

Welcome to the monthly news update from the National Museum Directors' Council. In this issue:

- [The Councils and the 100% cuts](#)
- [All UK oil paintings in public ownership now online](#)
- [New shipshaped museum for Mary Rose](#)
- [Tate £5m project for young in response to the riots](#)
- [Next year's major exhibitions: a round up](#)
- [Slew of museum prizes just announced](#)

and much more...

Responses to cuts for arts and museums

Arts Council England response the Autumn Statement

Arts Council England has responded to government plans to reduce the budget of the DCMS. These cuts will be passed on as a reduction in the Arts Council's budget £3.9 million (1%) in 2013/14 and £7.7 million (2%) in 2014/15. Chief Executive Alan Davey said:

"The government's intention seems to have been that Whitehall departments absorb any cuts themselves from efficiencies but since the DCMS has already given itself a 50% administration cut - which was also applied to the Arts Council and other NDPBs - the Department's latest cuts have been passed straight on to the bodies it funds... Some organisations are also having to deal with Local Authority cuts and so the situation is extremely challenging." [Arts Council](#)

Meanwhile Fullfact analyses the real extent of the Arts Council England, claiming that when inflation and other factors are taken into consideration, Arts Council England will have lost over 12% of its budget over 5 years. [Full Fact](#), [Museums Association](#)

Somerset, Newcastle, Birmingham and the 100% cultural cuts

The Guardian explored the difficulties of arts bodies faced when multiple sources of funding reduce or stop, in view of Newcastle Council's well-publicised proposal to cut its funding for the arts by 100% and to make substantial reductions to its support for museums. They write:

"The matched nature of most arts funding – with charitable, local and national grants being made conditional on one another – spells chaos, because after one block of funding is removed from a particular museum, gallery or theatre it will find that other elements begin to wobble too. The appropriate image is less the salami slice than a Jenga tower". [The Guardian](#)

[A report in the Stage](#) that councils' overall net spend on culture has already fallen by 7.8% (£250m) between 10/11 – 11/12 bears out these concerns.

Meanwhile as a growing number of cultural figures from the North East criticise Newcastle Council for its position, council spokespeople are expressing regret, but helplessness. Newcastle says it has to reduce its whole budget by one third over the next three years and adds that the move will be "counterproductive and, in many cases, a false economy but the council can only spend the resources that it has".

Other councils are moving in the same direction. In November, Somerset County Council decisively cut all its grants to arts organisations by 100%. Actor Samuel West has led the response from artists in the area on what he describes as "short sighted cuts" [Guardian: Tory shire says 'the party's over' for arts funding as Somerset wields axe'](#)

Meanwhile in a strongly worded letter to the *Guardian*, Cllr Phil Davis said that Birmingham was facing a similar dilemma: "The Conservative-dominated government appears bent on reducing councils to residual social services bodies incapable of supporting wider activity such as arts and heritage. Those who attack their councils for facing impossible choices should get on to Downing Street." [Arts Industry](#)

Additionally, the Museums Association reports that Southampton City Council is proposing to cut £18.1m from its budget, is considering axing its archaeology service, making nine full-time equivalent posts redundant. [Museums Association](#)

Philanthropy

DCMS report: democratising philanthropy

In the third of its reports about philanthropy and the arts, *Digital Giving and the Arts*, technology entrepreneur Matthew Bowcock looks at the ways that many committed smaller donors can provide the same sort of collective giving as a single very wealthy philanthropist, and how digital technology can make this easier. However he says that smaller organisations in particular may lack the infrastructure and confidence to build these relationships online.

The recommendations in the report include:

- An industry and government forum to develop a more cohesive technical architecture for online giving and claiming Gift Aid
- Investment in online matching programmes to incentivise smaller charities to develop their community of supporters
- A request for more cohesive, joined-up Government policy to encourage philanthropy
- Increased investment in research and development of digital technology in the cultural sector, with a focus on engagement, and showcasing of the results;
- Greater use of shareware and exchange of software, technology, experiences and best practice across the sector;
- Incentives to encourage technology skills transfer from business and employment of young technologists;
- Suggestions for how cultural organisations that are currently without a digital strategy can develop a plan and introduce new thinking in trustee boards.

