**BRITISH MUSEUM NATIONAL PROGRAMMES CONFERENCE 2019**

**Exploring equality and diversity in museum practice across the UK**

**#NPConference2019**

British Museum

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GEORGIA: Welcome everybody, it is so great to see you all here. I'm Georgia. I work in the National Programmes Team, as the Knowledge Share Programme Manager. After pestering you all via email over the last couple of weeks, it is lovely to see you all here in person.

So, you are probably wondering why this event, why at the BM? Each year we at the National Programmes Team host a conference. It is a different theme, designed to be useful, relevant and interesting to the sector at large, so we use the spaces that we have here to bring a lot of excellent speakers from across the country together. This is funded by the foundation supporting us since 2010. The theme of the conference changes each year, this year it is something close to our hearts. We seven the call for papers in the hopes we could bring together a conversation that is respectful, honest, open, non-defensive and intersectional as far as we can, we were so pleased with the response we got.

We hope that the tone carries through the day and everyone leaves having found something useful, interesting, provocative, or having had a good

conversation to take back with them to their own work, whatever and where ever that may be. So we aim to make the conference accessible to the colleagues, and we welcome your feedback. So, find the team if you have ideas and talk to us throughout the day. Before I hand over to our director for his much more official welcome, I wanted to say at the end of the keynote there will be five minutes of chaos where you leave for breakout sessions. I will remind you of the rooms, if you are staying here, please be aware that people will be filing past. I will now welcome our director, Hartwig Fischer, to the stage to say a few words. Thank you.

HARTWIG: Welcome everybody to the British Museum. It is great to is see so many wonderful colleagues in the BP Lecture Theatre today. This year we developed the National Programmes Conference 2019 to explore the current museum practices within the context of our rapidly changing times, changing nationally and internationally. We will focus on issues of representation, and power within the sector with emphasis on disability, class, gender race and sexuality. With the issues in mind, we will discuss the realities of museum work and how people are affecting change within their organisations. For today's event, we have sought to provide a platform for colleagues to openly share their work, their experience, their research and their ideas of how UK museums can address both their own histories and those of their communities. Public discourse on issues around diversity and representation within museums, is vital for the development and the relevance of our work.

From the base in communities, in the press, in Parliament, to crucial sector level reports, these conversations cannot be ignored. They have immense significance for museum, not only for the museum practice but for the principles of our continued existence. Museum histories and present-day operations are intimately bound up in the UK structures of power. We are mostly public institutions, funded and founded to good by government, universities, historical societies, worthy individuals and diverse forms of philanthropy. Debates around inequality and representation have direct ramifications for museum, to what we do, what we signify, and the stories that we choose to tell. The issues come into play across all areas of our work. The National Programmes Conference 2019 brings together practitioners from across the country to explore how museums and cultural institutions are actively responding to the debates and participating and shaping them. When they too have inherited the complex legacy of the eras in which they were founded. We may not be able to change those histories but we can acknowledge them. Through today's event we will showcase what is currently being achieved in our aim to work with them productively. We are delighted so many contributors from across the UK, arts and cultural heritage sector are here today. We are grateful for them for sharing time and expertise and we look forward to critical and reflective preparation, case studies and practical example, discussions and creativity. Before the sessions begin, I have the great pleasure of introducing our keynote speaker, Bonnie Greer.

For those of you who are not familiar with her work, Bonnie is an American-British playwright, novelist and critic. Her plays have been produced on BBC

Radio 3 and 4, BBC 2 and the West End. She has won the Verity Bargate Award for Best New Play and shortlisted for the John Whiting Award and for all of her remarkable work she was awarded an OBE in 2010. Bonnie has been a regular contributor to BBC 2's Newsnight Review and Question Time. You might have seen her most recent Question Time appearance a few weeks ago, that saw her go viral in Ireland, if you have not, don't miss out on it, it is super powerful! Bonnie has been a Deputy Chair of the British Museum, serving two full terms as Trustee from 2005 to 2012 and continues to work with us and is passionate about making positive changes in the museum sector. We are absolutely delighted, Bonnie, to have you with us this morning. Thanks for being a part of our conference. I know you will launch us into the day with a radiating speech with your wonderful intelligence and warmth. Thank you for being with us. (Applause)

BONNIE: I will stand behind the podium but I am standing on tip toes ... and also, I have rewritten this thing a thousand and times, you get nervous, so to the museum goer who tweeted on my Twitter feed that she was nervous today about doing her breakout speech, I will not say who you are, I know you are here, I am nervous too. You never stop being nervous.
Thank you, Hartwig, for what you said. I forgot that actually, I have not been here in a way in all of those years, in a sense when you have been a Trustee for a long time, it is like a divorce, I have never been divorced but you have to be away for a while, you just have to just not be there, otherwise, you are poking around and dusting. It is good to be back. If I stumble while reading the notes, it is because I can't read my own writing!

When I hear the word “diversity" I ask myself, diverse from what? From whom? I think sometimes that we should play what I call the Diversity Game and go around the room and ask each person who they're diverse from? Odds are, that there are some people who may not think so, and will call it diversity! I have been in that situation. Once, in an organisation that I really wanted to be a part of, when I first moved here, it was explained to me that actually the organisation was only for people of African-Caribbean and African background. And one of their goals was to diversify from me an African American, because of all matters of black culture and so forth, so I could not be a part of it. I got that, I understand that completely but it was a bit devastating. So, here I was, a desirable object of diversity in one place, and I was the diversified in another.

If your museum is just using the word “diversity" and you are not investigating it, then I will say you are not doing diversity, you are in the diversity business. It has quotas, as it can get funding, and I will call these your diverse folks, who then can be your spokespeople or human shields for when the museum is bombed (not literally but when it is hit) in that then the diverse people become human shields or they become mouthpieces or they serve as cultural flagellators against you, or they help you to comply – that lovely word "comply" once you have diverse people, and everything and everybody is put in a box.

That's the diversity business. It's a racket, and it's crooked. Museums should do health checks to make sure that they're not in the diversity business because it's toxic. Once, a wheelchair-bound painter who worked at a gallery I

was associated with announced, "You know what? I'm actually fine, it's this building that is disabling me." So the gallery listened, with intent. They heard her and they kept hearing her until they could listen. Not with pity, nor out of interest, or in the spirit of diversity, they listened. And listening with intent, in a sense, they became her and then what happened, is that they made the building less disabling. We were less disabled too.
After Hartwig and I were part of the panel here, almost a year ago, he said, "Let's kick some ideas around and see if you can come back and do something here." So, we met for the occasional lunch, and talked and exchanged books. I had bagsful of weeks, he had bagsful of books and one day we decided that reclamation was the drive underpinning almost everything that is happening today from Trump to Brexit, to Restitution, to non-binary, to Me Too, to everything.

So this idea that we came up with, it is going to be tested, in a series of panels, starting in January and extending into March 2020 under the banner 'The Era of Reclamation', a sign of the times. The first panel will consist of women of African descent. Some of them curators and some of them associated with global museums. There is also going to be an archivist, from a museum dedicated to black British history and culture and it is funded by black British people. There is going to be a professor of history and then me. And another panel will have, the secretary of the Smithsonian and Hartwig. Who will be in conversation, I was going to say, confession, in conversation with me, about their work and thinking about this question. And there will be a panel of

Generation Zs and Millennials, discussing museums and what they mean, if anything, to them.

This is the beginning of that question of reclamation and hopefully we will continue in other forms and in other ways. This is happening because Hartwig and the museum listened with intent, the intention to implement, to do. It is a collaboration that has extended agency to me, with no filters, nothing, but has allowed me to extend agency out to others, who would not come inside of this house, for various reasons.

So, I want to have a shout out and a thank you to Hartwig and the British Museum and to Freddie Matthews and Bryony Smith for allowing me to do this and to say, this is the beginning, I hope, and not the end.

Diversity is creation and it is also destruction. The building that the artist said disabled her had to be destroyed, bits of it, in order to change this. Often this destruction is metaphorical, in other words, a museum's idea of itself can be destroyed as diversity sheds a new light, shows a new way. Uncertainty often also comes with this destruction and I am saying to you, walk with uncertainty, bond with uncertainty. And this may sound counterintuitive, but diversity can liberate us from other boxes and bags and categories and send them up into smoke.

A museum can do that, the objects can do that, because they themselves are centres and holders of change. They are mutable, they are mutability. In a

diverse museum environment, storytelling and scholarship stand as equal fulcrums of community interest and who come together, all of us, around our shared human history. This coming together now changes the objects; diversity encourages this. In this, diversity uses labels only as sound-posts, as way-stations, not as definitions. Can we live with no categories? I don't know. I am from a generation that gave all of you categories, we gave you the word diversity too. I have an answer to this, maybe it's not for me to answer, but it seems to me that a diverse environment puts this question on the table without fear, because a diverse environment is a safe environment. That is one of its hallmarks.

Finally, I want to say this, that museums are engines of cognition, they encourage thinking and they encourage the expansion of thinking. They are also places of emergence.

What is emergence? Emergence is the thing that arises from the encounter of two different entities, neither one on the surface is related, but when they come together, they create the emergent which is greater than themselves. An example, Chauvet Cave in southern France, I have never seen it and maybe I probably will, but I dream about it, I dream about it, the way I dreamt about the Parthenon frieze, when I saw it in Encyclopaedia Britannica. And my late father, a guy who didn't have much education because he grew up in rural Mississippi in the 30, he would get that encyclopaedia to educate us and we saw the objects here, we saw the British Museum.

So, in this cave of Chauvet, there are paintings on it, lions, hyenas and there is a Venus there – they figure it's a Venus because she has a vulva. They are the result of human encounters, something outside of themselves, something different, something strange and the result, what they did is the result of emergence. It made them human, because they saw something in another place outside of themselves. Therefore the collection expands and deepens humanity by virtue of where it is, the new place. And we, like the prehistoric cave dweller, are gazing in awe at that which we did not make and we make it become ourselves and we hand that new self on to generations and find our common bond in the past, in the present, so that we can make a future.

Thank you very much for listening to me this morning and have a great conference, thank you.
(Applause)

Can I also add, I told you I wrote this thing a thousand times, I will probably get in trouble for saying this, but I will say it, I think that what is important about what we do – where we are – is that we understand, as closely as we can, that we need to defend our museums, we need to defend our collections in place. That is very important to me and I think it is important to this idea of emergence and of thinking, as not only who we are, but in the world to come, because our children and grandchildren are global people and as a globalist, I say a global people. So we need to understand what a collection in a place is about, and how we can make it stronger and how we defend it. Thank you. Yes.

GEORGIA: We have lots of time for questions from the floor. There are two roving mics going around, so please put your hands up if you have questions for Bonnie.

BONNIE: I can say a lot of provocative things!

GEORGIA: We should have put some plants in the audience!

BONNIE: Hartwig is a plant!

FLOOR: Bonnie could you say a bit more about that notion of emergence? Because emergence is a kind of, sorry, could you say one or two more words about emergence, which is bringing things across the horizon into visibility, or into something that becomes part of your life?

BONNIE: Emergence is a scientific term that defines sort of the thing that is between two different things that are not related to one another and, you know, if you are a writer or a playwright like I am, or a painter or a musician or whatever, we are doing it all the time. It's about dreaming, it's about making a new thing and I have always been trying to understand why some of the objects in the museum mean something to me, why should they mean anything to me? And, in investigating that in myself, I have come to learn new stories about myself, as human being and also about who I am and what I am. And that new thing is what we do all the time, as human beings, and that is

what expands our human agency – it expands our intelligence, it expands our conversations with ourselves and with each other and we do it all the time, we do it all of the time.
So, I think we need to see an object in a place where it didn't come from, in quotes, as a centre of emergence, of that expansion of human consciousness, of that expansion of human encounter and defend that, which I think is very important now to do. So that, if that makes sense, if that is clear to people? A hand has emerged.

FLOOR: Thank you, Bonnie, I just want to ask an opinion from you, I have sort of become really loath to use the word diversity. It really pains me and upsets me that something like this has become so toxic. We love biodiversity, we love diversity of foods, we love diversity of music and so on, but when that diversity is attached to human beings who create all of those thing, the cultures that lead to that, it's become so toxic as a phrase, so sad the other day to listen to Lenny Henry of all people saying exactly the same thing and yet I can find that, if you use diversity nowadays, it's almost two words, diversity and then train, they just suck the life out of everything.

BONNIE: That is what I am trying to say!

FLOOR: So I just want to hear your opinions on the fact that I find the notion of diversity in nature and amongst human beings and culture and society to be actually really, really enriching and perhaps we need a new vocabulary to describe the value of diversity which is something that enriches us, that

enlightens us as human beings.

BONNIE: That is beautiful, thank you. I think what happens, particularly in an environment like this is that people are educated to a certain standard and you just fall back into, we fall back into our educational boxes, we fall back into how we got our Masters, our PhD, all of this sort of thing – we go there because it's a safe space, it's a definable space and then from that place, you can launch papers, books, conferences, all of that and it doesn't allow for thinking, it doesn't allow for ambiguity, it doesn't allow for pushback, it doesn't allow for redefining, if that is necessary at all. I really meant it when I said at the beginning, there should be a conversation at the beginning to say this is a diverse environment – who is it diverse from? All white men. How old does this 'he' have to be?

It is those kinds of things, if we ask ourselves the question, we break down what we are. You are absolutely right. I am tired of hearing it. I think this is a beautiful day, it will be a beautiful day but if we can think about, as somebody said to me, having a bonfire of the identities, I think that it is a useful thing to have once a year in a museum.

FLOOR: Hello, Bonnie. I'm Mark. Can I just say, you are a legend, and your put-downs on BBC QT, they were phenomenal!

BONNIE: I didn't hire this guy!

FLOOR: Excellent. I wanted ... I was hesitant to ask but yes, you seem like you are willing!
(Laughter)

In what you were saying about, well, everything, with being local, the diversity and diversify, what are your thoughts on repatriation? Dare I ask?

BONNIE: Yes, you can ask them. These are just my thoughts, so as they say, when you know in America, they have these drugs. They sell you the drugs and they spend 15 minutes disclaiming everything that the drug is supposed to be, including, you could die! So this is my disclaimer, this is me. This is not anybody else, nothing else.
FLOOR: As you said on BBC QT, we have a good social sciences in this country. You said that on QT.

