

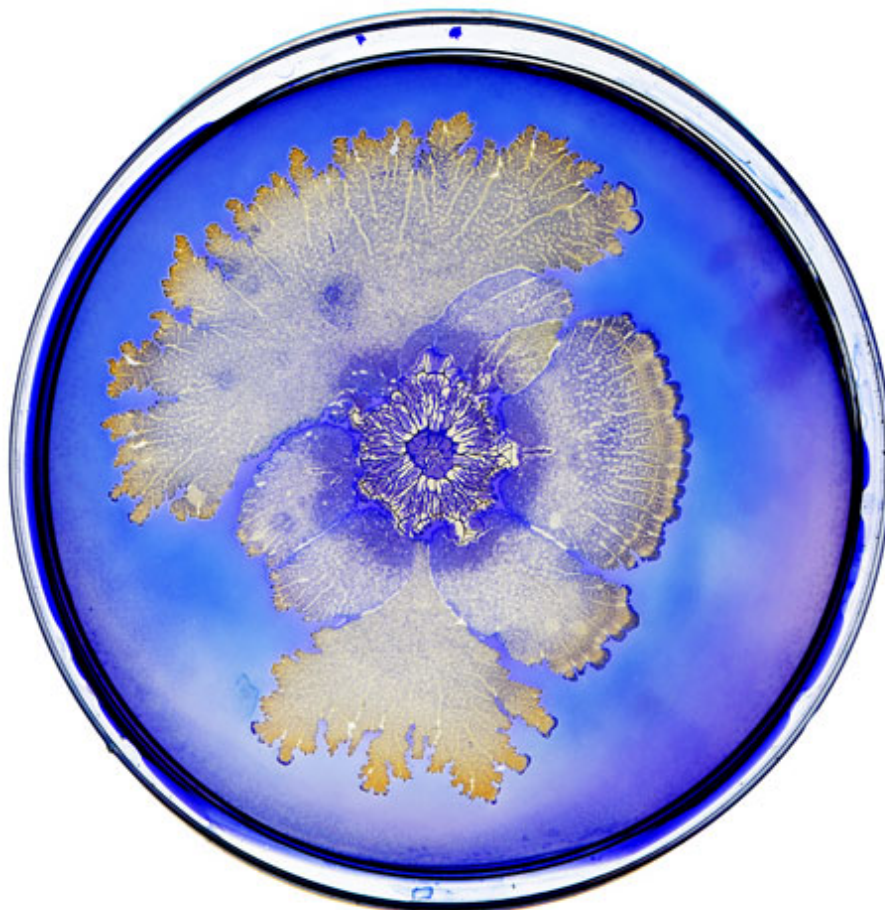
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Members' news



Bacteria found in probiotics. Image: Soonhee Moon / Tal Danino, part of the Bacterial Worlds exhibition at Oxford University Museum of Natural History, opening 19th October

IWM pilot institute seeks to deepen public understanding of conflict

Information about war in the media can be high volume but fragmented, often leaving the public unclear about complex situations. In June, IWM launched a new Institute for the Public Understanding of War and Conflict, which will use its collections-led knowledge base to help people gain a deeper understanding. It will also be working with charities, universities and Associates including academics with areas of expertise from international relations to radicalisation. Events already programmed include 'Syria: A conflict explored' and IWM is also developing 'I was there: Room of Voices' where visitors will be able to hear first-hand accounts of war from the museum's sound archives. The initial pilot will run until the end of 2019. [M + H](#), [IWM](#)

V&A Dundee opens in mid-September after eight-year development

V&A Dundee will open this month with the exhibition 'Ocean Liners: Speed and Style' and permanent exhibitions showcasing Scotland's creativity since the 15th century. Objects in the Scottish Design Galleries will include a Jacobite garter inscribed with political slogans from 1745, the 1480 Playfair Book of Hours and a gown worn by Natalie Portman in Star Wars. Kengo Kuma, who designed the building said he hoped it would be a 'living room for the city'. Several interviewees told the *Guardian* that there has been a growing sense of pride as the building has developed over the last eight years. Mike Galloway, Director of Planning at Dundee City Council also described how local jobs paying the real living wage have been an essential component in developing both the museum itself and the surrounding infrastructure, such as nearby hotels. There are also programmes co-designed with 16 – 25 year olds to help young people gain design-related skills. [Dundee Evening Telegraph](#), [Guardian](#), [V&A Dundee](#) (3D festival opening weekend events), [V&A Dundee](#) (schools and communities)

Also: Trip Advisor has published its Travellers Choice Awards for Museums, with the winners chosen by an algorithm tracking the quality and quantity of thousands of reviews. The top ten included the British Museum as fourth most popular in the world, with Musée d'Orsay in Paris rated first. Three Scottish museums were in the UK top ten, including the National Museum of Scotland and Kelvingrove Art Gallery. [Trip Advisor](#), [Harpers Bazaar](#)

Images this month: Bacterial World

Images this month come from the Oxford University Museum of Natural History's 'Bacterial World' which opens on 19th October, and features objects ranging from Luke Jerram's giant inflatable E. coli, constructed five million times bigger than the real thing, and film showcasing bacteria from geological structures and the deep sea. There is also a game of 'Gut Wars', setting gut bacteria against each other in a simulated environment. [Oxford University](#)

The cultural sector and No Deal

First batch of 'No Deal' Brexit briefings published

The Government has published its first set of guidance papers on how to prepare for Brexit on 20th March 2019 if there is no deal. These include briefings on studying in the UK, applying for EU programmes and import and export. Points relevant to cultural organisations include:

- The UK Government will guarantee schemes such as Horizon 2020 and the European Regional Development Fund where projects are agreed before the UK leaves. However, in the longer term the pressure group Scientists for EU calculates that the UK, which currently gets €1.283bn per year from European schemes, will lose €577.35m through being shut out of 45% of options.
- Government will also extend a guarantee for the Erasmus+ programme for education, youth, training and sport until the end of 2020, covering all schemes applied for before the UK leaves the union.
- Importers and exporters to the EU will need to acquire a UK Economic Operator Registration and Identification and familiarise themselves with tariffs information from HMRC.