One of the good examples cited in the report is the Natural History Museum's current 'I love Dippy' campaign, which seeks to raise £8.5m to renovate the great hall through crowdsourced funding from the public. It includes a justgiving page and [youtube video](#).

[Download the whole report here](#)

Where next for philanthropy?

In its review of the past decade of philanthropy, Philanthropy UK notes both a much more diversified philanthropy field, but also a fear that younger generations are less likely to give than the baby boomers. However, it also picks up trends of more giving by women and by self-made millionaires. The Institute of Philanthropy's Youth and Philanthropy initiative shows teams of schoolchildren how to research the needs of their community.

A range of articles also look at giving circles, match funding, giving while living, venture philanthropy and social impact bonds. [Philanthropy UK](#)

Paul Hamlyn Foundation giving reaches £200 million

The Paul Hamlyn Foundation has been giving to the arts, education, social justice and projects in India for the past 25 years. It is making some major gifts to celebrate the anniversary. They write:

"During 2012/13 we are marking the Foundation's 25th anniversary with a series of gifts to organisations we know well and whose work makes a big impact by helping people to realise their potential and enjoy a better quality of life."

These gifts mean the Foundation will have committed £200m since 1987. You can read some of its [highlights from 2012 here](#).

Hamlyn II: Tate to spearhead £5 million art project for the young in response to last year's riots

One of the Paul Hamlyn Foundation's major gifts this year is to Circuit: A National Youth Network for the Visual Arts. The work aims to reach 80,000 young people aged 15 – 25 over four years. It will focus on those who have least access to the arts.

This is being driven by the Tate Gallery's networks:

- Tate Gallery (across all four sites) and five museums from the plustate network:
- Firstsite, Colchester
- MOSTYN, Llandudno North Wales

- Nottingham Contemporary
- Whitworth Art Gallery, Manchester
- Wysing Arts Centre in collaboration with Kettle's Yard, Cambridgeshire

The programme will include live arts festivals, peer-led projects; artist-led projects and digital projects that connect the work together and represent it.

Sir Nick Serota said "The catalyst for it was the events of the summer of 2011, when riots in London, Nottingham and elsewhere across the country made us very conscious that institutions, such as the ones represented on the programme, offer young people opportunities that they both need in their lives and can help them develop those lives in a more meaningful way." [The Independent](#), [The Paul Hamlyn Foundation](#)

Cultural property

New twist in 'Old Flo' ownership battle

Last month we reported that Tower Hamlets Council had claimed ownership of the Henry Moore statue Draped Seated Woman – referred to locally as 'Old Flo' – and intended to sell it to raise up to £1.6 million to pay for local authority services.

In a new twist the London Borough of Bromley has written to Tower Hamlets Council claiming that it owns the statue. Bromley's claim follows new research into the details of the transfer of ownership from London County Council. If its claim is declared as valid, Bromley Council intends to display the work and not sell it, in keeping with the wishes of the artist.

Tower Hamlets Council has faced opposition from local MPs, Art Fund members and 3,000 local people who have signed a petition. [Art Fund](#)

English Heritage head calls for tougher sentences for heritage crime

English Heritage say that nearly one in five listed buildings were damaged by crime in the last year, with churches being at greatest risk. Chief Executive Simon Thurley said it was "disappointing" that those who damage ancient monuments frequently get away with "a slapped wrist".

A gang of men who stole lead from church roofs in 20 places in Lincolnshire and Nottinghamshire recently received prison sentences – after making £70k in profit, but causing £1m in damage. However Thurley argues that many other habitual offenders target historic monuments and dig up archeologically rich sites looking for valuables. He even suggested that some thieves target English Heritage databases looking for likely sites. He added "There is no disincentive. If you get a slap on the wrist, you just go and do it again," [Daily Telegraph](#)

Government indemnity scheme makes borrowing high value art viable

Museums and art galleries borrowed art worth £8.6bn last year, and many of these loans were made possible by the Government Indemnity Scheme, which provides insurance for high value artefacts. The cost of insurance would have been around £20m if taken out at commercial rates. Loans to national museums made up 75% of these loans.

Shows which would have been impossible in the last year without the indemnity scheme include the National Gallery's *Leonardo da Vinci: Painter at the Court of Milan* because of the high value of the eight borrowed paintings.

