

ASHMOLEAN FACULTY FELLOWSHIPS, 2016-17 ANNUAL REPORT

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The second year of the Faculty Fellowship programme expanded our reach to include Faculty from the Said Business School and Oriental Studies, selecting Fellows who were particularly likely to make collections teaching a sustainable part of their offer. The Fellows are not only made welcome within their chosen department(s) but introduced to the Museum staff at meetings and through announcements, so that they are recognised and accepted as community members.

As the Fellowships increasingly become part of the Ashmolean's teaching profile, it has stimulated the Museum to create protocols and support systems explicitly for external teachers, and to further develop skills training in object teaching for Faculty affiliates. A key component is the logistical support given to the Fellow in the preparation of course materials, with an option for full digital support in uploading material cultural content on to the Cabinet teaching platform (<http://cabinetproject.org/>).

The 2016-17 Ashmolean Faculty Fellows were selected on the basis of their Statements of Intent, submitted as part of the application process. They were required to outline the likely impact their Fellowship would have on the existing courses they taught in the curriculum; the possible new courses or Papers that could be developed as a result of working with the collections; and the relevance of material culture to the enhancement of their research and teaching.

The following were Fellows in 2016-17:

- Gervase Rosser, Professor of the History of Art
- Ulrike Roesler, Professor of Tibetan and Himalayan Studies, Oriental Studies
- Peter Thonemann, Associate Professor in Ancient History, Faculty of Classics
- Christopher McKenna, University Reader in Business History and Strategy, Saïd Business School

Gervase Rosser



My term as a Faculty Fellow in the Ashmolean Museum Department of Western Art was rewarding, first and foremost, at a human level. Although I knew colleagues in the Museum, the opportunity to spend a day a week embedded in the Ashmolean was a very welcome chance to get to know the staff better and to understand more fully how the institution works.

The Faculty Fellowship carved out sufficient time to immerse myself in the Museum's collections – in particular Prints and Drawings, but also paintings and sculpture. So far as teaching is concerned, I realised as a result of the Fellowship that I could make more use of the Prints and Drawings collection in working with students. In the following term, I taught two Special Subject classes focused specifically on Renaissance drawings from Florence and Venice. Using the Cabinet online platform, it proved possible to introduce my students to high-quality 3D

images of relevant objects in the collection.

Meanwhile I was able to embark on a personal research project, studying the image of Dante and the illustration of the Divine Comedy from the sixteenth century to the present. One outcome was a pair of seminars on this theme which I presented in the following term.

The Faculty Fellowships are an effective and inspiring way to foster more creative alliances between other academic departments of the University and the Ashmolean Museum curators and collections.

Ulrike Roesler



My museum fellowship in Hilary Term 2017 was an extraordinary experience. It gave me time to engage with Tibetan art and ritual objects "face to face", follow my curiosity, learn, and enjoy, without the pressure to produce an immediate "output".

Having this time to explore felt like an enormous luxury, and has been very productive. I have taken numerous photographs and notes and prepared teaching materials for our students. I also identified some objects and deciphered some inscriptions, and integrated the information into the Museum's database.

The museum fellowship has enriched the teaching in our Master's course in Tibetan and Himalayan Studies. This course normally has a strong focus on language and texts, and working with visual objects makes the course more rounded. Already this year I have started bringing students into the museum, and they have just written their first essays on objects from the Ashmolean. They have been very enthusiastic about this experience.

Chris McKenna

My time spent as a Fellow in the Ashmolean supported by the Mellon Foundation has been of immense practical help both to my teaching and my research. For my teaching, it has resulted in a restructuring of my Business History course to follow objects through global trade across three industrial revolutions in six countries. Three courses, for Executives, MBAs, and undergraduates, will benefit from a new focus on material culture over five centuries.

In my research, it was a central element in the £1m that I raise to fund a new research project on the Global History of Capitalism that is funding four doctoral students, a postdoc, and a seminar series for the next three years.

There could be no better example of the power of interdisciplinary research and teaching within Oxford than these Fellowships within the Ashmolean Museum.



Peter Thonemann



I was an Ashmolean faculty fellow in Trinity term 2017. The aim of the Fellowship, from my perspective, was to find out what materials the Ashmolean possessed from the Achaemenid Persian period, in the hope of using Ashmolean objects as an integral part of delivering a new undergraduate paper (to be taught for the first time in Hilary term 2019), *The Achaemenid Empire, 550–330 BC*.

Achaemenid Persian history is currently one of the liveliest areas of ancient history and classical archaeology, and a new course on the Persian Empire provides a splendid opportunity to further integrate the material and textual aspects of our undergraduate courses, and (not least) to make some imaginative use of the rich and (by us) rather under-utilised holdings of the Ashmolean Museum.