[Gov.uk](#) (all Brexit papers published in August), [Scientists for EU](#), [Gov.uk](#) (tariffs)

CIF publishes guide to auditing for 'actual possibility' of no deal Brexit

The Creative Industries Federation has published a guide for its members, helping them to audit their dependency on the EU on issues from import export costs to services used from EU countries and members of staff who are EU citizens. CIF says that a no-deal departure is now 'an actual possibility, rather than simply a worst-case scenario'. The guide suggests that if a business has heavy dependency, it should look at opening a branch in the EU, but that is not a possibility for many businesses with only three or four staff. Currently, 40% of creative industries export goods to the EU. Creative Industries Federation CEO Alan Bishop said 'we're finding it increasingly difficult to imagine what 'bad deal' could be worse than 'no-deal'. [Arts Professional](#)

Also: A survey by the Incorporated Society of Musicians of 1,600 of its members found that 40% musicians are already seeing an impact on their work in anticipation of Brexit, up from 26% in 2017. More than a third said that they earned half of their income or more working in the EU. 39% travel to Europe more than five times each year. [Arts Industry](#)

Parthenon Marbles as Brexit pawn?

The Greek government will be among the nations which have to sign off the eventual deal as the UK leaves the European Union. It has been suggested that it could use this as leverage in its ongoing attempts to reclaim the Parthenon Marbles from the British Museum. Greek culture minister Lydia Koniordou has recently written to Culture Secretary Jeremy Wright to discuss the return; the British Museum says that the marbles are its legal property, free to view by millions each year. [Independent](#), [Museums Journal](#)

Events

The Future of Civic Museums

In July the English Civic Museums Network published 'The Future of Civic Museums: A Think Piece'. Now the group is holding a seminar to discuss the work and engage a wider audience, including stakeholders beyond the cultural sector. NMDC is supporting the event which takes place at the V&A on 30th October. [ECMN](#), [NMDC](#) (full report)

People Power: Embedding community participation

How can museum work with communities create real change for organisations and the people they serve? The MA is running a one-day conference covering topics from co-curation to collaborative research and programming for wellbeing, with speakers from institutions including the Glasgow Women's Library, Museum of London and National Museums Northern Ireland. The event takes place at Glasgow Concert Halls on 12th September; tickets are £125 for MA members and £195 for non-members. [Museums Journal](#)

Museums invited to join Green Great Britain Week

The Department for Business, Energy and Industrial Strategy has announced the first Green Great Britain Week, taking place on 15th – 19th October, which showcases leadership in finding climate solutions to help the country transition to a thriving low carbon economy. Universities, NGOs and institutions including the Natural History Museum are taking part. Museums are encouraged to add relevant events to the BEIS event calendar. More details and branding are available from GreenGreatBritain@beis.gov.uk. [Business Green](#), [Great Green Britain Week](#) (event calendar – scroll to the bottom to add an event)

Call for papers: Visitors Studies Group conference

The Visitors Studies Group is seeking presentations for its conference which takes place at the National Gallery on 7th – 8th March 2019. The broad topic is 'reflecting the wider world, advocating for change.' The deadline is 5th October, contact admin@visitors.org.uk for further details and to discuss your ideas. [VSG](#)

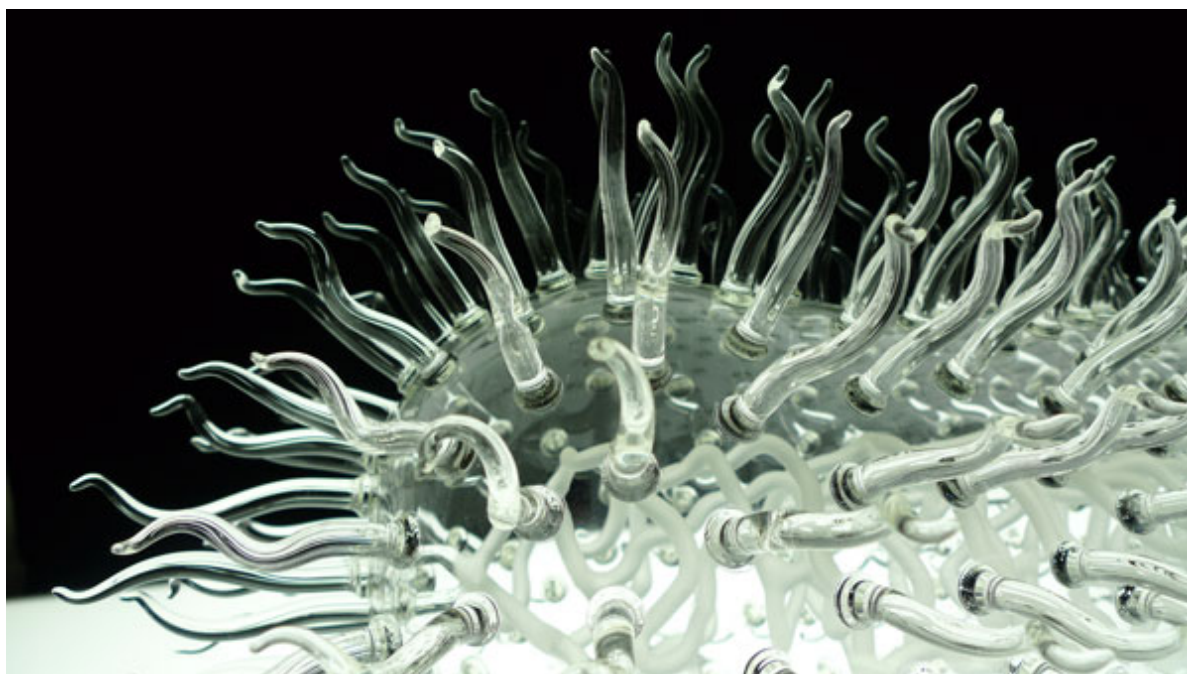
Audience development for museums

A conference in Augsburg, Germany will look at audience development for museums with topics including museums in the digital age, with a case study from the Science Museum; attracting millennials to create intergenerational museums; and museums as a gateway to a new home for migrants and refugees. The event takes place on 22 – 23rd October. [Bayerische Museumsakademie](#)

Essential digital skills for museum professionals

An eight-week long MOOC (Massive online open course) is launching in October 2018 to teach essential digital skills for museum professionals. It has been organised by the Museum Sector Alliance, an EU-wide network of museum organisations. The course covers managing data, using digital tools, developing digital content and writing a digital strategy for a museum. The course is free and requires a commitment of up to 10 hours per week. The deadline to apply is 30th September. [MU.SA](#)

Evolving festivals



Luke Jerram's representation of an ecoli, courtesy of Luke Jerram.

