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Members' news



Unknown maker, Anglo Saxon pendant (650-700), Norwich Castle Museum & Art Gallery. All images this month are of objects acquired in the last year with support from the Art Fund. They are currently shortlisted in an Art Fund public competition to choose object of the year.

National Museums Scotland plans further work to support collections across Scottish museums

National Museums Scotland has been developing a skills-sharing programme, using its in-house expertise to offer specialist curatorial support and training to staff in museums across Scotland. The first pilot project 'Old Tools, New Uses' surveyed domestic technology collections, a second trained a curator to review Pacific Collections. Now three more projects are planned for 2019 working with museums across Scotland to review ancient Egyptian, east Asian and natural sciences collections. Results will include better storytelling about highlight collections and the ability to integrate collection items from all over Scotland (particularly in natural sciences) into international research initiatives.

[The Scotsman](#), [National Museums Scotland](#)

British Museum to open major Archaeological Research Collection storage in Reading

The British Museum has received planning permission to build a major new Archaeological Research Collection (BM_ARC) next to and in partnership with the University of Reading. The 15,000sqm building is planned to be completed and filled with the museum's research collection by 2023. There will be access through study rooms for groups of people ranging from students to members of the public. The British Museum will also look at ways that museums local to this outpost can learn from the collection. Professor Robert Van de Noort, Acting Vice-Chancellor at the University of Reading said *"this is an important next step in what will be a first of its kind partnership between a national museum and a UK university...we are already developing plans with the Museum to explore a wide range of potential research synergies, building on our existing collaborative research."* [British Museum](#)

Collecting the Troubles at the Ulster Museum

A BBC Radio 4 programme 'Collecting the Troubles at the Ulster Museum' has covered its changing approach to displays about the Troubles in detail – moving from an exhibition that was largely a 'photojournalist's view' of the conflict to something more object-based and personal, with a narrative extending beyond the Good Friday Agreement and addressing current Northern Irish society, its achievements and its tensions. Curators describe how the museum's audience now includes a mixture of those who lost relatives in the conflict, younger generations – and tourists who know little about it. The history has attracted dark tourism to the country, but more recently 'phoenix tourism' – groups drawn by narratives of how societies find their way out of war, oppression or disaster. [BBC Radio 4](#)

Brexit

Cultural organisations offer holding advice in the face of continuing Brexit uncertainty

The next major step towards the Brexit process takes place on 11th December when parliament will begin to debate the deal which Prime Minister Theresa May has negotiated with the EU. There is considerable uncertainty about whether it will be accepted by enough MPs, and whether No Deal, a referendum or a renegotiation will take place if not. Issues such as movement for creatives and access to EU cultural funds remain unresolved until the negotiation is complete. Several cultural bodies have responded with provisional advice and proposals in the light of this uncertainty.

- Creative Europe has updated its advice for UK organisations interested in becoming part of European Cooperation projects. If the UK Government's proposed deal goes through, the UK will continue to pay into and be able to participate in such schemes until the current round ends in 2020. [Creative Europe Desk UK](#)
- The Creative Industries Federation describes the possibility of no deal as a 'disaster' for the sector. If May's deal is accepted, it welcomes the transition period running to 2020 and possibly to 2022, but notes that negotiations for a future relationship must take place during the period 'which seems ambitious given that trade negotiations can take several years'. It also welcomes the promise of a 'dialogue' on culture and education and a commitment on both sides to 'protecting and enforcing IP beyond international treaties' [CIF](#) (paywall)
- The British Council is participating in a number of events with EU creative industries partners and in the UK, which offer advice and are developing recommendations for a post-Brexit relationship with Europe, with a focus on copyright, European funding programmes post-2020 and movement of labour in the cultural sector. [British Council](#), [British Council](#) (moving beyond Brexit recommendations).
- The Creative Industries Federation has proposed a 'freelance visa' to allow creative freelancers from abroad to work in the UK, where they are providing services to UK businesses and have a business plan and a history of work in the sector. It points out that 37% of those in the sector are freelance compared to 15% in the economy as a whole. Margot James MP told Parliament that future mobility arrangements for the creative industries are yet to be finalised, but would be on a reciprocal basis and 'consistent with ending free movement'. [CIF](#) (paywall) [UK Parliament](#)
- The Migration Advisory Committee is seeking evidence on occupations where there is a skills shortage in the UK workforce, with a view to reviewing the minimum level of skill required for Tier 2 visas. The consultation runs to 6th January 2019. [uk](#)

[Gov.uk](#) (26 page political declaration with a framework for the future of the relationship between the EU and UK)

Appointments

Dr Liz Hide has been appointed as the first full time director of The Sedgwick Museum of Earth Sciences, the oldest of the University of Cambridge museums which has two million fossils among its collections. It currently receives 150,000 visitors each year as well as being a teaching resource. Dr Hide said "*with global issues and concerns such as climate change, fossil fuels, fracking and biodiversity loss, the museum will be a place where people can explore and discuss the earth sciences in a way that is directly relevant to their lives.*" [University of Cambridge](#)

