

Norwich Area Museums Committee 15 September 2015
Norwich Museums briefing for period June – August 2015

A. Exhibitions at Norwich Castle

A1. ARTIST ROOMS: Jeff Koons (9 May - 6 September 2015)

This important exhibition sees Jeff Koons's influential and controversial work being exhibited for the very first time in East Anglia. Norwich Castle Museum (NCM) is also the only venue to show his work in the UK this year. The exhibition featured in CNN's list of top 19 world events 'worth travelling for' and has welcomed over 50,000 visitors so far.

The exhibition is also providing an opportunity to extend NMS youth engagement programmes and is proving popular with younger audiences who have been responding excitedly to Koons' colourful and vibrant works and his sense of fun.

The *Koons Collaborative*, the youth group that has been working since January to devise and deliver events to engage younger audiences, have promoted the show through events such as their flowery float at the Lord Mayor's Celebrations and their Koons Couture Fashion Show. This last event has just been shortlisted as part of the Young Norfolk Arts Festival in the Art Entrepreneurs category of the EDP's Norfolk Arts Awards.

The show has supported strong local partnerships including Norwich University of the Arts, Norfolk and Norwich Festival and the Young Norfolk Arts Festival, alongside national and international partnerships with Tate and the National Galleries of Scotland, as well as with the Jeff Koons Studio in New York.

ARTIST ROOMS is an inspirational collection of international contemporary art acquired for the nation by National Galleries of Scotland and Tate through the generosity of Anthony d'Offay. ARTIST ROOMS On Tour is a partnership with Arts Council England and the Art Fund to make available this extraordinary collection to galleries throughout the UK. Anthony d'Offay, the man who made available his astonishing collection of modern art to the nation through the ARTIST ROOMS' scheme, has visited the exhibition three times, and described it as "*a triumph*" and "*the best presentation of Koons collection ever in the UK.*"



Image credit: Jeff Koons, *Winter Bears*, 1988 ARTIST ROOMS Tate and National Galleries of Scotland. Acquired jointly through The d'Offay Donation with assistance from the National Heritage Memorial Fund and the Art Fund 2008 © Jeff Koons

A2. 'Almost too daring for an individual': John Sell Cotman's one-man exhibition, 1806-7 (until 6 March 2016)

During the winter of 1806–7, the citizens of Norwich had the opportunity to visit a one-man exhibition at the house of John Sell Cotman (1782–1842). With 500 artworks, Cotman's exhibition was probably the largest solo show ever to have been staged by a British artist.

This continuing display in the Colman Project Space re-imagines how a part of the exhibition might have looked. In so doing, it highlights the enterprising ways in which Cotman used his artwork to present himself as an ambitious and varied artist at a turning point in his early career.

A3. Sawdust and Threads (until 27 September 2015)

This exhibition in the Timothy Gurney Gallery is the culmination of a residency programme that takes de-accessioned museum objects as its material. For *Sawdust and Threads* artist Caroline Wright has made detailed drawings of each of these objects and then carefully and painstakingly taken them apart. Her meticulous and exquisite drawings are displayed alongside the museum objects in their various states of deconstruction.

The project was conceived by artist Caroline Wright and NCM in partnership with the Polar Museum in Cambridge and UCL Museum & Collections in London. A fully illustrated publication accompanies the exhibition which was launched on 11 July with a panel discussion between artist Caroline Wright, curator Harriet Loffler and academic and catalogue contributor Haidy Geismar. 25 people attended.



A4. Build Your Own: Tools for Sharing (3 October 2015 – 3 January 2016)

Build Your Own is an innovative and exciting new exhibition for Norwich Castle. It has been co-produced by NMS with FACT (Foundation for Art and Creative Technology) and the Crafts Council, working with curators Lauren Parker and Clare Cumberlidge.

The exhibition will feature newly commissioned works by leading artists, makers, creative technologists and collectives. Rachel Rayns with the Raspberry Pi Foundation will install an interactive robot-controlled garden in the gallery. Linda Brothwell examines the heritage of Norwich and experiments with applying our traditional dyes and pigments to new materials (with particular interest in how our medieval buildings were once so colourful). Will Shannon and Assemble showcase a transformative project based in the Toxteth area of Liverpool where they are helping residents to re-build their homes. Finally, a suite of 3D printers will be producing prosthetics for local children as part of the e-Nable community – a global enterprise collaborating to ensure the distribution of free prosthetics worldwide.

