

Making Museums Work

- sharing the UK's experience

Withdrawn on 3 November 2020

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Welcome

This prospectus provides a brief introduction to some of the areas of expertise in museums in which the UK excels, with examples of projects we have undertaken in a range of countries.

Introduction

'When other countries are looking to develop their museums, they come to the UK'.

*Ed Vaizey, Minister for Culture, Communications and the Creative Industries,
Department of Culture, Media and Sport*

'UKTI helps our museums and museum supply companies do business around the world. Please get in touch; we can connect you to this unparalleled source of expertise and creativity'.

Richard Parry, Head, Experience Economy Team UKTI

The UK museum sector has a global reputation. In the last 15 years, over £2bn has been invested in our museums, creating world-class museums and first-rate suppliers of products and services to the heritage industry. As a result, the UK museum sector's skills and expertise are much in demand from countries undertaking large scale redevelopment of their museums and galleries and from individual institutions worldwide embarking on major museum development programmes.

The UK museum sector comprises museums - national, regional and independent - and a broad range of commercial companies which support them. The products and skills on offer include design and development, interpretation and training. All are keen to share the expertise they have acquired.

The UK's rich cultural offer is a major draw for international tourists. The UK has been ranked as third in the world for cultural resources by the World Economic Forum. The cultural institutions in South Kensington,

including the Natural History Museum, the Science Museum and the Victoria & Albert Museum, receive more visits per year than the city of Venice.

UK Trade & Investment (UKTI) works with UK-based businesses to ensure their success in international markets and to encourage the best overseas companies to look to the UK as their global partner of choice. Through its staff, located in embassies and consulates in 96 countries, UKTI provides expert trade advice and practical support to UK companies wishing to grow their business overseas.

Richard Parry
richard.parry@ukti.gsi.gov.uk
+44 (0)207 2154956

Barrie Harris
Barrie.harris@ukti.gsi.gov.uk
+44 (0)207 2154274

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Museum design and development

A museum building has to fulfil many differing purposes: galleries for displaying and securing collections, public spaces for cafés and shops, and spaces for storage, workshops and staff.

Many museums are housed in historic buildings, which can present challenges for contemporary users and require a sympathetic and knowledgeable approach to development. One of our most successful new museums has been Tate Modern, housed in the converted post-war Bankside Power Station, which attracted over 5 million visitors in 2012.

In many countries, new museums are housed in iconic new buildings which are a concrete representation of national identity and confidence. Iconic new museum buildings in the UK include the Riverside Museum in Glasgow, Scotland, designed by Zaha Hadid Architects, and the Hepworth in Wakefield, Yorkshire, designed by David Chipperfield Architects and shorted listed for the Stirling Prize for Architecture in 2012.



A new national museum for Oman

Arts Architecture International are the design architects for the National Museum of Oman, planned in conjunction with museum designers Jasper Jacob Associates. Situated on a prestigious site in the heart of Old Muscat, the new building showcases the rich cultural heritage of Oman from prehistoric times to the present day.

The main entrance addresses a new public square, and leads into an inspiring air-conditioned triple-height space celebrating the different regions of Oman. From this leads other galleries displaying Oman's maritime heritage, its civilisation and its rich collection of historic arms and armour. A helical staircase, featuring an archaeological timeline which gives an overview of 10,000 years of Omani history, gives access to the upper floors which showcase Oman's vibrant intangible heritage, including music, storytelling, dance and cuisine, and offers an Open Storage gallery providing public access to the museum's diverse collections and the story of modern Oman.



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Interpretation and exhibition design

Our museums are exciting and engaging places. Good design and interpretation are essential ingredients for a successful museum. It is not enough simply to put objects in a gallery. Visitors need help in understanding objects, making sense of museum collections and putting them in context. Museum designers are, in effect, story tellers in three dimensional space, communicating with the audience and bringing out the stories and the learning locked in collections using different types of media: graphics, images, multimedia and interactives.

