



BRIDGES & BOUNDARIES

Cultural Heritage Conference 2.0



10-11 SEPTEMBER 2026
THE HUMANITIES BUILDING
UNIVERSITY OF NOTTINGHAM

ABSTRACTS & PROGRAMME

Welcome!

to the

Cultural Heritage Conference

Bridges & Boundaries:

Interdisciplinary Perspectives on Heritage & Cultral Practice

Hello and welcome to CHC 2.0!

We are excited to bring you this year's programme, which promises a rich mix of interdisciplinary fields of study, research, and practice. Alongside traditional paper presentations, this year's programme includes performances and interactive demonstrations. With so much to choose from, it may be a difficult decision, but we hope you will fill your card with a variety of topics and formats to make the most of your CHC experience.

The CHC team are delighted to welcome postgraduate students, academic staff, independent researchers, and professionals from the Heritage and GLAM sectors, alongside many others.

We hope you enjoy the programme, discover something new, and leave feeling inspired and more connected to the cultural heritage sector and beyond.

Thank you for being part of CHC 2.0. Enjoy!

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Those staying for the conference
dinner will find The Orchard
Hotel & Restaurant just a short
walk away from the
Humanities Building.



All are welcome to join for a
pre-dinner drink at 18:00!

Dining at BRAMLEYS

NIBBLES £6

SMOKED ALMONDS (VG) (N) 174kcal

MIXED OLIVES (VG) 70kcal

TO START

**ROASTED RED PEPPER & CHILLI
VELOUTÉ SOUP** £9

Sweetcorn relish & crispy basil (VG) 453kcal

DERBYSHIRE LAMB TARTARE £12

Sea salt & rosemary crackers, olives & harissa
emulsion (G) 569kcal

STONE BASS CEVICHE £13

Passionfruit pearls, burnt orange & radish 359kcal

**BALSAMIC & MAPLE MARINATED
HERITAGE CARROTS** £10

Quail eggs, carrot tops, miso & lemon (V) (G) 554kcal
Vegan option available

PAN FRIED SCALLOPS £16

Fennel cream, roast chorizo & chickpea
salsa (D) 659kcal

FAVOURITES

**4oz ORCHARD TRENT VALLEY
VENISON BURGER** £20

Smoked cheese, bacon, pickled red onion
& burger sauce, served with handcut chips (G) (D) 782kcal

INDIA PALE ALE COD & CHIPS £21

Minted crushed peas, warm tartare sauce &
fresh lemon (D) 820kcal

NEAPOLITAN SOURDOUGH PIZZA £17

12" stone-baked pizza, tomato & basil (G) (V) (D) 943kcal
Vegan, Dairy & Gluten Free options available upon
request

**TRENT VALLEY VENISON & MUSTARD
SAUSAGE WITH SMOKED GARLIC MASH** £16

Roasted Roscoff onions, maple syrup & red
wine sauce (G) 643kcal

**BRAMLEYS SMOKED GARLIC CAESAR
SALAD** £13

Smoked garlic emulsion, parmesan & bread
croutons (V) (G) (D) 534kcal

Vegan option available upon request

Fancy a little more on your salad?

Add Chicken +£6 250kcal Add Salmon +£7 320kcal

MAINS

FLANK STEAK | BEEF FILLET £24

Slow cooked beef croquette, smoked garlic
pomme purée, baby carrots, shallots & pea
purée (G) (D) 956/933kcal £36

DERBYSHIRE GLAZED LAMB SHOULDER £24

Broccoli, baby courgettes, pea purée, lamb
fat terrine, verjus & lemon (D) 976kcal

PAN-FRIED MARKET FISH OF THE DAY £24

Mussels, apple, wild garlic, celeriac & a
lemon butter sauce (D) 400-600kcal

**GRILLED CURRIED CAULIFLOWER
STEAK** £16

Roasted tomato & cumin, black garlic, pine nut
granola, mint, lemon & oil (VG) (N) 567kcal

BEEF WELLINGTON | MADE TO SHARE £60

Caramelised onion purée & Tenderstem broccoli
(G) (D) 1680kcal

SIDES

TRIPLE COOKED CHIPS £7

Orchard smoked garlic mayo & chives (V) 465kcal

MIXED GREENS £7

Romesco sauce (VG) 323kcal

CORNISH BAKED NEW POTATOES £7

Smoked salt & butter emulsion (V) (D) 354kcal
Dairy free option available

ORCHARD SALAD £7

Mixed leaves, pickled cucumber, cherry
tomatoes & herb dressing (VG) 175kcal

Full allergen list



VG - Vegan | V - Vegetarian | D - Contains Dairy |
G - Contains Gluten | N - Contains Nuts

A discretionary 12.5% service charge has been added to your bill.
Please let us know if you'd like it removed.

Bridges & Boundaries:

Interdisciplinary Perspectives on Heritage & Cultural Practice

THIS YEAR FOR CHC 2.0 WE ASKED YOU TO CONSIDER:

a) *Policy development :*

What are the opportunities for researchers to work with policymakers and influence cultural policy developments?

b) *Community engagement :*

How do we ensure that research into cultural heritage management engages effectively with local communities?

c) *Cultural representation and appropriation :*

How can we ensure that cultural heritage management is inclusive and representative of diverse cultures?

d) *Decolonisation of methodology and practice :*

How can approaches to cultural heritage management promote the inclusion of indigenous knowledge and practices?

e) *Partnership and collaboration :*

How can researchers build partnerships and collaborate with industry to protect and preserve cultural heritage?

f) *Digital heritage :*

How is the cultural heritage landscape being affected by developments in digital technology?

g) *Research methodologies :*

What methodologies can be applied to cultural heritage conservation and management?

The conference brings together a wide range of perspectives on cultural heritage. To help navigate this diversity, presentations have been grouped into four overarching themes that connect related ideas and approaches.

ARCHIVE & MEMORY

Archives • Collections • Interpretation • Material Culture

LIVING HERITAGE

Performance • Intangibility • Embodiment • Transmission

HERITAGE & SOCIETY

Communities • Place • Governance • Conservation

HERITAGE FUTURES

Technology • Innovation • Digital Heritage • New Methodologies

Meet the Organisers!

After a successful first run which brought together a wide variety of interdisciplinary fields of researchers and professionals, we are happy to see the Cultural Heritage Conference 2.0 brought to life again by this year's organisers:

Katharine Ward...

Kat is a second-year Midlands4Cities-funded PhD researcher at the University of Birmingham. Her doctoral work investigates British Early Neolithic human remains through advanced imaging and osteological methods including micro-CT analysis. Alongside her research, Kat is actively engaged in the academic and heritage communities, serving as the Co-General Editor of Rosetta Journal, and participating on the organising teams for the Centre for Material Cultures and Materialities 'Sources' Workshop (January 2026), CAHA Colloquium (May 2026), and is a proud co-founder and organiser of the Cultural Heritage Conference for the second year in a row.

Prior to commencing her doctoral studies, Kat gained professional experience as a commercial field archaeologist and as a heritage consultant. In these roles, she contributed to a wide variety of development-led and research projects including the heritage management of significant heritage sites such as Crystal Palace Park.

Contact: kxs718@student.bham.ac.uk

Michelle Buckley...

Michelle is an American dancer based in London, undertaking an AHRC Midlands4Cities-funded Collaborative Doctoral Award with Coventry University and the Imperial Society of Teachers of Dancing (ISTD). Her research explores dance pedagogy, empire, identity, and gender through the creation and reactivation of the ISTD archive. She is also a member of the 2026 TV PhD Cohort, exploring new ways to communicate research through television and digital media.

Michelle has performed internationally in ballet, contemporary, and musical theatre, working with artists including Helen Pickett and Craig Revel Horwood. She has also choreographed for opera and theatre, and has performed and collaborated with New York-based choreographer Julia K. Gleich since 2007.

Alongside this work, Michelle is also Head of Communications at Insider London, assisting in the development of educational programmes and tours of London's cultural, creative, and commercial landscape.

Contact: buckleym3@uni.coventry.ac.uk



Rene Bonifacio...

Rene is a fourth-year PhD researcher in Linguistics (Modern Languages) at the University of Nottingham. He advocates for Indigenous minority language maintenance and conservation. Hence, his project focuses on how language planning and policy influence Manobo people's repertoires, practices, attitudes, and ideologies in the multilingual ecology of Lumintao Barangay in south-central Philippines.

Contact: Rene.Bonifacio@nottingham.ac.uk



Rob Nield...

Rob Nield is a PhD researcher at the University of Birmingham, working on British Romantic Poetry in English, Scots, and Scottish Gaelic. His thesis, *Glories Overthrown*, examines nostalgia in Romantic poetry across social, cultural, and linguistic boundaries. He is in receipt of AHRC funding via the Midlands4Cities consortium.

Contact: rcn482@student.bham.ac.uk



Roseanna Smith...

Roseanna is undertaking a collaborative PhD project with National Trust - Ironbridge Museums in Shropshire, funded by Midlands4Cities. Her research investigates the Coalbrookdale Collection of illustrated Victorian trade catalogues.

Her research focuses on the relationship between art and industry, highlighting the role of designers, engravers, ironworkers, and printers who contributed to the production of the trade catalogues, and demonstrating how printed materials were used to promote ironware across the globe at a time when 'marketing' was a developing field.

Roseanna has professional experience in the heritage and higher education sectors spanning object conservation, curating, marketing, and events. She is also an Executive Board member for the Centre for Printing History and Culture, a research group shared by Birmingham City University and the University of Birmingham, and organises the Centre's events and annual conference.

Contact: Roseanna.Smith@mail.bcu.ac.uk

The Cultural Heritage Conference was originally founded in 2025 by M4C-funded doctoral researchers:

Rene Bonifacio • Katharine Ward • Michelle Buckley • Kathryn Birch

CHC 2.0														Day 1 Morning Session										Thursday 10 September													
Time		Room		Room B53 is available as a Quiet Space														Room A27 is available as a Changing Room																			
09:30-10:00		F O Y E R		Registration																																	
10:00-10:15		F O Y E R		Welcome from Organisers																																	
Chair: Roseanna Smith																																					
10:15-11:15		A03		Keynote:		Sarah Kay National Trust Paper										<i>Building Bridges and working beyond our Boundaries: A personal National Trust journey towards community engagement, partnership and collaboration</i>																					
11:15-11:45		F O Y E R		Coffee Break																																	
Chair: Nigel Ward												Chair: Dan Webber												Chair: Lucas Yufeng Wu													
11:45-12:10		A03										11:45-12:10		A01		Kellie Everton University of Derby Postgraduate Student Paper				<i>Authorising the Count: Florence Stoker, Dora May Patrick and the women who shaped Dracula</i>				11:45-12:10		A22		Dr. Deborah Williams University of Malta Department of Dance Studies Academic Staff (HE) Paper				<i>On the Move: Dance Stories – Memory and Mapping Lives in Motion</i>				Archive & Memory	
12:15-12:40				12:15-12:40		Rachel Macfarlane University of Warwick & University of Suffolk Postgraduate Student Paper				<i>Cultural Appropriation or Cultural Metamorphosis? The Great Yarmouth Winter Gardens and the Making of British Seaside Heritage</i>						12:15-12:40																					
12:45-13:10				12:45-13:10		David (Dewi) Evans Queen Mary University of London/ Tours of the UK Postgraduate Student/ Tour Operator Workshop				<i>Autotopography: Bridging Lived and Living Experiences to Heritage Sites</i>						12:45-13:10		Debbie Whelan Durban Uni. of Technology & Archaic Consulting Pty Heritage sector Paper				<i>Forgotten soldiers: continued dis-remembrance of the Zulu fallen at Isandlwana</i>															
13:15-14:15		F O Y E R		Lunch & Interactive Display Presentations																												11					