Where to get that indispensable sardine jug – plus other praise and awards

Telegraph chooses best museum and gallery shops

In a London-centric feature, *The Daily Telegraph* has chosen some of the best museum shops, including the British Museum, Imperial War Museum, and National Maritime Museum. From ceramic buttons, sardine jugs and kitsch taxis to ancient art and modern design, it is a snapshot of a well developed museum retail sector. [Daily Telegraph](#)

Rachel Whiteread's Tree of Life voted best loved artwork of 2012

4,000 museum visitors voted for their favourite work from 16 supported by the Art Fund this year. Rachel Whiteread's Tree of Life was commissioned as part of the Cultural Olympiad. Covering the façade of Whitechapel Art Gallery, it features clusters of leaves cast in bronze and plated with gold leaf. Whiteread drew inspiration both from the Arts and Crafts motif which covers the gallery's towers and from wild plants local to the gallery. The Whitechapel Gallery is enterprisingly [selling additional leaves](#) in its shop.

Second place where to Titian's Diana and Callisto, acquired jointly this year by the National Gallery and National Galleries of Scotland. [Art Daily](#)

Museum of Liverpool wins 2013 Council of Europe Museum prize

The Museum of Liverpool has won a prize for exemplifying Council of Europe core values of living together, promoting diversity and reaching all parts of the community. [Council of Europe](#)

Competitions and funding

Nominate the most inspiring museum or heritage visitor attraction of the past year

The Guardian's Culture Professionals Network has teamed up with the annual Museum + Heritage Awards to offer a prize for the most inspiring museum of the past 12 months. Nominators should use [the form on this page](#) to explain in 50 words or less why your chosen museum should win.

The timetable for voting is as follows:

- Monday 17 December – Nominations open
- Friday 11 February – Nominations close
- Monday 18 March – Shortlist opened for public vote
- Friday 12 April – Voting closes
- Wednesday 15 May – Winner announced at M+H Awards 2013

[Guardian](#)

Art Fund Prize rebrands as Museum of the Year

The rebranded prize is now open to any accredited museum, and offers a prize of £100,000. It is open from 2nd January, and ten finalists will be announced in early April. The £10,000 Clore award for museum learning has now been incorporated into the Museum of the Year award, and can now only be won by one of the ten finalists. You can see the new details of the [Clore element here](#).

The Art Fund said that it hoped the changes would encourage more applicants. [Museums Association](#)

Funding for PhD museum researchers from European Research Council

The European Research Council has announced a new tranche of grants for researchers at PhD level and above, including those doing research in museums. [More details from the ERC here](#).

AIM announces National Heritage Landmarks Partnership grants and host of new funding programmes to make small museums more resilient

Supported by BIFFA, the Association of Independent Museums is giving £1.5m over the next three years to create high profile projects across the UK showcasing industrial development in history. The awards help transform derelict buildings and sites into places that can be used for history education.

Among the beneficiaries is NMDC member Ironbridge Gorge Museum, who receive £114,960 towards furnace restoration and a series of monument trails.

AIM is also offering a series of grants and free opportunities for smaller and medium sized museums:

- Preventative Conservation Grant Scheme – first deadline 31st March.
- AIM Sustainability workshops – free one-day training to help your museum become more resilient and develop income streams. Remaining dates are: 23 January 2013 at Birmingham

Museum and Art Gallery; 14 February at The Quilt Museum, York and 20 March at the National Maritime Museum Cornwall, Falmouth.

- AIM training grant scheme – up to £300 for staff to attend professional courses – particularly aimed at museums with less than 50,000 visitors per year
- AIM's Annual conference, 'Money, that's what I want' is taking place 20 – 22nd June at Manchester Museum of Science and Industry

For more details on any of these opportunities contact Justeen Stone
aimadmin@aim-museums.co.uk (tel 01584 878151) [AIM](#)

European Cultural Fund (ECF) Grants announced

The 2013 ECF Collaboration grants reopen in February and offer up to €30,000 for European cultural collaboration. However, competition is pretty stiff (in 2011, 21 grants were awarded after 542 applications). [Details on the ECF site here.](#)

They also continue to run their Step Beyond grants – for up and coming artists and cultural workers who are under 35 or in the first 10 years of their career. [Details here.](#)

