

Evaluation of the Collecting Cultures Programme

Case Studies Report

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CONTENTS

1. INTRODUCTION	2
2. SUPPORTING THE DEVELOPMENT OF COLLECTIONS	5
3. ENHANCING THE PROFESSIONAL KNOWLEDGE AND SKILLS OF STAFF ..	15
4. STRATEGIC COLLECTING PROGRAMMES SUPPORTING RESILIENCE	20
5. PROGRAMME LEARNING	27
ANNEX 1: CONSULTEES	30

1. INTRODUCTION

DC Research was appointed in June 2016 by the National Lottery Heritage Fund to deliver an Evaluation of the 2014—2020 Collecting Cultures Programme.

This report was produced in late 2020, and updates a previous volume produced in late 2019. Producing the report in two stages allowed the experiences, outcomes and impacts of those projects that had completed before the end of the programme to be captured and showcased without the need to wait until the whole cohort has finished.

The research phase that underpins this report was carried out between September 2018 and May 2019, and September and October 2020.

Collecting Cultures Programme

Collecting Cultures Grants totalling £5.1m were awarded in September 2014 to 23 museums, libraries and archives, ranging from £50,000 to £500,000 as part of a new programme of strategic collecting and public engagement projects running from 2014 to 2020.

The key aims of the Collecting Cultures programme are to:

- Support the development of collections and their use through strategic acquisition programmes, related research and public programmes.
- Enhance the professional knowledge and skills of staff working in the museums, libraries and archives.
- Use strategic collecting programmes to support the funded museums, libraries and archives to increase resilience as an organisation.

Collecting Cultures outcomes are aligned with the wider aims of the National Lottery Heritage Fund's Strategic Framework for 2013 to 2018 and are as follows:

- Heritage will be better managed.
- Heritage will be better interpreted and explained.
- People will have learnt about heritage.
- People will have developed skills.
- Organisations will be more resilient.
- More people and a wider range of people will be engaged with heritage.

Case Studies approach

The case studies sought to capture, in greater depth than the annual survey, the achievements of the projects, and establish:

- A picture of the life of the project, understanding learning about what went well and what did not.
- The extent to which the Collecting Cultures project has achieved each of the Programme Aims and Outcomes.

- Whether, and how, the projects demonstrate a step change in their collections' development.
- How strategic collecting through Collecting Cultures has impacted on overall collections development.
- The degree to which the project has improved the grantee's professional knowledge and skills.
- The impact of the project/programme on the grantee organisation, project partners and/or stakeholders and the wider community.
- Use of Collecting Cultures to lever in additional funding from elsewhere (such as PRISM or the Purchase Grant Fund).
- The extent to which Collecting Cultures has influenced governing body/board/trustees in terms of funding/supporting collections development in the future.
- Immediate and longer-term legacies of the project.

These case studies were done either at the end of, or just after, the Collecting Cultures Project had finished to consider a whole project perspective. Many of the projects have conducted their own independent evaluations, many of which are of good quality and have provided an excellent platform to engage in greater depth at each case study visit.

This has led to:

- A greater sense of perspective from the project leads, including what they would do differently if they had the opportunity.
- The full extent of the organisation's contribution and likely legacy benefit and impact.
- Understanding how the experiences of Collecting Cultures are likely to influence collecting strategy and decision making in the future, including contributions to addressing the Mendoza Review's recommendation on dynamic collection curation and management within the museum sector¹, and subsequent work commissioned by Arts Council England and the National Lottery Heritage Fund in February 2019 to better understand how the museum sector can be supported to address it.

A natural break in project duration splits the cohort into those projects intended to finish in 2017 and 2018; and those in 2019 and 2020. Table 1.1 overleaf shows which projects were covered in which phase.

The second phase of consultations coincided with the COVID-19 pandemic in 2020 and, as a result, all of these consultations were carried out by virtual (using Zoom or Microsoft Teams) rather than via face-to-face meetings.

¹ The Mendoza Review: an independent review of museums in England, p45

The remainder of this report sets out the key findings from the case studies, structured by each of the Collecting Cultures aims.

- Section 2 highlights how the projects support the development of collections and their use through strategic acquisition programmes, related research and public programmes.
- The approach taken by the projects to enhance the professional knowledge and skills of staff is in section 3.
- Section 4 examines how the projects have used strategic collecting programmes to support the funded museums, libraries and archives to increase resilience as an organisation.
- Section 5 sets out some programme level findings from the case studies.
- Detailed case studies for each of the 23 projects are presented in a separate accompanying 'Project Case Studies' report.

Table 1.1: Split of Projects between Phase 1 and Phase 2 Phase 1 (2019)

- Autograph ABP
- Birmingham Museums Trust
- Jane Austen Memorial Trust
- Manchester Art Gallery
- Museum of London
- National Football Museum
- National Museums Liverpool
- Royal Pavilion & Museums
- Science Museums Group
- Scottish Maritime Museum
- Seven Stories
- Wolverhampton Art Gallery

Phase 2 (2020)

- Cartoon Museum
- Fry Art Gallery
- Fusilier Museum
- National Museums Northern Ireland
- National Museums Wales
- National Trust
- People's History Museum
- Royal Armouries
- Scott Polar Research Institute
- University of Glasgow Archive Services
- Wiltshire Council

2. SUPPORTING THE DEVELOPMENT OF COLLECTIONS

This section highlights how the projects support the development of collections and their use through strategic acquisition programmes, related research and public programmes.

A number of projects reported that their Collecting Cultures project improved the relationship between collections and their wider organisation. For example:

- Science Museum Group were able to create a unique Robotics Collection that has been used and will be used across a wide variety of projects through collaboration across the group.
- Jane Austen's House was able to use their Bicentenary project to improve the connections between its collections and the interior of the house, developing its approach to collections management, and engaging with holders of key items to improve its intelligence about what might become available in the future.
- As a result of the Collecting Cultures project 'The Art of Football', the collections policy of the National Football Museum has changed in terms of art, and the museum is now giving consideration to the legacy of the project and the resultant changes in the collections policy going forward to ensure that art is appropriately reflected.
- The International Slavery Museum has fully embedded Collecting Cultures objects into the core collections of the museum rather than seeing it as a stand-alone project. Given that the museum has focussed on embedding Collecting Cultures in the core of the organisation, this ensures that the doors that have been opened and the new relationships that have been developed by Collecting Cultures will continue.
- Creative Wiltshire were able to develop a cohesive strategic collection policy for creative collections across the heritage sector in Wiltshire and Swindon; providing training and developing skills for staff and volunteers in areas such as collecting, conservation, and interpretation.
- The By Endurance We Conquer project occurred at a time of change at SPRI, with the archive registering for Accreditation, and some significant staff changes. The project was also very useful for advocating the work of the Institute across the University, and with peers.

Other projects used Collecting Cultures as an opportunity to fill strategic gaps in their collections:

- From Catwalk to High Street allowed Manchester Art Gallery to develop the couture aspects of its collection, using fashion as a reason for change. Prior to the project, Manchester Art Gallery had very little 'top end fashion'.
- In a Different Light allowed Autograph ABP to collect more than 175 works addressing three key gaps in their collection in terms of: representative works by established chroniclers of the 'Windrush' generation active in London during the 1960s and 1970s; 19th Century British portraits of sitters of African Caribbean and South East Asian heritage; and digitised film works by Clovis Salmon (aka 'Sam The Wheels').

