

ASHMOLEAN
MUSEUM
OXFORD



ANNUAL REVIEW

2019/20



ASHMOLEAN.ORG





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ABOVE Clay Live, October 2019. © Ian Wallman

26 Hong Tao (b.1948), *Galloping Rhythm*, 2000. Multi-block woodcut, printed with oil-based ink, 76 x 90cm. EA2007.28

34 Gold stater of Alexander the Great from the Amhipolis Mint, 336–c.323 BC.

COVER Rembrandt van Rijn (1606–69), *Self-Portrait in a Cap*, 1630. Etching and drypoint on laid paper, 5.2 x 4.7 cm. WA1855.368

10 Gallery view of the Ashmolean's *Last Supper in Pompeii* exhibition, 25 July 2019–12 January 2020

FOREWORDS



LORD LUPTON
CHAIRMAN
BOARD OF VISITORS

When I was fortunate enough to take over from Bernard Taylor as Chairman of the Board of Visitors on 1 January 2020, the Museum was in a flurry of activity preparing for the major *Young Rembrandt* exhibition, charting the meteoric rise of the Dutch Master. It was a joy to see the teams at work putting on a show of this scale, beauty and significance.

That was then. Now, just a few months later, we have to deal with the considerable challenges which have hit the world as a result of the Coronavirus pandemic. Like many other countries, the UK's financial outlook is uncertain, as we face the greatest challenge to our economy since the Second World War. The impact of Covid-19 is scarring the cultural fabric of our society.

In the months since lockdown was imposed countrywide, the Museum went into suspended animation. When my family and I went round it shortly before re-opening in early August, it had a melancholic, haunting beauty, accentuated by the eerie silence and total absence of people. Museums demand the social buzz of the enquiring public whom we serve.

Happily, as I write, the Museum has shed its chrysalis and re-emerged, re-opening with new measures in place, such as a social distancing system that accepts just over 5,000 visitors a week, instead of the previous 20,000.

As our doors open again, we simply must build on the important work that has already been achieved towards securing the Museum's endowment campaign to safeguard our future as a world-class museum and the greatest university museum of art and archaeology. Crises such as the one we are living through often reveal the depth of character and resilience of a community, and indeed a nation. I would like to call out and thank, on behalf of all of us who care about the Museum, the Ashmolean's staff and volunteers for ensuring that the Museum could provide a source of inspiration and learning throughout these past months.

We are so grateful to our supporters for helping us to continue to preserve, enhance and share our collections and knowledge. In particular, we would like to thank Mr Hiroaki and Mrs Atsuko Shikanai and The Shikanai Foundation for the exceptional gift of £1 million to endow the Japanese Collection; this includes the ongoing care and management of the collections, ensuring they are shared with the widest audience through a strong public programme, as well as taking on Lead Support of the 2021 *Tokyo* exhibition. We are therefore delighted to announce the naming of the two new Shikanai Galleries of Japanese Art.

Our heartfelt thanks go out to the Sarikhani family for their support of the refurbishment of the Ancient

Near East Gallery, and to Barrie and Deedee Wigmore for their support during the current crisis; your generosity goes beyond measure.

We are extremely fortunate to be a part of the University of Oxford's Gardens, Libraries and Museums (GLAM). Their contribution towards our core funding enables us to carry out our leading work in teaching and research, as well as developing our strategy to enhance our engagement with the local community and wider public.

Over its 337-year long history, the Ashmolean, Britain's first public museum, has held fast, always evolving and responding to the state of the world and the changing needs of its audience. I strongly believe that the Ashmolean's reputation, its stunning objects, its highly-motivated staff, the support of the University and of our supporters, big and small, mean that we will navigate these choppy waters successfully. Please do consider helping us along our journey.

Female figurine, Cyclades, c.2800–2300 BC. Marble, traces of paint, 30 cm. AN1896–1908. AE.178



XA STURGIS
DIRECTOR
ASHMOLEAN MUSEUM

It was all going so well. Looking back over the year from this uncertain vantage point, it is strange to think how things looked as we entered 2020. Visitor numbers were breaking all records, thanks in no small part to the beautiful and engrossing *Last Supper in Pompeii*; we had just celebrated the tenth anniversary of the Ashmolean's transforming redevelopment and welcomed Lord Lupton as our new Chairman. At the end of February we opened *Young Rembrandt* to critical acclaim and (astonishingly in retrospect) even in early March were confident it would break its ambitious visitor targets.

By 17 March we were closed and remained closed until early August. There is much to regret about having to shut our doors to visitors at a moment of national crisis when so many of us were in need of the very things that museums and art can offer; escape, enjoyment, inspiration, but perhaps above all a sense of community and connectedness. But while our doors closed much of our work continued, and I remain in awe of the nimble, creative and flexible way in which our staff managed and responded to the crisis; adapting ways of working and endeavouring to continue to serve all our communities in the new reality.

This has been a time of reflection and innovation. New opportunities have arisen. The quick and imaginative development of our digital programmes and resources meant we continued to engage existing and new audiences, as well as highlighting areas of potential growth. At the same time the sudden and dramatic collapse of all visitor-driven income; the social and economic impact of Covid-19; and the continuing re-examination of the

legacies of empire, given renewed urgency by the forceful re-ignition of the Black Lives Matter and, within Oxford, the Rhodes Must Fall movements, have all demanded that we re-examine what we do and how we do it.

For me these questions reinforce the importance of our five-year strategy, *Ashmolean For All*. Launched in 2018, it focuses on improving the way we serve and represent as wide and diverse an audience as possible – seeking to welcome and engage all our visitors while recognising the need to give voice to different perspectives on our collections and their histories. Achieving these goals in a sustainable way in a world of social distancing and financial constraints will require sureness of purpose and more of the adaptability and creativity that the Museum has demonstrated over the last six months and to which this report so amply testifies.



PROF. ANNE TREFETHEN
PRO-VICE-CHANCELLOR
UNIVERSITY OF OXFORD
(GLAM)

Oxford University's Gardens Libraries and Museums (GLAM) present some of the most important collections in the world, spanning all areas of human study and history. Welcoming over three million visitors a year, they play an intrinsic role in carrying out teaching and research, as well as introducing a large public to the academic work of the University itself.

In the wake of the seismic events that we as a society have recently faced, the role of our museums and public collections as safe, welcoming places that unite our audiences by providing solace and inspiration has become more relevant than ever. By continuing to build on the public's engagement

with our collections, we can restore hope, reconnect and unify our communities and rebuild the framework of our culture.

Over the past few years significant work across GLAM has been undertaken to develop our capability to share our digitised collections and to expand our offer across all platforms, reaching out to existing and new audiences, from here in Oxford to around the world.

The Ashmolean's current part in a pilot study with the Oxford Internet Institute and Department of Psychiatry, funded by the University's Covid-19 Research Response Fund, to study the effects of online cultural experiences on mental health is testimony to the future direction of our wider engagement. Such projects show how we can continue to support mental wellbeing through the engagement of our cultural assets online.

Now is the time to look at how we tell the stories of our collections. Through interpretation and intervention, we can question, debate and showcase different perspectives.

We have learned a great deal more in recent months regarding the potential of animating our museum programmes and collections in the digital world. With that renewed focus and insight, we can adapt to the post Covid 'new normal' and continue to deepen our connection with, and commitment to, an *Ashmolean for All*.

Namikawa Yasuyuki (1845–1927), *Vase with Waterfall Over Rocks*, 1910–15. Metal with silver wire and Cloisonné enamel, 24.9cm x 6.2cm x 8.5cm. EA2002.177



A YEAR AT A GLANCE: 1 AUGUST 2019 – 31 JULY 2020

AUGUST

Pakistan-based artist Ali Kazim undertakes a residency at the Ashmolean for *Gandhara Connections*, supported by the Bagri Foundation.

The family activity *Roman Holiday* runs throughout August offering food and drink themed crafts, storytelling, dressing-up and role play.

01 *One World Festival*. © Ian Wallman

02 Marble statue of Bacchus with a panther, AD 50–150. Museo Archeologico Nazionale di Napoli

SEPTEMBER

Prue Leith and Mary Beard visit *Last Supper in Pompeii* to film *Front Row Late* for BBC 2.

OCTOBER

International artist Cai Guo-Qiang attends opening of his solo show *Gunpowder Art*.

One tonne of clay is presented on the forecourt for *Clay Live*, a day-long celebration of ceramics.

The Ashmolean launches *Chromotope*, a multi-institutional research partnership exploring the Victorian Colour Revolution.

NOVEMBER

The Ashmolean celebrates tenth anniversary of the opening of its new building, designed by Rick Mather Architects.

8,160 visitors attend the *One World Festival*, bringing together different faith communities from across Oxfordshire.

American artist Philip Guston is the focus of the exhibition *Locating the Image* and the Slade Lectures; the opening is attended by the artist's daughter Musa Meyer.

The Western Art Print Room records the highest monthly attendance ever with 659 visitors.

DECEMBER

Heston Blumenthal premières his Pompeian feast at the Ashmolean Dining Room.

JANUARY

Lord Lupton takes on the Chair of the Board of Visitors.

Last Supper in Pompeii ends with a total of 87,280 visitors, becoming the most visited exhibition in Ashmolean history.

Installation of the major new exhibition *Young Rembrandt* begins.

FEBRUARY

Arts Council England renews the Ashmolean's status as an Accredited Museum.

Young Rembrandt opens to the public and receives stellar reviews across national media.

03 Installation of the exhibition *Young Rembrandt*. © Emily Jarrett

04 Entry to *Artists In Residence* Competition. © Samantha Varney

05 Ashmolean collections undercover during lockdown, March 2019. © Ian Wallman

MARCH

Coronavirus pandemic strikes the UK with devastating impact; the Government announces nationwide lockdown.

On 17 March the Ashmolean temporarily closes to the public. Staff are sent home, the lights are turned off and the collections go under cover.

On 19 March *#Isolation Creations* is up and running with daily challenges across social media.

APRIL

Ashmolean From Home presents new online programme for audiences to enjoy remotely.

400,000 viewers tune into watch *Young Rembrandt* as part of BBC Arts' *Culture in Quarantine*.

Young Rembrandt is recreated online, featuring videos, gallery shots, digital images of the artworks and accompanying texts.

MAY

New online art competition *Artists in Residence* documents the public's response to Coronavirus.

The Ashmolean becomes the first museum to create bespoke Instagram filters, featuring works from the

JUNE

Oxford researchers win Covid-19 research grant to develop a study with the Ashmolean on the effects of online cultural experiences on mental health.

Voices in the Gallery wins Vice-Chancellor's Education Award.

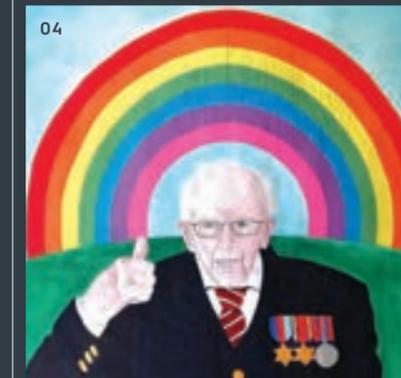
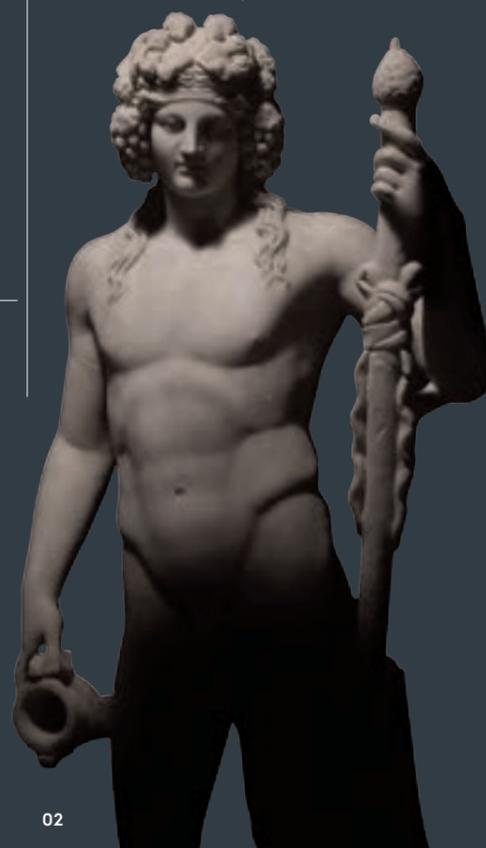
Ashmolean From Home releases new online exhibition *Mediterranean Threads*.

JULY

Preparations for reopening the Ashmolean on 10 August, after 146 days of closure, begin with new signage for face coverings, 2-metre social distancing and one-way systems.