Rhian Harris will become the new Chief Executive of Lakeland Arts in February 2019. She is currently Director of the V&A Museum of Childhood. [Museums Journal](#),

Events

Museums and Resilient Leadership course 2019 – 20

The Museums and Resilient Leadership course, based at the Black Country Living Museum, is open for applications for 2019 – 20. The course takes place over a year including eight workshops, two three-day residentials, an overseas visit and mentoring. Topics include finance, entrepreneurship, leading change, governance and social purpose. Applicants must be working in museums, galleries or the heritage sector in England and be very broadly mid-career professionals seeking the equipment to deal with a rapidly changing social, cultural and political environment. Each place is subsidised with a £7.5k contribution from ACE – participants are charged £795+VAT. The deadline for applications is 31st January 2019, with the course beginning in May. [MRL](#), [ACE](#)

GEM course on fundraising and income generation

GEM is holding an event on Fundraising and Income Generation for learning professionals to help them build well-funded and sustainable learning programmes. It will also create a network of people to support follow up activities. The course takes place on 27th February 2019 at Kensington Palace. Tickets are £125 for GEM members and £160 for non-members. [GEM](#)

Also: GEM is also holding a course on heritage interpretation at the Discovery Museum, Newcastle on 7th February 2019 with places at £125 - £160. [GEM](#)

Exhibitions on a shoestring

The Social History Curators Group is holding a study day 'Exhibitions on a Shoestring' which will describe how to create a good and accessible exhibition for under £1k. The event takes place at Exeter Community Centre on 26th February 2019. Tickets are £20 - £50. [SHCG](#)

Launch of the Culture Connect calendar of global conferences

The organisation Culture Connect has launched a new global conferences calendar covering arts management, museums and cultural diplomacy across the world. It is aimed to facilitate building bridges between institutions, people and countries and to assist the global spread of ideas. The calendar also allows users to search for calls for papers, and organisers welcome suggestions of conferences that should be added to the list. [LinkedIn](#)

Let's Get Real Conference 2019 – Connecting digital practice with social purpose

Culture24's next Let's Get Real Conference explores how museums and heritage organisations need to connect digital practice and social purpose in order to stay relevant for audiences. Speakers from within and beyond the cultural sector will cover strategic ideas and practical recommendations to think differently about digital work. The event takes place on 30th January at the Wellcome Collection. Tickets are from £120 (with early bird ending on 19th November), or you can choose to donate £45 to buy a place for someone else from a demographic under-represented in the sector. [LetsGetReal](#)

Images this month: Art Fund invites the public to vote on favourite new acquisition of 2018

The Art Fund has launched a public competition to vote for a favourite object acquired by museums in 2018 from a shortlist of ten objects. The competition highlights the work of the Art Fund in part-funding new acquisitions and also demonstrates the breadth of subject matter and style. The ten artworks include an Anglo Saxon pendant, dated to 650 – 700, now at Norwich Castle Museum & Art Gallery and Kehinde Wiley's 'Ship of Fools' at Royal Museums Greenwich, which references the perilous journeys of migrants. Voting is open until 15th December with a chance to win a National Art Pass. [Art Fund](#) (press release), [Art Fund](#) (voting website)

Tech

ACE sets up new network to offer digital expertise for the cultural sector

Arts Council England is investing £1.1m over two years on a Digital Cultural Network consisting of nine tech experts based at ACE offices across the country. The group will offer advice to cultural organisations on topics ranging from content strategy to data and analytics, digital marketing, CRM, e-commerce and business systems. It will also signpost training and broker partnerships with tech companies so that organisations can keep up to speed with and make use of emerging technologies. The work fulfils one of the commitments of the DCMS Culture is Digital consultation last year: ACE will be providing support in delivering a further six. The Digital Cultural Network is expected to launch in Spring 2019. [ACE](#), [ACE](#) (Tech champion jobs, listing specialisms), [Arts Professional](#), [ACE](#)

The mammoth in the room: obstacles to museum augmented reality

Bournemouth University academics Matthew Robert Bennett and Marcin Budka have written a usefully candid account of what didn't go right when they tried to introduce an augmented reality (AR) mammoth to museum settings. They found that audiences had great fun making the extinct beast materialise into their surroundings when the work was presented and led by museum staff, but that visitors are extremely disinclined to download apps when left to their own devices. Building trust, QR codes or simply loaned tablets may be part of the answer in creating AR that is well used. [The Conversation](#)

Visitor trends

New Taking Part report explores UK leisure activities

DCMS has published a new 'focus on' report derived from the Taking Part statistics which for the first time brings together an overview of adult free time activities in the UK. The report shows that:

- Of 12 activities listed, watching TV was the most popular activity at 92% and playing video games was the least at 37%.
- 90% of adults said they used the internet, but social media use falls off sharply with age: 98% of 16 – 24 year olds use it in their free time, compared to 33% of over 75s.
- Statistics on museum and gallery visits do not distinguish between work and leisure visits, but draw out new data on levels of enjoyment. Young people in general report lower enjoyment of cultural activities, but this effect is not seen in museums where 16 – 24 year olds and over 75s expressed similar high levels of enjoyment.

