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Strategies for a more collaborative sector



Apotheosis sign in The Sun Living With Our Star © Jody Kingzett, courtesy of the Science Museum Group

Mendoza Review Action Plan and Partnership Framework

The Mendoza Review of Museums in England, published in November 2017, recommended closer working between DCMS, major cultural funders and policy bodies to create greater strategic focus. A newly published Action Plan created in collaboration with Arts Council England and the Heritage Lottery Fund details how Government supports museums in England, covering a range of existing commitments and some new actions DCMS will take to improve its strategic role for museums, including the creation of a policy team responsible for delivering the Mendoza Review. Points include:

- There are 12 central government departments with an interest in museums, from the Department for Education to the Foreign and Commonwealth Office. DCMS will create a new annual event to bring them together to discuss museums strategy and goals.
- ACE and HLF have signed a Memorandum of Understanding (see article below).
- DCMS is beginning work with ACE and other arms-length bodies to make a strong case for museums ahead of the next Spending Review.
- There is currently no single source bringing together a unified picture of museum funding and activity across England. DCMS will explore creating a new tool that will bring together data from government, ACE and other sources to offer a clearer picture.

National museums, via NMDC, are also working with DCMS to respond to the Mendoza Review recommendation to create a 'Partnership Framework' to extend their reach throughout England. The Framework states national museums' commitment to working with the wider sector to ensure that partnership working is more strategic and better communicated, and that evidence of impact and best practice is collected and shared more widely.

Both the Partnership Framework and the implementation plan published alongside the DCMS Action Plan are intended as working documents, so actions will continue to evolve through ongoing discussion with colleagues across the sector. This iterative approach aims to enable development of the most practical and valuable responses to the current and future needs of the museum sector and its audiences. The Mendoza Review highlighted and identified some of these needs, and subsequent evidence gathered through the Framework will further add to understanding. Plans include:

- Tri-annual meetings of national museums' partnership leads to share information and evaluation of partnership activity and discuss action to address strategic needs or gaps.
- A nominated NMDC museum director to champion partnership working, with the role being taken by IWM Director-General Diane Lees for the first year.
- Collation of information (primarily through ACE) on the needs of regional museums and audiences to inform decision-making and develop a more strategic approach.
- An annual professional exchange event, organised with colleagues from across the sector, to network and respond to regional and thematic needs.
- Annual data collection from national museums on sharing collections and expertise to create an annual report.
- NMDC's revised guidelines on lending, being developed in consultation with colleagues across the sector, will also seek to enable more effective, strategic and frequent UK loans.

[DCMS](#), [DCMS blog](#) (Neil Mendoza), [Gov.uk](#) (Museums Action Plan) [Gov.uk](#) (Partnership Framework), [Museums Journal](#)

HLF and ACE plan a joint approach to support for museums

HLF and ACE have agreed to work in partnership to approach their work in the museum sector in a more strategic way. Following publication of a new memorandum of understanding the two organisations will:

- Develop a better understanding of how each body supports the museum sector and create a shared strategic approach.
- Give museums clearer guidance about which body to approach in differing circumstances.
- Share data to assist in making better-informed decisions.

This approach was recommended in the Mendoza Review and is welcomed by DCMS. A spokesperson for ACE said "*this partnership has been developed in order to serve museums in England to the best of our ability, and ensuring we have open lines of communication with museums is at the heart of this.*" [Museums Journal](#), [ACE](#), [M+H](#), [ALVA](#)

ACE and other museum bodies publish joint statement on collections at risk

ACE has produced a joint statement with fifteen other museum funding, development and membership bodies about support for museums and collections at risk. It says that although many museums are thriving, some face severe challenges to long-term sustainability. The group, which includes NMDC, AIM, the MA, Museums Galleries Scotland, MALD and others, would like those museums to get in touch to access support and guidance. It says "*we urge organisations, or individuals, who have concerns about the sustainability of a museum or collection to contact the most relevant organisation, as early as possible. We commit to sharing information between relevant parties, if given permission to do so, so that we can determine who is best placed to help. We recognise that in some cases, there might be a need for confidentiality and more discreet conversations.*" The report identifies a number of factors, most of which have economics as a root cause. These include cuts in funding, loss of workforce and expertise, loss of buildings, potential sale of collections and loss of Accredited status with its associated benefits. It acknowledges that not all museums and their collections can be preserved, but hopes that through early intervention and joint working, solutions can be found for many. [ACE](#)

New guide to asset transfer for groups taking over local museums

AIM has published a new guide 'Successfully Taking Over Your Local Museum' for groups interested in taking over the running of a museum through community asset transfer. The ACE-funded guide is produced in collaboration with people who have direct experience of the process. It covers the rights of groups as they negotiate with local authorities and offers advice to help assess whether the bid is likely to succeed. AIM is also offering free membership for all museums and groups going through asset transfer: contact sassy@aim-museums.co.uk for further details. [AIM](#)

Culture and education reports timetable 2018 – 21

Over the next three years there will be a number of major reports exploring the place of culture in education, including the launch of findings by Government and major cultural bodies including ACE, the Royal Society of Arts and the Royal Shakespeare Company. The Cultural Learning Alliance, which itself continues to publish policy briefings, has drawn all of these together in one overview, to encourage people to share knowledge and respond to consultations. [Cultural Learning Alliance](#)

