CULTURE
ON CAMPUS
AUTUMN 2016
UNIVERSITY OF BIRMINGHAM
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Welcome to the new look Culture on Campus, a bi-annual publication bringing you news from the University of Birmingham’s Cultural Engagement Team.

Set up in 2011 by Professor Ian Grosvenor, the Cultural Engagement Team works across the University to support its core, strategic aims; from research to employability, teaching and learning to engagement and impact.

In this edition of Culture on Campus, we highlight the varying ways the Cultural Engagement Team is working in partnership with cultural organisations and creative practitioners. We also profile recent projects in which we have supported researchers to engage with new audiences and to present research in new and meaningful ways.

This edition of Culture on Campus includes updates from the University’s cultural collections and venues, alongside highlights from the wider events programme, which together make the campus a vibrant place to study and visit (Culture on Campus, pages 17–31).

Culture on campus is here for every member of University staff and the student populous to experience. Whether one’s passion is art, music, antiquities or sciences, all our students and staff have the opportunity to use our unique collections and venues to inform their research and studies, to boost skills and employability, or to simply relax with and enjoy.

Thank you to everyone who has contributed to this edition of Culture on Campus.

culture@contacts.bham.ac.uk

CultureUoB

Meet the Cultural Engagement Team

Ian Grosvenor
Professor with Responsibility for City and Cultural Liaison

Ian leads on the University’s Cultural Engagement agenda, overseeing the design and delivery of cultural engagement initiatives and projects.

Ian is also a Professor in Urban Education History and Director of the Voices of War and Peace Legacy Centre. He is author of numerous articles and books on racism, education and identity, the visual in educational research, the material culture of education and the history of urban education.

i.d.grosvenor@bham.ac.uk

Clare Mullett
University Curator and Head of Research and Cultural Collections

As well as the management and care of the University’s Research and Cultural Collections, which cover a breadth of disciplines and reflect academic work, Clare initiates and leads on projects that engage staff, students and other publics with the collections and the University’s cultural offer. Clare works with academics to curate exhibitions about research, leads the International Museums and Collections Award for students and is responsible for the Making Cultures undergraduate teaching module. Clare also runs various University artists in residence programmes.

c.r.mullett@bham.ac.uk

Laura Milner
Cultural Partnerships Manager

Laura manages relationships with a wide range of cultural partners including arts professionals, creative practitioners and leading cultural organisations across the region. She is responsible for identifying and developing opportunities for the University to collaborate with the cultural sector on collaborative projects that reflect the University’s core strategic aims. She also leads on key Cultural Engagement projects including the University’s annual Arts & Science Festival, and the Cultural Internship Scheme, which places ten University of Birmingham graduates with cultural organisations over a six month period.

l.c.milner@bham.ac.uk

Rachael Yardley
Cultural Partnerships Officer

Rachael joined the team in May of this year, after completing a University of Birmingham Cultural Internship at Flatpack Projects (see page 14). Her main responsibilities involve the coordination, administration and marketing of key Cultural Engagement projects including Arts and Science Festival, Culture on Campus and the University of Birmingham Cultural Internship Scheme.

r.a.yardley@bham.ac.uk
AHRC recently piloted a Cultural Engagement Fund which supported University of Birmingham doctoral graduates to develop research projects with the cultural sector to support the engagement of their arts and humanities research with the wider cultural and civic context in which they operate. The scheme also aims to support the broader career development of these graduates, particularly in relation to work with non-academic partners to support the wider impact of arts and humanities research.

Three Cultural Engagement Fellows collaborated in interesting ways with cultural organisations including Sampad, Mockingbird Theatre and the National Memorial Arboretum on a range of projects that demonstrate how dynamic this kind of academic/cultural partnership can be.

If you are a postgraduate or early career researcher interested in cultural engagement, please contact Laura Milner, Cultural Partnerships Manager at l.c.milner@bham.ac.uk for an informal discussion about how the Cultural Engagement team can support you.
Celebrating South Asian Music in the West Midlands

On the 29 June Dr David Kerr, in collaboration with Sampad Arts, presented an evening exploring the South Asian musical heritage of the West Midlands, looking at the ways in which urban space and South Asian musical production and circulation have actively contributed to co-creating each other. Musical performance was interspersed with presentations by those involved in this musical production, including veteran British Asian singer/music producer, Amarjit Sidhu; artist, film maker and photographer Surjit Simpaly; and cultural curator/researcher Tas Bashir. Musicians from the Mohammad Yousaf Music Academy performed Naat (poetry in praise of the Prophet Mohammed), the all female Dhol group Eternal Taal performed Bhangra, and the final performance was given by Asian underground star S-Endz (of Swami). Held at mac birmingham, the sold out event convened academic and non-academic audiences.

Clayton Shaw, Associate Director at Sampad said:

“It was great to work with David on this project as he was able to bring a rich study of the developments and impact of South Asian music in the West Midlands to an appreciative local audience. We welcome more of these types of academic collaborations as they add value to our work.”

Dr David Kerr, Academic Lead at the University of Birmingham, said:

“The Mockingbird Bar and Theatre to put on multiple collaborations that are mutually beneficial and dynamic. Working as Kaye Winwood Projects, she produces immersive food and sensory experiences for curious appetites with a desire to push the boundaries of dining.