- Artists of the Black Art movement in Britain 1979-1984 and their legacy gave Wolverhampton Art Gallery the opportunity to explore the legacy of early protagonists of Black Art on contemporary practicing artists, engaging new sections of the local community and improve the diversity of their young curators' programme by targeting young men from BAME communities and engaging key artists to deliver talks and events.
- For Seven Stories, one of the attractions of the Collecting Cultures programme was that it allowed a pro-active and strategic approach to collecting to be developed. The aspects of collection development that the project focussed on included: poetry (to address a weakness in the collection); illustration (building on a pre-existing strength of the collection); and young fiction (where there were gaps to address in terms of recent developments). In addition to these aspects, there was also a desire to increase the diversity of the collection.
- Exploring Childhoods made significant progress in making the Museum at Sudbury Hall better able to represent childhoods from the mid-20th to the early 21st centuries. Many objects were from the 1980s onwards and reflected an expanding collection more recognisable to younger audiences.

Wolverhampton Art Gallery took a pragmatic approach to the project, having learned important lessons from its previous Collecting Cultures project (Peace and Reconciliation), which it delivered in partnership with The Herbert, Coventry. Wolverhampton Art Gallery completed the project in a short timescale, learning lessons from the Peace and Reconciliation project. This provided the project with focus, and Wolverhampton Art Gallery found it more straightforward to manage.

Projects that were particularly ambitious, and/or including developing a collecting focus as part of the project itself, typically conducted research and consultation exercises at the outset. For example:

- Birmingham Museums Trust undertook extensive events and a consultation programme, principally in community settings, often at the invitation of community groups themselves. As a result of the consultation with communities, artists, curators and expert professionals, 1801 new items for Birmingham Museums Trust's collection were acquired by purchase or donation.
- It took Manchester Art Gallery longer to fully understand where to go to start buying, as there were a range of potential sources that needed to be tested. As a result, the project was successful in terms of curators learning how to buy.
- Consultees for Fashioning Africa highlighted that, from the outset, the topic felt very broad and the project had to quickly focus on specific areas of interest around gaps in the collection and areas of distinct/niche interest.
- The Cartoon Museum quickly found the scope of Comic Creators was potentially very large, and therefore graded purchases by importance, both historically and in collections development, to spend allocated funding as best possible. Despite this, the Museum did not collect all the items it had planned to, mainly due to difficulties in planning additional fundraising for specific purchases.

- The research phase of Creative Wiltshire was a collaborative effort, with many new and unknown creators being identified due to engaging with the heritage sector in Wiltshire and Swindon. Research at the start of the project also provided the opportunity to identify gaps in current collections.
- Saving Treasures led to improved relationships between the finder communities and the local museums. The project has transformed relationships with detectorists, so they are now willing to lend artefacts. Longer term, it is possible that important artefacts will be bequeathed to museums because of the project. 55% of acquisitions were made by local museums, and Tredegar and District Museum, Cowbridge and District Museum, Museum of Cardiff and Cyfarthfa Castle Museum and Art Gallery had not acquired Treasure prior to the project.

Capacity was often the main barrier for projects to address, with smaller organisations in particular struggling to dedicate sufficient project management capacity when multiple projects are being delivered at the same time. For example:

- Jane Austen's House found the extension granted by the National Lottery Heritage Fund to alleviate pressure during the wider Bicentenary was very helpful and they learned lessons about the impact of overextending on major grant programmes.
- Autograph ABP also faced capacity challenges in delivering the project at the same time as having to adapt quickly to accommodate both full time programming of Rivington Place and retention of an agency model of delivery, with very little additional resource. To address this, the delivery of In a Different Light was re-phased over a longer time scale than originally planned with agreement from the National Lottery Heritage Fund.
- The Cartoon Museum benefited from a project manager, who at the outset was supposed to spend two days a week on the project. However, due to the ambition and success of the project, the Cartoon Museum found this should have been a full-time role.
- The project team at Sudbury Hall found that the acquisitions process itself was quite time intensive, and significant capacity was needed to manage the project budget.

Saving Treasures found that the project administration demands were significant and beyond what was expected at the outset, and the project ended up bringing extra resources to cope with this. This issue extended to local partner museums.

Some projects found the National Lottery Heritage Fund 10 Year Rule limiting but adapted their approaches accordingly. For example:

- Science Museum Group found that a lot of advances in robotics have come in the last 5 years or so and interesting examples from 10 years ago or longer are few and far between, with many having been scrapped for parts and reused in different projects. It was this element, more than anything else, that proved challenging as the tendency to scrap and reuse robotic objects was an unknown quantity that did not come up in research prior to the project, but Science

Museum Group adapted by sourcing older examples of automata that would complement the exhibition on tour and would also fit into the Museum collection being established.

- Museum of London were buying from established photographers and found that they were able to enquire about older material if necessary or acquire contemporary material outside of the Collecting Cultures project. Therefore, Collecting Cultures was able to influence wider collecting through establishing Museum of London's credibility in relevant networks.
- For the International Slavery Museum, issues around contemporary/modern slavery were also part of the project, which raised potential issues around the 10-year rule for acquisitions. The museum ensured that it maintained good links and relationships with the National Lottery Heritage Fund throughout the project on this aspect.
- The 10-year rule was an issue for the National Football Museum given the widening remit and scope of the museum – especially around ensuring that diversity and women's football are well represented. These aspects are more affected by the 10-year rule given they are more recent developments for the museum.
- Creative Wiltshire wanted to capture the development process of creators, many of whom remain active in Wiltshire. On occasion NLHF's 10-year rule hindered the ability of the project to collect examples of such progression, although the five-year tenure of the project made this largely manageable.

Some projects found that contacts were willing to donate objects, making it difficult on occasion to spend the allocated money. For example, Robots was able to portion out some of the project budget to transport costs of donated goods, which enabled the team to be more open to accepting objects of interest.

By Endurance We Conquer generated renewed interest in Ernest Shackleton and the Imperial Trans-Antarctic Expedition and received many offers of donations. Many of these offers, whilst generous, did not add to the collection, and SPRI staff found the project empowered them to justify why such offers had to be rejected.

Volunteering and public engagement

The primary focus of volunteering during Beyond Documentary was the production of films about the photographers whose work the project had collected. The Museum of London organised a private view of the Beyond Documentary exhibition together with a special screening of the four volunteer-made films on the Sackler Hall screen. This was attended by staff, partners, funders, the volunteers and their families/friends and other contacts.

The volunteer element of the project, and especially the filmmaking, generated a lot of learning for Museum of London in terms of 'letting go', and allowing participants freedom to respond, giving them a platform that is not professionalised. By Endurance We Conquer helped SPRI recruit several new volunteers to help with cataloguing, archiving and supporting the Polar Museum's front of house function. Volunteers learned about the project and benefited from a supported trip to the National Maritime Museum.

Science Museum Group found that the role of volunteers and the object handling collection in the Robots project was extremely important for visitors' engagement in the exhibition. On average the volunteers would interact with 350 people on a daily basis with an approximate total of 70,000 visitors throughout the course of the Robots exhibition, with excellent feedback from visitors. As a result of the success of their work, the project's volunteers were invited to exhibit at the International Robotics Showcase in June 2017.