Members' news

National Maritime Museum opens its four new galleries

The National Maritime Museum has opened its four major new galleries, covering the topics of Pacific Encounters, Polar Worlds, Tudor and Stuart Seafarers and the intersection of maritime, social and world histories in Sea Things. Online films tell short stories about the objects on display and their conservation – from how to care for Captain Scott's shoes to how to make a key to open a treasure chest. [RMG](#)

Tate is part of a project to photograph most seven and eight-year olds in London

Artist Steve McQueen is working with Tate on an ambitious project to photograph all Year Three school classes in London for a major exhibition at Tate Britain. Together, the museum says the image will make the 'largest group portrait ever made' and capture the diversity of a rising generation of Londoners. There will be an accompanying access programme focusing on identity, belonging and citizenship. Teachers are invited to sign up to the project on the dedicated website. [TateYear3](#)

Also: The Scottish National Gallery is beginning major £22m redevelopment work, with new gallery spaces, a landscaped garden and an accessible restaurant opening in 2021. [Museums Journal](#)

Images this month: The Sun: Living With Our Star

Images this month come from 'The Sun: Living With Our Star' which has just opened at the Science Museum in London. The exhibition looks at our changing relationship to and knowledge of the life-giving conflagration at the heart of the solar system. The story moves from Bronze Age Scandinavia and the sun gods of the classical world, to a summer paddle on a mid 20th century Scottish beach and modern NASA images of coronal mass ejections. There are also interactives including a huge illuminated wall display of the sun rising in different seasons and a chance to try on a virtual reality version of some of the museum's sunglasses, via a digital mirror. [Art Fund](#), [Science Museum](#), [Telegraph](#), [Londonist](#)

Consultations

ACE lays out its main challenges to 2030 for further consultation

ACE has produced a document 'Shaping the next ten years' laying out the major challenges facing culture to 2030 as a second stage in its strategy consultation. ACE is seeking views from the sector, asking people to first read the document, which takes about 15 minutes. The report proposes that ACE should focus on:

- A commitment to supporting a wider range of creativity, helping people to improve their own creative practice and expanding the kinds of arts they experience.
- It wants people from every background to benefit from public investment in culture, which currently still benefits a narrow slice of the population, often those with university degrees. ACE is considering interventions such as place-based partnerships and support for organisations to distribute their art more widely.
- It emphasises the importance of a more diverse workforce, acknowledging that "*despite a series of investment programmes and policy initiatives targeted at this issue, we have not succeeded in delivering systemic change... we need to do more to hold ourselves and the organisations we fund to account.*"
- It would like to see a more 'dynamic environment' for publicly funded organisations 'in which organisations change and develop, and come and go', but also addresses the 'fragility' of business models which make it difficult for organisations to respond to challenge and opportunity, especially around digital and funding. It seeks to build the leadership skills to deal with a changing landscape for the sector.
- It says that success or failure as a creative can depend on personal means as much as talent in a sector where low pay is common. ACE proposes to invest more in independent creative practitioners, and creative R&D for talent development.
- Supporting creativity in children will be essential for the nation's future success and for personal wellbeing. It argues for greater support for creativity in and out of school.

ACE's Deputy CEO Simon Mellor emphasises that the document 'is not a strategy. It's not even a draft strategy', but rather a current assessment of the challenges. The consultation remains open until 2nd January. [ACE blog](#), [ACE](#) (consultation document)

MA seeks views on Collections 2030

The MA's research project 'Collections 2030' looks at the current state of museum collections and the priorities for the next decade. It is now seeking wider views and has published a discussion paper, centred around the idea of collections as 'empowering, relevant and dynamic' alongside research questions. The consultation is open until 23rd November. [Museums Journal](#), [Museums Journal](#) (discussion paper)

V&A Museum of Childhood consults on transformation

V&A Museum of Childhood is planning a £13.5m upgrade that will preserve the original Victorian building but double the exhibition space. It is holding drop-in events on 20th, 21st and 24th October to consult with children and families on how to shape the project. V&A Director Tristram Hunt said the redeveloped museum would introduce young people to design and seek to improve the life chances of young people in Tower Hamlets, one of the most deprived boroughs in the country. [V&A](#), [Museums Journal](#)

Museums and the Paris Agreement on climate: a chance to get involved

Article 12 of the Paris Agreement on Climate Change (2015) states that signatories, which include the UK, should “*enhance climate change education, training [and] public awareness, participation and access to information*”, recognising that public involvement will be essential to achieving the Agreement’s ambitions, and prevent disastrous climate change. This is an area where the world’s 55,000+ museums can play an important role: they are widely trusted, reach many millions of people each year and have collections that are a valuable resource for engagement and research. The potential of museums to support climate change education and action has been formally recognised by United Nations (UNFCCC). Now Manchester Museum’s Henry McGhie has submitted an overview of the ways museums can be useful to an initiative called the Talanoa Dialogue. The Dialogue is intended to help the global community move farther, faster, together for constructive climate change action. The Talanoa Dialogue submission for museums is based on discussions last April in Manchester at the International Symposium on Climate Change and Museums. It offers museum workers a resource to discuss how the sector can do its part towards a sustainable future, sharing activities and learning by doing. It includes details on many museum and climate support networks that already exist. Henry is at @HenryMcr if anyone is interested in knowing more about this work or getting involved. [Museums Talanoa Submission](#)