BONNIE: OK. Oh! I have a concept that I call Meta-African. I have talked with various people about this. I have finished a series for Audible called In Search of Black History. I read history at university, so I know the trope, the shape, the signposts. But I learned a lot, especially from Professor Olivette Otele, who is a part of our conversation in January. There is a lot of ambiguity in African history. If we deny Africa that ambiguity, then we deny Africa agency. Africa, and you know, you say that word, and it is not a country, of course ... but I think we need a conversation. There is another factor missing at the table. That's what used to be called the diaspora. I don't use that word diaspora, I think it is too pretty. I am not a diaspora, I was kidnapped and brought here, a

whole lot of folks played a part in that. So when we talk about that, I want to talk about that first. I think there is truth in reconciliation that has to happen all the way around before we get to the next stage so. That's how I feel. And I think also, too often, when the questions are brought up, I think that museums are too involved in what I call the scramble for Africa response, where they immediately go back to 1871, everybody starts calling out from there. We need to have a bigger table. Then I can talk about that, that's how I personally feel.

FLOOR: Thank you.

BONNIE: Thank you, Mark.

FLOOR: Hello. I was wondering, it follows on from Mark's question, how you may have reacted or felt at the resignation of Adaf Suez as a Trustee and if you can recognise some of the British Museum, that she felt was present, that led to her resignation. Can you reflect on that at all?

BONNIE: Obviously I don't recognise it, I wouldn't be here, would I? I don't mean that flippantly, I mean obviously I don't. I haven't given it a lot of thought. When people resign from boards it is a lot of your own feeling about it, and you are right to do that. I think it is a powerful thing that she did, that she needed to do. Before I came on the board, I was asked to come on the board all these years ago, by Neil McGregor. I told people, the first thing they said was, "How can you be in there?" I had to ask myself that every day. I do

ask myself that every day. And it is everything that I have just said in my speech, really. It is about encouraging emergence. It is about looking at the next generation, for me. So, I respect what she did. I respect her. It was her personal choice, and this is my personal choice. I think that is what diversity is.

FLOOR: Hi. The way you spoke about the theme of reclamation really resonates with me.

BONNIE: Why? Why? Honestly, why?
FLOOR: Because the way you talk about those movement, pulling them together in one place and drawing the connections between them, things like Me Too. I curated a LGBT women's history programme. It was labelled as PC across all of the movements we are seeing a growing push back and resistance to them. I wondered what your thoughts were on that?

BONNIE: To?

FLOOR: To the reclamation movement as a whole, the movements you mentioned and how to overcome and persist through it?

BONNIE: We can?

FLOOR: How to overcome that resistance, to persist in the face of it?

BONNIE: I believe in the theory of, that you don't resist anything. That you make the institution built, so that it can take it and get bigger. I don't think you resist anything. These things are valid questions and valid points of view. So the museum becomes stronger as a result of that. I don't have a specific answer to that other than to say I think you never make a museum or an institution resist, I think you take it and get stronger as a result.

FLOOR: Hi. It's great to see so many amazing museum professionals in the room, however when we talk about equality and diversity in the museum sector, there is a lot of us that are probably programmers that run programmes that work with directly with our audiences, how do we not make ourselves feel like a cog, a small cog in a very large machine? How do we carry on that equality and diversity across our audiences and embed it in our museums, to feel like we are actually creating that positive change that you speak about when you feel, sometimes, that you do not have that power to create that legacy? Or if you do, you have a very small power to create a, an amazing project with a small group, that once it is done and dusted, that legacy is over. I am sure that is something that will be talked about today, however, I feel how do we keep that conversation going?

BONNIE: Thank you for that question, it's a brilliant question. I think we need to have a table of honest conversations. Now I know this is people's jobs, professions, and all that stuff and that is real thing but somehow and some way, a museum from the director on down has to have a means by which we have honest conversations. We don't have, if we don't have them, we ain't

going to be around in 20 years. We have to have them. They have to be conversations, as I said, listening with intent and with equality. So when you sit down at that table with your director, you are sitting as an equal. You have information that you are going to impart and that director has to listen and the director listens and gives information back to you. We have to do that. And unless, if we don't, we are not going to be here. Georgia is telling me to leave! (Laughter)

GEORGIA: I'm so sorry!

BONNIE: Bye everybody. Really, have a great conference, I hope you all disagree with everything I have said! That begins the conversation. Thank you very much.
(Applause)

GEORGIA: Thank you so much Bonnie and Hartwig for taking the stage. I hope that sets everybody up nicely for the rest of the day.

**BEING HUMAN: MAKING NEW NARRATIVES OF DISABILITY**

Richard Sandell & Jocelyn Dodd, University of Leicester; Tony Heaton OBE; Clare Barlow, Wellcome Collection

RICHARD: I'm Richard Sandell from the Research Centre for Museums and Galleries. Welcome to this session. Being Human, making new narratives of disability. In 2017, Clare Barlow contacted our research centre, we had been doing work around representing stories and objects linked to disability for close to 20 years. Clare generously said she had found that interesting, she wanted to consider how some of that thinking could be developed further and how it might be pushed through a permanent gallery, given that most of the work we had been doing had been on a more temporary exhibition space process. So a collaboration was born. We have had a fantastic couple of years working together on Being Human, the gallery and the related work around it, and the gallery opening a few weeks ago. So in the session, we want to share a little of the process with you to use it to think about how it informs thinking and practice around the stories we tell of disability in any museum of any collection type and we will end on that note to see if we can all leave here with commitment to make some changes.

On our panel today we have Clare Barlow, the curator of Being Human at the Wellcome Collection. To my left, Jocelyn Dodd from the University at Leicester. Tony Heaton, a practising sculptor, the Chair of Shape Arts, the founder of a brilliant organisation Endaca, working with the Research Director Centre for London for most of the 20 years from the start, when we started to look at these themes. So we are each talking in turn and then have chance for some questions at the end. Over to you, Jocelyn.

JOCELYN: I wanted to talk a little about disability and museums. Particularly around medical museums. For many people medical museums are not simply unwelcoming and inaccessible, they are also, they are also deeply hate-filled. So, Wellcome Collection, have approached the research centre to think about how they could explore new ways of thinking about developing this permanent gallery, Being Human. Richard and I were excited about this, as we have worked on a number of initiatives over the years and as is the case with many of those kinds of projects, they are temporary, they have an impact and then often things go back. It was the sense of wanting to do something that would have greater longevity that was especially exciting. So, we really wanted to engage with a lot of the ideas. the Wellcome Collection were interested in thinking about how they could create a gallery that would be inclusive, that would be welcoming, that would be accessible to all. But also to really challenge negative attitudes to disability that are so pervasive in every aspect of our social and political world. We were keen to move on with this, to think about how this may evolve. This really developed out of many years' work as Richard alluded to, we have been working around the area for 15-20 years. To give a bit of the bigger context for this, the research centre has been researching in the area for a number of years. Gaining deeper insights into the challenges and to the possibilities that museums and particularly medical museums have in relation to disability indifference. Yes had a long trajectory of work in the area. I wanted to go back to the earlier days to 2003, when we surveyed over 200 museums and galleries across the UK and found a wealth of material that related to disability in the collections. Many of the collections

were not on public display, so many of them were, as the project was called, buried in the foot notes.
When material was displayed, which, I say, it was not very often, often that really reinforced many of the negative stereotypes that relate to disability. For instance, you may see thing that related to the freak show and connections with disability were not made, so things may have been on show but they were not very obvious.

As I say, we found evidence of the experiences of disabled peoples' lives and experiences across a range of different collections. It didn't matter what kind of collection they were, or what kinds of institutions they were, either, it ranged from volunteer-run museums through to National Museums. Here you can get an idea of the glimpse of the diversity of material. You can see Nelson's bust at the National Maritime Museum, a prosthetic arm from a medical museum collection and on the right-hand side, you can see a photograph from a collection at Whitby Museum, a volunteer-run museum from their collection, a fantastic collection of photographs from the 19th century there. Then a painting by Holman Hunt from the Birmingham Museums and next to it at the bottom, a self-portrait by the miniaturist, Sarah Biffin, which a colleague, Richard and I worked for the Nottingham Museums, a colleague, a keeper of fine art, said he had something relating to disability and uncovered this engraving, a really beautiful image, a self-portrait. So lots of material that was literally hidden away in the collections. So, the medical museum collections were only a small part of the research that we did. We realised that there was something that was really significant about them as

well.  Our disabled researchers were deeply uncomfortable about medical museums.  There was a real sense of visceral sense of fear about people visiting them.  Seeing them as places that were really dehumanising, where disabled people were presented as curiosities, particularly from a non-disabled gaze, so a real sense of anxiety.  It is immensely challenging to go into institutions where you can see body parts, so here you can see skeletons at the Hunterian Museum and of somebody who particularly asked if they could be buried at sea ... so, when people, when decisions are made about things that are very different from those that people intended to happen.

We began to do more research in medical museum collections.  The objects were often interpreted in ways that prioritised scientific and medical perspectives.  Here is an example of a prosthetic used, and they are often presented in a way where the technology and the medical aspects of it are given preference in terms of the label.  So the label for this item, from the Wellcome Collection, says: Gas-powered prosthetic, plastic, metal, textile, 1963.  This heavy custom-made prosthetic worn by a child with impaired limbs caused by Thalidomide ... sorry, I can't say it, the device inadvertently prevented the wearer from using their arms and legs.  What the label does not say, was what it was like to wear the prosthetic.  The prosthetic outwardly made so that the child looked like it had arms so more acceptable to society but actually reduced the mobility.  For the child, they had to get used to the very heavy prosthetic that changed the balanced was incredibly uncomfortable.

For some children parts of their limbs were removed so that they could accommodate the prosthetic. So you can get some of the sense there of how problematic these collections are. One of the things that did emerge from the early visits to medical museum collections was something that the researchers were quite surprised by. Our disabled researchers were really filled with dread at the prospect of visiting places like the Royal London Hospital Museum. But they returned to the research meetings that we had with a different view. They were quite surprised when they found this wheelchair on display. Often, wheelchairs are presented in museum collections and people make all sorts of assumptions alongside of that. But this wheelchair belonged to Eva Lucca, the matron of the hospital, one of the most influential people in the hospital, holding a key and a critical role, highly respected, really powerful within that institution. That made us think significantly about those collections.

We did a number of subsequent projects that built on that work. It was around focusing particularly around medical museums, recognising the important role they play in shaping our understanding and attitudes towards disabled people. So we worked with disabled people with artists, with people like Tony, to interrogate collections and to explore ethical approaches to renovating disability, to think about disability and difference. So we worked collaboratively with disabled people to reveal the significance of the Social Model of Disability, and the way in which we could use that to approach collections. I will hand over now to Tony who will tell us much more about that.

TONY: I thought I would start with this slide, how the Social Model of Disability changed my life ... I'm sure there are a lot of people in the room who are familiar with the Social Model of Disability. If you are it is good to have a refresher, if you are not, it well help you learn more. I need to talk about the Social Model of Disability but I have to add historical context. I became disabled in 1970. As a wheelchair rider I inherited a world with no drop-curves, almost every building with steps up to it but it was totally inaccessible. No ramps or if you wanted to get on to a train, they loaded you on to a goods van rather like the one in this image. No windows, no heating, placed in a metal cage with the mail bags and living in hope that your destination, would come along and somebody would unlock the big doors and heave you out of it. Record disabled people were routinely patronised and locked in institutions obviously for our own good and safety. Care and control, we were marginalised and hidden in plain sight and those with power and rank, the non-disabled continued to create structures and systems that excluded us, then something turned this on its head, that of course was the Social Model of Disability.

In simple terms, the three bullet points will give you an idea of what the Social Model of Disability is about. It asks the question, where is the problem and it locates it in social organisation, people's attitudes towards disabled people and the environment and not in the individual's impairment. Bonnie Greer talked about that, the wheelchair user who said you have to change the building. This term was originated by Mike Oliver. He said in our view it is society that disabled people, disability is something imposed on top of our impairment by

the way that we are unnecessarily isolated and excluded from full participation in society.

He argued it wasn't impairment that was the main cause of our social exclusion, but the way that society responded to us. Of course, models are ways of translating ideas into practice. The idea behind the social model was that of externally imposed restrictions. It's, it's nothing more complicated in many ways than a clear focus on the economic and cultural barriers that are encountered by people who are viewed as having some form of impairment, whether that is physical, sensory or intellectual. Of course the barriers we face include inaccessible education systems, working environments, inadequate benefits, discriminatory health and social support services, inaccessible transport and inaccessible public buildings amenity and of course the devaluing of disabled people, through negative images in the environment. It usually sees impairment as unattractive and unwanted. So, this is the medical model of disability, in the disabling world I entered back in 1970, in that goods van, this was the prevailing model. Whilst I and many other particularly politicised disabled people and many of our allies like you lot will reject this model once you see its failings it's still persistent and regularly like some dreadful virus it breaks out in certain sectors of our society. Of course, what the medical model does is situate the problem within the individual, as you can see in the middle of this slide, it says the problem is a defective person.

Then it goes on to describe why that is. The person can't walk, can't get up steps, can't see, can't hear, needs doctors, house-bound, needs intervention. What the social model did was identify the barriers and those barriers are sort

of very straightforwardly explained on this slide, the barriers are the disabling world that Bonnie talked about, lack of accessible communication, prejudice, badly designed buildings, isolation, inaccessible transport system and of course we as a society can make those necessary changes should we want to and of course it's not a charitable action to do that, but it should be seen as a duty and the responsibility of a civilised culture. I just wanted to do, to show you a couple of things here, following the social model and some of that social model thinking. And, you know, the need for ramps and large print are pretty obvious, but more important in the modern world are subtle oppressions.

These next couple of slides are from the UK office and population surveys. They developed some questions to gather information about the lives of disabled people. I have selected just two to get you thinking. What I have done here is present, I have called it MM medical model and then I have presented the social model alternative to this question, so what the medical model or the OPCS asked are, are your difficulties in understanding others mainly due to a hearing problem? And when we rewrite it, in the social model thinking, we might say, are your difficulties in understanding people mainly due to their inability to communicate with you?