The EU Culture programme has also just produced a [handy checklist of European Cultural networks here.](#)

Crowdfunding schemes in Europe report published

The European Expert Network on Culture has produced a new report on crowdfunding schemes in Europe – which usually exist on web-based platforms. It looks at the legal implications of these schemes and is somewhat dry, but helpfully lists the main crowdsourcing platforms in a number of countries, and highlights cultural projects and others that have used this method for successful funding. It is a useful overview of an approach that is currently mainly used by film-makers, but has wider potential. [EENC](#)

£3m grants from HLF to build fundraising capacity

The HLF has announced £3m of grants to help heritage organisations build fundraising capacity. Catalyst heritage is open now, and the deadline to register to apply is 31st January 2013, with decisions being made in the summer. Grants will range from £100k to £500k and will help groups across the UK network and tap into wider sources of support. [Arts Industry](#)

Members' news: ship special!

New ship-shaped museum embraces the Mary Rose at Portsmouth Historic Dockyard

2013 sees the opening of a new ship-shaped museum, built around the hull of the *Mary Rose*. It will contain 19,000 artefacts raised with the wreck in 1982, many displayed in galleries that reflect the original layout of the ship.

You can [see a short film here](#) about the high-tech new museum. Work will continue in the very heart of the museum to stabilize and remove water from the wreck – it is currently behind glass in a 'hotbox' as up to 100 tonnes of water is removed from the timbers. In 2016 the hotbox will finally be removed allowing visitors to see it up close. [Historic Dockyard](#)

Work also continues on the new Babcock Galleries at the National Museum of the Royal Navy. These will open in spring 2014 to coincide with the centenary of the beginning of WW1. The major opening exhibition *HMS: Hear My Story* will tell the stories of ordinary men and women who have served in the last century. [NMRN website](#)

National Heritage Memorial Fund Saves Warship

The last surviving WW1 battleship is to be preserved after a £1m grant from the National Heritage Memorial Fund (NHMF) to the National Museum of the Royal Navy.

The ship, which is based in Belfast, fought at the Battle of Jutland in 1916 and it is hoped that the repairs will be completed in time to mark the centenary. As well as making the hull safe, the boat will be transformed into a new museum if a further bid to the HLF is successful. Barely altered since it was first built, the vessel is already a time capsule of naval history.

Jenny Abramsky, Chair of the NHMF, says: "As we approach the centenary of the First World War, the National Heritage Memorial Fund's role to protect our most important heritage at risk as a permanent memorial to those who have given their lives for this country has never felt so pertinent. Without question, our trustees felt it was absolutely vital that as an icon of this devastating war, HMS Caroline must be safeguarded." [NHMF](#)

King Canute's' Viking Warship discovered and heading for the British Museum in 2014

The remains of the largest Viking warship ever found is heading for the British Museum to mark the opening of its [new exhibition space](#) in 2014. The vessel was discovered by chance in 1997 during the creation of the Viking Ship Museum in Denmark. It is described by the British Museum as a 'troop carrier', which would have carried 100 warriors. It was built some time after 1025 when the trees to create it were felled. The dating suggests that the boat may have belonged to King Canute.

Like the Mary Rose (500 years younger, 4 metres shorter) a concern is that if dried out too quickly, the timbers would simply end up as a heap of dust. The Viking Museum's solution has been to dry the timbers very slowly and then replace the moisture with synthetic resin, making the whole frame stable. This means that unlike the other Viking ships in their collection, the boat will be strong enough to be loaned abroad. [Viking Ship Museum Guardian](#)

New Yorkshire Tower of Babel: inside the British Library's huge newspaper archive

The British Library's millions of newspapers will shortly be moved to a vast new storage facility just completed in Boston Spa, near Wetherby, Yorkshire. The vast warehouse will be kept in low oxygen conditions to prevent the risk of fire, and contains 160km of robotic shelf space. Culture Minister Ed Vaizey and journalists toured the building in December.

From 2013, the task of moving all the newspapers from their current home in Colindale, North London will begin. The 30,000 researchers who explore documents from the library each year will be able to visit Boston Spa, or order them for viewing at the British Library's main London home. [Daily Mail](#), [Yorkshire Evening Post](#).