Scottish festival becomes regional engagement fund

Museums Galleries Scotland is ending its Festival of Museums after 12 years, but investing the £40k it spends annually on the event in a new regional engagement fund. MGS says that the festival helped museums to develop event planning, marketing and income generation skills, much improving the sector's knowledge base. The new fund will give museums the opportunity to take part in local or regional festival and tourist events, rather than being tied to a specific three days. MGS's interim CEO John McLeish said "*I hope that the flexibility of this new fund will allow museums... to embed themselves more firmly in the cultural and social fabric of their local areas.*" [M + H](#), [MGS](#)

Otherworld: New monetised model for museum Lates in London

Culture24 is leading on a new Lates museum festival to run over two days close to midsummer across London. 'Otherworld' replaces Museums at Night in the capital, and is refocused in a number of ways: participants will buy a wristband which will give them access at all venues on their chosen night, programming will be co-created with 18 – 30 year olds and there will be a range of events showcasing creative talent. Venues will receive a slice of the ticket revenue, depending on size, and gain the experience to develop capacity for their own Lates during the rest of the year. Historic houses, libraries and archives as well as museums and galleries are welcome to take part in the first event on 21st – 22nd June 2019. Culture24 hopes that this will develop a sustainable model for museum Lates which can be adopted by other cities nationally and internationally. [Culture24](#)

Creatives, curators and visa applications

A number of stories over the summer have focused on the difficulties festivals and cultural institutions are experiencing obtaining visas for creatives seeking to fulfil cultural work in the UK. Two Egyptian museum professionals have recently been refused visas, although in one case the decision was reversed after intervention by museum professionals. Elsewhere Womad and Edinburgh festivals also had well-publicised difficulties obtaining visas for artists. Nick Barley, Director of the Edinburgh International Book Festival said *"I think this is deliberate, and they have to change the way they are going about it... Whatever your politics, you need to have cultural dialogue...this is about the future of the UK."* [Museums Journal](#), [Guardian](#), [Herald Scotland](#)

The power of museums as health and community spaces

Study finds that gallery visits work as pain relief weeks after visits

A new study published in the Journal *Pain Medicine* by researchers from the University of California, Davis found that visits to a gallery reduced suffering for those in chronic pain up to three weeks after the event. The research involved hour-long private tours of the Crocker Art Museum in Sacramento. 58% said they felt less pain, and many reported feeling less socially disconnected, an issue which also often arises for this group. No healthcare professionals were involved in the work, and the researchers suggest that this may make it 'less stigmatising and more normalising than [traditional] art therapy'. [The Art Newspaper](#)

A Social Prescription: Collaborations through arts, health and education

The annual conference of the gallery education organisation Engage is this year about social prescription - exploring how museums and galleries can collaborate on projects with health and wellbeing outcomes. There are already many examples of gallery educators working with health and social care services, technologists and researchers. Case studies cover rethinking urban planning and the uses of VR; there will also be an ethics committee and a speed mentoring session. The event takes place at the Whitworth Gallery on 13th – 14th November. Early bird tickets start at £145 for Engage members and £360 for non-members. There are some bursaries available. [Engage](#)

19% of accredited museums still not providing basic online information for disabled visitors

The State of Museum Access Report 2018 has been published by VocalEyes, giving an audit of information for disabled people on the websites of all 1,718 accredited museums. The report found that:

- 19% of accredited museums have no information for disabled people on their websites. This is a slight improvement on the 2016, when the figure was 27%.
- Many other museums provide very thin information which only considers the needs of visitors with a mobility impairment.

The report also offers guidance for museums wishing to improve their offer, with suggestions for approaches to welcome potential disabled visitors and inform them of barriers to access. Recently published Taking Part statistics for adult museum visits in 2017 – 18 show a gap of just under 5% between disabled and non-disabled audiences. Well thought out website information can help in closing the 'disability engagement gap'. [VocalEyes](#), [History of Place](#), [Taking Part](#)

Arts Minister calls for tourism to become more accessible

Arts Minister Michael Ellis and Minister for Disabled People Sarah Newton have called for more tourist and heritage venues to become accessible. VisitEngland's Inclusive Tourism Award highlighted Eureka! Children's Museum in Halifax and the Roman Baths in Bath as examples of good practice. [Gov.uk](#), [VisitEngland](#)

Awards

A round up of Europe-wide museum awards

There are now several museum prizes which are open to applicants from across Europe, from the Museums + Heritage Awards for Excellence, to Children in Museums and European Museum of the Year. A new publication from the Network of European Museums Organisations summarises eight prizes in one publication, giving an overview of the criteria and benefits for museums taking part.

[NEMO](#)

Museums Change Lives Awards

The MA is launching new Museums Change Lives Awards to celebrate museums and individuals who have made an impact on local communities. The three awards for museums are: best project, local hero award and best small museum project. The Radical Changemaker Award will celebrate the work of an individual. The deadline for entries is 8th October, the winner will be announced at the MA's conference in November. [Museums Journal](#)

Also: The Horniman's Aquarium curator Jamie Craggs has been announced as Aquarist of the Year by the Marine Aquarium Societies of North America, in honour of his work on the seeding of coral reefs. The work will now be used by Jamie, his team and international partners in efforts to understand and repair damage to coral reefs caused by climate change. [Reefs](#), [Horniman](#)

Funding

£12k grants available for independent museums rethinking strategy and sustainability

The Association of Independent Museums has launched a new funding scheme for AIM member museums seeking to improve sustainability, management and income generation. ACE is supporting AIM to offer a fund of £55k for each of the next four years. Major grants of £4 – 12k will enable museums to create projects impacting their culture, strategy and business model; smaller grants of £3k - £6k will help improve financial sustainability. Projects will draw from the ideas in AIM's Hallmarks of Prospering Museums document. The deadline for the first round is 20th November. [AIM](#), [AIM](#) (Hallmarks)

New round of capital development grants for Welsh museums and archives

The Welsh government is offering capital funding to accredited independent and local authority museums, and local authority or not for profit archives. The Transformation grants for 2019 – 20 are up to £120k for smaller projects to improve appearance, environment and collections care, or up to £300k for larger strategic projects. The first deadline in the two-step process is 28th September. [Wales.gov](#)

Funding support for networks 2018

Arts & Fundraising is offering one round of fundraising training for networks in 2018, with up to £1k available for a network containing at least ten people, or £2k for a minimum of 20 people. The deadline is noon on 5th October, and activity must take place before 31st March 2019. [Arts fundraising & philanthropy](#)

Paul Mellon research, digital and curatorial grants of £500k open for applications