There is a reason for this, this is kind of homework for you guys. So the second one, the medical model says, 'Does your health problem or disability prevent you from going out as often or as far as you like?' If we rewrite that in a social model way, we might say, 'What is it about your local environment that makes it difficult for you to get about in your neighbourhood?' Of course, once you

start looking at questionnaires, you will start thinking about whether that is framed in an inclusive and social model way or whether it's very much focussed around a medical model, as sort of deficit model. What, I mean one of the reasons I wanted to look at that is that if you use data to go on to develop services then you are using incredibly skewed data, if you are looking at it from a medical model perspective rather than a social model perspective and reinforcing the medical model and the assumption that disabled people are defined by their impairment, rather than realising that the data, a large part of the population are disabled by poor design, by repetitive and conservative architecture that discriminates.

Discriminatory attitudes and of course exclusive services and this is importance when you think that 20% of the population are disabled people. It's important to think about that when we are writing labels or writing interpretation. So, just to summarise, the reason we use the term disabled person, if you use the social model is that I am disabled, I am a disabled person, because I am disabled by inaccessible buildings and information.

So the disabling part is what is done and how it's done. Before I hand over to Clare, I thought it was worth having a quick look at this final three points, which is the fact that museums have got enormous and largely untapped potential to reframe the ways in which people viewed disability and physical and mental difference more broadly and museums shape the ways in which we see the world. They shape and inform the kinds of conversations society has about difference and what has come to be wildly referred to as the social

model of disability can be used as a powerful to reframe the way we interpret and present objects and stories that we have that link to disability. Okay, I think over to Clare.

CLARE: Thank you, Tony. So, I came into this having been appointed by Wellcome Collection to rethink this gallery. This was the old Medicine Now gallery at Wellcome and as you might be starting to see, primed by Tony's presentation, there were a lot of issues we knew we had to address going forward as we rethought the space. We wanted to create a new gallery that would be in place for the next decade or so.

So we really wanted to be at the forefront of a change of thinking about how we see ourselves, how we see each other and the world around us. And, one of the most major problems I think you can see straight away is around the body and how bodies are present in the space and when I was doing my audit of the gallery, as I took ownership of my domain, I realised we were only really showing two types of body, a very normative body, such as the transparent woman, who is very much presented as this is woman! I am sure all of you recognise this as an exact and accurate portrait of you in all of your identikit body shapes.

Or, the other type of body we had was more of a grotesque body, the body that is exposed for our edification or for our engagement, perhaps our prurient interest. This was tied up in a bow, the bow being pseudo clinical design, but really presented Medicine Now as being the future and it was a bright, white,

shiny red and white future. Now, I am not saying that to in any way detract from the achievements of the curators who put this in place. Ten years ago, this was not on any museum's agenda, ten years ago, Wellcome Collection was already engaging a lot more with accessibility than other museums in London.

Certainly for me, as a young curate and I learnt a lot from seeing some of the thing they had done around visual impairment and more integrated design, but it was very clear this was not really fit for purpose and to give you a glimpse of where we ended up, we created a very different space. A space that we intent tended to do more humanistic in feel, we wanted to use natural material, a space that would be accessible, but where that accessibility would have been thought about from the very beginning of the design and so would be fully integrated into every aspect of the gallery, seamlessly, so it was there if you needed it, but it wouldn't necessarily, you wouldn't necessarily notice it, if you didn't need it. We wanted to show this could be beautiful, we wanted to show it could be fully integrated and that a lot of it wasn't that complicated, which I will say more about in a minute, but I also knew that I couldn't just do this by myself, I needed advice, lots of advice and that is where the conversation with Leicester and with the amazing people like Tony, he became involved in the consultation, that is where that conversation started, with that awareness that we needed to have a lived experience of people running through every aspect of the space.

The other thing I should say is this is not a gallery that is just about disability, it has four big themes, genetic, minds and bodies, infection and environmental

breakdown. So, it was also a question of how could we seamlessly explore these themes in such a way it was present, it was there, but it was fully integrated. And we worked together in lots of different ways, I will show you another bit of outcome, here is the outcome side and we looked at every aspect of the space, we looked at the design and the object list and the object list at different points, so that there was a chance, once where it was starting to become into shape, but there was still a lot of fleck, once where it was more fixed and what can we say with these objects?  There was a lot of learning, we did a lot of workshop sessions together, I learnt an enormous amount, I have included this on the slide because one of the things I learnt from Tony actually was the importance, a very free gesture, if you are a cash-strapped museum of offsetting seating in front of the screens to create equality of experience if you are a wheelchair user or someone who is not a wheelchair user.

The other thing we found since we opened is for parents use that space to play on the floor with their kids while they are watching the film.

So it's a classic example of inclusive design working better for everyone. We also worked with prototype who were deliberately not part of the conversation, so there was no way we could have stacked them, primed them to like what we did and this is one of our wonderful prototypers, Lady Marie going around the finished space to give us her thoughts. I mentioned the workshop sessions here is a shot from one of them. What I was very conscious of was the power and relationships of museums and the question of how you create a consultation process that is fully accountable and I think, for that, for

a process to be accountable, it has to be repeated again and again and again. You can't just have a one-off session and say, “Oh, well we spoke to some people and now we have done some things.” So, what we did was every time we held a session, we started it by going back over the points that have been raised in the previous session and what we were doing in response to that.

So changes we had made to the object list, really concrete things, to show that this was a process that was actually having impact. I think that was a positive thing for everyone concerned. We also, thinking about the power relationships, one of the most valuable things for me was developing a set of interpretation guidelines for the gallery and we did that by pair writing, Tony ran a slightly longer training session for us on the social model of disability and we paired up me and members of the team from across all of our different departments, marketing, comms, with different disabled people, disabled activists and artists and consultants to rewrite labels from a social model perspective. And the idea behind that was not that these would be the final labels that would go into the space, but this was a way of showing what it would look like to have a social model label.

From that Jocelyn Lynn and Richard extrapolated an amazing set of guidelines and what were the principles that underpinned these ideas and then, when I had done the first draft of my interpretation I pinned it up and gave the team post-it is and they critiqued it to tell me how well or badly I was fulfilling the promise that I had made to them for every label in this space would be written from a perspective of social model. I think things like that, thinking about how

you can show accountability, how you are going to be accountable is absolutely crucial if your project is going to have full integrity. Well was in a fortunate position, we were able to pay people for their time involved in the consultation. I think no matter what scale of consultation you are doing, thinking about how you are going to prove good faith.

And the results for us far surpassed anything that we could possibly have dreamed of. It helped us rethink the design of the space. It helped us rethink the bodies in this space, Trent important Woman is the only object from medicine to now in the previous gallery but paired with Bob Flanagan's visible man, where Bob Flanagan creates a transparent man reflecting his experience as somebody with cystic fibrosis. His transparent man constantly has snot running down the nose, he is constantly emptying his bowls, and this gallery is for 14-plus. It was nice to change the narrative around something like the Transparent Woman, to keep it there but to turn it into a critic of the body, saying that other bodies are left out of this. No differences are depicted so things like that were very important. Something that came up crucially was engaging with a whole wide spectrum of different people. In addition to the consultation with letter we talked to people like Heart and Soul, out of this came this commission from Tilley who is an artist who also works as a VA at Wellcome. Tilley did a comic of her experience of being in a museum involving Ben Conors. And it engaged with the work, with the collecting tin. Another collecting tin, this is a performance piece by Kathryn Yellow, where she dressed up and collected money from public for her charity, Sick Bitch Crips. All of these are small change, a few objects, a few things but together they

create a space that is playful, that is open and that is engaging with realities of people's lives. Another really important work which came directly out of the consultation is an audio piece called Austerity Cuts. Engaging with what it feels like to go for a disability assessment. We realised that we had to be more explicitly political. We realised we had to bring in different voices, so we still have moments that engage with medical intervention, moments that engage with research. But we tried to treat everybody as full human beings. This is from a collection of prosthetics. We reached out to, rather inspired by the wheelchair from the previous work, we reached out to Wellcome staff to say to ask their families and friends if anyone has old prosthetics that they could donate together what a short paragraph about what it is, how they feel about it. We were overwhelmed with the response, from things like this leg where, the person was like, it is really good. To a child's Hearing Aid, where it started out: This is my Hearing Aid, and I hate it! So we were able to show a wider range of perspectives. The gallery built on three ethical principles on the idea we are all different, the idea we are all valuable and the idea that we are all connected. I think that through that lens we were able to do something really extraordinary which celebrates the full humanity, I would hope, of every object and everybody who is represented. With that, I will hand over to Richard.

RICHARD: Thank you. Thank you, Jocelyn, Tony and Clare. Yes, a few minutes left. Just over ten minutes. Just to get you a chance to think of any questions or comments that you will have. Hopefully that has given you u a flips, really, a behind the scenes look at the process over a two-year period of collaborated working between institutions, between disabled people, curators and all of the

staff we had the opportunity to work with, to see how that can be pushed through a project of transformation. Hearing us all talk about it, I'm remembering some of the earlier sessions that we would have. We would leave saying, "Gosh, that was good, they seemed up for it. Open to change." You then report back that transparency, the kind of you asked, we did, philosophy of being accountable. It was really, really important. Although we were found encouraged to go further in the collaboration, each of us also said, "We have been here before." When the doors closed and the exhibition comes into production, what comes out the other end it has the features we have been talking about knocked out of them and the end result is a less promising than perhaps we had hoped.

This was probably the, well, certainly for me, the first time in which we were able to go further and further and further and the outcome being one we are all enormously proud of. As Clare says, never in the projects is something perfect, things you would not change but really, it is exciting for us to see the 360-degree view, a commitment to ethical thinking around disability is pushing narrative, space, experience, interpretation and shifting the space, the place where the organisation works. And seeing that transformation was fantastic. So while you think of questions, we have handouts to give you a bit more background information. Tony alluded to homework, we will not follow up and check. But we created guidelines out of this co-produced process where everybody involve headline a say and we created a set of guidelines that apply to every kind of museums or collections. So we have handouts if you want to grab one as you leave. As well as the guidelines it gives playful exercise. So

the pair writing, the idea you can produce text, not on your own but working with others in different experiences. We have given you some of the examples we used as a collaboration. So existing objects and existing labels. That were then reform lated and rethought through a Social Model of Disability lens and helped to shape the interpretation of it being human. So there are examples for you and one on each of the handouts had you can get when you leave. So, in the last few minutes we would love to hear your thought, comments or questions, that is up to you now there. Is a microphone now ...

FLOOR: In terms of the wider collection, what you have in store, has the project impacted on your plans for that?

CLARE: Absolutely this was a collection development opportunity for Wellcome Collection, so we were acquiring new material for the gallery. In thinking about that, we were taking all of these objects through a collections acquisition process and seeing it as an opportunity to think about what could be star objects, that could help flash out narratives that we were telling perhaps in entirely medical perspectives through what we had in store or in the archives but would instead bring in that kind of lived experience perspective.

RICHARD: Any more comments or questions?

FLOOR: Hi. I have a question about the people that you worked with to develop the gallery. It sounds like you worked with a few groups. I am

wondering how you engaged the groups and if will are people that you work with, that you were already working with, or if there were new groups of people you worked with?

CLARE: A lot of them were new groups of people. We were lucky that Heart and Soul, an organisation run for and by people who are learning disabled had just secured a residency in the hub, which is a project space that we have upstairs in the collection. So it is was easy to reach out to them. To say that we were doing this thing, would they like to be involved, they generously wanted to get involved with us. And through the collaboration wonderful people like Tony came on board and were a part of that conversation. We also worked with ... we worked with a huge range of people and panels, another reason to go to the Wellcome Collection! But what we were trying to do was to think about it in the round. We knew we needed moments where we went in depth into a perspective, a perspective perhaps hard to access, such as that of learning-disabled people. We also knew there were moments where we wanted to engage with issues that were facing everyone, or were facing a wider disabled community, that was where the Social Model thinking is helpful. It is not about putting people into boxes, which of course can be quite challenging, we wanted people politically engaged who were think being this, who were think being it from a broader perspective. I mean, I had been involved in 2017 LGBT projects, one of the things that can be challenging is often you are asked to speak on your own behalf as if you were speaking on behalf of a huge community.

I'm sure that lots of you have had that experience of museums where you are suddenly an advocate for a whole group because of a characteristic you have. We wanted to avoid that. We wanted to try to make sure we were having the right conversations, that we were having, basically, we were transparent so anyone who wanted to talk to us had the capacity and also that we were thinking about these broad themes and the moments of deep-diving. That proved successful for this project.

RICHARD: I think that, there were many, many different perspectives that got to feed into it, the breadth and the variety is crucial with a project like this. In terms of the guidelines that you will get a copy of, and the work that we have done particularly around the way in which we tell stories about disability, across, amidst all of that diversity and all of the people, we brought in six or seven into the project with lived experiences of disability, they were politically engaged with a shared understanding of disability rights and the fundamental ports of the Social Model of Disability in advancing the rights globally. And there was plenty of complexity to unravel but coming at it from a clear view that the way that museums tell the stories will have to be right. So that political engagement was also important.

FLOOR: Following from the first question. I was wondering if you had the opportunity during the project or since the galleries opened, thinking about the future of the collection, to reinterpret or rewrite object labels for everything that is not on display or not the start objects, what is the long-term plan for that?

CLARE: The collection is committed to a greater position of inclusivity and accessibility, there tends to be a big moment of change in museums when you are doing a new gallery, you can think through a lot of the issues, then you have to think about the next step, how to percolate that through into the rest of the space. Often, that, the need for that becomes immediately apparent as soon as you opened a new space. You start to see the differences across. But this was always part of our strategy, that this should be a part of a bigger drive across the collection. It has manifested itself in physical changes to the building. We have installed a changing places toilet, which was a huge passion project of ours. But that it should open at the same time as the gallery. To see that the signs that changed were starting to crop up around the space. Obviously, change is slow, it takes a while for that to percolate through but that is the vision. I think it is an important one.

RICHARD: We are out of time. I don't know, some of you will be here. I recognise some faces. Remember from a Cardiff MA conference in 2014. And where everyone was asked to go away to rewrite one museum object label to say if you did it, it would make a huge sea change in the way in which disability is changed across the public sphere. If you feel so inclined with, we have support and guidance. Our colleague has handouts 100 copies, if there are not enough, we will put them on the website. Email me, I will make sure you get a copy. But join me in thanking my fellow speakers and have a great rest of the day.