Ashmolean hits target of digitising 190,000 objects, 25 per cent of the collections, substantially increasing online access to art and archaeology across the Museum.





ASHMOLEAN FOR ALL

Our Strategy *Ashmolean For All* places equity and inclusion at the heart of everything we do, enabling us to improve the way the Museum represents, engages with and includes all communities and individuals, from existing visitors to new audiences. *Ashmolean For All* is underpinned by the following principles, which are embedded in every aspect of our work:

PRESERVING, ENHANCING AND SHARING OUR COLLECTIONS

We will continue to care for our collections, enable their growth and share them worldwide. Ranging from prehistory to the contemporary world, these internationally significant collections are the foundation of all that we do.

INSPIRING OUR AUDIENCES

We will ensure that our audiences' encounters are inspiring, meaningful and enjoyable by developing the Ashmolean onsite, offsite and online as a place of discovery, emotional engagement and lifelong learning. We are listening to our visitors to create inclusive, relevant content across all our programmes and platforms, making the Museum a more welcoming and social place while connecting more deeply with our local communities.

A WORLD-CLASS CENTRE FOR RESEARCH AND TEACHING

We are dedicated to furthering the understanding of the world through the material and visual evidence of art and archaeology, and providing intellectual leadership in research and teaching-related areas covered by our collections and research resources across the disciplinary range for the University.

This past and unprecedented year has accentuated the public benefits of a museum. Culture sustains people. And in times of crisis this is increasingly evident. In the light of recent world events our strategy, now in its third year, has gathered momentum and a sense of urgency. The Ashmolean has a social and civic role to play in retelling the stories of the past, ensuring that we represent and remain relevant to all our audiences by creating a safe space to explore and discuss these issues.

In March, prior to lockdown, the Ashmolean was on course to receive one million visitors for the 2019/2020 year. In addition to our core learning and engagement work with schools, families, communities, adults and older people, we introduced the following range of new initiatives to widen access to the Museum:

- *AshPass*: a pilot membership scheme for young people aged 16–19, offering special benefits to encourage independent visits to the Ashmolean, was launched in Cheney School and Oxford Spire Academy. Due to its success we will roll out the scheme to more schools next year.
- *Voices in the Gallery*: a partnership with Oxford Spire Academy to co-create a set of audio recordings

and films made by young people from Eritrea, South Sudan and Syria with Ashmolean gallery staff, reflecting on and responding to objects from the Ancient Near East. On receiving the Vice-Chancellor's Education Award, the judging panel praised the Museum for 'making powerful use of learners and staff as co-creators, genuinely changing the way the Museum's objects are exhibited. The panel feels there is wide applicability for this project's approach across the museum sector, and hope that the team might consider sharing their work widely in the future'.

Object handling, *Voices in the Gallery*. © Ian Wallman



- In October the Older People's Action Team – our newest co-producing group, recruited through our *Meet Me at the Museum* sessions for isolated older people – met for the first time. In considering the stages of ageing to understand how to unpick stereotypes and make improvements for older audiences visiting the Museum, the group has advised on social, physical and cultural activities to increase engagement to the Museum for all older people.
- The One World Steering Group met regularly, furthering connections between Oxford's different faith groups and sharing knowledge of different cultures in the city. The theme of this year's *One World Festival* was to welcome new arrivals to Oxford, especially refugees from Syria and other war-torn areas of the world, to a free weekend of activities, performances, talks and crafts.

“The *One World Festival* has been an absolute success. This has brought together the rich religious, cultural and ethnic diversity of our beautiful county. Through the process of organising the event, many of the organising team, drawn from our diverse communities, have got to know each other, built strong working relationships and gained understanding about each other's communities and cultures. All this was made possible through the dedication and professionalism of the Ashmolean staff and volunteers, for which my gratitude and thanks.”

IMAM MONAWAR HUSSEIN

- Our work with GLAM Community Engagement has continued with *Along for the Ride*, a co-curated community exhibition for World Mental Health Day. Working in partnership with The Mill, a local wellbeing hub supporting people's mental health, participants were inspired by visits to the Print Room to create a display at the Ashmolean. They oversaw the process from inception to installation, including the exhibition's theme 'Along for the Ride' to explore journeys and mental health.
- Furthermore, the Community Engagement team supported two members of Oxford's Syrian Kurdish community to advocate, network and help deliver workshops for the city's Middle Eastern communities. The workshops fed into the planning and content development of a forthcoming exhibition about the creation of countries in the Middle East following the First World War.
- More recently, we launched *Artists in Residence*, a competition with the *Oxford Times* inviting people to submit artworks created during, and in response to, their experiences in lockdown. We have received over 1,100 creative and moving submissions from across Oxfordshire. Selected entries have been printed weekly in the *Oxford Times* and the winners will be displayed at the Ashmolean.

Important work such as this continues to broaden our audiences and to encourage as many people as possible to reap the benefits of visiting a museum.

One World Festival, November 2019. © Ian Wallman



EXHIBITIONS, FREE EXHIBITIONS, SPECIAL DISPLAYS AND TOURING EXHIBITIONS

EXHIBITIONS

LAST SUPPER IN POMPEII
25 July 2019 – 12 January 2020

YOUNG REMBRANDT
27 February – 1 November 2020

FREE EXHIBITIONS

A.R. PENCK: I THINK IN PICTURES
28 June – 3 November 2019

CAI GUO-QIANG: GUNPOWDER ART
24 October 2019 – 13 September 2020

PHILIP GUSTON: LOCATING THE IMAGE
23 November 2019 – 8 March 2020

SPECIAL DISPLAYS

FEED THE WORLD: FOOD AND MONEY
30 July 2019 – 1 March 2020

LASERS, HOARDING AND ROMAN GOLD COINAGE
7 March 2020 – March 2021

FROM ISTANBUL TO OXFORD: THE ORIGINS OF COFFEE DRINKING IN ENGLAND
28 September 2019 – 15 March 2020

A NICE CUP OF TEA? COMMUNITY-LED INSTALLATION
23 May 2019 – May 2021

TOURING EXHIBITIONS FROM THE ASHMOLEAN

PAINTING FACES: THE ART OF FLATTERY
17 May – 8 September 2019
Broadway Museum and Art Gallery

DIMENSIONS: THE MATHEMATICS OF SPACE AND SYMMETRY
14 September – 19 December 2019
Broadway Museum and Art Gallery

JAPANESE GHOSTS AND DEMONS
21 September – 1 December 2019
Derby Museum

THE YOUNG TURNER: AMBITIONS IN ARCHITECTURE AND THE ART OF PERSPECTIVE
28 September 2019 – 12 January 2020
Banbury Museum

REMBRANDT IN PRINT

1 June – 15 September 2019
Lady Lever Art Gallery, The Wirral

4 October 2019 – 5 January 2020
Holburne Museum, Bath

18 January – 2 August 2020
North Hertfordshire Museum

MAKING AN IMPRESSION: PRINTS BY MANET, PISSARRO AND THEIR CONTEMPORARIES

8 January – 10 March 2020
15 May – 7 June 2020
ZAMEC Cultural Centre
Poznan, Poland

SKYSCAPE

11 January – 18 March 2020
Petworth House

1,098,679

unique visitors to our website

551,250

visitors to the Ashmolean

223,992

visits to exhibitions at the Museum

87,280

visitors attended *Last Supper in Pompeii*

8,312

visitors attended *Young Rembrandt*

OUR PROGRAMME

The success of our exhibition programme draws on every area and department of the Museum. Founded on curatorial research, it calls on the expertise of conservation and art handling, public engagement, commercial and fundraising activities, as well as front of house operations. The past year has presented some of the greatest exhibition successes the Ashmolean has had to date, together with the most challenging experience of responding to the Coronavirus pandemic and subsequent lockdown.

A visitor enjoying the *Young Rembrandt* exhibition.
© Emily Jarrett



LAST SUPPER IN POMPEII: 25 JULY 2019 – 12 JANUARY 2020

Last Supper in Pompeii told the story of the Roman love affair with food and wine, and its influence on every aspect of Roman life. Fittingly for the Ashmolean and Oxford University, the exhibition was a fusion of art and archaeology.

Beginning in Pompeii before its destruction in AD 79, a fresco of diners and a statue of the wine god Bacchus set the tone, while fascinating Greek, Etruscan and Italic objects reminded us of earlier influences on Roman culture. Visitors were then brought into the home and the heart of the exhibition, the dining room. Its Greek-inspired decoration included mosaics such as the incomparable fish mosaic, the most photographed object in the show, and the skeleton mosaic with its macabre reminder to us to seize the day. At the end came the stark reality of the eruption of Mount Vesuvius. The resin cast of a victim brought to life the human story behind these objects, reminding us of the tragic events that made their preservation possible.

The exhibition showcased new research and conservation throughout. In preparation, a pioneering collaboration with the Ashmolean and Il Parco Archeologico di Pompeii oversaw the conservation of 37 copper alloy, ceramic and glass vessels excavated at Pompeii. Found in the ruins of a tavern, these objects had been untouched since their first excavation in the 1950s. They went on show fully conserved for the first time after 2,000 hours of painstaking work, including visits to Pompeii by Ashmolean conservators to liaise with senior conservator Dr Giuseppe Zolfo.

In the process the stories of how the objects were made, used and repaired have been revealed, forming part of the exhibition's narrative.

Rich in research, lessons were conducted within the exhibition by curators, teachers and learning staff for members of diverse disciplines across the University. The themes will serve as content for future teaching, reinforced by the accompanying catalogue. Designed as a legacy publication, it brought together a dozen expert contributors from Pompeii and Oxford, incorporating new material that extended beyond the exhibition. The 296-page exhibition catalogue became the bestselling product of the year.

The exhibition generated an unprecedented demand for group bookings and exhibition tours. For families, our summer activities were themed around Roman food and mythology, while the family trail received continuously positive feedback. Shortlisted for a Museum and Heritage Award, our partnership with Iffley Academy presented *Last Supper in Pompeii* as a source of inspiration for students to develop their own work in an exhibition at school. This featured Lego interpretations of Pompeii and Mount Vesuvius as well as the students' own mosaics, drawings and artworks. Since 2016 the Ashmolean's partnership

between GLAM and Iffley, a special academy for children and young people with special educational needs and disabilities, has provided opportunities for both Museum staff and students to develop new skills and build strong relationships.

With star objects, accessible themes and the intrigue of a lost city, the abundant source of stories enabled our public engagement team to create widespread media coverage in the local, national and European press and digital media.

■ Fresco with Bacchus and Mount Vesuvius, Pompeii IX 8, 6, AD 60–79. Museo Archeologico Nazionale di Napoli



One of the Exhibition's most creative partnerships was the collaboration with celebrity chef Heston Blumenthal. Following a visit to the Museum, the famous chef created his own unique interpretation of a Roman feast; he provided guests with a taste of history, immortalised by the ash of Vesuvius. His special menu previewed at the Ashmolean Dining Room to a select group of journalists and donors in December 2019. It then launched at *Dinner by Heston* in January 2020, alongside a competition with the Ashmolean, offering the chance to win a unique dining experience at his London-based restaurant.

“I have always had a fascination with the gastronomy of the past and the food we serve at *Dinner by Heston* in London is inspired by the many inventive and creative chefs from Britain's culinary history. When the opportunity came along to work with the team at the Ashmolean Museum, I leapt at the chance to uncover the incredible food stories from Pompeii. The passion and knowledge that Paul, Theresa and all the team shared was infectious and fascinating, and the menu we created with their help has brought a new avenue of storytelling to *Dinner*. I look forward to further collaborations and more edible historical discoveries very soon.”

HESTON BLUMENTHAL
CHEF



Back in our vaulted Café, our catering partners Benugo transformed the space into the *Taberna Ashmolean*. Enhanced by reproduced images from the show and a menu reflecting the flavours of Pompeii, its popularity resulted in a 25 per cent increase in sales. We continued the customer experience into the commercial spaces. Four hundred retail products were built around the themes of Gardens, Life and Death and Food and Drink. Items sourced from Italy became bestsellers, while bespoke product development was also commissioned, using the striking images across a range of stationery and homeware products. In total the exhibition shop generated sales of £230,000, an increase of 78 per cent from last year's exhibition shop sales.

In the show's final weeks tickets sold out, concluding in the highest exhibition visitor figures ever seen at the Museum.

■ Gallery View of *Last Supper in Pompeii*

EXHIBITION ORGANISATION AND SUPPORT

Organised in collaboration with the Ministero dei Beni e delle Attività Culturali e del Turismo, Italy; Il Parco Archeologico di Pompeii; Museo Archeologico Nazionale di Napoli; and Parco Archeologico di Paestum, the exhibition triumphed in all aspects.