The commissions all reflect how craft, community and technology have forever been connected – working together, sharing skills, creating tools and improving our environments. They encompass one-to-one collaboration and mass co-production and both traditional and cutting edge tools.

An extensive programme of events and demonstrations has been organised to complement this exhibition, many of which will take place in the gallery 'Maker Space'. NMS has collaborated with Norwich University of the Arts who will showcase the different ways in which their students and tutors are designing, creating and building - from real-life architecture to virtual worlds through games design and VFX. Exhibition primary sponsors HP Enterprise Services will also demonstrate how their new Sprout device can revolutionise the way we create and share ideas.



Rachel Rayns with Raspberry Pi Foundation, *Neurotic Machines*, 2015. Image: Brian Slater

A5. Ana Maria Pacheco, *Enchanted Garden* (continuing in the Castle Keep)

Pacheco's series of eight alabaster reliefs have been on display on the balcony level of the Keep since March and have received much acclaim from both public and local press, with a visit from the Brazilian Embassy being planned.

Pacheco is a former resident of Norwich and from 1985-89 was Head of Fine Art at Norwich University of the Arts (then Norwich School of Art). During her time in Norwich she befriended Francis Cheetham, then Head of Norwich Museums and an expert on medieval alabasters. She loved the collections at the Norwich Castle and the series *Enchanted Garden* was designed and made with NMS in mind. It has taken years to come to fruition. The alabaster was difficult to source and the material and the scale in which she wanted to work were completely new to Pacheco (who is more widely known for her large sculptures in wood).

The imagery in the reliefs is, in Pacheco's words, 'a homage to the human imagination', but it also references the mythical beasts of her native Brazil, biblical and apocryphal tales, western mythology, poetry and our own local lore.

The reliefs have provided the perfect contemporary counterpart to the medieval alabasters on display in the Keep. For this reasons the loan of the works has been extended until Christmas. During this time NMS will seek to apply for funds to acquire the works for the permanent collection. It is hoped that by doing so, NMS can retain this unique series and continue the stimulating dialogue they have inspired between the medieval and the modern.



A6. Other forthcoming exhibitions

A Viking's Guide to Deadly Dragons (6 Feb – 30 May 2016)

This national touring exhibition from Seven Stories - National Centre for Children's Books is based on Cressida Cowell's hugely popular *How to Train Your Dragon* books. Opening soon after the release of her latest book, *How to Fight a Dragon's Fury*, it is anticipated that Cressida Cowell will come to Norwich Castle to help launch *A Viking's Guide to Deadly Dragons* next spring.

British Art Show 8 (25 June – 4 Sept 2016)

The British Art Show is widely recognised as the most ambitious and influential exhibition of contemporary British art. The exhibition introduces the public to a new generation of British artists, providing a vital overview of the most exciting art produced in this country over the last five years. Organised in partnership with Norwich University of the Arts, this marks the first time the British Art Show has ever been shown in the city.

Julia Margaret Cameron and Olive Edis: Two Modern Women

Photographers (Oct 2016 – Jan 2017) (provisional exhibition title and dates)

The bicentenary of Julia Margaret Cameron (1815 – 1879) celebrates her place as a pioneering woman in the history of photography. In 2016 NCM will stage a unique exhibition pairing Cameron's portraiture with that of Olive Edis, whose own major contribution at the forefront of modern photography is further celebrated with a complementary HLF-funded project at Cromer Museum, culminating in 2017.

Small Stories: At Home in a Doll's 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.

Collecting in East Anglia (Timothy Gurney Gallery from 6 October)

The Collection of Fine and Decorative Arts at NCM has been enriched over several years by some outstanding acquisitions. This display will focus on those works of art acquired in the last five years, but set them within the context of the Lady Adeane Bequest, which greatly enhanced the modern collection in 1993. Recent additions include paintings by Edward Seago, Graham Sutherland and Frank Auerbach and a fine collection of twentieth-century pots. The exhibition will afford NCM the opportunity to convey to the public the numerous paths through which we acquire work and thank the various organisations and individuals who have so generously supported us.