(Applause)

KAYTE. If you wanted to come closer that would be nice for our speakers. Gentle nudge. Welcome to breakout session three, hopefully we are escaping into something good. It's my privilege to chair in session, Making the Invisible Visible. I am not going to give too many spoilers about this session will be two talks which will highlight how close partnership with community partner and stakeholders I guess, story, histories and identities that have been absent or excluded from museum narratives and collections have been made visible. So embracing of ethos of participatory practice and collaborative working, these stories have been revealed and communicated with genuine authenticity and devolved authority. So first up we will hear from National Museums, from Hannah and from, my brain has gone, Karen, sorry, I left my other notes over there! They are going to talk us through how they are building on the collaborative work they did on The Troubles project to partner with the LGBT I stakeholders to bring it forward to what was not recognised in the museum narrative to collecting and interpreting together and have done this towards a representation that feels both authoritative devolved and with genuine voice. Afterwards we will hear from Simon and Glenis who will talk us through the work they have been doing at Black Country Living Museum and looking at how the museum has approached the complex local and difficult history through embracing collaborative practice and working with communities that have been underrepresented or unrepresented previously at the site, the museum.

I think these will give us great food for thought in terms of what the ethos of

the work has been doing in trying to reveal and give light to some of these histories, but also in the processes that each have gone through in order to truly collaborate with their stakeholders and communities. So, first up, we have National Museums Northern Ireland and I will let them describe what they are going to talk about in more detail, so thank you very much.

**RIGHTS OF REPRESENTATION: MAKING THE INVISIBLE VISIBLE**

**NATIONAL MUSEUMS NORTHERN IRELAND & BLACK COUNTRY LIVING MUSEUM**

NMNI: Queer of the Year - Curating LGBT+ Experiences at the Ulster Museum, Belfast, Hannah Crowdy & Karen Logan

BCLM: *Forging Ahead – Difficult Histories of the 1940s - 1960s,* Simon Briercliffe & Glenis Williams

HANNAH: Welcome, thank you for coming along to our session, so before I start on our journey to how we became Queer of the Year, at the Ulster Museum, I wanted to talk a little bit about the context in Northern Ireland, as it is quite different to other parts of the UK, although it has been changing a lot this year and actually when we first proposed this session, I wanted to talk quite a lot about the photograph you can see on the left of this slide and I wanted to use that to talk about how it's not just about marriage equality, even though that is what everyone would see in the news about Northern Ireland.

So, the photograph on the left is an event called My Big Fat Gay Wedding. This

was traditionally held on the steps of a prominent hotel in Belfast as part of our Culture Night celebrations and really it was a very good humoured, but a protest against the blocks to equal marriage in Stormont. As I said, when we first proposed this I was going to talk about that and how a lot of the energy, inside and outside of Northern Ireland was about protesting against the different rights around marriage there, but, as most of you will know, thanks to our lack of Government we now do have equal marriage in Northern Ireland, the legislation is being passed, so the other image is celebrating that news and whilst it is really important, I am not saying it's not, we and others would feel it's been a bit of a distraction and a distortion to what some of the more fundamental issues are in Northern Ireland, which are, as deserving, if not more so of our attention. And these issues are really about very fundamental human rights and that is because there is quite a widespread acceptance of homophobia, indeed at the very highest levels of society in Northern Ireland.

Again, once upon a time we would come to conferences and we would have to introduce people to the delights of the DUP, no everyone is aware of the DUP, but the homophobia that they promote, amongst others, has a really serious effect on people's mental health and the quote here is by a good friend of ours at the museum, her name is Ruth McCarthy and she is the director of an organisation called Outburst Arts. She says:

And, just to emphasise that even more, there is a project in Northern Ireland called the Rainbow Project, which worked to improve the health of LGBT people and back in 2013 they conducted a report, which was about mental

health in people in Northern Ireland and 25% of respondents to that survey said that they had made at least one suicide  attempt and that compares with 3-5% of the LGBT+ population in great principle and 4% of the general population in Northern Ireland, so I think you can start to see the problems there are and again the images we have chosen are some of that really aggressive homophobia and the way that makes its way into everyday life. And so when we started our, on this journey of our work, one of the things we wanted to do was to really celebrate the organisations that have been doing this kind of work for absolutely years and in museums, I think we have come very late to this, in the Ulster Museum we have definitely come late to it and we appreciate those others that have come before us, but it's really these grassroots organisations that need celebrating, rather than us patting ourselves on the back about how well we have done, because we couldn't do it without these groups.

So, just a sample of them here, Queer Space is a volunteer-led collective I will come back to. Cara Friend is an organisation which has been operating for 45 years. Gender Jam which is for young trance nonbinary people in Belfast and Outburst I have mentioned which is a festival for sharing queer ideas and creativity.

So, we very much have been working with and learning from these organisations and in the early days, we were actually quite shocked to discover that what we really needed to do, as a starting point was ensure that the museum was a welcoming space for everyone. And when we were in

discussion with these kind of organisations, they said people didn't necessarily feel welcome in the museum and, as I say, we were very shocked and surprised when we said, but of course they are welcome, we are a museum for everyone, but we had just made that assumption and we found that you really can't do that, you have to be proactive about how you work with organisations and that you prove that you are welcoming.

So, before we moved on to collections development, interpretation, anything else, we started with some programming to increase that sense of welcome and involvement for people. So, the first event we did was the drag artist David Hoyle, came and did a tour of the Ulster Museum, I know he has done tours of other museum, including here in London and just being frank, I think it was quite interesting when he said he would do the tour we were very excited about it and we started running around going do you want some information about this gallery and we think there is some LGBT stories in here and he said, "No, absolutely not." That is not what he wanted. We are always trying to control the narrative and impose our idea of what we think this interpretation should be.

Then, the second event we did was an event called Your History which was part of the Pride Festival in Northern Ireland and there was a book launch there and I sat on a panel. That the time because we had done so little I was mainly talking about the work that other museums had done, but we kind of were making a statement of intent that we wanted to do more, we wanted to represent these experiences and at the end of it, a lot of people came up to me

and said we would be interested in working with the museum and we would be interested in donating material. In particular, an organisation called Queer Space, who you will come back to.

So, that was about 2014/2015 we ran those events and then in 2016 we launched this project which Karen has been leading on called Collecting the Troubles and Beyond which was funded by the National Lottery Heritage Fund. Karen developed this good methodology that all of these different aspects of our work are equally important and they all inform one another, it's this cyclical process we work on and the beyond in the title of our project has been particularly significant. It's beyond in terms of time that it takes us beyond the signing of the Good Friday Agreement, it's not just the pure experience of conflict and it's beyond that it's not just the narrative of two different community, it's taking in a lot of different experiences and again not just about conflict. So as part of this project we really started to move forward in our work in representing LGBT+ experiences.

And, collecting was absolutely necessary for us, because we had next to nothing in our collection that told these stories and we, the initial acquisitions we made were working with the Northern Ireland Gay Rights Association and we acquired a collection of Belfast Pride T-shirts and associated material and David McFarlane who is quoted here, again quite shocking and surprising when we talked to him, there was a really deep sense of anxiety that this history would be lost if he didn't work with the museum and he talked to us about how there is no centralised archive of material relating to LGBT+ experiences,

he explained to us how a fear of illegality meant a lot of the material had been destroyed over the year, many people do not have families they could leave records to, so whilst we knew it meant a lot to us collecting this material, I think we hadn't realised quite how much it would mean to other people, that we were collecting them and that we were representing them.

And then Queer Space, on the back of that event, I mentioned, is really when we started to have that conversation with them and it was the beginning of a relationship, you all know, we have already heard a lot about it today, but it is about developing relationships, if you are to be truly diverse in what you do and in the conversations it was about developing trust, they needed to trust us as a museum, it was about the concept of value, it had to be clear to them that we really did value their perspectives and the materials that they were going to donate to us and it was about mutual respect, so that was very much both sides. So, they donated material relating to their organisation, including the first issue of the Northern Ireland Gay Rights Association news. Other kind of material and ephemera. I just wanted to mention the Ayatollah is Watching You. This shows Ian Paisley as the new dictator of Iran and it was the LGBT+ organisation, it was a response to Paisley's Save Ulster from Sodomy campaign. That has now nicely been turned around into response to marriage equality they would say we have saved sodomy from Ulster. Got there in the end.

Then we worked again with Outburst Arts, who we mentioned. It was more of that relationship building based around events. They knew we were welcoming to them, that we wanted to work with them, there was that trust

and respect there.  It with was their tenth anniversary a few years ago, we said with them at the time we loved working with you, doing the events but would they like something in the museum collection?  Because of that 10th anniversary they wanted to donate a full set of programmes to chart their own journey as an organisation.  They've grown to be such an important force within Northern Ireland but also internationally.  It is really providing that commentary about what artists and creatives, how they can respond and comment and how they're a part of that wider struggle for equal rights.  I will hand over to Karen to talk more about the collections development and then move on to talk about interpretation and engagement.

KAREN: Thank you, Hannah.  This is one of the main collections that came in through Doug Sobey.  He acquired a collection of over 200 photographs relating to the establishment of various LGBT+ organisations in the 1970s, including Cara Friend, the gay liberation society and the Gay Christian Fellowship.  And a what is interesting is that the material dates from the 1970s, a time when homosexual acts between men were illegal in Northern Ireland. This is a photograph of Doug in his blue jumper with his partner who was instrumental in the campaign for decriminalisation, who is now a Unionist councillor in Belfast City Hall.  So using the collection we were able to put on a temporary exhibition.  So with Doug Sobey and Rachel Wallace capturing oral history testimonies.  This was testimony to the resilience of the LGBT+ community and to the strong level of support during that period in the early 70s amidst the campaign for legal rights for women and men across the provenance.  And outing the past Festival, we hosted in the first year in 2018.

The festival aims to make LGBTQI+ people and their history more visible, to explore the history more fully.

We host the event with Cara Friend and Belfast City Council and supported the speakers by providing access to our collections and by co-curating content through producing pop up displays and video presentations. So the papers are selected to represent the diversity of the community and based on historical topics and events from across the UK and Ireland. An example of one of the partnerships that we were involved with as part of the Outing The Past LGBTQ+ History Festival was the policing with Pride. 2017 was the first time any police service on the island of Ireland marched in uniform. The PSNI and the Gardai chose to share that moment together in Belfast. LGBT police officers wanted to come forward and show that there was LGBT preparation with the police and challenge negative perceptions. Officers participated in the parade and shared their experiences with the oral and written testimonies.

We have a series of 12 in all, where there is a photograph of the individual or a relative or object that is important and you turn it around and there is a verse relating to their experience. It is interesting in The Troubles that people see a PSNI officer, and then they turn it around not expecting to read about the first time that they marched with Pride. Here is a short clip of the video that we put together with the PSNI and LGBTI+ network. That is an example of the pop-up we used in the display. Hopefully this will work.
(Video)

It was just a feeling of togetherness. I think also, especially from, I know of our colleagues within LGBT they had not tread the path before, they gave a sense of people before us and here we are treading our own way in Northern Ireland on this particular route. So, last year we marked the 20th anniversary of Queer Space. One of our key partners in August of 2018. We had an event for them at the Ulster Museum we do produced a display event to mark the significant events for the 20 years, that is theirs to use, they can add to it over time. And at event we were delighted and honoured to be awarded the Queer of the Year award. If you can read it, it is for our engagement with the LGBT+ community and work to collect, preserve and share the positive contribution that LGBT+ people make to society. The first time it's been awarded to an institution, they made the decision to a collective. It is mostly awarded to an individual. It was to be announced, I wondered who it would be, I was not told, it turned out to be Ulster Museum and that impromptu thank you speech! As well as using the collections for temporary exhibitions, displace and programming, we have incorporated it within the permanent displace including the first Pride March in 1991 and the badges for the campaign for equal marriage that we now have to update again. The collection dates from the 1970s to the present day.

The next step for us is to collect earlier objects and stories and integrate those into the modern histories' galleries, what is come back through the feedback from The Troubles histories is that people are feeling better represented and it comes from a direct evidence of this material and we are getting a positive response for doing so. So to conclude we were able to build reciprocal

relationships with the LGBT+ community through a genuine commitment to representation, authority and power in terms of promoting LGBT+ history collection, co-production and using our museum resources and skills to support others in curating and interpreting their observe history. And new collections development policy, 2018, we are committed to collecting for equality and diversity but we know there is more to be done, to represent that, we are engaged with the Queen's University of Belfast in a research project to capture the experiences prior to the 70s onwards which was largely a campaign for civil rights which is largely visible. There are researchers going through dairies and records to capture the history that hopefully we can use.

SIMON: Thank you. It does say not to tap the microphone! I'm Simon Briercliffe, an historian based in the Black Country, Dudley. We do have slides but there is no particular rush! Thank you. We'll get there. I will carry on. I'm an historian I will hand over to Glenis. We are coming from two perspectives to give you background we were recently glad to be awarded funding to pursue a project we have been calling: Forging Ahead, moving the museum's time line into the post-war period. If you are not familiar with the museum, we are a ticketed open-air living museum so the interpretation is done through objects within the environment. Up until now we have told the history of the region up to the Second World War, now we are up to 1968. So, obviously that is a massively important historical period for the history of diversity in this country. Absolutely, that is the case in the Black Country. If you are not familiar with it, it is definitely not Birmingham. It is just outside of Birmingham, to the west, very important! Our way of doing it, it to build a

town. That is what we do. We are a museum of built environment. We are building a town centre and industrial area and using it to tell a variety of stories from the region which help the museum's ethos, which is tagged Real Life, Real Stories. So we use individual lives, businesses and buildings as a microhistory to tell bigger pictures.