It ignited the interest of supporters from across the world, including Intesa Sanpaolo, lead supporter, who praised the significant scientific contribution to the study of Italian history and culture. Other generous donors comprised The Ruddock Foundation for the Arts, The William Delafield Charitable Trust, Stockman Family Foundation and the Museum's Patrons, as well as The Helen Roll Charity, Professor Gillies McKenna and Professor Ruth Muschel, Charles and Alison Young, the late Miss Cecil Western, Mr John and Mrs Margaret Leighfield and Audley Travel. As a result the Museum was able to meet the ambitions for the exhibition, including the additional commission of an audio guide, with support from The Lucinus Trust, which presented the outcome of the conservation work.

Our thanks go out to HM Government, the Department for Digital, Culture, Media and Sport (DCMS) and Arts Council England for making this exhibition possible through the British Government Indemnity Scheme.

YOUNG REMBRANDT: 27 FEBRUARY – 1 NOVEMBER 2020

More than ten years in the making, *Young Rembrandt* was developed in partnership with the Ashmolean and the Museum De Lakenhal, Leiden. The exhibition drew on the strengths of the Museums' respective collections: the Ashmolean's outstanding group of prints and drawings, and two of Rembrandt's earliest paintings from the Lakenhal.

Initial negotiations to borrow the most prized drawings, prints and paintings from international lenders were led by co-curators Professor Christopher Brown CBE, Director-Emeritus of the Ashmolean, and Christiaan Vogelaar, Curator at Museum De Lakenhal. An Van Camp joined the project in 2015 as the Ashmolean's new Curator of Northern European Art.

Preparations in the two years leading up to the exhibition comprised budgeting, managing loan agreements and transportation, developing the narrative and design of the galleries and producing the catalogue and public programme. The exhibition first opened in Leiden in November 2019 under the title *Rembrandt: Rising Star* to commemorate the 350th anniversary of the artist's death, before travelling on to Oxford.

Almost 140 works from across the globe – from Moscow to Los Angeles – have been generously lent to the exhibition by over 40 museums and private collectors. Together they tell the incredible story of Rembrandt as he transforms from an inventive and ambitious teenager into one of the world's greatest artists.

Young Rembrandt opened to the media on 24 February, followed by a preview for Friends and a Private View hosting our Dutch colleagues, lenders, supporters and HE the Dutch

Ambassador. The exhibition received remarkable critical acclaim across the national press.

But, on Tuesday 17 March, the doors of the Ashmolean were forced to close as the nation entered lockdown. The show came to a standstill after only nineteen days, during which it had received 8,312 visitors – a great testimony to its potential.

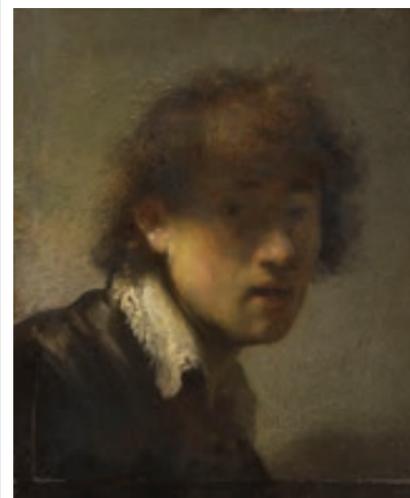
Within a few days staff had started working from home and measures were put in place; heightened security on site, exhibition lighting switched off to reduce exposure and works covered with tissue and Tyvek for protection. Regular checks were conducted throughout lockdown by conservators and security staff.

Ambitious in our approach, we continued to engage new visitors with *Young Rembrandt* through a variety of platforms. Themed videos were released across our social media channels and we produced an online tour of the exhibition, accompanied by an introductory film: both received over 122,000 views. Our Press Office moved quickly to incorporate *Young Rembrandt* into BBC Arts' *Culture in Quarantine* series. Broadcast on BBC 4 in April, the documentary was presented by Simon Schama; it attracted 400,000 viewers, a figure that increased through use of the BBC iPlayer. Its release caused

an immediate spike in our online traffic and one of the largest Twitter responses the Ashmolean has ever had, with hundreds of people praising the programme.

“Rembrandt is loved, generation after generation, for his capacity to depict the whole of humanity with the keenest and kindest of eyes. We look to him for empathy, understanding and pure joy at his astonishing abilities. Right now, we could all do with a bit of Rembrandt.”

SIMON SCHAMA
ART HISTORIAN AND PRESENTER



Moving beyond online programming, we worked with GLAM Community Engagement to take *Young Rembrandt* into communities with restricted digital access by commissioning local community artist Dionne Freeman to create resource packs, including sketchbooks, materials and activity sheets, for adult and teenage audiences at the Oxfordshire Hospital School, MIND at the Mill and SMART. This was further developed by a series of short activity films for our website, providing a valuable learning resource for everyone to enjoy beyond the course of the exhibition.

Following correspondence with museum colleagues and private lenders in April an extension of the loans was confirmed. To facilitate this agreements had to be reviewed, export licensing and Government indemnity extended, and insurance arrangements re-considered. Simultaneously we planned for worst-case scenarios for when we could reopen and created contingency plans for the exhibitions that were to follow *Young Rembrandt*.

It was not until July, after almost 21 weeks of closure, that we could advise lenders that we would reopen to the public on 10 August.

The experiences of European museums who reopened ahead of us informed our planning for the reopening, as we also considered the specifics of our building and in-town location. To facilitate a safe but enjoyable visit, exhibition tickets have been reduced to 30 per cent of the normal capacity. Visitor routes have been planned as part of a one-way system and while entry continues to be free, general ticketing for the Museum itself and the permanent collections is now in place.

■ Rembrandt van Rijn (1606–69) *Self-Portrait*, 1629. Oil on oak panel, 15.5 x 12.7 cm. Bayerische Staatsgemäldesammlungen, Alte Pinakothek, Munich

■ View of exhibition *Young Rembrandt* under cover during lockdown, March 2020. © Ian Wallman

EXHIBITION ORGANISATION AND SUPPORT

Young Rembrandt is supported by The William Delafield Charitable Trust, Edward Speelman Ltd, the Friends of the Ashmolean and the Patrons of the Ashmolean. The catalogue received support from The Michael Marks Charitable Trust, with additional support from the circle of *Young Rembrandt*, Charles and Alison Young, Amb. J. William Middendorf II, Sotheby's, The Catherine Lewis Foundation, Janice and Brian Capstick, Susan and Matthew Weatherbie, the Thriplow Charitable Trust and the Embassy of the Kingdom of the Netherlands.

The exhibition has been made possible as a result of the British Government Indemnity Scheme. Our thanks go to HM Government, the Department for Digital, Culture, Media and Sport (DCMS) and Arts Council England.



MODERN AND CONTEMPORARY

The significance of our growing programme of modern and contemporary art is reflected in the breadth of our activities. These range from exhibitions and special displays to acquisitions and projects with contemporary artists from all over the world.

EXHIBITIONS

During the course of the past year our series of free exhibitions, each accompanied by a catalogue and a public programme, featured one of the world's most ground-breaking artists, Cai Guo-Qiang (b.1957, Quanzhou, China), in the Chinese Painting Gallery (Gallery 11).

Famed for his gunpowder explosions staged at museums and in public spaces worldwide, and his contribution to the Beijing 2008 Olympic Games where he treated viewers to possibly the greatest fireworks show in history, the exhibition *Cai Guo-Qiang: Gunpowder Art*, supported by the Denys Firth Family Foundation, attracted over 32,400 visitors. It represented Cai Guo-Qiang's profound interest with both Western history and Chinese artistic traditions and materials including paper, porcelain and silk, from his first explosions on paper through to recent engagements in responses to El Greco and Pompeii.

Building on the success of our new exhibition programme which launched in 2018 in Gallery 8, we staged two monographic exhibitions of the internationally acclaimed and politically engaged artists A.R. Penck (1939–2017) and Philip Guston (1913–80). Both shows demonstrated our approach to displaying modern art in a historic museum context by creating new dialogues between

different times and cultures. They succeeded in attracting over 20,000 visitors each.

A.R. Penck: I think in Pictures, supported by Galerie Michael Werner, Märkisch Wilmersdorf, London, was the first museum show dedicated to the German artist in the UK for over 30 years. The exhibition highlighted his dynamic style and prolific output, as well as marking the thirtieth anniversary of the end of the Cold War. In succession *Philip Guston: Locating the Image*, supported by Hauser & Wirth, presented the renowned American artist in a new light, focusing on his works on paper

and the inspirations that he drew from literature and art history. Guston's art was shown alongside works from our collections, ranging from prints by Michelangelo to drawings from the Song Dynasty. The exhibition was accompanied by Professor Karen Lang's 2020 Slade Lectures at the University of Oxford. It has continued the Ashmolean's series of high-profile American exhibitions, following on from *America's Cool Modernism* in 2018 and *Jeff Koons* at the Ashmolean in 2019.

Gallery 8 during the exhibition *A.R. Penck: I think in Pictures*



SPECIAL DISPLAYS

The Lewin Gallery (Gallery 62) has featured new acquisitions, such as Desmond Morris's surrealist painting *The Dove*, 1948, along with the new IN FOCUS series, currently presenting portraits and nudes by Egon Schiele (1890–1918) on loan from a private collection. Displayed in rotation alongside works from our collections, the series offers fresh perspectives on European modernism for our regular visitors to enjoy. Despite his short life Schiele became an icon of modernism and is now regarded as one of the most important painters of the human figure in the twentieth century. The Ashmolean is the only museum in the UK where work by Schiele is on long-term public display, providing a rare and ongoing opportunity to see his work.

ACQUISITIONS

Our vision to expand our collections efficiently is guided by the Ashmolean's *Collection Strategy of Modern and Contemporary Art*, which focuses on a small number of art movements and themes that enable us to open up dialogues with, and make connections to, the historic collections. Concentrating on selected areas, we acquire in-depth groups of works with the aim of creating more representative and inclusive narratives.



Following on from Ibrahim El-Salahi's exhibition in Gallery 8 in 2018, we were delighted to acquire four of his works. These feature in a special display in the Ancient Sudanese Gallery in juxtaposition with ancient Sudanese objects, on view until November.

Furthermore, with support from the New Collecting Award by the Art Fund as well as the Contemporary Art Society, we researched and acquired works on paper from the 1980s by German 'Neue Wilde' artists, including Elvira Bach, Ina Barfuss, Salomé and Rainer Fetting, to complement our existing holdings of 'Neo-Expressionist' prints.

A gift of drawings by important 'Expressionist' artists, among them works by Egon Schiele and Ernst Ludwig Kirchner, has enabled us to give our visitors a taste of European Expressionism and provide a historic background to our 'Neo-Expressionist' works. These drawings were generously donated by Cleo Kedros.



PARTNERSHIPS WITH CONTEMPORARY ARTISTS

Aside from collecting contemporary art, we have also enjoyed collaborating with contemporary artists. Most recently, during the outbreak of Covid-19, we produced the online feature *Ashmolean Artists at Home*. In this a number of the artists represented in our collections – including internationally acclaimed artist Jenny Saville – described their work and life during lockdown.

“I've thought about the Black Death and what I learnt about that from the time I worked in Sicily. It arrived in Europe by boats from Asia docked in Messina, Sicily. And I've thought about Egon Schiele and Gustav Klimt, both of whom died from the Spanish flu. All of history seems to have come into view. 'Work and keep working, don't put anything off, do it now...' is what I've told myself. And make the work good...”

JENNY SAVILLE
RA

Elvira Bach (b.1951), *Untitled*, 1982. Oil, pastel and gouache on paper, 50 x 35 cm. WA2020.15 © Elvira Bach

Salomé (b.1954), *Dusche III*, 1987. Chalk and gouache on paper, 71 x 84 cm. WA2020.8 © Salomé

ACQUISITION HIGHLIGHTS

Our commitment to expanding the Ashmolean's collections ensures their international significance and maintains our relevance as one of the leading university museums in the world.

This year a total number of 328 acquisitions were made before the Museum closed on 17 March. The items comprised paintings, graphic works, coins and textiles through the schemes administered by the Arts Council England, the Cultural Gifts Scheme and Acceptance in Lieu of Inheritance Tax, together with a range of gifts, bequests and purchases.

Detail of Élisabeth Sonrel (1874-1953), *Les Rameaux (Palm Sunday)*, 1897. Watercolour and graphite on laid paper, 53 x 91cm. Purchase with support from Art Fund and funds from the Needle Brown Bequest. WA2020.16



FOUR ACQUISITIONS
BY IBRAHIM EL-SALAH

The Ashmolean has acquired four works by Ibrahim El-Salahi (b.1930), an Oxford-based resident and one of the most important figures in Sudanese art today. A pioneer of African and Arabic modernism, his work features in collections worldwide, from the Guggenheim, Abu Dhabi to MOMA, New York and Tate Modern, London. The acquisitions received the support of the Art Fund, Arts Council England / V&A Purchase Grant and a friend of the Ashmolean.