Engaging with families

Het Scheepvaartmuseum, the National Maritime Museum of the Netherlands, shows how Holland's culture has been shaped by the sea. Following an extensive redevelopment, the new museum allows visitors to explore 500 years of maritime history. The 'Tale of the Whale' whaling gallery is proving to be particularly popular with young visitors. The gallery was specifically designed by Haley Sharpe Design to communicate effectively with children aged 6-12, family and educational groups. Providing interpretative consultancy, exhibition design, interactive development and visual communication, the Haley Sharpe Design team envisioned a sensitive yet occasionally provocative exhibition environment in which visitors are able to explore the historical narratives, and mankind's relationship with the whale, as well as the ecological context of Holland's whale trade. The route and placement of exhibits was carefully designed to provide a synergy with the historic building, and participatory experiences were built in throughout the gallery.



Hong Kong's City Gallery

MET Studio (with Oval Partnership) created the 1,500 sqm City Gallery, a new gallery and exhibition venue, the most recent project of the Hong Kong Planning Museum, which takes as its theme planning and infrastructure in Hong Kong. To bring this broad and challenging subject to life, the design team created three main focus elements. The first was to evoke the collective memory of Hong Kong residents using features unique to the city; the second to create challenging spaces to encourage visitors to explore and revisit, and the third to make the information flow two-way with feedback built in, reflecting the open nature of the planning process.



Archaeological sites

There are widespread challenges in conserving and interpreting archaeological sites. In addition to pressures from ever-expanding urban development and increasing pollution, there are issues around preserving the site, displaying excavated sites and providing intellectual access to archaeological knowledge. Finding the best ways to interpret archaeological sites, particularly prehistoric sites which can be hard to understand, to communicate their significance and to ensure the retention of the site's 'spirit of place' all require specialist expertise and advice. The UK has many thousands of archaeological sites, including World Heritage Sites such as Stonehenge and Hadrian's Wall, and has developed significant expertise in their research and interpretation.

Showcasing Sweden's archaeological heritage

Uppåkra, near Lund in Sweden, is one of the most important Iron Age sites in Europe. With more than 1000 years of continuous settlement, the site has yielded over 23,000 precious metal artefacts, as well as a major temple site. It is currently being excavated by Lund University and Barker Langham is assisting the University and the board of stakeholders, including the Archaeological Museum, Lund, in creating a world-class archaeological centre at Uppåkra, based around a functioning archaeological dig, and a new Cultural Heritage Bank for the Skåne region. Barker Langham defined the spatial requirements for the project, assessed the programming and visitor needs, and created an operational business plan for the project, based on local user and market research.



They worked in partnership with the UK office of Ralph Appelbaum Associates, who led the feasibility study and created a concept for the interpretation of this fascinating archaeological site.



Interpreting an historic palace site

Daming Palace in Xian, Shaanxi Province, China, was the Imperial Palace of the Tang Dynasty during the 6th to 10th century when Xian was the capital of China. Imagemakers were commissioned to plan and design permanent exhibitions for a new 'Archaeology Discovery Centre', telling the story of archaeology and world heritage to visitors to the archaeology park on the site of the Palace. The Discovery Centre is 2,000 square metres in size, and on opening was the first of its kind in China. The first gallery introduces archaeology as the 'science of discovery' and explains what archaeologists do. Visitors can then explore some of the remarkable archaeology discovered at Daming Palace and learn how it is used to understand how people lived in the past. The next gallery explores how archaeologists conserve and restore artefacts, and the final gallery tells the story of 'World Heritage', of the cultures and dynasties around the world at the time of the Tang, of China's Silk Road heritage, and of UNESCO cultural World Heritage Sites across China and abroad.

Design solutions

The UK leads the world in producing high specification display and conservation equipment to use throughout museums and galleries. Design solutions cover a wide range of media, including graphic panels, exhibition sets, models and dioramas, showcases housing original and replica objects, interactive/audio/AV presentations. Historical artifacts and paintings need to be both accessible to the public but also secured from possible harm through environmental changes or physical damage.