The Paul Mellon Centre for Studies in British Art has opened a number of grant schemes together worth £500k. Options include a £40k research grant to allow institutions to appoint a research curator to carry out work towards a publication or exhibition; digital projects grants also up to £40k for research and collaboration to be published online; travel grants up to £2k to support research; £3k educational programme grants and £7k publication grants. Museums Sheffield and Manchester Art Gallery were among the recipients in 2017, both using the funding to support research curators. The deadline for applications is 30th September. [Paul Mellon Centre](#), [Paul Mellon Centre](#) (2017 recipients)

Royal Society launches £3k Places of Science grants for small museums

The Royal Society has launched the Places of Science scheme which offers grants of up to £3k to small museums wishing to tell the story of science and scientists relevant to local communities. Projects should encourage participation and engage communities in new and interesting ways. The scheme will also favour stories that feature historically unrepresented people and museums which did not benefit from the 2016 Local Heroes funding scheme. The deadline for applications is 3pm on 26th September. [Royal Society](#), [AIM](#)

VAT33a scheme open for applications

Introduced in 2001, the VAT refund scheme for museums and galleries is aimed at supporting the provision of free access to museums and galleries in the UK. The scheme allows museums and galleries that meet the criteria to claim back VAT incurred on most goods and services purchased in order to grant free rights of admission to their collections. The scheme is currently open, and applications are welcome from eligible museums by 2nd November to VAT33A@culture.gov.uk. [Gov.uk](#) (more information and eligibility criteria)

Social and cultural policy

Civil Society report published

DCMS has published its Civil Society report, which looks at how Government can work with and strengthen civil society. It aims to support a culture in which people have a pathway to contribute over a lifetime through voluntary work and not-for-profit socially beneficial organisations. Proposals include:

- Government will fund the training of 3,500 people in community organising by 2020. Community organisers will listen to people's concerns, act as connectors and help to find solutions.
- A new Innovation in Democracy programme will pilot participatory democracy approaches.
- DCMS will work with the Department for Education to develop proposals for youth participation.
- The National Citizen Service Trust will be created as an independent public body accountable to parliament. (There are also opportunities for museums to apply for National Citizen Service contracts from December 2019).
- There will be £90m to help disadvantaged young people transition into work, backed by major employers and social sector organisations.
- There will also be a programme developed between DCMS and other Government departments to address the lack of community spaces and the skills to manage them sustainably.
- Government will work with partners to produce new models of community funding including social impact investment, charitable funding and corporate investment. Big Society Capital and Access (The Foundation for Social Investment) will devote around £35 million of dormant accounts funding.
- A cross-government group will be formed to work with civil society and look at ways in which it can be better involved in the policy making process. DCMS will also convene a regular forum for social enterprises.

This month the Government has also published its annual Community Life statistics which track data such as family contact, volunteering and how connected people feel to their neighbourhoods. In 2017 – 18, 14% thought their neighbourhood had improved in the last two years, 24% thought it had got worse. 38% took part in some sort of civic activity in the past year. [Heritage Alliance](#) (scroll), [Gov.uk](#), [Politics Home](#), [Gov.uk](#) (community life statistics), [Museums Journal](#),

Also: An evaluation report of 11 arts centres based outside Leeds City Centre assesses the benefits of cultural activity in city areas often regarded as 'barren' and 'undesirable' and demonstrates that audiences who may not visit city centre venues will engage locally. The report's authors say that the work 'fills a gap in cultural policy research by looking at organisations that are usually overlooked'. [Arts Professional](#)

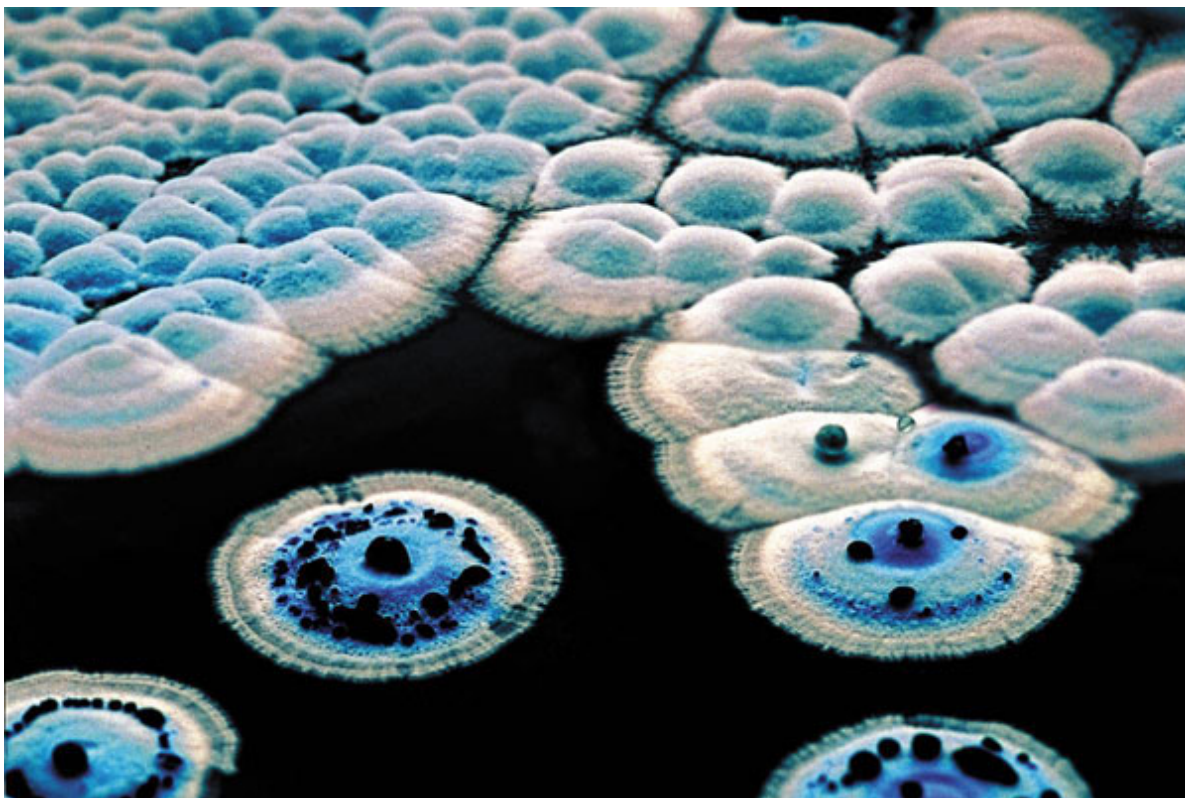
Planning cultural districts to prevent gentrification and exclusion of local communities