Resilience, leadership and cultural democracy: ACE reports consider vital future issues



Entrance to The Sun Living With Our Star © Jody Kingzett, courtesy of the Science Museum Group

Resilience report looks at perceptions, theory and practice in the cultural sector

In September, ACE published three reports which will inform its ten-year plan to 2030. The first is ‘What is Resilience Anyway?’ by Golant Media, exploring how resilience is perceived in the cultural sector and whether organisations are becoming more resilient. The research included discussion events, a large survey and a literature review. The report tracked both good practice and opinion in the sector and found that:

- 43% think that resilience is ‘just code for surviving austerity cuts’, versus 32% who disagreed. However, although 90% of respondents were concerned about being resilient to financial factors, other issues such as technology (68%), rival forms of entertainment (67%), property and rental

prices (41%), ageing audiences (35%) and Brexit (43%) were identified as issues that call for organisational resilience.

- In many ways the cultural sector is ahead of the curve in addressing a wide range of resilience issues, particularly the idea of considering outside stakeholders, and ethical, social, environmental and cultural impacts. These topics are business as usual in many arts organisations but relatively novel in much business thinking.
- The report quotes a variety of qualities that predict that a cultural organisation will cope resiliently, including involving everyone across the organisation, empowering staff, having a variety of products and services, accessible management, planning for various scenarios and linking every activity to strategic objectives.
- Senior staff were much more likely to believe that resilient behaviour had been adopted by their organisation than junior staff. Staff in larger organisations were also less likely to believe their organisation was adopting resilient behaviours.
- Individual artists in an oversubscribed sector with a culture of low pay often worked long hours on several projects and state low pay as a major reason for leaving the sector, a significant barrier to a more diverse workforce and a variety of talent.
- Only 3% thought the sector is 'very much' investing in staff development, despite the fact that training doesn't just help specific skills like social media or reading a balance sheet, but rather develops resilience skills themselves, teaching people to deal with challenge without being overwhelmed.
- There is an assumption that growth equals success, when some organisations should consider downsizing to achieve more focus, or to fill a particular ecological niche. Mergers are relatively rare in the cultural sector although they could sometimes be the right solution. The report also considered how some organisations could reach the end of their useful life and should be allowed to disband and be replaced by new start ups.

[Arts Professional](#), [ACE](#), [ACE blog](#)

Cultural Democracy in Practice report

ACE has also commissioned the group 64 Million Artists to write a short guide to 'Cultural Democracy in Practice'. Aimed at Chief Executives, it makes the case for the importance of introducing cultural democracy and gives a number of case studies of its application in practice. It argues that 'culture is unbounded' and encompasses many activities "*from the personal to the collective, informal and formal, from grime to opera, knitting to line dancing, the West End to fringe to gardening, cooking and everything in between*" and that there should be a much broader conception of artistic practice. Not all of this will involve ACE or institutions, but they shape a landscape in which organisations need to make a shift from outreach to inclusion, from consultation to co-production and from offering cut price tickets to attract new audiences to first asking those audience what they want. The report quotes the Warwick Commission's point that currently the "*wealthiest, better educated and least ethnically diverse 8% of the population form...the most culturally active segment of all*" and says that the arts risk becoming irrelevant if they ignore 'a country that wants to be involved in everything'. Case studies include Cornwall Museums Partnership and its Citizen Curators programme, which gives volunteers from communities a central stake in commissioning and decision-making. The approach not only brought much needed diversity to the museum, but also helped to reveal aspects of the collections that told completely new stories, such as the Cornish role in converting the Miao peoples in China to Christianity. It also produced an exhibition and an Instagram event which increased engagement with the museum sixteenfold in four months. [64 million artists](#)

Report advocates 'flatter, facilitative and more diverse leadership'

King's College London has published 'Changing Cultures – Transforming Leadership in arts museums and libraries', the third work commissioned by ACE towards its next ten year plan. It explores how leadership in the cultural sector is changing, with a move towards flatter hierarchical structures, a more facilitative approach aimed to build consensus and allow a range of staff to show leadership in particular areas. Even so, the need to take ultimate responsibility remains an important capacity for good leaders. Topics covered in the report include:

- The characteristics needed by a leader, which are identified as problem solving, networking, collaboration, mentoring, stewardship and research.
- The frequent need to blend social and commercial leadership and particularly develop entrepreneurial skills.

- A detailed overview of the leadership courses available, how these help and where there are gaps. There are also statistics on the tendency of the cultural sector to offer leadership development opportunities only when a career is already relatively advanced.
- The importance of a more systemic approach to producing more diverse leaders.
- It offers examples from other sectors with similar challenges of 'acute external scrutiny, constrained resources and an ambassadorial role', with case studies including NCVO's course for charity leaders in the 2020s.
- It explores how to be clear-sighted in evaluation and consider whether leadership development programmes are being effective.