PROJECT 1 – Dr David Kerr
Celebrating South Asian Music in the West Midlands

PROJECT 2 – Dr Emma Login
Audience development at the National Memorial Arboretum

Dr Emma Login worked alongside the National Memorial Arboretum to explore how the organisation might better engage young visitors and those from BAME communities. Emma’s doctoral research explored processes of war memorialisation and ways in which individuals engage with memorials years after the people and events they commemorate have passed. Working with heritage professionals from the Arboretum was an amazing opportunity for Emma to explore the practical implications of her research. Working with the Head of Marketing, Emma learnt how to conduct meaningful feedback workshops with young people and community groups, leading workshops both on site and in the community, and discussing how the results of these workshops could be implemented at the Arboretum.

“It has been fantastic to work with Emma to enable us to explore the perceptions of the Arboretum amongst some of our non-traditional audiences. Whilst we conduct regular visitor exit interviews to provide us with insights for decision-making, having the ability to unearth any barriers to visiting is vitally important in enabling us to strategically develop our audiences, and engage with people who would have previously overlooked a visit here.”

Head of Marketing, National Memorial Arboretum

PROJECT 3 – Dr Claire Peters McLeod
Francophone film screenings across Birmingham

The AHRC funding allows doctoral graduates like Claire to work collaboratively in the cultural sector, gaining invaluable skills and forging vital new partnerships that are mutually beneficial and dynamic. Claire worked with The Drum, mac birmingham, and The Mockingbird Bar and Theatre to put on multiple film screenings from the field of Francophone postcolonial studies.

Claire says:

“This experience has shown me how to engage the wider public with non-mainstream cultural output and has invited me to think about how to frame the films in ways that make sense to diverse audiences.”

Alper Dervish, Director of The Mockingbird, says:

“On the back of the success of this event, we have hosted a free Francophone film workshop event and it seemed to be extremely useful for those involved. It has been good to see new faces on site as a result of these collaborations.”

Dr Paul Geary, Teaching Fellow within the University of Birmingham’s Department of Drama and Theatre Arts, provided critical advice during its development. Students from this course assisted with props, set design and performance providing invaluable professional development experience. Kaye continues to work with the students (now graduates) one of whom worked closely with Kaye towards the realisation of her latest event AFTER DARK (July 2016).

Kaye is now working with Dr. Paul Geary towards an AHRC Research Network bid titled ‘Provoking the Palate’ which, if successful, will take place 2017–18.

Honorary Research Associate
Kaye Winwood

Initiated in 2013, the Honorary Research Fellows scheme at the University of Birmingham has awarded 25 individuals from a cross-section of the region’s arts and heritage sector with Honorary Research Fellow status. In exchange for access to the University’s vast archives, staff, and resources, Fellows are expected to pursue personal research goals and to support the University of Birmingham with its public engagement agenda.

Kaye Winwood joined the scheme at the beginning of 2016. She has over fifteen years experience as an arts professional specialising in visual art, food, moving image and performance. Particular research interests include performance, sensuality and provocation. Working as KayeWinwood Projects, she produces immersive food and sensory experiences for curious appetites with a desire to push the boundaries of dining.

In February 2016, Kaye produced Diabolical Roses, an immersive dining production conceived to explore themes of romance, sex and unity through a marriage of food and performance. Dr Paul Geary, Teaching Fellow within the University of Birmingham’s Department of Drama and Theatre Arts, provided critical advice during its development. Students from this course assisted with props, set design and performance providing invaluable professional development experience. Kaye continues to work with the students (now graduates) one of whom worked closely with Kaye towards the realisation of her latest event AFTER DARK (July 2016).

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kayewinwood.com
CULTURAL ENGAGEMENT WITH RESEARCH

QAWWALI SHRINE

A new research project is underway between Sampad South Asian Arts, creative producer Harmeet Chagger-Khan and University of Birmingham academics Tasawar Bashir (Department of Music), Dr Winnie Chua (Institute of Cardiovascular Sciences), Dr Pia Rotshtein (School of Psychology), Dr Scott Wilson (BEAST) and Prof Alan Wing (School of Psychology).

Having successfully secured research and development funding from Arts Council England, the project seeks to understand emotional responses to Qawwali – a popular form of Sufi devotional music with a tradition that stretches back more than 700 years.

Using collaborative research methods, the group will host a series of workshops, performances and discussion events designed to understand and reinterpret psychological and physiological responses to Qawwali. This will include an exploration of how the concepts of Rasa and Fana, states of spiritual ecstasy and enlightenment produced by the music, might be mapped and digitally visualised.

The project will culminate in March 2017 with a symposium at the University. To keep up to date with the project, visit sampad.org.uk

CULTURAL PARTNERSHIPS

Cultural Partnerships are central to the work of the Cultural Engagement team. In 2015-16 we supported projects designed to support collaborative approaches to research, teaching and learning, impact and engagement, employability, policy, programming and audience development.

Who do we work with?

Working with a range of cultural partners, from individual artists to key consortia, the University is dedicated to supporting and maximising the distinctive qualities of the region’s culture, and encouraging civic and cultural engagement amongst students and staff.

