

Why Exhibitions? Strategies, audiences, and future directions
A joint-Subject Specialist Network conference for museum professionals
and researchers

Wednesday 21 and Thursday 22 February 2018
Tate Britain | National Portrait Gallery | National Gallery

Programme

Wednesday 21 February | Venue: Clore Auditorium, Tate Britain, Millbank, London SW1P 4RG

- 18.30—18:55 Delegate registration at the Clore Foyer (Clore Entrance)
19.00—19.10 Welcome from **Alex Farquharson**, Director, Tate Britain
19.10—19.30 Keynote address **Sandra Penketh**, Director of Art Galleries, National Museums Liverpool
19.30—19.40 Thanks and conference introduction from **Caroline Collier**, conference facilitator
19.40—19.45 Delegates transfer to Manton Foyer
19.45—21.00 Drinks and Private View of *The EY Exhibition: Impressionists in London, French Artists in Exile (1870–1904)*

Thursday 22 February | Venue: National Portrait Gallery, St Martin's Place, London WC2H 0HE

- 8.30—9.45 Breakfast in the Early 20th Century Galleries

Panel 1: Future Directions, chaired by Nicholas Cullinan, Director, National Portrait Gallery

- 9.55—10.05 Welcome from **Caroline Collier**, conference facilitator

- 10.05–10.15 Introduction from **Nicholas Cullinan**

- 10.15—10.35 **Temporary exhibitions: sacred cow or dead duck?**
Dr Ellen McAdam, Director, Birmingham Museums Trust

Does the London-based national museum of blockbuster temporary exhibitions work for regionals? Is the supposed uplift in visitor numbers content- or marketing-related? Either way, would hard-pressed regional museums be better advised to invest their efforts into changing galleries using their own collections rather than spending on temporary loan exhibitions?

- 10.35—10.55 **Beyond Boundaries: Art by Email**
Dr Helen Pheby, Senior Curator, Yorkshire Sculpture Park

This paper will be a case study of the 2017 Yorkshire Sculpture Park exhibition Art by Email of work by artists in Middle Eastern and North African [MENA] countries whose travel to the UK is restricted. It will weigh the successes and challenges of this platform and consider whether it offers a genuine alternative for presenting artistic practice.

- 10.55—11.15 **Exhibition Curation: Democratising Art while Pursuing Prestige**
Emma Ridgway, Head of Programme, Chief Curator, Modern Art Oxford

Exhibitions in public art institutions aim to strike a balance between expertise and democratisation. To generate future directions for exhibitions is it time to examine curatorial decision-making, to engage more explicitly with education, and to address the inherent contradictions of pursuing prestige?

- 11.15—11.35 Chaired discussion with panel speakers, including delegate questions

Panel 2: Audiences, chaired by Alex Farquharson, Director, Tate Britain

11.45—11.55 Introduction from **Alex Farquharson**

11.55—12.15 **How do we look at Old Master paintings? And what do we see? New exhibition strategies for Old Master paintings at the Ulster Museum, Belfast**
Anne Stewart, Senior Curator of Art, Ulster Museum, National Museums Northern Ireland and Hannah Crowdy, Head of Curatorial, National Museums Northern Ireland

Using three inter-related case studies of recent exhibitions centering on the works of Rembrandt, Goya and Lavery, Anne Stewart and Hannah Crowdy will explore how we encourage our audiences to look at art in new ways, and what their feedback tells us about these intimate encounters.

12.15—12.35 **Who Decides? Exhibitions, co-production and institutional critique**
Grace Todd, Senior Learning, Participation, and Interpretation Officer, National Museum Cardiff, and Nicholas Thornton, Head of Fine Art, National Museum Wales

Throughout 2017 Amgueddfa Cymru / National Museum Wales worked with a group of ten service-users from the Wallich - a Welsh charity supporting homeless adults - to curate and organise an exhibition of new acquisitions from the Museum's collection of modern and contemporary art. This paper explores the way the process transformed the participants' attitude to art and the Museum, but also challenged the established values and decision-making processes of the institution.

12.35—12.55 **Bring on the Biscuits!**
Jess Thom, writer, artist and campaigner, co-founder of Touretteshero

Touretteshero co-founder, Jess Thom, will draw on her experience of delivering events for disabled children and young people to discuss how audience co-curation can create inclusive interactive spaces. In the process of inviting, and collaborating with, disabled people, Jess will identify and dismantle barriers that stop people accessing and contributing to spaces.

12.55—13.15 Chaired discussion with panel speakers, including delegate questions

Delegates walk to the National Gallery, Sainsbury Wing, Trafalgar Square, London WC2N 5DN, for lunch and the afternoon panel



13.15—14.15 Lunch for delegates and speakers at the National Gallery, Sainsbury Wing

Panel 3: Exhibition Strategies, chaired by Gabriele Finaldi, Director, National Gallery

14.30—14.35 **Caroline Collier, conference facilitator**

14.35—14.45 Introduction from **Gabriele Finaldi**

14.45—15.05 **Evolving Practices: Models of Exhibition Making at the Laing Art Gallery**
Julie Milne, Chief Curator of Art Galleries, Tyne & Wear Archives & Museums

This presentation will explore the shift from programming free exhibitions at the Laing Art Gallery to a charging model driven by the need for less reliance on local authority funding. It will survey the change from initial reliance on toured-in exhibitions to a self-generated model with the help of research funding from the John Ellerman Foundation.

15.05—15.25 **'Picturing the News' in digital form: the curation of an online exhibition**
Ruth Brimacombe, independent scholar and curator, and Cathy Waters, Professor of Victorian Literature and Print Culture, University of Kent

Picturing the News: The Art of Victorian Graphic Journalism is an online exhibition that celebrates the nineteenth-century media pioneers responsible for creating the modern news culture that still shapes our world. It reveals an art form that is otherwise resistant to traditional modes of display. This paper will discuss the curatorial decisions faced in its development.

15.25—15.45 **What makes a successful competition and what are the challenges?**
Rosie Wilson, Head of Exhibitions, National Portrait Gallery, London

Competitions come in different shapes and sizes, variously designed to attract established and/or emerging artists. What is clear is that they almost always have a broad appeal for audiences. This presentation looks at the challenges and potential issues of organising competition exhibitions, and draws on over 38 years of experience running the BP Portrait Award and the Taylor Wessing Photography Prize at the National Portrait Gallery.

15.45—16.05 Chaired discussion with panel speakers, including delegate questions

16.05—16.25 Summation by **Caroline Collier, conference facilitator**



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