CHC 2.0		Day 1 Afternoon Session						Thursday 10 September																
Chair: Michelle Buckley																								
14:15-15:15		A03		Keynote: Dr Marie-Louise Crawley C-DaRE, Coventry University Presentation/Dance				The Isadora Project: Reinscribing Dance History																
15:15-15:45		FOYER		Coffee Break																				
Chair: Dr Lucie Sykes					Chair: Larissa Terranova					Chair: Belén Trigo														
15:45-16:10		A03				15:45-16:10		Bori Oluwole-Ojo Birmingham City University Postgraduate Student Paper		What Heritage Controversies Reveal About Decision Making		15:45-16:10		Eustacia Hughes Goldsmiths College, University of London Postgraduate Student Paper		Michael Clark, Choreomusicality, and the “Material Gap”		Living Heritage						
16:15-16:40				Muslihah Mujtaba University of Birmingham Postgraduate Student Interactive Demonstration		Experiencing Zapin: Southeast Asia’s Intangible Malay Cultural Heritage		16:15-16:40		A01		Ho-Chung Tam University of Birmingham Postgraduate Student Paper		Bridging Earth Heritage, Participatory Cultural Practice and Wellbeing: A Community-Based Approach to Sustainable Development		16:15-16:40			A02					
16:45-17:10								16:45-17:10		A01		Dr. Xunnan Li & Mengjiao Wang University of Leeds Academic Staff (HE) & Postgraduate Student Paper		Redefining Chinese Intangible Cultural Heritage Hakka Qilin Dance in the UK through Intercultural Co-Production		16:45-17:10			A02		Dr. Enza de Francisci University of Glasgow Academic Staff (HE) Paper		Passion Day: A Project Review of Translation and Performance in Sicily	
17:15-17:40				Deborah Ward Royal Conservatoire of Scotland Postgraduate Student & Choreographer Performance		The Solar Wheel: How a Folk Ballet can deepen connections with traditions and cultural heritage.		17:15-17:40						17:15-17:40		Marius-Alexandru Teodorescu Învață de mic NGO Independent Researcher Paper			The Notebook’s Silence, the Interview’s Voice: Archiving Intangible Directorial Heritage					
17:45-18:00		FOYER		Closing Remarks into Networking & Drinks Reception																				
19:00		Bramleys (The Orchard Hotel)				Conference Dinner (Registration Needed)								13										

13:15-14:15	FOYER	Lunch & Interactive Display Presentations	15
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Chair: Michelle Buckley

14:15-15:15	A03 Keynote:	Julia Sallabank SOAS University of London Paper	<i>Cultural and Heritage Continuity through Language Revitalisation</i>
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15:15-15:45	FOYER	Coffee Break
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Chair: Deborah Ward

Chair: Jennifer Young

Chair: Xunna Li

15:45-16:10	A03	Larissa Terranova CSA Circolo Amerindiano Independent Researcher <i>Interactive Demonstration</i>	<i>What is Missing Matters: Heritage Lens, Epistemic Responsibility, and the Boundaries of AI in Cultural Heritage Research</i>	15:45-16:10	A01	Dr. Rowan Gatfield & Dr. Raymund Konigk Lincoln School of Design & Architecture Academic Staff (HE) <i>Paper</i>	<i>From Fragment to Artefact: Heritage MAning as a De-sign Method for Cultural Production</i>	15:45-16:10	A22	Lucas Yufeng Wu University of Exeter Postgraduate Student <i>Paper</i>	<i>Making Tradition Visible Reimagining the Safeguarding of traditional Chinese opera through New Dragon Gate Inn (2023)</i>
16:15-16:40				16:15-16:40		Katie Green Made by Katie Green Dance artist w/specialism responding to heritage <i>Paper</i>	<i>Gathering Place 360: making archaeology accessible through dance and creative technology</i>	16:15-16:40			
16:45-17:10		Dr. Lucie Sykes Independent Artist-Researcher <i>Interactive Demonstration</i>	<i>Motion Capture as a Site of Cultural Transmission: Refraing Embodied Slavic Heritage Through Digital Improvisation</i>	16:45-17:10				16:45-17:10		Anita Greenhill University of Manchester Academic Staff (HE) <i>Paper</i>	<i>The Woven Code: Ethical AI, Social Reproduction and the Safeguarding of Intangible Cultural Heritage</i>
17:15-17:40				17:15-17:40		Nigel Ward University of the Creative Arts Academic Staff (HE) <i>Paper</i>	<i>From Barter to Place: Reimagining Reciprocal Cultural Exchange as a Methodology for Place-Based Creative Practice</i>	17:15-17:40		Dan Webber Derby Museums GLAM Sector <i>Paper</i>	<i>From Dracula to Lara Croft: The Transferable exhibition at Derby Museums</i>
Heritage Futures											

Heritage Futures

17:45-18:00	F O Y E R	Closing Remarks & Thank You!
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End of the Cultural Heritage Conference 2.0 for 2026!

Poster Presentations		
Blessing Fatoyinbo	University of Ibaden Postgraduate Student	<i>Towards a Contemporary Communication of the Distant Past in Metal Art Practice</i>
Arwa Almalki	Lancaster University Postgraduate Student	<i>War or Journey? Cultural Resonance in COVID-19 Vaccination Campaigns in Saudi Arabia and the United Kingdom</i>
Lucas Pereira	Universidade Federal de Pelotas Postgraduate Student	<i>Beyond Restoration: Scientific Characterization and the Recovery of Cultural Heritage after the January 8 Attacks (Brazil)</i>
These will be available to view during coffee & lunch breaks on both days		

Photography student, Eulan Peng, will be capturing moments throughout the conference.

Be sure to give a follow!
@chronocrafttr

KEYNOTE: Sarah Kay

National Trust
Cultural Heritage Curator
BA (Hons), AMA



Sarah Kay is a Cultural Heritage Curator with the National Trust, with more than 25 years of experience in heritage conservation, collections, and public engagement. Following studies in Languages and History of Art, and a postgraduate diploma in Fine and Decorative Arts with Christie's, she spent 11 years working with Christie's in Germany and in international advertising in France before joining the National Trust.

Over the past 26 years, Sarah has worked across volunteering, research, curatorial, and cultural heritage roles, both freelance and within the organisation. Her expertise spans historic collections, interiors, gardens, and landscapes, with a particular focus on researching and interpreting heritage to engage diverse audiences and communities.

At Attingham Park (2006–16), Sarah pioneered a Conservation-in-Action approach that brought conservation practice into the public eye and led to presentations at international conservation conferences, including ICOM, ICON, AIC, AICCM, and the Swedish National Heritage Board.

She has played a leading curatorial role in strategic projects and significant acquisitions across the National Trust's Midlands portfolio, including Attingham Park, Croome Court, Shugborough, Kedleston Hall, and now Ironbridge Gorge, the UNESCO World Heritage Site.

In her current role as Regional Cultural Heritage Curator (Specialist Delivery Partner), Sarah works collaboratively across disciplines to advise and support properties on inclusive histories, evolving heritage significance, the interpretation of under-represented stories, public engagement, and the application of conservation principles. Her work seeks to ensure that heritage remains relevant, accessible, and meaningful to contemporary and future audiences.

Building Bridges and working beyond our Boundaries: A personal National Trust journey towards community engagement, partnership and collaboration

Drawing upon more than 25 years' experience of working in the curatorial field for the National Trust, Sarah Kay, Cultural Heritage Curator, will outline a personal journey against the backdrop of the organisation's shift towards greater community engagement, partnership and collaboration. For the UK's largest heritage and conservation charity, she will describe, through insights into a series of curatorial projects, how organisational change has taken time, is complex, is still challenging and draws criticism. However, this culture shift is more important and urgent than ever if heritage and museums are to remain meaningful, dynamic and relevant. Now entering a new 10-year strategy and having just taken on the huge World Heritage Site of the Ironbridge Gorge, the National Trust's aim is to be audience rather than asset-led and play its part with the rest of the heritage sector in being thoughtful and rigorous in how it reflects changing times, changing attitudes, and changing demographics.

Contact: sarah.kay@nationaltrust.org.uk

KEYNOTE: Marie- Louise Crawley

Coventry University
Assistant Professor



Dr Marie-Louise is a choreographer, artist-scholar and Assistant Professor at the Centre for Dance Research (C-DaRE), Coventry University (UK). Her research interests include dance, museums, and critical heritage, as well as areas of intersection between Classics and Dance Studies, such as ancient dance and the performance of epic. Her PhD (2018) investigated dance in the archaeological museum, and she has since worked on several large-scale European research projects focussed on participatory approaches to cultural heritage. Recent projects include “Kinaesthetic Heritage: Bodies, Memory, Contested Histories” (British Council, 2025, PL) and she is currently working on Dance Map (Horizon Europe, 2025–2027), investigating 20th and 21st century European dance heritage, and The Isadora Project, a new performance work about how memory and history dance through time and space.

Educated at the University of Oxford and vocationally trained at the Ecole Marceau in Paris, Marie-Louise began her professional performance career with Ariane Mnouchkine’s Théâtre du Soleil (2003–2009). She has worked in the UK as an independent choreographer and dance artist with companies as diverse as Birmingham Opera Company, Marc Brew, Gary Clarke, and Ballet Cymru, and choreographic work has included pieces for a Tate / ARTIST ROOMS exhibit at mac Birmingham, and for the Ashmolean Museum, Oxford as well as theatre work. Marie-Louise is also an Artist and Research Associate of the Archive of Performances of Greek and Roman Drama, University of Oxford.

Marie-Louise has published widely in Dance Research Journal, Performance Research Journal and International Journal of Performing Arts and Digital Media among others. She co-edited Art and Dance in Dialogue: Body Space Object (Palgrave, 2020) and her new book, Radical Archaeology: Dancing in the Museum, is forthcoming with Routledge. She is a Co-Editor for the Journal of Dance and Somatic Practices and a Series Editor for Bloomsbury’s Dance in Dialogue book series.

The Isadora Project: Reinscribing Dance History

I am in the studio and I am learning the choreography of Isadora Duncan’s opening to Act II scene 2 of Gluck’s Orfeo ed Euridice, known as ‘The Dance of the Blessed Spirits’.

I have known the myth of Orpheus and Eurydice since I was very little, when it was, oddly perhaps, one of my favourite stories. I remember a Channel 4 TV adaptation of the myth that I watched again and again until the videotape wore out. I was maybe nine or ten years old.

I have known about Isadora since I was about the same age, perhaps a little older. My local dance school used to put us in for dance competitions and there was always a classical Greek dance category. I liked this category because it meant I got to dance barefoot. I also really liked Mercury skips; I mean, really liked them. One time, I did a little solo called ‘The Sea’ – I was particularly proud of the long strips of blue and green chiffon that my Mum had assiduously stitched onto my leotard so that when I danced, I felt like a strip of seaweed floating in the ocean. I remember I came third with that solo, and the adjudicator said it had reminded her of Duncan. In the car home afterwards, I clutched my bronze medal and asked my Mum about who this Duncan was. Isadora, she said, Isadora Duncan.

This work in progress is part of a choreographic practice research project, The Isadora Project, which reimagines Isadora Duncan’s choreography of Act II scene 2 of Gluck’s Orfeo ed Euridice (1903). The practice research builds on my work around dance as a form of ‘radical historiography’ (Crawley 2020) and ‘kinaesthetic heritage’ (Crawley 2025) which can open new ways of thinking about underrepresented female histories through the body. The work blends choreographic practice together with theoretical underpinnings around dance as feminist historiography (Crawley 2020, Cooper Albright 2010, Thomas 2003) and dance’s relationship to kinaesthetic memory (Schiller 2022), along with more personal accounts of various encounters with the figure of Isadora Duncan – as a young child learning classical Greek dance and ‘incarnating’ Isadora at a dance competition, as an apprentice performer in Paris chancing upon Isadora’s autobiography in a second-hand bookshop, and as a dancer in her early forties reimagining this short piece of Duncan’s repertoire. The work aims to ask questions about how my body carries the histories and memories of these dances, past and present. How do Duncan’s repertoire, history and memories become re-inscribed differently on my body in the performing present? How might I dismember history (dance history, Duncan’s, my own) in order to remember, and reimagine, it differently?

This work is generously supported by a Society for Theatre Research Practitioner Grant 2026.

Contact: ad1803@coventry.ac.uk

KEYNOTE: Barney Sloane

Historic England
Nationalist Specialist Services Director



Barney Sloane is currently National Specialist Services Director at Historic England, leading a department of archaeologists, heritage scientists and historic buildings conservation experts. In addition, he leads three interlinked strategic programmes aimed at enhancing the public value of archaeological investigation (primarily through the planning process) in England: 21st Century Challenges for Archaeology (21CAP), Heritage Information Access Simplified (HIAS), and the Future for Archaeological Archives Programme (FAAP). Each of these aims to build better bridges between archaeologists, museums, local authority curators, academia and of course the public.

