands, which are often hand-painted signs on the sides of vans, truck and public transportation. Assam is famous for its ancient tradition of fine textile production, so Abate planned and produced a collection of textiles made with Indian silk, linen and cotton. His work seeks to highlight aspects of a city undergoing a particularly rapid period of technological and industrial development, linking two very different eras in its history. The textiles of the series are visually juxtaposed with fabrics of the antique Assamese tradition, emphasising this mixture of traditional elements and new commercial iconography.

Good horn, good brakes, good luck II, Assam State Museum.

Bamboo walkway featured in *Good horn, good brakes, good luck II*, Assam State Museum.

The photographic series *I found myself in Guwahati* showed a visual diary of Riccardo Banfi's experience during his residency in 2015. As the title suggests, his research was shaped on an instinctive and spontaneous exploration of place, carried out without considering any specific subjects or cultural expressions. In this project there are recurring images of festive occasions and public events, juxtaposed with snapshots of urban and natural contexts. The images are organised according to notion of accordance and discordance.

Research from Alessandra Messali's video installation *Emilio Salgari and the Tiger*, a project realised between 2013 and 2016, was translated into a theatre play held in the Assam State Museum public garden on 26 March 2016, in collaboration with students from the Handique Girls' College and with the technical support of fellow artist Giuseppe Abate.

The duo Matteo Stocco and Matteo Primiterra presented the documentary *Shataloi*, a video installation which is the first outcome of research undertaken from 2015 to now. Their work aims to visually and socially explore the contrast between the two sides of Guwahati divided by the Brahmaputra river. Images and voice recordings illustrate the explosion in urban development in contrast to traditional aspects of this society. Religion and society are presented as the backdrop to a city confronting its economic need to copy western models of development, for better or worse.

The pilot project of the residency, by Paolo Rosso and William West, is *The Guwahati bamboo walkway*, an ongoing part of this residency. It also functions as a gateway piece for invited artists to enter the context of the area. A maquette of the walkway was exhibited, realised by Mishing artisans from Majuli Island, Giuseppe Abate and Edoardo Aruta, new artists of the Guwahati Research Program.

The walkway itself is on the opposite side of the Brahmaputra river, in the area of North Guwahati. Here it overlooks the river's landscape, functioning as a place of contemplation, and provides local people with a shared space. In practical terms the Guwahati bamboo walkway functions as a means to arrive at the ferry terminal of North Guwahati from the village of Anandanagar. A constant flux of commuters passes through the villages of North Guwahati, making their way to and from the ferry terminals lining the shore. This means that it is considered more a commuter zone rather than somewhere to linger. The site is not only naturally beautiful, but replete with archaeological remains dating from as early as the 12th century which are relatively uncared for and unappreciated. Through building the bamboo walkway, Rosso and West hope they might be considered somewhat differently.

The exhibition is multi-dimensional and truly avant garde, and a legacy of the British Museum's ITP.

Wunglentiong Yazing Shimray

Director, the Directorate of Museums, Assam (ITP 2014)

Your collection in focus
Ideas worth fighting for



The People's History Museum in Manchester is the UK's national museum of democracy. The museum explores ideas worth fighting for, ideas including democracy, equality and human rights.

The collection reflects these issues and contains the largest quantity of political material in Britain, including campaign posters, trade union and political banners and other ephemera relating to the history of ideas and activism. The museum actively collects banners and placards used in contemporary protests and events. Most recently, a large quantity of handmade placards were donated from the Manchester Women's March, held in protest against US President Donald Trump. Many of the placards questioned Trump's attitudes to women and his role in world politics, and the museum intends to acquire a representational selection.

The People's History Museum often stages exhibitions dealing with provocative issues such as historic confrontations with the police, the implications of the 2008 financial crisis, and the war in Syria. Our current exhibition *Never Going Underground: The Fight for LGBT+ Rights* looks at the history of LGBT+ activism in connection with the 50-year anniversary of the partial decriminalisation of homosexual acts (1967). This community curator-led exhibition typifies the museum's approach of presenting much-contested histories in an inclusive way.

Adam Jaffer

Collections Officer, People's History Museum, Manchester

Your collection in focus
Challenging collections, and talismans for peace

Working in Birzeit University Museum is an adventure. My journey here started in 2009 as a student, when I spent most of my free time volunteering in the museum. The modest exhibition space gave unlimited freedom for artists and curators to present their thoughts on different social, political and international issues.