So this is a, this is a key period for us. Over the next three years in working up the research we have done and the preparation we have done within the community into a set of interpreted strategies and ways to answer some of the difficult questions that are going to be arising. So, it turns out we have challenging conversations document, I am glad it mentions the word contextual. As a historian that is an important word to me. Putting things in thinker context and we are talking about difficult histories in particular, which is crucial. So everything that happens within the area has a local context, a national context, global, an economic, a cultural context and so on. So that is what I will be talking about, how we situate our research contextually and what Glenis has is how we present it in the present day. So the historical background, the Black Country was a hugely successful region. After the Second World War we had a shortage of labour are fa around the world. It is important to stress the diversity of immigration, not just immigration with a capital I. There were people from all over the British Commonwealth, from the Caribbean, from south Asia, it didn't start in 1948. In a foundry in Smethwick there was a workforce of 20% Punjabi Sikh workers in 1947, so the year before rind rush docked. The larger group was Irish immigrants, from Poland, from the Ukraine, from all over the world. It is geographically uneven.

We are a regional museum but this is the experience of immigration for the immigrant and for the host community it was different in somewhere like Smethwick or Wolverhampton, than it was in the smaller towns in the Black Country, so how we interpret that as a museum for the region is also up for grabs, I think. The project is based on building a number of buildings, 20-odd, I think that it is. Basically they form a town. These are real buildings, either replicas or translocated buildings, moved brick by brick. For each we appealed to the public for their memories of the history of the building, so we do as much documentary research as we can and then go out with what we know and see whales we can find.

Our starting point for the inclusion of stories of more than just the white working class that had been brought up in the Black Country was we didn't need to shoehorn these in, there was not an approach to a tokenistic fashion, so there was a discussion about a building that was representative for a particular community but we chose to make the assumption that these stories were present, we had to find them. This, the pub I highlighted here is a good example of how it worked out. We chose it on the basis of its architecture, a beautiful, clay ceramic pub from Wolverhampton. When we went out to the pub it was evident from the people who got in touch that the largest group of drinkers was Irish. We had people telling thaws they remember drinkers there from the Caribbean, it was a dominos pub, that there was an interesting meeting of Caribbean and English and Irish culture, there was a Punjabi meeting there. That is another really interesting historical story. We didn't

know any of that when we chose the building.  So it is evidence that, fingers crossed, that this process works.  It doesn't come up with all of the answers to what we need.  There are things that happened in the Black Country during this period that don't come up readily in people's memories.

As a historian it could be easy to write a history of racism, these things are well-documented and well-resourced, there was a lot of it. We had bus strikes for conductors, when conductors were employed, we had colour bars, the MP for Wolverhampton was Enoch Powell himself. In Dudley we had race riots and this was something that a few people were aware of, that I have talked to and it demonstrates the lack of a few things from my perspective, in terms of the historiography of the subject, it barely gets a mention. There is a lot of things that happened in London and first instances of this kind of violence, yet, it was a few years after the Notting Hill riots, but there was a weekend in which white people went on the attack of what was labelled the negro quarter of Dudley. So it was itself a massive oversimplification and really gives you an introduction to the problems of language you have to deal with when using the sources like that. Most of the reporting seemed to conclude it was probably Teddy boys or probably young people letting off steam, which is kind of an erasure of the experiences of the people who suffered, of which there is a large number. There is a wonderful set of photos that you can see here. There is a couple of dozen photographs of the riots taken by press photographers and I don't think there is a single person of colour in any one of them, there is lots of pictures of dogs. I love dogs but that is really not the point. So, we have to go and find the sources for ourselves and make the sources for ourselves. As I mentioned

when we call out for building memories like that, we conduct oral histories based around the buildings and try and get a broad sense of life in towns like Dudley at the time as well as how that relates to the individual building. There is several in Dudley and we have talked to several people from Dudley. And the, popular memory, shall I say of the riots is almost non-existent of people amongst the white community in Dudley, anyway. That is, it was really evident, there is plenty of people that just don't remember it at all, even people like, we have talked to newsagents and people who worked in record shops and things like that, not a single recollection of it. So we thought we need to broaden this out a bit and talk to people from various communities that were living in Dudley at the time and it soon became apparent that this is a story that is has stuck in the memories of people from Dudley who was affected by it, far more than it has by people who weren't affected by it. Which in some ways is obvious, but in some ways it's demonstration that there are histories that are running in parallel here. So, we realised obviously we need to talk to, as wide a population, as diverse a population as possible. Now that is not revolutionary, I think it's the bare minimum for a project like this is to talk to people whose lives were affected.

So, but what I think is important is that we need to make sure we understand the context that these things were happening in, so locally, we could talk about employment and things like that and fears about employment and of course a lot of the contemporary commentators did, but nationally this was the year of the Commonwealth Immigration Act and down the road there was brewing the most racist election campaign there has been in this country. Even globally,

there was talk about literature from the US being imported to Dudley by fascist groups. So there is a huge amount of context to put in there, but it soon became evident that the experiences of the people that we were talking to that haven't been represented today, they made to become the context for what we do as well, so context works both ways.

So when we are telling stories about the record shop in Dudley or the, any of the other buildings that appear in our project, we need to make sure that the difficult histories that people have chosen not to remember are part of the context of the, and part of the stories we are telling. That raises all sorts of questions, we are a living museum, we have costume characters around that are there to evoke and the time and place. It would be a very straightforward decision if went had done this research and this kind of talking to people to say, we will have a Teddy boy, it's a nice evocative person from the 50s to have walking street, but of course if a Teddy boy is reminiscent of a traumatic memory and we know from other experiences that there can be associated with racialised violence, is it the right thing to do or the right thing not to do. So, we have got a lot of interpretative decisions to make over the next few years while the buildings are being built. We have tried the odd bit of experimentation to date, I should state this is something that is new for museum as a whole. Obviously immigration happened before 1948 and before the war, but it's not something the museum has really approached, so this is new for everyone and does require some bigger questions answering than just what was the history, there is all sorts of very foundational and fundamental questions about the organisation as a whole, but trying it for the first time, we

are. This summer, as part of our late programme, we have worked with a theatre group called Black Country Touring who put on a play based on the research we did, so the riots acted as context for the backdrop for the play and this plot was taken from a story, a small story that happened in Smethwick about a child being born to an Asian family. The audience profile for these events, for the museum as whole in fact is much broader than a lot of cultural institutions, so we have about 50% social economic grouping which is a lot more than a lot of museums and there was the fear, there was suspicions that some of these groups were less receptive to more challenging history, especially coming on an evening after work and with the family. I have put the feedback up here not to show how well we have done, but just to disprove the theory that there is no reason for us not to do these things or go in with too much fear of pushback from them.

So, before I hand over to Glenis, I think it's important to take the lessons from those plays. They have multiple viewpoints, they had lots of different people expressing their points of view and their perspectives and I think that is crucial, that is the context I am talking about. I think it takes a large scale immersive project like this to be able to talk about racism within its context, we don't have text labels anywhere, we don't have objects in cases, we have got people, we have got environments, so we are a slightly unusual situation, but I think it perhaps gives us a unique position to change from having histories running in parallel to become a point where histories can interact and hopefully they will benefit from that.

GLENIS: I would like to start by saying, starting with Marcus Garvey:
"A people without knowledge of their past or culture is like a tree without roots." As a black person working within the, at the Black Country Living Museum, I think this is a once in a lifetime experience within my career and I feel privileged to be part of this journey, sharing my expertise and using creative methods to find real stories from local communities and I do personally feel that I have that responsibility to tease out those stories and to find ways, creative ways of connecting with local communities, the forging Ahead Project has made this work more legitimate, it's given us a platform to really reach out where we extend the timeline of those stories, so we can tell the Black Country story in its entirety.

I am going to start off with a film here, now, hopefully this will work, so I have been asked to press this twice.

VIDEO: Since 1978 we have been telling the story of the Black Country and it's a story worth telling.

GLENIS: So that was a quick introductory of what is going to happen and it's exciting that we are having so many buildings being moved brick by brick. I sometimes can't believe how these buildings are going to be recreated at the Black Country, making a new town. One of the projects I have worked on was called migration stories and programming and ensuring our cultural calendar has been really successful in marrying up opportunities where we can look at our audiences and have audiences attend events. We now programme Black

History Month, we have Jamaican Independent Day, and the more recent Windrush Day.

These opportunities where we can join national marketing campaigns to encourage a wider reach throughout the year has been successful. We have explored more stories from this era and with the influx of migration and the made for labour people came to the Black Country from all over the world. Setting the stage to tell a story from a different angle. I think that within museums we are always seeing the story from one side and actually I know that with my experience in working with the museum sector for over 20 years, sometimes we have to change within.

Now, we haven't got all of the answers but a good starting place is the preparation from within. We recognise that we need to approach and do things differently and we need to change as an organisation, a learning organisation, we have programmed a wide range of training initiatives so we can firmly place ourselves where the visitor is standing. Our work, I work very closely with our people and cultural team, where we are planning to increase and introduce training for our staff and volunteers, so they feel equipped, comfortable and ready to share these difficult stories.

We are looking at the respect agenda, dignity at work, awareness of unconscious and conscious bias and last but not least the language we use when we are telling these difficult stories. Right, this slide really showcases how we have started to make the connection in reaching out to communities.

So within each building we have Woodside Library, Stanton's Music Shop and JH Lavender which was a foundry and the Infant Welfare Clinic and also the Elephant & Castle, which Simon mentioned earlier.

Getting the offer right is a delicate balance of really knowing your audience and having a good understanding of what is culturally appropriate. The Woodside library events have sat around book, reading literacy, World Book Day has been a significant point in our calendar where we can schedule and programme. Songs for Stanton was born from Record Store Day for their record shop. JH Lavender and the Aluminium Foundry we have looked at screening the Black Prince and the Maharajah. Black History Month, World Engineering Day and of course the Infant Welfare Clinic that has been linked with the 70th anniversary of the National Health Service. Having a platform that will meet your audience both ways will support empathy and participation, allowing open debate and communication at the very start of that interpretation journey.

Right, this was probably one of my favourite events that I produced and worked on and co-ordinated last year. And it fell on the anniversary of the 70th anniversary of the NHS, so there was a lot of marketing material, there was a Twitter feed, there is a lot of things happening throughout the year. I felt it was right to look at the 70th anniversary of the NHS and look at ways in which we could look it in with our Infant Welfare Clinic. You Called We Answered talk place last year during Black History Month. A call to share memory was part of the bill where we had 30 people who came forward to share their stories and

lived experiences. The infant Welfare Clinic is probably my favourite to tell the backdrop of the story of the birth of the NHS, the influx of junior doctors from countries from India and Pakistan during the 50s and 60s. The lives of young women and children in that period, grasping and understanding of public health to the present day.

We have one-minute left. I will tell you about Marva. She is one of the characters you don't meet very often. She is 90-plus, we don't know how old she is, she is a bit of a character! We met Marva at one of our consultation events, she is larger than life, with a willingness to share her personal story and sometimes her difficult experiences of the past working within the NHS. I, she is a midwife, she was a State-enrolled Nurse, followed by studies to become a certified midwife. Marva has been around for a long time, contributed within the NHS for our outstanding work. She has given birth and helped to give birth to over 200 babies, I've been told. She is very proud of that with her extended family. We have our midwife character, helping us to shape the Infant Welfare Centre, with real stories shaped with the help of Marva. I have a lovely oral history recording. This is going to be too long. I will finish off by saying, that for us at the Black Country Living Museum, positionings ourselves as a cultural enterprise offers the very best to meet the needs of our visitors. To be valued in our community whilst at the same time holding true to the charitable purpose and what it means to the museum. It is with this mindset, that we move forward into the next phase of our exciting, major development project. BCLM, Forging Ahead, a project that will allow us to fulfil our potential and maximise impact as a world-class museum and agent of change. Thank you.

KAYTE: That was amazing. A lovely insight to the work you are doing. What struck me, the stories are present, we have to find them. The onus is on, the people working in the museums to collaborate with the types of partners that both sessions talked us through. We are now at a tea break. I wonder for the sake of being caffeinated, if you had a question maybe came to speak to the speakers and those desperate for a loo or tea break to head off. But thank you very much. I want to give a round of applause to our lovely speakers. Do come forward and ask your questions or get a cup of tea ready for the next session. Thank you very much. Thank you, speakers.

**RE-IMAGINING (Y)OUR MUSEUM**

**PAISLEY MUSEUM & MANCHESTER MUSEUM**

*Re-imagining Paisley Museum,* Katy Wilson-Scott, Kairos Women's Space & Sarah Cartwright

*Co-curating Manchester Museum's South Asia Gallery*, Stephen Welsh, Nusrat Ahmed & Yusuf Tai, Manchester Museum & Kayte McSweeney, The British Museum

KAYTE: Welcome back. Right now, with a session to look at major collaborative projects. This is interesting for me as I am working together with Manchester Museum, and this is looking at two partnerships that is expanding on the co-production and partnership philosophy that most museums are trying to embrace today. These are reimagining what a museum is. Reimagining whose

voices have been represented, haven't been respected and will be represented. Reimagining practices for the community partners and the museums and reimagining what a gallery re-development, can be, for whom and for how. We will hear from Sarah Cartwright and Katy Wilson-Scott, two sides of the one coin. This is a museum re-development done in close genuine partnership with a community group looking to instil a history, an embedded history that has been previously unrepresented at Paisley, working-class women. Then moving to the colleagues from the British Museum from Manchester Museum. We have Nusrat, Stephen, and Yusuf, talking about Manchester Museum working as a collective, as equal partners as an initiative to create one of the first histories of the South Asia diaspora, a place where People's Voices and histories are heard with those with the biggest stake in the histories. Now, I will hand over to Paisley Museum and to Katy and Sarah. Thank you very much.

>>: Before I get started, I have a couple of large-point copies if you need them, we can pass them around if required. As mentioned, my name is Sarah Cartwright. I am the social history creator at Paisley Museum, part of the reimagine project, speaking with Katy Wilson-Scott, a development manager at Kairos Women's Space. To give a bit of background, Paisley Museum, reimagined is a £42 million project to transform Paisley Museum to reopen in autumn of 2022. Today we would like to share a journey through co-production looking at representation and readdressing the gender bias in the museums with the focus on the social history, a journey we are still on. Now we would like to tell a story through the medium of a comic style picture book.