Read on to find out more about some of the projects we have jointly fostered with cultural partners this year.
Radical Sabbatical

Radical Sabbatical is a new artist residency scheme which was launched in spring 2016. In partnership with Eastside Projects, we gave four artists the opportunity to work with academics and curators at the University of Birmingham to develop their work and practice. The artists were given space for experimentation, knowledge exchange and cross-disciplinary engagement and worked with academics to explore how each other’s research is produced and conveyed.

Themes this year included Space and Confinement, Conflict and Cooperation and Energy. The successful artists were Andrew Gillespie, Andrew Lacon, Lexi Strauss and Emily Warner who worked with academics from various University colleges. Emily’s work focuses on multi-disciplinary practice that explores art as a ‘live experience, an action-based encounter or a conversational situation’. She said of her time in residence:

“Being involved in Radical Sabbatical opened up my practice to new ways of understanding and engaging with contemporary research and ideas. I interpreted and appropriated new lines of thought, using insight from conversations and encounters on campus, as impetus for performative work and interventions. I have established some really important connections with the researchers I collaborated with, and continue to investigate and exchange material from my ongoing projects within these new networks.”

Emily worked with Dr Phil Jones, a senior lecturer in Cultural Geography, who felt that the residency benefited his own research process:

“Radical Sabbatical has been a hugely exciting project to be involved with. The opportunity to look at research problems and the university environment from a completely different perspective has been incredibly productive and has stimulated ongoing collaborative projects crossing the arts-research interface.”

Due to the success of the project we have decided to run it again next year. If you are interested in being involved in the 2016/17 cohort, please contact Clare Mullett – University Curator on c.r.mullett@bham.ac.uk

Emily Warner, Performing Radical Sabbatical (April 2016). Photography by Tess Osborne

Birmingham Festivals

Birmingham is a leading destination for cultural festivals and events. Collectively these festivals produce an eclectic and engaging artistic programme of national and international significance spanning artforms including music, dance, film, new media, visual art, theatre, comedy and literature. Member organisations range from established models such as the Birmingham Literature Festival – now in its 16th year – to more emergent festivals such as the University of Birmingham’s Arts and Science Festival which was launched in 2013.

Birmingham Festivals is a consortium which established in 2015 to undertake key sector development and address common challenges. Comprised of over 25 members across Birmingham, together they represent the quality and diversity of Birmingham’s arts and cultural offer. Diversity of scale and approach is a vital distinguishing feature of the city’s festival sector, as well as an authentic voice which is hugely attractive to national audiences.

Visit the newly launched website to learn more about Birmingham’s vibrant festivals offer: birminghamfestivals.com

Culture Central

Culture Central is a development agency created by, and delivering for, the cultural and creative sectors in Birmingham. In May 2016 it became a registered company and recruited a Director, Gary Topp, to lead the Company. The founding company members and directors are drawn from thirteen of the main arts organisations in the city. The intention is to widen and extend the membership to individuals, organisations and the non-cultural anchor institutions of the city. The fundamentals of the business model are based on membership fees and project income.

Culture Central is an important mechanism to support, sustain and innovate the cultural sector at city scale. It is concerned with leadership, innovation, collaboration, resilience and change to help make Birmingham a globally competitive city for the cultural and creative industries.

The Cultural Engagement team hosted a visit from Culture Central Director, Gary Topp, who met with representatives from our cultural collections and venues, as well as academic and academic-related staff with overlapping areas of interest with a view to joint working in the future.

The University of Birmingham is also a key member in a cross-sector working group convened through Culture Central comprising representatives from the cultural sector and higher education. The group will work collaboratively to further a city-wide ambition to improve access to cultural learning opportunities, and to “create and enhance a new progressive approach that recognises the multiple benefits that culture and creativity offer in highly cognate and strategic ways.” It is envisaged that this group will work towards a more formal arrangement for collaborative working through Culture Central.


B/F

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The Universitas 21 Museums and Collections Award gives students the opportunity to work for one month on a museums or collections project, at the University of Melbourne, Lund University, Sweden or the University of Birmingham. Students spend time with museums and collections staff from across their host university, including curators, collection managers, archivists and conservators in order to get a more comprehensive picture of what their work entails. This broadening experience enhances the students understanding of the different issues currently facing university collections. Hear from Lund University student, Sigrid Nilsson, who spent a month at the University of Birmingham in June 2016.

My name is Sigrid Nilsson. I’m an art student at Lund University in Sweden, and I have spent a month doing an internship at the University of Birmingham. I had the opportunity to do this via Universitas 21, since I was the fortunate recipient of their International Museums and Collections Award. During my time in Birmingham I have had placements with several of the collections and museums within the university, as well as the chance to explore both Birmingham and other parts of Britain. I have absolutely loved my time here, having learnt a lot and had both professional and personal adventures. Projects that I have worked on include organising and cataloguing works of art as well as historical objects, getting to curate my own online exhibition, and trying my hand at writing texts in several different genres and for different media.