[Gov.uk](#)

Analysing the museum audience: from 'Facebook families' to 'Commuterland culturebuffs'

The Audience Agency has published its 2018 report on trends in effectively attracting visitors to museums. It is based on a sample of almost 40,000 visitors to 105 museums which ranged from independents to nationals and local authority museums. The report found that:

- There are a 'core four' types of audience: young creatives aged 16 – 24, families, older learners and cultural tourists. The report further segments these groups depending on whether they are regular or occasional visitors: but most museum visitors are medium or high cultural engagers beyond the museum world.

- Older audiences are highly represented with 41% of all visitors over 55 (however, we know from other data sets that visiting falls off sharply among the over 75s).
- Younger, BAME and less culturally engaged audiences are more likely to visit free museums. Paid entrance museums attract the more culturally engaged and those from further away.
- Although men and women visit about equally across the English population, museum audiences of all kind skew strongly female: 63% vs 39%.
- 52% of visitors are within a 30 minute drive of the museum, with visitors travelling further when the primary aim is to learn something. Visitors in the North East are the most likely to be local at 93% of total visits.
- Museums attract more family visitors than other artforms.
- Almost everyone rates their museum visit as good or very good (98%) but the Net Promoter Score, which tracks how likely a visitor is to recommend their experience to someone else is lower for museums at a score of 66 than the cultural average of 74. The most contemporary-minded audience segments are the least likely to express satisfaction with their visit.
- Local museums attract the most loyal and regular visitors, with 40% of all local attendees coming multiple times each year. They also attract the most family audiences.
- The survey also asked for comments about barriers to visits and common factors include the cost of public transport, entrance fees and refreshments, poor communications and marketing, time and 'rurality' – scattered and isolated populations.

[Audience Agency](#)

Developing cultural business



Artemisia Gentileschi, Self Portrait as Saint Catherine of Alexandria (c. 1616), National Gallery.

Cultural sector GVA grows 40% in less than a decade, producing £29.5bn to UK economy

DCMS has published the provisional 2017 figures of Gross Value Added for the sectors which it oversees. Overall, DCMS sectors produced £267bn, up 3.4% since 2016. Half of this was produced by the digital sector and £101.5bn by the creative industries. The cultural sector produced £29.5bn, a growth of 38.5% since 2010 and growing 7% since the previous year. 60% of the cultural GVA comes from film, TV and music and 25% from the arts. The Heritage Alliance is currently carrying out research into the ways in which heritage underpins sectors such as film and TV, email policy@theheritagealliance.org.uk if you have information to contribute. (NB many DCMS sectors fall into more than one category, so may be counted twice – the overlaps are laid out in the report). Gov.uk

Museums collaborate with industry in UK Research and Innovation creative clusters

More details have been announced of the £80m plan to harness the creative industries to develop eight 'creative clusters' across the UK. Groups, which include museums, businesses, broadcasters, theatres and universities will each collaborate to develop a specialism in a city region. Each cluster will focus on a particular industry: National Museums Scotland is part of the Edinburgh cluster focused on Creative Informatics and V&A is part of a London cluster built around R&D in the business of fashion, textiles and technology. Bristol, Leeds, York, Cardiff, Belfast and Dundee are also taking part. [UKRI](#)

Also: The Government has given an additional £5m to the Creative Industries Trade and Investment Board, to help it grow international activity. The Board is hoping to increase exports by 50% by 2023, supported by its new Chair, advertising CEO Annette King. [Gov.uk](#)

Government seeks to develop a tourism sector deal

Culture Secretary Jeremy Wright has announced that he will be seeking to develop a sector deal for tourism, to continue to grow the sector which is worth £66bn to the economy. DCMS has initially asked tourism leaders to consider issues including how to make tourism and hospitality a career for life, increase accommodation and access and look at further ways to attract visitors all year round, not just in high season. Wright said *"we are in a competitive global market and we need to be ambitious to maintain the fantastic growth we have seen in recent years...a sector deal is the way to deliver this."* [Gov.uk](#), [VisitBritain](#)

Breaking the working week - and other futurology

'Any useful idea about the future should appear to be ridiculous' – Nesta predictions for 2019

Nesta has published its annual series of short blogs predicting social and scientific developments for 2019. It argues that technological change itself is relatively easy to foresee – but not the social changes that comes in its wake, for example the transformation of dating by Tinder. It approvingly quotes James Dator, an Emeritus Professor of Futures Studies who claims that 'any useful idea about the future should appear to be ridiculous'. Ideas fielded this year include:

- 'The beginning of the end of exams' as students are continuously assessed by AI - which will be able to mark essays and track qualities such as teamwork and independent thinking. This could transform many of the debates about modern education, but also comes with ethical issues.
- The rise of the 'deep fake' – footage that appears to be real but is produced by technology may create a world where we can no longer believe our eyes. This holds the risk of sparking a geopolitical incident and may also cause us to rethink our ideas around belief and authenticity.
- Only 6% of the employed population now work 9 – 5, and 42% of us work flexibly, yet much social infrastructure is still framed around the traditional working week – including the timing of many leisure events. Meanwhile new ideas from Universal Basic Income to the four-day week and the strengths and risks of home working are widely discussed. Nesta argues that 2019 will be the year when society begins to recalibrate away from the idea of the traditional week.
- 'AI superbrains' could begin to run cities and regulate all aspects of urban life – improving efficiency, but with potentially Orwellian knock-on effects of citizen rights, already seen in China's plans to grade its population by their life choices.

