

CALL FOR PAPERS

Museum collections on prescription – Political rhetoric, civic responsibility or engagement opportunity?

A Subject Specialist Networks Conference jointly organised by European Paintings Pre-1900, British Art Network and Understanding British Portraits, (London, 4-5 June 2020)

Deadline for submissions: 16 December 2019

Recent years have seen increasing momentum and a growing evidence base for programmes linking art and culture with health and wellbeing. In 2017 the All-Party Parliamentary Group (APPG) on Arts, Health and Wellbeing presented its report *Creative Health: The Arts for Health and Wellbeing*, advocating for arts and cultural organisations to be supported in making health and wellbeing outcomes integral to their work. The APPG is actively engaged with the Culture, Health & Wellbeing Alliance, which has forged strong relationships with museums and galleries across the UK. The drive to harness and research the impact of the arts on the health and wellbeing of local communities is also evident in NHS England's 2019 launch of its long-term plan, which includes a commitment to social prescription, while Arts Council England and De Montfort University have embarked on the *Talent25* project, which aims to track the effects of culture on children in Leicester over the coming 25 years. Most recently, the report *Durham Commission on Creativity and Education* (11 October 2019) strongly endorses the importance of participation in cultural and creative activities for health, wellbeing, social interaction, resilience and productivity. Museums are expanding their offer, with regional museums and galleries at the forefront of innovative programming. Examples, to name but a few, include the Holburne Museum's *Pathways to Wellbeing*, Bristol Museum's *Art Shed: Museums as Medicine* and Manchester Art Gallery's *Therapeutic Thursday*.

This conference will provide an opportunity to hear about a wide range of collections-focussed art, health and wellbeing programmes from local, regional and national museums, galleries, heritage organisations and academic partners. It will facilitate learning about the research and evidence that underpins much of this work and discuss issues and challenges arising from it.

Proposals are invited for papers illustrating case studies and partnerships, discussing challenges, raising questions and proposing future models. Interdisciplinary case studies, voices from participants and artists, and relevant examples exploring engagement with collections are particularly welcome.

Possible themes and topics:

- Critical reflections on museum initiatives that have focused on the health and wellbeing of audiences through engagement with collections.
- Challenges around evaluation and measurement of impact.
- Whether the 'art and health' approach deepens the understanding of collections and supports the diversification of audiences.
- Implications for collections specialists when approaching object interpretation and research.
- Whether models such as commissioning and social prescribing are sustainable for the museum sector.
- The role of museums and galleries as 'community assets'.
- Potential for new interdisciplinary partnerships.
- What expertise may be needed within museums and galleries for safe, effective health and wellbeing programmes.

Please send proposals (up to 300 words) for either 10- or 20-minute papers (please specify which in your submission), and include a short biographical note (up to 100 words), all in Word format. Submissions should

be sent by **09:00 on Monday 16 December 2019** to Jessica Jukes, British Art Network Coordinator, Jessica.Jukes@tate.org.uk. All potential speakers will be notified in February 2020.