Projects reported some excellent examples of public engagement as a result of their projects:

- Manchester Art Gallery established 'Costume Collective', a public engagement group designed to get the feel of, and feedback from, the public. Six group sessions were attended by around 20 members, none of whom were fashion specialists, discussing a range of aspects of the project. The group had a keen interest in fashion and the history of fashion.
- Birmingham Museums Trust found that the 'messy collecting' it developed through Collecting Birmingham resulted in valuable partnerships, and whilst it might not always yield a collection, it leads to goodwill and powerful ambassadors. As a trusted partner, Birmingham Museums Trust can now teach community organisations about how to preserve, protect and develop their own collections and how to bid for money to develop them, a relationship that will reap medium to longer term benefits.
- For the People's History Museum (PHM) and the Working Class Movement Library (WCML), there were a range of headline exhibitions as well as smaller displays at both venues which used collections acquired through the project. In addition, a range of exhibitions, events and public programme activities took place throughout the project which engaged people directly with collections and subject matter associated with the project. Key exhibition examples include: 'Represent! Voices 100 Year on' at PHM; 'Disrupt? Peterloo and Protest' at PHM; 'Peterloo: news, fake news and paranoia' at WCML; and the 'Bones of Paine' procession and exhibition delivered by WCML.

Exhibitions and displays

Most projects included project specific exhibitions and displays, as well as using their Collecting Cultures supported acquisitions featuring in main displays and other exhibitions.

- Collecting Birmingham coincided with several exhibitions in Birmingham Art Gallery's main display galleries, some of which featured objects acquired as part of the project, and all of which explored themes of personal identity and community representation.
- The Beyond Documentary exhibition opened on 28th April 2018 in Museum of London's Inspiring London Gallery and the adjacent Show Space at the museum's main London Wall site. Despite including a wide range of the photography collected, it was not possible to show everything (even the Inspiring London Gallery, Museum of London's second temporary exhibition space, did not allow sufficient wall space).

- In A Different Light: New Acquisitions archive display featuring a selection of newly acquired works was exhibited at Rivington Place in late 2017, alongside a series of Think-Tank and Open House archive events.
- Design and display of the Fashion Cities Africa² temporary exhibition at Brighton Museum and Art Gallery (30 April 2016 – 8 January 2017), as well as partnerships with other museums (including an Object Journeys partnership with The British Museum³).
- For the Scottish Maritime Museum (SMM), the Collecting Cultures acquisitions have been a catalyst for major events, loans and temporary exhibitions including the award-winning *Illumination: Harbour Festival of Light*, as well as SMM's first major art exhibition – 'George Wyllie: Paper Boat' and the launch of Lachlan Gouldie's 'Shipyard' exhibition. In addition, the main exhibition of the Collecting Cultures project was 'Maritime Perspectives' which took place from June to October 2018 and featured all of the Collecting Cultures items acquired.
- For the National Football Museum, the main exhibition from the project, entitled *Football is Art*, runs from April 2019 to October 2019, and uses many of the items that have been purchased through Collecting Cultures. The exhibition combines a mix of pre-existing core collection and new acquisitions from Collecting Cultures, and the exhibition showcases what has been acquired through Collecting Cultures.
- The acquisitions acquired by Seven Stories – via purchases and donations – through the Collecting Cultures project have been used in a range of exhibitions. There have been two major exhibitions devoted exclusively to Collecting Cultures acquisitions – Michael Morpurgo – *A Lifetime in Stories* (which will have toured to five other venues across the country by the end of 2019), and *Where Your Wings Were* with David Almond, as well as other exhibitions that have featured Collecting Cultures acquisitions.
- The International Slavery Museum currently has a display, 'Challenging histories: Collecting new artworks', which highlights some of the powerful artworks recently acquired as part of the Collecting Cultures project. This is just one example of the use of the acquired objects by the museum – other exhibitions have also featured objects as spotlights.
- The Fry Art Gallery ran successful symposiums based on the work of their project, and a two - part exhibition 'Saved for the Nation' was produced, highlighting works acquired through this project with full credits being given to NLHF support in the associated catalogues.
- The Museum of Childhood collaborated with the National Caribbean Heritage Museum⁴ in 2018 on a special exhibition in 2018 exploring the significance and history of black dolls in childhoods, both past and present. This exhibition, entitled [Black Dolls: The Power of Representation](#), included Museumand

² <https://brightonmuseums.org.uk/brighton/exhibitions-displays/brighton-museum-past-exhibitions/past-exhibitions-2016/fashion-cities-africa/>

³ <https://objectjourneys.britishmuseum.org/fashioning-africa/>

⁴ Also known as Museumand

bringing a selection of dolls from their collection to display alongside those at the museum, but also a wealth of cultural knowledge and stories. The Exploring Childhoods project added four new items to the Museum of Childhood's collection project in support of this collaboration.

- For ASC at the University of Glasgow, one of the key achievements was the levels of engagement achieved by the project officer through the range of engagement activities carried out. This included exhibitions, workshops, talks, family events, participation in festivals, as well as seminars and interpretative resources to promote engagement with collections, record and share knowledge of the collections and industry, and learn about the Scottish textile industry. Of particular note was the Follow the Threads exhibition that took place at The Lighthouse in Glasgow in early 2019 – which attracted more than 10,000 visitors.
- For the Fusilier Museum, a number of exhibitions at the museum that would have taken place anyway, were boosted and enhanced by the objects acquired through Collecting Cultures, where the use of the new acquisitions *"helped to tell the story better for the exhibitions"*. The objects acquired through Collecting Cultures are now in the permanent collection, and on display as part of the permanent exhibitions at the museum.
- For the Royal Armouries, a key outcome for the project is the permanent Make: Believe display, described as *"A brand new display of arms, armour and ephemera from cult and classic movies and television shows, showcasing the museum's extensive collection of arms and armour from film, television, stage and more."* Of particular note, there has been an increase in footfall, and an increase in sales in the gift shop resulting from the project, and in particular as a result of the Make: Believe display – the venue saw just over 2,500 more visits than the previous year and this is acknowledged as *"showing a significant impact the Make: Believe display and programme has had on the museum"*.

Whether, and how, the projects demonstrate a step change in their collections' development.

Royal Pavilion and Museums Brighton's world cultures collection has benefitted significantly from Fashioning Africa, both in terms of the objects and in making the museum develop deep and meaningful engagement with communities and groups that have been involved.

The Bicentenary Collections project has led to a step change in collections development at Jane Austen's House. It symbolises a return to the original Jane Austen's House museum mission, with the 'Making the Museum' exhibition highlighting the acquisitiveness of early years. This has been re-established by Collecting Cultures, and with it, increased internal and external agreement about the importance of bringing Jane Austen items into the public domain, the need for funding to support this and advocacy of professional skills.

Wolverhampton Art Gallery felt that whilst the project had not fundamentally changed its approach to collecting, it provided valuable learning opportunities, and enabled the Gallery to develop a key element of the collection and develop the skills and capability of its staff and volunteers.

The aim of Beyond Documentary was to lay down foundations for an ongoing contemporary photography collecting strand, a long-term outcome for the Museum of London. However, toward the end of the project, active collecting of contemporary photography outside Beyond Documentary by the museum has increased significantly, totalling 87 photographs by six photographers. There are still items that Museum of London would like to acquire, and the museum is also always interested in asking photographers, 'what else have you got?'. Museum of London is now a credible actor in these networks.

Science Museum Group found that whilst the Robots collection was inextricably linked with the exhibition, as the project progressed it became clear that the collection was useful and of interest to other galleries and exhibitions across the group. Whilst this realisation came late on in the project, Science Museum Group are able to use this learning in the future to ensure that acquisitions are made known across the institution and so potential objects that could do a 'double duty' are given the best chance at recognition from the start of concept through to final exhibition.

Collecting Birmingham was very challenging for Birmingham Museums Trust in its first few years and took time to find its focus, requiring a much bigger input from the Trust than had been originally envisaged. A range of benefits have emerged as a result, including, improved community and school perceptions of Birmingham Museums Trust; a review of the whole Birmingham Museums Trust collecting policy, and the importance of consulting ahead of acquiring; and wider understanding across Birmingham Museums Trust of working with communities (*"hopefully it will always be like this"*).