Frank Auerbach, *Head of Julia III* 2002, Norfolk Museums Service, © Frank Auerbach. Formerly in the collection of Lucian Freud, Accepted in Lieu of Tax.

Significant loans

Central to the new Timothy Gurney Gallery display will be a stunning and newly conserved sculpture by Barbara Hepworth: *Pavan (Forms in Movement)*. This beautiful bronze has been loaned to the museum for five years from a private collector and will be shown in the gallery from 6 October, marking the first time it has been on public view in forty years.

NMS is working in partnership with the British Museum and Wiltshire Museum, as the beautiful piece of secular medieval silver, the Lacock Cup, which will be on display in Norwich Castle Keep from 4 September 2015 to 10 January 2016 as part of a national tour.



B. Events

B1. Lunchtime talks

ARTIST ROOMS: Jeff Koons was accompanied by a programme of lunchtime talks (individual attendances shown in brackets):

- *An Introduction to the exhibition* 12 May, Harriet Loffler, NMS (40)
- *The Saint and the Sinner* 23 June, Michael Archer, Professor of Fine Art, Goldsmiths (35)
- *Jeff Koons, Pop Art and the American Dream*, 30 June, Dr Sarah Garland, Lecturer in American Literature and Culture, UEA (40)
- *But is it art? Jeff Koons the Mischief Maker*, 14 July, Francesca Vanke, NMS, (45)

B2. Medieval Madness

Families have been stepping back in time with a host of medieval-themed summer holiday activities at Norwich Castle. This creative and engaging programme has attracted a significant level of interest. Thousands of visitors have taken part on a *Conquer the Castle* trail, involving a quest for eight items in the Castle Keep. There were also sessions on Arms and Armour, medieval weaving and Magna Carta. Performances of *Chaucer's A Knight's Tale* by local actor Neil Paris have proved particularly popular in the Town Close Auditorium. Visitor feedback included many comments that children had been enthralled by the sessions.



B3. Jeff Koons

Several resources have been produced for families visiting the Jeff Koons exhibition with the most popular being the Koons-inspired photo booth designed by MA students at Norwich University of the Arts. The events programme was also well attended by families including the Museums at Night on the 16 May and the Koons Couture event on 26 June. Visitors have enjoyed being able to take

photographs in the gallery, boosting social media activity relating to the exhibition.

B4. Koons Collaborative – Youth Engagement Work at Norwich Castle

July saw the final event organised by the *Koons Collaborative*—a group of eleven young people aged 17–22 years who worked on events and activities to support the world-class Jeff Koons exhibition as part of the Young Norfolk Arts Festival. A Koons-inspired float was part of the Lord Mayor's Parade and won a runner-up prize of £100. The vehicle was supplied by NCC Highways and Transport. In front of 25,000 onlookers, the Koons Collaborative paraded costumed bears, living statues and four young Koons-inspired couture models on a float decked with the funkiest, most brightly coloured accoutrements, including a life-size stuffed lion, a hundred gorgeous paper flowers, graffiti panels, and much more.



B5. Summer School for Looked After Children

The annual Summer School was a great success this year with twelve children aged 9-12 years old taking part in a week-long programme focussing on the medieval Castle. Highlights included the creation of a giant paper-mache medieval queen, which was subsequently placed on display in the Keep. This work took place in partnership with Norfolk's Virtual School, a long-standing NMS partner. The NMS Teaching Museum trainee cohort helped lead the Summer School, displaying great energy and enthusiasm. Foster carers evaluated the day as important for building confidence and social skills, and helping to strengthen foster placements.

B6. The Museum of Norwich

Two successful talks were held this month as part of Adult Learners Week. Fashionistas flocked to the museum to hear Curator Ruth Battersby-Tooke talk about street style. Hannah Henderson presented a talk on 'Making a Memory Box' aimed at those caring for people with dementia. Currently various agencies are looking to make Norwich a 'dementia friendly' city and NMS staff are in discussions about how the museum can be a lead partner in this exciting project.

One of the *Go-Go Dragons!* 'baby' dragons has been located in the museum entrance during the summer. A new 'Knit and Knatter' group are furiously knitting dragons which will 'fly' in the museum's front windows.