Nesta also looked back on its predictions for 2018, where it scored a relatively high hit rate in predicting that people would take a greater interest in the environment, waste and ownership of consumer data, with workers seeking greater power in the collaborative economy. [Nesta](#), [Nesta](#) (2018 revisited)

Also: Nesta has also created ShareTown, an 'unashamedly positive vision of a preferred future' which gives a better balance of power between citizens and local government and includes 'coops, exchange platforms and community land trusts' as well as a cultural infrastructure used for social good. This vision meshes well with the discussion paper on the role of civic museums from earlier this year. [Nesta](#), [NMDC](#)

Out of hours museums for 'older people and non-hedonists'

In a lyrically written polemic for the FT, Janan Ganesh appeals for an extension of the definition of city night life beyond pubs and bars, and in particular for different and later opening hours for museums. He argues that despite the creation of 'Night Mayors' in many world capitals, night culture is still relatively narrow and rarely aimed at 'older people and non-hedonists'. Globally, The Louvre and Hermitage are usually open until six, The Smithsonian is an outlier in being open until seven – and museum Lates, although growing, are exceptional events, often targeted at a 20 and 30-something crowd. Meanwhile major museums extensions continue to accommodate the pressure of daytime visitors. Ganesh writes *"like voting, the consumption of art is a thing of national importance that is made harder than it should be. Museums' endless physical extensions (another annex and the Tate Modern should just bid for city status) speak to the unmet demand for them. The trick is to accommodate it through time as well as space. Cutting through Bloomsbury, I pass the Greek Revivalist fortress of the British Museum: treasure-laden, classily lit and, at dinner time, as inaccessible as Pentonville Prison up the road. These profound institutions, repositories of our civilisation, are dormant for two-thirds of the day. Round-the-clock admittance is unthinkable, of course, at least without compromising the material condition of the works. But to take in Canaletto's "Venice" on a Monday evening should not be the extravagance it presently seems."* [FT](#) (paywall)

Funding



John Bellamy, The Boatbuilders (1962), Scottish Maritime Museum.

Lottery funding begins to recover, offering an extra £30m for the cultural sector

Lottery ticket sales increased by 5.4% in the first half of 2018 – 19, leading to an increase of around £30m in lottery funding for the four UK arts councils. In the last few years sales had declined – particularly in 2016, when the arts lost £55m. Last year, ACE launched a 'ThanksToYou' campaign to highlight the link between artistic projects and the Lottery. Camelot currently gives a return of 2% to good causes and has a contract to run the Lottery to 2023, however a competitive process for the new contract begins next year. [Arts Professional](#)

Nesta event on designing more innovative funding methods

Over the past few years Nesta has been developing and experimenting with a range of new funding tools to support innovation, including challenge prizes, matched crowdfunding and equity. It is now hosting an event to share its findings, aimed primarily at funders but which may contain useful insights for those seeking support. The event is free but registration is essential. It takes place on 17th January at Nesta in central London. [Nesta](#)

Also: Charity donation via Alexa and other voice assistants is now an emerging digital option, offering the convenience of giving through chatting, not clicking. [Voicebot](#)

£3m fund for the north for culture for social good opens in April 2019

In the aftermath of the Great Exhibition of the North, the Government has created a new £3m fund for the north to support cultural work for social good. The fund will be distributed by Sheffield-based social enterprise the Key Fund, which will offer groups grants or loans up to £150k. It will run for two years from April 2019 and is open both to not-for-profit cultural organisations and small and medium creative businesses. [Gov.uk](#)

£500k Windrush Day grant scheme launched

The Ministry of Housing, Communities and Local Government has launched a new £500k fund for communities to celebrate the Windrush Generation through commemorative and educational events, which could include exhibitions, arts events, seminars, school projects and street parties. Each grant will be in the range of £2.5k - £25k. The deadline for applications is midnight on 21st January 2019. [Gov.uk](#), [Gov.uk](#) (grant details)

European parliament contemplates doubling Creative Europe budget to €2.8bn

The European parliamentary committee on culture and education has proposed that the budget for Creative Europe should be doubled from €1.4bn to €2.8bn in the next funding round covering the period 2021 – 27. It argues that this will address the 'chronic underfunding' in the current round and make culture and creative industries a priority across EU programmes. However, the increase will come from larger individual state contributions which are yet to be debated in mid-December. The UK's involvement with the fund is yet to be decided and is dependent on the outcome of Brexit negotiations. [Art Professional](#)

HLF Catalyst programme led to an additional £9m in fundraising for heritage

From 2012 onwards, HLF invested £4.88m in two programmes aimed to improve fundraising across the heritage sector, Catalyst Umbrella and Catalyst Small Grants. An evaluation has found that the programmes trained almost 20,000 people over 4,100 organisations. For every £1 spent by HLF on the project, participants raised £3.82 or an additional £9m of private money. 98% of those who took part reported that they had been able to diversify their income streams based on the training. HLF will announce its next five year Strategic Funding Framework and priorities early in 2019. [HLF](#)