Produced at different times in his life using a range of techniques, the four works depict El-Salahi's diverse practice. They range from the early two-dimensional figurative style that combines Christian iconography with Sudanese visual culture, as seen in an untitled Christmas card print. *Untitled* from 1957, to the lively calligraphic abstract *Untitled* from 1965, which oscillates between ornamental pattern and a map. These early works are complemented by the recent pair *Pain Relief*, 2017, consisting of a tiny drawing on the back of a medicine packet that El-Salahi made when suffering from physical pain, and a large-sized screen print from 2019. El-Salahi has emphasised how the concentrated drawing process forms a major part of the Pain Relief series: 'It is like a form of meditation; I don't feel the pain at all. It is a kind of medicine'.

“To be appreciated by an institution as famous as the Ashmolean is a great honour. I am delighted that some of my works are now in the Museum's permanent collection, in my adopted hometown. It is particularly pleasing that they are displayed alongside the Museum's collection of ancient Nubian relics of Sudan, as I think they relate to each other.”

IBRAHIM EL-SALAH



Ibrahim El-Salahi (b.1930), detail from *Untitled*, 1957. Zincographic print 22.5 x 29.5 cm. WA2019.81 © Ibrahim El-Salahi. All rights reserved, DACS/Artimage 2020

Ibrahim El-Salahi (b.1930), *Pain Relief*, 2017. Pen and ink on medicine packet, 13 x 7 cm. WA2019.131 © Ibrahim El-Salahi. All rights reserved, DACS/Artimage 2020

Ibrahim El-Salahi (b.1930), *Untitled*, 1965. Rubbing from etching plate, crayon on paper, 57 x 30 cm. WA2019.82 © Ibrahim El-Salahi. All rights reserved, DACS/Artimage 2020



LES RAMEAUX (PALM SUNDAY)
BY ÉLISABETH SONREL

With support from the Art Fund and the generous bequest of Noelle Brown, a former colleague and longstanding friend of the Ashmolean, the purchase of this impressive and moving watercolour enriches our holdings of works by women artists. Signed and dated in 1897 by the French artist Élisabeth Sonrel, *Les Rameaux (Palm Sunday)* is an ambitious work by a brilliantly talented painter and designer who, although widely recognised during her lifetime, has largely been forgotten.



Giovanni Domenico Tiepolo (1727-1804), *A Minuet Danced in a Ballroom*, c.1790-1804. Pen and brown ink with grey wash over black chalk on laid paper, 37.5 x 50.4 cm. Accepted by HM Government in lieu of Inheritance Tax on the estate of John Green and allocated to the Ashmolean Museum, 2019. WA2019.88

Élisabeth Sonrel (1874-1953), *Les Rameaux (Palm Sunday)*, 1897. Watercolour and graphite on laid paper, signed and dated, 53 x 91cm. Purchase with support from Art Fund and funds from the Needle Brown Bequest. WA2020.16

A MINUET DANCED IN A BALLROOM
BY GIOVANNI DOMENICO TIEPOLO

This scene of a couple dancing in the company of gossiping and flirtatious figures was made as an independent work of art. It is one of a series of over 90 'Scenes of Contemporary Life' that move between affection and cynicism, created late in the artist's life for his own pleasure. Domenico's superb handling of the ink and wash achieves radiant effects, as his animated touch lends sparkle to the figures. This is one of a group of outstanding works of art - including another drawing by Domenico, *The Bird Fanciers*, from the same series, and paintings by Michele Marieschi and Roelant Savery - that came to the Ashmolean through the Acceptance In Lieu scheme from the estate of John Green.



PORTRAIT OF GIUSEPPE FRANCHI WITH A BUST OF HOMER BY ANTON RAPHAEL MENGES

Mengs painted this compelling image of the sculptor Giuseppe Franchi (1731–1806) in Rome, evoking their shared passion for classical art. The close friendship is conveyed through the naturalism and psychological penetration of the portrait, as well as through the visible brushwork which adds to the air of intimacy. This informality is distinctive, since Mengs's portraits are notable for their urbanity and polished finish. As a rare masterpiece by an artist whose paintings and writings on art changed the course of art history, the painting was accepted under the Cultural Gifts Scheme and allocated to the Ashmolean in memory of the discerning collector Robert Berg.

Anton Raphael Mengs (1728–1779), *Portrait of Giuseppe Franchi with a Bust of Homer*, 1772–3. Oil on canvas, 72.3 x 56.4 cm. Accepted by HM Government under the Cultural Gifts Scheme and allocated to the Ashmolean Museum, 2019. Presented in memory of Robert Berg from the collection formed by Robert and Gillian Berg. WA2019.83



STILL LIFE WITH ROSES IN A CHINESE VASE BY SAMUEL JOHN PEPLOE

A Scottish artist largely based in Edinburgh, Peploe studied art in Paris in the 1890s, looking especially at the work of Manet and Cézanne. By the 1920s his main concern was with painting the perfect still life, featuring recurring elements such as Chinese porcelain, roses and fruit in carefully composed arrangements. The vivid colours, thick impasto and fluid handling are typical of his work.

Samuel John Peploe (1871–1935), *Still Life with Roses in a Chinese Vase*, signed. Oil on canvas, 51 x 40.7 cm. Accepted by HM Government in lieu of Inheritance Tax from the estate of Lady Bates and allocated to the Ashmolean Museum, 2019. WA2019.117



DOUBLE GOURD VASE WITH GOATS' HEADS

In 2019 Barrie and Deedee Wigmore generously presented an exceptional collection of late nineteenth-century British ceramics and metalwork. The collection had first been loaned to the Museum in 2016 for display in the new Deedee Wigmore Gallery of 19th Century British Art. The collection comprises over 30 pieces by makers including Wedgwood, Minton, the Martin Brothers Linthorpe, William Ault, James Dixon & Sons and Hukin & Heath. It is particularly rich in pieces designed by Christopher Dresser (1834–1904), often regarded as a pioneer of modern design. The gift has transformed the Museum's collection of Victorian decorative arts and will form a focus for further acquisitions in the future.

William Ault Pottery (1883–1930), after Christopher Dresser (1834–1904), *Double gourd vase with goats' heads*, c.1892–6. Lead-glazed earthenware, 26 cm high. Presented by Barrie and Deedee Wigmore. WA2019.56



KATY TALATI COLLECTION OF CHINESE PAINTINGS

Katy Talati (1923–2015) grew up in Beijing. Here as a young woman she studied painting with Pu Quan, a cousin of China's last emperor and a highly regarded painter in the classical tradition. When Katy moved to England in 1948, Pu Quan gave her a large number of his paintings which she generously bequeathed to the Ashmolean, along with several works by other artists. After retiring to Oxford in the 1990s she contacted Pu Quan's daughters in Beijing and Hong Kong. The result was the 2005 exhibition *Pu Quan and his Generation: Imperial Painters of Twentieth-Century China*, comprising early works lent by Katy and works from his career in China after 1949 lent by his family. The collection includes work on silk from the Imperial Palace painting and calligraphy supplies.

Detail of Pu Quan (1913–1991), *Hidden Beauty among Mountains and Rivers*, Beijing, 1948. Ink on silk, 44 x 858 cm. Bequeathed by Katy Talati. EA2020.1

ANTINOUS OSIRIS

The cast was made for the British Museum's 2008 exhibition *Hadrian: Empire and Conflict* and shown in the Ashmolean's recent exhibition *Antinous: boy made god*. The statue represents Antinous, the boy-favourite of the emperor Hadrian, as an Egyptian god, wearing a pharaonic headdress and loincloth. Antinous holds a short sceptre in both hands, associated with roles of authority and used for ceremonial purposes.

The figure is one of five sculptured portraits of Antinous as an Egyptian god, two of which were found at Hadrian's Villa at Tivoli. They represent the boy in the form of the god Osiris, who according to the Egyptians, drowned in the Nile on the same day of the year as Antinous. The original statue found at Hadrian's Villa, Tivoli, is in the Vatican Museum (inv. 22795).

Antinous Osiris, 2008. Resin cast of a statue in Parian marble (AD 130–50). Donated by the British Museum in 2019.





ADES FAMILY GIFT OF MEDIEVAL PERSIAN CERAMICS

The Ades Family gift, made under the HM Government's Cultural Gifts Scheme, comprises eight medieval Persian ceramics. Varying in technique and size, these objects add to the Museum's already strong holdings of ceramics from twelfth- to thirteenth-century Iran, especially in relation to lustreware. These objects were part of a large cache of medieval vessels probably buried by a merchant in Gurgan (south-east of the Caspian Sea) before the Mongol invasion of 1220. The objects were found intact in the early 1940s. Acquired by N. E. Ades and his brother Clement, the ceramics have been extensively published and exhibited since. They remained in the family until their recent donation in 2019 to the Ashmolean and other UK museums.

B Bowl with pseudo-inscription, Iran, twelfth to thirteenth century. Fritware, with painting in black under a turquoise glaze. Accepted by HM Government under the Cultural Gift Scheme from the Ades Family Collection allocated to the Ashmolean Museum, 2019. EA2019.60

B Maekawa Senpan (1888–1960), *Subway*, 1931. Colour woodblock print, 20.5 x 26.8 cm. Purchased with the assistance of the Art Fund, the ACE/V&A Purchase Grant Fund and the Story Fund, 2020. EA2020.108



ONE HUNDRED VIEWS OF NEW TOKYO (SHIN TOKYO HYAKKEI)

With the support of the Art Fund, Arts Council England / V&A Purchase Grant and the Story Fund, the Ashmolean was able to acquire *One Hundred Views of New Tokyo* (*Shin Tokyo Hyakkei*), a series of 100 woodblock prints published between 1929 and 1932. A collaboration between eight Japanese artists from the Creative Print movement, the series set out to celebrate the energy and dynamism of Tokyo as it recovered from the devastating earthquake of 1923. No more than 50 editions were printed, several which are believed to have been destroyed during the Second World War. Only three complete sets are kept in museums around the world and the fourth, acquired by the Ashmolean, is the only complete set in the UK.

CARING FOR THE COLLECTIONS

A meticulous programme of conservation underpins our collections and multilayered schedule of exhibitions, events and loans, study visits and teaching to ensure the highest level of care. This work ranges from the analysis and treatment of an individual Old Master drawing to the design of a large new University facility for Collections Teaching and Research (CTRC).

Last summer, as part of an unprecedented collaboration with Il Parco Archeologico di Pompei we completed the three-year preparatory conservation for *Last Supper in Pompeii*. Every aspect of the show, including the lighting, the materials, the environment and the mounts, was individually assessed and selected, with the handling and installation planned and carried out to the smallest detail. Investigation continued after the opening of the exhibition on a number of vessels from excavations at Pompeii. Scientific collaboration with the Department of Chemistry, Professor Mark Robinson of Oxford University Museum of Natural History and others uncovered new discoveries such as traces of urine in the waxy residue on a vessel, confirming its use as a chamber pot, and the identification of bitumen as a surface coating. Careful examination of corrosion products on another bowl uncovered and identified minute traces of insects captured in their last moments.

Other projects include the conservation of drawings and letters by William Holman Hunt and Edward Burne-Jones, generously supported by the Elizabeth Cayzer Charitable Trust, and a paper copy of a tomb painting at Hierakonpolis, 5 metres in length and made by F. W. Green c.1899, supported by the Friends of Nekhen.

An innovative project to develop a shared methodology for studying the technology and authenticity of *mina'i* ceramics from twelfth-century Iran also started this year, working closely with, and supported by, the Sarikhani family. In addition, 25 textiles were investigated and recorded in preparation for the publication *Aegean Legacies: Greek Island Embroideries in the Ashmolean Museum*. The book is a compendium to the exhibition *Mediterranean Threads: 18th and 19th century Greek Embroideries* premiered as an online display during lockdown as part of the *Ashmolean From Home* Programme.