B7. Strangers' Hall events programme

Strangers' Hall has worked with other heritage organisations across the city on the Huguenot Summer programme, which celebrates the achievements of this remarkable group of refugees. Strangers' Hall's summer events have followed the Huguenot theme. On 5 July a Huguenot History walking tour led by Rod Spokes, local historian and Blue Badge guide, took visitors through some of the little-explored Norwich churches, lanes, burial grounds and courtyards, highlighting those with particular Huguenot settler associations. The walk finished at Strangers' Hall with Curator Cathy Terry reviewing the museum's textiles and showing Huguenot-related objects, including the Le Blanc family bible.

The Strangers' Hall Summer Fayre celebrated the Huguenot heritage with a specially-themed dance afternoon presented by Norwich Historical Dance, drawing on French dancing traditions.



On 4 September the talk *Stories of Refugees in Elizabethan Norwich* will explore the history of the earlier group of settlers to mark the 350th anniversary year of their arrival in Norwich. This group generally known as 'the Strangers' was directly linked to Strangers' Hall. Historian Dr Alastair Duke will reveal some of their poignant tales.

C. Curatorial update

C1. Major Loans

A major group of fourteen objects will be travelling to the British Museum in September for their much anticipated and prestigious exhibition *The Celts* (24 September to 31 January 2016).



NMS is a major lender to the exhibition which will then travel to National Museum of Scotland in Edinburgh from 11 March to 25 September 2016. The items are some of the most precious from our Iron Age, Roman-British and Early Medieval collections including

a stunning drinking horn-terminal in the form of a bovine head with flaring nostrils, which shows incredible design and attention to detail. The mount was found by a metal detectorist in Needham, South Norfolk and is one of several archaeological treasures acquired through the HLF's *Collecting Cultures* scheme.

C2. Norfolk Historic Buildings Group visit to Strangers' Hall

Led by Jan Bensley, a member of the group and of the NMS learning team, the tour provided a detailed look at the many layers of history which make up this fascinating and elusive building. The tour was written up for the NHBG newsletter by Karen Mackie, a member of the group who also works for Visitor Services.

The group spent a very enjoyable afternoon interrogating the details of the building which gives us clues as to its long history of alterations—such as Nicholas Sotherton's initials and merchant mark in the spandrels supporting the tie beam of the Great Hall which indicates a 16th century alteration. Beginning in the garden, the tour took in the entire building, ending in the Georgian dining room.

The article provides an interesting perspective on a specialist group's experience of one of our sites and demonstrates how we can cater for such groups through the expertise of NMS staff.

C3. Conservation work at Strangers' Hall

The Costume and Textile Association (C&TA) has very generously funded some textile conservation work at Strangers Hall. Currently, work is underway on two key objects:



Georgian Wing Chair, Walnut Room

There is evidence that the chair, which dates from the first half of the 18thC, was re-upholstered in the 1950s and 1980s. The silk cover has not fared well and is split and frayed in many places with some resulting loss of fabric due to light damage and physical deterioration. After a careful review the decision was taken to carry out new reupholstering.



17th Century Stumpwork Cushion Cover, Lady Paine's Bedroom

This beautiful embroidery has been on display for some time in a very heavy wooden box frame at the end of the bed. The box had not been opened for many years so a thorough condition check could not be carried out.



A new bespoke mount and a new acrylic box will be made for the cushion cover, so when it goes back to Strangers' Hall to the foot of the bed, more of the beautiful embroidery and trim will be visible to visitors.

C4. Recent Acquisitions

The Art Department has recently purchased a stunning glass sculpture, *Dragon Boy I*, by Norfolk-based, internationally-known contemporary glass artist, David Reekie. This work, a lively modern take on the ancient Norwich 'Snap' is on display in the Castle Keep, next to the original Snaps. It will also feature in the forthcoming *Vikings Guide to Deadly Dragons* exhibition.

D. Formal Learning

D1. Schools and Formal Learning

Schools numbers at Norwich Castle were strong during June but less good in July. Learning staff have noted a shift in visiting patterns this year as schools wanted to visit earlier and the 'activity week' experience no longer seems to be taking place in the last few weeks of term. The good weather in July also meant that Norwich sites did not attract as many last minute wet-weather visits as usual. Secondary schools continue to find it very difficult to make educational visits.