MGS launches fundraising toolkit with films and animations

Museums Galleries Scotland has launched an online fundraising toolkit covering everything from crowdfunding to legacies to creating a charitable trust. It includes filmed and animated case studies telling the story of funding success. [MGS](#), [Inspiring Fundraising](#) (dedicated site)

Government publishes new HLF policy directions

Following a consultation, DCMS has published updated policy directions for the Heritage Lottery Fund. The new document contains tweaks to emphasis in the light of representations from the sector rather than major change. Issues raised included ensuring long-term public benefit, distribution over geographical regions and areas of deprivation, skilling up the sector and definitions of heritage at risk. From next year HLF will simplify its application process and undertake analysis of its funding of lower socio-economic groups. [Gov.uk](#) (DCMS response to consultation), [Gov.uk](#) (policy directions)

Colonialism, provenance, restitution: the politics of objects

Report recommends large scale restitution to Africa from French museums

A report commissioned by the French President Emmanuel Macron has recommended that France should return all the works in museums taken 'without consent' from former African colonies. It also proposes a reversal of the usual burden of proof for restitution, with museums having to provide evidence that an object was obtained in a 'free, evidenced and equitable' transaction in order to keep it. It is currently uncertain whether President Macron will implement all the proposals made by historian Bénédicte Savoy and Senegalese economist Felwine Sarr. However, he has agreed to the return 'without delay' of 26 objects claimed by Benin and has also called for a conference before April 2019 to progress the issue. In the short term, the report recommends returning 24 objects or groups which were taken as spoils of war back to countries including Ethiopia and Benin, followed by a five-year period where a wider group of artefacts would come under scrutiny. France holds fewer African objects seized during war than the UK or Germany, but around 60,000 objects might be affected. Savoy argues that *"we are dealing with the case of a continent which has almost nothing left of its history when we have it all. The aim is not to empty Western museums to fill up the African ones, but to invent a new relationship based on ethics and equity."* The proposals are in contrast to the Benin Dialogue Group led by the British Museum, which is aiming for the long-term loan of objects to Africa. Two African nations have so far responded to the French report: Ivory Coast, which says it will ask for the return of 100 objects and Senegal which will request all objects held by France. Minister Abdou Latif Coulibaly said *"we are ready to find solutions with France, but if 10,000 pieces are identified in the collections, we are asking for all 10,000"*. *The Art Newspaper* argues that this initial response is 'bad news' for the report writers, who said their proposals would not 'empty the [French] museums'. Stéphane Martin, the head of Quai Branly-Jacques Chirac Museum expressed disappointment with the report which he said would 'make museums hostage to the suffering created by colonialism'.

Responses by museum directors internationally have weighed up the issues, advocating greater transparency about provenance while building stronger relationships, but with none expressing enthusiasm for the radical moves being promoted in France. Speaking to the Radio 4 *Today* programme British Museum Director Hartwig Fischer agreed that in the future objects may be 'moved or shared' and said he expected partnership work to intensify. He added that major collections exist in Africa, for example in Lagos and Accra and that new museums are being constructed, but that it is also *"important that these objects serve as ambassadors of these great cultures in the great museums of the world... I think [Macron] is very aware of having these important objects in different places. And that is also what the King, the Oba, told me in Benin City when I visited him two months ago to discuss these matters, that he wants his people to be in the position to engage with their cultural heritage, in Benin City, but also for these objects to be ambassadors."*

Other commentators explore practical barriers to return: Alexander Herman of the Institute of Art & Law says French law on the 'inalienability' of collections would need to change and that the return process would 'cost a small fortune' in already underfunded museums. Mark Horton, Professor of Archaeology at the University of Bristol supports the case for restitution but adds *"many museums on the African continent lie semi-derelict, with no climate control, poorly trained staff and little security. There are numerous examples of theft or lost collections. No wonder Western museums are reluctant to return their collections."* He argues that if collections are returned, the West must also invest more heavily in African museums and their staff. [The Art Newspaper](#), [Restitution Report 2018](#), [The Art Newspaper](#) (responses from European museum directors), [The Art Newspaper](#) (responses from Senegal and Ivory Coast), [The Conversation](#), [Al Jazeera](#), [The Art Newspaper](#) (legal barriers), [The Art Newspaper](#) (proposed conference), [BBC Radio 4 Today programme](#) (from 1:33)

Also: 20 years after the landmark Washington Conference which set up principles to help heirs reclaim Nazi looted art *The Art Newspaper* reports that in many countries the restitution process is still difficult, with only five out of 44 governments having set up 'national processes' to deal with claims. The UK's Spoliation Advisory Panel, set up in 2000, is described as 'widely respected' by claimants, but has dealt with a relatively small number of cases (22 in all) compared to invaded countries in mainland Europe. [The Art Newspaper](#)

Benin Dialogue group aim for display at new Benin Royal Museum within three years