The first image is a baby in her mum's arms. Both white and the woman with orange hair and glasses, a banner that reads it is a girl. The mum is speaking, "Welcome to the world, Kelly." It is 1980. It doesn't want to change! There we go. As you can see in this image, Kelly is pictured in her room. She is seven years old, playing with a toy robot. Wearing a blue T-shirt with brown hair. A train set in the foreground and posters of one of Wonder Woman. The date at the bottom reads 1987. While Kelly is growing up, she enjoys the stuff we did as kids, superheroes, explorers, trains and of course, robots. Kelly is drawn towards technology and how things work. These are employment sectors that are very male-dominated this does not stop her from being inspired by the interests. She is not aware of the gender bias as a child in these subject areas. In the next image Kelly is talking with her mum. And says, "Mummy! I want to grow up and I want to be a robot." Mum responds with, "You can't be a robot but you can build them, let's see inventors in the museum." Now we see the grounds of Paisley Museum in the frame with a grand entrance of pillars and columns. There is greenery in the foreground and people milling around, including a wheelchair user, it is a sunny day in Scotland, it does happen!

Paisley Museum opened in 1871, built thanks to the donation of Sir Peter Coates. And a collection amassed by the Paisley philosophical society in the early 1500s. Now back to Katy who explores Kelly's visit to the museum in the late 1980s.

>>: So Kelly and her mum are at the museum. They are walking past sculptures, Kelly is curious and excited to learn about the people that came before. To Kelly's surprise, all that seems to them are the lives of the rich,

white men.  It feels like there could be a sign like this with the word "men" in flashing lights.  From artists, inventors to engineers, all Kelly and her mum discover are the lives the men.  Honoured and appreciated, respected, as if women are not as respected or as often.  The women are in the background as wives and daughters, occasionally a rich white woman is on it but this is an autonomy.  Kelly is confused and asks, "Can we go to the bits with the girls?" she is deflated and angry when she cannot find the female inventor she wishes to find.  Kelly's mum realises that history has forgotten the lives of working-class women.

This is where I come to the story.  Kelly arrives in Johnston in Scotland, another sunny day.  Surprisingly.  Outside, pictured with two large windows there are silhouettes of women, having a nice time.  We believe that when women support women, incredible things happen.  We believe in transformational change in all aspects of women's lives.  From representation in public life ... to recognition of women's contribution to society. To encouraging active and engaged citizenship for all women and their families.  We are a small and a growing space, we believe we can change the world around us by working together.  This may sound bold, we are at the British Museum, why not try but as Margaret Mead once said: Never doubt a small group of thoughtful and committed citizens can change the world, indeed, it is the only thing that ever has.  In Kairos Women's Space there is a buzz of activity, women of colour, disabled women, young and old alike move around the space and sit together for a natter about the museum. Staff sit in to start conversations about

women's history.  Did you know only 0.5% of recorded history is about women?  There is no ordinary working-class people in museums?

We have on a co-production of a journey with Sarah and James.  Starting with their secret collection for a woman's tour and hearing the history of the local women.  We decided on the Paisley Co-operative Women's Guild and banners, trailblazers of their time who fought for improvements to childcare and reproductive rights.  We created a banner, inspired by them, learn being the influence of the guild and their production processes and beliefs.  Sarah and Jane came to us about the feedback from the museum and made sure our ideas were included every step of the way, inviting to us the designer's conversations to influence the displace.  Kelly is an example of one of our women, who has been given the opportunity to influence the museum collections, a voice of a working-class woman, heard by the sector, not just heard but listened to and appreciated for the value she offers.  Back to Sarah for the next chapter.

SARAH: As you can see, Kelly is pictured with hands on hips.  In a stance to state, "This has to change." Kelly is right.  All too often, the stories that are told, social inequality and hierarchies organised by gender, sexuality, race, and social class are evident in not just social history collections but across the museum's sphere.  This shows the age by which museums are formed by rich white men for rich white men.  Having one group always create multiple under-represented groups, we need to give women's history a voice, not through a male gaze but through their own important fascinating and untold

stories. Kelly and her work aims to do that. She understands how crucial it is for things to change, new ways of creating exhibitions must be formed and working on a co-production project is a step towards a quality of representation. If the museum is willing to hear input from the audience, visitors and users of a museum space of what they want to see and what represents their interest, alongside research and collections fully to find the female stories, Kelly believes that is a positive step for women.

And when the museum opens in 2022, that the attention is not having to just addressed the gender bias but the other under-represented groups who will be able to find stories that they can relate to and engage with, where they can see versions of themselves to inspire and empower them to challenge social inequality and hierarchies. The image shows that the time has passed and Kelly is back inside Paisley Museum. Kelly is there with her own child, mixed race, the child is seven years old. Kelly is telling her, "You know my mum brought me to the museum when I was your age." This time Kelly knows that things have changed she does not have the same fear Kelly had as a child. She is confident that the child can see a version of themselves in the museum exhibitions, something that they can relate to. By ensuring a fair representation of all, the museum can create a sustainable audience, one that inspires. The changes will not happen overnight. But there is a starting point. It is about acknowledging the gaps in the collection. Adapting the gaps and undertaking research of the collections to find out what you have, which can tell the untold stories. So, pictured within the museum, the image shows Kelly and her child, holding hands. There is a Gay Pride flag, a statue representing

women and factories, information on Dorothy Pilanger and statues and pictures of rich white men. Kelly is impressed with the changes of the changes in the museum. And showing the range of histories that will hopefully enable all visitors that sees something that reflects them as an individual while visiting. So Kelly sees the shift in the representation. There is not such a stark contrast between genders and other under-represented groups are present having worked with the museum under similar format as supported by Kairos Women's Space. This is not what the change stops this is a path towards equality and representation for all. Gender mainstreaming is not the sole concern of women, this change should be challenged by all cultural professionals.

So, Kelly is outside of the frame here, holding her child's hand. Pointing and shouting, "Mum, look." Behind is a portrait of a woman of colour, a statue of a man. The child is impressed to share this experience with her mum. Kelly can see that the changes that have occurred in the lifetime so far but the child does not see the changes, for them, this is their starting point there. Is less discrepancy between the displace and strides made to redress the balance but we have to continue to make the changes and strive for equality of representation for all? In the image Kelly's is pointing to a picture of a woman of colour with a robot. She wants to build robots when she grows up. She sees herself in the museum, seeing paths open to her that she may not have before considered. There is a point when addressing the lack of representation of women's histories, we can see this is deep in root. We can start to change things. We have to change to ensure that we are the generation that opened

rather than closed minds and who opened the stories up and put them back on to the page of the collective memory.  I will pass you back to Katy to sum up.

KATY: So here they are the group of women who made today possible. I think it's important to remember that the people in the community are the reason we are here. Without our relationships with them I wouldn't be here talking to you today and co-production is all about relationships and its hard work, it takes a lot of time, much more time than traditional curation. At its heart is the belief that people's voices and ideas matter and will have a positive influence on the displays in our collection and the wider museum. Bonnie put it beautifully this morning when she said, "Let's listen with intent." I was going to say if we listen, we learn, which is the same message. Today is the perfect example of that, I am here at the British Museum and I can't believe I am here at the British Museum and it would have been much easier for Sarah to come on her own, not negotiate this presentation with someone who has very little connection to the sector. But I am here and I think there is something really important about that. The museum took the time and they are committed tote values of co-production and it's not talk on a stick, it's deep, meaningful and important.

I am from a working-class background, my dad was a carpet fitter and my passion for museums came from him. He took me to museums as often as he could because he couldn't go there himself. Today is a special day for him, because he can see me here, this is what today is about, about allowing ordinary people to be involved in days like this in our museums in general.

Finally, I want us to imagine a different future, where we can create a world where we can find, sorry, where we can find ourselves represented in collections, whether a woman, a migrant, LGBTQ, black, disabled, working class and, as Kelly imagined, our children and grandchildren could be walking around museums and seeing versions of themselves, achieving incredible things, overcoming odds imagine what that would feel like? Imagine if we reimagined our museums? Thank you very much. (Applause).

FLOOR: Dare I press any more buttons? That is the question. Do I keep pressing? Wait for the signal? I think our colleagues at Paisley have already covered most things so I think we have finished. There is a lot of similarities, which you will see. I am Stephen Welsh. I am joined by my colleagues, one from the South Asia gallery Collective, Nusrat, and Yusuf. It is a museum partnership gallery, so my colleague indicate Kate is part of the collective, as is my colleague here, who can't be with us here today, but they are very much part of this process.

So we don't have a comment to share with you, but in the spirit of our work and the collective, we have almost what could be best described as a family album, although these guys might deny ever knowing me or being related to me, once we have finished today.

So yes, the South Asia Gallery, I co-created it, for some of you who know this project has been on the go since about 2015, it was a very different beast entirely. It was a project that had minimum community engagement and up

until 18 months ago we were working on that basis, until, the force of nature that is Esme Ward, became our director. I know that some of you know her, I heard that chortle. What we did when she joined is we went back to the drawing board and thought about the gallery and considering its significance, where we going to produce something which was chronologically led and decided by curators internally or did we want to think again, stop and pause the project and really go back to the drawing board.

For those of you who don't know, Manchester Museum is a university museum. We have a collection of 4.5 million specimens, so we have natural science and human cultures but we do and we work extensively with local communities in schools across Manchester, so when Esme started, we really went back and we said where we connecting?  Where we being as inclusive as we possibly could be?  We are in the midst of a 13.5 million capital project which is transforming the museum. Part of that capital project, our ambition is to be one of the world's most caring inclusive and imaginative museums possible. So, were we achieving that with this flagship £5 million principle gallery with the British Museum and I think it's fair to say we weren't? So we threw a meal and we went to a local restaurant and we invited anyone who would be interested in the project and we had a meal together and it was an open invite for people to come to the museum and be involved in the co-creation and also the design and production of the gallery.

So in September last year we held a number of workshops and they were an open call for people to come forward with the idea its they wanted to submit

to the gallery. Very simple process and about 40 stories were submitted and from those stories, certain themes began to emerge. Now, this has changed significantly over the last 12 months but this is what emerged in 2018, so you can see the different themes that emerge from those 40 stories. Now you can see we are using this metaphor of the anthology, because in the word of literature it's a single text by a number of authors approaching a similar theme from a different perspective.

This is what we are hoping to achieve with the gallery as a whole, so we have these anthology themes. So there is no now a collective which has emerged of about 25-30 people and it can flow, ebb and flow, so some people attend regularly, others don't attend so regularly and it's composed of people from all walks of life that are in passionate about South Asia and connecting with it. We have activists, journalists, DJs, academic, you name it, we have some who will share their thoughts with us. Then, once we had this anthology themes, once this collective emerged towards the end of 2018, we wanted to see if those themes could connect with the collections and resources we had at our disposal. So we had two visits to the British Museum with the doctor in the gallery, where she introduced us to the collections on display, but also behind the scenes in storage, now I am sure this question will come up, because people will ask, well you started with the stories first and then you went to the collections. That was intentional, purposeful and you can ask us further questions about that when we come to that point, but it was a remarkable thing in terms of the connection people made, so when we went into the storeroom and we were shown some of the wonderful objects at the British

Museum, there was a seal and Sushma told us about the fact that the script had not been deciphered it was 4,500 years old and that started an interesting conversation with one of our co-creators and they started to talk about what happens when you lose the ability to speak the same language, so inter generationally in his household, Newman is bilingual, his children can only speak English, but his parents can speak Bangladeshi. So, he used that seal to start a conversation in this room about what happens in his own household when that ability to communicate, or learn language is lost.

So, then we proceeded to explore all of the collections around Manchester as well, so this is Dr Rachel Webster, our curator of botany sharing the collection from South Asia. We did the same thing at the Whitworth Art Gallery, it's our sister art gallery at the University of Manchester. This is the assistant curator of textiles and wallpapers and again all manner of questions are coming up about the collection, about the significance of them, what was missing because we are not a social history museum, nor is the British Museum or the Whitworth Art Gallery. We visited Manchester gallery, so they saw decorative art there and met the curator, but also John Ryland gallery which is part of the university of Manchester as well. We have really immersed ourselves in the British Museum and the Manchester Museum and we have started to thrash out what co-production, co-design and co-creation means to all of us and going back to what Bonnie Greer said earlier really being comfortable in that uncertainty. That strikes the fear of God into designers and funders and perhaps some other people that are working on the project, but it's vital that you hold on to that uncertainty and so at every stage, we have adapted and at every stage we

have sought to immerse everyone who is working in the, on the project in Manchester South Asian diaspora communities and their needs. At this point I will pass you on to Nusrat, who is going to tell you what happened in summer which was our design calm.

NUSRAT: Hi, everyone, my name is Nusrat Ahmed. I have been part of the Manchester Museum since April this year, I have come on board as the South Asian Gallery Community Producer. When we talk about South Asian Gallery we talk about SAG. It doesn't sound positive, but that is how we say it. I was part of SAG before coming into post, because I was part of the collective and I became involved in the museum through my community and development work in the community and we did a project in partnership with Manchester Museum. So I was aware of Manchester Museum but I did not actually been going to the museum or had years, I have been part of it, so recently we did a survey and it came up that the research visits were really beneficial. It made me think about the fact about the fact we are asking this group of people to co-produce and co-create something they really don't know much about. They are not museum people, so the research visits were really, a really good way to bring them into the museum and see other cultural venues. So I think that was a really positive part of the journey. We, I think for me, the turning point was the design camp we had in August and that was a three-day intensive working together with the collective and it really was intensive. We have over 45 people in the collective, we asked the designers to come up from London and spend three days with us in Manchester and Greater Manchester and to actually immerse themselves into this being in Manchester and feeling Manchester.

We had the visit to the Curry Mile, we did some local parks and went to the northern quarter in Manchester and looked at some iconic buildings and their relationship to South Asia through the cotton industry and there was loads of conversations over those three days and on the third day we had a really intensive workshop that was run by the designers and I think they were quite surprised about what actually came back as well. At the same time, we launched Slack, slack is our new communications channel, which was initially a bit pessimistically received, people were like we can't do that, just send us on email. It's been kind of challenging trying to work with everyone in the collective, because people, they are have you loud voices and we wanted to make we wanted the place where everything is in one place and not having multiple conversations and people missing out on certain things that were happening and Slack has worked really well. It's a place where everything goes on now, announcements, the BM can go in there, the designers can go in there and we can generally have this conversation as a collective and be up to date on everything. Anything else?  I am going to pass you over to two of our collective members that are really valuable to us.

