

Norwich Area Museums Committee 13 December 2016

## Norwich Museums' briefing for period August to December 2016

### A. Exhibitions at Norwich Castle

#### A1. *British Art Show 8* (24 June – 4 Sept 2016)

*British Art Show 8*, one of the most prestigious contemporary art exhibitions in the country, was for the first time in its history exhibited in East Anglia during the summer. Hosted by Norwich Castle Museum & Art Gallery and Norwich University of the Arts and, *British Art Show 8* opened to the public on 24 June 2016, with three venues across the City of Norwich. Norwich was one of only four UK venues for this show and was the closest location to London.

Part of Hayward Touring's comprehensive exhibition programme, designed to showcase and celebrate the country's leading role in the international art scene, *The British Art Show* is a five-yearly exhibition. For its eighth incarnation 42 established and emerging contemporary artists are represented and the show features more than 100 works – many of which were commissioned or made especially for the exhibition.



Detail of *Diagrams of Love: Marriage of Eyes*, 2015

© Linder Sterling/Dovecot Studios Ltd. 2015

Courtesy the artist, Stuart Shave/Modern Art and Dovecot Studios Ltd.

Norwich was the third venue of *British Art Show 8*'s tour and curators Anna Colin and Lydia Yee, together with curators from both Norwich Castle Museum & Art Gallery and Norwich University of the Arts, devised a special presentation for the City. This, together with works, which had been developed over the run of the exhibition tour, plus totally new additions, made the Norwich showing unique and distinct from previous versions in Leeds and Edinburgh.

All the artists were selected based on their work and significant contribution to the British and international art scene over the past five years.

The evaluation for the show has now been completed and the key findings are very interesting. The headlines include the statistic that 90,456 people engaged with the exhibition directly and that the marketing campaign reached more than 1 million people, including social media outputs. In terms of visitors to the exhibition, 33% had postcodes which were outside of Norfolk, which shows that the exhibition had appeal to a wide variety of audiences beyond the County.

## **A2. Colman Gallery temporary displays (until March 2017)**

A display of drawings and prints by the artist Claughton Pellew (1890-1966) is currently on show in the Colman Project Space, exploring the harmony of country life on the occasion of the 50th anniversary of the artist's death.

A selection of works by the priest, artist and antiquarian Edward Thomas Daniell (1840-1842) is also currently on show in the Colman Watercolour Gallery, featuring watercolours from his travels across Europe and the Middle East.

## **A3. *Sixty years On – Highlights from Norwich Castle's Collection* (Timothy Gurney Gallery from 24 September 2017)**

This exhibition showcases the modern and contemporary art acquired over the last 60 years with the support of the Norfolk Contemporary Art Society. The show includes a range of works by artists including Prunella Clough, Graham Sutherland, Keith Vaughan and Frances Kearney.

## **A4. The Battle of the Somme and the Norfolk Regiment**

Four battalions of the Norfolk Regiment fought in this bloody battle between 1 July and 13 November 1916. Opened in July, this is the third of a series of Rotunda displays commemorating the centenary of the First World War.

## **A5. *Fisherman and Kings: The Photography of Olive Edis* (8 Oct – 22 Jan 2017)**

This our current exhibition celebrates the pioneering and important work of Olive Edis, a Norfolk photographer based in Sheringham whose unique and arresting images, often immortalising local people, place her at the forefront of modern photography. This show is curated by Alistair Murphy, the Curator at Cromer Museum who is an expert on the life and work of Olive Edis.

The Norwich exhibition of her work complements the HLF funded project at Cromer Museum that will transform access to the work of this influential female photographer. A catalogue has also been produced to complement the show.



'Belcher' Johnson & autochrome self-portrait images from the NMS Olive Edis collection

## **Forthcoming exhibitions at Norwich Castle Museum & Art Gallery.**

### ***Small Stories: At Home in a Dolls' House (4 Mar – 25 June 2017)***

Selected as one of only two UK regional venues, NCM will host this international touring exhibition from the V&A Museum of Childhood. Showcasing a stunning collection of twelve of their best dolls' houses, this exhibition will attract families and doll's house enthusiasts from across Norfolk and beyond.



Kaleidoscope House

Laurie Simmons, Peter Wheelwright and Bozart, USA, 2001

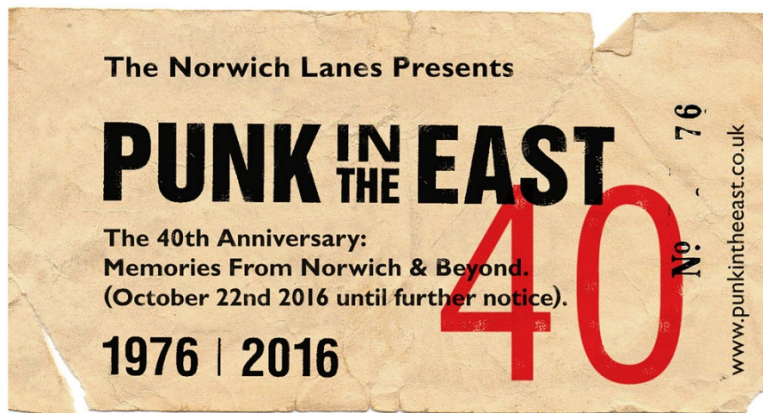
© Victoria and Albert Museum, London

### **Nelson Exhibition: 29<sup>th</sup> July – 1<sup>st</sup> October 2017.**

Norwich Castle will be hosting an exhibition dedicated to Norfolk's greatest hero, Horatio Nelson, in summer 2017. We are yet to confirm a title for the exhibition, however, it will feature many of our own collections as well as significant external loans from Royal Museums Greenwich (the National Maritime Museum) and other local, regional and national organisations. As Nelson was both a prominent local figure and a national hero, we expect this exhibition to be very popular.