Meanwhile, in mid-October the Benin Dialogue group agreed to work towards long-term loans for a permanent display at the new Benin Royal Museum now being developed in Nigeria. Representatives from museums from Austria, Germany, the Netherlands and Sweden agreed a three year time frame and that each would make loans on a rotating basis. The group will also provide advice on building the new museum, exhibition design and training for Nigerian museum professionals. [The Art Newspaper](#)

Also: The Pitt Rivers Museum in Oxford has invited a group of Maasai tribal leaders from East Africa to inspect their collections – shedding new light on objects and pointing out where they have been misinterpreted. Maasai leader and campaigner Samwel Nangiria said *“we are a living culture, not a dead one, and we want to talk to the museum about how they can change this. I believe that working together we can honour my community and present our real culture in the museum.”* The meeting is at the beginning of an evolving dialogue between the museum and the group. [Oxford Mail](#), [Guardian](#)

International



Kehinde Wiley, Ship of Fools (2017), Royal Museums Greenwich.

€660m for a rebuild of Berlin's Natural History Museum

The German Government and City of Berlin have each agreed to contribute €330m towards a ten year renovation of Berlin Natural History Museum. Much of the museum is unchanged since 1945 and the major works will include a larger and more modern exhibition space, an overhaul of existing buildings and a new storage and research campus. However, Director Johannes Vogel says that the transformation is not just about buildings, but about addressing the biodiversity crisis. He said "we want to change society so that we can deal with this earth in a more sustainable way. We have the objects, the stories and the audience." [The Art Newspaper](#), [Tagespiegel](#) (German)

British Council explores the growth of 'soft power superpowers'

The British Council has published a new report 'Soft Power Superpowers' which looks at the spread of cultural institutes across the globe as a growing number of countries invest as a way of cementing global influence. The report also features an interactive 'heat map', making it easy to see which countries are investing in which parts of the world – for instance Brazil's attention to Africa and the cultural presence of China in the US. Significant trends include:

- China's Confucius Institutes have grown from 320 to 507 in the past five years alone, giving it by far the largest number of cultural centres of any country.
- France is second with 219 Institut Français centres, down ten from 2013, and the UK is third with 177 British Council offices down from 196.
- Meanwhile Russia's Russkiy Mir Foundation has more than doubled in five years from 82 to 171 outposts. Russia is also investing generously in its broadcasters, with Russia Today gaining traction for its news through social media and YouTube where it was the first TV news channel to reach one billion views.
- In general, while Western Europe cultural offices have been stable or in decline, Asian and Latin American countries in the study are investing.
- There are signs that the US brand has 'taken some knocks' in the last few years, with cuts to cultural budgets and a 3% decline in international students from 2016 – 17, but the report points to huge investment in aid and education by both the state and private philanthropists and concludes that 'there is a difference between the Twitter echoverse and a longer term loss of position'.
- Despite this competition, the UK is the world's leading soft power superpower in 2018 and 'in a very real sense the gold standard against which others measure themselves.' Nevertheless the report argues that it may not retain this position as 'the Eurasian Century' progresses, and that Germany and France are currently leading the way for the international liberal order as the UK is preoccupied with Brexit. However, if it can achieve an 'open Brexit' and through arts, creative industries, humanitarian aid and education continue to project itself as a liberal, democratic country upholding a 'rules based international system' it will still have considerable advantages.

[British Council](#)

Culture in a changing climate

Cultural organisations improve morale and save £16m with sustainability programme

Julie's Bicycle and ACE have published 'Sustaining Great Art and Culture: Environmental Report 2017 – 18' marking the end of their six-year project to improve sustainability across NPO organisations. Overall, organisations are estimated to have saved around £16.5m since 2012 – 13 after implementing changes affecting everything from food to packaging, recycling and procurement decisions as well as energy systems and merchandise. Commenting on the programme in the *Guardian* ACE Chair Sir Nicholas Serota pointed to the 'significant purchasing power' of cultural organisations which can push suppliers into making ethical decisions as well as opportunities in public programming to 'challenge and be provocative, both informing and opening our minds.' Statistics show that:

- 136 organisations which have provided consistent data across the six years of the project had a 35% decline in emissions over the period, or an average of 7% each year.
- 46% of NPOs gained reputational benefits from being part of the programme and 43% said it helped them develop new partnerships.
- 70% said that involvement with environmental reporting had improved staff morale and wellbeing.

- 25% of NPOs are now either on a green tariff or purchase energy from a 100% renewable supplier.