The report captures the sense that leadership is changing, within and beyond the cultural sector. Jonathan Reekie, Director at Somerset House Trust comments "*I suspect the form of leadership we're talking about will have radically changed or may not even exist in 10 – 20 years.*" [ACE](#)

Brexit

Roads less travelled: 'no deal' briefings on data, passports and driving

The Government has published a second batch of papers advising organisations about extra bureaucracy they will have to undertake if the UK leaves the EU with no deal on March 29th 2019. Issues likely to be relevant to museums and the creative industries include:

- The Data Protection Act 2018 means the UK and EU will remain sufficiently aligned for the UK to continue to send data to partners in the EU. However, EU organisations may not be able to send data to the UK without new clauses being added to contracts.
- UK passports may not be accepted in their last six months of validity – so travellers to the EU are advised to renew any passport that is more than nine years and six months old.
- Those driving in the EU will need to obtain an International Driving Permit, as a UK driving licence will not be valid.
- There has been no paper on flights to date, but the Government has also suggested that flights to Europe could be grounded by no deal.
- The Government favours a new 'skills based system' for workers coming to the country, which will largely favour those with a job offer and earning more than £30k. The Government has added that there would be some exemptions, but not "lots" for different sectors. This may affect many creative and cultural workers who often earn less than £30k.

Meanwhile, *The Art Newspaper* reports that the UK art market and commercial galleries are struggling to put contingency plans in place, because of the level of uncertainty, especially around import/export charges and delay at ports. [Gov.uk](#) (data protection), NMDC (first batch of 'No Deal' papers), [Gov.uk](#) (driving), [Gov.uk](#) (passports), [Gov.uk](#) (full 'no deal' collection), [The Art Newspaper](#), [Telegraph](#) (flights), [The Week](#)

Events

Nature and bonfires, not rooms and suits for 'new kind of national arts conference'

ACE has commissioned a new kind of conference to bring thought leaders together across the cultural sector. On 4th – 5th July 2019, the performance company Slung Low will devise a conference to be held 'out in the fresh air' in the grounds of Temple Newsam in Leeds at which participants will swap suits and meeting rooms for bonfires and 'adventure'. ACE's Deputy Chief Executive Simon Mellor said "*we wanted to re-imagine what a national event of this nature could be like – and to help provoke and challenge current and future leaders from arts, museums and libraries to come up with new ideas for how we should be doing things in the sector going forward. Slung Low's iconoclastic approach offers the perfect platform to do this.*" The programme is still emerging, but there is a mailing list on the dedicated website. [ACE](#), [Wild Conference](#), [Temple Newsam](#)

Historic Environment Scotland programmes new digital heritage festival

DigiFest is a new digital heritage festival, run by Historic Environment Scotland and aimed to position Scotland as a leader in heritage sector innovation. There will be events featuring 3D modelling, AR, VR, gaming, animation, robotics and coding aimed at both professionals and families. This will run alongside DigiDoc, a two-day conference on 11th – 12th October. Tickets for this strand are £30 - £150. DigiFest takes place at The Engine Shed, Stirling from 8th – 20th October. [FutureScot](#), [Engine Shed](#) (booking)

The Learning Curve – the learning agenda for museum leaders

GEM is running an advanced course for museum leaders 'The Learning Curve: How leading a learning museum can transform your business'. The course has been devised by Nick Winterbotham who has led many museums including the National Railway Museum in York and Eureka! The Children's Museum. It will show how a learning-centred approach can improve resilience. The event takes place at Bramhall Hall, Stockport on 11th December. Tickets are priced at a reduced rate for a pair of attendees from one organisation (ideally a museum leader and learning officer) and range in price from £145/180 for a single person or £220/£270 for two. [GEM](#)

Culture in Crisis: harnessing heritage as a tool for sustainable development

Four international organisations will be discussing how to encourage social and economic development through the preservation of global cultural heritage at an event at the V&A. The groups have all been involved in the Cultural Protection Fund programme. The event takes place on 21st November from 18.30 and is free, although booking is necessary. [V&A](#)

London Lates: more details of Otherworld

As reported last month, Culture24 has developed a new major museum Lates festival for London, beginning in June 2019 and aimed at generating more financial benefit for museums and a more exciting format, particularly for young adults. To date, 52 venues from 13 London Boroughs have signed up. New material offers museums more practical festival detail, including pricing, expected volume of visitors, venue revenue share and how to co-create a programme with producers and a panel of 18 – 30 year old audience advisors. [Culture24](#), [NMDC](#), [Otherworld](#) (expression of interest form)

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 £82, or you can choose to donate £45 to buy a place for someone else from a demographic under-represented in the sector. [LetsGetReal](#)

Tactile access to collections workshop

The Touring Exhibitions Group is offering a new workshop 'Tactile Access to Collections: Maximising and Managing Public Object Handling Opportunities'. It covers issues for a range of sizes and types and looks at how accessioned collections can be safely used in an object handling programme. The event takes place at the House of Illustration, King's Cross on 20th November. Tickets are £60 - £80. [TEG](#)

Appointments

Lucy Casot has been appointed as new CEO of Museums Galleries Scotland. She is currently Head of Heritage Lottery Fund Scotland and will take up the new post in January 2019. [MGS](#)

Funding



Babylonian tablet in The Sun Living With Our Star © Jody Kingzett, courtesy of the Science Museum Group

New report says enhancing a sense of community is vital to make place-based giving schemes work