Whitworth Art Gallery to double in size

Work has just begun on a redevelopment of the Whitworth Art Gallery that will see it gain an extension and an art garden. Over the last 5 years, the number of visitors to the Whitworth has doubled to 170,000: now the gallery space will double too. Progress will be recorded on their [capital development blog](#) over the coming months. [Whitworth Art Gallery](#)

New jobs and expansion for Leeds Museums and Galleries

Leeds Museums and Galleries are to create 14 new posts following a £5m expansion of the museum. The museum, run by Leeds City Council has seen visitor figures double over the past 5 years to over 1.1m annually. In a difficult period for the sector, Leeds has managed to flourish, being one of only four museum applicants to ACE nationwide to receive more than £5m.

Its new posts will focus on outreach, including six community engagement officers. The service is committed to linking both to some of the more deprived parts of the city, engaging the young and linking closely with the city's economic development goals.

John Roles, head of museums and galleries, said the service is not immune to cuts and had to offer up 10% of its council grant in savings last year. But he praised the support from Leeds City Council:

"Leeds City Council has pledged its commitment to ensure the city continues to have a rich cultural offering. ...Part of our vision for the future is to be the best city to live for children and young people and the cultural identity of Leeds plays a huge role in this." [Arts Industry](#)

General news

More finds from the Staffordshire hoard

Discovered in a field three years ago, [the Staffordshire hoard](#) was the largest find of gold from the Anglo Saxon period ever discovered. It was purchased by Birmingham and Stoke on Trent Museums for £3.3m, with help from the National Heritage Memorial Fund and donations from all over the world.

When archeologists explored the field they were convinced they had found everything, but now 90 more pieces have been uncovered accidentally by ploughing. A treasure inquest this month is likely to confirm that the two hoards are connected. [Guardian](#)

MA workforce consultation

The MA is currently consulting on workforce development priorities to inform a UK-wide action plan. They invite museum staff to fill in a very short online survey and to encourage others in their networks to take part.

[Take the survey here](#)

The action plan will build on the findings of the Cultural Heritage Blueprint, which was updated earlier in 2012 and focused on five areas for development:

1. Strengthen leadership and management
2. Develop business, enterprise and entrepreneurial skills
3. Open up entry into the sector and diversify the workforce
4. Commit to Continuing Professional Development (CPD) for staff
5. 5. Develop sector-specific skills

The MA is keen to get opinion and examples of practice from across the UK and to make the action plan as representative as possible.

Imaginative borrowing brings unusual audiences to the Museum of London

The Museum of London's Doctors, Dissection and Resurrection Men has attracted new audiences because of the imaginativeness of its borrowing for the exhibition. London is peppered with little known medical museums, such as the Gordon Museum of Pathology and their unusual holdings – in this case wax hands displaying a variety of gruesome diseases – have been invaluable. The show has attracted groups of medical school students and their lecturers, intent on expanding their medical knowledge.

In return, smaller organisations have sometimes benefitted from the Museum of London's conservation expertise: an iron coffin belonging to St Bride's church was repaired by the museum before going on display.

The exhibition also draws from larger repositories, including objects from the Science Museum's Henry Wellcome collection, which is far too large to be displayed en masse. [Guardian Culture Professionals network](#)

97 works of art given to the Queen to mark her Diamond Jubilee

Last month artists from the Royal Academy of Arts gifted 97 works to the Queen to mark her Diamond Jubilee. They included Tracey Emin, Grayson Perry and David Hockney.

Martin Clayton, senior curator of prints and drawings, said: "It seems livelier and more varied than the Academy's equivalent gifts for the Queen's Coronation and Silver Jubilee. The Coronation gift was quite conservative, and even in 1977 there was still a feeling that individual artists were playing safe in their choice of works." [BBC](#)

Statistics from 'Taking Part' show large increase in cultural engagement

The Taking Part survey has been running since 2005 and is a major source of evidence for DCMS. Figures just released relate to the period Oct 2011 – Sept 2012. [They can be read in detail here.](#)

Key statistics show that up to 80% of the population now engage with the cultural sector each year:

- 74% of adults said they had visited a heritage site: a figure which has been increasing since the surveys began;
- The proportion of people who had visited a museum or gallery has significantly increased since 2005/06, from 42% to 52%; and
- Arts engagement increased to highest levels since the survey began in 2005/06 for people living in urban areas, reaching 78 per cent. This was a significant increase from 75 per cent in 2005/06.