Over the course of the project, the National Football Museum acquired a range of objects – a total of 48 at the time of the case study, 44 of which were purchases and the remaining 4 were gifts/donations. In terms of the wider role of the project for the National Football Museum, the museum has found it to be of great benefit to have a specialist on the team on the art side of the collection. The museum has also been pleased that it has been able to return loan items and objects once such items or objects have become part of the core collection through Collecting Cultures acquisitions. Collecting Cultures has been very helpful to the museum in filling gaps in the core collection.

The Scottish Maritime Museum now describe what they have as a 'tremendous collection of art' due to the Collecting Cultures project – 88 works of art were acquired – and they have the ambition to continue to develop this to further enhance the collection and address some gaps that remain. The museum regard what they have now as a 'collection of important national art' but it not yet a 'national art collection' and they plan to achieve this going forward.

There has certainly been a step change in collections at Seven Stories due to Collecting Cultures – the sheer volume of acquisitions is a clear step change in general, and especially around poetry. Whilst some of the items, collections, or archives that have been gifted may have arisen as opportunities for Seven Stories without Collecting Cultures, the museum would have struggled to act on such opportunities without the availability of Collecting Cultures funding. The acquisitions from, and the experience of, the Collecting Cultures project will also have an influence on Seven Stories collection development strategy going forward.

In addition to the step change in collection development, there has also been a step change in collection diversification as a result of Collecting Cultures. For example, the acquisition of the Beverley Naidoo collection.

For the International Slavery Museum, Collecting Cultures provided a rare opportunity to develop the collection – both in terms of its size and its breadth. The museum has been able to acquire a '*marvellous array of interesting objects*' – in total, more than 40 objects, and for three-quarters of the objects that have been acquired, they would not have been in the market for them at all without Collecting Cultures.

The Fry Art Gallery found that their project gave trustees a renewed confidence. The Gallery is now looking to extend the Gallery and storage space available, and this has been driven in part by the success of the project in terms of raising the profile of the Fry, and also in part by the additional volume of material that needs to be stored and displayed ("there is a focus on 'getting it right' behind the scenes").

Collecting Cultures led to increased confidence in taking lessons and learning from the project to inform SPRI's collection policy, both in terms of an overall framework and highlighting areas that needed to be focused on in the future.

The Exploring Childhoods project allowed the Museum to be more adventurous, deepen relationships with community partners and seek out new audiences through expanded collections and interpretation strategies focusing on diverse aspects of the 20th and early 21st century childhoods. Exploring Childhoods has significantly influenced the next project at Sudbury, 'Children's Country House'.

As a result of Comic Creators, the expanded comic collection at The Cartoon Museum has increased the ways that it engages with the public. A comic art community has emerged around the Museum, with groups hosting events such as 'ladies do comics', a range of evening talks, and the recruitment of new volunteers.

Learning activities

Learning programmes tended to follow acquisitions for many projects ("*it's difficult to get started until stuff has been bought*").

- Beyond Documentary included a significant volunteer and educational element, focussing particularly on engaging young people aged 16-24 through a connected project entitled 'Roots to Reckoning', which engaged participants with the museum's collection and actively involved them in the interpretation of the objects acquired. 16 to 24 is a target audience for Museum of London and a gateway for reaching other under-represented audiences. The secondary schools element of the project aimed to highlight the changes to photography in London between 1970 and the early 21st century, recording maximum feedback scores from all the teachers and support staff who were involved.
- The education and learning elements of Fashioning Africa led to participants expressing themselves and learning about identity and dual heritage, with good teacher feedback.

Some projects reported that the learning, outreach and digital deliverables for their projects would have benefited from better definition (*"these things felt like they were a bit 'box-ticky'"*)

3. ENHANCING THE PROFESSIONAL KNOWLEDGE AND SKILLS OF STAFF

This section sets out the ways in which Collecting Cultures projects have enhanced the professional knowledge and skills of staff working in the museums, libraries and archives.

In terms of the degree to which projects have improved the grantee's professional knowledge and skills, projects reported a range of experiences:

- Museum of London found the markets they were operating in to be quite volatile, so in the initial stages it was important to understand this market and build on existing networks. Over time, the project was able to navigate the market with greater confidence.
- Jane Austen's House reported that a range of trainees, staff and volunteers have gained new skills because of the project. All benefitted from enhanced subject knowledge, knowledge of acquisition processes, Cohort Meetings (Jane Austen's House took a number of staff members to cohort meetings), MODES training and collections management skills.
- From Catwalk to High Street highlighted issues concerning mounting costumes. To address this, Manchester Art Gallery identified a need for a 'tool kit' to help display costumes and accessories in an innovative and practical way, which can be used for all display projects.
- Through its Robots project, Science Museum Group have learnt how to better tailor the public programming offer for future exhibitions. For example, its 'lates' offer proved a great testing ground for several new activity formats and areas of the Museum not previously used (for example 'soapbox debates' and the new lecture theatre in Wonderlab. Since the Robots Lates events, both these activities and areas have been adapted and used for other thematic late openings.
- There was suspicion of the Artists of the Black Movement in Britain 1979-1984 from some artists, who for many years had been ignored by institutions and funding bodies. Some did not want to be labelled as 'Black Artists', with others also being very focussed on current works, and reluctant to revisit the past. Most knew each other well, and Wolverhampton Art Gallery found they had to build positive relationships with the artists over a long period of time.
- For staff at the Scottish Maritime Museum, at the individual level, staff have developed fundraising experience, general experience in collections development, enhanced existing and developed new networks and – one of the key aspects has been – the development of negotiation skills. In addition, staff report that they have developed empathy through seeing the process of collecting from the artists' perspectives.
- At the National Football Museum, skills development and training has included the project manager giving a talk at a sporting heritage network conference in Liverpool – which enhanced their experience around this, as well as completing the 'Navigating the Art Market' course run by the Art Fund/Sothebys.

Negotiating skills have improved for the project manager through the project – and on occasion they have been able to use the justification of spending the National Lottery Heritage Fund monies as a reason to try and push the price down on particular items – asking for a ‘museum discount’ with some successes.

- At Seven Stories, there was notable skills and knowledge development for the staff involved in the project especially around acquisitions and purchasing. Through the project, staff at Seven Stories developed links with an expert in manuscript valuation and a specialist and dealer in rare books and working with such experts helped to increase the confidence of staff, increase their willingness and ability to negotiate and make them more likely to stand their ground in such negotiations.
- Staff at the Museum of Childhood now have an enhanced knowledge of the collection, and there is a much clearer understanding of what and how to collect, and a tacit acknowledgement that strategic collecting requires patience. As a result of the project, the Museum increasingly makes strategic collecting decisions autonomously. The National Trust has employed a plastics specialist because of the project, following training provided by Museum Development East Midlands.
- A legacy for the Royal Armouries has been around enabling visitors to be involved in handling the collection – and Collecting Cultures helped with this for the arms and armouries collection. The ability to provide activities where visitors can handle the collection is a key benefit – and there was notable training with the team on this, and it provided a good learning opportunity.

SPRI has developed new and existing external relationships with auction houses and collectors, and with the descendants of those involved in the Shackleton expedition. The institute found that as Shackleton-related items passed through generations, owners felt a diminishing sense of attachment as any familial connection with the expedition was diluted. This meant owners were more likely to view items as assets rather than treasured possessions.

Birmingham Museums Trust found that having a collecting structure limited by theme and geography helped the team to focus discussions whilst still having an ability to be flexible, essential given the timescale and staff capacity for the project. Over the duration of the project, the Collecting Birmingham team learnt when to stop one thematic approach and begin another.