The Office for Civil Society at DCMS has published a new report 'Place-based giving schemes funding, engaging and creating stronger communities' which assesses the potential for growing place-based giving. The report found that:

- There are 21 London Borough place-based schemes, 43 community foundations and 69 giving circles as well as many other forms. These include funds for culture such as the Newcastle Culture Investment Fund which gives funding to arts organisations in the wake of local authority cuts.
- There is interest in reviving the role of Mayors as leaders in generating place-based philanthropy in a 21st century context.
- Various polls since 2015 have shown that people believe that there is a declining sense of local community and that this in turn tends to erode the likelihood that people will give or volunteer locally. Only 18% of people were involved in community work in 2017, with 67% saying they find it difficult to get involved.
- However, there is scope for improvement: 30% say they would like to get more involved locally and 58% want to be more involved in local decision making.

The report suggested that there is a 'virtuous circle' in which people first feel involved and empowered in their community, and then are more inclined to donate to causes which in turn improve their local area for the better. The report includes 13 case studies which show the great diversity of local schemes, and the variety of approaches. For instance, in Hartlepool, Action Labs using an 'agile problem solving' approach with local residents helped frame responses to complex social problems. This has kicked off several pro-social volunteering schemes backed by seed funding. Interviewees for the report were keen to see more place-based giving schemes "as long as that development is done sensitively and place-based schemes aren't seen as a 'magic bullet' with which to solve all the country's ills." Gov.uk

New Cultural Value Centre with £2.5m funding seeks a home

A new Cultural Value Centre has been founded to research the case for the value of arts and culture in the UK and abroad. However, it first it needs to choose a host Research Organisation to give it a home. The Centre comes with investment of £2.5m from the Arts and Humanities Research Council, Paul Hamlyn Foundation and Arts Council England and will act to create cross-sectoral networks between academic and non-academic bodies as well as synthesising existing research.

Organisations interested in housing the Cultural Value Centre should respond to AHRC's call before 15th November. ACE CEO Darren Henley said "*establishing a Centre for Cultural Value offers a new opportunity to increase our understanding of the contribution of arts and culture on life in the UK. The Centre will help us to examine the impact of artists, arts organisations, museums and libraries on individuals, communities and society as a whole.*" [AHRC](#), [AHRC](#) (short 2016 animated film on the report underpinning the new centre)

Also: AHRC has also announced the nine groups across the four UK nations which will receive 'creative clusters' funding. This will be used to generate socio-economic benefit from culture across a whole city or region-wide ecosystem, rather than by funding one institution at a time. National Museums Scotland is involved in one cluster aimed at bringing 'data driven innovation' in the Edinburgh design and advertising sector. [Nesta](#), [Arts Professional](#),

Museum Shop Sunday gives an opportunity to showcase goods and increase sales

For the second year, the Association for Cultural Enterprises is co-ordinating Museum Shop Sunday – an opportunity for cultural venues to collectively promote retail spaces with events, offers and joint marketing. Last year over 600 museums and heritage sites took part. Participants can sign up to receive tips and marketing materials and to be added to a venue map. Museums are also encouraged to submit pictures of interesting and unusual products to be used to attract press coverage. [Association of Cultural Enterprises](#)

Awards



The original orrery, 1712 in The Sun Living With Our Star © Jody Kingzett, courtesy of the Science Museum Group

Achates prize rewards first time philanthropists

The Achates Philanthropy Prize, which rewards first-time funders of cultural projects, has announced a shortlist of ten individuals and six corporates for its £10k prize. Now in its third year, the prize encourages audiences to consider moving into the role of philanthropists. The shortlist includes furniture manufacturers Finsa for their support of the pop-up Museum of Architecture as well as individual supporters of The Ministry of Stories, Northern Ballet and The Old Vic. [Arts Industry](#), [UK Fundraising](#)

Design Museum shortlists mycelium buildings and an artificial island for Design of the Year

The Design Museum has announced the 87 shortlisted entries for its annual Beazley Designs of the Year award. These range from a football kit, to a hoarding for an Apple store, a plastic-free supermarket aisle and innovative buildings. There are new uses for materials, including a paper water bottle with a sugarcane lid, furniture made for recycled mobile phone cases, building materials grown from mycelium fungal colonies, and floating islands for public recreation in Copenhagen Harbour. The associated exhibition runs to January. [Dezeen](#), [Design Museum](#)

Leeds City Museum wins 2018 Family Friendly Award

Leeds City Museum has been announced as the 2018 winner of the Kids in Museums Family Friendly Museum Award. Judges liked the museum's baby friendly curator talks, welcoming staff and 'Dadtastic' days, as well as a programme which represents all the communities of Leeds. 90,000 children visited the museum in 2017, which has a special group 'Museum Minis' for the under 5s and a youth panel of 14 – 22 year olds. Leader of Leeds City Council, Judith Blake said *"this is a massive endorsement for the passion and enthusiasm of the team there and the dedication they show in making the museum a fun and accessible place for children to enjoy while they learn more about history, heritage and the world around them."* [Museums Journal](#), [Kids in Museums](#)

Attracting visitors, balancing the books

Visits to DCMS-sponsored museums hold steady, but fundraised and self-generated income falls