High specification display cases

The Museum of Islamic Art in Qatar is a ground-breaking building designed by I M Pei and sited on a man-made island in Doha. The museum's 5000 square metres of gallery space provide a stunning environment in which to house its world class collections and the interior design, which features state of the art showcases by Click Netherfield, has maximised the light and transparency within the galleries. The designer, Jean-Michel Wilmotte, specified that the artifacts should be displayed within their own 'sacred space' and so Click Netherfield engineered the showcases to minimise their visual impact. Over a thousand treasures of Islamic art are on display, including a jade pendant belonging to Shah Jehan, builder of the Taj Mahal, and of the earliest Qur'ans to survive, so lighting, conservation and security were also important considerations in the showcase design.



Protecting priceless works of art

The Statens Museum for Kunst, the National Gallery of Denmark, houses internationally important works of art from the 14th century to the present day, in a 19th century building with a late 20th century extension. Sun-X (UK) Ltd, a specialist installer of ultraviolet window filters, advised the use of, and subsequently installed, their external grade MT20 dark neutral density filter, significantly reducing the harmful effects of visible light, heat, and ultra violet rays on the paintings, without changing the colour of the transmitted light or impairing visitors' experience. The filters were applied to the windows in both the 19th century original building and the modern extension. The very large sheets of glazed curtain walling in the modern extension had to be treated with the aid of a basket crane, and the result provided both an aesthetically pleasing finish to the external facade and protection for the priceless artworks within for years to come.

Technology and digital

The digital revolution has dramatically transformed the ways in which media is produced, delivered and consumed. Emerging technologies are having a significant impact on the way learning and interpretation can be delivered within the museum environment, and museums are increasingly using technology to reach the non-visiting audience outside their walls. UK museum suppliers have created innovative ways of using new media. Museums are uniquely positioned to deliver context, content and credibility, but at the same time understand that, while technology will constantly evolve, our need to connect with great art, with something larger than ourselves, never will.