Comic Creators made a significant contribution to the development of knowledge and skills in both staff and volunteers at The Cartoon Museum. The experience gained from Comic Creators gave staff at the museum the confidence to fully plan and curate the 2000AD ‘Future Shock’ exhibition at the Museum in 2017 and develop the permanent comic art displays in the new museum.

Autograph ABP had to navigate the issue of rights and licensing, with artists often being reluctant to sign away the rights to their work, typically asking, “*what is going to happen with my images?*”. The National Lottery Heritage Fund recommended the offer of Creative Commons licensing as an alternative to licensing under copyright, but Autograph ABP found this problematic in terms of

achieving satisfactory protection in the specific context of photography, and indeed, Autograph ABP staff consistently found that contributing photographers refused to agree to Creative Commons licensing.

To address this, specific licences to allow reproduction for such purposes as education or publication by Autograph ABP were arranged, widening the potential scope of the collection, without infringing on the future rights of the contributors.

Several projects found that building relationships with dealers, collectors and artists was more effective and efficient than bidding at auction. For example:

- Creative Wiltshire soon found it was better to deal directly with dealers and artists, as there was less risk, and negotiations often benefited from dialogue and investment of time in developing relationships.
- SPRI found that acquiring at auctions was problematic, and a time-consuming, stressful, and demoralising process for staff. Typically items were sold at high prices with the project losing out (“a lot of work for not a lot of gain”). The project found much greater success through developing networks with collectors and dealers.

Ethics and community relationships

The origins of the Fashioning Africa project came from work with the BME Heritage Network (a collective of local arts and heritage enthusiasts that was established in 2015) looking at perceptions of Royal Pavilion and Museums Brighton, and how its world cultures collections had been created. This Designated Collection, which runs to the 1950s, is in essence a colonial collection.

The Fashioning Africa Collection Panel was very keen to make decisions about collecting and influence the senior leadership team. Fashioning Africa relied significantly on the Collecting Panel - it set the agenda for the project and supported collecting, bridge building, and relationships.

Birmingham Museums Trust discovered the importance of using the voices of the creator or depositor or the community to tell the stories associated with the objects where possible. Sometimes participants might be the story, or they might help shape the story – for example the community participants who selected the Vanley Burke images that seemed most relevant.

Saving Treasure; Telling Stories had greater engagement and reach in Wales than had been anticipated and worked with communities and places (“The project formed the right partnerships with the right people”). The three main project partners worked well together, and the relationships built between Amgueddfa Cymru and local museums across Wales are expected to become a long-term legacy of the project.

Wolverhampton Art Gallery’s approach to community engagement was very fluid, with no restrictions in place as to who should come and how regularly they should attend sessions.

Beyond Documentary led to Museum of London learning about how best to engage with photographers, who could sometimes be hard to pin down (something similar

projects have also reported). Additionally, London photographers are much more aware of the interest in, and value of their work, in recent years (as a result of a number of projects, including those supported by the current and previous Collecting Cultures programme).

Relationship building with artists was a key challenge for In a Different Light, working with a generation of artists who have a history of poor treatment, recurrent experience of institutional racism and who enjoyed little professional development opportunity themselves. Securing works for the archive took a great deal of delicate communication effort to build confidence in the motives and the professional intentions of ABP.

To address this, artists contracts were as simply designed as possible, and senior staff capacity at Autograph ABP was used to build confidence with artists, enabling purchases to be made from artists and estates otherwise unobtainable. In some cases, Autograph ABP engaged a third-party negotiator in some acquisitions as a necessary and cost-effective way to proceed with some of the identified photographers, with whom relationships were already established. Having gone through this process Autograph ABP is well regarded in terms of its standing with artists, and confident that it would now be able to successfully manage this process in house.

In a similar vein, Fashioning Africa consultees felt that the cultural value of items, particularly in terms of precious personal items that required 'trust dialogue', were often not reflected in the price, and key members of the Collecting Panel were able to reassure and broker relationships. Fashioning Africa was collecting in new markets, and therefore felt a moral responsibility to set reasonable prices.

Wolverhampton Art Gallery found that there was suspicion of the project from some artists, who for many years they had been ignored by institutions and funding bodies. Some did not want to be labelled as 'Black Artists', with others also being very focussed on current works, and reluctant to revisit the past. Most knew each other well, and Wolverhampton Art Gallery found it they had to build positive relationships with the artists over a long period of time.

Other projects that were acquiring unique items or new markets reported that valuation of potential acquisitions could often be difficult. Manchester Art Gallery often used independent curatorial valuations, which it was able to get quickly to enable it to respond to opportunities.

There is a community of active collectors interested in Shackleton and the Imperial Trans-Antarctic Expedition, and as a publicly funded institution SPRI felt a duty to follow ethical guidelines, and not to disclose which materials it was interested in acquiring. Whilst this approach helped avoid artificially inflating prices, it could become problematic if the SPRI unwittingly found itself bidding against (i) another public institution such as the National Maritime Museum, or (ii) private collectors who might ultimately intend to donate or lend the item to the SPRI.

The current process for the Collecting Cultures projects is that for material over £5,000, organisations must obtain valuations. One project suggested that this could usefully be raised to £10,000 for any future programmes to help mitigate issues such as items selling for slightly over the valuation but still being a relatively

low budget item, and the timeframe for getting a valuation resulting in not being able to bid for an item.

The impact of the project/programme on the grantee organisation, project partners and/or stakeholders and the wider community.

The Robots project proved an ideal test bed for digitisation techniques used in a wider roll out of the Science Museum's Collections Online. The digital department were able to confirm best practice and equipment for capturing heritage objects and establishing a catalogue framework. These techniques will be used as the remainder of the collections are digitised and catalogued.

Collecting Birmingham enabled Birmingham Museums to forge new relationships including links with the city's Somalian Muslim community. Through this new connection the Trust became the first UK museum to purchase of a Xeedho, the ceremonial vessel a Somalian bride receives and unwraps as part of her wedding rites.

Artists of the Black Movement in Britain 1979-1984 was very significant terms of the credibility of Wolverhampton Art Gallery, putting it in a very strong position for future funding bids, with the project securing Arts Council England national portfolio status to further develop the Black Artists work.

Royal Pavilion and Museums Brighton regard the Collecting Panel approach as good practice in all future collections' projects and is currently being used on a project focussing on LGBTQ+ collecting and engagement ([Queer Looks](#)).

Beyond Documentary has influenced Museum of London in terms of its future approach to acquiring, and its collections approach more generally as it plans for relocation. This includes discussions about what collections will be used for, how they speak to audiences and engage people. It has focussed thinking around more proactively and strategically developing Museum of London's overall collection, and has significantly improved networks in London with photographers, dealers and collectors of documentary photography.

For the Royal Armouries, Collecting Cultures helped to strengthen the links and networks with those working in the industry. Contact with various individuals and organisations (e.g. Larry Zanoff from Independent Studio Services) did exist prior to the project, but Collecting Cultures helped to strengthen these links, and gave the opportunity for the staff involved to get to know people in the industry better through the project.

For the International Slavery Museum, an example of the mainstreaming impacts of Collecting Cultures is the better engagement between registrars and the collections team and other parts of the organisation. This is helped by the fact that Collecting Cultures was discussed regularly at museum team meetings and as such, the project was a trigger for cross-departmental working across the organisation.

4. STRATEGIC COLLECTING PROGRAMMES SUPPORTING RESILIENCE

This section examines how the projects have used strategic collecting programmes to support the funded museums, libraries and archives to increase resilience as an organisation.

