

Archivist as Interpreter 04 March 2016, British Library Conference Centre

Speaker Biographies and Synopses

Introduction by Jamie Andrews, Head of Culture and Learning at the British Library

Keynote speaker

Paul Cornish began his museum career at the British Museum but, since 1989, has worked at IWM London as a curator. He has contributed to, and co-edited, several books on the material culture of conflict. From 2010 to 2014 he was Senior Curator in the First World War Galleries project team, working to create the centrepiece of the transformed IWM London.

Archives “do their bit”: IWM London’s First World War Galleries.’

Archival material plays a central and very powerful role in IWM London’s First World War Galleries, which opened in 2014. How and why this came about is explained by Paul Cornish of IWM’s First World War project team.

Panel 1

Victoria Northridge has been Collections Manager at Black Cultural Archives since July 2012. She is responsible for all aspects of management of the collection, such as development, access and care. Victoria originally began working in a library background within the HE library sector over a ten year period. However it was when she started a temporary archive post at the Women’s Library in 2004 that she decided to change her career path to archives. Victoria worked for six years in the collection at Imperial War Museum where she undertook her MSc in Archive Administration, before graduating in 2011.

Her talk will focus on how Black Cultural Archives interprets its collection through archive driven installations, outreach, and digital platforms.

Kevin Bolton has been at Manchester City Council since 2003 and between 2010 and 2014 oversaw the creation of Archives+ as part of the Manchester Central Library transformation programme. He has recently been appointed to the post of Citywide Services Manager (Reform) in Libraries, Galleries and Culture.

Archives+ has managed to increase and diversify its audiences through digital interpretation, volunteering, audience engagement and a schools programme. Today Kevin will focus on Manchester Central Library's cultural programme and how this has led to artists using the Archives+ space and collections for creative inspiration.

Melissa Addey is the Leverhulme Trust's Writer in Residence at the British Library for 2016, based in the Business & IP Centre. Her work focuses on two ideas: storytelling for businesses; and business for storytellers. This residency brings together both Melissa's previous career in business and her writing, and she is very excited about it.

Melissa will focus on her residency at the British Library, in working with existing and new audiences, taking inspiration from collections; and work with business and creativity.

Rachel Foss is Head of Contemporary Archives and Manuscripts at the British Library. Prior to taking up this role in 2015 she was Lead Curator for Modern Literary Manuscripts, also at the British Library. She serves on the committee of the Group for Literary Archives and Manuscripts (GLAM) and is on the advisory board for the Archiving the Arts initiative led by the National Archives.

Afternoon seminars

1: Working with archives

Sarah Kogan is an artist/curator working in the East End of London exploring themes of biographical narrative, landscape and memory. Currently she is developing *Changing the Landscape*, her Battle of the Somme, contemporary visual arts project, supported by the National Lottery through Arts Council of England, exhibiting at The National Archives. In addition, Sarah is a Lecturer on the Art of Psychiatry module, in conjunction with Bethlem Royal Hospital and South London and Maudesley NHS Foundation Trust and contributes to Oxford University's WW1 Centenary website, *Continuations and Beginnings* as well as *History is Now* Magazine.

Vicky Iglkowski is Diverse Histories Records Specialist at The National Archives, with a background in women's and gender history. In this role in the Public History team she actively promotes traditionally marginalised histories to new audiences, through public events, conferences and creative projects. A recent example of this is two collaborative events with the Black Cultural Archives as part of the national Being Human Festival for the humanities which used spoken word to engage young people in the history of Black British Civil Rights. She currently chairs The National Archives internal Cultural Engagement Group, a space to facilitate creative and cultural interpretations of The National Archives collections.

How does a visual artist navigate a journey through a major archive, remapping the apparently innumerable twists and turns to reveal a narrative? How do the two, seemingly inaccessible worlds of the artist and archivist, discover common language and goals? Within this symposium, we will discuss how an artistic process can crystalize within the walls of an archive and develop a new creative identity; how history is revealed by the elements we bring with us on our own journey of discovery and how the reference points of 'archival' and 'contemporary' fuse at the point that they meet. We will also look at how the challenges and points of difference can be overcome when two cultural worlds collide.

2: Facilitating interest

Alan Crookham is the head of the National Gallery Research Centre. He is the author of *The National Gallery. An Illustrated History* (London 2009), 'The Turner Bequest at the National Gallery' in *Turner Inspired. In the Light of Claude* (London 2012) and 'Curatorial constructs: archives in fine art exhibitions' in

ARA Journal (vol. 36, issue 1, Spring 2015). His interests include the boundaries between documents and art works and the use of archives within fine art exhibitions.