Like 65% of the NPOs involved, University of Cambridge Museums made public programming a part of its environmental interventions. Its work included a Climate Hack to make an exhibit for museum sites and it also developed a game devised to be played across museum sites called Operation Survival. Focal Point Gallery in Southend grew a vegetable garden in its public square in 2017 managed by adults with learning disabilities and cooked and served the resulting food at events discussing food sustainability and the environment. Policy work on sustainability is ongoing: earlier in 2018 ACE committed to working with Julie's Bicycle on these issues for a further four years and an Accelerator programme is now underway which will work intensively with two cohorts of ten cultural organisations. [ACE](#), [Guardian](#), [Julie's Bicycle](#) (Accelerator programme), [Museums Journal](#)

Michael Gove launches UK climate projections for the next century at the Science Museum

At an event at the Science Museum, Environment Secretary Michael Gove has announced the UK Climate Projections 2018, the first major update of the figures in a decade. These offer insights into 28 possible outcomes for the climate over the next century, depending on the extent of carbon emissions. The Projections allows interested parties to make assessments about areas at risk. For example, although sea levels are expected to continue to rise everywhere, the effect will be more marked in the south than the north, with London projected anywhere between 0.29m and 1.15m. Summers as hot as 2018 are likely to be common by 2050. The material also includes links to further business resilience tools and guidance to help organisations assess how they should begin to plan and adapt. [Gov.uk](#)

Also: A report published online by the journal *Nature* highlights the danger to heritage-rich seaboard cities because of rising seas, with the potential for some to be gone by 2100. It suggests that sites including Venice and the Roman site at Ravenna could be among those most at risk. [The Art Newspaper](#)

Arts drive pro-environmental behaviour, says neuroeconomist

BBC Radio 4's Costing the Earth has been exploring whether emotional responses to arts and culture are more effective than logical thinking in driving pro-environmental behaviour. Nik Sawe, a neuroeconomist at Stanford University, who studies decision making using brain imaging told the programme "*what really seems to power pro-environmental behaviour is the emotional regions of our brain. Interestingly, the parts of our brain where we calculate value and...do cost benefit analysis: the more we engage those, the more likely people are to take a selfish action. Art and music...create something intuitive and emotional that connects people with something that otherwise is very large in scope and very hard to grasp.*" [BBC Radio 4](#)

Culture for social good

'Not So Grim Up North' TWAM publishes the results of its museums and wellbeing project

From 2015 to early 2018 ACE funded a research project 'Not So Grim Up North' to investigate the health and wellbeing impacts of museum and gallery attendance for audiences with significant health problems such as dementia, stroke and mental illness. Partners included NHS and third sector organisations in Greater Manchester and Tyne and Wear alongside museums including TWAM, Whitworth and Manchester Museum. It used qualitative research, such participants' own perceptions and diaries to explore how museum engagement could support wellbeing or (where relevant) recovery. The report describes how museum staff picked up new health-based knowledge – for instance, by working with the Stroke Association, so they could structure appropriate activity. The projects tracked positive results attributed to museum work, including mood improvement, reconnecting socially and volunteering. The research also provides a framework for other museums interested in similar work. [TWAM](#) (scroll for pdf link to full report) [Health and Culture](#) (project website)

Also: The Whitworth Gallery is also part of a major project in Manchester to address homelessness through the arts. During November, it staged Emma Turner's performance art piece 'Are You Sitting Comfortably?' in which members of the public could sit and ask any question to Denise Harrison, who has experienced homelessness. Denise told the *Big Issue* "*I want the people sat in the chair opposite me to understand what it feels like and that it can happen to anyone.*" [Big Issue](#), [The Guardian](#)

ACE publishes report on culture for health, wellbeing and in the criminal justice system

ACE has published 'Arts and culture in health and wellbeing and in the criminal justice system: a summary of evidence' - the last in a group of eight reports looking at issues for the future of culture, which will be used to inform its ten year strategy to 2030. ACE is currently spending £12.94m on 54 National Portfolio Organisations with significant health and wellbeing focus and £895k on seven specialist criminal justice organisations. Issues for the sector in these areas include:

- Cultural groups are usually led by the priorities and demands of the criminal justice and health sectors where randomised controlled trials are the gold standard, but hard to apply to cultural work.
- In criminal justice, 'desistance' from offending behaviour and improved self-esteem are the main desired policy outcomes, but when they occur it tends to be from a mixture of factors, rather than a single intervention such as arts work.
- Nevertheless, criminal justice projects have often been supported out of pragmatism, rather than leaning heavily on an evidence base, and some outcomes from arts engagement, including social skills building, increased learning and attitude changes are believed to lead to desistance.
- ACE also frequently forms partnerships with the research community – from universities to the Wellcome Trust and Royal Society for Public Health so that better evidence can be developed and disseminated.
- Despite budget constraints, arts for health and wellbeing projects are increasingly popular in the UK and internationally, especially as NHS England acknowledges poor mental health as the country's most significant source of disability. The report summarises a substantial number of health studies, covering a wide range of life stages and health conditions, including museum-based social prescribing and work with those with dementia.