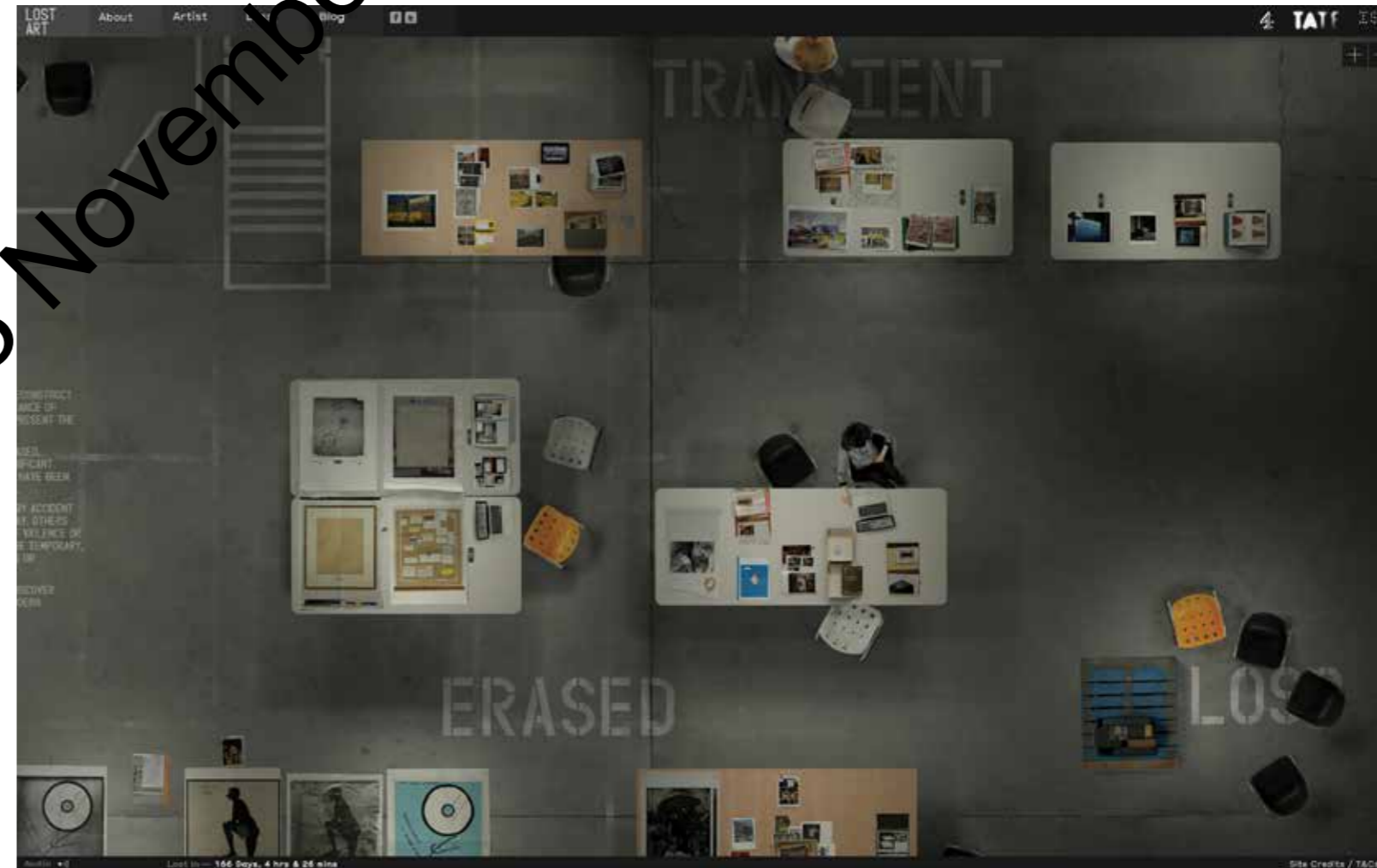


A bird's eye view of Hong Kong

Antenna International create handheld audio, multimedia and virtual tours that help museums, historic and cultural sites and tourist attractions shape and enrich their visitors experiences. The Peak Tower Ltd. has appointed Antenna International to produce and manage the Hong Kong Sky Tour – a new multimedia tour offering for visitors at the Sky Terrace 428, on the 100th floor of the tallest building in Hong Kong. The highest 360-degree viewing terrace in the city offers a stunning vista stretching across its skyscrapers and Victoria Harbour. With the new tour visitors will be able to learn more about the panoramic views and pick up some cultural tips in multiple languages. Antenna has also specially designed an interactive feature for The Peak where visitors are able to 'tap and play' to access content about Hong Kong, one of the most dynamic and exciting cities in the world.

Retrieving lost art virtually

The Gallery of Lost Art was a year-long virtual installation designed by ISO Design for Tate and UK public service broadcaster Channel 4. The online installation brought together masterpieces of Modern Art that have been stolen, destroyed, censored or have simply disappeared. Visitors to the site were free to explore the interactive exhibition space and discover the story of each lost work by unpacking tables of media; each table contains digital fragments of the original works, which include paintings, sculptures, performances and events. The project itself was destroyed after 12 months after over 100,000 visitors from 144 countries had experienced it. The online reach to date across online and social media channels has been estimated at over 3.6 million people worldwide. The project has won a number of awards, including the 2013 Design Week award for Interactive Design.