A new report from the Global Cultural Districts Network has offered a guide to creating cultural areas without causing gentrification through ignoring and squeezing out local communities, rather than allowing them to benefit from development. It suggests that currently government, businesses and property developers are the most prominent voices in the governance of cultural districts and suggests that models which give artists and residents a voice are essential. It includes case studies from Hong Kong, Glasgow and California. [GCDN](#), [Arts Professional](#)

GDPR guide to archiving personal data

The National Archives has published a 'Guide to archiving personal data' to help with navigating the provisions and exemptions of the new GDPR law as it applies to archives. It explains how, since May 25th, the rules have changed about data relating to living people which is intended to be transferred to archive services. It also explains the new concept of 'archiving in the public interest'. [National Archives](#) (full guide), [National Archives](#) (news item)

International



Colonies of *Streptomyces coelicolor* making the blue antibiotic actinorhodin. Image: Tobias Kieser, John Innes Centre

National Museum of Brazil destroyed by fire along with most of its collections

The 200 year old National Museum of Brazil in Rio de Janeiro has been destroyed by fire along with around 90% of the 20 million items it contained relating to natural history and ethnography. It was one of the largest museums of its kind in South America. It is not yet known what caused the fire, but underfunding has been blamed for a lack of sprinklers in the museum, and firefighters with 'no water, no ladders, no equipment'. The museum's Vice Director Luiz Duarte told reporters "*it is an unbearable catastrophe. It is 200 years of this country's heritage. It is 200 years of memory. It is 200 years of science. It is 200 years of culture, of education.*" Professor Paul Buckup who is an expert in fish science, told reporters that he arrived after the fire was underway to find parts of the building with animal specimens still intact. With colleagues and soldiers, he helped break down doors to rescue some items. A few objects, notably meteorites, survived the fire itself. There has been public anger at the underinvestment that enabled the destruction, and a demonstration against budget cuts took place outside the museum the following day. Among the probable losses is 'Luiza', the oldest human remains found in the Americas and an ethnology collection including pre-Colombian items. The museum has published a number of ways to help on its Facebook page - any institution interested in offering specific support should contact falecomdiretor@mn.ufrj.br. [BBC](#), [Arts Journal](#)(translation of Facebook page) [BBC](#), [Guardian](#), [The Art Newspaper](#), [Museums Journal](#)

Also: Palmyra, the ancient site in Syria extensively damaged by ISIS will reopen to tourists in summer 2019. Provincial governor Talal Barazi says 'the authorities now have a project to repair all the damage caused to Palmyra's Old City' However, the UK Government continues to advise against travel to the war afflicted country. [RT](#), [The Art Newspaper](#)

Objects taken in a spate of thefts of Chinese art in Europe may be stolen to order

A series of thefts of Chinese artefacts from European museums, beginning in Stockholm in 2010, may be driven by Chinese collectors as China increasingly values its cultural heritage at a time when its elite is acquiring huge wealth. A piece in GQ comments that the thieves "*often seem to be working from a shopping list—and appear content to leave behind high-value objects that aren't on it*". It argues that billionaires and powerful corporates are now keen to acquire some of the ten million antiquities that have left China since 1840, including those taken during the sacking of the Old Summer Palace by British and French troops in 1860. James Ratcliffe, Director of Recoveries at the Art Loss Register says "*the Chinese don't need a coordinating campaign. There are enough Chinese collectors with a huge amount of money who want the pride of acquiring this art.*" [GQ](#)

Also: Meanwhile in the US the Peabody Museum of Natural History has received a gift of \$160m from a single donor, who first visited the museum when he was six. Philanthropist Edward P Bass said "*I see institutions as having the power to transmit and perpetuate a set of fundamental values, and to do so generation to generation.*" The museum will use the funds for a major upgrade. [New York Times](#)

Seriously playful

Games to educate and engage the public in decision making

Nesta is carrying out research into how board and digital games can be used to engage the public in decision-making on complex issues. For example, in Cambridge a combination of Minecraft and virtual reality was used to enable people to walk around a model of a planned neighbourhood, resulting in a 'hugely diverse and creative range of proposals' on how to improve the area. Games have also been used to expand public understanding, such as Aardman's Hungry City game exploring the future of food, which was rolled out to several science centres, and games to think through goals from engineering plant life to terraforming Mars. Nesta is now looking for further good examples of games for a wider public good for a forthcoming report: please send examples to [@FEngasser](#) or [@tom_saunders](#). [Nesta](#), [Aardman](#)

Also: Researchers at the University of Plymouth have run experiments to discover the extent to which people are influenced by the words and actions of humanoid robots. They found that adults were unaffected, but children aged 5 – 7 were significantly more likely to agree with opinions uttered by a robot, even when obviously wrong. [Science Daily](#)

VR kings of infinite space

New developments in VR allow users to wander through a seemingly infinite environment, while being bounded in a relatively small real-world space, but without ever bumping into the walls. The technology takes advantage of eye movements to readjust the environment without the user noticing. This technology may be useful in establishing mobile VR experiences in a relatively small museum area. [BBC](#)

French teenagers test app giving them free access to culture

Meanwhile in France, 400 teenagers are trying out a phone app which allows them to explore their local cultural offer – from plays, film and concerts to books until they find something that appeals to them. In the year of their 18th birthday, users will get a free €500 credit through the app to spend on cultural products. The €430m-a-year plan will be rolled out to 10,000 more teenagers in October, 80% funded by the private sector. There are some potential problems: the scheme has led to a debate about what 'counts' as culture and whether films like Star Wars should be included. A similar project in Italy led to students selling their passes to the highest bidder. Some French politicians have argued that the project must be accompanied by some form of mediation, so that young people are encouraged to expand their cultural knowledge rather than consuming what they already know. [Guardian](#)

Cultural education and social mobility

Class, money and anxiety shaping youth engagement with culture

A network of young people's arts groups, ART31 has published the results of its research into arts engagement among young people. 'Young People and Arts Engagement: What We Need' is based on an online survey followed by workshops, involving 696 people aged from 7 to 25. The report identified social anxiety and ticket prices as barriers, but the report also comments: "*there was a pattern that was exposed during the workshop. The young people from less privileged backgrounds had not been to the museum, theatre and art galleries outside of the setting of a school trip*". The report recommends more programming outside school, including at youth clubs, and opportunities for young people to genuinely lead rather than tokenistic inclusion. ART31 itself carries out a programme of work to give young people access to the arts at a time when these have declining space in the school curriculum compared to Ebacc subjects. One participant commented on ART31's work: "*it's had a massive impact. I mean I wouldn't be doing anything right now... For me personally, I'd still be sitting in my room, playing my guitar on my own, I wouldn't be out seeing shows and meeting people, you know? Because when you don't know what's out there, it's sort of hard to discover what's out there.*" [Arts Professional](#), [ACE](#) (full report)