ALA: I am Ala and I am a student. I joined this because I have a genuine interest in South Asian culture and I want to represent young people, I often feel they are underrepresented in museum sessions. So my anthology at the collective is based on trade and industry and I think that is relevant to my current and my future studies and my career path. Also, since joining there has been many opportunities at the museum for me, so I have taken part in the South Asia

design camp in August and I also, I am an active member of the Museum Youth Group and I am taking place, I am doing a work placement at the finance sector to gain insight into the finance world, because that is where I would like to go in the future. I believe that our collective group is valuable and it is a fantastic opportunity for community members to have their voices heard. I'm, it's my pleasure to be a part of this big family.

YUSUF: I'm Yusuf Tai, the one that usually talks a lot but I will try to limit that! Two quick things to address without going into a kind of This is Your Life Story. But who I am, why I am here? They are relevant. Like Katy and Ala I am not from the museum sector or a museum professional at all. So why am I here? I live in Bolton in Greater Manchester, and obviously Manchester Museums and earlier you saw the picture of a gallery. I felt proud of that, even though I'm in the British Museum. I came from a south Asian background, my mother and father were born in Burma but I am born and bred in Greater Manchester. I had a chance encounter, even before Esme became involved in 201, Dr Nick Merriman told me that we would have what was originally the India gallery but then became the south Asia gallery, and it was said, this is what is hatching, how would I ensure we have wider engagement of people when the future gallery is ready that it is accessible to all from all backgrounds? I came up with the kind of thing that I do, I said to him, "I don't have off-spring, my vision is when I do have off spring, who I hope to live in Greater Manchester, when they visit this gallery in the future, that I want them to walk in, not to be fascinated by what is there as it is from south Asia but to be directly relevant to them." That was important to me. I feel although it is a great opportunity to

reflect the diversity and heritage, that it is can still be mainstream and clunky. He asked how did I envisage to work on that as a solution?

So, to cut a long story short he said, "Tell me what we can do." What I helped to organise at that time, was a small thing in September of 2017 when he said, "I will open up the gallery in the evening, you can bring people from Greater Manchester, from mainly a south Asian background working in some capacity, grass roots capacity with arts and heritage-based projects." So, these people turned up. The first thing that the doctor said, bear in mind that the people have interests in arts and heritage and were mainly born in Greater Manchester, he asked how many of them had been to Manchester museum? A third had not been to the Manchester Museum. This was my thing. I could have been critical of the process, just another institutional arts-type project or a big institution at Manchester Museum that will not engage with the people it is supposed to build the gallery for, I immersed myself as I could. When Esme came on board, it moved more quickly. The thing about co-production, you will not move as fast, you will go back before you move forwards but by doing that we spoke earlier about listening with intent. Listening with intent is the beginning of that process. If you listen it will redraw the things that you have as a planning place. I think that a real big thing with talking to the Manchester Museum, is that they have been fantastic in this process. They've really been not conventional in how they have done it.

I hope when we get to the place, the South Asia gallery in two years' time, even thousand who were not engaged as part of the collective, it will feel it is

an accessible place for them as it is for everybody else. Thank you. I did say that I talk a lot!
(Laughter)

STEPHEN: If you wanted to know more about the project, we are blogging regularly on the Word Press site about the unfortunate elements of the capital and future project, where you will find the most up-to-date information with what we are doing with the south Asia gallery.

KAYTE: Thank you to the speakers. It is time to open up to the floor. We have had two great examples of theoretical reimagining but active reimagining. I wonder if you would like to ask our speakers from Paisley or Manchester Museum. We have loving mics and so a coup couple of questions would be great. Who would like to start us off?

FLOOR: Thank you for your presentations. Both museums spoke about things taking longer when you are really doing this process of co-curation properly. I wanted to ask with these large budgets and high-profile projects, how have each of your projects built in the time? Did you have to go back and add time? How did that work?

STEPHEN: The easy response is yes, to that. Esme has been in post for 18 months. We did have some expectations, unbelievable, I think we thought we could do by the end of 2018, it was unrealistic as the complexities and the energies needed to do this type of work as Paisley have said is intense and it

takes an organisational shift. We had to go back to speak to the designers, the architects and to speak to the National Heritage lottery fund and our colleagues at the British Museum. They have other multiple powerful projects that they are working on, they have been hugely accommodating and supporting to us. So managing that. It is what Yusuf said as well. With the best intentions people work at different paces. So we have had members of the collective and members of museum staff that want it down quicker and there are others who work at a different pace. It is trying to find that rhythm. But we have needed more time, more resources, and actually more staff. So, Nusrat coming into the post as well.

NUSRAT: I keep saying there is no journey, no script. We have to stick to that, really. There is not a script to this, just keep saying it is a journey.

YUSUF: I can add that the process gets more focused as you move along but it takes a while. I may have been frustrated as somebody who is a part of the co-production team and from within the community that things are not moving as quickly as we would like it to but now, we have Slack and things are available and we have done more together. So things are more focused.

SARAH: From Paisley's perspective we closed the museum last year, so as far as the project, we have been undertaking it for 1.5 years. We are aiming to open in 2022 but it is not just work with Kairos Women's Space, there are other groups going through the same process. It take as great deal of time. But as

far as I'm concerned and I think that Katy feels the same, it is worth it, without the voices of the community, who are you doing it for?

KAYTE: Any other questions?

FLOOR: You both either spoke directly about or referred to the fact that you started with the stories. You then go into the collections. So, that is directly what Stephen said but also, you know, inferred, I reckon in Paisley's presentation, that you wanted to represent different parts of your communities within the museum. I just wondered if you can give specific examples as to how you have overcome that. Our experiences in Birmingham is that we have sometimes tried to do that but it is not always possible. How have you overcome that?

SARAH: In terms of ourselves, perhaps as it is the budget for the project we have. We have had more time to research and to really look into our collection. At first glance specifically with female histories, it is not always waving as you, there must be digging with regards to that side of things. Even then it is not waving as you as women's history is not recorded or forgotten or destroyed as it is not seep as important as male history. So it is about getting to grips with your collection. I know that is not always possible due to funding, time, to staffing. So, from our perspective we just had maybe that little bit more wiggle room. We have had a whole project team brought in to do the project. So that additional staff, it has been helpful.

KAREN: From our point of view as a partner it was useful for the museum to come in and tell us the objects that we got to pick. So they presented women focused objects, and then as a group we said this is what we wanted to take forward and we did the research and came back with further information. So a real process of decision-making. We had choice and control over when we did next.

YUSUF: We had a workshop on Thursday, we laid the anthology themes out and objects out that we thought could connect. Some we didn't have. We don't have a British Asian collection, trade and industry, we do have that collection. We could try to pick things out, thinking laterally, and language, of course, we are not anarchy in that sense, yes, a few Palm Leaf books but we are not John Ryeland's University. Of course, the British Museum has wonderful collections but exploiting the other places in the city like the Museum of Science and Industry, John Ryeland as University library but what we found in the process, is that the collective is made up of so many different people, so we have poets. You may have spotted even the Singh twins, they have come along and got wind of what we are doing, they are members of the collective. We are not just thinking about accessing collections but thinking about commissions.

So, for instance there is a number of poets and performers. So for the language section we may think, actually, maybe that has minimal objects of any, maybe it is a commission. Even music, we don't have a south Asian musical instrument collection but then challenged is it relevant? One of the co-curators is a DJ, he is not interested in antiquated south Asian instruments

so, is the music section altogether different? What we don't know. It is that curiosity, at the moment, that is leading us in that direction. But part of it is the potential for co-commissions, like members of the collective, we commission them to do something for us.

NUSRAT: We are asking the collective to bring their own objects, it is not just our objects. We know somebody who has, I don't know how many generations of pass passports and wants term on display, that is her story under the journey anthology.

STEPHEN: And you have corrected me when things have been asked about certain things changing, you can have more regular exhibitions that have been commissioned by the committee which are as big and large and change ... fantastic.

KAYTE: Sorry to cut you off. We are finishing up. I wonder if we can give a round of applause to our speakers today. Thank you for sharing.

(Applause)

**EMBEDDING COMMUNITY-LED PRACTICE**

**ROYAL MUSEUMS GREENWICH & PEOPLE'S HISTORY MUSEUM**

Royal Museums Greenwich - *The community-led project model: working for change*, Navjot Mangat & Ros Croker

People's History Museum: *How can museums open up their spaces to communities?* Mark Wilson

GEORGIA: Hello, everyone, welcome to the final session of the day, it's a pleasure to introduce our speakers, so we have Nav and Ros, representing Royal Museums Greenwich and Mark representing the People's History Museum. So we are going to kick off with Royal Museums Greenwich. That is all I need to say, I guess. Thank you very much.

ROS: We are going to talk from here. Is that okay?  My name is Ros Croker, I am a senior manager for partnerships and public engagement at Royal Museums Greenwich.

NAVJOT: I am Nav and during the time of this project I was exhibitions interpretation courier at Royal Museums Greenwich, but I am the senior interpret interpretation and participation producer.

ROS: Did you want to finish what you were saying.

NAVJOT: I am now senior participation and interpretation producer.

ROS: So although we focus on people's connection with the sea, the majority of our collection on displays were collected at a certain time by a certain group of people who probably looked a lot like these guys up here. So, they, a lot of the collections are still catalogued in this way, with a very white male academic perspective. This perspective is obviously only relevant for a small percentage of the population today and tells a one-sided view of history. There are also knowledge gaps about the collection, so it's very hard for people to find

relevance to the collection and for us to tell balanced view of history through the collection at the moment. So, in 2014 we embarked on a big project called the Endeavour Galleries Project and I think in each of your packs you have a booklet that says,'Welcome Aboard', that tells you all about the project. That was funded by the NHLF I think it's now called. That was really an audience development plan to think about and transform the way we engage with audiences and approach our collections. And, this was really built on a layered approach to collaboration and consultation, that included lots of different elements and it was all built in collaboration with a lot of different people as well.

So that included four new permanent galleries at the museum, a new creative commissions, co-creation projects embedded across the galleries, a new volunteering programme, oral history gathering and also alongside this updated policies and strategies across the museum to really kind of question our approaches and make sure they are as accessible as possible and that there is no kind of systemic things getting in the way of that. So, one of the things that we thought really long and hard about is how do we make sure all of this great work that has been funded for a short amount of time is going to be sustainable beyond the project as well. So many different elements and community research was one of those.

So, the biggest barrier that we found to engagement with the museum and was about what maritime history is and who it includes. So what we wanted to do as part of this project was to generate conversations, to connect to people

across cultures and to change our historical bias and involve people in this change. We are a national collection, so why do we get to choose the research questions. We wanted to Democratise research, moving away from research questions chosen by curators or other staff at the museum to an audience-centred approach, one which also values lived experience as well as academic knowledge, not one or the other and we really wanted to make sure that people were involved in this.

NAVJOT: If there is one thing to take away, I am aware of the time, it's 4.00pm and almost the end of the day, if there is one thing you want to take away from research at the Maritime Museum it's the community deciding on research, they are deciding the research topic, how they want the work and the research question and what outputs they want from that project. The entire point of the project was not only to make collections more accessible but have them become more relevant to communities and have a connection to them or an affinity related to that collection.

The way in which we did was we began the conversation within the museum, so we had a curatory department meeting where we discussed gaps in our collection. That was largely about identifying what curators felt needed a bit more interpretation or they just weren't aware of stuff. That was a long list of about 20 different subjects and in the end, we went with three because this was a pilot programme and we wanted to ensure that the catalogue and archive from as accessible as possible. So we ended up working with African Caribbean history, South Asian sea farers and women in maritime business.

These topics were deliberately broad because we wanted to approach communities and ask them, this is the collection we are working with, we don't know much about it, so instead of saying we will figure out a research question we thought we would speak to them and see what do you want from this and what do you want to find out using this collection?

The project model we used for the project is of action research. Someone who spoke here a year ago, talks about action research, it's pretty much a model to ask what am I doing, how can I do it better and what can I do to do that? We met with Dr Tom Wakeford to talk about how institutions are doing research. This model crops up a fair bit, so we tried to move that for the project model. The entire point of it is about crafting the process with the people that we are working with. So there is no parameters set in the beginning and there is this concept of constantly speaking to the people we are working with and saying does this time work for you or this meeting process work for you and the way we are doing the research work for you? It's very flexible and it's about being flexible. Throughout one project, we got to an optimised working pattern that worked for not only the researchers but actually just worked for the researchers. It's useful but requires support.

This talk is going to be quite open in terms of the experiences we have had, but hopefully the openness will give you an understanding of the pros and cons of working with this model. We are a big organisation and a big institution and we had a budget that was a bit more flexible. We had issues with staffing resources at some point, so if you are going to use this model just be aware

that you need to be available and ready to make the change that has been suggested through the process. So how did we do it?  I think the first key thing is going off what Ros said about the distrust in the museum and it's one that is fair, it's one that is understandable if someone has been to the museum before the Endeavour Project and this project began before those galleries opened up. So the communities we were working with, even though they may have been aware that work was going on, it wasn't there, it wasn't tangibly there, so that distrust was something that was valid.

Another thing, even though these are gaps in the collections, but we also wanted to decentre the institution as holders and validators of knowledge, so we decided to work with research facilitators. These are experts based in the communities that are often doing their own sessions, involved in community practice and have historical backgrounds. The way with any we found those research facilitators was word of mouth, speaking with our community stakeholders and looking at what is going on, with Asian and black history, speaking to speak and saying we are thinking about working with these people. We are not sure where we are going, that is a decision to be made. We were fortunate to have three people who believed in trying to make the collection more accessible and they were key factors in having that trust with communities and bringing them into the space, because the open day is something I want to talk about in a second, but people came to those first sessions not because of the institution, but because they had trust in that session that was bringing people to the museum and that individual had trust in the division of the project.

So an open day is the way we scheduled and instructed everything. Historically we have worked with organisations or groups and that is a great way of working, that is cool, but this was going to be a project that works over three months or six months and we needed to ensure that each person had an individual motivation. So we wanted to make sure that someone set up an event and set as many stakeholders and groups and invite people to attend, so this opened up our audience-based visitors who had never been to the museum before, had no real interest in the content, but an interest in seeing the speaker. The way we had scheduled the event would be me pitching the event in the morning and then doing the or chive handling session, so giving them a taste of the research within the space. Then the researcher speaking on how they thought the history and the research could be opened up and support the history of the project being carried out.