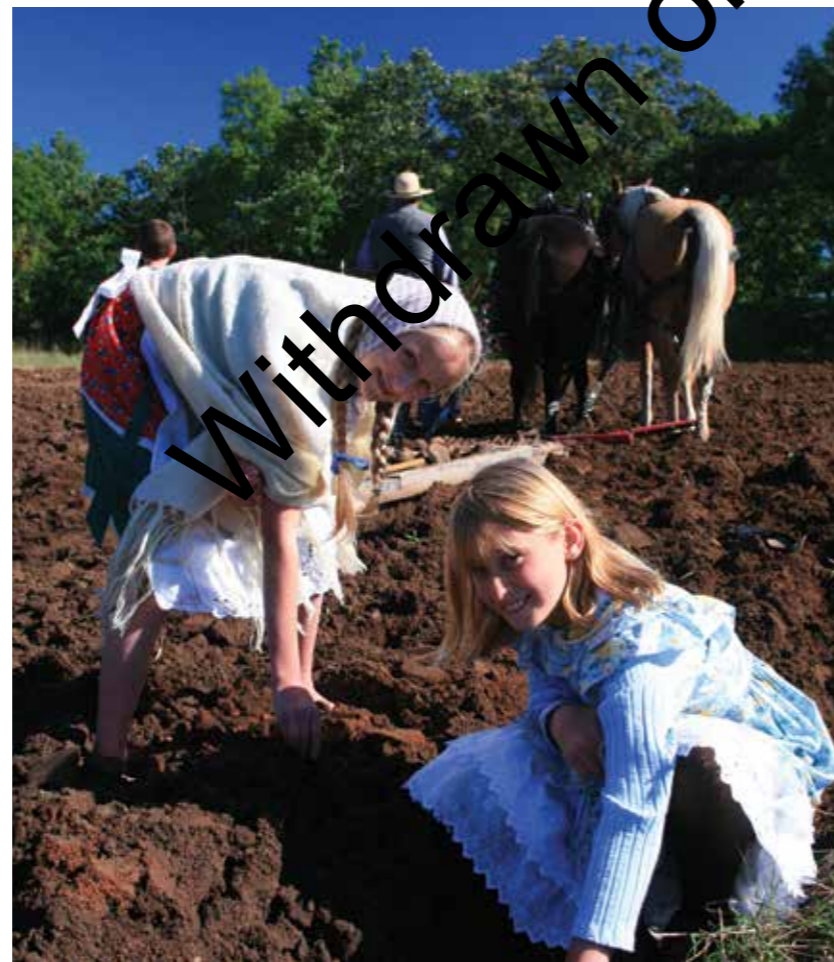
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Enhancing the visitor experience

A successful museum focuses on the needs and interests of its visitors and embraces the many different audiences that visit museums. In addition, museums are becoming destinations in their own right – not just cultural centres, but also somewhere to meet and spend time with friends. Public areas, such as cafés, restaurants and shops, as well as contributing to the museum’s profits, also need to reflect the museum’s vision and values. Museum catering has come a long way from the traditional ‘a cup of tea and a piece of cake’, and museums such as Tate, the National Gallery and the British Museum, are now home to restaurants with great reputations and a high level of customer service that attract diners outside opening hours of the museum.

Bringing a living history museum to life

Old World Wisconsin is an outdoor living history museum in Eagle, Wisconsin, USA, a vivid recreation of the life and times of European immigrants in America’s heartland. In an effort to improve their visitor experience and make history relevant, Old World Wisconsin retained A Different View to analyze their current visitor experience and identify gaps. Through a detailed analysis A Different View were able to come up with ideas that could be integrated into Old World Wisconsin’s master plan that would enable them to deliver a more engaging visitor experience in the longer term. In addition, A Different View developed ideas for the short term to make immediate improvements in the visitor offer and create an engaging visitor experience.



Creating a new dining experience

The Royal Picture Gallery Mauritshuis is a world famous art gallery displaying an internationally important collection of Dutch masterpieces dating from the 17th century. It is housed in a 17th century palace in the heart in the Netherlands’ capital, The Hague, and attracts over 250,000 visitors a year. The gallery is currently undergoing a major refurbishment and redevelopment which will see it expand into an adjacent building. The Mauritshuis required advice on how to create a new all-day brasserie to replace the existing museum café and to expand the current offer, and specialist expertise on how a financial agreement could be structured, what pitfalls to avoid and how a successful overall catering operation could best be achieved. Turpin Smale Catering Consultants has extensive museum and gallery catering experience and analysed the Mauritshuis’ catering strategy, developed a business plan, provided an operator agreement and outlined a layout and operation that would appeal to both customers and caterers and ensure the Mauritshuis brasserie became a destination in its own right.