### **A6. Exhibitions at the Museum of Norwich: Punk in the East 22<sup>nd</sup> October – 28<sup>th</sup> January 2017.**

An exhibition celebrating 40 years of punk heritage and influence in Norwich and beyond, told through stories, photos and punk memorabilia.



## **B. Events**

### **B1. British Art Show 8 (BAS8) Takeover Days**

To celebrate the arrival of BAS8 in Norwich, members of the Young Norfolk Arts team joined forces with students from Norwich University of the Arts and the Sainsbury Centre Young Associates group to produce two special takeover events. The event at Norwich Castle on Monday 21 and Tuesday 22 November was a considerable success, attracting many visitors.

### **B2. Talking Textiles**

These monthly talks for adults took place at the Norwich Castle Study Centre in Shirehall. Each talk was illustrated with objects from the important costume and textile collection. Subjects included *Dress Fancy* exploring party wear, and *Life's a Beach* considering seaside and nautical fashion.

#### **Curatorial update**

## C1. Major Loans

A major group of fourteen objects were sent out on loan for the prestigious exhibition *The Celts*, previously at the British Museum and the National Museum of Scotland in Edinburgh until 25 September 2016. The items included a stunning drinking horn-terminal in the form of a bovine head with flaring nostrils, which shows incredible design and attention to detail.



## C2. Art Department Research

Curators Francesca Vanke and Giorgia Bottinelli are currently researching a major loan exhibition about Rembrandt scheduled for autumn 2017. The theme of this show is *Lightening the Darkness* – and, focusing chiefly on Norwich Castle’s magnificent but little-known collection of over 90 of Rembrandt’s etchings, will explore the artist’s physical and metaphorical uses of light and shadow, used to such stunning effect in his works in both print, painting and drawing. Francesca Vanke is also working with the Yale Center for British Art on an internationally important loan show for 2018, based around the painting of *The Paston Treasure*. The exhibition will bring together as many pieces from the Paston’s extensive collections of gold and silver as can be located, together with a dazzling array of paintings, musical instruments, jewels, and other objects from the seventeenth century.





(L) Rembrandt van Rijn *Self-portrait with Saskia*, 1636 Etching, copyright Norwich Castle Museum

(R) Nautilus shell and silver-gilt cup, copyright Rijksmuseum, Amsterdam

### **C3. Strangers' Hall**

Curatorial work has continued to focus on the assessment and identification of the extensive doll's house furniture as part of preparations for the *Small Stories* exhibition of dolls' houses from the V&A which Norwich Castle Museum will be hosting 4 March – 25 June 2017. The 18<sup>th</sup> century dolls' house Norwich Baby House is being conserved and redisplayed as part of the programme for the exhibition as a whole, to form the highlight of the 'Small Stories at Strangers' element, which will also offer a display opportunity for star items from this significant collection and provide a service-wide trail for dolls' houses on display across the County.

## **D. Other Developments**

### **D1. Norwich Registrars' Weddings**

Since the commencement of registry office weddings at Norwich Castle on the 1<sup>st</sup> of April 2016, we have seen an increasing number of ceremonies take place. So far this financial year over 500 ceremonies have been completed within the Benefactors' Room.



The Benefactors' Room dressed for a wedding

## **D2. Strangers' Hall Weddings**

Strangers' Hall has seen a healthy number of ceremonies take place, with eight weddings having been delivered in 2016. A review of wedding provision at Strangers' Hall is currently underway.

## **D3. Norwich Castle: Gateway to Medieval England project update**

1. Following permission to start, which was obtained on 14 July 2016, the Project Team have officially entered the Development Phase of the project. The work being undertaken during this period will form the basis of the second-round application to the Heritage Lottery Fund, which is expected to be submitted in late 2017/early 2018.
2. The following important meetings have been held since the last AMC report:
  - The second Academic Advisory Board meeting was held on 16 September 2016
  - The second Project Board meeting was held on 12 October 2016
  - The second HLF Monitor/Mentor meeting was held on 21 October 2016
3. Following a European tender process, Artelia Projects UK Ltd were appointed to provide project and cost management services for the Development and Delivery phases of the project in November 2016. The evaluation panel consisted of members of the NMS Senior Management Team and Norfolk County Council Corporate Property Team, and approval to appoint was granted by the Project Board. An inception meeting with

the Project Team has been scheduled for 14 December 2016 and the contract will officially commence on 9 January 2017.

4. Regular communication is being held between curatorial and project teams at NMS and the British Museum in order to develop concepts for the *British Museum Partnership Gallery of the Medieval Period* within the Keep. An important and creative full-day meeting was held with the Head of National Programmes, Project Curators of Late Medieval Europe and Loans Administration Team at the British Museum and NMS Project Team on 24 November 2016. The meeting was focussed around working in collaboration on the new displays, including digital initiatives, but also saw significant progress made towards developing working practices.
5. A new member of staff, Dickon Whitewood, was successfully appointed as Research Assistant on 28 November 2016. This 12-month HLF-funded post will focus on gathering archival material for Development-Phase work, as well as researching the townscape of medieval Norwich.
6. A consultation session was held on 5 September 2016 with The Society for the Protection of Ancient Buildings, which resulted in favourable responses to the design proposals for the Castle Keep and entrance hall. The Project Team is awaiting written feedback.

## **E. Visitor Numbers**

Total visitor figures for the Norwich Museums were 148,586 for the period 1 April 2016 until 31 October 2016, compared to 152,204 for the period 1 April 2015 to 31 October 2015. This represents a 2% decrease overall. Given the fact that the Easter holidays were split over two financial years and also the very hot summer, the year-to-date performance is encouraging.

A detailed analysis of school visits will be tabled at the meeting.

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