Journeys of Discovery

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Three groups of young people from across the North East will have the chance to curate their own exhibitions as part of the London 2012 Cultural Olympiad thanks to an HLF grant of £150,000.

Over 100 young people have been delving into the region's collections, exploring world cultures and working behind the scenes to develop the three original, interlinked exhibitions, which will go on display at museums in Middlesbrough, Durham and Newcastle this year.

The project, called Journeys of Discovery, is a collaboration between Tyne & Wear Archives & Museums, the Oriental Museum at Durham University and Middlesbrough's Dorman Museum, and forms the North East strand of Stories of the World; a London 2012 initiative to encourage young people to explore and interpret museum collections.

Led by Arts Council England in partnership with the London Organising Committee of the Olympic and Paralympic Games (LOCOG), Stories of the World comprises a series of 300 innovative exhibitions and events that are taking place across the UK and are being created by the largest number of young people ever to have worked behind the scenes at museums.

Bill Griffiths, Senior Manager for Journeys of Discovery, says: "Journeys of Discovery is a very exciting project and the young people involved have relished this unique opportunity to explore the museums' stores, take charge behind the scenes and develop their own ideas for the exhibitions; from display and design to marketing and interpretation.

"We are thrilled that we are now able to make these ideas happen with the generous support from the Heritage Lottery Fund."

Ivor Crowther, Head of HLF North East, says: "We at the Heritage Lottery Fund are delighted to support such an innovative project that has sparked a real interest from the young people in exploring their heritage. Journeys of Discovery will help them become more knowledgeable about their past and learn new skills which will help equip them for the future."

Inspired by the great adventurer Captain Cook, Journeys of Discovery has encouraged each group of young people to explore the stories behind different objects; talking and meeting with artists, storytellers and people across the globe whose cultures, interests and experiences are expressed in the objects.

The exhibition at Durham Oriental Museum, Made in China, will use key objects to explore British relations with China and will open on 16 June 2012. The exhibition at Middlesbrough's Dorman Museum, Pacific Journeys of Discovery: Exploring New Worlds, will use objects to respond to Captain Cook's legacy from New Zealand, Australia and the Pacific, and is set to open on 17 June 2012. The Tyne & Wear Archives & Museums' exhibition will be on display at the Great North Museum: Hancock from 20 July and will explore the global stories behind a selection of objects from the collection.

For further information about Stories of the World, please visit the London 2012 Festival website.

Notes to editors:

Stories of the World

The Stories of the World exhibitions get young people working with curators, filmmakers, artists, writers and musicians to explore and reinterpret museum collections, giving a new perspective on the stories that tell us about our place in the world.

The exhibitions will include objects discovered in museum stores, important loans, special events, and collaboration with artists, musicians and performers.

The result? Exhibitions and events at over 40 venues, designed to appeal to new audiences everywhere and welcome the world to the UK in 2012. Exhibition themes will include fashion, music, travel and immigration – all portrayed and described in original ways and with huge curatorial input from young people.

There are already around 1,500 young people involved in all areas of developing the exhibitions – from display, design and interpretation to marketing and promotion.

More than 50 museums across the UK are making this happen by working together on seven projects. It is the biggest ever museum project, and provides a unique chance for the public to get involved and change the way they work for ever.

Journeys of Discovery

Taking inspiration from adventurer Captain Cook, Journeys of Discovery encourages young people to explore world cultures by engaging with objects from museum collections. The project with culminate with three major exhibitions designed and curated by three groups of young people from across the North East.

Made in China
16 June – 16 September 2012
Oriental Museum, Durham
This exhibition explores relations between Britain and China between 1500 and the present day. The exhibition combines the internationally significant Chinese collections of the Oriental Museum with archaeological evidence discovered in Durham city, personal memories from the local community, and archival material from the university archives. From early-European maps of China, to an English bishop's chopstick holder; from porcelain beer mugs to Olympic mascots, the exhibition explores the diverse ranges of objects and experiences that link Britain and China.

Pacific Journeys of Discovery: Exploring New Worlds
17 June – 9 September 2012
Dorman Museum, Middlesborough
Displayed alongside objects from the North East's collections is a vibrant collection of responses to these objects and cultures. Young people have learned about the cultures from a selection of the countries visited by Captain Cook and his crew, especially Maori and Aboriginal, and have gained an insight into how these cultures are still thriving today.

Globalisation
20 July – 23 September 2012
Great North Museum: Hancock
Exploring the interesting stories behind a range of objects, this exhibition will look at how objects from the Tyne & Wear Archives & Museums collection can form a path into a wider global story and provoke a range of discussions and interpretations surrounding the objects.

For further information:

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