International touring exhibitions

Museums' international activity include extensive programmes of touring exhibitions and partnerships, which raise the profile not only of individual museums and collections but highlight the rich quality of collections held within the UK. Touring exhibitions allow visitors around the world, many of whom may never have the opportunity to visit the museum, to see treasures from collections and exhibitions which are in UK museums. In 2012, the British Museum sent 13 exhibitions on tour to nine countries, including China, India and Russia.

Exporting Hollywood glamour

'Hollywood Costume' is a touring exhibition created by the Victoria & Albert Museum and designed by Casson Mann. The exhibition explores the central role costume design plays in cinema storytelling and brings together over 100 of the most iconic movie costumes from across a century of film-making from 'Ben Hur' to 'Gone with the Wind' and 'Breakfast at Tiffany's'. The exhibition gives the public the chance to go behind the screen to experience being on set. Visitors follow the journey from script to screen, playing an integral part in the

process of creating believable characters. The exhibition celebrates the best-known characters in Hollywood film history, encountered in a party with an invitation list that cuts across period and genres. Hollywood Costume delivers a montage of movie legends, all within matt black stage environments, studio lighting, music, film, animations, dialogue and a wealth of detail that make it an engaging spatial experience that feels cinematic. The exhibition attracted over 250,000 visitors in London and will be seen in Australia and the USA.



Three Centuries of British Art in China

In November 2012, 'Toward Modernity: Three Centuries of British Art', a major touring exhibition, began a 14 month tour to six museums in China, as part of the British Council's UK Now festival. For the first time, masterpieces held by 18 galleries in the north west of England, in a consortium led by Bury Museum and Art Gallery, are being seen in China. Described as an 'astonishing, proud moment' for the museums involved, the exhibition includes works by Turner, Constable, Henry Moore and Lucian Freud. 'Toward Modernity' has demonstrated the potential for international trade in cultural products. In Beijing, it attracted over 600,000 visitors and, by the end of the tour, around four million people in China are expected to have seen the exhibition.

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Professional development

UK museum management skills are recognised around the world as being of the highest quality. Many museum professionals from overseas come to the UK to undertake post-graduate courses on museology at one of our leading universities, such as University College London and the University of Leicester, or to take short-term professional development courses. In addition, UK museums offer bespoke in-country training seminars and workshops, to share the expertise and skills which they hold.



Capacity building for future leaders

The British Museum is a world leader in its field with a strong history of providing tailor-made training for museum professionals across the world. Responding to a request by the Ministry of Culture of India to support the development of a leadership cadre for Indian museums, the British Museum tailor made The Leadership Training Programme for India's future museum directors and cultural leaders. This unique programme balances the theoretical with the practical, building on participants' existing skills and advising on museum best practice. The programme covers all aspects of museum management including vision setting, strategic planning, project management, media training, exhibition display, education, audience development, communications, digital technology, conservation and security.

Hands on workshops

The British Council's art collection now numbers more than 8000 artworks covering all media and all aspects of British art and design of the 20th and 21st centuries. This is not a study collection but a hard-working and flexible resource that introduces the achievements of successive generations of British artists to audiences worldwide through exhibitions and loans. It is also used as a training resource for museum curators from around the world, providing hands-on workshops focusing on areas such as developing touring exhibitions, packing and handling works of art, and collections management.



Collections management

In addition to catering for the needs of visitors, museums also have a duty of care towards the collections which they hold, to ensure their protection and survival. The UK leads the world in developing recognised standards, such as the SPECTRUM Standard. SPECTRUM is a freely-available standard which defines and promotes best practice in the management and use of collections in museums. Now in its fourth edition, SPECTRUM is used by more than 7,600 museums in 40 countries worldwide to improve the management, sustainability and use of their collections. Collections management involves a wide range of activities including cataloguing, storage, documentation, conservation, storage and environmental controls.