Barney started his career as a professional archaeologist with the Museum of London in 1986, leaving to undertake an AHRC-funded research project at the University of Reading on medieval burials in 1999. He joined (then) English Heritage as archaeology grants manager before becoming head of strategic planning and management, and then (after Historic England was formed) Research Director. He is a board member and past president of the European Archaeological Council, and a Fellow of the Society of Antiquaries of London.

Strategic Collaboration in Archaeological Heritage Management in England

It has been 35 years since the implementation of Planning Policy Guidance Note 16 which transferred the responsibility for funding archaeological excavations in advance of construction to developers. In that time an archaeological profession has developed which is now routinely integrated with the construction process, applies advanced investigative techniques and sophisticated analytical methods, engages the local public and creates high quality digital and hard-copy outputs. Some £300m per year is spend on archaeology in the UK and some 5-6,000 people are employed. But managing the impacts of this remarkable success is not easy and a number of specific issues need addressing. Historic England, as the Government's ALB adviser on England's historic environment, have a role to play in ensuring that strategic issues are addressed so that public benefit can be maximised from the archaeological process.

This presentation will very briefly summarise three strategic programmes which HE leads relating to: the improvement of the professional archaeological practice (21st Century Challenges for Archaeology); the better management of heritage inventories (Heritage Information Access Simplified); and the resolution of the archaeological archives crisis (Future for Archaeological Archives Programme). In the spirit of building bridges, these are all cross-sector collaborative programmes with shared ambitions for positive change.

Contact: barney.sloane@historicengland.org.uk

KEYNOTE: Julia Sallabank

SOAS University of London
Professor of Language Policy
& Revitalisation



Julia Sallabank is Professor of Language Policy and Revitalisation at SOAS, University of London, where she has worked since 2007. She gained her PhD from Lancaster University in 2006 and previously worked as a Commissioning Editor for Oxford University Press. Her main research interests are endangered language documentation and revitalisation; sociolinguistics/sociology of language; language policy and planning, especially in multi-lingual contexts. Her recent research focuses on links between language revitalisation and wellbeing, working with communities and partners in Europe and Thailand. From 2023 to 2026 she was Principal Investigator at SOAS for a major Horizon Europe project, Revitalising Languages and Safeguarding Cultural Diversity (RISE UP, riseupproject.eu), working with eight partners from six European countries, which analysed language policies and language ideologies, and practices in language revitalisation, as well as organising interactive workshops and cultural events. She is a member of the Guernsey Language Commission and is developing materials for the endangered language Guernesiais (Guernsey, Channel Islands) with Guernsey teacher and researcher Yan Marquis.

In 2021, she published *Revitalizing Endangered Languages: A Practical Guide* (Cambridge University Press), a fully open-access book co-edited with Professor Justyna Olko of Warsaw University, Poland. This is the first guide to language revitalisation for practitioners. She is also the author of *Attitudes to Endangered Languages: Identities and Policies* (Cambridge University Press, 2013). With Peter Austin, she has co-edited *Endangered Languages: Beliefs and Ideologies in Documentation and Revitalization* (British Academy/Oxford University Press, 2014) and the *Cambridge Handbook of Endangered Languages* (Cambridge University Press, 2011). Her most recent papers are overviews of linguistic diversity (2024), language revitalisation (2026), and family language policy (in press).

Cultural and Heritage Continuity through Language Revitalisation

Cultural and linguistic diversity are under increased threat, along with diversity of all kinds; one symptom of this is the widespread shift from smaller and minoritised languages to dominant, majority ones. Not only does this represent a significant loss of linguistic heritage, but it also has considerable detrimental impact on the populations concerned – through the causes as well as the effects. Links between language and culture have long been recognised, and are underlined by current initiatives by UNESCO (e.g. the International Decade for Indigenous Languages) and the European Union (e.g. funding to support European cultural heritage and linguistic diversity). As the ERC call notes, ‘Cultural heritage, the arts and the cultural and creative industries have a crucial role to play for resilient and socially sustainable societies, shaping and strengthening the values that hold us together and give meaning and a sense of belonging.’ In this talk I describe some efforts that are being made to reclaim, maintain and revitalise linguistic heritage around the world, and attempt to identify trends and models in approaches to similar problems. I examine what kinds of activities are promoted, and how we might measure their outcomes or even success. I am particularly interested in stated and unstated goals and how they relate to outcomes – both intended and unintended.

Contact: js72@soas.ac.uk

Meet our Speakers

War or Journey? Cultural Resonance in COVID-19 Vaccination Campaigns in Saudi Arabia and the United Kingdom

Arwa Almalki
Lancaster University • Postgraduate Student
Poster

The effectiveness of public health campaigns depends not only on the accuracy of the information they communicate but also on how that information is framed and the extent to which those frames resonate with the cultural contexts of their intended audiences. Drawing on Van Gorp's (2007) cultural constructionist approach to frame analysis, this study investigates the multimodal framing of COVID-19 vaccination campaigns in Saudi Arabia and the United Kingdom. The analysis examines a corpus of sixteen government-produced vaccine posters (eight from each country) to explore how verbal and visual framing devices interact with reasoning devices to construct culturally resonant frames that encourage public engagement with recommended health behaviours.

The findings reveal clear cross-cultural differences in framing strategies. The journey frame emerges as the dominant frame in the Saudi corpus, whereas the war frame is consistently employed in the UK posters. In the British context, the war frame reflects the widespread use of military rhetoric by political leaders during the pandemic and draws upon the enduring national narrative of the "Blitz spirit," invoking resilience, collective sacrifice, and perseverance. Its persuasive force is further reinforced by its familiarity within British historical consciousness. In contrast, the Saudi journey frame aligns with longstanding cultural narratives surrounding safar (the journey) and desert travel, conceptualising the pandemic as a challenging yet temporary stage that can be overcome through collective effort. This framing also resonates with broader patterns in Saudi public discourse, where life is frequently represented as a journey toward progress and achievement. Furthermore, as Saudi Arabia is characterised by relatively high uncertainty avoidance (Hofstede, 2011), the journey frame provides a clear behavioural roadmap, with the visual metaphor of the hopscotch game depicting vaccination as a sequence of achievable steps that reduces ambiguity and reinforces confidence in the recommended health behaviour.

The study demonstrates that the persuasive potential of multimodal public health communication depends not only on the selection of particular frames but also on their cultural resonance. By integrating multimodal frame analysis with a cultural constructionist perspective, it contributes to framing research by demonstrating how culturally embedded narratives, values, and symbols shape the design and effectiveness of public health communication across different sociocultural contexts.

More about Arwa...

I am currently pursuing a PhD at Lancaster University, where my academic journey is focused on exploring the intricate dynamics of language and communication. My research delves into pandemic discourse, multimodal metaphor, and argumentation strategies, examining how these elements shape and reflect societal narratives, influence perceptions, and construct meaning in times of crisis.

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The Elevated Granaries of the North of the Iberian Peninsula as a Representative Manifestation of the Spanish Material and Intangible Cultural Heritage (Typological definition, regulatory framework and conservation criteria)

Javier Mundíña Basanta & Belén Trigo

University of Santiago de Compostela • Postgraduate Student & Academic Staff
Paper

Granaries on stilts (hórreos or cabazos) are structures elevated on stone supports, intended for the storage and drying of grain through perimeter ventilation and hygrothermal insulation. Its construction system combines an assembled wooden box, supported on stone pillars and rodent-barrier discs, and a light cover adapted to local materials. From conservation-restoration, its treatment must be governed by the principles of minimal intervention, material compatibility, reversibility, legibility and respect for technical authenticity.

Legal protection begins with Decree 449/1973, which protects only the granaries (hórreos and cabazos) of Asturias and Galicia that are more than one hundred years old, establishing that “they remain under the protection of the State, which will prevent any intervention that alters their character.” Royal Decree 313/2026 expands this framework, on the one hand, extending protection to all types of granaries, without chronological limit, and incorporating those existing in León, Cantabria, Navarra and the Basque Country, thus recognizing their historical distribution in the north of the peninsula. On the other hand, it extends its recognition as part of the intangible cultural heritage.

From the point of view of the risks that threaten this type of construction, we must highlight not only those derived from its abandonment and looting; also the lack of training in traditional trades linked to the granary culture, as well as documentation of both the construction and restoration techniques and the uses, functions, values and meanings of the granary.

Therefore, any intervention must be based on a prior diagnosis of pathologies and complete documentation of the property. The actions will be limited to consolidation operations and specific replacement with compatible materials, avoiding volumetric alterations or changes to the construction system. Likewise, the preservation of these elements requires also maintaining traditional construction techniques, considered part of the intangible cultural heritage.

More about Javier...

I am an architect from the University of A Coruña (Galicia, Spain). I accessed doctoral studies in Architecture in the departments of Architectural Representation and Theory, Composition and Construction Technology at the University of A Coruña, obtaining the Diploma of Advanced Studies (2004). I am currently writing my doctoral thesis in the PhD Programme in Cultural Heritage Protection at the University of Santiago de Compostela (Galicia, Spain).

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More about Belén...

PhD in Private Law, I am Associate Professor in the University of Santiago de Compostela (Spain) since 2006. I am currently the director of the research project on Tangible and intangible heritage: culture, architecture and landscape in Galicia developed in the context of the PhD Program in Cultural Heritage Protection of the University of Santiago de Compostela.

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Passion Day: A Project Review of Translation and Performance in Sicily

Dr Enza De Francisci
University of Glasgow • Academic Staff
Paper

This presentation focusses on a project I ran (funded by the University of Glasgow) in the city of Naro (Agrigento) around Passion Day on the 27th April 2025, marking the seventh year of this tradition. The project was based on conserving the long-standing tradition in Sicily of the Easter street procession which is rooted in centuries of popular culture, folklore, and ancient religious practices and currently at risk of disappearing.

Passion Day is an all-day event which re-enacts the Sacred Representations of the Passion of Christ. The event is hosted at the former monastery of St Augustine's church. In 2025, 14 local theatre companies from all around Sicily were invited to participate in the event (over 400 actors). Each year, the companies perform a scene from the Passion of Christ (14 scenes in total). The script is adapted from Adam's Ransom (1750), also known as The Martyrdom of Jesus Christ, which was written by the Sicilian playwright, Orioles Philip.

This presentation will provide an insight into the staging of Passion Day, offer an overview of the key features of our project, and conclude by underscoring the wider impacts on sustaining religious performance traditions through translation. Indeed, Passion Day had never previously involved any professional translators which meant that the performances had not been made accessible to non-Italian/Sicilian speakers. From this starting point, our project was aimed at inspiring new, more inclusive, approaches to staging the Sacred Representations and, more generally, at generating a new understanding of the value of preserving and promoting minoritised performance cultures.

More about Enza...

Enza De Francisci is Senior Lecturer in Translation Studies at the University of Glasgow and programme director of the Glasgow-Nankai (China) for MSc Translation Studies (double degree). Recent publications include her monograph, A “New” Woman in Verga and Pirandello: From Page to Stage (Legenda 2018); and her co-edited volumes Shakespeare, Italy, and Transnational Exchange (Routledge 2017) and Translation in the Performing Arts (Routledge 2025). She is the Chair of the Society for Pirandello Studies UK, and her work has been featured several times on BBC radio, including a World Service Forum episode on Pirandello and another one on the 19th-century Italian actress Eleonora Duse.

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Disability Representation in West Midlands' Arts and Cultural Spaces

(co-authored by Dr. N.M. Emmanuel, S. Brizio, & Prof. P. Tsatsou)

Dr. Ngozi Marion Emmanuel & Sofia Brizio
Birmingham City University • Postgraduate Student & Academic Staff
Paper

This qualitative research investigates disability representation in West Midlands' Arts and Cultural spaces, focusing on museums, galleries, and arts centres. Over the past two years, high-profile museums such as the Wellcome Collection and the Victoria and Albert Museum in London have hosted exhibitions on disability history and justice, encouraging new ways of thinking about disability as an identity and as an integral part of the human experience. However, outside of specific thematic work and exhibitions, disabled people appear to be excluded from and underrepresented in the arts. Given that 17.8% of disabled people in England live in the West Midlands, this project aims to examine how museums, galleries, and arts centres in the West Midlands promote equitable spaces for disabled people through accessibility, work with disabled artists, display and exhibitions of disability arts, curatorial and commissioning practices, and language of indexing disability arts. We interviewed selected staff and management personnel in museums, galleries, and arts centres in Birmingham, Shropshire, and Digbeth. Findings show that the selected arts and cultural spaces have considerations for disabled people in terms of accessibility provisions, however, only a few specifically work with disability artists and display disability arts. Themes across the data show that funding, capacity, and knowledge gap are some of the challenges that present in progressing equitable disability representation in arts and cultural spaces. Thus, although there appears to be valuable work already being undertaken across the region in terms of making arts and cultural spaces accessible, gaps remain to be filled in integrating disability arts and supporting disabled artists in the region. This presentation reflects on how these barriers to disability representation can contribute to the erasure of disability history and heritage, sometimes even unknowingly due to fears of real or perceived tokenism.