One example is the *Cities* exhibition programme, launched in 2009. The core concept is to draw attention to the complex relationship between people, place and time. The idea of the project is to move beyond stereotypical representations of nostalgia and folklore, and is an attempt to juxtapose past and contemporary visual and cultural material. This not only affirms the uniqueness of the cities explored, but challenges issues of memory, identity and change as well as socioeconomic, social and political transformations. The exhibition recreates the connection between community and city space through rediscovery and new approaches.

The *Ceremonial Vniform* exhibition, curated by Omarivs Ioseph Filivs Dinæ in 2014, is another example of collections addressing and critiquing different issues. This project was a design exhibition focusing on the manifestations of dress, material and cultural history, identity politics, magic, gender and sexuality.

In the spirit of using collections to address current issues, my piece in focus is a selection of paper talismans. These talismans are part of the Dr Tawfiq Canaan amulets collection – the most important of all Birzeit University Museum collections. Dr Tawfiq Canaan, a pioneering physician, medical researcher, ethnographer and Palestinian nationalist, collected these amulets in the first half of the 20th century from Jerusalem.

They are designed to provide the user with love, peace and friendship. Regardless of whether I believe or not in the magic power of these talismans, I find the symbolism of them lovely and powerful, particularly in a conflict zone like my region. Could these talismans stop the endless waves of wars? Could they bring peace and friendship in the Middle East? I don't believe in magic, but I hope they can.

Ayman al-Shweiki

Museum Custodian, Birzeit University Museum (ITP 2012)



Protest placard from the Manchester Women's March, 2016, People's History Museum.

Ceremonial Vniform exhibition.

Your collection in focus

Objects personifying peace and harmony in the Egyptian Museum

Peace is the most important word now in our world – and in the ancient world too – and there is no peace without harmony. Ancient civilisations such as the Greeks personified words and concepts like peace and harmony into figures to worship in human form, often depicted on coins.

The Greeks personified Peace as a female, named Eirene. She was an important symbol in the 5th century BC during the Peloponnesian war, in the hope that peace would prevail. On this coin Eirene is depicted as a female standing and holding a sceptre and either an olive branch or a winged caduceus (symbol of peace of the god Hermes).

Peace was always associated with Harmony or Unity, personified as a female, Homonoia. On this coin, Homonoia stands and holds a cornucopia (horn of plenty) on her shoulder, with her other hand raised.

Fatma Ali Abbas

Curator (Papyrus and Coins), Egyptian Museum, Cairo (ITP 2015)



Greek coins from the Egyptian Museum Cairo representing Eirene, personification of Peace, and Homonoia, personification of Harmony or Unity.

An example of a Nok terracotta from Nigeria.

Your collection in focus

Nok culture within the context of Nigerian art traditions

Nigeria is very famous within the history of ancient art traditions. Prominent among these are the Nok terracottas which have spread over time across various parts of Nigeria. A highly developed culture of terracotta in Nok, established around 3rd century BC, was followed by Sokoto, Kastina, Ife, Benin and Igbo-Ukwu art traditions.

Nok material culture (the earliest known terracotta sculptures in Africa) became famous in 1943, when British archaeologist Bernard Fagg recognised the archaeological importance of some chance discoveries near the village of Nok in Jaba local government, Kaduna State. Nok cultural traditions cover a wide area and include sculptures with a uniformity of style, such as mouth piercings, ears, triangular noses, semicircular eyes, with minor differences to other aspects of Nigerian terracottas.

All these facts suggest some form of interaction between the people of the Nok and as far away as Numan in Adamawa, Wambai in Nasarawa, Abuja and Niger – all in the northern part of Nigeria. Beyond this, terracotta from Ife, Benin, Igbo-Ukwu and Esie in the southern part of Nigeria have certain Nok features. This gave credence to the fact that some forms of interaction existed between these cultures before their contact with the Arabs and the Europeans, contesting the belief that the creation of Nigeria as a culturally united nation was solely through British interventions.

Through these Nok terracottas we hope to address current critical issues of identity. Using the exhibits to promote unity, we are encouraging ourselves to 'take a risk', be brave and exhibit up to 250–300 terracotta pieces at Nigeria Museums – objects which have difficulty being accepted among some traditional Christian and Muslim communities in Nigeria.

Ishaq Mohammed Bello

Assistant Chief Technical Officer (Education), National Commission for Museum and Monuments, Kaduna (ITP 2012)



Your collection in focus
**Object of the month at
 Victoria Memorial Hall**



The documentation unit of Victoria Memorial Hall (VMH), Kolkata, is displaying one object from its collection as object of the month, now a very popular practice among our colleagues with much support from our Director as well as visitors of all ages and backgrounds.