What is so special about the award is the opportunity to widen your horizons by working with such a variety of collections, venues and tasks. I have spent time preparing workshops with the Learning & Access Team at the Barber Institute, worked on a children’s fairy tale trail at Winterbourne while also cataloguing and packing the ancient objects of the Archaeology Museum and writing an essay on Shabti figures of ancient Egypt. This award has really given me the opportunity to grow more familiar with all aspects of working with cultural collections, while also giving me the opportunity to grow as a person.
MEET THE 2016–17 CULTURAL INTERNS

RIYAH COLLINS
BBC Birmingham

Riyah completed her BA in English Literature and History in 2016. She’ll be working at BBC Birmingham as part of the External Partnerships team supporting a range of projects from community coding clubs to Children in Need.

SOPHIE BRICKNELL
Ironbridge Gorge Museums Trust

Sophie studied BA Ancient History, Archaeology and Geography and MA Landscape Archaeology at the University. At Ironbridge, she will support the events team to realise a range of projects from community coding clubs to Children in Need.

AUTUMN EVANS
Birmingham Royal Ballet

Autumn graduated in 2016 with a BA in English Literature and Drama. She will work alongside Birmingham Royal Ballet’s income generation team on a new project designed to help uncover the hidden value in BRB’s Intellectual Property and other assets.

HARRIET HATHAWAY
Birmingham Museums Trust

Harriet completed her undergraduate degree in Ancient History and Archaeology. She will support the exhibitions and design team at Birmingham Museums Trust with the planning and installation of New Art West Midlands and Night in the Museum. She will also manage a small-scale exhibition on the Paradise Circus development.

MATTHEW SMITH
Writing West Midlands

Matthew completed an MRes in Playwriting Studies in 2016 and will support Writing West Midlands, the literature development agency for the region. He will support the organisation to deliver a range of projects including Birmingham Literature Festival, Birmingham Poet Laureate, and the Writing West Midlands Friends Scheme.

VITA FOX
Birmingham Repertory Theatre

Vita graduated in 2016 with a BA in Drama and English Literature. At The Rep, Vita will be involved in a digital engagement programme designed to develop and improve the customer experience. She will have access to a wealth of content that she can manipulate to engage visitors in the theatre’s foyer space.

AISLING MARKS
Flatpack Film Festival

Aisling completed her undergraduate degree in English Literature in 2012. She will work as part of the marketing team at Flatpack, a film festival which takes over venues across Birmingham every spring. Aisling’s placement will cover the full spectrum of the festival’s marketing activity, from compilation of the festival brochure to delivery of festival preview events.

PATRICIA NISTOR
Birmingham Open Media

Patricia graduated in 2016 with a BA in History of Art. She will provide curatorial support to the public programme at Birmingham Open Media, a gallery and events space operating at the intersection of art, technology and science with measurable impact.

For more information visit birmingham.ac.uk/culture/cultural-intern-scheme.aspx
The University of Birmingham is home to a diverse cultural offer; the campus is alive with museums, galleries, archives and cultural venues, here to be savoured, treasured and enjoyed.
LGBT History Month

The University hosted several events in February for LGBT History Month, an annual national celebration of the diversity and culture of LGBTQ people in the UK and exploration of the issues and barriers they continue to face. The University had something special to celebrate this year, having risen 29 places to number 50 in Stonewall’s list of LGBTQ-friendly employers, and students and staff across campus joined forces to organise a variety of events that were open to everybody, regardless of their background and whether they identify as LGBTQ.

Our launch event in the Elgar Concert Hall was opened by Dame Julie Moore, Chief Executive of UHB, followed by Dr Michelle Aaron from B-Film in the College of Arts and Law introducing a special screening of The Queen of Ireland, a documentary about drag queen Panti Bliss and how she became the figurehead of the 2015 campaign to legalise same-sex marriage in Ireland. The evening ended with a drinks reception, accompanied by local LGBT choir Rainbow Voices.

Other events during the month included a workshop on making the workplace a welcoming environment for LGBTQ employees, and a talk at the Barber Institute of Fine Arts by historian Professor Helen Berry from Newcastle University.

Planning for LGBT History Month 2017 is underway, and the University will be hosting events around the national theme of Citizenship, PSHE and Law. If you would like to be involved, to request more information, or to be added to the staff Rainbow Network mailing list, please email lgbtq@contacts.bham.ac.uk.
The Lapworth Museum of Geology is now open following an extensive £2.7m redevelopment project. Enabling visitors to explore life over the past 3.5 billion years, the Museum will showcase exceptional objects from one of the UK’s most outstanding geological collections, with state-of-the-art galleries and a range of innovative and interactive exhibits - all completely free of charge.

The Lapworth Museum of Geology at the University of Birmingham officially reopened on Tuesday 21st June, after a major refurbishment and installation of new exhibits.

Following an extensive £2.7 million revamp, visitors will be able to enjoy a state-of-the-art museum experience showcasing one of the UK’s most outstanding rock, fossil and mineral collections, through a range of innovative and interactive exhibits.

The Evolution of Life gallery explores life over the past 3.5 billion years using fantastic fossils from the Midlands and many other famous sites worldwide, whilst the Mineral Gallery displays the beautiful natural shapes, colours and forms of minerals and crystals, and how we use them in the modern world. The Active Earth Gallery looks at our constantly changing planet, and the incredible forces and processes that can result in natural hazards such as volcanic eruptions, earthquakes and tsunamis.