Also: The Labour Party has said that it intends to 'put creativity back at the heart of the school curriculum', promising an extra £160m for cultural activities in primary schools. It also says that it will review the Ebacc to make sure arts are not sidelined. [The Art Newspaper](#)

'Children who study the arts do better': new briefing on Arts in Schools

The Cultural Learning Alliance has published the fourth of its succinct briefing papers, this time on Arts in Schools. The four-page document brings together statistics, quotes and further reading on the topic. It argues that 'children who study the arts do better', being more likely to attend university and more employable. Arts can also improve cognitive abilities up to 17% and enhance results in maths and English. It quotes Andreas Schleicher of the Organisation for Economic Co-operation and Development (OECD) who says "*in whatever way you construct your list of 21st century skills, you will always come across creativity... this is all about imagination, inquisitiveness, collaboration, self-discipline.*" [CLA](#)

Also: An increasing number of libraries are adding makerspaces to their buildings, giving the opportunity for high technology creativity, including Fab Lab Devon, The Fleet Makery in Hampshire and CreatorSpace in Watford. [Gov.uk](#)

Education Secretary announces research linking cultural experiences with social mobility

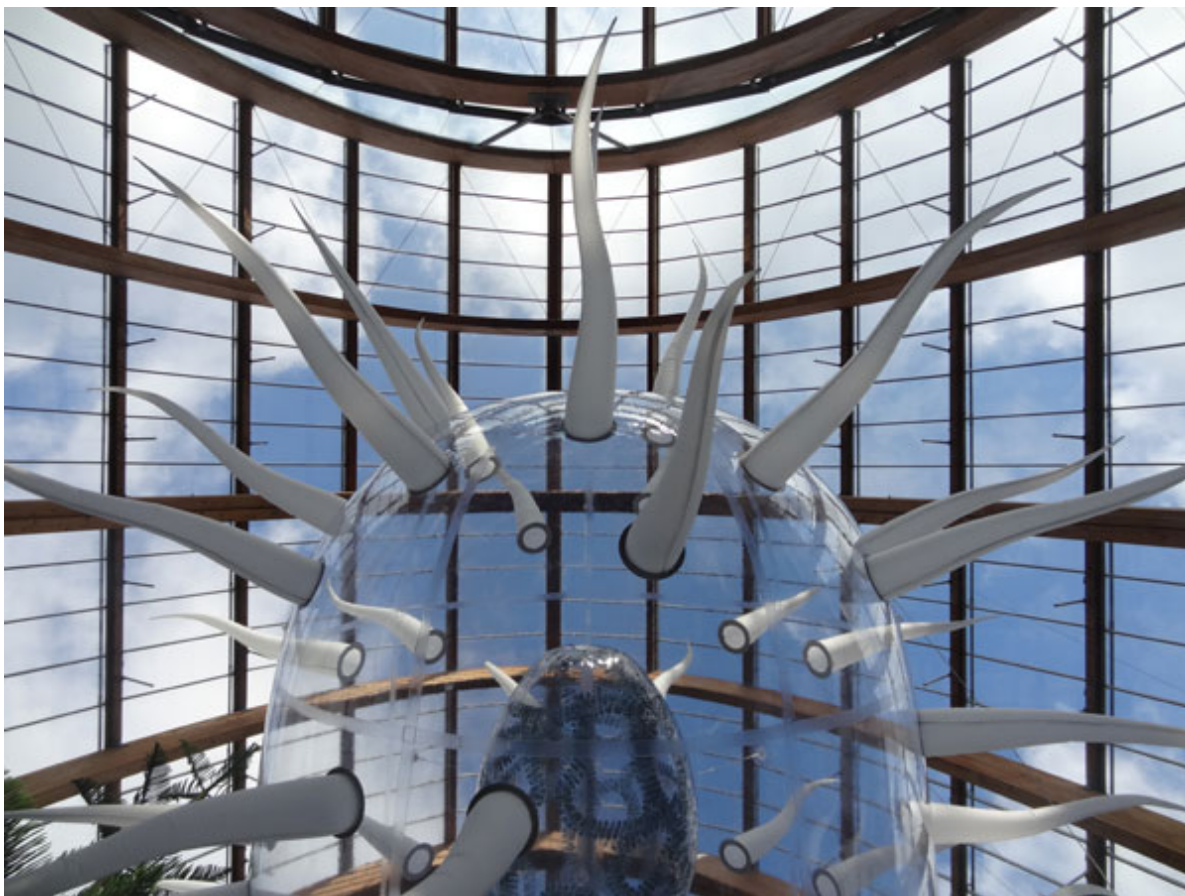
Education Secretary Damien Hinds has given a speech to the Resolution Foundation about ways of improving the life chances and social mobility of disadvantaged children. Currently, children receiving free school meals are 23% less likely to be in employment compared to their peers by the age of 27. He emphasised the importance of early years language skills and being read to at home, as well as supporting the Ebacc as a source of core learning. He also announced that Dame Martina Milburn and the Social Mobility Commission will undertake research on how extracurricular soft skills can improve social mobility and how *"to take further steps on behalf of those children who aren't getting the rich range of cultural experiences they need."* This and other strands of work will be backed up by a big data project tracking young people's outcomes across the country over the next five to six years. [Department for Education](#), [Cultural Learning Alliance](#)

Arts and A Level languages 'hanging on by the fingertips' in some state schools

New figures continue to show a decline in arts subjects at GCSE and A Level. 2018 results for England show a 26% decline in Performing and Expressive Arts since 2017 and a 65% decline since 2010. Across all arts subjects there was a 5% decrease compared to 2017 and 24% since 2010. There is a similar pattern at GCSE with a 10% decline in arts subjects in the last year. Meanwhile History, which is among Ebacc subjects, has 22% more entries since 2010 and 2% since 2017. There is also a slight rise in 16 year olds taking modern languages by 0.4%, despite a 2.7% decline in young people in this age group. However, the Association of School and College Leaders argues that languages as well as arts are at risk at A Level in state schools because of financial pressure. General Secretary Geoff Barton said *"Subjects like A-level music, French and German are hanging on by their fingertips in the state sector because schools and colleges cannot afford to run courses with relatively small numbers of students on current funding levels."* Only 3,422 students sat German at A Level in the last year. *The Arts Newspaper* takes an international view on the trends in UK education, pointing out that recent Chinese educational reforms have been in the opposite direction and now emphasise the liberal arts, after multinational companies found Chinese applicants 'lacking in creative spark'. It suggests that the UK may be 'valuing skills tailored to a disappearing job market'. [ASCL](#), [Art Newspaper](#), [Rhinegold](#), [BBC](#), [Cultural Learning Alliance](#), [The Arts Newspaper](#)