This year on World Peace and Understanding Day (23 February), we displayed a miniature 17th-century watercolour painting, *Emperor Jahangir distributing charity in the shrine of Salim Chisty in Fatehpur Sikri*, by an unknown Indian artist as object of the month, as the painting's theme symbolises the true meaning of peace and understanding. This object was acquired by VMH in 1914.

It is generally known that the Mughal dynasty ruled most of northern India from the early 16th to the mid-19th century. The Mughals were notable for more than two centuries of effective rule, and for their capability and skill. Through seven generations the Mughal Empire maintained a record for remarkable talent, and for its administrative organisation. Further, most rulers of this dynasty took initiatives to maintain peace and understanding among all communities, and integrated Hindus and Muslims into a united Indian state.

Joyee Roy
 Documentation & Photography Unit, Victoria Memorial Hall, Kolkata, India (ITP 2011)

Your collection in focus
**Melted objects at the
 National Museum of Beirut**

The object I have chosen is a powerful example of a museum taking a risk, and being brave. It represents a particular time in the history of Lebanon, and more specifically the civil war (1975–1991). During this period, the National Museum of Beirut was partly damaged as well as the displayed collection. However, the majority of the archaeological collection was safely stored. Thanks to the Director of Antiquities, Maurice Chéhab, most of the small objects were removed from their original location and placed in a warehouse that was supposedly secure.

This artefact is part of the collection that was damaged by fire despite precautions taken to protect it. Incendiary bullets unfortunately reached the warehouse and in some areas, the temperatures reached extremely high levels. This unguentarium melted following a fierce fire. While melting, it was completely reshaped.

The blueish-green coloured unguentarium now has a twisted upper part suggesting the neck of a bird, while its base and body are distorted. This used to be a perfume bottle dating to the Roman Period. The excavations in Lebanon uncovered many objects of this type. Several were found in funerary contexts attesting to their importance in ritual ceremonies. Today, this object conveys a different story, highlighting the importance of cultural heritage safeguards in times of crisis.

Marie-Antoinette Algemayel
 Archaeologist, Directorate General of Antiquities/National Museum of Beirut, Lebanon (ITP 2016)



Emperor Jahangir distributing charity in the shrine of Salim Chisty in Fatehpur Sikri, North India, 17th century AD.

This Roman period unguentarium (perfume bottle) was melted during a fire in the National Museum of Beirut, Lebanon.

Your collection in focus

Reconciliation spear

The object I have chosen to highlight from our collections at the Department of Museums and Monuments in Uganda is an Acholi spear – a ritual spear that performs a reconciliation role within the communities of northern Uganda. The spear is made by blacksmiths by melting iron ore or recycled metals, then fashioning into blade-shaped tools. A spear's form depends on the blacksmith. Some of the spears are solid iron from head to shaft, while others have the blade fitted onto a wooden shaft by gluing with natural plant materials.

During the reconciliation process in Acholi, conflicting communities gather traditionally to witness the ritual of a *Mato oput* ceremony. The elder will perform a bending of the spear to symbolise the destruction of the spear as a weapon and its transformation into a peaceful object.

The reconciliation ceremony continues publicly by drinking the juice of the bitter roots of the Oput plant to symbolise the pain of suffering and death, and to acknowledge mistakes. The offender acknowledges their guilt and the victim's family offers forgiveness, and the mediator organises a public ceremony of *Mato oput*. The ceremony of communal feasting and dances continues for the day.

Abiti Adebo Nelson

Ethnography Section, Department of Museums and Monuments, Uganda (ITP 2013)



An Acholi ritual spear in use at a community ceremony in Uganda.

Acholi ritual spear from the Luo (Nilotic) culture, 19th–20th century.



Speaking the unspeakable: how can museums address contested histories, and support processes of reconciliation?

Working with contested histories

Objects and heritage sites speak, but not everyone agrees on what they say. As heritage professionals, we often hope to use the past in positive ways to help the communities we work in. International organisations like UNESCO, the European Union and others now place an increasing emphasis on using 'heritage' to improve various aspects of society.

At the same time, if there is one constant in heritage, it is that people will continue to question and contest aspects of it, from 'ownership' to the right to represent it. These aspects are of increasing significance given the application of 'human rights' to heritage, as we see in the Council of Europe's 2005 Faro Convention and 2015 Namur Declaration, and recent statements from the UN's Special Rapporteur on Cultural Rights, Farida Shaheed. Finding innovative ways to work with the many dissenting voices around heritage is going to be a crucial strategy to support cultural pluralism in an era of increasingly factionalised identity politics.