Caring for collections

Many countries, even those with national museums, often lack expertise on how best to care for their collections. This lack of knowledge can result in rapid deterioration of items, loss and misplacement and even damage.

In Egypt, a week-long training in basic collections management was provided by Freda Matassa as part of a programme organised by the Levantine Foundation. Delegates came from museums all over Egypt and included curators, researchers, administrators and museum directors. Training was practical and hands-on and covered how to measure, inspect, inventory and document objects, safe methods of handling, packing and wrapping items and how to organise loans and transport. Delegates were examined at the end of the course and awarded certificates. The course was extremely well-received and has increased the knowledge of collections management in a wide range of Egyptian museums.



Conserving Kuwait's art treasures

An Islamic Art collection in Kuwait has worked with conservators Halahan Associates over a period of more than 10 years. Initially the work involved conservation of objects damaged in the Gulf War but this developed into training local staff in various aspects of collection care and management including conservation, and also developing and collection care programme. Halahan Associates assessed the condition, needs and risk of the various sections of the collection, such as textiles, books, metals, ceramics etc. A regular programme of housekeeping was designed and improved environmental conditions were installed as well as an insect pest monitoring system. By identifying pragmatic but effective ways of protecting the collection from deterioration, the care, storage and condition of the collection and access to it were greatly improved. More recently, Halahan and Associates have advised on the refurbishment of the museum and development of a new building containing a new store, conservation studios and research laboratories.

Consultancy

The expertise which is held by UK museum professionals, both within museums and within the wider consultancy and supplier community, ensures that there is a constant demand for advice and support on a wide range of projects. UK museums and suppliers are keen to share their knowledge worldwide.

Mystery Boxes

The Science Museum has developed a number of innovative products related to its inspiring learning programmes. These include 'Mystery Boxes' where participants have to use scientific approaches to investigate the contents of sealed boxes. In association with the Science Museum, a 'Mystery Boxes Programme' has been developed by Cocuckistanbul educators and is being delivered at their premises in Istanbul Bilgi University santralistanbul campus. The overall aim of the programme is to enhance young people's science thinking skills, and to introduce them to how science works and areas of science study and careers. The programme was officially launched in December 2012 and is being marketed to all schools in Istanbul, supported by the Istanbul Ministry of Education.



Creating a Media City in Taiwan

Malcolm Reading Consultants was commissioned by the Taiwan Land Development Corporation (TLDC) to produce an integrated study into the potential of a Media City concept for Taiwan. MRC examined the options for two sites in Taiwan, Hua Lien and Tai Chung, and assessed their suitability for developing high-profile creative clusters, taking into account their strategic qualities, connectivity and ability to accommodate the brief's spatial requirements. Based on this preliminary work, we will produce a design brief and contribute toward the outline operating model. Malcolm Reading Consultants are also supporting TLDC in promoting the Media City concept to potential partners, investors and government.



Contacts

A Different View www.adifferentviewonline.com

Antenna International www.antennainternational.com

Arts Architecture International www.artsarchitecture.com

Barker Langham www.barkerlangham.co.uk

British Council www.britishcouncil.org

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Bury Museum and Art Gallery www.bury.gov.uk/index.aspx?articleid=2537

Casson Mann www.cassonmann.co.uk

Click Netherfield www.clicknetherfield.com

Freda Matassa www.fredamatassa.com

Halahan Associates www.halahan.co.uk

Haley Sharpe Design www.haleysharpe.com

Imagemakers www.imagemakers.uk.com

ISO www.isodesign.co.uk

Malcolm Reading Consultants www.malcolmreading.co.uk

MET Studio www.metstudio.com

Science Museum www.sciencemuseum.org.uk

Sun-x www.sun-x.co.uk

Turpin Smale www.turpinsmale.co.uk

Victoria & Albert Museum www.vam.ac.uk

UK Trade and Investment (UKTI)

Barrie Harris - barrie.harris@ukti.gsi.gov.uk

Richard Parry - richard.parry@ukti.gsi.gov.uk

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