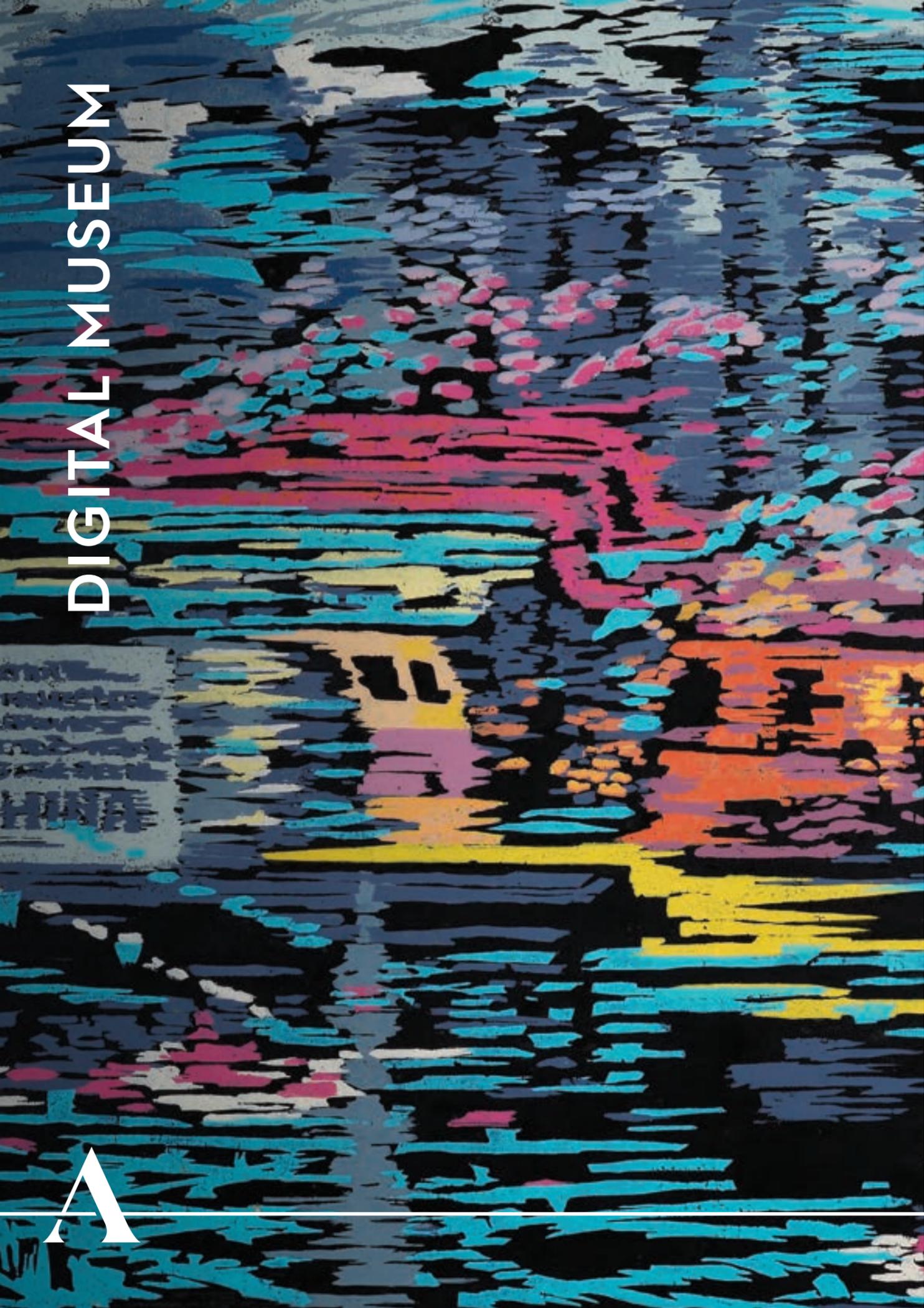
At the same time we have contributed towards bringing the designs of the major new Collections Teaching and Research Centre to RIBA stage 4, enabling work to start on site in July. CTRC brings together substantial areas of GLAM's collections within the new Reuben College building, located at the centre of the University; it also creates a state-of-the-art conservation laboratory, as well as other facilities. This unique space provides exceptional facilities for teaching, research and digitisation, and is due to open in October 2021.

With the sudden closure of the Museum this spring, however, our attention focused on implementing a regular regime of inspections.

This involved looking meticulously for pests and any signs of damage or equipment failure that might affect the collections and works on loan. Lights were turned off sensitive objects, while temperature and humidity readings from over 200 telemetric monitors were accessed online as part of a daily routine to check the performance of air handling units and local controls for optimum temperature and humidity. Care of the collections on site was paramount during this time, requiring a strong collaboration between the Conservation, Security and Facilities teams.

B Checking for pests in the galleries during lockdown. © Sue Stanton





The important strategic aim to develop the Ashmolean's online presence – by increasing digital access to the collections across a range of platforms and transforming the Museum into a virtual source of discovery – was reinforced by the Covid-19 pandemic. Over the past few years we have prioritised the digitisation of our collections, provision of online learning resources and growing our social media content and audiences, making tremendous progress during this time. The period of temporary closure from March to August 2020 has revealed the Museum's strengths and the opportunities for growth, as well as testifying to the benefits online culture has on our wellbeing.

ONLINE COLLECTIONS

In July 2020 we reached our ambitious target of publishing 25 per cent of the Ashmolean's objects on Collection Online. Over the past five years since the project started, the Digital Collections team has delivered a staggering 33 projects, including 24 digitisation and 9 infrastructure projects. Supported by collection managers, study room supervisors, curators, interns and volunteers, over 190,000 objects from across the Museum are now available on collections.ashmolean.org. Some exciting recent additions include Predynastic material and Coptic textiles from the Egyptian collection, Creswell's photographs of Islamic Architecture and a large number of portrait prints from the Hope collection. Our virtual visitors can now search across the collections using the interactive timeline or specific criteria. A range of design

and functionality upgrades have also been made to the Collection Online website to improve the user experience.

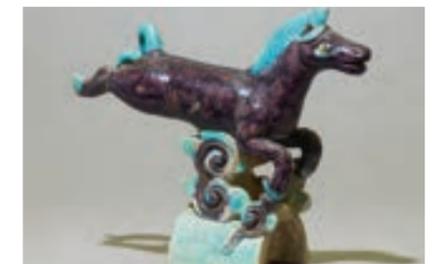
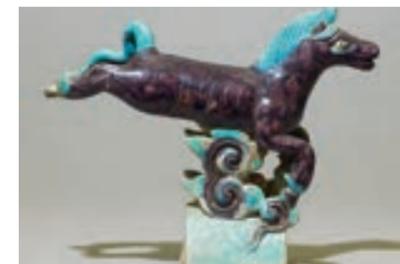
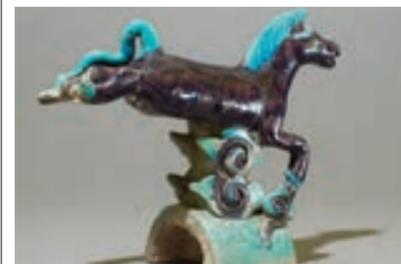
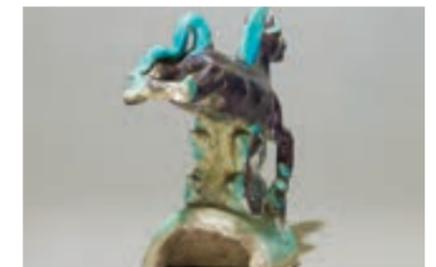
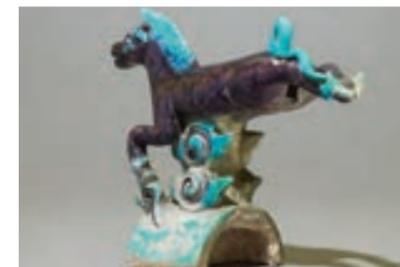
This core undertaking has been made possible through the generous support of donations, including Members of the Ashmolean Museum and this year's Annual Appeal *Welcoming the World*, which focused on opening up our digital collections to international communities.

During lockdown, a web-based app featuring digital images of the portrait prints from the Hope collection was quickly developed to overcome the challenges of remote working. This enabled more than 50 e-volunteers to contribute to the Museum's digitisation efforts from their own homes, resulting in an impressive 5,000 inscriptions being transcribed in three months.

Collection Online saw a record-breaking increase of 100 per cent in site visits by April, double the traffic from the same period in 2019. These statistics demonstrate the value of online collections in providing continuous, global access to our world-class collections for research, learning and public enjoyment.

 Hong Tao (b.1948), *Galloping Rhythm*, 2000. Multi-block woodcut, printed with oil-based ink, 76 x 90cm. EA2007.28

 Collection Online offers multiple views of one object as demonstrated by *Roof Tile in the Form of a Horse*, 1601-1700. Stoneware, modelled with purple and turquoise alkaline glazes, 26x32.5x12.5cm. EAX.1744



ASHMOLEAN FROM HOME

Following the closure of the schools in late March, we quickly issued a lockdown special digital newsletter to direct teachers and parents to our online learning resources and the Museum's social media activity. A new online jigsaw collection, representing objects from Ancient Egypt and Greece, was developed to support Key Stage 2 history themes. Downloadable activities ranged from *10 Things to do with a Landscape* to *Colouring Sheets from Oxford Doodle Club*.

Appealing to broader audiences, our Digital Communications team created a series of Instagram filters based on objects from the collections, and the Animal Crossing game imported the Museum's treasures as miniature artworks through the use of QR codes. These were complemented by the highly successful social media campaign *Isolation Creations*, which challenged audiences to send in their creative responses to the collections. From doodles to knitting projects, haikus and baked goods, over the course of a month we saw an eighteenth-century Chinese silk jacket reproduced on a banana peel, the Alfred Jewel photoshopped onto a flatbread and an Egyptian siltstone figurine recreated in Blu-tack. The campaign received 3,000 responses from the public across Instagram, Twitter and Facebook, creating a strong sense of community; new audiences tuned in from all corners of the world. Due to its popularity, *Isolation Creations* was widely reported and images were published regularly in the *Oxford Times*.

For a more engaged audience, *Stories* presented a host of articles and short videos led by our curatorial team, highlighting themes as diverse as *Indian Deities Protecting us from Pandemics* to *Slow Art*.

ONLINE WELLBEING

Online access to the Ashmolean has proved to be a tonic for many during the pandemic, resulting in a significant increase in online engagement. Research funding from the University enabled the Museum to work with the Department of Psychiatry and the Oxford Internet Institute to study the impact of online cultural content on people's mental wellbeing. The first phase of the research included an online survey to which 1,000 people contributed; half of them agreeing to be involved in follow-up research.

“One positive aspect of this terrible pandemic is that colleagues in both clinical service and the University's museums and libraries have responded creatively using digital technology to maintain, and even increase, engagement with the community. The funding we have received will kick-start our evaluation of these innovations - which could be a really powerful way of helping people to manage mental health problems.”

PROFESSOR JOHN GEDDES
HEAD OF THE DEPARTMENT OF PSYCHIATRY

Participants reported that the Ashmolean online and other cultural content was calming, inspiring and helped them feel connected with others. Some of the feedback from participants has included:

“#IsolationCreations was fantastic and engaged me when I really felt hopeless. They were fun, the curator responded, and I am grateful.”

SURVEY PARTICIPANT

It was intriguing to learn that engaging with the Ashmolean online imparted similar benefits to a physical visit to the Museum.

DIGITAL LEARNING

Beyond the creation of digital content, we continue to spearhead new projects that use digital technology as a creative medium. Our Learning team formed a key part in the recent GLAM Digital Makers project. This partnership with the Bodleian Libraries, supported by the Oxford IT Innovation Challenge, ran from June 2019 to February 2020. Defined as 'learning about technology through making with it', digital making comprises computer coding, visual arts, photography and music, alongside the integration with electronics or crafts activities. Digital Makers brought together staff from the Ashmolean, the Bodleian and Makerspace at Oxfordshire County Library and Science Oxford. Together participants explored the potential of digital making by developing and testing activities with a range of audiences including families, young people, library students, conservation staff and trainee teachers. The project highlighted that digital making inspires people to explore their creativity and it showcased the scope for integration within the families programmes to support the National Curriculum's emphasis on computing.

“Different, fun, mind-boggling, so much science / IT / maths, very 21st century, fascinating... you will need a lot of slots as these are going to be very popular”

PARENT AT FAMILIES EVENT

3,000

individual creative responses were submitted to *Isolation Creations*; each object posted reached an average of 39,000 accounts daily

Ashmolean Museum
@AshmoleanMuseum

#IsolationCreations, but make it fashion. This woven silk jacket comes from late 18th-century China. If you look closely, you can see the detailed dragon roundels and a brilliant blue wave border. You know the drill!



21,833

became the highest recorded number of plays on our YouTube channel in the month of May

28,000

people played our online jigsaw puzzles

Alison Bowyer
@alisonbowyer

A little sea dragon... #IsolationCreations



Alison Bowyer
@alisonbowyer

To be honest, I don't know the drill, but will this do?



38,000

people used our new Instagram filters

86,466

visits to the Collection Online website in April 2020, which was an increase of 100 per cent compared with April 2019

190,000

works now available to search and study in Collection Online, attracting 22,000-page views in a single week

247,523

followers on social media with an increase of 15,163 new followers during lockdown

Oscar Beighton
@OscarBeighton

Didn't have any yellow paper





Our mission is to increase knowledge and understanding by delivering world-class teaching and creating transformative academic experiences for University students while also presenting a learning offer for all age groups at all educational levels. In so doing we serve the needs of the University, our family audiences, school students and further education learners.