More about Sofia...

Sofia Brizio is a PhD student at the Sir Lenny Henry Centre for Media Diversity, looking at the representation of people with disabilities in the media. This paper is a work in progress and is coauthored with Dr Ngozi Marion Emmanuel and Prof Panayiota Tsatsou.

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More about Ngozi...

Dr Ngozi Marion Emmanuel is the principal investigator on the RIS funded project Dis_Museums which seeks to understand disability representation in West Midlands Museums, Galleries, and Arts Centres. She supports research at the Sir Lenny Henry Centre for Media Diversity, Birmingham City University.

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Autotopography: Bridging Lived and Living Experiences to Heritage Sites

David (Dewi) Evans
Queen Mary University of London/Tours of the UK • Postgraduate Student/Tour Operator
Workshop

This workshop offers participants a way of engaging with cultural heritage that centres their lived and living experiences through an autotopographic approach. The aim of the workshop is to build bridges to the past, by centring personal narratives within the site(s) and practices of cultural heritage and using these personal experiences to offer unique insight into the performance, preservation, and promotion of cultural heritage. By offering a framework for considering how artisans, performer, guides, custodians and conservators can consider and discuss their own experiences of cultural heritage (who wouldn't want to hear how a artisan became a master craftsperson, which pieces in a collection are a custodian's least favourite, or how a local guide had their high-school prom in a 13th century castle) we build a connection to the person, their community, and the heritage which they are sharing. Through the use of the autotopographic (the dual way that our experiences of place create a sense of who we are, and how our sense of self creates our sense of place), we are able to uncover the ways that cultural heritage shaped, and continue to shape, the individual and how individuals shape the cultural heritages of today.

Delivered as a workshop where participants will be asked to consider their own relationships with cultural heritages through their own personal engagement with the field. During the workshop, participants will engage with the autotopographic framework which I have created as part of my PhD study. This framework encourages those people who work in the cultural heritage sector to consider their personal relationship to the place where they work and how they might make it 'their own'.

More about Dewi...

Dewi Evans is a site-specific/responsive performance maker who creates work on lived and living experiences. He is currently studying a PhD at Queen Mary University of London where his work considers how our understanding of place (both the micro and the macro) and our lived and living experiences of site impact our sense of self and wellbeing. Alongside his work as a performance maker Dewi also runs the multi-award-winning tour operator Tours of the UK, which blends performance skills with heritage and tourism practices.

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Authorising the Count: Florence Stoker, Dora May Patrick and the women who shaped Dracula

Kellie Everton
University of Derby • Postgraduate Student
Paper

The suave, evening-dress Count came from Hamilton Deane's stage adaptation, premiered at Derby's Grand Theatre in 1924 and carried into film by Bela Lugosi. The decisions that let it exist, and that shaped what came after, were made by Bram Stoker's widow. Florence Stoker held the rights to Dracula, and it was her licence that allowed Deane to put it on the stage at all.

This paper reads her as the figure who decided what counted as Dracula. She authorised one line, the Deane stage play that John Balderston revised for Broadway and that became Lugosi's 1931 film, for which Universal paid her \$40,000, and she suppressed another, pursuing Murnau's unlicensed Nosferatu through the German courts until they ordered the prints destroyed.

For all this, Florence Stoker survives in the record as Bram's widow and the woman who sued Nosferatu, not as the author of the Dracula the twentieth century received. She edited the posthumous Dracula's Guest in 1914 and outlived him by a quarter-century on an estate that dwarfed his, yet her shaping hand on the most filmed character in cinema goes uncredited. Beside her stands Dora May Patrick, the premiere's Mina, Deane's lifelong partner and, on the project's reading, a likely co-author of the 1924 adaptation, almost wholly written out.

Drawing on doctoral research into Florence Stoker, the paper treats Dracula as a property whose canonical form was settled by two women's choices about who could adapt it and on what terms and asks what it means that the record kept the character and lost the women who made it. Representation and appropriation, read here through licence, litigation and authorship, turn out to be questions about whose work the culture agrees to remember.

More about Kellie...

Kellie Everton is a practice-based PhD researcher at the University of Derby whose work explores the intersections of Gothic literature, heritage, performance, and material culture. Her doctoral research examines Hamilton Deane's 1924 stage adaptation of Dracula and Derby's role in shaping the modern vampire. Through archival research, creative practice, and feminist approaches to heritage, she investigates overlooked histories, forgotten collaborators, and the processes through which cultural memory is constructed. Kellie is Co-Director of Derby Dracula CIC, leading public engagement projects that connect academic research with exhibitions, events, and creative interpretation of Derby's Gothic literary heritage.

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Towards a Contemporary Communication of the Distant Past in Metal Art Practice

Blessing Fatoyinbo
University of Ibadan • Postgraduate Student
Poster

Communicating, teaching, and preserving African history transcends documentation in black and white or oral repositories. The place of art is also vantage in the preservation of history. Different artists across various places have documented history through various medium. While some recall history on canvases, some others print history on fabrics, and yet others have engaged Artificial Intelligence (AI) in locating the past in the present. Among artists who have constantly represented African history in contemporary art practice is Dotun Popoola. Popoola's synergetic metal art practice spans almost two decades. While sculpting metal using contemporary styles and themes, Popoola has constantly ensured to connect his art with African history through iconographic and emblematic representations on his art works. Through descriptive and analytic approach, this paper therefore explores historical documentation and recall in contemporary metal arts through the works of Dotun Popoola. Anchored on Erwin Panofsky's theory of Iconology, the paper argues that, contemporary metal art practice could be viable medium of historical pedagogy, historical preservation and documentation.

More about Blessing...

Blessing Fatoyinbo is a Master's student of African Visual Arts and Art History at the University of Ibadan, Nigeria. She obtained her first degree (B.A. Ed) in Fine and Applied Arts from Adeyemi College of Education. She is a creative artist who explores diverse ideas through various media such as acrylics, oil paints, yarn, and discarded objects. She has facilitated numerous training workshops. Her research area includes, art history and contemporary Nigerian art.

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From Fragment to Artefact: Heritage Mining as a Design Method for Cultural Production

Dr. Rowan Gatfield & Dr. Raymund König
Lincoln School of Design & Architecture • Academic Staff
Paper

Design practice routinely draws on inherited cultural knowledge, traditions, artefacts and memories to create new meanings, experiences and forms of value. Yet these inheritances rarely survive intact. Records, artefacts, traditions and memories are maintained unevenly, while other traces disappear entirely. Heritage therefore reaches the present through processes of selection, interpretation, and representation rather than as a complete historical record. These conditions create a need for methods that can work productively with fragmented evidence.

Tangible and intangible heritage often survive as traces that cannot support complete historical reconstruction. Researchers, designers, and creative practitioners must therefore move beyond documentation and make interpretive decisions about how fragments relate to broader cultural narratives. Existing approaches offer limited guidance on how evidence, interpretation, and reconstruction connect across heritage and creative practice.

This exploratory paper tests the viability of Heritage Mining as a transdisciplinary design method. It uses literature from heritage studies, critical fabulation, cultural production, and design research to examine Heritage Mining as an approach to fragmented evidence. Critical fabulation provides the mechanism through which partial records, absences, and contradictions support interpretation. Design and illustration then transform cultural narratives into new cultural artefacts and forms of cultural value.

The paper advances propositions rather than empirical findings. The mining metaphor provides a process of prospecting, extraction and cultural production. Heritage Mining positions design and illustration as sites where interpretation transforms fragmented heritage evidence into contemporary cultural production. Heritage is therefore understood not as a fixed inheritance from the past, but as something actively produced through interpretation, synthesis and creative practice.

The study establishes a basis for future work on Heritage Mining as a design method. It reframes heritage from an object of conservation to a resource for contemporary cultural production and cultural value creation.

More about Rowan...

Rowan Gatfield is Senior Lecturer in Illustration at the University of Lincoln. His practice and teaching focus on illustration, visual storytelling and interpretive image-making, with interests in heritage, memory and place.

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More about Raymund...

Raymund König is Senior Lecturer in Interior Architecture and Design at the University of Lincoln. His research explores cultural production, design theory, heritage interpretation and inhabitation.

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Gathering Place 360: Making archaeology accessible through dance and creative technology

Katie Green
Made By Katie Green • Dance artist with specialism responding to Heritage
Paper

An introduction to the Gathering Place 360 project, piloted from 2024-26 by choreographer Katie Green, with support from Arts Partnership Surrey, Surrey County Archaeological Unit, and Surrey County Council IoT and Emerging Technologies Department.

The main aim for this project is to make local heritage more accessible to more people, where previous experience and consultation with local partners showed that there were persistent challenges in ensuring the heritage of the county's most significant archaeological sites could be available to everyone.

In 2024, we created 4 VR360 'inspiration films' with filmmaker Matt Walker from Cave & Sky responding to Bronze Age Runnymede, Medieval Ankerwycke, Tudor Woking and Godalming in World War I, supported by archaeologist Hannah Potter.

Since then, we have shared these films on VR headsets with hundreds of children and young people and their teachers in years 4-6 in schools, and participants aged 9+ in libraries and community centres, alongside a programme of creative workshops including dance, writing and working with clay.

This presentation will offer:

- Extracts from Gathering Place videos to give a sense of the format for the story-telling and the interdisciplinary collaboration between archaeologists and creative practitioners at the heart of the project.
- An overview of our learning so far, which shows that where people aren't accessing local sites independently for a wide range of reasons, and schools aren't taking young people, the Gathering Place 360 approach provides a very good alternative to actually visiting a site that is much more accessible and cost-effective, but still able to replicate some of the key elements of an in-person visit. As well as improving engagement with the specific sites explored on our 360 films, the project also increases people's awareness of and interest in history more generally, and their appetite to find out more.

More about Katie...

Katie Green is a choreographer specialising in working with dance, music and story-telling in museums, heritage sites, libraries, galleries and other extraordinary spaces. As well as directing her own company, Made By Katie Green, she manages The Imagination Museum dance/heritage professional network. All of Katie's projects are developed collaboratively with a broad range of partners - particularly those who may not have worked with dance before. Through these projects she aims to create spaces where everyone feels they belong, providing connection with the environment and the world around us, building confidence and changing mindsets about what dance can do.

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The Woven Code: Ethical AI, Social Reproduction, and the Safeguarding of Intangible Cultural Heritage

Anita Greenhill
University of Manchester • Academic Staff
Paper

The rapid integration of artificial intelligence into cultural production presents both unprecedented opportunities and significant ethical challenges for the safeguarding of intangible cultural heritage. While AI offers new possibilities for documenting, translating and reimagining oral traditions, it also risks transforming culturally situated knowledge into decontextualised datasets subject to extraction, platformisation and algorithmic appropriation. This paper examines these tensions through The Princess and the Serpent a collaborative digital storytelling project developed with storytellers, musicians and creative practitioners from Senegal and The Gambia that explores how West African oral narratives can be responsibly translated into AI-assisted digital media.

Drawing upon the Convention for the Safeguarding of the Intangible Cultural Heritage and theories of social reproduction, the paper argues that oral storytelling should be understood not simply as cultural representation but as the ongoing labour through which communities reproduce collective memory, cultural identity, ecological knowledge and intergenerational relationships. Rather than treating oral narratives as repositories of data, the project conceptualises heritage as a living, evolving social practice whose meaning emerges through performance, interpretation and communal participation.

Using a participatory, practice-based research methodology, the paper proposes an ethical architecture for AI-mediated heritage founded upon four interdependent principles: collective consent, data sovereignty, equitable benefit-sharing and provenance-sensitive attribution. Together these principles redistribute narrative authority across the wider ecosystem of storytellers, translators, artists and community custodians while resisting forms of epistemic injustice associated with data colonialism and invisible digital labour.

