



Museums for Everyone in Challenging Times

New Museum School Advanced Programme Inclusive Transformation Network Symposium

9 – 10 July 2025



Art Fund_



Culture&



UNIVERSITY OF
LEICESTER



Art For All

Attenborough Arts Centre



Andrew Fletcher, Director of Attenborough Arts Centre, gave a thoughtful presentation on the accessibility and inclusivity of cultural institutions.

Highlights:

- Acknowledging the fact that no venue can be fully accessible for all makes space for conversations on strategies to improve accessibility.
- Conceptualising the struggle towards accessibility as taking an 'anti-ableist' position creates a sense of urgency, and encourages grounded reflections on what the organisation is proactively doing to avoid complacency in ableism.



Evaluation Session

with Prof Victoria Tischler
(independent evaluator)

Evaluation session with partners and students

Highlights :

- This session offers participants a chance to reflect on what's going well, what needs improvement, and any feedback on the programme
- The information gathered ensures that we are addressing our core mission, achieving our objectives, and that the programme keeps improving and evolving

Wellbeing session

Culture&

Student Wellbeing Session with Lamya Sadiq
(Wellbeing Officer)

During this session, we shared our hopes for working in the arts and heritage sector. We also shared space on what we find challenging and frustrating, particularly in terms of how factors such as race, gender, Disability and neurodiversity effects our experience of these spaces. Every student offered examples of how they have individually navigated these difficulties, creating a network of peer support that will hopefully be sustained long after the programme. We ended the session thinking how about how we can set boundaries and be clear about our needs and preferences when we work with others.

Lamya provided the students with a template for creating a personalised written collaboration rider to help articulate these needs to ourselves and to others. The rider can function as a substitute for having to verbally advocate for oneself, which can overtime become incredibly exhausting. The goal of the wellbeing session was to consider how we can nurture and maintain capacity when undertaking challenging, frontline work in an equally challenging sector.





Museums for Everyone in Challenging Times

Presentation and Q&A with Dr Errol Francis, Artistic Director of Culture&, and Victoria Lane Senior Curator, Art and Identity Royal Museums Greenwich

Highlights :

- Dr Errol Francis shared insights into *Time, Space and Empire*, Culture&'s multi-site cross-arts programme exploring the concepts of time, space, and the development of Britain's sea power.
- Victoria Lane's presentation centred *The Keeper of All The Secrets* by Jacqueline Bishop, a new acquisition and display at the Queen's House Royal Museums Greenwich, developed in collaboration with Culture&. Victoria highlights techniques that mitigate resistance to institutional change, such as reminding the organisation of the inclusive values it has set out to achieve.





We in the cultural sector must stand up to Trump's attacks – if not now, when?

Presentation and Q&A

Dr Gus Casely-Hayford, OBE, Director of V&A East

Highlights :

Dr Gus Casely-Hayford generously shares his work to incorporate diversity in the paradigms of national museums. Following over 2 decades of laying the groundwork and gathering momentum, shift in the ambient context of the cultural landscape created opportunities for drastic change to take place.