CURRICULAR TEACHING

Our curators have made vital contributions to curricular teaching across the University during the past academic year (2019-20). Complete modules in the Humanities (HUM) and the Social Sciences Division (SSD) taught primarily around the Ashmolean collections, including *The Body and Adornment: Material Culture of Later Medieval Britain*, *Roman and Greek Coinage*, *Islamic Art and Archaeology*, *Ancient Near Eastern Artefacts*, *Trade and Exchange in South Asia*, *Ancient Egypt and Mesopotamia*, *Painters on Painting in China* and *Encountering South Asian Sculpture*. Using our collections to facilitate object-based learning to drive intellectual inquiry, four courses featured material drawn from our holdings of art and archaeology. Several of our Museum-based courses supported the student call to diversify Eurocentric Oxford curricular and reading lists by developing an understanding of the material culture from Egypt, Iraq, India and China.

“Being able to handle objects and walk around the Ashmolean collections during classes provided an invaluable learning experience. The ability to see the details up close meant that any research we conducted subsequently was enriched by an unparalleled understanding of the nuance of each piece.”

SEHRISH JAVID
GRADUATE STUDENT

“During my MSt at Oxford University (2017-18) I catalogued nineteenth-century photograph albums of Indian sites and landscapes, and went on to use these objects as the basis of my research. This experience had a significant impact on my choice of career as a cataloguer at a major auction house. Not only did my object-based study at the Museum contribute to my desire to work closely with art and artefacts after university, but it also continues to influence me in how I look at and study works of art. My time at the Ashmolean showed me the rich history that could be gleaned from the careful study of individual objects, alone and in conjunction with other artefacts, and how valuable the Museum’s role is in recording this research.”

FRANCES BELSHAM
FORMER STUDENT

Our collections and exhibitions are catalysts for teaching projects. Regular collaborations take place between curators, staff and students to support course goals, such as *Theory and Methods* in the History of Art.

In response to Covid-19, curators taught online courses in preparation for exams and final assessments where photographs replaced object handling. Although no substitute for handling an object in person, such online courses reiterated the value of our digital assets and the vital contribution of museum-based teaching to the University.

Our curators also supported other higher education institutions (HEI) delivering object-based teaching and research across multiple disciplines in institutions such as Oxford Brookes, University College London, Basel, Bristol, Cambridge, Gloucester, Leicester, Reading and Warwick Universities.



UNIVERSITY ENGAGEMENT PROGRAMME (UEP)

This year marked the final chapter of our grant from the Andrew W Mellon Foundation, which has funded the UEP for more than eight years. This grant has transformed our relationship with the University and diversified our rich and productive contribution to teaching and learning at Oxford.

In the past year the UEP team accounted for close to 50 per cent of all the Ashmolean's academic activities in the University. As well as delivering curricular teaching – providing courses, classes and lectures at undergraduate and Masters-level for faculties as diverse as English, Neuroscience, German and Psychiatry – the UEP has developed programmes to increase the breadth and depth of dialogue between Museum and University beyond the curriculum.

The oversubscribed 'Eloquent Things' course, training early-career researchers and faculty members in object-centred teaching, is now established within the Humanities and Social Sciences Divisions. The Faculty Fellows scheme has extended its reach, for example into the departments of Education and Musculoskeletal Medicine.

Krasis, now in its third year, has brought together undergraduates and researchers in 18 disciplines from 24 colleges for a unique series of interdisciplinary symposia. We have supported and trained participants in the continuing series of research-led gallery talks, now in its fifth iteration, under the heading *Talking Emotions*.

The Andrew W Mellon Foundation's support has empowered the Museum to expand vastly the volume of its teaching. It has increased the diversity of the Museum's interaction with the University both within and without the curriculum, enabling the Ashmolean to engage with an academic community far wider than any since the Museum's founding in 1683. And just as the UEP has sought to establish the Museum as an inclusive, accessible, interdisciplinary resource for Oxford, so Oxford – in all its intellectual richness – has become a key resource for us as we seek to understand, interpret and share our remarkable collections. For all this we are profoundly grateful.

 Rose Hill Primary School.
© Rachael Lowes

LEARNING FOR EVERYONE

Our Learning programme is designed to transport all participants to an array of times, places and cultures through memorable encounters based on our collections. Over the past year we have focused on developing targeted partnerships with organisations from the local community to create meaningful relationships that we can build on, well into the future.

FAMILIES AND SCHOOLS

For families, our varied and playful programme has welcomed over 5,700 people throughout the year who have taken part in our weekly *Baby Ashmoles* sessions, used our family activity packs and been a part of our targeted community engagement with our key partners across the city. Among these partners is Peeple, an Oxford-based charity that supports parents and children.

Beyond the core primary schools programme, we collaborated with specific schools on a broad range of projects. One such was *Digital Portraits*, which involved 60 Year Six children from Rose Hill Primary School in East Oxford working with an artist to create art inspired by the collections. Workshops took place at both the school and the Museum, culminating in a public exhibition at the Ashmolean during the summer of 2019.

“We had a very emotional Year Six leavers' assembly today – I think the *Digital Portraits* will be one of their most memorable and creative memories.”

SUE VERMES HEADTEACHER
ROSE HILL PRIMARY SCHOOL

The Ashmolean has continued to strengthen its relationships with secondary schools and Further Education institutions. We worked closely with colleagues in key city schools, Oxford Activate Learning (FE), Oxford University and Oxford Brookes University to run a strong ongoing

programme of sessions across Classics, Art & Design, History of Art and Creative Writing.

A-level Study Days have also continued, attracting input from partner teachers and GLAM colleagues. Fully booked Study Days have explored Chaucer's World, the Renaissance, Classics and History of Art.

Our work with secondary students was recognised by the University with two prestigious Vice Chancellor's Education Awards for *Voices in the Gallery*, a unique collaborative project with Oxford Spires Academy, and *Classics in Communities*, a partnership with the Classics Department.

“The Vice-Chancellor's award for the superb *Voices in the Gallery* project means a lot to students and staff at Oxford Spires Academy. The students involved were forced migrants and new to learning English; they valued the opportunity to engage with, and learn about, objects in the Museum, to talk with curators and to produce podcasts of real quality. They very much enjoyed the experience of choosing and connecting with an object in the collection and exploring links to their own cultures of origin. Their pride in their achievement was touching, and the recordings showed the potential of the young people we welcome to our city.”

HEAD OF SIXTH FORM
OXFORD SPIRES ACADEMY

YOUNG PEOPLE AND ADULT PROGRAMMES

CREATIVES is a group for 17-19-year olds. It provides a unique insight into how a museum works through monthly meetings where the group learn about the Museum, staff and collections. A total of 648 young people took part in sessions led by our Learning team. Meanwhile, over 7,988 adults took part in other programmes and activities. Of these, our public What's On

programme offered activities spanning talks, workshops, tours and study room visits, animating the themes of the collections and exhibitions programme. One of the highlights was the *Clay Live Festival*, in partnership with the Craft Potters Association, which saw a mass – and messy – practical workshop on the Museum forecourt. Bespoke visits to exhibitions and events were organised for groups, clubs and societies, with requests for group visits to *Last Supper in Pompeii* breaking all records.

ASHMOLEAN TEACHER TRAINING

We have continued to work with Higher Education institutions such as Oxford University, De Montfort University and Nottingham Trent University. This year we worked with Oxford Brookes University to deliver a three-day training course at the Ashmolean on teaching Arts and Humanities using Museum objects and the 'Take One' approach. Ninety first-year BEd students came for a one-day workshop, using the collections to inspire music, art and dance, while fifteen third-year BEd students attended a four-day training course. We were delighted to host Dr Nigel Fancourt from Oxford University's Education Department for a term as part of the Ashmolean's University Engagement Programme Faculty Fellows initiative. We are also regular contributors to the training programme for the Oxfordshire Teaching Schools Alliance based at Cherwell School. Here we run a half-day training session for eight trainee English teachers and a whole day for 80 trainee teachers from across a wide range of secondary subjects.

All of this resulted in nearly 1,000 Higher Education students and researchers receiving direct engagement with the Ashmolean Learning team.

31,335

children and young people from early years to A-level and FE took part in Ashmolean learning programmes

1,400

different objects were the focus across over 50 University of Oxford courses

1,000+

students and faculty members were hosted by UEP. They collaborated with colleagues, students and researchers in 26 subjects, from 36 of the 44 colleges and halls of the University

1,000

hours were spent by curators teaching University classes and giving tutorials

200

graduate teaching sessions and 240 undergraduate teaching sessions were held





As a University Museum we strive to produce world-class research, either in collaboration or individually, to complement our teaching offer. Our research ranges from conventional books and articles to excavation reports and catalogues, innovative research projects and major web-based digital platforms. Curatorial staff supervise doctorates, including students studying at other Universities through the Arts, Humanities and Research Council (AHRC) Collaborative Doctoral Partnership, and we also host early-career researchers.

EXHIBITIONS AND RESEARCH

Our exhibitions programme is an important source of new research, as seen in the catalogue for *Young Rembrandt* and the pioneering collaboration between Il Parco Archeologico di Pompei and the Ashmolean in connection with the *Last Supper in Pompeii* exhibition. The new five-year research project *Chromotope*, a partnership with the Sorbonne University and funded by the European Research Council (ERC), started in October 2019 and will underpin our future exhibition *The Colour Revolution: Turner to Whistler*. This is the first academic study into the change in attitudes towards colour in the nineteenth century. It will examine how the ‘chromatic turn’ of the 1850s mapped out new ways of thinking about colour in literature, art, science and technology throughout Europe. The project includes a Conservation post to investigate the use of colour on William Burges’s *The Great Bookcase* (1859–62).

DIGITAL RESEARCH

Home to two leading online coin projects, our digital research has flourished during lockdown. Treasure catches the public imagination, and through the online *Coin Hoards of the Roman Empire* project, funded by The Augustus Foundation, we have led an extensive international collaboration to make this form of national heritage freely available to all. Already online are 15,000 hoards containing an astonishing five million coins. *Roman Provincial Coinage Online*

explores the non-imperial coinage of the Romans, shedding light on local identities and histories through a combined catalogue of the ten leading collections in the world. The project is of interest both to collectors and the scholarly community. Now available as a web app, the site receives two million-page views a year.

William Burges (1827–1881), *The Great Bookcase*, 1859–62. Pine, carved, painted and gilded, 317.5 x 173.9 x 49.5 cm. WA1933.26

Roman hoard from Mecklenburg-Vorpommern, fifth century AD, Germany

“As an early career researcher, I have worked on coins struck in ancient Spain to those of Queen Anne, adding over 3,500 coins to our online collections. Recently I have edited a volume of new research on the coinage of Alexander the Great and written a book, *Money and Power in Hellenistic Bactria*, featuring coins from Hellenistic Central Asia, which will be published later this year.”

SIMON GLENN
RESEARCH FELLOW



RESEARCH PARTNERSHIPS

We also take pride in the support we give to research in other parts of the world. The *India-Oxford Initiative*, now hosted by the Museum, is an exciting mechanism for the University of Oxford to share, promote and build on its diverse range of collaborations and partnerships with the Indian subcontinent. Research and academic activities of the Initiative fall under the umbrella of Overseas Development Assistance, funded through the University's Global Challenges Research Fund (GCRF) Strategic Funds.

Elsewhere, the Cast Gallery has been involved in partnerships in archaeological excavations at Aphrodisias, south-western Turkey, researching the changing character of Greek city life from the Roman period into late antiquity, and at Hadrian's Villa at Tivoli, Italy, studying the private culture of a great imperial retreat in the second century AD. Meanwhile, a collaboration with the Art Institute of Chicago oversaw the full-scale reconstruction of the plaster cast of *Ludovisi-Chicago Antinous*. Using digital scanning and three-dimensional printing, two separate parts belonging to the same original sculpture were pieced together. Subsequent improvements have recently been made to create a more accurate version of the *Ludovisi-Chicago* bust, and this will soon go on display in Chicago.

Closer to home, following receipt of an award from Oxford's Higher Education Innovation Fund allocation from Research England, we have supported an Early-Career Research Fellow to engage with the history of the Indian Collection at Powis Castle and reinterpret the collection. The Italian Drawings Research Project, funded by a major grant from The Getty Foundation (The Paper Project), has also involved curatorial training.

Ian Hicks, the first of two Ashmolean-Getty Paper Project Research Fellows, worked as part of the Italian Drawings Project to catalogue our rich collection, preparing entries to appear online. The Fellowship supported research in public and private collections in Europe and North America and collaboration with visiting experts. Ian also engaged diverse audiences with his research, including presentations in the Print Room to Ashmolean donors, Oxford faculty and students, and the general public.