As part of the project *Cultural Base: Social Platform on Cultural Heritage and European Identities* I have been working with heritage practitioners and experts across Europe to see what role heritage can play in building more inclusive and creative societies. Our observation is that the new expectations being placed on heritage by policy-makers are problematic: heritage alone cannot make up for broader economic and ideological problems, and the causes of conflict are too variable for a 'one size fits all' solution.

However, we should think through the positive ways heritage can be used, especially when the heritage we work with is so often contested. There is an urgent need to understand how heritage is used by communities, politicians and even our own institutions. The 'conflict sensitivity' approach of

peacebuilding NGOs like International Alert is one useful approach, and we need to spend time (and resources!) learning more about each specific context and design bespoke strategies that help heritage play a positive role in how communities relate to contested histories.

Recently my colleagues and partners from the Cultural Base Social Platform have set up a small working group to explore issues of contested heritage and how to work with it. Like the Platform itself, we are a mixture of practitioners and academics, with expertise ranging from nationalism, colonialism, gentrification and exclusion to site-specific art practice, socialist architecture, slavery, community engagement, archives, peacebuilding and human rights. We do this in various ways, from exhibitions to filmmaking, direct intervention, forum theatre, discussion forums, art installations, and academic inquiry.

Our different experiences indicate that for those of us interested in how to work with difficult heritage, three areas need research and work in the immediate future: heritage discourses (how heritage is being discussed), governance and decision-making (how and why heritage is being governed), and collaboration among stakeholders. All three areas are interlinked, but we have started our collective work by focusing on how to create spaces that enable creative collaboration and discussion between stakeholders. We also recognise the huge value in working together and sharing the details and dynamics of these issues. This is a new initiative, which we want to develop and grow in scale. If you are interested in finding out more, or participating, do get in touch.

Jasper Chalcraft

Research Fellow 'Cultural Base: Social Platform on Cultural Heritage and European Identities', University of Sussex



Jasper Chalcraft (centre) with Barbara Vujanovic and Saeed Bayashoot, during an ITP workshop on cultural heritage and conflict.

Speaking the unspeakable: how can museums address contested histories, and support processes of reconciliation?

Sites of conscience, memories of disaster



In a post-modern age museums are not limited in their function as cultural institutions displaying objects. They are now sites of interaction between personal and collective identities and memories, working between life and history. The traditional lens of viewing a culture is now changed as 'others' have occupied a space in museums to create traditionally overlooked narratives. The Bhopal Gas Tragedy Museum (Bhopal, Madhya Pradesh, India) is perhaps the first Indian museum commemorating a contemporary social movement led by survivors of the world's worst industrial disaster.

In early hours of 3 December 1984 prevailing winds brought a dark grey cloud filled with poisonous methyl isocyanate gas leaked from the Union Carbide Plant, which covered the city of Bhopal. Despite previous reports of small scale leakages of toxic gas, the company had not taken proper safety precautions. The government also played a role, overlooking safety measures to allow chemical factories within a densely populated area. The immediate victims were around 10,000 or more as the actual number is not available. More than 50,000 people survived with severe injuries. The inquiry into the incident ended only after 25 years – a culmination of deeply flawed investigation processes involving government culpability, that of inquiring bodies and even the highest court.

Government plans to build a memorial were resisted by survivors as they were seen as symbolising a bypassing of responsibility rather than a sign of solidarity. Instead, grassroots memorialisation by activists near the site is seen as the official visual representation of the struggle for justice.

Survivors have formed the Remembering Bhopal Trust with other similar groups and organisations have started working on the decontamination of soil and ground water. Their mission is not only to focus on the Bhopal tragedy but to join wider environmental movements specifically where nuclear and chemical plants are located.

In 2004 on the 20th anniversary of the incident, survivor groups started going door to door, collecting objects to give their campaign a visual presence. Within four months they had collected enough objects to prepare a mobile exhibition

Yaad-e-Hadsa, or Memories of disaster. This mobile exhibition stood for nine months – one bus full of objects, photographs, audio recordings, with survivors travelling to various cities to tell their stories. None were museum professionals, many were not even educated. It all came organically without any defined agenda, as they understood that in many ways, the objects were the most powerful witnesses. Rama Lakshmi, the curator, emphasises on the morality of having this museum: 'the morality of memory, the morality of who remembers, the portal through which a memory is preserved and the morality of the memory keeper, is a very deeply contentious subject! It is a memory for those who opposed a memorial. Because a memorial would be a silent site, they wanted to tell stories and to force visitors to think.