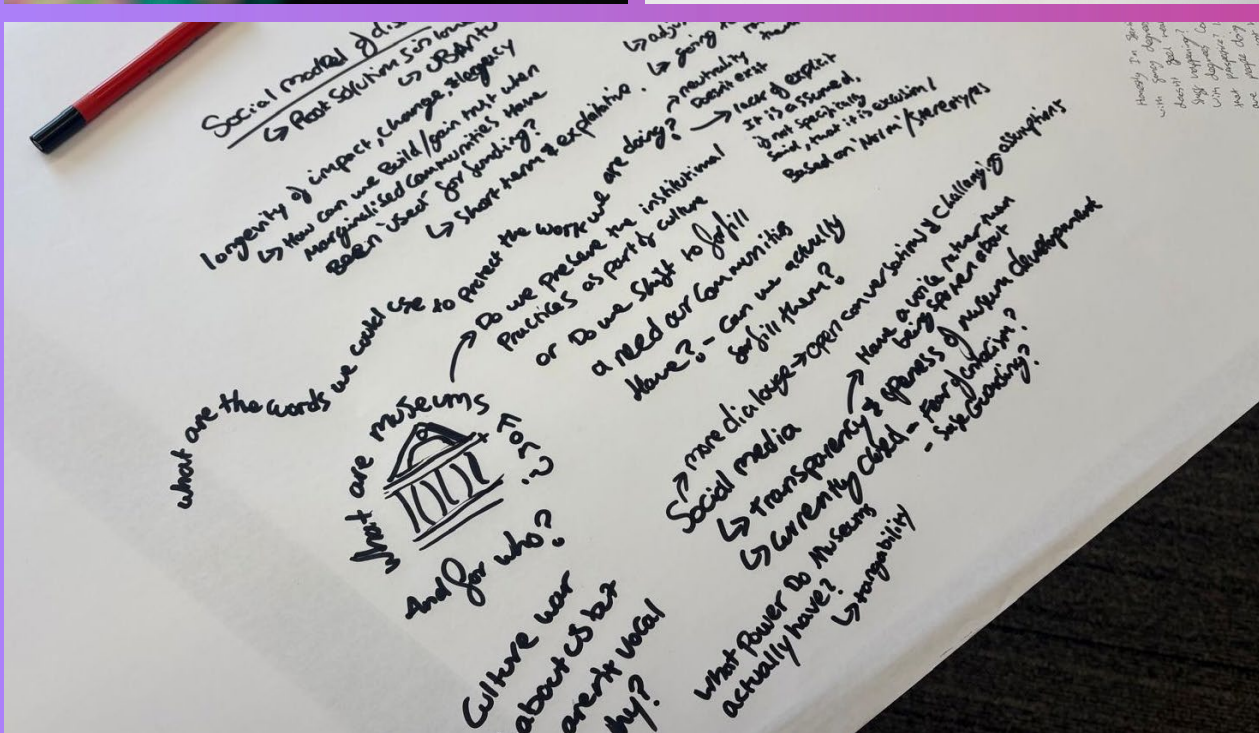
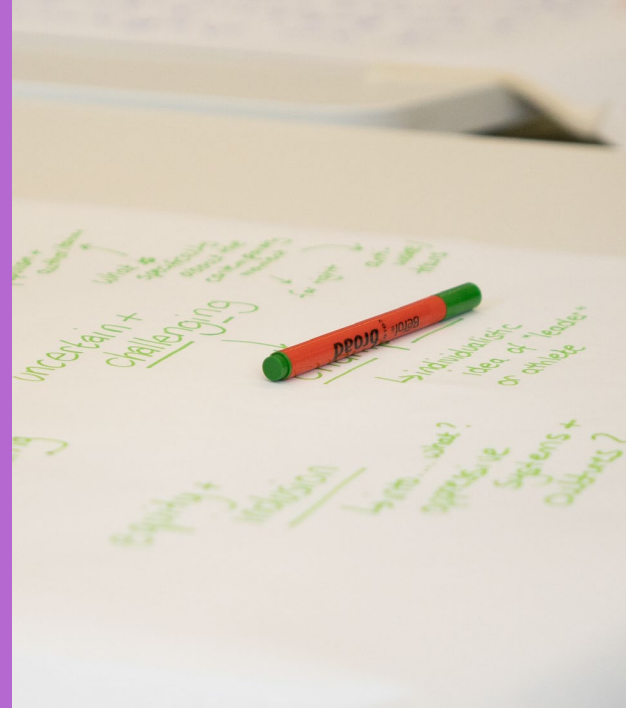
We in the cultural sector must stand up to Trump's attacks – if not now, when?

Presentation and Q&A, Dr Gus Casely-Hayford, OBE, Director of V&A East

Paradigm shifts don't take place just from museum directors signing diversity statements, but requires proactive change in collections, visitor experiences, partnerships and commissions. V&A East, a new national-level museum space, was an opportunity for Gus to rethink the paradigm, and to build openness as an inherent part of the space.

The V&A East Storehouse, photo by Errol Francis





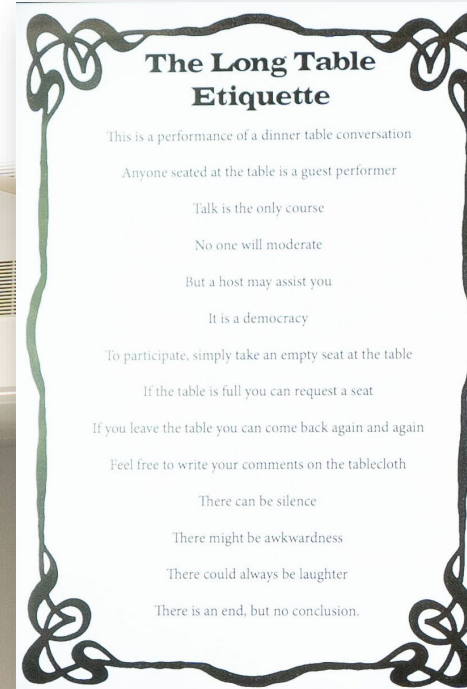
Long Table Discussion based on format devised by Lois Weaver:

In uncertain and challenging times, how can we champion the commitments to equity and inclusion that underpin our sector and make the case for expanding and embedding them more fully?

Long Table Discussion based on format devised by Lois Weaver

Discussion Highlights:

- Language is a battleground – words such as ‘EDI’ become tainted by right-wing media. How do art and heritage organisations strategically engage with this development? Who are deciding and leading on the terminologies, and who are left out of determining the language used in museums?
- What does Museum for ‘Everyone’ imply? Generic language can be misappropriated to be excluding
- Not engaging with antagonistic voices might further antagonise and radicalise them, leading to escalation of conflict/backlash.



In uncertain and challenging times, how can we champion the commitments to equity and inclusion that underpin our sector and make the case for expanding and embedding them more fully?



This year, we are delighted to announce that more people applied to the New Museum School Advanced Programme than ever before. While we are pleased that there is a clear demand for the programme, it also illustrates that there are many in the arts and heritage sector who continue to hit the proverbial glass ceiling, with many senior and even middle-ranking positions blocked-off to those without postgraduate qualifications.



Arts & Heritage Partners

If you are an arts and heritage organisation and you would like to support the New Museum School Advanced Programme, please email info@cultureand.org for more information.

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