From rocks and fossils to gemstones, volcanoes, earthquakes, and dinosaurs, the Museum will capture the imagination of all ages.

Jon Clatworthy, Director of the Museum, said:

‘This has been a transformational refurbishment which will dramatically change the way in which we interact with our visitors. The new exhibits will provide a far more hands-on approach to learning about the 3.5 billion years of history we showcase here, and the building refurbishment means we are able to feature far more of our extensive collection in an inspiring and innovative way. We are very excited to welcome visitors of all ages back through the Museum’s doors; it has opened up one of the gems on the campus to the community.’

The redevelopment has been made possible thanks to a transformative Heritage Lottery Fund (HLF) grant of £1.5m and the generous support of University of Birmingham alumni, and a number of grant awarding bodies, trusts and foundations.
The Cadbury Research Library can be found in the Muirhead Tower, and is home to the Special Collections and Archives of the University of Birmingham. The unique collection of rare books, manuscripts and archives is open to all, and Special Collections are responsible for directly supporting the University’s research, learning and teaching agenda by collecting and making fully accessible all collections.

Find out more at:
birmingham.ac.uk/crl
@CadburyRL
flickr.com/photos/cadburyresearchlibrary

Round up of the past year

Qur’an Manuscript Exhibition

On 22 July 2015 the University captured the world’s imagination when it revealed the parchment of a Qur’anic manuscript held in the Cadbury Research Library had been radiocarbon dated to the early seventh century, making it one of the earliest examples of the Islamic holy text in existence. In October 2015 the manuscript went on public display in the dome of the Bramall Music Building for three weeks. Nearly 9,000 people visited the campus to see the Qur’an – some coming from as far away as China, New Zealand, Malaysia, the United States and Zimbabwe. Exhibition facilitators were recruited from existing University students and 26 talks were delivered as part of sessions for schools and community groups.

The full manuscript is available to view on the Cadbury Research Library’s Flickr site.

Shakespeare 400

The exciting addition of a rare First Folio of the works of William Shakespeare (1623) to the Cadbury Research Library is on display at the Barber Institute of Fine Arts from 10 June – 25 September 2016 as part of the student-led exhibition ‘All the World’s a Stage: Court, Patrons and Writers in Shakespeare’s Circle’. We are also celebrating the Shakespeare 400 anniversary with an exhibition of 24 varied illustrations from the works of Shakespeare, Picturing Shakespeare, in the Muirhead Tower foyer until 8 September.

Project Collaborations

Inspired by Bindings

An eighteen month project generously funded by the Esmee Fairbairn Collections Fund, have provided two more internships for University of Birmingham students this summer, working with the Mingana Collection of Middle Eastern manuscripts. As part of the internship the students have devised an exhibition showcasing the results of a two-month project between the Cadbury Research Library and the social enterprise Go-Woman! Alliance CIC. Inspired by manuscript bindings from the Mingana Collection, participants had the opportunity to explore traditional paper craft and bookbinding techniques, expressing themselves through creativity and developing self-confidence, as well as vocational skills. The exhibition will run from 8 September – 18 December 2016 in Muirhead Tower foyer.

Noël Coward Project

The Noël Coward Foundation are funding an 18 month project archivist post to work on the Noël Coward archive. We’re delighted to welcome Jess Clark who has recently been appointed to the post and embarked on this project, which builds on our connection with the Foundation and will improve access to the collection.

Research Engagement

Varna Road: Janet Mendelsohn’s Social Eye

The department of History and Cultures in collaboration with the Ikon Gallery and with support from the Arts and Humanities Research Council, staged a highly successful and thought-provoking exhibition of photographs by American academic and documentary filmmaker Janet Mendelsohn (b. 1943) of Balsall Heath in the 1960s. The photographs were taken while Mendelsohn was enrolled as a student of the University’s Centre of Contemporary Cultural Studies (1967–1969) and create a “photo-essay” of inner-city life. The exhibition was held at the Ikon Gallery from 27 January – 3 April 2016 and comprised 61 photographs from Mendelsohn’s collection, lent by the Cadbury Research Library.

Images courtesy of Cadbury Research Library
Bellows and the Body: The Real, the Ideal and the Nude
22 October 2016 – 22 January 2017
Lady Barber Gallery

Two female nudes, last seen together in 1910, are reunited for this autumn’s fascinating exhibition at the Barber Institute, Bellows and the Body: The Real, the Ideal and the Nude.

In February 2015, the Barber announced an important new acquisition: Nude Miss Bentham, 1906, an early masterpiece by George Bellows once owned by Pop artist Andy Warhol. This compelling oil painting – the Barber’s first studio nude, and only the second painting by Bellows in a British public collection – gained widespread approval from visitors, as well as provoking much intrigue. Who was the model for this full-length nude, described by Guardian arts correspondent Maeve Kennedy as ‘the sturdy Miss Bentham’? And, why had they never heard of Bellows – who, it transpires, is celebrated on his home soil and regarded as one of the most significant American painters of the early 20th century?

