Museum Exhibition Design: Histories and Futures (1–11 Sep 20)

Online: www.musex-design.org (University of Brighton, UK), Sep 1–11, 2020
Deadline: Jun 22, 2020

Claire Wintle

Museum Exhibition Design: Histories and Futures
An Online Conference
University of Brighton, Centre for Design HIstory
www.musex-design.org

Conference Call for Papers

Keynote Speakers:
Prof Suzanne Macleod, University of Leicester, UK
Prof Andrea Witcomb, Deakin University, Australia

The exhibition and its power over objects and visitors is a commonly analysed aspect of museum history. Museum Studies is underpinned by seminal texts attending to the poetics and politics of museum display. Yet the activities, agendas, experiences and impact of those historically involved in museum exhibition design have rarely been considered. While contemporary museum exhibition design is a thriving field of study, Suzanne MacLeod, Charlotte Klonk and Sam Alberti have all noted that the agents of past display practices have often remained hidden. Apart from the occasional 'starchitect', art museum curator, or author of a "how to" volume, exhibition makers – from early curators and technicians, to more recent design, interpretation and other exhibition professionals – have tended to remain 'behind the scenes' of the museum. The collaborative effort of creating an exhibition is often neglected.

The event will now be a nearly carbon-neutral conference (NCNC), held entirely online. Running for two weeks (Tues Sept 1 to Friday Sept 11 2020), the conference has no physical venue, and its participants do not, on this occasion, meet in person. In this time of uncertainty and confinement, Museum Exhibition Design: Histories and Futures will bring international scholars together as an asynchronous online community. Panellists record a 20-minute video or PPT recording, which is submitted to the organisers in the weeks leading up to the launch. Over the two weeks of the live event, the conference website will host keynotes, panel presentations and Q&As; web pages will include reading lists, links to global research centres and archives, and a noticeboard for worldwide research projects. Museum Exhibition Design will be a landmark event in Critical Museum Studies, and provide a permanent online resource for twenty-first century scholarship.

Hosted by the Centre for Design History at the University of Brighton, this conference will virtually

welcome scholars from all disciplines and career stages to consider museum exhibition design practice and exhibition making from a range of perspectives. It is our intention to bring together those studying temporary and permanent display practices in museums, from the eighteenth century to the recent past, with reflective commentary from exhibition makers practising today. Our purpose is to reframe understandings of museums and their genealogy, as well as to enter into a dialogue with museums and exhibition makers as they plan for the future.

We invite contributions on the following possible themes:

• Changing responsibilities for delivering exhibition design in museums, including the roles of in-house designers, project managers, interpretation officers, technicians, mount makers and curators, as well as external design practitioners, architects and artists
• The professionalisation of exhibition design in museums
• Changing technologies in exhibition design
• The material culture of museum exhibition design, including presentation materials and models, technical drawings, prototypes and mock ups, together with setworks, graphics and display equipment
• Histories of emotion and affect in museum exhibition design
• Expanded definitions of the 'designer', from technicians to community and activist groups and 'celebrity' designers
• Histories of collaborative working, with audiences, professionals and communities
• Interactions between the commercial and public sectors, and in-house and external design teams
• Communities and networks of museum design practice
• Exhibition design manuals
• Methodologies for studying histories of exhibition design practice.

Conference convenors: Dr Claire Wintle, Kate Guy and Hajra Williams (University of Brighton, UK).
Conference presentations can be in any language (but would need to be professionally subtitled in English); Q&As will be in English. Please send a 300-word abstract and a short biography to CentreforDesignHistory@brighton.ac.uk by Monday June 22 2020. For informal enquiries, please contact c.wintle@brighton.ac.uk
Abstract Deadline: Monday June 22 2020
Speakers will be notified: Monday June 26 2020
Accepted Papers to be submitted by: August 21 2020

Reference:
CFP: Museum Exhibition Design: Histories and Futures (1-11 Sep 20). In: ArtHist.net, May 16, 2020 (accessed Nov 21, 2026), <https://arthist.net/archive/23112>.