The paper contributes to emerging debates on ethical AI by demonstrating how community-governed digital infrastructures can support, rather than replace, living heritage traditions. It argues that safeguarding intangible cultural heritage in the age of AI requires structural models of governance that embed cultural authority within the communities from which knowledge originates, ensuring that technological innovation strengthens rather than extracts the social and cultural value of oral tradition.

More about Anita...

Dr Anita Greenhill is a Senior Lecturer at Alliance Manchester Business School, University of Manchester, whose research explores how digital technologies are transforming work, creativity, communities, and culture. Her interdisciplinary research spans digital labour, artificial intelligence, immersive technologies, the creative industries, esports, and digital heritage. Anita has published extensively on technology and society and has led research with academic, industry, and public sector partners. Her work combines qualitative research with co-production to examine how emerging technologies can create social, cultural, and economic value. She is a member of Digital Futures (Createch) and is actively developing research on AI-enabled storytelling, digital creativity, and the future of the music and creative industries, building collaborations that connect universities, industry, policymakers, and cultural organisations.

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Lost Place-Names and Intangible Heritage: Case Studies from Yorkshire

Katie Hardy
University of Nottingham • Postgraduate Student
Paper

This paper explores the importance of the information contained in medieval place-names, and the effects of these names being lost over time. The place-names coined in England in the medieval period contain a wealth of information, much of it environmental, and demonstrate how the landscape was managed and perceived by every day, ordinary people. In the case of field-names, this is on a hyperlocal scale, and as such these are an excellent source for local history and dialect studies. Yet, across England the majority of these field-names do not survive into the modern day and can only be found by searching medieval archival documents - a specialist and time-consuming process. Treating these lost field-names as a type of intangible heritage, this paper argues the importance of their preservation, recognition, and discovery, for the benefit of local people and academic study.

More about Katie...

Katie is a first-year PhD student based at the University of Nottingham's Institute for Name-Studies. Her research explores the medieval field-names of two areas in Yorkshire, gathering names from historical documents held in archives (the North Yorkshire Archives and West Yorkshire Archive Service). In the later stages of the project, questions of public engagement with and communication of this material will be explored, including the use of mapping and Geographic Information Systems (GIS). Her other research interests are historical linguistics, dialect studies, and medieval English literature.

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Michael Clark, Choreomusicality, and the “Material Gap”

Eustacia (Edie) Hughes
Goldsmiths College, University of London • Postgraduate Student
Paper

This presentation is based on my first year of PhD research, where I am exploring the concept of choreo-musical emergences. My research investigates how choreomusicality can be conceptualised through the idea of ‘unsounded sound’, this is to say, imagined resonances and implied audibility are created in the relationship between music and dance. I am exploring this idea through the work of the choreographer Michael Clark due to the centralisation of music in his choreography, his reworking of and resourcefulness with technique, and the curatorial aspects across (and within) his body of work.

This research has ultimately been shaped and developed through a predicament of archival access, and how one can work a project around the (current) inaccessibility of archival materials. The restrictions imposed by this, have allowed my research to live within ephemeral processes and ways of disseminating knowledge, and investing in the living archive within dance networks operating in London. This paper discusses how I am approaching knowledge of ballet technique through a lens of analytical process, and the positioning of my body within this project as a vessel for research: capitalising on embodied choreomusical knowledge. Further to this, my methodology by necessity of the ‘material gap’ imposed by archival access has necessitated a turn towards what knowledge can be sourced through the transmission between people and bodies as a reflection of the flow of knowledge that occurs endemically within the ecosystem of dance. While I am studying Michael Clark’s work and methods, access to this knowledge is mediated through lineages of pedagogy, collaboration, and ultimately shaped through my language and my own subjective body via inheritance, mirroring, and speculative constructs.

More about Edie...

Eustacia Hughes is a research student in the Music department at Goldsmiths, her research interests are primarily in the field of choreomusicology, with an emphasis on conducting rigorous explorations of “the between” of music and dance as it relates to Ballet derived dance-forms.

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Backing the Bridge: Tribute Backing Vocal Practice as Living Popular Music Heritage

Sofia Jones
Manchester Metropolitan University • Academic Staff
Performance

I am an academic with more than thirty years of international experience as a lead and backing vocalist on the tribute circuit. This practice-led session asks a simple question: how do backing vocal choices determine who gets remembered, who dictates how the vocals are performed, and how “authentic” a performance feels to the audience and the performer? I will perform three short, specially arranged excerpts which illustrate different backing strategies – harmony, call and response, and stagecraft and then talk briefly about the decisions behind them.

Each excerpt is paired with short annotations drawn from rehearsal notes and audience feedback. Being a backing vocalist is often invisible labour with tiny timing shifts, an array of tone choices, and staging and blocking that steer audience understanding and cultural memory. The audience sees you and hears you, but they don’t realise how different the show would be without you. I’ll reflect on how being a Black woman in this work changes those dynamics as well as what that means for how we display and support popular music heritage.

This session is for anyone interested in performance, heritage, or how everyday music work shapes cultural stories.

Why does this matter?

Backing singers do cultural work that’s rarely acknowledged. Showing the work live helps rethink what counts as heritage and who should be included in heritage policy and practice.

More about Sofia...

Sofia Jones brings thirty years of international experience as a backing vocalist in the tribute circuit to her practice-led research. She explores how harmony, staging, and vocal tone shape what audiences remember and call “authentic.” Alongside performance, Sofia coaches and teaches a wide range of accents and dialects, using voice work to shape character and cultural meaning. Her work combines live performance, rehearsal archives, and oral histories to argue for greater recognition of backing labour in heritage practice.

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From Preservation to Cultivation: Bridging Artistic Boundaries through the Living Heritage of Kunqu

Xueting Luo

Trinity Laban Conservatoire of Music & Dance • Independent Researcher
Interactive Demonstration

Living heritage is often discussed in terms of preservation, transmission and safeguarding. While these approaches play an essential role in protecting cultural traditions, they can also encourage heritage to be understood primarily as a collection of knowledge and performance forms to be conserved. This paper argues that Kunqu, one of China's oldest forms of classical theatre and a UNESCO Intangible Cultural Heritage tradition, offers a different understanding of intangible cultural heritage: not primarily as something to preserve, but as an ongoing process of embodied cultivation.

Drawing on ethnographic fieldwork, embodied practice and participatory workshops, the paper explores Kunqu dance as part of a broader ecology of Chinese aesthetic and embodied traditions, including poetry, calligraphy, painting and martial arts. Rather than being connected through shared techniques or stylistic similarities, these practices are linked by common principles of cultivation that shape perception, attention, movement and relationships with the surrounding world. What is transmitted across generations is therefore not only a repertoire of performance, but also cultivated ways of perceiving, moving and inhabiting the world.

This perspective invites us to reconsider the boundaries that often separate artistic disciplines, as well as the distinction between heritage as a cultural object and heritage as lived practice. If heritage continues through the cultivation of ways of perceiving, moving and relating, rather than simply through the reproduction of codified forms, then research must likewise engage with these living processes through embodied participation alongside documentation and interpretation. In this sense, the paper also contributes to ongoing discussions on decolonising heritage research by questioning approaches that privilege classification and preservation over lived cultural practice.

The presentation includes a short interactive demonstration, inviting participants to experience how a simple movement principle can illuminate heritage as a living way of inhabiting the world rather than an object of preservation.

More about Xueting...

Xueting Luo is an early-career researcher specialising in embodied performance and Chinese aesthetic traditions. She recently completed her PhD at the School of Performance and Cultural Industries, University of Leeds, where her research explored Chinese classical dance as an embodied expression of aesthetic philosophy, with particular attention to somatic awareness, ecological thought, theatrical traditions and intercultural practice. She is currently undertaking the Specialist Diploma in Choreological Studies at Trinity Laban Conservatoire of Music and Dance. She also holds an MA in Chinese Dance History and Aesthetics from Beijing Dance Academy and publishes in both Chinese and English.

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Cultural Appropriation or Cultural Metamorphosis? The Great Yarmouth Winter Gardens and the Making of British Seaside Heritage

Rachel Macfarlane

University of Warwick & University of Suffolk • Postgraduate Student
Paper

On the seafront in Great Yarmouth, in Norfolk, stands the last remaining Victorian glass and iron Winter Gardens of its kind. Drawing on material culture related to this case-study, my paper explores the ways in which cultural representation, appropriation and metamorphosis have shaped 120 years of the building's history. From commemorations of the centenary of Nelson's victory at the Battle of Trafalgar, to 1930s swimwear contests influenced by transatlantic leisure cultures, and the buildings transformation into a Tyrolean biergarten during the 1960s, the Winter Gardens has continually reimagined and performed different cultural identities.

In doing so, this paper questions the extent to which the smorgasbord of traditions synonymous with British seaside heritage can be understood as possessing unequivocally British origins. Responding to the conference theme, it argues that cultural appropriation may be better understood as an ongoing process of cultural metamorphosis, through which borrowed practices are adapted, localised and ultimately naturalised as authentic expressions of place and national identity, demonstrating how heritage sites themselves participate in the production and legitimisation of cultural ownership. At a time when heritage and ideas of Britishness are increasingly invoked within debates around belonging, ownership and representation in England's seaside communities, this paper considers the implications of these processes for heritage practice and the delivery of cultural policy in contexts shaped by devolution and social unrest.

More about Rachel...

Rachel is a part-time PhD student at the University of Warwick. Her thesis examines cultural value in relation to seaside heritage, cultural policy and regeneration through a case-study of the Winter Gardens in Great Yarmouth. She has worked in the cultural sector for 20-years and has recently joined the University of Suffolk as Manager for the Suffolk Centre for Culture and Heritage.

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Experiencing Zapin: Southeast Asia's Intangible Malay Cultural Heritage

Muslihah Mujtaba
University of Birmingham • Postgraduate Student
Interpretive Demonstration

Zapin is one of the most widely practised dance forms across the Malay world, from the shores of the Arabian Peninsula to the archipelagos of Southeast Asia. Beyond its geographic reach, Zapin carries a way of knowing, feeling, and relating that is passed through the body.

Rooted in the living traditions of Malay culture in Southeast Asia, this dance form is kept alive through the ongoing relationship between practitioner and community.

This interactive performance demonstration invites audiences to experience the live transmission of Zapin dance. With over twenty years of professional performing arts practice, the presenter shares her lived experience of sustaining movement and memory across generations through her doctoral research on Malay dance as intangible cultural heritage (ICH), the living practices, knowledge, and traditions recognised under the UNESCO 2003 Convention. Conducted at the University of Birmingham, this PhD research examines the transmission of Malay dance while amplifying the voices of ICH practitioners in Singapore.

The session presents Zapin as a particularly accessible bridge between audiences unfamiliar with Southeast Asian Malay cultural traditions and the living heritage of the Malay world, crossing that bridge quite literally through movement.

Participants will experience how knowledge in Zapin is communicated through embodied instruction through a creative sharing of foundational movements, witnessing how this embodied heritage is carried and renewed through the relationship between teacher and learner.

Through a participatory approach, the sharing opens a broader conversation about what it means to safeguard intangible cultural heritage, such as dance, through practice and participation.

More about Muslihah...

Muslihah Mujtaba is a Cultural Heritage PhD researcher in the School of History and Cultures at the University of Birmingham. A Nottingham-based artist, her research on Malay dance examines the transmission of intangible cultural heritage (ICH) in its value to preservation and dissemination. Muslihah brings a distinctive perspective to her academic research as an experienced practitioner, bridging artistic practice with cultural heritage, performance studies, digital humanities, and history. She holds an MA in Art Education, Culture and Practice from University College London (UCL) and a BA in Theatre Practice (The Royal Central School of Speech and Drama, University of London).

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What Heritage Controversies Reveal About Decision Making

Bori Oluwole-Ojo
Birmingham City University • Postgraduate Student
Paper

Heritage controversies are usually treated as problems to be managed. This paper argues the opposite. Drawing on comparative case studies of four World Heritage Sites, namely Stonehenge, the Tower of London, Lamu Old Town and Fort Jesus, this research shows that controversy is not a sign of failure. It is the moment when governance becomes visible.