George Bellows (1882–1925) was a major figure in the ‘Ashcan School’: a loose grouping of artists who shared an interest in expressing the modernity of their urban environment – specifically New York City – and a social commitment to realism. Their models were the working-class men, street children and prostitutes, and their settings the sidewalk and subway, the dockyards and boxing clubs. Their art was a radical, modern take on genre painting – the everyday life as subject – executed, particularly in Bellows’s case, in a painterly style that owed more to old masters such as Velazquez and Rembrandt than to the experimenting of the group’s European contemporaries – the Post-Impressionists, Fauves or Expressionists.

Based on extensive research by the Barber’s former research intern, Deborah van der Herik, and Dr John Fagg, Director of the University’s American and Canadian Studies Centre, the exhibition suggests some convincing answers to the mystery of Miss Bentham’s identity as well as exploring the treatment of the human figure by Bellows and his fellow Ashcanners. The Barber’s painting will joined by Nude Girl: Miss Leslie Hall, a comparable oil of 1909 owned by the Terra Foundation for American Art, as well as key works on paper, including the Bellows’s print The Life Class – acquired earlier this year by the Barber.

The exhibition, generously supported by the TERRA Foundation, will be complemented by a public evening lecture on Thursday 3 November, followed by a major academic symposium the next day, with papers and round-table discussions involving academics and curators from the UK, Europe and the US. There will also be a full programme of gallery tours and talks, plus practical art and writing workshops for all ages.

Further details are available on the Barber website at www.barber.org.uk
The University of Birmingham has thousands of objects cared for by the Research and Cultural Collections department with regular activities, events and exhibitions for staff, students and the public throughout the year.

Research and Cultural Collections

Research and Cultural Collections has a vibrant programme of student projects for both undergraduate and postgraduate students. Participants work alongside the curatorial team to undertake projects that are beneficial to both parties, taking into account the student’s areas of interest. Rachael Banes, Curatorial Volunteer has written the following article, sharing the research she has conducted into the Archaeology Collection.

Not every society has always been as comfortable with displaying facial hair as we are today. In Ancient Egypt, men would shave their entire bodies to prevent the spread of disease, only growing their hair or beard as a sign of mourning. Nevertheless, whilst the Egyptians were usually against real hair – the ‘Fake Beard’ as seen on our Figurine of Osiris from the Archaeology Collection, was a staple in the representation of kings and deities.

Often appearing in religious images, the false beard was associated with the Gods, particularly Osiris. A beard made of goat’s hair formed part of the ceremonial wear of a pharaoh throughout ancient Egyptian history. The beard is recognisable as early as 3000 BCE on the Narmer Palette, worn by Egypt’s first king. The faux facial hair is then seen on almost every kingly representation since and is even donned by the infamous female pharaoh Hatshepsut in the 1400s BCE, in an attempt to hide her feminine features.

Our Osiris statue, which is from the Late Period (about 450 BCE), when the Egyptians were being ruled by the beard-friendly Persians, maintains the same false beard jutting from the god of the underworld’s chin.

By Rachael Banes, Curatorial Volunteer

Curators and Connections: behind the scenes tours of the Research and Cultural Collections

Since the University’s earliest days, objects have been used and displayed around campus for teaching, research and inspiration. A new series of tours launching this autumn will introduce the dispersed collections that comprise the Research and Cultural Collections. These thematic tours will give behind the scenes access to spaces which are not usually accessible to the public. Three strands that will run throughout the 2016/2017 academic year will introduce University History and Architecture, aspects of the Campus Collection of Fine and Decorative Art and the museums embedded into academic departments. The tours will explore the stories of key objects and people associated with the University of Birmingham and through that discovery, encourage visitors to look at campus in a new light.

The first three tours running during the autumn term will cover University History and Architecture: early years (1900–1914), Paolozzi and the University of Birmingham: Pop Art in the Campus Collection of Fine and Decorative Art and Introduction to the Danford Collection of West African Art and Artefacts.

Osiris’ Fake Beard

Research and Cultural Collections has a vibrant programme of student projects for both undergraduate and postgraduate students. Participants work alongside the curatorial team to undertake projects that are beneficial to both parties, taking into account the student’s areas of interest. Rachael Banes, Curatorial Volunteer has written the following article, sharing the research she has conducted into the Archaeology Collection.

Not every society has always been as comfortable with displaying facial hair as we are today. In Ancient Egypt, men would shave their entire bodies to prevent the spread of disease, only growing their hair or beard as a sign of mourning. Nevertheless, whilst the Egyptians were usually against real hair – the ‘Fake Beard’ as seen on our Figurine of Osiris from the Archaeology Collection, was a staple in the representation of kings and deities.

Often appearing in religious images, the false beard was associated with the Gods, particularly Osiris. A beard made of goat’s hair formed part of the ceremonial wear of a pharaoh throughout ancient Egyptian history. The beard is recognisable as early as 3000 BCE on the Narmer Palette, worn by Egypt’s first king. The faux facial hair is then seen on almost every kingly representation since and is even donned by the infamous female pharaoh Hatshepsut in the 1400s BCE, in an attempt to hide her feminine features. Our Osiris statue, which is from the Late Period (about 450 BCE), when the Egyptians were being ruled by the beard-friendly Persians, maintains the same false beard jutting from the god of the underworld’s chin.