ACE discusses how to continue to improve the evidence base in these areas, while acknowledging that changing public opinion can be as important in driving policy. It says "*there is also value in creating space for powerful narratives to sit alongside and complement academic research: stories such as those told by Erwin James, ex-prisoner and Guardian columnist, and work shared with the wider public, such as the Donmar Warehouse and Clean Break partnership's innovative reframing of three Shakespeare plays within a women's prison setting.*" [ACE](#), [ACE](#) (all eight reports), [ACE blog](#)

Croydon pilots social prescribing after initial 20% reduction in hospital referrals

Parchmore Medical Practice in Thornton Heath was the first in Croydon to try social prescribing, against a background where patients frequently presented with socio-economic problems and doctors often worked to 9pm. Since the introduction of prescriptions including boxing, bingo, gardening, mindfulness and a choir, outpatient hospital admissions have reduced by 20%. It has cost the practice a modest £50k to prescribe 30,000 sessions and now 37 other GP practices in Croydon are investing. The success is part of a growing interest in using a wider social and cultural offer in health settings, which can be more effective and cheaper in some situations. The Parchmore Practice is now harnessing digital technology to embed the scheme – sending texts with suggestions of groups and activities and piloting an app that patients can use to make choices. [Guardian](#)

Also: Health Secretary (and former Culture Secretary) Matt Hancock has expanded his ideas about social prescribing in a speech given at the King's Fund. He gave particular emphasis to using England's 3,000-strong library network as a basis for activity and said that Government would create a National Academy for Social Prescribing. [Gov.uk](#), [Health Care Leader News](#)

Cross-sectoral museums: creating institutions for the future

The Harris makes plans to become the 'first blended museum, library and art gallery'

The Harris Museum & Art Gallery in Preston has announced regeneration plans which will blend its collections with a library service in one open-plan space. Tim Joel, the museum's Deputy Head of Culture said he hoped that visitors would be able to "*come on a journey of discovery throughout the building rather than being in the bitty pockets as they are at the moment*". On the ground floor books, art and heritage will sit alongside digital access, an improved café and a shop. The Harris will also offer facilities aimed at supporting local designers and creatives and in particular at recent University of Central Lancashire graduates, hoping to retain them in city rather than lose talent to larger conurbations. The museum hopes to raise the £10.7m necessary through various sources including HLF and public fundraising and already has £3.4m through match funding. [ALVA](#), [Harris Museum](#)

National Trust steps in to help create a viable future for Lancashire mill museums

The National Trust has joined a group of cultural bodies seeking to secure the future of two Lancashire mill museums which have been under threat since Lancashire County Council said it could not sustain funding arrangements. Both Queen Street Mill and Helmshore Mills have now reopened part time, but the National Trust will work with the council and businesses to find ways to make them more commercially viable. HLF and ACE are also funding research into the future plans for the mills, with HLF contributing £99k. [Rossendale Free Press](#)

From Game of Thrones to digital stained glass: museums working with creative industries

The Network of European Museum Organisations has published a report giving examples from across Europe of collaborations between museums and the creative industries. These range from the play 'Persian Language Lessons' shown at the Žanis Lipke Memorial in Latvia as an alternative way to tell a story of the Holocaust, to a digital stained glass window workshop run at the Nidaros Cathedral in Trondheim, Norway and a Game of Thrones Tapestry commissioned for Ulster Museum, Belfast by tourism groups (because Game of Thrones has driven significant international tourism to Northern Ireland). For each example, museums briefly explain the challenges of working with creative industries and the benefits. The publication is less a detailed toolkit than a bird's eye view of the possibilities, with lavish photography capturing the immersive effect of the collaborations within museum spaces. [NEMO](#)

New Building Better, Building Beautiful Commission being formed to improve built environment

The Ministry of Housing, Communities and Local Government is forming a new 'Building Better, Building Beautiful Commission' because of concerns about poor quality design in homes, new settlements and existing high streets. Commissioners are being recruited and the group will begin to consult with stakeholders next year to produce a report in late 2019. It will also champion the development of garden cities, towns and villages. [Gov.uk](#)

Tristram Hunt interview: from tech billionaires to Corbyn and finding a new generation of curators in Bethnal Green

V&A Director Tristram Hunt has been talking to the *Guardian* in the wake of a number of major V&A projects, from new outposts in Dundee and East London and development plans for the Museum of Childhood in Bethnal Green which go beyond regenerated buildings. He says that in Bethnal Green “for the Bengali and Bangladeshi community there it is a trusted brand... 47% of the children who visit the V&A are from black/minority backgrounds. But in the long term, it’s about workforce as much as audience. In terms of that, diversity is really, really poor. The excitement of this project is in growing a curatorial work force, in encouraging local talent.” He also spoke about successful partnership with the Smithsonian at ‘this sketchy moment of Anglo-American relations’ and fundraising, including the challenges of encouraging tech billionaires to consider museum philanthropy. Now tactfully impartial about politics, the former Labour MP also reveals that Jeremy Corbyn is “very excited by [V&A] Dundee, because he’s a big fan of Dundee. He goes on cycling holidays there”. He adds that flocks of Momentum supporters visited the V&A’s recent Frida Kahlo exhibition. [Guardian](#)

Jobs

A selection of jobs from across the NMDC membership this month:

- [Project Curator: ResearchSpace - The British Museum](#)
- [Photographer: The Tate Year 3 Project - Tate](#)
- [Metal Conservator - V&A](#)
- [Assistant Curator - Sir John Soane's Museum](#)
- [Exhibitions Programme Manager - Tullie House Museum and Art Gallery](#)

A complete list is available on our website [here](#).

This newsletter can also be read online at <http://www.nationalmuseums.org.uk/news/newsletters/>