Angelamaria Aceto is the Research Assistant on the Italian Drawings Project, funded by the Tavolozza Foundation and the Wolfgang Ratjen Foundation. Her focus on the remarkable and underexplored collection of architectural and ornament drawings from the fifteenth to the eighteenth centuries has led to many new discoveries.

INDIVIDUAL RESEARCH

Over the year we have produced 47 individual research outputs. Individual research is remarkably diverse. To give a flavour, current research in the Department of Antiquities, one of the Museum's six research departments, embraces an Upper Palaeolithic flint group (12-13,000 BC) from Guildford, Sir Arthur Evans's discoveries at Knossos, the culture and archaeology of Cyprus in the Archaic period, daily life in ancient Italy, 3D imaging (photogrammetry) of the Arundel Collection of Roman sculptures and inscriptions, the archaeology of emotion in the later medieval period and the Reverend William MacGregor, a major nineteenth-century collector of Egyptian material.



View of excavations at Aphrodisias, South-western Turkey 2019. © Prof. Bert Smith

PUBLIC ENGAGEMENT AND RESEARCH

As part of *Last Supper in Pompeii* we collaborated with The Oxford Research Centre for the Humanities (TORCH) to stage *Carpe Diem* – a late-night event timed to coincide with the eruption of Mount Vesuvius which began on 24 October AD 79. Oxford students continue to run *Uncomfortable Ashmolean Tours*, exploring the colonial links and other, previously hidden, stories in our collection. The launch of *Our Museum: Our Voices* has paved new ways for previously overlooked and under-represented groups to find themselves in the Museum through gallery interventions and an online exhibition devised by students and early-career researchers from the University. By curating a series of alternative labels, they have enabled perspectives that have historically been marginalised in our public galleries to become the central focus – in this year's project their own diverse ethnicities and LGBTQ+ identities. We hope in future years to expand the programme to amplify and listen to other previously unheard voices – not only within our academic community but from the city, region and beyond.

THE PRINT ROOM AND STUDY ROOMS

Our dedicated Western Art Print Room and other Departmental study rooms offer an opportunity for researchers, University teaching and members of the public to come face to face with the Museum's collections.

Over the past year 2,309 visitors attended the Western Art Print Room and 1,596 visitors attended the Eastern Art Study Room, comprising individuals and groups from across the academic community and broader public. Meanwhile 7,248 objects were studied in the Heberden Coin Room, while over 2,300 objects were used for teaching and research purposes in the Antiquities Study Room.



4,631

visitors used the Print Room and Study Rooms across the Ashmolean between 1 August 2019 and 17 March 2020

£327,670

is the total value awarded to 6 new research projects funded in 2019-20 which the Ashmolean is leading or with which it is involved

8 Masters & 13 Doctoral

students were supervised by curators at the Ashmolean

01 Detail of William Burges (1827-1881), *The Great Bookcase*, 1851-62. Pine, carved, painted and gilded. WAI933.26

02 AND 04 Krasis symposium and Medical students in the Western Art Print Room. © Jim Harris

£3,808,900

is the total value of the 16 research projects running during 2019-20 in which the Ashmolean is leading or in which it is involved



03 Raphael (1483-1520), *Studies of two Apostles and of their hands*, c.1519-20. Black chalk over pounced underdrawing with some white heightening on laid paper, 49.9 x 36.4cm. WAI846.209

NATIONAL AND INTERNATIONAL REACH

The Ashmolean's national and international programme of research, loans and touring exhibitions continues to expand across the world. Since we started mapping our research partnerships in 2016, the statistics below capture the impact of the Museum's national and international reach over the past four years.

RESEARCH PROGRAMME

275 research partnerships were conducted in 36 countries, including 172 project collaborators across 146 institutions worldwide.

LOAN PROGRAMME

1,054 objects have been lent to 270 exhibitions across the world. 48 objects are on long-term loan to 4 museums in Finland, Italy, the USA and the Netherlands and 344 objects are on long-term loan to 18 museums across the UK.

TOURING EXHIBITION PROGRAMME

18 exhibitions have travelled to 3 international venues and 23 UK venues.

Map highlighting the breadth of the Ashmolean's international reach with examples from its research, loan and touring programmes between 2016–2020.

113

works went on tour in *Degas to Picasso: Creating Modernism* in France to Milwaukee Art Museum

45

works went on loan to *Restoring the Minoans* at the Institute for the Study of the Ancient World; 27 works went on loan to *Michelangelo* at the Metropolitan Museum of Art, New York

02

works are on long-term loan to the Metropolitan Museum, New York

102

works went on tour in *Great British Drawings* to Princeton University Art Museum

07

research projects across Europe since 2016:

Chromotope: An Exploration into Colour in the 19th Century, supported by European Research Council (ERC)

Archaeological Excavations at Aphrodisias, Turkey and Hadrian's Villa at Tivoli, Italy

Ancient Coinage as Cultural Heritage, supported by AHRC JPICH

Oxford-Paris Alexander Project, supported by AHRC

Transforming our Understanding of Raphael with Eloquence in Drawing, supported by the Leverhulme Trust

Italian Drawings Project, part of the international Paper Project programme funded by The Getty Foundation from 2018

02

research projects in the Middle East between 2016 and 2020:

The Nahrein Network: New Ancient History Research for Education in Iraq and its Neighbours, supported by Global Challenges Research Fund

Divination and Art in the Islamic World, supported by the Leverhulme Trust

16

works went on loan to The Blue Road, Liang Yi Museum, Hong Kong

09

works went on loan to exhibitions in Japan including 2 in *Stradivarius*, Mori Arts Centre, Tokyo

55

works went on tour including the Watlington Hoard to University of Nottingham Museum; and *Jorvik Viking Centre*, York

34

works went on tour including *Making an Impression: Prints by Pissarro, Manet and their Contemporaries* to Broadway Art Gallery and Museum; Wolverhampton Art Gallery; ZAMEK Culture Centre, Poland

23

works went on loan to *Codebreakers Groundbreakers: From the Enigma Codes to the decipherment of Linear B*, Fitzwilliam Museum, Cambridge

45

works went on loan to *Pissarro à Eragny*, Musée du Luxembourg, Paris

36

works went on loan to *Life at the Dead Sea*, Museum of Archaeology, Chemnitz, Germany

35

works went on loan to *Raphael: The Drawings*, The Albertina, Austria

43

works are on long-term loan at the Archaeological Museum, Cori, Italy

01

research project in Australia in 2020: *The Wonders that Basham Saw – Australian National University, Global Research Partnerships Scheme*

OUR PEOPLE AND SUSTAINABILITY



The Ashmolean's staff and volunteers remain at the heart of our ability to fulfil our educational and research objectives and to offer our visitors, Members and supporters an excellent and memorable experience of the Museum.

We are incredibly thankful to all our staff, volunteers, benefactors and Members for their support of the Ashmolean this year. Their efforts have enabled us to ensure the security of the building and collections, as well as their conservation and maintenance throughout lockdown. Our thanks go to the Government for giving our staff the opportunity to take part in the furlough scheme which generated a £500,000 saving, making a significant contribution towards the Museum's financial stability.

STAFF WELLBEING

Over the last year we have been working to embed the wellbeing initiatives developed in response to our staff survey. We ran our second six-week mindfulness course and continued to offer online mindfulness and mental health awareness courses, yoga classes and training for a network of Mental Health First Aiders. To complement the support available, we now have access to an Employee Assistance Programme, which offers physical and mental health support, counselling, self-help and legal advice free of charge 24 hours a day, seven days a week.

VOLUNTEERS

We saw a significant increase in volunteers at the Ashmolean, with a total of 142 new volunteers recruited to the team in 2019 from a broad range of ages and backgrounds. We have more than doubled the number of young volunteers aged 18-24, with these roles offering the first opportunity to gain work experience in a museum. These roles have included public engagement such as supporting object handling sessions for visitors and giving lunchtime tours of the galleries, as well as extending to behind the scenes work in documenting and digitising the collections.

“I am proud that GLAM has supported and trained up colleagues to be Mental Health First Aiders. Obviously now more than ever people are suffering with mental health issues and the fact that they have a point of contact for support and guidance is essential in these testing times. Sometimes it is just the fact that someone listens to you. Awareness that we all, at times, suffer with mental health and the fact that there are people who will listen, offer guidance and encourage the person to seek help or encourage others to support them is the key to being a MHFA.”

CHRISTOPHER DOOGUE
MENTAL HEALTH FIRST AIDER (MHFA)
AND ADMINISTRATOR, DEPARTMENT
OF WESTERN ART

 Vincent Gill, Visitor Experience Assistant (VEA) in the Ashmolean's galleries.
© Emily Jarrett



SUSTAINABILITY: OUR COMMITMENT TO MAKING A POSITIVE IMPACT

To further our commitment to reducing the environmental impact of our activities, our Environmental Sustainability Committee has identified a number of priority areas. These include the reduction of our energy consumption and carbon footprint, either by reducing use or finding sustainable alternatives; a commitment to choosing low-impact travel options; new ways to reduce waste and promote recycling across all facets of the Museum, from food waste to exhibition materials; promoting re-use of single use plastics; investing in research and optimisation of our limited green space to support biodiversity;

embedding sustainable considerations in purchasing decisions throughout our supply chain; making strides towards achieving Fairtrade Foundation Accreditation.

Our staff and volunteers have engaged and worked proactively, with the Committee's support, towards implementing more sustainable practices across the work of the Museum.

“The Museum’s Environmental Sustainability Committee is made up of a group of passionate, thoughtful members of staff who are united in the belief that the Ashmolean has a moral imperative to act in response to the current environmental crisis. In our first year, we have formulated a robust sustainability policy and outlined the key projects that we want to focus on to ensure the Ashmolean meets its targets in this area, and we look forward to taking these forward.”

EMILY JARRETT
CHAIR OF THE ENVIRONMENTAL
SUSTAINABILITY COMMITTEE



IN MEMORIAM

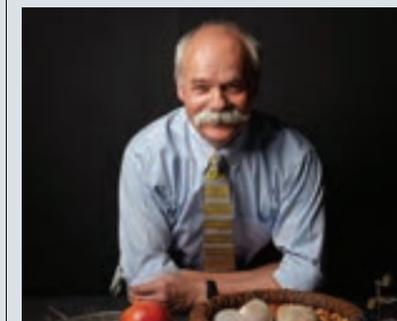


JON WHITELEY
1945–2020

Jon Whiteley, Assistant Keeper of Western Art at the Ashmolean from 1978 to 2014, and subsequently Honorary Curator, was exceptional in every way. Jon was a generous colleague and mentor, a distinguished art historian, a brilliant lecturer and an extraordinarily modest and honourable individual. The fame of the Ashmolean’s Western Art Print Room as a welcoming place for study and enjoyment is largely due to the standards Jon set over his 36 years as a curator, through his dedication to public service and to sharing his profound understanding of art.

The son of two schoolteachers, Jon was passionate about education, helping to set up in 1981 what is now our Learning Department. Obituaries in the national press emphasised his unusual career trajectory as an award-winning child film star. This early experience was formative: in his public talks Jon inhabited the part, bringing the Pre-Raphaelites, French Impressionists, musical instruments or ceramics to life for his audience. Renowned for his breadth of knowledge and depth of scholarship, Jon was an inspirational teacher to Oxford students and a curator of memorably beautiful exhibitions. In his early career at Christ Church Picture Gallery, he organised

the first ever exhibition on Dora Carrington; his recent major exhibition was devoted to Stradivarius. Characteristically, after his retirement Jon continued to work on the collections he had done so much to shape, completing before his untimely death a catalogue of French paintings. His spirit remains with us as a beloved colleague and exemplary curator.



MARK NORMAN
1949–2019

Mark Norman, much loved former Head of Conservation at the Ashmolean, sadly and unexpectedly died of a cardiac arrest in Guernsey, his place of birth, on 27 October 2019.

Mark joined the Museum in 1985 as Chief Conservator in the Department of Antiquities. He demonstrated his passion for the Egyptian collections early on, conserving the largest single object in the Museum, the seventh-century BC Nubian Shrine of Taharqa, with the conservator Seamus Hannah. This began Mark’s longstanding contribution to understanding the conservation of Egyptian objects and his pioneering work on the history of conservation, which uncovered a wealth of information on the way these objects have been treated and used as well as the people involved.

In 1999 Mark was appointed to lead the new single Conservation Department, bringing together conservators from five curatorial departments as one. This proved an opportunity for him to address the needs of the collections as a whole. The 2004–2009 redevelopment and innovative thematic redisplay of the Ashmolean’s collections was a tremendous logistical as well as conservation challenge. Many of the most fragile and complex objects were now displayed for the first time. With his conservation team Mark worked tirelessly, leading on the decant of 500,000 objects, testing 450 cases, providing support for 39 new galleries, overseeing the refurbishment of 17 existing galleries and developing six new stores. Two permanent galleries on the theme of Conservation remain unparalleled in the country; they are a testament to Mark’s commitment to conservation and public engagement.