How strategic collecting through Collecting Cultures has impacted on overall collections development.

As a result of Collecting Cultures, Jane Austen's House have developed a collections policy with a clear 'cut-off date', which is not to collect anything connected with people Jane Austen herself did not know and rationalise objects it owns that do not comply. As a result, the Trust can now communicate clearly that they not able to accept everything related to the Austen family, nor wish to pursue such purchases, nor able to hold such material on loan indefinitely.

Birmingham Museums Trust felt that the 'step change' in community involvement has led to a more complex approach to collecting and collections, but the Trust felt it is more meaningful, more confident, and results in collections that people are more likely to want to see.

Museum of London is beginning work on 'Curating London'⁵, a four-year contemporary collecting programme, curating the city today with funding from Arts Council England, engaging young people in collecting. Beyond Documentary has had a significant influence on this project through bringing in people from non-curatorial backgrounds to curate and experiment.

From Catwalk to High Street provided Manchester Art Gallery with unique opportunities to raise their profile as a collecting organisation, and influence collecting in their sector. The project gave Manchester Art Gallery the ability to train up a small, dedicated volunteer team that will continue to support the collection. These volunteers did a lot of hours on the project, predominantly specialist sewers with very highly developed skills.

A key organisational impact of Jane Austen's House's project has been the understanding by trustees that appropriate staff was vital for the museum and has put in place a revised team structure to ensure the organisation is resilient and sustainable.

Jane Austen's House also reported a significant shift in its relationship with the Jane Austen Society as a result of Collecting Cultures. The House has a large number of loans from both the Jane Austen Society and also from members of the Austen family, and as a result of the project now operate on a presumption to acquire not borrow, and to work to convert loans to the trust to gifts where possible. As a result, the Society recently agreed to donate their loans to the trust, and now direct all collections enquiries to Jane Austen's House.

Wolverhampton Art Gallery felt that whilst the project had not fundamentally changed its approach to collecting, it provided valuable learning opportunities, and enabled the Gallery to develop a key element of the collection and develop the

⁵ <https://www.museumoflondon.org.uk/about-us/curating-london>

skills and capability of its staff and volunteers. The project was completed in a much shorter timescale than the other projects in the programme, providing the project with focus, and making it straightforward to manage.

In retrospect, SPRI felt *By Endurance We Conquer* would have benefited from engaging much earlier with owners of items on long term loan to the Institute, as there were notable successes in converting loans to donations towards the end of the project, including one occasion when the Institute's request to buy an item prompted the offer of a donation.

The scope of the collection developed through *Comic Creators* caused a challenge for storage and accessioning for reasons of staff and storage capacity at the Cartoon Museum. This has created a post-project legacy of an accessioning project, which the Museum aims to deliver through creating new volunteering opportunities.

A key early task for the Archives and Special Collections Team at the University of Glasgow was the development of an Acquisitions Framework, which was used to help inform the implementation of the project. This was a notable achievement for the project given the influence the framework has had on the strategic thinking of ASC in terms of collections management. The Acquisitions Framework is regarded as a good impact from the project and provides a lasting legacy.

The Royal Armouries report that arms and armoury in popular culture is now a more established part of the collections policy at the Royal Armouries – and *Collecting Cultures* helped with this.

Use of Collecting Cultures to lever in additional funding from elsewhere (such as PRISM or the Purchase Grant Fund).

Several projects have successfully levered additional funding from a number of sources to support their *Collecting Cultures* project:

- Manchester Art Gallery secured a grant of £24,000 from the Purchase Grant Fund towards the acquisition of a Schiaparelli garment.
- Jane Austen's House's Bicentenary Project levered additional resources from Friends of the National Libraries, the Jane Austen Society's North American Branch and over £10,000 in individual giving to support the purchase of the Cassandra Austen letter, as well as further donations and discounts from dealers (which Jane Austen's House felt was effectively match funding), and pledges of funding from Leche Trust, Friends of the National Libraries and the Purchase Grant Fund for another purchase that was unsuccessful.
- The Robots project was able to secure funding from the Wolfson Foundation for engagement work with people with autism, and from the Royal Academy of Engineering to support logistics and programming elements connected to the project. The Robots exhibition marked Science Museum Group's first foray into the world of Kickstarter, successfully crowdfunding the (re)creation of Eric, the UK's first ever robot.
- Museum of London successfully applied to the Art Fund and the ACE/V&A Purchase Grant Fund for acquisition funds. As a result, the Purchase Grant

Fund were able to provide a total of £15,000, and the Art Fund £20,000 towards acquisitions. In addition, Museum of London also contributed over £20,000.

- Funding from James Green Charitable Trust, combined with an additional allocation from Arts Council England's award to grant 'Major Partner Museum' status to the Royal Pavilion and Museums for 2015-2018, enabled the temporary exhibition 'Fashion Cities Africa' (Brighton Museum and Art Gallery, 30 April 2016 – 8 January 2017) to be developed and displayed as one of the most important public-facing elements of the Fashioning Africa project.
- Wolverhampton Art Gallery secured additional funds from Wolverhampton City Council (£31,785); Friends of Wolverhampton Art Gallery (£26,500); Art Fund (£14,080); and the V&A Purchase Grant Fund (£11,250).
- Alongside the funding from Collecting Cultures, Scottish Maritime Museum were able to maximise the potential of the project through additional support from the National Fund for Acquisitions and Art Fund for specific items. This enabled SMM to acquire an even greater range of works. Of particular note is the John Bellany painting '*The Boat Builders*', described as the '*coup de grace*' of the project by SMM. It clearly shows that SMM is serious about art. Whilst Collecting Cultures monies did not directly fund this acquisition, the acquisition resulted from the work and activities of the Collecting Cultures project and exemplifies the wider impacts of the SMMArt project for SMM.
- For the National Football Museum, Collecting Cultures clearly helped to lever in additional funding – the museum did not expect to get support from the V&A Purchase Grant Fund (this was the first time the National Football Museum had received funding from this fund) and having Collecting Cultures also helped lever in Art Fund support.
- For the 'Voting for Change' project, PHM/WCML report that for some of the key acquisitions, Collecting Cultures funding was used alongside other sources (e.g. V&A Purchase Grant Fund, as well as crowdfunding) exemplifying how Collecting Cultures helped to lever in or support additional funding from other sources. PHM had received no funding via the V&A Purchase Fund for 20 years, but due to the Collecting Cultures project received three awards during the lifetime of the project. A legacy impact of this is that the skills to bid successfully to the V&A Purchase Fund are now embedded within PHM.
- There were a range of other funding and resources levered in to Seven Stories due to Collecting Cultures – including a Knowledge Transfer Partnership with Newcastle University; other grants to support acquisitions (e.g. Friends of the National Libraries); Cultural Gifts Scheme; and private donations. In addition, support for exhibitions, such as from publishers for the Morpurgo exhibition, have also been received.
- Fry Art Gallery successfully levered additional funding from a range of sources, including from the Purchase Grant Fund and the Art Fund, in addition to its own fundraising. This, and discounts from dealers, meant that Collecting Cultures money could be used for further acquisitions.

- Creative Wiltshire supported and encouraged organisations explore opportunities for match funding. For example, Chippenham Museum were able to purchase and display 'Studio Interior with Nude' by William Brooker with combined funds from The Art Fund, Arts Council England/Victoria and Albert Museum Purchase Grant Fund and Creative Wiltshire.