The study analysed 21 interviews with heritage professionals, community members and policy advisors, alongside planning records, UNESCO reports and court judgments. The findings reveal that routine management hides three things: which values are excluded, whose knowledge is ignored, and how power is exercised without accountability. Controversy strips this cover away. At Stonehenge, public pressure and a High Court challenge forced officials to reconsider a tunnel scheme after consultation had been dismissed. In Lamu, communities bypassed tokenistic consultation and used the courts to stop a coal plant. At Fort Jesus, overlapping mandates between the National Museums of Kenya and county officials led to a conservation project being mistakenly halted. At the Tower of London, the absence of agreed thresholds for cumulative impact means development proceeds while communities feel locked out.

These cases show how controversy reveals the gaps that routine management hides. The paper argues that instead of asking how to prevent disputes, heritage scholars and practitioners should ask what controversy reveals about how governance really works. Treating disputes as diagnostic tools can help identify where frameworks fail, whose values are excluded and how power is distributed.

More about Bori...

Bori Oluwole-Ojo is a doctoral researcher at Birmingham City University. His PhD examines built heritage decision-making in controversial contexts, focusing on Kenya and England. His research explores how governance structures, metrics, and public participation shape heritage outcomes during disputes. His research interests include heritage governance, postcolonial conservation, and the politics of participation.

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Beyond Restoration: Scientific Characterization and the Recovery of Cultural Heritage after the January 8 Attacks (Brazil)

Lucas Pereira
Universidade Federal de Pelotas • Postgraduate Student
Poster

On January 8, 2023, the buildings around Square of the Three Powers (Praça dos Três Poderes), in Brasília, Brazil, were attacked by individuals dissatisfied with the outcome of the previous year's presidential election. In addition to architectural heritage, numerous artworks housed within these buildings were vandalized and damaged. The attacks affected cultural assets of different typologies and historical significance, including paintings, sculptures, and ceramic artifacts. The Conservation and Restoration of Cultural Heritage program at Universidade Federal de Pelotas (UFPel) received twenty of these objects for treatment through the project "LACORPI – January 8: Restoration and Democracy" (8 de Janeiro: Restauração e Democracia). As part of this initiative, an interdisciplinary team conducted studies aimed at obtaining information about the affected works through physicochemical analyses of their constituent materials, such as FTIR, XRD and Raman Spectroscopy. This work presents the role of material characterization within the broader project of recovering cultural heritage damaged during the January 8 attacks. The investigated objects included paintings, metal sculptures, and a ceramic artifact, highlighting the material diversity represented within the affected collection. In addition to supporting decision-making throughout the restoration process, the information obtained contributes to future research on art history, artistic techniques, and the long-term preservation of these cultural assets. Although the artworks have already been returned following restoration, the Interdisciplinary Research Group on Material Heritage (CPMAT - Grupo de Pesquisa Interdisciplinar do Patrimônio Material) continues to develop studies aimed at expanding knowledge about these works and their artists, with a commitment to disseminating the results through scientific publications. In this context, physicochemical characterization extends beyond its diagnostic function, serving as a tool for documentation, knowledge production, and the valorization of cultural heritage. This work highlights the importance of interdisciplinary collaboration between heritage studies, conservation, and materials science in the recovery of cultural assets affected by major disruptive events.

More about Lucas...

Lucas Pereira is a conservator-restorer and chemist currently pursuing a Master's degree in Materials Engineering at the Federal University of Pelotas (UFPel), Brazil. His research focuses on the characterization of cultural heritage materials, with particular interest in archaeometry, conservation science, and the application of analytical techniques to the study and preservation of artworks and historical objects. He has experience in conservation-restoration projects involving diverse cultural assets and works at the intersection of heritage studies, materials science, and chemistry, contributing to the understanding and safeguarding of cultural heritage.

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Enchanted Masks: Reimagining "Vesmuḥunu" Through Contemporary Practice-Led Performance

Dhanushka Seneviratne
DS Dance Research Lab • Independent Researcher
Interactive Demonstration

This practice-led research investigates the cultural, ritualistic, and artistic significance of Sri Lankan dance masks "Vesmuḥunu" through an embodied, contemporary performance framework. Rooted in traditional dance forms and folk theatre, these masks have long served as powerful performative objects within healing rituals such as "Thovil", where "Yaksha Muḥunu" (devil dance masks) play a central role. Their intricate craftsmanship, symbolic potency, and ritual function position them as vital carriers of Sri Lanka's intangible cultural heritage.

Responding to the archival collections of Sri Lankan masks held at the British Museum, particularly the Hugh Nevill Collection, this study examines how these historical artefacts can be reactivated within contemporary dance practice. By engaging with the mask as both a cultural object and a dynamic performance tool, the research explores how embodied knowledge can generate new interpretations of heritage material. The project foregrounds the mask's dual identity: as a museum artefact shaped by colonial collecting histories, and as a living, sensorial object embedded in ritual performance traditions.

Through choreographic experimentation, the study develops a contemporary dance work that reimagines the mask's performative agency. Movement research is informed by traditional Sri Lankan dance vocabularies while embracing improvisation, interdisciplinary methods, and somatic inquiry. Audience interaction forms a key component of the methodology, positioning spectators as active participants in the unfolding dialogue between body, mask, and cultural memory.

Ultimately, this research proposes a framework for understanding Sri Lankan dance masks as evolving cultural entities objects that hold historical narratives yet continue to generate meaning through embodied practice. By bridging archival study with contemporary performance, the project contributes to ongoing conversations on heritage preservation, decolonial performance-making, and the role of practice-led research in revitalising traditional cultural forms.

More about Dhanushka...

Dhanushka Seneviratne is an award-winning professional dancer, choreographer, Oriental Ballet director, interdisciplinary artist, international research scholar, and academic. She has lectured in choreography theory, practice, and dance research at the University of Kelaniya, Sri Lanka, where she also supervised undergraduate and postgraduate research, coordinated the Performing Arts degree program, and contributed to curriculum development. She holds an MA in Public Art and Performative Practices from London Metropolitan University (2023) and a Certificate in Teaching in Higher Education, awarded with Best Research Honours (2021). Her scholarly interests include Dance/Movement Therapy (DMT), Dance Science, dance history and archival studies, dance on screen, ritual dance and cultural preservation, and community led creative practice. She is a member of the Dance & History Association of Germany. She currently serves on the Europe Committee, representing the UK, for the International Association for Creative Art in Education and Therapy (IACAET). Also, member of the One Dance UK organisation. She is also the founder and artistic director of DS Dance Research Lab UK (DSDRL).

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Motion Capture as a Site of Cultural Transmission: Reframing Embodied Slavic Heritage Through Digital Improvisation

Dr Lucie Sykes
Independent Artist-Researcher
Interactive Demonstration

This interactive demonstration foregrounds motion capture (MoCap) as a dramaturgical and analytical environment for exploring how embodied cultural practices, such as folkloric dance, are transformed through digital mediation. Drawing on practice-as-research with performers, I introduce the Sculptural Qualities Framework (SQF) to analyse how skeletal markers, trace-forms, and real-time feedback loops generate new relational and perceptual conditions for movement. Motion capture is approached not as a recording tool but as a co-creative system that shapes attention, improvisation, and embodied decision-making.

In this interactive demonstration, I present a work-in-progress that draws on my Slavic folklore heritage and the myths of Vesna and Morana. This short performance evolved over the last few years and was recently developed as part of the AA2A residency scheme at Nottingham Trent University. In this work, I examine how intangible heritage, in the form of folklore dance movements and storytelling, can be reimagined in XR environments. The myth provides a cultural substrate for investigating how digital dramaturgy extends and reframes the traditional narratives. Therefore, it demonstrates how motion-capture environments can serve as “a gateway” between embodied heritage and contemporary digital performance. The real-time visualisation in Unreal Engine (LiveLinkXR) becomes a sculptural space where physical action and digital form co-shape each other, emerging with sculptural qualities that support cultural transmission.

This interactive demonstration contributes to cultural heritage discourse by repositioning folklore as an applied context (Bendix & Hasan-Rokem, 2012) rather than the conceptual centre through the use of digital storytelling. Thus, digital storytelling becomes a method for safeguarding, transforming, and revitalising embodied traditions within technologically mediated spaces.

More about Lucie...

Dr Lucie (Lee) Sykes is an interdisciplinary artist-researcher. Her live performances and multisensory installations invite audiences to take a moment to notice, reflect, and reconnect with themselves and others. Lucie is interested in how the body-mind connections of the performer and audiences' shapes, connects, responds, within interactive ecological and technological environments. To achieve these sensorial encounters, she uses cutting-edge technologies such as motion capture, 3D printing, projection mapping, and augmented reality to offer a rare opportunity to experience dance-theatre performance in a new light. Her research dissemination of various high-profile publications and symposium presentations in the UK & internationally.

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Bridging Earth Heritage, Participatory Cultural Practice and Wellbeing: A Community-Based Approach to Sustainable Development

Ho-Chung Tam
University of Birmingham • Postgraduate Student
Paper

The growing recognition of culture as an essential dimension of sustainable development has prompted interest in participatory approaches that connect communities with their local heritage. While discussions of culture and sustainable development have largely centred on cultural heritage and museums, comparatively little attention has been given to earth heritage, despite its potential to shape people's relationships with place, identity and wellbeing.

This research explores the potential of participatory cultural practice with earth heritage as capable of fostering community wellbeing and contributing to sustainable development, through an interdisciplinary project situated on the Isle of Portland, Dorset, a landscape where international significant geology, industrial heritage and community identity are deeply intertwined. The study adopts a qualitative, Community-Based Participatory Research (CBPR) design, combining stakeholder interviews with the co-development and evaluation of a participatory earth heritage intervention involving young adults (18-29). Through collaborative creative practices, including land art, storytelling and place-based activities, participants are invited to engage with Portland's geological and cultural landscapes while reflecting on their relationships with place, heritage and community. Data will be analysed using Reflexive Thematic Analysis, informed by realist evaluative reasoning and COM-B behavioural framework to explore how participatory engagement generates different outcomes across varying social and environmental contexts.

Rather than treating earth heritage solely as an object of conservation or interpretation, this research reconceptualises it as a living cultural capital through which communities negotiate identity, belonging and wellbeing. In doing so, the project seeks to bring together perspectives from geoscience, heritage studies, participatory arts and public health to advance broader debates on culture as and for sustainable development. By positioning participatory earth heritage as a form of cultural practice, the study proposes a conceptual perspective for understanding how locally grounded, creative engagement with geological landscapes can inform more inclusive and sustainable approaches to heritage management and community development.

More about Ho-Chung...

Ho-Chung Tam is a UKRI-funded doctoral researcher at the University of Birmingham. Based within the Centre of Understanding Behaviour, his interdisciplinary research brings together behavioural science, heritage studies and geoscience to explore how participatory engagement with earth heritage can foster wellbeing and contribute to sustainable development. Through a Community-Based Participatory Research approach, his PhD investigates how creative engagement with geological landscapes can strengthen relationships between people, place and heritage. Prior to undertaking his PhD, Ho-Chung worked as a social researcher specialising in participatory research and qualitative methods. His research interests also include community development, place-based inquiry and youth studies.

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The Notebook's Silence, the Interview's Voice: Archiving Intangible Directorial Heritage

Marius-Alexandru Teodorescu
Învață de mic NGO • Independent Researcher
Paper

The director's notebook occupies a paradoxical position in the heritage of Romanian theatre directing. A private manuscript recording staging decisions, textual analysis, and visual conception, it is often treated as a complete record of a production's preparation. This paper proposes a different reading: the notebook is self-intelligible rather than complete, written for the director's own use. It falls silent precisely where no explanation is needed.

The project Arhiva Regizorală (The Director's Notebook Archive), funded by AFCN, brings together two bodies of source material generated fifty years apart: director's notebooks from Romania's socialist-era repertory theatre system (1947–1989) — including Lucian Giurchescu and Dinu Cernescu — and roughly twenty filmed interviews with directors currently active in Romania and the diaspora. Read against one another, these corpora reveal a productive tension between static document and live discourse.

Giurchescu and Cernescu were exact contemporaries, yet their notebooks differ entirely in kind: Giurchescu's are dense with movement diagrams and staging instructions, almost silent on conceptual vision; Cernescu's invert this, rich in essays on the production's imaginative world but absent any staging notation. Read separately, the corpora suggest unequal preparation. Contemporary interviews suggest otherwise: Eva Patko describes clarifying a production's world through reading, music, and visual art — research that never resolves into written notes but becomes knowledge carried into rehearsal. Cernescu's silence, read this way, is a different working method, invisible on the page alone.