		JUN	JUL
Norwich Castle	2014	2037	1474
	2015	2489	854
Museum of Norwich	2014	183	106
	2015	123	74

D2. Snapdragons: Early learning at Norwich Castle

The theme for June 'Snapdragons' (the monthly event at NCM for 2-4 year olds) was 'Pattern, Colour and Shape' to link with the Jeff Koons exhibition.

The children collected and created patterns in a playful way—drawing round shapes to find out about outlines and threading coloured cotton reels to create pattern sequences. They looked at and talked about patterns in Norwich shawls, teapots and animals from the collections.



Jeff Koons was introduced as an artist who uses repeated shapes, large outlines and bright colours. The children entered the gallery to look for and match up shapes and colours. The children had great fun playing with their reflections and body shapes in front of the mirrors.

D3. Castle of Ideas: UEA's Festival of Literature for Young People (FLY) at Norwich Castle

For the first time in FLY's history UEA left the campus and set up a Castle of Ideas at Norwich Castle on 13 July. Forty young people from four different secondary schools took part in a day of readings and creative writing workshops with nine authors, poets and playwrights including George Szirtes, Andrea Holland and Steve Waters. Each young person had the opportunity to descend to the dungeons to write scary stories or have a blood-chilling introduction to the Gothic. The feedback was excellent and it was good to work with UEA on such an inspirational event, we hope it will be repeated in the future.



D4. The sixth annual 6th Form Biodiversity Conference

This event was held at Norwich Castle on 9 July. With the aims of supporting A level studies, promoting further study, careers and volunteering in the conservation sector, it also addressed some of the politics of biodiversity. As part of Norwich Castle's annual programme for secondary schools, NCM welcomed fifty students and their teachers. The conference was funded by the RCUK via the UEA Research East project headed by Professor Kay Yeoman which supports local schools' engagement with research. Speakers included staff from UEA, Norfolk Wildlife Trust, Broads Authority, Hawk and Owl Trust. The success of this event is guaranteed by the commitment of staff and volunteer representing all the partner organisations.

Student comments:

Everything I learnt could be used towards my A level

It has really inspired me and shown me the importance of biodiversity



D5. Children's University celebration at UEA

Jenni Williams from the NMS earning team attended the Norfolk Children's University graduation ceremonies at UEA on 16-18 June. Over 1,200 children from around forty Norfolk schools were awarded certificates whilst wearing graduation gowns and caps after completing over 30 hours of learning outside of school. The scheme involves children visiting approved educational establishments including NMS museums and recording their learning in specially designed notebooks called Passports.

E. Other Developments

E1. Weddings

Further to the development of a wedding offer for Norwich museums, a number of wedding bookings have now been confirmed; two for later in 2015 at Strangers' Hall and five for 2016. Staff have also supported a number of viewings with potential customers. The first wedding ever to be delivered at Stranger's Hall took place on Saturday 22 August. The event was very successful.

E2. Conference & banqueting

NMS continues to actively promote the corporate venue hire offer at Norwich Museums. A range of branded promotional materials have been produced and distributed. Corporate hire is recognised to be an area with considerable potential in terms of enhancing earned income. NCM has already delivered a number of high profile evening civic and corporate events including the NCC Chairman's Reception and the VJ commemoration event, with strong levels of bookings and

interest for the remainder of 2015 and 2016. Bookings range from book launches to formal dinners and receptions.

On 16 June NCM hosted the launch of both the *Go Go Dragons!* trail and sticker book, with 100 guests attending. The Castle mound has subsequently played host to two of the *Go Go Dragons!*, with large numbers of visitors participating in the accompanying trail.

F. Visitor Numbers

Norwich Museums continue to perform well in 2015-16, sustaining the excellent performance of 2014-15. Visitor numbers from the period April-July 2015 remain strong, with attendances at the Castle boosted by the Jeff Koons temporary exhibition and the strong *Medieval Madness!* programme of family activities over the summer holidays.

April-July 2015:

Castle Museum 72,845 (71,820 in 2014-15)

Museum of Norwich 4,459 (4,513)

Strangers' Hall 3,408 (2,727)

Detailed visitor figures will be circulated at the meeting.

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