Also: Meanwhile in the US, study of the humanities at degree level, including history, has collapsed since the financial crisis, with only subjects with a toehold in the sciences showing buoyancy. [The Atlantic](#)

Visitor numbers and tourism



Luke Jerram's giant ecoli, installed in Sheffield. Courtesy of Luke Jerram

National Portrait Gallery figures vastly under-estimated by faulty counting technology

Earlier this year it appeared that National Portrait Gallery visitor figures had fallen by 45% in the space of a year to 1.1m. Now it has emerged that the figures were miscounted by Ipsos Retail counting technology, and the corrected figure adds an extra 600k visitors in 2017 – 18 alone when 1,691,547 attended. This represents a far smaller decline in audience of around 10%. The gallery discovered the error when the manual count into the BP Portrait Award in July diverged sharply from the technology. It now seems likely the system has been miscalculating since at least spring 2017. *The Art Newspaper* has suggested that the remaining 10% decline is because NPG audiences have not been attracted to recent shows featuring contemporary art. It argues that the gallery's current exhibition 'Michael Jackson: On the Wall' may strike a balance between covering the celebrity topics that reach a wider audience at that venue and introducing an element of experimental art. [Guardian](#), [The Art Newspaper](#), [The Art Newspaper](#), [NPG](#)

VisitEngland attraction figures show declines in London visitors for third year

VisitEngland has published figures showing trends in visitor attraction figures for 2017. 1,416 attractions gave data, of which 31% were museums and galleries. The figures show:

- Across all attractions there was a 2% increase in visits, but visits to museums and art galleries were down by 1% for the second year running. These declines were largely driven by London-based museums, which had a 4% decrease in visitors.
- Paid-for museums and art galleries also saw growth of 5%, while free venues declined by 2%.
- London-based attractions of all kinds were particularly likely to see a fall: down 2% in 2017 and 1% in 2016. All other regions grew, except the West Midlands and North West, both down by 1%.
- Size is also a factor in growth: across all attraction types larger institutions saw the smallest growth, whereas small and medium-sized venues grew by 4 – 5%.

Commenting on the figures, the MA's Alistair Brown said that because statistics across all the museums in England are not collected it can be hard to pick out the nuances and changing patterns in museum visits. This gap can lead the media to treat DCMS statistics on national museums as if they reflect the sector as a whole. He writes "*our London-centric media seems barely aware that there is a whole world of museums beyond Zone 1, let alone interested in the fact that many are doing a roaring trade. You only have to look at the success of places like the Black Country Living Museum or Derby Museums, which have both seen strong year-on-year growth consistently for the last five years, to see that what goes for London doesn't necessarily go for the rest of the country.*" Stronger regional growth across all attractions may also be a sign that the Discover England Fund, launched in 2016 to encourage tourists to look beyond London, is having some success.

[VisitEngland](#), [Museums Journal](#), [Museums Journal](#), [Gov.uk](#)

Also: figures released by Leeds City Council and West Yorkshire Local Authority Museum Partnership showed that museums in the area welcomed 1.7m visitors and the £7.5m invested in museums generated £33m for the regional economy. [Museums Journal](#), [Museums Journal](#), [Arts Industry](#), [Leeds.gov](#) (2min promotional film)

Long haul travellers driving UK tourism

Meanwhile, new figures show that tourism in the UK has continued to grow because of its popularity with overseas visitors.

- Data from the Office of National Statistics shows that overseas tourism to Scotland rose by 16.9% to 3.2m, with spending increasing 23% to 2.3bn. A majority of these (1.9m) were European visitors, up by 17%, contrasting with a 1% increase in Europeans visiting the rest of the UK.
- Chinese tourist numbers have continued to grow, up 29% since 2016, and spending £694m. Tourists were also up 35% from India and 13% from the US.

[ALVA](#), [Scottish government](#), [ONS](#)

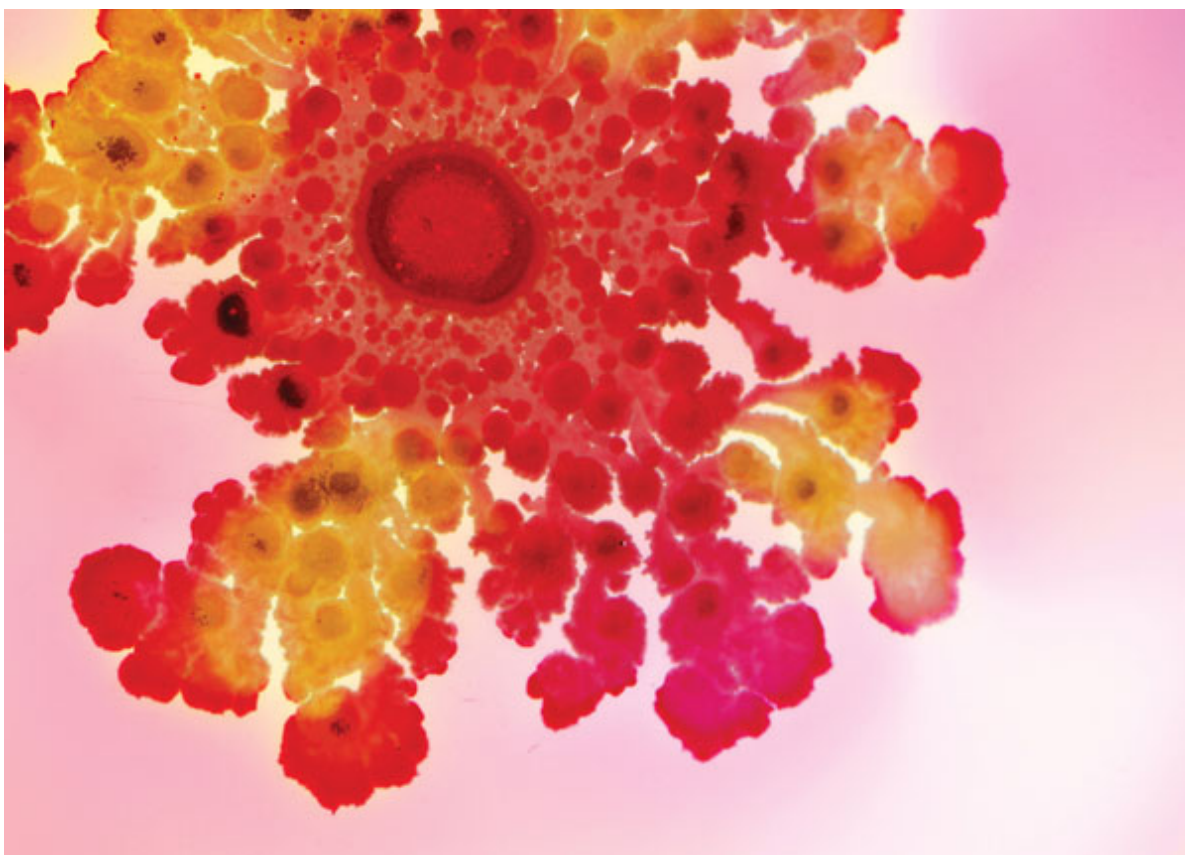
Taking Part statistics show a decline in children's museum visits