Archiving the notebook in isolation risks distorting the history of Romanian directing, mistaking documentary silence for absence of thought. The filmed interview, retrospective and justificatory, does not replace the notebook — it recovers what the notebook was never written to say. We propose a dual archival methodology treating notebook and interview as two halves of one act of directorial thinking, divided by a boundary of genre: what is written for oneself, and what is spoken for another.

More about Marius-Alexandru...

Marius-Alexandru Teodorescu, PhD, is a Romanian theatre director, dramaturg, and cultural manager. He is the project coordinator for Arhiva Regizorală (The Director's Notebook Archive, AFCN, 2026), led by the Asociația Învață de Mic, overseeing its archival research and interview activity. His doctoral research on the director's notebook as a working document of theatrical authorship underpins the project's archival methodology. Teodorescu has directed for independent Romanian theatre and managed numerous AFCN- and Ministry of Culture-funded cultural projects. His work bridges theatre practice, digital archiving, and cultural heritage research, with a focus on safeguarding the intangible heritage of Romanian theatre directing.

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What Is Missing Matters: Heritage Lens, Epistemic Responsibility, and the Boundaries of AI in Cultural Heritage Research

Larissa Terranova
CSA Circolo Amerindiano • Independent Researcher
Interactive Demonstration

This paper returns to Nottingham with an honest account of a system in progress. Heritage Lens, first presented at the 2025 Cultural Heritage Conference as a multimodal RAG prototype grounded in a single Olmec research thesis, has since been developed, tested across multiple academic contexts, and rigorously examined as much for its silences as for its outputs.

The system was built to address a real research problem: archaeological knowledge is scattered across formats, textual analysis, site photography, spatial data, and interpretive frameworks that rarely speak to one another in an accessible way. Applied to Olmec urbanisation in early Mesoamerica, Heritage Lens enables natural-language querying across textual and visual materials. The more significant development since 2025 has been architectural and ethical. The corpus has grown beyond the original thesis, making a latent question unavoidable: when multiple scholarly voices inhabit the same system, each carrying its own interpretive assumptions, how honestly should an AI tool report the resulting complexity?

This is the problem the Epistemic Agent is designed to address. Rather than producing confident synthesis from a richer but still incomplete corpus, it explicitly surfaces what cannot be retrieved, where confidence is limited, and where interpretive gaps or bias may be shaping the response. The Olmec case makes this a necessity rather than a design choice: a civilisation whose record is incomplete and contested demands that what is missing be treated as seriously as what is present.

The boundaries Heritage Lens encounters, around evidential gaps, around who produced the corpus it draws on, around the risks of AI-mediated decontextualisation, are the same boundaries that cultural heritage research has always had to negotiate. What this paper offers is a model for epistemically transparent heritage AI, one that makes those boundaries visible rather than smoothing them over and reflects honestly on what remains unresolved.

More about Larissa...

Larissa Terranova is a Digital Humanities researcher working at the intersection of AI ethics, cultural anthropology, and Mesoamerican archaeology. She is affiliated with the Centro Studi Americanistici "Circolo Amerindiano" (CSACA) in Perugia and holds a postgraduate qualification in Applied Generative AI from Johns Hopkins University. Her project Heritage Lens explores multimodal and epistemically transparent AI for cultural heritage research and has been presented at international venues including the University of Nottingham, the University of Nottingham Ningbo China, CSACA Perugia, and the UK-Ireland Digital Humanities Association Annual Event in Southampton. Heritage Lens was also selected as a finalist project at HackXelerator AR26.

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Redefining Chinese Intangible Cultural Heritage Hakka Qilin Dance in the UK through Intercultural Co-Production

Mengjiao Wang & Dr Xunnan Li
University of Leeds • Postgraduate Student & Academic Staff
Paper

This paper explores the co-production methodology of redefining Chinese Hakka intangible cultural heritage in the intercultural context, specifically Qilin Dance (Chinese Unicorn Dance), through a co-design process in a diasporic educational context in the United Kingdom. Developed in collaboration with Chinese teachers in British schools and Hakka Qilin dance artists in the Hakka community in Leeds UK, the project focuses on the creation of a learning toolkit that translates embodied cultural knowledge into pedagogical practice. Rather than treating heritage as a fixed form to be transmitted, this study approaches it as a dynamic process shaped through interaction, negotiation, and shared experience (Li, 2025). In the intercultural context of community engagement, cultural heritage knowledge is not simply delivered but co-constructed through dialogue between researchers and practitioners. Central to this research is the transformation of embodied experience: how observation, discussion, and physical engagement generate tacit understanding, how this understanding becomes internalized, and how it is subsequently expanded into transferable learning strategies. The co-design process thus operates as a mediating framework through which experiential knowledge is articulated and reconfigured into a toolkit accessible to younger generation in diaspora. By foregrounding this process, the paper argues that intangible cultural heritage can be redefined as an adaptive, co-constructed practice. It contributes to ongoing discussions on transcultural pedagogy, cultural sustainability, and collaborative knowledge production in diasporic contexts.

More about Xunnan...

Dr Xunnan Li is Senior Lecturer at School of Performance and Cultural Industries University of Leeds, Deputy Director of Leeds Centre for New Chinese Writing and Editor of Studies in Theatre and Performance.

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More about Mengjiao...

Mengjiao Wang is a PhD candidate at School of Performance and Cultural Industries University of Leeds. Her research focuses on intercultural dance pedagogy and cultural heritage dance.

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The Solar Wheel: How a Folk Ballet can deepen connections with traditions and cultural heritage

Deborah Ward
Royal Conservatoire of Scotland • Postgraduate Student/Choreographer
Performance

A penchant for storytelling through movement led to my creation of the folk ballet genre in 2019. Originally a vehicle to showcase folklore and tales from the British Isle's that had not previously been adapted into balletic texts, these ballet's have diversified in form. Live performances and filmic works have evolved to explore social, environmental and political narratives that speak to the challenges of the land, nature, and cultural heritage. An ambition to break barriers found within ballet's historic formal structures and systems, drives the objectives of ensuring these folk ballet's are accessible to all, performed in outdoor spaces in non-traditional settings, creating an immersive and deeply connected experience for the audience.

The Solar Wheel is an original interdisciplinary production, created in four acts that will emerge at the turning point of each season, across twelve months to become a one act work in 2027. This lecture demonstration offers an insight into the research led collaborative creation process drawing from local and national folklore and customs that are followed in celebrating each seasonal solstice and equinox. Visual artist, Jessice Pearce and dance maker, Deborah Ward will share their interdisciplinary approach to making the work and examine the narrative and cultural positioning of the work. A performance of The Autumn Equinox act will be shared to conclude the presentation.

More about Deborah...

A Dance artist, Deborah is an early career researcher and PhD candidate at The Royal Conservatoire of Scotland, where she is exploring narrative works by women ballet choreographers through a feminist narratological lens. Deborah is a Fellow of the Higher Education Academy, a committee member for CORPS de Ballet International, and Chair of the British and International Federation of Festivals. Deborah is the Director of Ballet Folk and has presented work internationally in both educational and professional settings.

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From Barter to Place: Reimagining Reciprocal Cultural Exchange as a Methodology for Place-Based Creative Practice

Nigel Ward
University for the Creative Arts • Academic Staff
Paper

Discourses surrounding place-based creative practice increasingly emphasise co-creation, participation and community engagement. Yet relationships between cultural institutions and communities often continue to be characterised by one-directional models of knowledge exchange in which artists, researchers or organisations ‘deliver’ culture to communities rather than creating it collaboratively.

This paper revisits Eugenio Barba’s concept of barter, developed through the work of Odin Teatret, as a potential methodology for contemporary place-based creative research. While barter has traditionally been understood as a form of intercultural theatrical exchange, this paper argues that its wider significance lies in its capacity to establish reciprocal relationships in which artists and communities become equal participants in the production of cultural meaning.

Drawing on examples from socially engaged theatre and community-based creative practice, the paper explores how barter offers an alternative framework for understanding intangible heritage as a dynamic process of exchange rather than a fixed cultural asset. In this model, performance becomes both a mechanism for preserving cultural memory and a means of generating new forms of collective knowledge rooted in place.

The paper suggests that Barba’s work anticipates many of the principles now associated with co-production, cultural democracy and place-based research. It concludes by proposing “creative barter” as a conceptual and methodological framework through which artists, researchers and communities might collaboratively produce knowledge, strengthen local cultural identities and develop more reciprocal approaches to creative research.

In repositioning barter from theatrical practice to research methodology, the paper contributes to current debates surrounding community engagement, partnership, intangible heritage and interdisciplinary approaches to place-based cultural practice.

More about Nigel...

Professor Nigel Ward is Professor of Theatre and Film whose research focuses on place-based creative practice, community co-creation and performance as research. His work examines how participatory artistic methodologies generate cultural exchange, strengthen local identities and create new forms of knowledge through collaboration between artists, researchers and communities. Drawing on an international career in higher education and the creative industries, he is currently developing a research agenda around creative barter as a methodology for place-based cultural innovation, heritage and community engagement.

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From Dracula to Lara Croft: The transferable exhibition at Derby Museums

Dan Webber
Derby Museums • GLAM Sector
Paper

When Hamilton Deane’s stage *Dracula* premiered at Derby’s Grand Theatre in 1924, it gave the world the cloaked, evening-dress Count later carried into film by Bela Lugosi. Derby Museums took that claim; the work of the AHRC-funded *Dracula Returns to Derby* project and built an exhibition around it. *Dracula Returns to Derby: 101 Years and Counting* ran at Pickford’s House from May 2025 to June 2026, drawing loans from Dacre Stoker, the *Dracula Society* and the Hammer Script Archive, among them Christopher Lee’s Hammer cloak and a cane owned by Deane. Over its run the house’s annual footfall rose by 15 per cent and shop income rose sharply, in what became the museum’s longest single exhibition.

This paper asks what the exhibition proved and what it left to be tested. Its argument is that *Dracula* can anchor a successful regional-museum show when a research claim gives it a place to stand and significant collections lend it weight. The proof was practical rather than rhetorical: footfall, income, national press and an audience the museum had not previously reached.

The clearest evidence of a working model is that it transferred. A Tomb Raider Derby fan group, seeing the *Dracula* exhibition, asked for the same treatment for *Lara Croft*, made in Derby in 1996. *Lara Croft: 30 Years On* opens at Pickford’s House for twelve months on the *Dracula* show’s blueprint, its visitor and income targets the benchmark and its audience ready-made.

The paper reads this as a regional museum learning to treat its own late-twentieth-century culture as exhibitable heritage, and sets out what the university partnership, the lenders and the fan community each contributed, and what a museum needs in place before the model will carry a second time.

More about Dan...

Described as “rumbustious” by *The Stage* (March 2026) Dan Webber (he/him) is an award-winning LGBTQ+ poet, comedian, promoter and producer based in Derby. He has performed at festivals and venues across the country including Glastonbury Festival, Edinburgh Festival Fringe, The UK Ghost Story Festival, The Other Place (The RSC) and at The Royal Vauxhall Tavern. Dan is currently Events Programmer for Derby Museums, Co-Director of The Derby *Dracula* Enterprise CIC, Co-Director of Derby Poetry Festival, Outreach Coordinator for the Nottingham Queer Arts Collective and Founder of The Derby and Derbyshire Queer Arts Collective.

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Forgotten Soldiers: Continued dis-remembrance of the Zulu fallen at Isandlwana

Debbie Whelan
Durban University of Technology, Archaic Consulting Pty. Ltd. • Heritage Sector
Paper

The Western trope of the physical monument, triggering memory and evoking pride and social cohesion, is well documented. In South Africa, the contestation of such monuments was exacerbated by the 2015 #Rhodesmustfall movement, closely associated with the international Black Lives Matter campaign. For these movements, monuments considered associated with colonialism particularly, were targeted and defaced, removed or destroyed. The paucity of black-associated monuments was bemoaned despite a concerted move towards redressing this issue having been in place for over two decades.