DCMS has published figures for visits to the 18 mostly national museums that it sponsors directly for 2017 – 18. These show:

- Overall visitor numbers are similar to last year at 47.3m, a figure which has been stable since 2015 – 16.
- However, there is significant variation between venues. Tate received the most visitors for the second year at 8.2m, driven in part by the extension at Tate Modern and the David Hockney exhibition. V&A saw the largest increase, up 27.8% or 1m extra visitors, again driven by very popular temporary exhibitions (including Pink Floyd: The Mortal Remains) and a capital project (The Exhibition Road Quarter). Four museums saw declines ranging including the National Gallery (down 18.2%). The apparent decline at the Geffrye Museum (down 5.6%) was due to closure from January for a refit: so averaged over months open, its figures are actually up.
- There has been an average of 10% growth in visits to museums outside London, from 6.8m in 2016 – 17 to 7.5m in 2017 – 18.
- Overseas visitors account for 47.6% of all visits, with the Royal Armouries receiving most visits from abroad at 66.9% followed by the National Gallery and British Museum both at around 63%.
- Child visits are also up by an average of 8.6% to 8.2m.
- Loan venues have increased from 1,305 to 1,356 in the last year, with the V&A loaning to the greatest number of venues (241) in 2017 – 18.
- Self-generated income is down by 8.3% to 271m, as is income from private individuals, companies or charities, which fell 15.6% to £173.6m.
- However, income from admissions increased by 10% to £48.7m, with more than half of this being accounted for by the Tate Gallery Group which took an additional £2.7m compared to the year before, driven by popular shows such as David Hockney at Tate Britain.

[Gov.uk](#)

Northern Ireland museum visits up slightly with wide demographic variations

Data from the Continuous Household survey shows that visits to museums in Northern Ireland were up a percentage point in 2017 – 18 from 48% to 49%. Survey details show disparities in visitor numbers by how deprived an area is (38% of visitors were from the most deprived areas vs 62% from least deprived areas). Protestants were more likely to visit than Catholics (51% vs 44%) and those with a disability were significantly less likely to visit (39% vs 54%) as were those over 65 (36%). 35 – 44 year olds were the most likely to attend (61%). The most popular reasons for visiting was either out of general interest or to bring children. [Museums Journal](#)

House of Lords debates image rights

There has been a short debate in the House of Lords called by Lord Freyberg to discuss the balance between museums allowing public access to images and charging for their commercial use. Acknowledging that museums are under pressure to find new revenue streams as public funding is squeezed, he questioned whether the revenue generated always outweighs the disadvantages of charging. He argued that high image fees are a deterrent to producing Art History course books, and that as other nations from the Netherlands to Uruguay begin to grant free access UK collections risk being sidelined by sharing elsewhere. Many subsequent speakers are on the Boards of museums, including Lord Dannatt, Chair at the Royal Armouries. These speakers pointed out that European museums which offer free images also charge for entry and have a different funding model, as well as underlining how charging sustains the in-house expertise needed to supply good, high resolution images, even if the overall profits are modest. Speakers recommended that national museum directors should have a single generic definition of what uses are academic and which commercial, possibly established at a Round Table. Closing the debate, Viscount Younger of Leckie said that as arm's length bodies, museums must be free to make commercial decisions. Many speaker's cited NMDC's 2015 publication 'Striking the Balance' which considers the issues in more detail. [Hansard](#), [NMDC](#) (Striking the Balance)

Soane Director argues for perspective on visitor figures

The Director of Sir John Soane's Museum, Bruce Boucher has written for the *Evening Standard* arguing for more balance in attitudes to visitor figures as a measure of museum success. He says that recent falls in visits to some London nationals have been 'greeted as if foreshadowing the death of civilisation' when these are against a background of generally high visitor numbers, with more than half the British public visiting a museum each year. The Soane has recently run programmes which focus on wellbeing – ranging from those aimed at people with dementia to after-school clubs for young people aimed to make up for a deficit in arts in education. Programmes like these offer a depth of engagement not captured when the focus is on volume. He also argues that 'core responsibilities for buildings and collections' are crucial and that it is important for museums to 'strike the right balance' between investing in these and the pursuit of visitor numbers. [Evening Standard](#)

Ancient Egyptians and dinosaurs on the move

The mummy returns: Bolton museum reopens Egyptian galleries

Bolton Museum has reopened its Egyptian galleries with film, sound, interactives and a full-scale Egyptian tomb, following a two-year £3.8m redevelopment of the museum. The mummy of Thutmose III was first acquired by Bolton in the 1930s and is now surrounded by a complete recreation of the tomb where it was found in the Valley of the Kings in 1898. There is an animation projected on the wall describing the journey of the Egyptian soul into the afterlife. Across four more rooms, 2000 objects are displayed in brightly lit surroundings, alongside the story of relationships between Egypt and Bolton in the 18th and 19th centuries and a video wall capturing the obsession with all things Ancient Egyptian in modern popular culture. Council Leader Linda Thomas hopes that the new displays will generate tourism and jobs for the town. She said "*we are... very proud of the town's rich philanthropic tradition, our deeply-rooted civic values, and a belief in improving the quality of life for all Boltonians through free access to high-quality cultural, educational and community resources. The new Egyptian galleries capture all of these principles and will put our museum firmly on the map regionally, nationally and internationally.*" [M + H](#), [About Manchester](#)