DCMS has published adult and child Taking Part statistics for the year 2017 – 18, for museums and galleries, arts, heritage and libraries. The figures show:

- 58% of 5 – 15 year olds visited a museum or gallery, a statistically significant decline compared to the 63.3% who visited the previous year. These figures are driven by a reduction in visits outside school. Visits to heritage sites were static at around 68%.
- Figures for adult museum visits come from a smaller sample, covering quarter 4 of 2017 – 18, to preserve consistency after some experimental changes to the questions asked in the first three quarters. The figures show a small decline to 49.7%, down from a peak of 53.1% in 2013 – 14.
- However, the direction of adult figures varies sharply by region: London figures are down by 13.3% and the East of England by 9.8%. The North East, which was among the regions with the lowest engagement in 2016 – 17 saw a rise of 11.5%.
- There remains a significant gap of 19% in museum visits between adults in the higher and lower socio-economic group, but this is the lowest figure since records began in 2005.
- For the first time, Taking Part published figures about the barriers to cultural engagement. These showed that the main reasons for not attending museums, arts and heritage sites were a lack of interest and time; whereas lack of need was the main reason for not using libraries.
- Fewer than 5% said that feeling out of place deterred them from attending arts events (figures for museums were too small to report).

A technical report has also been published for year 13, explaining the methods used to produce the statistics and the changes made. [Taking Part overview](#), [Gov.uk](#) (adult), [Gov.uk](#) (child) [Gov.uk](#) (technical report)

Museum collections - sharing and storage



Penabacillus strain. Image: Soonhee Moon / Tal Danino

Not the hoard of Smaug: curators respond to Simon Jenkins

Guardian commentator Simon Jenkins, has criticised museums for keeping a majority of collections in store, including 'some 80% of the Tate's'. He also argued that 'the authenticity of an object in a case loses its appeal' and that facsimile reproductions in museums are just as good. Nevertheless, he also argues that original objects should be out in the world, for example, Stephenson's Rocket on a railway platform. His piece led to a number of letters from curators and museum professionals, laying out the many reasons for museums to hold objects in store, from light sensitivity to material important for research. Letters also offered an abbreviated overview of accessioning and loans. Two former curators wrote "*museum basements do not contain Smaug's hoard of jealously guarded treasures but artefacts including flints, pottery and glass sherds in their millions: these are the building blocks not only of our country's history and culture but also those of many other countries that do not have the resources to store, conserve and analyse such objects.*" [Guardian](#) (letters), [Guardian](#)

Also: Science Museum Group Director Ian Blatchford has argued that national museums should lend more star objects, as Stephenson's Rocket continues to tour museums in the north after a century in London. He said "*if great things always stay in the same place, people take them for granted and they lose their power. By lending great objects outside London, the person lending benefits as much as the person getting it because suddenly everything is looked at with a fresh eye. It's disruptive in the very best sense.*" [The Times](#)

Free Tate workshops on sharing works of art

Tate has added a new date to its series of free workshops for museum and gallery professionals interested in borrowing, lending or acquiring artworks. Run by Tate Registrars, the workshops will also be a forum for sharing collections in all possible ways and participants will be eligible for bursaries for strategic loans from Tate's National Collection of British Art. The new date is 22nd – 23rd October at Tate Modern. [Tate](#)

FOI reveals London councils' art collection in storage

The *Evening Standard* has mapped the whereabouts of the art collections of a majority of London councils through Freedom of Information requests and reports that 10,000 works worth £150m are in store because of lack of gallery space. Southwark Council's collection has been in storage since the 2013 fire at the Cuming Museum; two other councils with little or nothing on display have very small collections: one out of nine Newnham-owned paintings is on show, and Hammersmith & Fulham lends sometimes. The City of London has much larger holdings of 3,800 objects, 7% of which is on show at the Guildhall Art Gallery. Director of Compton Verney gallery Professor Steven Parissien said that councils should lend to smaller galleries, hospitals and schools saying 'it's not about monetary value – it's about cultural value'. The article could lead a non-professional reader to believe that lending is free: it does not address the conservation time, transport, gallery assessment, insurance and other costs associated with lending, which may present difficulties for economically squeezed councils and recipients like schools and hospitals. However, there are an increasing number of projects aimed at facilitating loans and the Touring Exhibitions Group offers useful resources for organisations interested in the processes for lending and borrowing. [Times](#), [Evening Standard](#), [TEG](#)

Science Museum begins 'most ambitious project in a generation' to transform collections storage

The Science Museum has begun a major five year project to move 320,000 stored objects from Blythe House in London to its storage facility in Wiltshire, where it will create a new building for sustainable, energy efficient collections care. The Government decided to sell Blythe House in 2015, a building which is not pollution-proof and no longer meets modern standards for storage. The Science Museum's project is aimed to increase public access both physically and digitally and engage a global audience with the museum's holdings. The development is in line with the Mendoza Review which has warned that underinvestment in storage, insufficient space and poor environmental quality place collections at risk. [M + H](#)

Jobs

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

- [Administrator - National Museum Directors' Council](#)
- [Touring Engineering Manager - Natural History Museum](#)
- [Photographer - National Museums Scotland](#)
- [Digital Content Producer - National Galleries Scotland](#)
- [Curator, Romance Collections - British Library](#)
- [Curator \(Cosford\) - RAF museum](#)
- [Network Operations Analyst - Royal Botanic Gardens Kew](#)

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

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