The concept of the permanent Remember Bhopal Museum was steered by Rama Lakshmi and activist Shalini Sharma. It is a community led museum with the concept of 'nothing about me, without me'. They refused funding from government and corporate agencies. Survivors raised their own funds, one even offering her three-room flat to host the display. Objects were collected from victims living in slums next to the factory. With little awareness of traditional collecting, even a small piece of pencil, a precious reminder of someone's child, was considered worthy. These objects, alongside photographs and interviews, are used to explain the horror and aftermath of the incident. Visitors can also listen to residents' stories of escape and survival, with oral history as one of the key tools to include their voices. The museum was inaugurated in December 2014 by Sunil Kumar, a survivor who lost his parents and five siblings in the Bhopal disaster. Celebrities, musicians and artists came to support the museum's mission to work with other organisations to create public awareness of uncontrolled industry and environmental justice. A contemporary art exhibition 'Eyes Wide Shut' was held in Mumbai as one of many public engagement programmes to teach audiences about the Bhopal tragedy. Street plays and songs were written in local dialect as part of their public engagement alongside school visits and special talks on the environment.

Shambwaditya Ghosh

Assistant Professor/Independent Curator, Pearl Academy, New Delhi (ITP 2012, Senior Fellow 2015)

Speaking the unspeakable: how can museums address contested histories, and support processes of reconciliation?

Speaking the unspeakable in an exhibition

Byzantium's other empire: Trebizond was shown at the Koç University Research Centre for Anatolian Civilizations (ANAMED) Gallery from 24 June – 30 September 2016. Issues of the 'other' and 'otherisation' have been hot topics in academia for a while, and can be tricky to navigate. So was the exhibition on Trebizond for many reasons.

The exhibition focused on Hagia Sophia at Trabzon, a 13th-century church which was converted to a mosque in 2012. The church (now mosque) had been used for many functions throughout its long history, such as a church, warehouse, hospital, as well as sitting unused for long years in between. The Trabzon province in modern Turkey had been home to the Rums, Anatolian Greeks, for centuries and so the city as well as the old church means a great deal to the Rums and to the local Turkish population residing in the city now.

While focusing on the Hagia Sophia at Trabzon, the exhibition also unravels a considerable number of smaller churches, monasteries, and chapels from the city's Byzantine past. Also, being a Hagia Sophia exhibition, it naturally references the Hagia Sophia Museum at Istanbul, its possible conversion to a mosque being a popular and sensitive topic. We were aware of the sensitivities of the subject matter in a Turkish context as the focus of the exhibition relates to several tricky subjects – religion, contested history of a city, vulnerabilities of locals, political climate in Turkey and so on. Therefore, we always reminded ourselves to stay objective and to display scientific truths without any commentary or a dominant message.

In the end, the exhibition was received very well by both the Istanbulites and locals of Trabzon. We were approached by some Foundations in Istanbul and in Trabzon whose mission is to preserve Trabzon's monuments and to research the city's history. We see once again that the public is quite receptive once you present scientific facts to them in a neutral way. Now, we are hoping to take our exhibition to Greece to reach an even wider audience in a different context. We believe that if we can tour the Trebizond exhibition, it will lead to further reconciliation, this time between countries.

Ebru Esra Satici

Project and Event Coordinator, Koç University Research Center for Anatolian Civilizations (ANAMED) (ITP 2015)



A view from the gallery.

Hagia Sophia from the south. Winfield Archive, 1960.

Speaking the unspeakable: how can museums address contested histories, and support processes of reconciliation?

The road to reconciliation: a community memorial

Heritage is a dynamic process, involving memories of events and actions, refashioned for present-day purposes. Cultural landscapes are dynamic, temporary and their values shift. Collective memory and cultural landscapes are connected, but might also conflict. Painful or unwanted heritage is part of collective memory, and must be addressed. It raises the question of whose heritage we are protecting, and whose history will be shared.

Road to reconciliation, with Uganda National Museum and the Norwegian Directorate of Cultural Heritage (NDCH) was a heritage memorialisation project aimed at confronting 20 painful years of conflict between Kony rebels and the government army. It explores the humanitarian issues raised when more than 2 million citizens were forced into refugee camps, putting values and cultural norms at risk.