[DCMS](#)

Cultural property

Turkey pursues human rights law in attempt to repatriate artefacts from world museums

Turkish legal campaigners are reportedly using human rights law in an attempt to repatriate the sculptures which decorated the Mausoleum of Halicarnassus, which are part of the British Museum's collection. If campaigners go ahead with the case, it will be the first time this law will have been used to contest the ownership of museum objects. A petition with 118,000 signatures is being sent to the Strasbourg court along with a film claiming Turkish ownership.

Lawyer Gwendolen Morgan speculates that the "most likely line of attack" is article 1, 1st protocol which states 'every natural or legal person is entitled to the peaceful enjoyment of his possessions'. She adds "However, the European Convention on Human Rights is only in force since 1954, so there is a serious timing problem".

The British Museum said it was not aware of the case, and so could not fully comment, but pointed to the firmans (permits) which the British obtained at the time of the excavation. Turkey is also pursuing cases against museums globally, including the Getty Museum in Los Angeles. [Guardian](#)

Crouching Venus and three other artworks saved for display in UK museums

Four artworks worth £29m have been purchased and put on display in NMDC museums and have been highlighted in the [58th annual report of the Reviewing Committee on the Export of Works of Art and Objects of Cultural Interest](#), which was published in December.

The works are:

- [Portrait of Mademoiselle Claus](#) by Edouard Manet, acquired by the Ashmolean Museum in Oxford (worth £28,350,000 but bought for £7,830,000 after tax remission);
- Benjamin Britten's [complete draft score of The Young Person's Guide to the Orchestra](#) which was purchased by the British Library for £201,660 after tax remission (original cost of £220,000);
- a [pair of Italian console tables](#), one purchased by the Victoria & Albert (V&A) Museum, and one by National Museums Scotland (£367,950 each); and
- The [Crouching Venus](#), a sculpture by John Nost the Elder, which was acquired by the V&A (£485,000)

The works cost the institutions concerned just under £9.3m due to tax relief. Lord Inglewood, chair of the reviewing committee said "This shows the benefits that can arise from the workings of a tax system which encourages the retention of treasures like these in this country. I would encourage the Treasury to look sympathetically and constructively at how the nation in the future can benefit even more from such schemes." Last month we covered Arts Council England's [Acceptance in Lieu \(AIL\) report](#) which gives further practical examples of 51 cases accepted for AIL in the previous year. [DCMS](#)

Creating a cultural commons

"In case I haven't already made it abundantly clear - I love museums, libraries and archives."

In the spirit of thinking big and thinking different for the New Year, we like this piece from Nick Poole, CEO of the Collections Trust, which strips the cultural sector back to its central purpose and asks what it is for, and how it can build a society?

He argues that the idea of a 'cultural commons' should be more widely used as a framework. The concept isn't viable in every aspect of museum management in a sector which relies so heavily on copyright for revenue. Nevertheless he argues that the sector should be deepening the sense that

museums belongs to everyone, and that everyone can participate in it with shared governance. This, he argues, would create a greater sense of responsibility for what we inherit from our ancestors, and help with thinking about what we need to collect now to represent us in the future. [The Collections Trust](#)

Appointments and New Year Honours

In the 2013 New Year Honours List **John Leighton**, Director General, National Galleries of Scotland receives a knighthood for services to art. **Alex Beard**, Deputy Director of the Tate receives a CBE for services to the arts. **Ruth Mackenzie**, Director of the Cultural Olympiad also receives a CBE for services to the London 2012 Olympic and Paralympic Games. **Frank Paterson**, former chair of friends of the National Railway Museum receives an MBE for services to museums.

Tim Knox, Director of the the Sir John Soane Museum is to become the new Director of the Fitzwilliam Museum, Cambridge. During his eight years at the Sir John Soane Museum he masterminded an ambitious project to restore Nos. 12 and 14 Lincoln's Inn Fields, which flank the original museum.