With this, the recent vandalism of the Monument to the Zulu Fallen at Isandlwana battlefield (completed in 1999) in KwaZulu-Natal came as a surprise. It celebrates the significant Zulu victory over the British at the battle of Isandlwana on 21 January 1879. Large chunks of the bronze installation were removed, most likely for sale as scrap. Whilst criminal activity is most likely the underlying cause, it is of concern that a monument communally purchased through subscription by the amaKhozi (chiefs of clans) and deliberately intended to redress the ills of history, has befallen this fate. Further, that community members, fully reliant on cultural tourism did not guard the site, questions whether materiality is important in post-colonial monuments, and to what degree different worldviews and perceptions of space may contribute to their interpretation.

This paper describes the battle and the site, before considering the monument through an autoethnographic lens; its design, siting and construction. It then dissects post-colonial thinking considering materiality and monuments, weaving in comments from the public domain about the monument's dismantling. The essay concludes by suggesting that alternative experiences may be required in order to evoke monumentality and memory in post-colonial societies and suggests that, despite perceived participatory processes in its design, the power of the 'monument' may be compromised by alternative worldviews of material and space.

More about Debbie...

Debbie Whelan is a researcher focused on contemporary, indigenous and post-colonial environments, particularly in KwaZulu-Natal. Whilst her academic background is fully situated in teaching architecture, both in South Africa and the UK, she is currently an independent researcher affiliated with a previous institution, Durban University of Technology. Debbie works in interdisciplinary spaces between architecture, history and anthropology as certainly, in our contemporary society, these cannot be separated.

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On the Move: Dance Stories – Memory and Mapping Lives in Motion

Dr Deborah Williams
University of Malta Department of Dance Studies • Academic Staff
Paper

This paper examines the intersections of identity, embodiment, and migration through On the Move: Dance Stories, a 2026 oral history project that documents the lived experiences of dancers across the United States. Grounded in ethnographic and oral history methodologies, the research addresses the topic of migration via the research methodology of traveling through the USA to gather the stories. In this way, the term refers not only to the pathways of the research journey but encompasses the relational voices and intertwined yet disparate experiences of practitioners from diverse cultural, generational, and gendered backgrounds, exploring how movement functions as a form of fluid locus relating identity, memory, and belonging.

Through narrative and embodied testimony, the project investigates how dance operates as a form of cultural continuity, exchange, and transformation. These stories stand, 'As vital acts of transfer, transmitting social knowledge, memory, and a sense of identity' (Hellier-Tonoco 2009:117). In this spirit, On the Move treats the interview encounter as an embodied ethnographic space, where memory is enacted through gesture, rhythm, and affect as much as through words.

The study contributes to contemporary ethnochoreological discussions on identity, heritage, and transmission by illuminating how nation and migration—both personal, physical, and cultural—functions and (re)shapes movement vocabularies and meanings. Ultimately, the project argues that dance serves as both map and memory of movement: an embodied archive through which people negotiate place, space, and continuity within a nation in motion.

More about Deborah...

Deborah Williams is Senior Lecturer in Dance Studies at the University of Malta. She holds a BA in Dance with a focus on education and community partnerships from Five College Dance Department at Smith College, USA. From the University of Roehampton, London, Deborah received both an MA in Dance Anthropology and a PhD in Dance. Her research is rooted in the fields of dance anthropology, ethnography, and oral history, and centres around highlighting the voices of non-professional dancers. Research areas include dance/movement within digital game design, and investigating dance, social value, and representation.

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Making Tradition Visible Reimagining the Safeguarding of traditional Chinese opera through New Dragon Gate Inn (2023)

Lucas Yufeng Wu
University of Exeter • Postgraduate Student
Paper

Traditional Chinese opera (Xiqu) is one of China's most significant forms of intangible cultural heritage. Despite its highly codified performance traditions, inherited repertoires, and aesthetic values, many Xiqu genres are experiencing declining and ageing audiences and struggling to attract younger generations. This raises an important question: if traditional performing arts become increasingly disconnected from contemporary audiences, how can their skills, knowledge, and performance traditions continue to be transmitted?

Against the backdrop of changing audience structures, shifting entertainment consumption, and the rapid expansion of digital media, increasing numbers of theatre practitioners in China have begun experimenting with new ways of presenting Xiqu. Among these, New Dragon Gate Inn (新龙门客栈, 2023), promoted by its producers as an immersive Yueju (越剧) production, has generated perhaps the greatest commercial and cultural impact. Developed through collaboration between the Xiaobaihua Yueju Opera Troupe and the commercial musical theatre company Focustage, the production attracted approximately 9.25 million views in a single TikTok livestream, while around 80% of its audience had no prior exposure to Yueju.

Using New Dragon Gate Inn as a case study, this research examines how traditional Yueju practices are reorganised within a new theatrical framework. Combining dramaturgical and performance analysis, it explores how Yueju vocal traditions, role-type conventions, stylised movement, and performer-spectator relationships are integrated with immersive staging, direct audience interaction, and audience-oriented dramaturgical strategies associated with contemporary commercial musical theatre.

Rather than asking whether the production remains authentic Yueju, this research asks how adaptation can contribute to safeguarding traditional performance heritage. It argues that the production retains the visibility and recognisability of Yueju traditions while assigning them new dramaturgical functions within a more audience-oriented structure. Rather than preserving complete traditional forms unchanged, the research suggests that the continued visibility, circulation, and meaningful use of traditional performance practices may itself constitute an important mode of heritage safeguarding, contributing to wider discussions on the future sustainability of intangible performing arts heritage.

More about Lucas...

Lucas Yufeng Wu is a PhD researcher in Drama at the University of Exeter. His research focuses on intercultural theatre, musical theatre, and traditional Chinese theatre practice, examining how traditional performance practices are reimagined within contemporary theatrical forms. His research also incorporates practice as research to explore new possibilities for intercultural performance-making. His broader research interests include theatre history, performance studies, intangible cultural heritage, and contemporary adaptations of traditional performing arts.

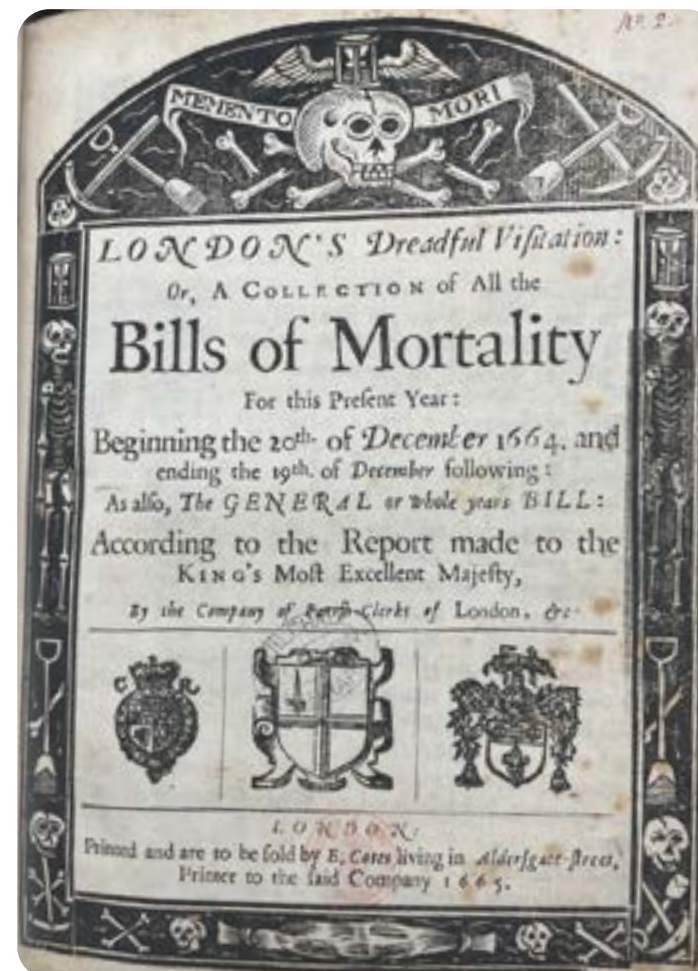
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Selling Such 'Sad Sheets': Ellen Cotes and the Marketing of Mortality

Dr Jennifer Young
University of Greenwich • Academic Staff
Paper

The Bills of Mortality were a weekly published account of deaths in each parish of the City of London from the 1590s into the 18th century. In 1665, a collection of the previous years' Bills were printed and sold by Eleanor Cotes, one of the small number of women printers working in the City at the time. In this edition Cotes includes a dedication from 'The Printer to the Reader'. Such dedications are standard in many early modern texts, serving as valuable bridges between a stationer and their anticipated customers that forges a connection that can lead to a sale. In her preface, Cotes demonstrates knowledge of these conventions but her dedication goes further, revealing additional information about the production of this book and its printer; for Cotes is not only the printer of these accounts meant to monitor the plague, but a resident of the city that was recently ravaged by it.

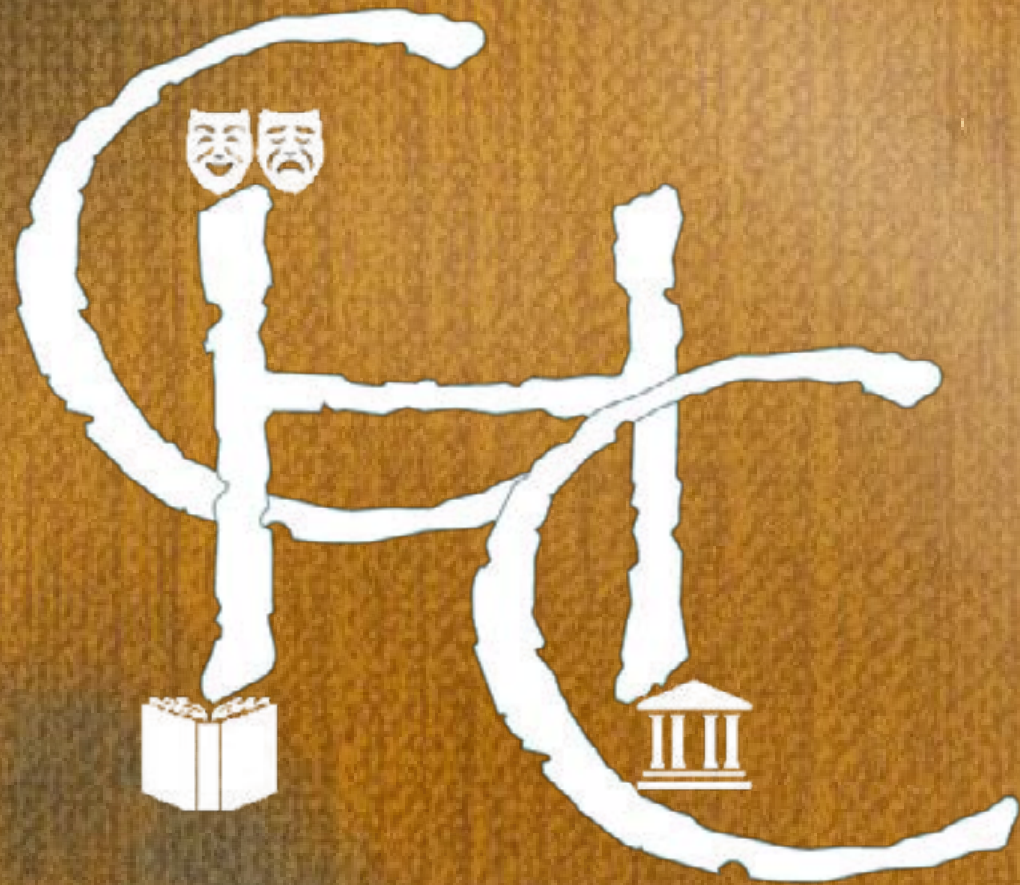
This paper examines a rare example of a paratext written by a woman member of the early modern London book trade in order to identify and contextualise her strategies for selling this unusual type of publication. The paper combines literary and textual analysis with the history of London Printers to unpack this artful, technically savvy and poignant piece of publication history and to also recognise it as an account of one person's experience and reckoning with one of the darker, yet ever-present elements of early modern culture.



More about Jennifer...

Dr Jennifer Young is Senior Lecturer in Early Modern English Literature at the University of Greenwich. Her research focuses on the printing and publication of early modern texts in London and the lives of the stationers who produced them. She is co-author of *Shakespeare in London* and has published articles on the London Book Trade in a range of journals including *The Journal of Early Modern Cultural Studies*. This paper is part of her current focus on widow stationers in 17th century London.

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