Also: The remarkable success of Dippy on Tour continues as the dinosaur replica leaves Birmingham to winter at the Ulster Museum until late January. Dippy attracted 255,548 to Birmingham Museum & Art Gallery, making it the museum's most popular exhibition on record and is estimated to have generated £1.7m in spend by extra visitors drawn to the city. [M + H](#), [NMNI](#) (Dippy

at Ulster Museum)

Manchester Museum offers to lend its Ancient Egyptian objects as gallery closes until 2021

Meanwhile, much of Manchester Museum, including its Egyptian galleries are closing until 2021 for redevelopment. In the meantime, the museum is inviting people to make a bid to host some of its Ancient Egyptian artefacts. It writes "*keeping the objects safe will remain our priority, but we want to see if we can also give people the chance to experience or connect with them in different ways outside of the Museum and in addition to our current outreach programmes.*" Interested parties should write to the museum's Domestic Liberation Team by 14th October. [Manchester Museum](#)

Export bar for miniature of Elizabeth I watching defeat of the Armada

Arts Minister Michael Ellis has placed an export bar on a miniature depicting Elizabeth I watching the defeat of the Spanish Armada. The piece was created around 1600 and is a rare contemporary depiction of the battle. The asking price is £210k and the bar runs to 13th December with a possible extension to 13th March. [Gov.uk](#),

Genuine consultation, innovative outreach

Drugs and dark matter: King's College Science Gallery is a new addition to a global network

King's College London has opened a new venue 'Science Gallery London' which will display art produced in collaboration between artists and university researchers. It is part of a network of spaces already established across the world in places from Bengaluru to Detroit. The gallery is set in Guy's Hospital and will have a theme of health and wellbeing. King's hopes to attract 300,000 visitors each year, and particularly hopes to engage people aged 15 – 25 who would not usually consider going to university. A panel of young people in this age group have helped shape the choice of exhibition topics. The first, 'Hooked' will challenge 'the perceived social menace and stigma associated with addiction', followed by shows exploring transplants and regenerative medicine, dark matter and anxiety. Director Daniel Glaser says it is important for universities to do more than research and teaching and the new space is driven by "*the need for a place where we are exposed to and engaged with rigorous thinking about the problems of tomorrow... there are very few spaces where that kind of exposure is encouraged.*" [The Art Newspaper](#), [Taitmail](#), [King's College](#)

The Bilbao effect with a difference: culture led regeneration at V&A Dundee

The Art Newspaper has captured more of the thinking behind the new V&A Dundee which opened last month. The museum's creators drew inspiration from the transformative effect that Guggenheim Bilbao had on the Spanish city, but aimed for a primary audience of Scottish visitors, with a projected 60% living within an hour's drive, rather than cultivating an international tourist majority. Half a million visitors are expected in the first year, settling down to around 350,000. Workshops across Scotland throughout the build have reached 100,000 people and created 'an enormous amount of loyalty growing around the museum'. Meanwhile overnight stays in Dundee are already up by 10% in the past six months and two international firms have announced European centres in the city. Dundee City Council is now exploring creating a concert hall and opera house near the museum site. [The Art Newspaper](#), [M+H](#), [Taitmail](#), [Arts Industry](#)

Also: Newcastle Gateshead has launched a collaborative plan to reach every child and young person in the city with the arts over the next decade, at a rate of 165,000 each year. 40 organisations will be involved and work will include long-term research by Newcastle University. [Arts Industry](#)

£900k helps young people curate exhibitions and create apps at Northern Ireland museums

HLF has given £900k to the 'Reimagine, Remake, Replay' project which will reach 4,000 16 – 25 year olds in Northern Ireland with opportunities to curate their own exhibitions and learn the skills to create apps, games, films and virtual reality experiences based on museum collections. The work will take place over four years at seven museums in partnership with The Nerve Centre, which runs Creative Learning Centres across the country. National Museums Northern Ireland is among the partners and creative digital work will make use of collections from fine and applied arts to industrial heritage and archaeology. Head of HLF Northern Ireland, Paul Mullan said partnership with museums would give "a real 'hands-on' opportunity for the young people helping them to connect to their heritage in meaningful ways. We are looking forward to seeing how they respond to the collections, what is of importance and value to them, and how they use these to reflect their own identity and sense of the past, while still connecting to our collective heritage." [HLF](#), [ALVA](#)

Museums, libraries and parks as assets in addressing mental health in £1.25m research programme

Mental health issues are the single largest cause of disability in the UK and approaches to addressing this have usually been based around a 'deficit model' which considers what is lacking and how to fix problems. Now a new culture, nature and community-based programme backed by £1.25m from UKRI will explore the resources already in communities that can be used to support people. These one million or so assets include libraries, museums, parks, care farms and heritage sites. The MARCH network will be led by Dr Daisy Fancourt from the Institute of Epidemiology and Health Care at UCL, who is now planning research, consultations and roundtables. Museums and other organisations can sign up to register an interest in the work. [UCL](#), [March Network](#) (register an interest)