By Rachael Banes, Curatorial Volunteer

Figurine of Osiris, image courtesy of Research and Cultural Collections
Theme and Variation: The Making of the Bramall Frieze by Peter Randall-Page celebrated the making of the recently commissioned frieze by displaying a range of preparatory works and documentary photo-graphics. The exhibition charted the artist’s process from original concept through to the installation of a frieze comprising of over nine hundred individually crafted ceramic tiles. It explored how the design came into being as a visual representation of the improvisation of jazz; giving an insight into the intricacies of the pattern and the artist’s working practices.

Permission Taken was the result of artist Antonio Roberts’ residency at the University of Birmingham during the 2014–15 academic year. This two-part exhibition held in the Bramall Music Building and at Birmingham Open Media explored remix culture, permission culture and issues surrounding ownership and intellectual property. It predominately focused on Roberts’ documentary photography. The exhibition charted Roberts’ residency at the University of Birmingham (2014–15).

Oscilloscopes are a type of electronic test instrument which allow for the observation of varying signal voltages. These instruments can convert other signals, such as sound or vibration, to voltages and display this reading. The voltages are displayed as a two-dimensional line, plotted against a scale which allows the viewer to analyse changes in the electrical signal over time.

Cathode ray oscilloscopes are an early version of this type of instrument. They consist of a cathode ray tube, amplifiers, a timebase and power supply. They are now called ‘analogue’ scopes to distinguish them from digital versions that became more common in the 1990s. This particular model was a popular British-made dual-trace oscilloscope which allowed two signals to be displayed simultaneously.

Object in Focus: Cathode Ray Oscilloscope

The Research & Cultural Collections are studied and interpreted by many researchers, students and artists. This cathode ray oscilloscope from the Collection of Historic Physics Instruments inspired artist Antonio Roberts during his residency at the University of Birmingham (2014–15).

Rorschach Screen, Peter Randall-Page (2015) Image Credit: Research and Cultural Collections, University of Birmingham

Permission Taken was a popular British-made dual-trace oscilloscope which was a dramatic flourish

Winterbourne House and Garden

Winterbourne House and Garden hosts a year-round programme of exhibitions, events and workshops.

Saturday 26 November, 10.30am – 3.30pm

Intriguing Forms and Beautiful Barks: Botanical Art with Jeni Neale

Learn how to illustrate bark, twigs and buds with artist Jeni Neale. Learn how to build layers of transparent watercolour to portray these fascinating subjects. (£45, booking essential)

Saturday 10 December, 11am – 4pm

Christmas at Winterbourne*

Winterbourne’s immensely popular Christmas event returns. Father Christmas and his reindeer will be welcoming children to the grotto, those who have been good will receive a present!

04 March 2017 – 02 March 2018, 10am – 4.30pm

Fairytales and Fables*

A magical exhibition exploring the elemental themes of earth, air, fire and water in Victorian and Edwardian fairytale illustrations.

* Admission charges apply

For full details of Winterbourne’s programme of events, and for more information on pricing and booking, see winterbourne.org.uk

There was mime, music and musings in Winterbourne’s garden on Saturday 18th June as the new Ovid’s Garden was formally ‘opened’.

In partnership with Winterbourne and designed by acclaimed landscape designer Kathryn Aalto, this garden is the project of University of Birmingham Classics Doctoral researcher Miriam Bay. Miriam’s research explores the invocation of Ovid within Italian Renaissance gardens, tracing the way ancient myth and landscape shaped garden design. It also investigates the sensory experience of the garden through the different uses of its plants.

Miriam welcomed visitors and talked about the project before welcoming the garden’s designer Kathryn to discuss her design. There was then performance from Avid for Ovid, Roman Pantomime enthusiast and performers, and the chance to enjoy a glass of wine in the garden.

Now in full bloom, the garden sits comfortably in its Arts and Crafts surroundings.
WELCOME TO
THE NEW
MAIN LIBRARY

After years of planning and construction and months of shifting stock from one building to another, the new Main Library is now ready and waiting to welcome students, open for use 24 hours a day. What can we expect?

Entering through a light, airy foyer, library users pass the café and the library lounge and turn right into the atrium, beyond which stand hundreds of bookable PC workstations, alongside a variety of study spaces. A power point at every desk enables students to work from their own devices and wifi guarantees seamless access to a wide range of online resources. In the first and second floors a large collection of the most heavily used books ensures that students always have access to the printed resources they need and throughout the day library assistants roam the study floors ready to offer assistance and make users aware of what’s available, including support from skilled library trainers and subject specialists. The Research Reserve on the lower ground of the new Main Library has 50,000m of shelving and is designed to accommodate and preserve low use but vital research collections. There’s a regular fetching service from this facility and a room where researchers can consult the material.

Above: The New Library
Image courtesy of Associated Architects

A New Exhibition
Inspiring Knowledge
in our New Library

The development of the Edgbaston campus and especially the opening of the New Library is a significant, once in a lifetime event. In order to do justice to these improvements in the lives of our community, Library Services with the Cadbury Research Library are putting on an exhibition for the building’s opening which celebrates various forms of the arts and sciences with some of the most significant publications held in the University’s collections.