Five arts donors have received the **Prince of Wales medal for philanthropy**. They are Sir Terence Conran, Sir Peter Moores, Mr Mathew Prichard, Sir Gerald Elliot & Lady Elliot and The Lady Rayne. [Arts Industry](#)

Digital

All 212,000 of the UK's oil paintings now online

The Public Catalogue Foundation and BBC have just completed their ambitious project to put all the oil paintings in the UK in public ownership on the web. The UK is the first country to achieve this in a scheme which saw 3,217 venues across the country taking part.

As well as paintings held by museums and galleries, the project encompasses those owned by universities, local councils, [community centres](#), zoos, [hospitals](#), fire stations and a lighthouse. 80% are not on view and had never previously been photographed. Masterpieces by the internationally famous sit beside more pedestrian works and pieces that are fascinating for reasons other than their artistic merit, such as [Noel Coward's painting of the White Cliffs of Dover](#).

It is easy to spend hours on this site finding little known pictures previously lost on offshore islands, in tiny museums and buried in unlikely buildings. This project is not just as a summary of works held by the nation, but an engaging way of displaying a very large collection online. [BBC Your Paintings](#)

Displaying a play at the V&A

The V&A holds material relating to 100 significant post-war plays including critics responses, posters and interviews with theatre practitioners. This kind of material, frequently lost in archives and pursued only by very committed specialists, has now been turned into an iPad app. [Overview on iTunes here](#).

The work is part of the V&A's recent work to create more responsive design for handheld devices – a move which they hope will turn their huge website from "Frankenstein's monster – something stitched together from many parts" into a more cohesive experience. [They share their recent developments for mobile here](#).

Exhibition highlights 2013: Part I

As NMDC now represent 39 organisations with sites across the UK, we are presenting the exhibitions highlights for 2013 in a new way. Major exhibitions will be listed on our website, we will be highlighting some here and in February's newsletter.

Here are our first set of top picks, in which museums fearlessly encompass huge themes - from the origins of the universe to tapestries of modern society. The second set of picks will be published in our February newsletter, by which time our online list of exhibitions will be complete.

Journey to the beginnings of the universe

Opening in November 2013, the Science Museum's exhibition about the **Large Hadron Collider** will transport visitors to one of the great scientific and engineering endeavours of our time: CERN in Geneva. The Museum is collaborating with designers and theatrical experts to create an experience which immerses visitors in the great intellectual adventure on the planet.

In the Large Hadron Collider (a giant particle collider) scientists and engineers work at the extremes of temperature, vacuum and energy to recreate conditions not seen since just after the Big Bang some 13.7 billion years ago.

Extinction and resurrection

A few exhibitions this year deal with death and rebirth. The National Museum, Cardiff's **Quietus: The vessel, death and the human body** (6th April – 7th July) is major solo exhibition by Julian Stair, one of the world's most acclaimed ceramicists explores the containment of the human body after death. Through his objects, Stair explores different rituals around death and burial across civilizations and ages and how this can be understood as a celebration of life. The Natural History Museum's **Extinction, Not the End of the World?** (8th Feb – 8th Sept) looks at extinction not as a disaster for which humans are all too often responsible, but as part of the process of natural selection and a vital part of evolution. Meanwhile the Wellcome Collection shows **Death: A Self Portrait, the Richard Harris collection** (until 24th Feb). The 300 works look at the iconography of death and our contradictory attitude towards it.

There will also be one resurrection (no, not at the [Museum of London](#)!). At the National Roman Legion Museum in Caerleon the **Bath Stone Coffin** – containing the remains of a local man who was part of the Roman Army – will go back on display from 17th January, complete with modeling to allow visitors to see what he would have looked like.

Finally, also at the Natural History Museum, one photographer charts a way back to a celebration of life, after years of taking pictures in war zones had left him on the edge of despair. Sebastião Salgado's **Genesis** (opens April 2013) is a major exhibition of 250 black and white photos from the most unspoiled corners of the planet from Siberia to the rainforests.

Imagined Lives

Museum objects and neat labels will take audiences so far, but to understand the past and future, we also need to imagine. A number of exhibitions this year create fictional spaces for visitors to inhabit. Among the most curious is the V&A's **Tomorrow**, commissioned from contemporary artists Michael Elmgreen & Ingar Dragset (1st October 2013 – 2nd January 2014) for site-specific installation in the former Textile Galleries. It will include the production of a new filmed drama staged within the highly-choreographed environment of a grand domestic setting belonging to a fictional architect. Objects from the V&A's collection will be presented alongside artworks, furniture and every day items. We are not quite sure what is going to happen in the space, but we are looking forward to finding out.