Employment

Art Fund offers 500 paid cultural work opportunities to students with new scheme

The Art Fund has launched a new scheme which will allow 500 university students undertake work placements in the cultural sector, with posts paying at least the Living Wage. 'Artful Opportunities' builds on existing work by the Art Fund, which has already placed students as guides at cultural events or as ambassadors for Art Fund on university campuses. Since 2017, students have also been able to access a £5 annual arts pass offering free entry to 240 museums and discounts on major exhibitions. Art Fund Director Stephen Deuchar said "there are 1.4 million full-time university students in the UK right now, and I would encourage each of them to apply for a Student Art Pass to join our creative community, get access to Artful Opportunities, and receive discounted or free access to hundreds of cultural institutions." [Art Fund](#)

New annual survey tracks pay in the cultural sector

Arts Professional is launching a new, annual survey to track pay in the arts and cultural sector. It is seeking a large volume of employed and self-employed people working in culture to anonymously give details of their earnings in 2017 – 18. 2018 will be used as a baseline to track trends over time, with a particular focus on career progression and talent retention, given that low pay is known to be endemic in much of the sector. *Arts Professional* has previously run one-off surveys, in 2006 and 2015, which show a gender pay gap that widened over time. [Arts Professional](#)

International

Culture a crucial factor for 100 Resilient Cities network

The 100 Resilient Cities network was created by the Rockefeller Foundation and connects cities from Bristol to Addis Ababa interested in coping better with sudden shocks such as hurricanes and floods, and slower-moving challenges from unemployment to homelessness. Now the British Council has joined the network as a partner because of its specialist knowledge of how arts and culture can help to build resilience. It is currently working with the city of Athens, looking at how the creative industries are a crucial factor in regeneration. Eleni Myrivili, Athens' Deputy Mayor for Urban Nature, Resilience and Climate Change Adaptation said *'through this partnership, the City has escalated its commitment to cultural aspects of resilience; I hope that this report will further expand the ways we understand the role that arts and culture play in building resilience in an urban environment.'* The British Council hopes that the work will be a useful paradigm for other cities wishing to address culture, social and ecological challenges in one framework. [British Council](#), [100 Resilient Cities](#)

ICOM warns of threats to museums internationally following Rio museum fire

The International Council of Museums has issued a statement in the aftermath of the fire which destroyed the National Museum of Brazil in Rio de Janeiro along with most of its collections. It says that funding for supporting existing museums has been squeezed in many parts of the world, while new museum capital projects 'present an inflated picture' of support for museums while 'funds for on-going operations are steadily declining'. Governments must also prioritise security, maintenance and research into collections to prevent another disaster like Rio. Meanwhile, offers of help and initial funding have flooded in as Brazil gets to grips with the total destruction of its National Museum. There is currently a temporary exhibition in tents in front of the ruin, with plans for a more permanent exhibition space. Stories of lucky survivals have emerged, from indigenous artefacts on loan elsewhere to the fish in the museum's fountain. However, the main story remains one of irreparable loss, including frescoes from Pompeii, recordings of lost indigenous languages and insect holotypes. [Washington Post](#), [The Art Newspaper](#), [Museums Journal](#), [ICOM](#)

Tourism

Discover England Fund supports tours off the beaten track for the third year

The Discover England Fund, which supports consortiums to develop bookable tourism products serving large areas and multiple venues, has invested £800k in its third year. Five groups receive funding, including the Real Yorkshire Tours Destination Management Company, which will create high-end multi-day packages for visitors from Australia and the US, based on experiences in venues across Yorkshire. Other packages include Globus's Undiscovered England which targets visitors from countries including India and Canada to visit lesser-known parts of the country; faith-based heritage tourism aimed at Americans and a South-West package across several counties. The Fund aims to spread the impact and benefit of tourism beyond a few major cities. [VisitBritain](#)

Also: The Government has announced an additional £250k in funding to encourage Americans to participate in the Mayflower 400 celebrations which take place in 2020. Plymouth is at the centre of a national partnership of 11 English destinations developing a programme for the anniversary. [Gov.uk](#)

And finally... "The Existential Void of the Pop-up Experience"

Unfortunate New York Times critic Amanda Hess has spent the summer trying out New York's pop-up Instagrammable 'experiences', including Museums of Ice Cream and Pizza, and has not enjoyed it. Inundated with opportunities to snap herself against a backdrop of giant cherries, ballpits and primary coloured polyester rugs while eating a variety of fast foods she says "I felt like a shell of a person. It was as if I was witnessing the erosion of meaning itself". She makes the distinction between experiences like these, that are better as a photograph than they are as a reality, and looking at art, standing on the Grand Canyon, or going on a roller coaster, which are about the thing itself. She laments "I found myself sleepwalking through them, fantasizing about going to a real museum". It seems that playful is good, but no replacement for a bit of depth. [NYTimes](#), h/t [Culture is Digital](#)

Jobs

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

- [Collections Hazards Officer - National Railway Museum](#)
- [Patrons Officer - National Portrait Gallery](#)
- [Spitfire Experience Operator/Retail Assistant - Royal Air Force Museum](#)
- [Collections and Storage Officer - Birmingham Museums Trust](#)
- [Head of Visitor Communications - Tate](#)
- [New Guinea TIPAS Project Officer - Royal Botanic Gardens, Kew](#)
- [Treasure Trove Manager - National Museums Scotland](#)

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

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