Due to human suffering, displacements and several child abductions, the attitude of the people and the landscape changed. Although the peace process began in 2006, it was not until 2008 that people began returning to their ancestral homes. Open wounds required every community to heal through remembering, and a lack of access to cultural values meant a need to restore human dignity, hope, cohesion and love.

To address shared values of preserving and promoting heritage for humanity, the Uganda National Museum started discussions with the Acholi people to document and preserve significant cultural sites and norms to promote reconciliation. The project was in collaboration with Acholi, Langi, Teso and Madi elders and with cultural and religious leaders in the north, who strongly expressed that 'cultural reconstruction is as important as infrastructural reconstruction'. By 2008, cultural reconstruction was a precursor to documenting cultural sites as well as preserving traditional dances, songs and rituals. This was important because traditional systems failed to unite and harmonise conflicting groups of people, even from the same families. Furthermore, the mechanisms of traditional justice are more retributive than restorative. In addition, the museum profession was shifting to more inclusive practices, with all humanity considered in the preservation of material culture, considering the question of for whom are we preserving heritage.



The collaboration really took off with the involvement of NDCH, which focuses on cultural heritage and reconciliation in post-conflict situations. In October 2009, Uganda National Museum and the NDCH undertook a fact-finding mission in northern Uganda. By then Uganda National Museum had built a strong working relationship with the Acholi leadership in Gulu, and with district authorities. Politicians and district authorities were supportive. People had started leaving the camps and were moving back to their villages, but questions of land ownership and compensation were highly contentious.

The main issue was to find spaces for presenting cultural practices and memories. People expressed the need to keep memories of loved ones in a respectful, dignified way.

The transition from war to peace required the reintroduction of *Mato oput*, a ritual for the healing of hearts and reconciliation that reintegrates offending individuals, including former members of the Lord's Resistance Army, into their communities. This intervention of cultural memory in the post-conflict situation was a challenging task, as we had no idea initially who to ask about traditional reconciliation practices. Ultimately it was the few elders who survived the war who found a solution, by remembering the *Mato oput*.

Abiti Adebo Nelson

Ethnography Section, Department of Museums and Monuments, Uganda (ITP 2013)



Community memorial dance at Dure Community Museum 2016.

Pabbo women's peace group, former refugee camp, northern Uganda, 2013.



The National Museum Lagos

The National Museum Lagos welcomed stakeholders from the tourism sector and other areas to celebrate the launch of its latest project, the New National Museum, with a focus on museums as tools for driving tourism, arts and culture.

This project is the concept of the Lagos State Ministry of Tourism, Arts and Culture under the leadership of Governor Akinwunmi Ambode in collaboration with the Federal Ministry of Information and Culture. The project aims to widen the reach of the National Museum as well as changing its aesthetics. The plan is not just to give the National Museum a facelift to renew the interest of Nigerians and foreigners alike but to also give it a new charter to restore its glory.

The revamped museum will hold its own beside museums all over the world, structurally as well as with its organisation and collections. The project will be implemented in phases and will place the National Museum Lagos on the map alongside premier global museums. The new museum will be remodelled into a world-class recreation and tourism centre, and the completed project will help harness the state's tourism potential for wealth creation and sustainable growth.

Cynthia Iruobe

Assistant Chief Curator, Lagos Museum (ITP 2010)

Birzeit University Museum

Birzeit University Museum has a number of exhibitions which have recently opened, including the fifth edition of the Cities exhibition, *Gaza – reconstruction* which opened on 10 October 2016, and documentary drawings of the Kafr Qasem Massacre by artist Samia Halaby, which opened on 22 February 2017.

There has also recently been a new space developed on the Birzeit University campus, and staff and students are looking at ways to optimise it for workspace and collections storage.

Ayman al-Shweiki

Museum Custodian, Birzeit University Museum (ITP 2012)

Victoria Memorial Hall

On 4 March, 2017 the catalogue on *Krishna: iconographic representation* was published at Victoria Memorial Hall. The catalogue is based on my curated exhibition and from the collection of the Victoria Memorial Hall, which displays a selection of around 57 artefacts on Krishna in different media. The selection includes an illustrated manuscript of the Vaishnava text *Geeta Govinda*, two illustrated Oriya manuscripts, miniature paintings of the late medieval period, patachitras, early Bengal oil paintings, oleographs, lithographs, prints, coins, metal sculptures, paintings from the Bengal school of art and modern paintings of the first half of the 20th century.