At M Shed in Bristol they are looking at **Real and Imagined Lives** through a series of portraits borrowed from the National Portrait Gallery – some of well known Bristol figures, such as JK Rowling and Iris Murdoch and some whose identities are lost in history, leaving only mysterious 16th and 17th century paintings behind.

For a weapons grade dose of escapism though, head for the Royal Armouries **The Swords of Middle Earth** where four swords designed for the Lord of the Rings films will be on display until the end of February.

We are sailing

As we report elsewhere, 2013/14 is going to see the innovative refurbishment and display of some remarkable ships from across history. Look out in particular for the launch of the museum which will be encasing the Mary Rose at [Portsmouth Historic Dockyard](#) in 2013.

Psychogeographies

The National Library of Scotland is also re-creating a lost world in its **Putting Scotland on the map: The world of John Bartholomew & Son** (7th December 2012 – May 2013) This exhibition celebrates the success of the famous map-making firm which was responsible for the *Times Atlas of the World*. The company's former Duncan Street premises in Edinburgh will be brought back to life with a re-creation of a 'factory floor' and management office.

Bristol Museum and Art Gallery's **No Borders** is a major exhibition of international contemporary art featuring artists from the Middle East, Asia and Africa. It includes *Ton of Tea* by globally-renowned Ai Weiwei which will be on display in the UK for the very first time.

Other works include photographic portraits of sugar-cane cutters by Zwelethu Mthethwa and a video meditation on the Partition of India by Amar Kanwar.

A Bayeux Tapestry for our times?

Two sets of tapestries will be touring the North this year. In **The Vanity of Small Differences** (summer 2013) massive tapestries created by Grayson Perry are to go on a national and international tour, kicking-off at Sunderland Museum & Winter Gardens in summer 2013.

The artist visited Sunderland last year and based the subject matter for his first two tapestries, *The Adoration of the Cage Fighters* and *The Agony in the Car Park*, on the places and characters he found there. The exhibition tells the story of class mobility and the influence social class has on our aesthetic taste.

Meanwhile Ironbridge Gorge museum will be hosting some of the **Quaker tapestries** sewn by 4,000 Quakers at the end of the 20th century, and reflecting community life.

Twentieth century heroes

The people who helped shape the late twentieth century make an appearance across many of the exhibitions this year, and a couple are entirely devoted to cultural icons. The Museum of London's **Michael Caine** (8th March – 14th July) is a retrospective of the actor as he reaches his 80th birthday. The exhibition will focus on key moments in both Caine's personal life and his career as an actor and will explore how his background as a rebellious working-class Londoner influenced his path. Meanwhile the V&A has gained unprecedented access to **David Bowie's** archives to create a retrospective of the last five decades of his career (23rd March – 28th July).

Murder in the library, zombies in the neighbourhood

Some museums will also be celebrating the more gothic end of popular culture this year. The British Library's **Murder in the Library: An A – Z of Crime Fiction** features well known crime writers alongside the obscure and unexpected, previously undisplayed manuscripts and rare audio recordings and artworks.

Zombie's Kill or Cure uses the concept of a zombie outbreak to ask serious questions about the nature of consciousness. How can we find out what's going on in the minds of the zombies? What do we need to know to make the decision, kill or cure? All will be revealed at the Science Museum on 2nd – 3rd February.

NMDC Jobs

Our jobs website www.nationalmuseumjobs.org.uk now includes the latest vacancies from NMDC's new member organisations around the UK. Current vacancies include:

- Education Officer: Families (maternity cover), Ashmolean Museum of Art and Archaeology, Oxford
- IS Infrastructure Manager, National Gallery, London
- Post Doctoral Research Assistant - Molecular Biologist Disease Initiatives, Natural History Museum, London
- Collections Care Conservator, Science Museum Group, London
- Exhibition Project Manager, Royal Museums Greenwich, London
- Sponsorship and Patrons Assistant, National Galleries Scotland, Edinburgh

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