Improvement in the conservation, care and understanding of the collections through major redevelopments, pioneering environmental monitoring and control, investigative approaches to conservation and state-of-the-art conservation facilities are all legacies of Mark’s 31 years at the Museum. He was immensely proud of his team and their new home, retiring as Head of Conservation in 2016. As a colleague and friend he was approachable, kind and always on side, giving his team unwavering support. Outside Oxford his influence was widespread, and his breadth of knowledge and capacity for detail was legendary.

COMMERCIAL AND FUNDRAISING

To ensure a sustainable business model, our commercial enterprises are focused on enhancing the customer experience and growing our earnings. This year we delivered a net profit of £517,150 from Retail and Brand Licensing, Catering, Venue Hire, Corporate and Friends Membership, Picture Library and Publishing. Before the Museum closure in March, the commercial arm had been performing strongly with a net profit of £590,000, 13 per cent ahead of the previous year and on track to exceed £1m net profit.

RETAIL AND BRAND LICENSING

Our strategy to strengthen the themes of the exhibitions and collections within our commercial spaces, as demonstrated by the broad product range in our Exhibitions Shop during *Last Supper in Pompeii*, generated sales income across our retail businesses and online of close to £830,000. By March 2019 our retail income was 23 per cent ahead of the previous year and our online business sales were up 35 per cent year on year, with the priority categories of stationery, books, jigsaws and gift jewellery.

In January we appointed Start Licensing as our exclusive brand licensing partner to build the income from our commercial portfolio. Income from licensing more than doubled this year, with the addition of new partners such as Treccani, an Italian publisher, who produced a limited-edition boxed set of facsimile drawings from our Raphael collection. Following several visits to the Print Room, these prints have been painstakingly rendered as close to the originals as technology will allow, including using overlaid paper for authenticity.

CATERING

Over the past year we have sought to animate the Ashmolean Café and Rooftop Restaurant. The success of the Café's transformation into the Taberna Ashmolean during *Last Supper in Pompeii*, for example, was followed by a similar take-over for *Young Rembrandt*. Curated events such as our Gin 'n' Jazz evenings on the Rooftop Terrace, as well as the introduction of special exhibition packages combined with afternoon tea or lunch, also enhanced our customer offer.

MEMBERSHIP

Our Membership reached 9,000 Members, following on-site recruitment during the *Pompeii* exhibition. Further improvements were introduced to the Membership's support systems: real-time direct debit went live in November 2019, streamlining a faster sign-up process, removing paper forms and facilitating membership retention. Members' Week in November 2019 was well attended, offering a range of events. Of these behind-the-scenes tours proved the most popular, with many sessions fully booked in advance. Members' Week led to an increase in commercial benefit from our shops and catering outlets, where Members receive discounts as part of their benefit package.

We continue to value the support of our twenty Corporate Members, 65 per cent of whom have been a part of the membership for over six years. This year we were delighted to welcome five new member organisations to the scheme.

PHILANTHROPY

Philanthropy plays a vital role in enabling the Museum's strategic aims. Little did we know how relevant our *Welcoming the World* fundraising appeal to support the digitisation of the collections would become, just as it successfully concluded in early March. While the pandemic has undoubtedly affected our fundraising, with many donors and funders hesitant regarding their own investments in light of the financial impacts of Covid-19 and their ability to engage with the Museum through lockdown, we have also found our closest friends only too eager to help the Museum weather the storm. Some of our most loyal supporters have come forward to make gifts, including a very generous donation from Ashmolean Fellows Barrie and Deedee Wigmore. Our Patrons have remained steadfast in their support with renewals coming in on schedule, despite global events.

Our special thanks go out to Mr and Mrs Shikanai and the Shikanai Foundation, and the Sarikhani family, for their respective support of the

Japanese and Middle Eastern Collections. We are profoundly grateful to all our supporters this year, from our Elias Ashmole Group Patrons to individual benefactors, trusts and foundations. All of them underpin our ability to safeguard our treasures and to share them with the world.

The challenges the Museum has faced have underlined the importance of our campaign to continue to expand the Museum's endowment. In doing this we seek to ensure that future changes to our funding from the University, or to our commercial income, do not limit our ability to share our collections and expertise with the world. Our ongoing attention is focused on transformational endowment gifts that will ensure steady support for our most important activities.

■ Annual Patrons Dinner, November 2019.
© Martin Phelps



BENEFACTORS, GIFTS AND LEGACIES

BENEFACTORS

Adrian Swire Charitable Trust
A G Leventis Foundation
The Al Tajir Trust
The Andrew W Mellon Foundation
Walter G Arader IV
Arts Council England
Arts Council England/V&A Purchase Grant Fund
The Art Fund
Association for Roman Archaeology
The Atlas Fund
The Augustus Foundation
The Austin and Hope Pilkington Trust
The Bagri Foundation
The Barakat Trust
Mr Stephen and Mrs Kimiko Barber
Dr John and Dr Carol Barton
Bei Shan Tang Foundation
Robert and Gillian Berg
Birkelsche Stiftung für Kunst und Kultur
Blavatnik Family Foundation
Mr Dennis Britton
The Bulldog Trust
The late Mrs Elizabeth Burchfield (née Knight),
widow of Dr Robert Burchfield
Peter and Sally Cadbury
Janice and Brian Capstick
Lord and Lady Carrington
The late Ms Pamela Carr-Taylor
The Charlotte Bonham-Carter Charitable Trust
CHK Charities Limited
Dr Nicola Coldstream
The CPF Trust
The Daiwa Anglo-Japanese Foundation
Mr Richard de Unger
The Poleberry Foundation and Martin Dunphy
The Elias Ashmole Trust
James and Vanessa Emmett
Lord and Lady Farmer
The late Ms Irene Finch
Denys Firth Family Foundation
Mr Martin Foley
Dame Helen Ghosh
Mr C M Gorman-Evans
The Great Britain Sasakawa Foundation
The late Miss Hazel Grinyer
GRoW @ Annenberg
Colonel Tom Hall
The Headley Trust
Thomas and Linda Heagy
The late Mrs Jaleh Hearn
Mr Malcolm Herring
The Rt Hon the Lord Heseltine, CH
and Lady Heseltine
Michael Hue-Williams
The Huo Family Foundation
Ms Alice Yin Hung
Ian Mactaggart Trust
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Ishibashi Foundation

Italian Cultural Institute in London
J Paul Getty Jr General Charitable Trust
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Mr Chris Jones and Ms Sara Everett
Ms Cleo Kedros
Ms Latifa Kosta
Ian and Caroline Laing
Mr John and Mrs Margaret Leighfield
The Catherine Lewis Foundation
The Linbury Trust
Mr Matthew and Mrs Frances Lindsey-Clark
The Lord Faringdon Charitable Trust
The Luscinus Trust
The late Mr Mike Malone
Mr Grier H Merwin
The Michael Marks Charitable Trust
The late Mr Brian Donald Hewens Miller
The National Lottery Heritage Fund
Mr Nicholas Nops
The late Miss Ursula Overbury
OxFORD Asset Management
P F Charitable Trust
Pew Charitable Trusts
Pictet & Cie
Mr Philippe Pieters
Michael and Sue Pragnell
Sir John Ritblat
ESG Robinson Charitable Trust
The Ronus Foundation
Ms Virginia Ross
The Rothschild Foundation
Royal Archaeological Institute
The Ruddock Foundation for the Arts
Bonnie M. Sampsell
The Sarikhani Family
John and Penelope Scott
The Selz Foundation
Ms Priscylla Shaw
Mr Hiroaki and Mrs Atsuko Shikanai
and the Shikanai Foundation
The late Dr Ann M Soutter, née Ridler
Edward Speelman Ltd
Sir Hugh and Lady Stevenson
Mr Stephen W C Stow
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FELLOWS OF THE ASHMOLEAN MUSEUM

Mr Nicholas Barber CBE
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Professor Christopher Brown CBE
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The Garfield Weston Foundation
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Mr Bernard Taylor CBE DL
Baron Lorne Thyssen-Bornemisza
The Wellby Family
Mr Barrie and Mrs Deedee Wigmore
The William Delafield Charitable Trust
Winton Capital Management
Lady Wolfson of Marylebone

FINANCIAL HIGHLIGHTS

TOTAL INCOME

Total income received in the year was £11.1 million, down £0.9 million on the previous year, mostly as a result of a decline in self-generated income caused by the reduction in visitor footfall following the Covid-19 related closure of the Museum. This also impacted on philanthropic income, which was down £0.7 million on the previous year, reflecting changes to the exhibition programme, shortfalls on unrestricted core development targets and reduced visitor-based donations. Income drawn from Endowments was lower by £0.2 million due to the delay in associated projects. These shortfalls have been partly offset by the receipt of £0.5 million of furlough income.

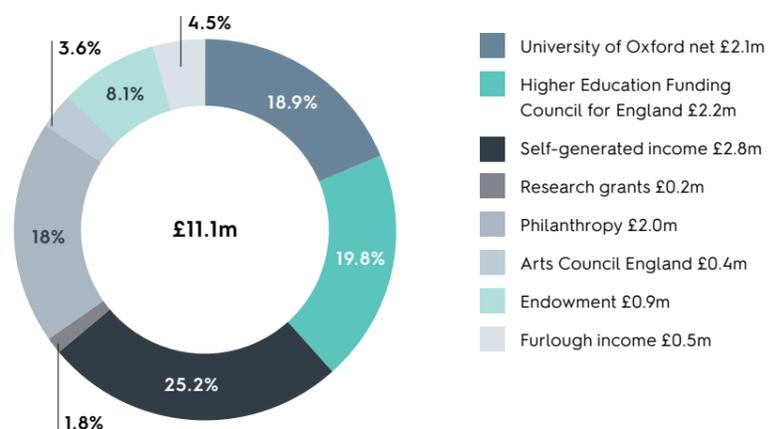
As the impacts of Covid-19 work through the economy, especially the public purse and visitor economy, all sources of Museum funding continue to be under great pressure. Thus building our endowment, fundraising and public donations continues to be vital for the Ashmolean's financial resilience. We are very grateful to all donors and supporters who are so resolutely supporting our cause.

TOTAL EXPENDITURE

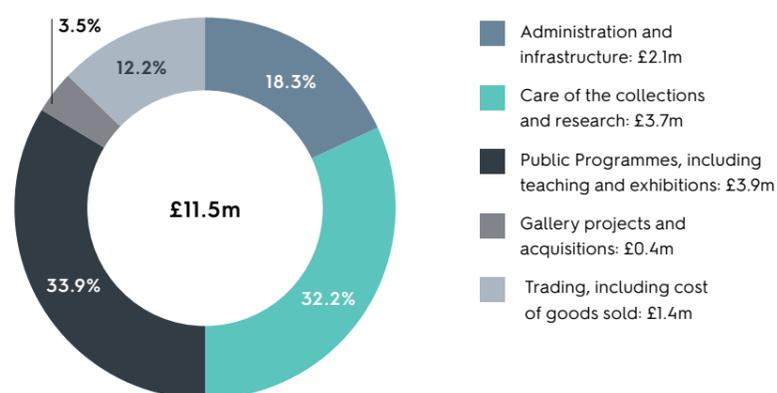
Total expenditure in the year was £11.5 million. This was £0.5 million less than the previous year. The savings flowing mostly from our exhibition and public programming costs, which were impacted by cancellations and delays relating to Covid-19. Museum expenditure on gallery projects and acquisitions was £0.1 million higher than in 2019/20.

NB In 2018/19 funding for the University Engagement Programme was categorised as 'Self-Generated Income'. However, in 2019/20 this income is included within the heading of 'Philanthropy'. Please refer to the restatement of the 2018/19 financial numbers to support the year-on-year comparative in adjacent table.

2019-20 INCOME (£M)



2019-20 EXPENDITURE (£M)



INCOME £M	2018/19 PUBLISHED	RE-STATED 2018/19	2019/20	RE-STATED VARIANT TO PRIOR YEAR
University of Oxford net	2.0	2.0	2.1	0.1
Higher Education Funding Council for England	2.2	2.2	2.2	0.0
Self-generated income	3.5	3.6	2.8	-0.7
Research grants	0.1	0.1	0.2	0.1
Philanthropy	2.7	2.6	2.0	-0.7
Arts Council England	0.4	0.4	0.4	0.0
Endowment	1.1	1.1	0.9	-0.2
Furlough income	0.0	0.0	0.5	0.5
TOTAL	12.0	12.0	11.1	-0.9

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