Michael Takeo Magruder is a visual artist and researcher who works with new media including real-time data, digital archives, immersive environments, mobile devices and virtual worlds. His practice explores concepts ranging from media criticism and aesthetic journalism to digital formalism and computational aesthetics, deploying Information Age technologies and systems to examine our networked, media-rich world. In the last 15 years, Michael's projects have been showcased in over 250 exhibitions in 34 countries, and his art has been widely supported by numerous funding bodies and public galleries within the UK, US and EU. For further information about Michael's work, visit www.takeo.org

Using examples from the National Gallery and elsewhere, Alan Crookham will explore how archives are used within exhibitions of fine art. He will approach this from the perspective of archivists and curators. Michael Takeo Magruder will then discuss the relevance of archives and archival materials from the standpoint of a practising visual artist, and showcase examples of his past work within this area.

The session is intended to be participatory and to allow everyone attending to share their ideas about best practice and innovation.

3: Archives for all

Sarah Cole is the founder of TIME/IMAGE and Creative Entrepreneur-in-Residence at the British Library. Sarah calls herself a creative geek and is at home in the digital world. Her diverse interests, including games and publishing as well as heritage, inform her work.

Sarah will focus on how digital allows us to engage audiences who have little or no relationship with the original source material. Case studies will include the British Council Film Collection and upcoming geolocation mobile app, Poetic Places.

4: The role of the new

As an actress, **Emer Gillespie** has appeared in a multitude of film, television and theatre productions. Her first poetry collection, *The Instinct Against Death* was published in 2012. She is currently developing her first TV series. She is a cofounder of *Ekphrasis*. See more at: <http://www.bl.uk/events/alice-ekphrasis-an-evening-of-poetry-inspired-by-alice-in-wonderland-04-march-2016#sthash.y8Not4Gr.dpuf>

Emer's seminar takes an inspirational look at creative, new work from archives. It focuses on using creative literary responses to inspire new insights into classic works; a project relating to the British Library's Alice in Wonderland exhibition.

Ian Duhig is a former homelessness worker, a Cholmondeley Award recipient and Fellow of the Royal Society of Literature, Duhig is a joint winner of a Shirley Jackson Award for short stories, the only outright winner of the National Poetry Competition twice and has three times been shortlisted for the TS Eliot Prize.

Catherine Smith writes fiction, poetry and drama. Two of her collections, *The New Bride* and *Lip*, were short-listed for Forward Prizes. She is a founder member of *Ekphrasis*.

Panel 2

Sarah Jaffray is responsible for Visitor Experience at the Wellcome Collection and is an art historian and museum educator.

Sarah will focus on the role of archives in a major – and controversial exhibition.

Dr Lisa Peschel is a lecturer in the Department of Theatre, Film and Television at the University of York. She has been researching theatrical performance in the Terezín/Theresienstadt ghetto since 1998. Her publications on survivor testimony and scripts written in the ghetto have appeared in English, Czech, German and Hebrew, and she frequently lectures and conducts performance workshops on Terezín/Theresienstadt theatre at institutions in Europe and North America. Her anthology *Performing Captivity, Performing Escape: Cabarets and Plays from the Terezin/Theresienstadt Ghetto* was published in 2014. She is a co-investigator on the £1.8 million project 'Performing the Jewish Archive' funded by the UK Arts and Humanities Research Council.

Performing the Jewish Archive: The scope and the limits of re-performance of archival material: Lisa will analyse a performance that took place in the Czech Republic in 2011: an adaptation of a cabaret written in the Terezín Ghetto that came to light during my research in 2006. In discussing the development of the adaptation and the performance itself I engage with the following questions: How effective was our incorporation of historical context into a script that was originally written for the ultimate 'insider' audience -- that is, a script full of inside jokes and references to events that only the inhabitants of the ghetto would know? How can the voice of the historian function in a dramatically effective way as the voice of a character? What are the advantages of trying to recreate the original performance style, versus finding a contemporary or cultural equivalent that might be more accessible to today's audiences? What does it mean to the audience to see this performance in the former site of the ghetto itself, especially since many aspects of the original performance conditions cannot and should not be reproduced?

Stefan Dickers is the Library and Archives Manager at Bishopsgate Institute, which houses collections on the history of London, the labour movement, co-operation, freethought and humanism, and protest and campaigning. He qualified as an archivist in 2001 and began at Bishopsgate Institute in 2005.

He will discuss collecting and interpreting alternative histories in the Special Collections and Archives at Bishopsgate Institute.

Dr Val Johnson is Director of Research and Collections at The National Archives, responsible for supporting and coordinating innovative research, conservation and cataloguing programmes for collections and access. Alongside our leadership role for the archive sector, Val is also responsible for The National Archives' support for archives of all kinds, to secure the best possible long-term future for their collections and services. She aims to further The National Archives' engagement and collaboration with researchers across the cultural heritage, higher education, academic and archive sectors.