Joyee Roy

Documentation & Photography Unit, Victoria Memorial Hall, Kolkata, India (ITP 2011)

National Commission for Museum and Monuments (NCMM)

Today the National Commission for Museum and Monuments (NCMM) Kaduna, Nigeria is no longer viewed as merely a space which stores artefacts for the specialised few. With accelerated human resources development, the Commission has become more focused on people and learning processes than on just materials for display. As such, the environment in which museum employees work, and where audiences visit, has become a basic concern more than ever before. The NCMM is currently in the process of building a comprehensive archive for the first time, and attaching a bigger library for use by the public.

Ishaq Mohammed Bello

Assistant Chief Technical Officer (Education), National Commission for Museum and Monuments, Kaduna (ITP 2012)



Kenya Heritage Training Institute

The inaugural course at the Kenya Heritage Training Institute was held from 20–24 February 2017. Targeting heritage managers with less than two years' experience, the course had 27 participants – ten from National Museums of Kenya's regional museums, nine from the counties, five from Kenya Defence Forces, one from Kenya Railway Museum, one from a private museum and one international participant. The inaugural course on heritage and museum basics included modules on:

- an introduction to museums and heritage
- the history of museums in the world
- the protection of sites and monuments
- the role of museums and heritage in socioeconomic development
- museum exhibitions
- museum collections, conservation and storage
- museum ethics and best practice
- museum, heritage and conventions
- museums and community participation
- heritage, marketing and merchandising
- fundraising in museums

All these sessions were covered ably by National Museums of Kenya staff with over ten years' experience. They took this as an opportunity to share skills and mentor up and coming professionals. These individual interactions will enable them to understand their needs when called upon to assist in initiating major projects at their own institutions.

We are now sure that we have created awareness and with more enquiries forthcoming, we are sure more and more Kenyans are willing to spend their money on a course in heritage. The Institute looks forward to having scheduled courses throughout the year as well as organising satellite campuses in Nairobi and Kisumu for more coverage.

Rebecca Njeri Gachihi

Programme Manager, Kenya Heritage Training Institute
(ITP 2010, Senior Fellow 2016)



National Museum of Egyptian Civilisation

On 15 February 2017, a temporary exhibition was opened at the National Museum of Egyptian Civilisation on Egyptian handicrafts through the ages as a partial opening for the museum, the culmination of a 13-year-long dream.

The main aim of the exhibition is to show continuity and characteristics of Egyptian traditional identity within these crafts. The process of the industry and the usage of the same materials through different eras are highlighted. This exhibition contains about 420 objects from different periods. It deals with four main Egyptian crafts through all the periods of Egyptian history – prehistoric, pharaonic, Greco-Roman, Coptic, Islamic, modern, contemporary – with a focus especially on the crafts still in use today.

Sayed Abuefadi Ahmed Othman

Curator, National Museum for Egyptian Civilisation
(ITP 2016)



Chhatrapati Shivaji Maharaj Vastu Sangrahalaya (CSMVS) Mumbai and the National Museum, New Delhi

A collaborative project between Chhatrapati Shivaji Maharaj Vastu Sangrahalaya (CSMVS) Mumbai, the British Museum and the National Museum, New Delhi, *India and the world: a history in nine stories* is a landmark exhibition showcasing some of the most important objects and works of art from the Indian subcontinent, in dialogue with iconic pieces from the British Museum. The catalyst for each conversation is a specific moment in history repositioning Indian objects in a global context and exploring a conversation between India and the rest of the world.

In some instances these conversations offer immediately visible connections to be drawn. Elsewhere, they may surprise the visitor into new understandings of how people have configured their lives differently. While similarities can lead to an appreciation of the long and shared histories India has with the rest of the world, differences demonstrate respect for parallel systems of knowledge, and present opportunities to learn something new.

The exhibition is designed around a wide variety of objects, from figurative representations and large-scale sculpture, to inscriptions and coins, paintings, jewellery and tools. Together, they demonstrate the potential that individual objects in context and conversation can have to unlock diverse stories and histories.

The exhibition will be on display at CSMVS, Mumbai from 10 November 2017 – 18 February 2018 and the National Museum, New Delhi from 29 March – 29 June 2018.

Vaidehi Savnal

International Engagement Coordinator, CSMVS Mumbai (ITP 2016)



Detail from
The procession
of Abdullah Qutb
Shah, Deccan,
17th century.
© Trustees of
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Portrait of Thirumala
Nayaka, Madurai,
Tamil Nadu,
17th century.
© Trustees of
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Moves and news

Ayman El-Shweiki (ITP 2012) attended a course from 26 June – 3 July 2016 on fundraising at the Goethe Institute. He also had the opportunity to participate in the second workshop for museologists from Arab states, hosted at the Chinese Silk Museum.