They were very enthusiastic, for example, this is an image from the African Caribbean research day. We had to run two sessions, we had initially budgeted for one session, but in the idea of the project being flexible we will do another one, we didn't want to have anyone who wanted to take part not being able to. It also gave people an understanding of what the project was about. One thing we definite didn't ask people to do was sign up on the day. We are asking people to carry out research and make decisions and dedicate their time, so we just gave them packs as to timescales we were thinking about, content they might be look into and raising which they can talk to the project and they got in touch with us over time.

With this particular project we had nine people sign up and that formed the research team. That research team then went through a process of induction within the library space, so finding out how to use the space and the archives and in all fairness the research teams had varying levels of experience, we had some people who were experts and some who had never done it in their life but were interested in the content. We had to suit their needs, once that initial training was done, they decided the research questions, how they wanted to work, did they want to work on weekends and in groups or individuals, did they want to carve up a collection and do what they wanted do individually and feed that back?

Then it would be about once the research was done, figuring out the output. Friends were brought into the process early. We had Kate McSweeney to give us experience and best practice for the journeys programme. This is about structuring the first aspect of the programme, how to get people together. How often can people meet? Feedback? How to track that? That was useful for the first project. Kate catching up with us to see how it was going at key points. Each project had catch-ups. In some cases monthly, in some cases weekly, this depends on the people and the needs. Communications were sent out regularly and evaluations processes were informal. You could have done it more formally but for the way that the project worked it was about building rap other and ensuring everyone involved was comfortable, so we had a way of tracking what people were saying and feeding back. In some cases it was conversations, email, or texting to say this is not working can we try this

instead. It was all logged into a document and then acted on. Outputs, this is an interesting way. The most interesting thing about the project. You don't often go to partners were doing co-curation. Without saying I don't know what we are doing. We are doing research, what sponsor? Not sure yet! It is a difficult sell sometimes. Not only internally but with the stakeholders. The open day highlighted to us the perceived values of the museum and the job of the museum, to put something on the exhibition, to put something on display. We were building four new galleries and a collection moving, we had to focus on research and to have the information feed back to the collections database. But that allowed us to speak to a variety of different kinds of outputs. For example, one was an African-Caribbean family research guide and the colonial Cook certificates, the highlighting of names, where people came from, where they were sailing to and face images of the individuals, which before the project had not been available to researchers.

As research was going on, the objects were re-catalogued and edited in terms of the database as well. There are lessons, one is getting away from display. This is largely about figuring out different ways that different team guess involved. If there is no display or exhibition team, you could be working with the curatorial team more. We worked with the learning team heavily. And they decide what had they wanted to do was to embed certain individuals into the learning programmes. So if we were doing an exhibition on STEM, we talked about a navigator that we found or nurses' experiences to embed them as far as possible. It gave us freedom and it highlighted to participants and to researchers the value of the collection's database. Many asking, is it

embedded into the database itself?

Interpretation is one thing, the database is what we are using, people are using, the online catalogue's in RMG's case, that is are what it is linked to, is that changed as well? It was great to see the community partners and researchers picking up and asking about that. It is unpredictable. There are many things we did not know would happen. But there are known unknowns without unknown, knowns. Once a project was over, we thought we would use it to apply to the next model. We realised that was impossible as the learnings so optimised to that group you have to start over again. So that was interesting. By the time we got to the third process we knew that everything has to be started again. But that gave us a better understanding of how we work.

Another thing is research facilitators, an example of how unpredictable it is, although there a contract, for example this project ... many people working directly off the lived experience, so the local Bengali communities looking at Bengali seafarers, they didn't know a researcher to validate their lived experience. So the time we needed for that individual shortened from four sessions to two sessions but it was about having the conversation and managing expectations. I am low on time. Will not say too much about managing with communities but with internal expectations. We are doing community and research. At the with are to is a I that the decisions are made by the communities that must be stuck to. If we are working across departments there are ideas what the idea should be, supports the museum's

needs, dictated by the professionals, throughout the processes we had to remind them that is not the case and that we had to listen to someone who said can't we do this instead? Or changing the histories? The group decided this was the question that we decided on, that was what they wanted. That this is the work that they were doing. And similarly with the digital projects it was a question of can it be what we worked on but the group decided that the whole point was that the entire catalogue of Bengali sea farers, that is what they wanted and had to be fed back. Highlighting people is the first step. The project, a pilot programme, will lead to many more things but it is about reminding the stakeholders, internal and external, there is no end to this. and then can we change how we value knowledge? Is the input useful in the scenario? Early on this is a really good example. Where someone said we looked at this, we think this surname relates to this person, this person is from this background, to get an internal curator to check it? How? When there is not a curator within the team that speaks that lived experience, cultural background, why to check it? It was a conversation that we had with the community partners and researchers until it was clear that the lived experience was as valid as the academic research carried out and it should be valued at the same level. That then goes to who else should have access to the collections databases?

We were working with community group, being fed into a curator and fed into a database but should in future programmes it go directly to Ros, or the learning facilitator, or directly to the researchers? There is a conversation to be had about our roles, how to set out job roles that don't then act as barriers

to others engaging with the content and with these objects. And here are some of the quotes. These people, the researchers have been key in the project for working. This is basically some of the feedback that they gave from the project. I will not read it!

ROS: Quickly, we have mentioned the embedded learning project. A new set of research projects for next year, looking at LGBTI+ history, disability history and history of migration so, we are recruiting research participants from January. And research facilitators, we are still embedding research into the collections, thinking about how to make it an easier process going forward and digitalising all of the 240 Cook records as well. Lastly, throughout the project we have ended up with a couple of new acquisitions, which we were not planning, we had assured the libraries and the archives teams it would not happen but we still made it happen, which is great! That is what the research group wanted. It helped their research and they wanted to include those things to help people in the future to research the areas so. It was really important to them. We are championing expertise in terms of lived experience. I think there is always a turnover of staff, so to be able to keep telling everyone what it means, why it is important for the communities and us, and collaborations across the teams. The time is up. There is a great project for everyone. Thank you very much everyone!
(Applause)

MARK: I'm Mark Wilson, the exhibition officer at the People's History Museum I want to talk about how museums open up spaces to their communities. I will

start by giving a bit of background about the museum. It had its origins actually, a group of activists collecting materials that were unrepresented in museum collections, it at first got little support for that. Then the collection found a home at Limehouse at Town Hall in London in 1975. As it hit financial problems, there was a bid to save those collections and bring them to Manchester. In the 1990s, the museum opened on a very small basis at the 103 Princess Street, also an historic site of the first Trades Union Congress. Soon, the museum outgrew that space as the collections grew. It moved then to a hydraulic pumping station in Manchester, another listed building, the site where it is now, and in 2010 it reopened after a £12.5 million capital bid allowed us to extend that building. The images you see now, it is a picture of that extension and the front of the museum. In a way, what I am about to talk about might seem very strange.

In 2010, the museum opened the prestigious new galleries, which in a lot of ways, were an affirmation, really, a recognition
of the important collections. It seemed almost like an end-point. A celebration of the material culture of the working-class movement, of activists and campaigners. But I think, what is interesting is, that this is almost the start of my talk, in a sense. That these galleries, this achievement in fact is the jumping off point. Despite communities being at the centre of everything that the People's History, museum had done, even in the 90s. In terms of the designs of the galleries, that I am showing you images of now, very little community consultation took place at the time. That was not particularly rare. but it was important to us. So once we had reopened in 2010, in a way, that's when we

began to start questioning the very displays that we had just constructed. In 2013 we got money off the Arts Council to really reconnect with the communities that we felt we had somehow lost touch with in some sense. We set up a project called The Play Your Part Project. The project allowed us to examine those sorts of collections and re-look at them from the perspective of the communities that we seek to represent and the communities that we wanted to work with. The approach was using very experiment approaches, with pop-up prevents, pop-up exhibitions, mass consultations, and very much doing this in public. The image on the screen was a three-month exhibition which shifted the work space, the meeting space, where a lot of those decisions were being made, the public could watch that happen. I have to say, at this point, not many of the public actually turned up for those meetings, although we were opening it up to be transparent to invite those people to come to it, the meetings did not get much attendance but the events did. We focused on connecting with different communities, whether it be LGBTI+ communities, whether it be through music events, whether that be through mass sort of workshops. You can see a particularly well-attended one here in the museum's engine hall. Not all consultation was on this scale, the small-scale stuff is as important.

So, one of the key things that came out of it and there was a lot of findings and really interesting projects that allowed us to work with these smaller groups, we, one of the main sort of findings was really kind of the connection with LGBT+ communities and this led to sort of, we can see an archive session here, examining our collections, examining what we had. So, the initial findings really was to change some of the museum's displays and this led to a redesign of our

LGBT+ section, which at the time was a gay rights section and it was really guided by that consultation. There was also an LGBT+ tour which was developed for the main galleries and a number of pop-up exhibitions.

Now, this formed the foundation of a later project, really sort of created strong bonds with community partners that we then built on for the 2017 project, Never Going Underground, so with those partners we decided to create a programme year that was dedicated to kind of LGBT+ stories and projects and events. At the centre of that was the Never Going Underground exhibition and the image you see here is of our community curators, who were in charge of creating that exhibition. I should point out, Ian McKellan wasn't one of the community creators. So the community creators were appointed through a call out through those partnerships, people like The Proud Trust and the LGBT Foundation and through those we did an open call out for anyone who wanted to be involved with that project and who was interested in museum displays and learning about museum displays.

So, in a sense, we put no parameters on that and one thing that was essential to us that actually the expertise did not lie in the museum, it lay in that people who had an actively involved in those communities and involved with that activism. It's also important to note, even though there was nine community curators, they also felt it was essential that they didn't purely represent that community, so they themselves conducted consultations and workshop sessions to really engage with that topic and what did other people within the community want to see in that exhibition.

So, it's really important to note that actually the majority of the exhibition had very little of the museum's collection within it, the majority of it was built up through this consultation, through research, through objects that were in museums and just to highlight sort of to the extent we probably, through the project collected directly from it about 35 new objects and subsequently probably somewhere in the region of 15 post the end of that project. It's also important to know it wasn't just the one exhibition, we also worked with other groups to co-create exhibitions. There was one small display where we worked with the Lesbian Immigration Support Group who are a kind of volunteer group that support women that are fleeing the country of origin, going through the asylum process, many of whom are fleeing persecution in the country of origin. So it was really important, we found the museum has always had a community engaged sort of programme, but we also found that often our community exhibitions would often be people talking about communities that weren't the communities themselves, so we felt it was important that the women themselves created this exhibition and made every decision involved with that exhibition.

So, another thing that is really important and this is one of the main points that I really want to get across, even though I spoke a lot about the importance of building these exhibitions and representing groups within them, it's really important to note that actually, for a lot of these groups, they have get wider concerns and bigger concerns outside of that and I think that really one of the most important things I think for the museum, some of my personal highlights

of the Never Going Underground project was things like we had a place given to us, a free place on the Pride Parade and this gave us kind of the opportunity to allow groups that don't usually get to march at Pride because Pride has become quite a corporate concern and this allowed groups like African Rainbow Family, proud To Be Parents to march behind that banner.

Now it might sound like it's something outside the remit of an exhibitions officer, but this is part of our practice. It's important through our exhibitions to do something more than display. Moving on to another project we did represent, we really changed that kind of model of co-creation really, a much lighter touch in a way, because we also wanted to connect with people in different, people who couldn't give that level of time. So we created something where people could talk about an individual issue and their objects could be seen in an exhibition next to a historical suffragette banner, the whole thing was based on this format and all of the labels was written by community members. I am going to flip through to share some of the objects we acquired and collected many objects through that project.

A current project we are working on which is part of our Disrupt exhibition which is also has a protest lab and is also documenting sort of current activism we have completely open source, can drop off objects, they just give us their account and we reproduce the label in their own words. It's a very reactive space, there is rules within it that mean that if there is things that we deem to be hostile to certain groups, they won't be sort of displayed but will be documented. The important thing to mention is that there is this constant sort

of working with groups and trying to keep that continuity, so out of Represent there became another project which was other Nothing About Us Without Us, which was working with disabled people activists and this, again was a very similar model to never going underground, but in a sense the display you see in the background is one of two pop-up displays we did.

These displays were important in beginning to start those relationships with those groups. There was a tremendous amount of objects within that display, but it is just the starting point of a wider conversation where again we are going to do a year-long project with those same groups and build on that relationships we have made in 2021. Also, it's really important to note we have also got a project about migration, it sounds bonkers, there is so many projects that are running and co-running. Often, they have similar parties that are involved in them and often there is cross fertilisation between the groups and we try and keep that continuity. In a sense we are trying to create a museum which is kind of run by this body, this community body of people.

So, this is our community programming team for our 2020 programme, who are investigating migration within our exhibitions. We came to the idea of having this community programming team through some mass consultations, which, when we talked about should we do an exhibition what came back to us, the stories of migration were in our galleries but they weren't explicitly told. So one of tasks that this community programming team are given is to create interventions on that gallery, which begin to question and interrogate our collections and bring out new stories.

So everyone on that programme team brings their own story of migration to the table, but they also kind of involved with wider communities as well. One of the things that is unique for us in this year, we have created a much clearer sort of structure for paying people which has often been hard for us and in the earlier projects there wasn't as clear a pay structure, but with this programme we are really cementing that idea of paying people for their community involvement. This is a complex issue, because some of the groups we work with, it does jeopardise some of their benefits, etc, in certain terms, so we haven't found the complete answers with that and on that note I will conclude. I have a lot more I could say, but I will conclude it there. (Applause)
GEORGIA: I am so sorry to cut you off, I know our late start was part due to me, so apologies. This is the space that everyone will be coming into for the plenary, I see some people escaping at the back, please fill in your evaluation forms before you leave! In the meantime, we can take questions. Did anyone have a burning question for our panel? In which case, if you had further slides you wanted to click through? Just for the dedicated people who are still here.

MARK: No, I actually got through all of the slides.

GEORGIA: Thank you so much. Brilliant. You are released. (Applause)