Saving Treasures leveraged additional financial contributions totalling over £35,000 for specific items from a range of sources, including The Headley Trust, the V&A Purchase Grant Fund, Amgueddfa Cymru and Wrexham Museum Friends. In addition, local museums found additional funds to contribute towards Community Archaeology Projects.

By Endurance We Conquer overlapped with the centenary anniversary of Shackleton's Imperial Trans-Antarctic Expedition. This served to raise the public profile of Shackleton, increase the number of items available for purchase, and raised awareness of the SPRI. However, it also had a significant impact on raising the prices of items for sale in a market where there was significant competition for very sought-after items.

One other project identified a rise in the market value limiting the number of works that could be purchased as a project risk, and actively mitigated this through applications to sources of match funding.

A number of projects are continuing to develop fundraising opportunities for collecting following the end of their Collecting Cultures project.

One example of increased organisational resilience through Collecting Cultures via increased visitor numbers is for partnership project between the People's History Museum and the Working Class Movement Library where both organisations report growth in both the size and range of audiences over the timescale of the project. PHM's audiences grew from just over 100,000 to more than 123,000 between 2014 and 2019 (a 20% increase), with specific developments including a growth in international visitors (17% to 20%) and participation by young people increasing from 17,000 to 37,000. Whilst WCML doesn't have the same detail around visitor numbers available, drop-in visitor numbers increased by 80% between 2014 and 2019, and attendance at events grew by 17% over the same period.

Some projects highlighted the significant 'in kind' resources that contributed to the success of projects. For example:

- Birmingham Museums Trust highlighted a range of staff and volunteer resources that supported Collecting Birmingham, stressing that without this additional support (underestimated by Birmingham Museums Trust at the outset of the project) the project would have struggled. A resulting key legacy of the project is the embedded knowledge and learning at Birmingham Museums Trust as a result of the resources needed to support the project, particularly in terms of engaging and working with a range of communities and groups.
- Managing the volume of works acquired for Autograph ABP through In a Different Light led to resource pressures, with increases in the amount and cost of archiving materials, the amount of time spent on drafting agreements and

identifying contextual materials, and costs of filming and editing, collating bibliographical and caption information. Additional core resources were applied internally to help deliver the programme including design of the digital platform and delivery of dissemination.

- The addition of the Michael Morpurgo archive to the Seven Stories collection was a gift (not a purchased acquisition using Collecting Cultures funding). However, Collecting Cultures gave Seven Stories the chance to act on this opportunity much more quickly, and it also helped to make it happen even though it did not directly fund the acquisition. Collecting Cultures was also able to provide wider support in terms of exhibitions etc.

Influencing governing structures in supporting and resourcing future collections development

Projects have demonstrated the benefits of dynamic collecting and have been able to raise their own profile and that of collecting in their sectors. For example:

- The Jane Austen Bicentenary Collections Project helped Jane Austen's House to demonstrate the need for significant trustee and staff renewal, with there being recognition at board level that collections management is a senior role. As a result the post of Collections & Interpretation Manager, a senior permanent position, was filled in late 2018.
- Being in the market for acquisitions has put the International Slavery Museum back 'in the mixer' in terms of this area of activity, and the profile of the museum has been reaffirmed in the international market due to the Collecting Cultures project.
- SMMart at the Scottish Maritime Museum helped raise of the profile of the museum, as well as provide a wealth of publicity and PR to promote the museum and the art collection in particular. The museum, the exhibition and the new items in the collection received publicity in various media national outlets in Scotland, and they would have struggled to get this for previous exhibitions. In addition, the networks developed by the project manager helped to increase the reputation of the museum. Furthermore, the project has enabled SMM to develop the collection to the extent that it is now better recognised as more of a national collection and the reputation of SMM has been enhanced as a result.
- Seven Stories identify clear legacies of the project – for example, there is now an increased potential for other individuals to donate their collection to Seven Stories due to high-profile examples such as the Michael Morpurgo archive – which helped enhance the profile and reputation of Seven Stories – and it is expected that this will continue into the future. The reputation of Seven Stories is key in terms of getting more offers of archives/collections from such individuals. Clare and Michael Morpurgo are now patrons of Seven Stories – and this is due to the Collecting Cultures project and the support role it played.
- Collecting Birmingham has had a significant governance impact, influencing Birmingham Museums Trust's overall collecting approach, with a key partner involved in supporting Birmingham Museums Trust's work at the Central Mosque and helping to save the Koh-I-Noor restaurant booth, Mohammed Ali

of Soul City Arts, being subsequently been elected as a Birmingham Museums Trust trustee.

Collecting Birmingham, Fashioning Africa, Creative Wiltshire and the PHM/WCML successfully used panel-based approaches to inform their approach to collecting:

- The Expert Panel model developed through Collecting Birmingham is one that Birmingham Museums Trust will use in future collecting and collections development, both in seeking advice to define areas or items to collect or to understand more deeply objects which Birmingham Museums Trust have already acquired. This approach was reinforced by cross-disciplinary working across Birmingham Museums Trust and partnership working combining in-house specialisms with partners' local and specialist knowledge, allowing all parties to be able to play to their strengths and maximise impact.
- As part of Fashioning Africa, Royal Pavilion and Museums Brighton established a Collecting Panel of specialist advisers, as well as the recruitment of a community facilitator, volunteers and research students, to work alongside Royal Pavilion and Museums Brighton staff in support of the project's audience outreach, diversity and engagement objectives. This was vital in providing opportunities for knowledge exchange and skills-sharing within and between the museum, BAME communities within the locality, and with other stakeholders with interests in museums, heritage, fashion and the arts. The Collecting Panel had different cultural and professional backgrounds, and this created a positive dynamic and energy, and the panel and project staff at the museum were able to combine skills and knowledge, share learning and CPD opportunities.
- The leadership at Royal Pavilion and Museums Brighton shared the ethos of the Fashioning Africa project, but there has not yet been the opportunity to further embed learning across the organisation due to capacity issues as it moves toward trust status.
- Creative Wiltshire formed an acquisitions panel which became an effective way of ensuring all elements of the heritage sector, (libraries, museums and archives), were represented and had a say in shaping the project.
- PHM and WCML reflect that being a partnership project provided both challenges and opportunities. The formation of an acquisitions panel (which included representatives from both partners) was a good approach that worked well, providing a stronger connection for acquisitions and a better understanding of what was available to be acquired. Both organisations note that they expect the partnership from the Collecting Cultures project to continue on some level into the future – including the ongoing involvement of WCML in the acquisitions panel.

The Museum of Childhood found it was too ambitious in its aim of developing a Community Panel to influence purchasing and had to adapt. Sudbury Hall, in terms of location, was not close to the project's target communities, and during its lifetime, there was a reduction in support to community-based groups, which meant they had limited capacity to be able to engage with the project. The project found that initiatives such as the Community Panel would have benefited from

being in place earlier in the project's lifetime, but it took time for the project team to find its feet and grow in confidence.

As a result of In a Different Light, and also through the wider changes to its remit and management of Rivington Place, Autograph ABP is focussing on consolidation in its next phase of development. Lessons have been learned from the challenges faced in managing both the archive and full time building based contemporary programming activities, and ABP is addressing this through a Resilient Heritage Project (focussing on care, conservation and asset development in the archive, in order to consolidate the progress made to date) and new business plan to 2022.

5. PROGRAMME LEARNING

This section sets out some programme level findings from the case studies.

Collecting Cultures projects have been much better engaged in the regular cohort meetings organised by National Lottery Heritage Fund in the current Collecting Cultures programme in comparison to the final two years of the predecessor programme.

"Finding out about what other projects are doing is tremendous CPD"

Projects found that the meetings were well organised, with good inputs and learning points, and many found them helpful in sustaining activity over a long period of time (*"always important to have something to say for the 5 minute update slots"*).