With this exhibition the Library shares its wonders, offering those who visit centuries of innovation and imagination to inspire. Like the library itself the exhibition is a crucible of ideas; an array of ground-breaking works that have changed the way people have thought, experienced and imagined the world.

The three showpieces are The Nuremberg Chronicle (1493), Vesalius’s Fabric of Human Anatomy (1543) and Chaucer’s The Canterbury Tales (1560). Complementing these three works and demonstrating the inter-disciplinary nature of knowledge and art are illustrations from a range of iconic works by the likes of Newton, Huxley, Dickens, Milton, Blake, Diderot and Descartes. All life is here.

The exhibition will be supported by a series of lectures and events. The opening lecture will be given by Professor Alice Roberts, who will be speaking about Vesalius, on 13 October, which will form part of this year’s Book to the Future Festival. Dr Steve Ellis will be speaking on Chaucer’s Canterbury Tales on 2 March to mark World Book Day.

It is hoped that the exhibition will be a unique opportunity for all departments to engage with these iconic works in new ways. Most of all we wish to inspire our students with a sense of wonder and enthusiasm – encouraging them to see themselves as the next stage in a historic chain of knowledge.

Karin Brown, Shakespeare Institute Librarian

Top: René Descartes (1596–1650), L’homme... et un traité de la formation du foetus (Treatise on man), 1692
The brain showing optical nerve and pineal gland
Bottom: William Blake, Illustrations to Dante’s ‘Divine Comedy’, 1824–1827 Virgil and Dante at the Gates of Hell
Home to UoB’s Music Department, the Bramall is equipped with state-of-the-art teaching, research, performance and rehearsal facilities, including a 450-seat concert hall that prides itself on being the most adaptable space of its kind in any UK University. The Bramall showcases a range of concerts and events and is open to the public.

Entertainment Awaits at the Bramall this Winter

Entertainment awaits you at the Bramall, with a wide selection of concerts and events. Located right at the heart of the University campus, the Bramall is the perfect place to bring family and friends for a great night out.

Comedians from Mock the Week and Live at the Apollo provide the laughs at our monthly comedy nights. Some of the UK’s finest classical musicians will take to the stage. Immerse yourselves in to the world of key celebrities and eminent speakers, via our “Audience With...” evenings. Or boogie the night away, with rock and pop favourites from stage and screen.

Abba-Rigional
14 December, 7.30pm

In complete Swedish style, Abba-rigional will have you and your friends dancing from the moment they walk on stage. Join us on a 70s rollercoaster of Abba’s greatest hits, taking a chance along the way and super-trouping you through a night to remember.

An Audience with Simon Weston
26 January 2017, 6.30pm

Join us for an evening with inspirational Falklands war veteran Simon Weston CBE, as he talks about overcoming adversity and positive mental attitude, plus his experiences of being in the public eye over the last 30 years.

Comedy Night
19 January, 8pm

Laugh in the face of the January blues, with Barry Dodds (compere), Larry Dean and Paul Sinha.

Medically qualified Paul Sinha is a critically acclaimed international stand-up comedian who first achieved media recognition in 2006 when his solo show Saint or Sinha was nominated for the Perrier award at the Edinburgh Festival. You may also know him as one of the regular “Chasers” on ITV’s award winning quiz show The Chase.

Peter Donohoe
23 February 2017, 7.30pm

In the years since his unprecedented success in the International Tchaikovsky Competition in Moscow, Peter Donohoe has built an extraordinary world-wide career, encompassing a huge repertoire and over forty years’ experience as a pianist. He is acclaimed as one of the foremost pianists of our time, for his musicianship, stylistic versatility and commanding technique. Peter Donohoe was awarded a C.B.E. for services to music in the 2010 New Year’s Honours List.

To view the full programme and to book tickets visit the Bramall website www.thebramall.co.uk or call the Box Office on 0121 414 4414.
Clockwise from top left:
Art group Genetic Moo invite audiences to generate multi-coloured animations using their interactive app.
Grand Union artists-in-residence, Eric Moschopedis and Mia Rushton, lead festival attendees on a walking tour along Digbeth’s canal.
Professor Kieran McConnell provides the historical context for an exhibition of photographs by Janet Mendelsohn to a packed lecture theatre.
Silent Signal at Vivid Projects – a group exhibition bringing together artists with biomedical scientists.
Images by Greg Milner Photography

Clockwise from top left:
Professor Michael Zev Gordon and award-winning pianist Joseph Houston present a recital and discussion exploring memory.
Letter press artist Becky Howson leads a hands-on workshop at Winterbourne House & Garden
University of Birmingham particle physicists collaborated with contemporary dancers to translate scientific concepts through dance.
Birmingham Ensemble for Electroacoustic Research sonify data from the Large Hadron Collider in a unique performance at BOM.

Arts & Science Festival returns 13–19 March 2017. Themed Land and Water, the festival is a free programme of ideas, research and collaboration across campus.
For more information on the University’s cultural offer visit: birmingham.ac.uk/culture

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To contact the Cultural Engagement team, email: culture@contacts.bham.ac.uk