Shi Wanghuan (ITP 2016) is currently working on a collaboration between Arts Exhibitions China and the Cartier Foundation.

Zarmeene Shah (ITP 2015) is now Head of the Liberal Arts programme at the Indus Valley School of Art & Architecture, Karachi.

Sayed Abuelfadl Ahmed Othman (ITP 2016) was part of the team that has just prepared and opened NMEC's first temporary exhibition gallery about handicrafts in Egypt through the ages.

Olivia Zheng Xuan (ITP 2015) is currently working on preparations for the British Museum *A history of the world in 100 objects* show which has recently opened at National Museum China.

Rika Nortje (ITP 2007) is now working at the University of Johannesburg Gallery as an Art Collection Management Specialist.

Wang Yi (ITP 2006) has recently moved from the National Silk Museum in Hangzhou to the Art and Archaeology Museum at Zhejiang University. This new museum is still under construction, and will open to the public in October 2017.

Makbule Ekici (ITP 2012) has recently moved to Gaziantep University. As Departmental Head, she is also in charge of the university's museum, Gaziantep Cultural Museum.

Ana Sverko and Barbara Vujanovic (ITP 2016) presented on the experience and knowledge gained during the ITP at a lecture organised by Prokultura: Observatory of Cultural Politics, Ivan Meštrović Museums and Art History Institute, and the Centre Cvito Fisković.

Marwa Abdelrazak (ITP 2012) is in Berlin at the Berlin State Museum from 1 April – 27 June on an international scholarship.

Yu Miao (ITP 2014) completed the first commercially sponsored project for Hubei Provincial Museum – Log Cabin Cultural Public Space – which was inspired by work at the Great North Museum in Newcastle.

Omar Abouzaid (ITP 2007) is now Vice-Dean in the Faculty of Archaeology for Community Services and Environment Development. He is currently organising the first international conference for the Faculty of Archaeology entitled *Archaeology, theory and fieldwork*.

Sibel Yasemin Özgan (ITP 2013) has been in Berlin for a year as a visiting scholar at the University of Fine Arts and has just returned to her post at Istanbul Technical University.

Tugba Tanyeri Erdemir (ITP 2015) is now a research associate in the Department of Anthropology at the University of Pittsburgh.

Saad Amira (ITP 2015) is now serving as a diplomatic attaché leading the South Asia department.

Qi Yue (ITP 2014) has been transferred to the Chinese Embassy in Romania by the Ministry of Culture. She'll be in Romania for three years before returning to the Palace Museum in Beijing to continue her museum work.

Nevine Nizar (ITP 2012) is now also teaching at the Helwan University on their Masters programme for Museum Studies and Heritage.

Sahara Dahir Ibrahim (ITP 2011) is now with CARE International in Somalia for a one-year assignment. In her current role she is gaining invaluable programme development, fundraising and project management skills.

Dora Jok (ITP 2016) is now a PhD candidate in a local university and has just started reading for her literature review.

Shubha Banerji (ITP 2014) recently began a new position at the President House Museum in New Delhi.

Nilanjan Banerjee (ITP 2009) has now returned to the role of Officer, Rabindra Bhavana Institute of Tagore Studies and Research at the Visva-Bharati University.

Khalid Abdulla (ITP 2010) is currently working on the Louvre Abu Dhabi project.

Hikmat Basheer Al-Aswad (ITP 2008) and his family are now living in Holland. He is still writing and published books and articles about Mesopotamia. He has given several TV and newspaper interviews and participated in several conferences about the destruction of Mosul Museum.

Hayk Mkrtchyan (ITP 2014) is now Director of the Association of Museum Workers and Friends. This new position is based at the Museum Education Center in Yerevan. The Association was founded in 2003 and has more than 50 museums around Armenia as members. The organisation aims to support museum workers through professional education and the development and modernisation of the field in general.

Davit Poghosyan (ITP 2015) has now been appointed Head of PR and Museum Collaborations at the Memorial Complex of Sardarapat Battle, National Museum of Armenian Ethnography and History of Liberal Struggle. This is in addition to his current role.

Asmaa El-Rabat (ITP 2014) and her team at the Egyptian Museum are now working on the first part of their project archiving photographic negatives. Asmaa has also recently obtained her diploma in Egyptology from Cairo University.

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