Projects found the cohort meetings to be a good opportunity to network and broker opportunities – for example the National Lottery Heritage Fund brokered the relationship between Autograph ABP and the Staying Power project from the previous programme, following which a panel of community members came to Autograph ABP. This led to a showing of the Idris Elba film 'Yardie' with an exhibition on images from In a Different Light.

The Scottish Maritime Museum recognised the importance and benefit of the Collecting Cultures cohort meetings. In particular, the cohort helped the museum in its acquisition of Bellany's 'The Boat Builders' painting as it was another project (Fry Art Gallery) that provided the original contact at a Collecting Cultures cohort meeting.

Projects reported that they found the National Lottery Heritage Fund's evaluation expectations clear from the outset, and also valued meeting a range of different Heritage Fund staff and visiting interesting places.

Whilst most projects found the cohort meetings useful, a small minority did make mention of the early starts/travel time for meetings and the relevance of some of the information sharing between projects given the diversity of the collections/projects. There was a suggestion that a meeting of 'peer projects' rather than all projects may have been more effective in forming support groups.

In addition, some consultees mentioned that the guidance on project funds being used to support engagement in cohort meetings could have been clearer.

The National Lottery Heritage Fund could consider building on the experiences of Collecting Cultures projects working in contemporary British photography (Autograph ABP, Museum of London, Wolverhampton Art Gallery and Staying Power from the previous programme) to produce guidelines for organisations in terms of managing expectations of undiscovered artists, and the appropriateness of creative commons licencing in such projects.

Rules around no overseas flights could be problematic for those projects operating in international markets, and options for overcoming this could often cost more, had higher risk and led to projects being less confident.

A number of projects reported that whilst grant officer relationships were satisfactory, knowledge was typically limited. Most of these projects feel that Collecting Cultures would have been better managed consistently as a national programme.

Projects reported that the National Lottery Heritage Fund were really supportive to projects, allowing them to spend Collecting Cultures resources on elements such as logistics and conservation, especially when items were donated. More generally, some projects felt that it would have been helpful to transfer resources from collecting to support collections related activities. For example, Manchester Art Gallery had to undertake considerable work on acquisitions to conserve them and make them ready for display and exhibition.

The ability to easily move resources from acquisition to conservation was important to some projects, and this could vary across the projects depending on conversations with locality Heritage Fund offices. For example, Manchester Art Gallery found that it was not possible to buy a couture jacket for the resources that it took to restore and conserve one.

Some projects highlighted that they had not allocated sufficient resources towards conservation. For example, SPRI found through the project that taking a 'whole cost' approach to acquisition, including conservation costs, was an important learning point for the future.

There was a considerable range in terms of the size of projects. Consultees described various processes as to how they pitched the size of their project at the application stage. Some knew precisely what to bid for based on well-established market values (SPRI), whereas others were either more experimental (such as Collecting Birmingham) or dependent on what items emerged during the lifetime of the project (such as Saving Treasures; Telling Stories).

Projects also calibrated their bids with a competitive element, making assumptions about how many other organisations might be bidding in their region ("*it is a balancing act between scoping what is needed, and making the most competitive or compelling case*"). Some consultees now feel that they should have bid for larger projects.

Capacity to deliver Collecting Cultures was a recurring theme in the case studies. Some felt that a dedicated project officer resource was vital to the success of their project, although supervision and maintaining strategic focus was important, and some projects floundered where dedicated staff were not actively managed.

There was variance in terms of the engagement projects had with regional NLHF offices. Some regional offices were very engaged (such as the East Midlands with the Exploring Childhoods project at the National Trust Museum of Childhood having a very hands-on relationship), whereas others reported little engagement or interest.

One issue raised by projects was the delivery timescale (typically around five-years). Whilst this was praised by a number of projects due to the time it provided for delivery – especially in terms of the lead-in time it can take to identify and acquire objects – some projects reflected on the issues this can create. Most

notably, that a five-year timescale increases the likelihood of staff turnover/personnel change with resultant delays in project delivery.

On balance, the consensus of the projects was that having a project over this timescale was a positive aspect – albeit with the potential to increase the likelihood of staff changes with resultant delays in project delivery.

One issue or lesson from archive-specific projects was about the perceived contrasting position between archives and museums in relation to collection development projects like Collecting Cultures. There is a feeling that archive services do not have the same history or experience of developing their collections through purchases/acquisitions and that simply having a dedicated budget does not make it easy to acquire – it is more about the timing and availability of relevant material. However, these differences in experience were also highlighted in a positive way - in particular, with the reflection that there are many lessons that archives can learn from museums in terms of community engagement and audience engagement.

6. ANNEX 1: CONSULTEES

Consultee	Organisation
Adam Gwilt	Amgueddfa Cymru
Sioned Hughes	Amgueddfa Cymru
Owain Rhys	Amgueddfa Cymru
Renee Mussai	Autograph ABP
Cherelle Sappleton	Autograph ABP
Rebecca Bridgeman	Collecting Birmingham
Janine Eason	Collecting Birmingham
Gordon Cummings	Fry Art Gallery
Colonel Brian Gorski	Fusilier Museum
Sarah Stevenson	Fusilier Museum
Richard Benjamin	International Slavery Museum, National Museums Liverpool
Stef Bradley	International Slavery Museum, National Museums Liverpool
Rachel Dison	International Slavery Museum, National Museums Liverpool
Mary Guyatt	Jane Austen's House
Sophie Reynolds	Jane Austen's House
Jo Beggs	Manchester Art Gallery
Miles Lambert	Manchester Art Gallery
Francis Marshall	Museum of London
Wiebke Cullen	National Football Museum
Emma Hadley	National Football Museum
William Blair	National Museums Northern Ireland
Hannah Crowdy	National Museums Northern Ireland
Thomas Bamforth	National Trust, Museum of Childhoods
Ruth Bellamy	National Trust, Museum of Childhoods
Jodie Lees	National Trust, Museum of Childhoods
Edith Parkinson	National Trust, Museum of Childhoods
Sam Jenkins	People's History Museum
Jenny Mabbott	People's History Museum
Laura Bell	Royal Armouries
Claire Cox	Royal Armouries
Jonathan Ferguson	Royal Armouries
Mark Jackson	Royal Armouries
Robert C Woosnam-Savage	Royal Armouries
Helen Mears	Royal Pavilion Museums Brighton and Hove
Rachel Heminway-Hurst	Royal Pavilion Museums Brighton and Hove
Edith Ojo	Royal Pavilion Museums Brighton and Hove Collecting Panel Member
Zoe Hawken	Science Museum Group
Fiona Greer	Scottish Maritime Museum
David Mann	Scottish Maritime Museum
Amanda Beckham	Seven Stories

Evaluation of the Collecting Cultures Programme

Consultee	Organisation
Sarah Lawrance	Seven Stories
Steve Marchant	The Cartoon Museum
Peter Lund	University of Cambridge, Scott Polar Research Institute
Naomi Boneham	University of Cambridge, Scott Polar Research Institute
Charlotte Connelly	University of Cambridge, Scott Polar Research Institute
Kiara King	University of Glasgow
Clare Paterson	University of Glasgow
Julie Davis	Wiltshire & Swindon History Centre
Terry Bracher	Wiltshire & Swindon History Centre
Joy Bloomfield	Wiltshire & Swindon History Centre
Carol Thompson	Wolverhampton Art Gallery
Margueritte Nugent	Wolverhampton Art Gallery
Lynette Cawthra	Working Class Movement Library