

IMA FORUMS: EXHIBITION MAKING – LIBRARY COLLECTIONS

National Library of Ireland. 7 December 2016

#irishmuseums

SCHEDULE

- 09:30 – 09:45 Registration – National Library of Ireland Seminar Room
- 09:45 – 10:00 Welcome: Dr Sandra Collins, Director, National Library of Ireland
- 10:00 – 10:45 Dr Jill Unkel, Curator of Western Collections, Chester Beatty Library **Round peg in a square hole, or fitting a collection into an exhibition**
Dr Orla Fitzpatrick, National Museum of Ireland **Off the Shelf: maximising the potential of library collections within the museum**
- 10:45 – 11:15 Tea / Coffee Break
- 11:15 – 12:30 Andrew Moore, Library Assistant, National Gallery of Ireland **Rare auction catalogues in the National Gallery of Ireland**
Mark Reynolds, Archivist GAA Museum **The GAA Museum's library and archive collections.**
Jennifer Greiner **Risking the Work of Angels: the loan and exhibition of iconic manuscripts**
- 12:30 – 13:30 Lunch (*at own leisure*)
- 13:30 – 14:45 Evelyn Flanagan, Special Collections Librarian, University College Dublin (UCD) **Creating Exhibitions in Special Collections UCD Library**
Brian Crowley, Curator, The Pearse Museum **'Knowing I loved my books': Exhibiting Shakespeare at the Pearse Museum**
Nicola Ralston, Assistant Keeper, Education and Outreach Department, National Library of Ireland **Evolving through Evaluation: Learning lessons at the National Library of Ireland**
- 14:45 – 15:00 Open session and Final Comments



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National Library
of Ireland



An Roinn Ealaíon, Oidhreachta,
Gnóthaí Réigiúnacha, Tuaithe agus Gaeltachta
Department of Arts, Heritage,
Regional, Rural and Gaeltacht Affairs

An Chomhairle Oidhreachta
The Heritage Council



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SPEAKER BIOGRAPHIES AND PRESENTATION ABSTRACTS

Dr Orla Fitzpatrick, National Museum of Ireland

Off the Shelf: maximising the potential of library collections within the museum

This paper will explore the role of library collections within a large national cultural institution. Books, pamphlets and journals are often viewed as peripheral and only of use in the research phase of an exhibition. This hierarchical view of collections fails to acknowledge how library holdings can add to an exhibition's narrative and illuminate its theme. It will address the untapped potential that such collections represent both in terms of exhibition content and within the role of wider museum scholarship. Using case studies from the National Museum of Ireland, the author will illustrate how library materials can be displayed and incorporated into an exhibition in a meaningful way. It will also show how online exhibitions and interactive displays could be used to enliven traditional displays. She will also refer to the particular conservation requirements of paper-based objects and to the wider issues of access that such 'non-core' collections raise.

Dr Orla Fitzpatrick recently completed a doctorate at Ulster University on the subject of modernity and modernism in Irish photographic publications. She has worked in libraries since 1993 and currently holds the position of Librarian at the National Museum of Ireland. She has published on Irish material culture, design and photographic history.

Dr Jill Unkel, Curator of Western Collections, Chester Beatty Library

Round peg in a square hole, or fitting a collection into an exhibition

The Western Collection at the Chester Beatty includes European prints, Christian manuscripts from Europe, Armenia, Ethiopia, Egypt and Syria, Ancient Egyptian, Christian, Manichaean, literary and documentary papyrus, Cuneiform tablets, Hebrew manuscripts, Russian Icons, and various miscellaneous objects dating from 3000 BC to the early twentieth century. The languages of the collection include Sumerian, Hebrew, Egyptian, Coptic, Syrian, Greek, Latin, Armenian, Slavonic, Russian, Ge'ez, French and English. Faced with such a heterogeneous collection, in terms of its geography, chronology and subject matter there are a number of challenges that naturally arise in attempting to shape a single cohesive permanent display. This talk is going to address a number of these by examining the recent reinterpretation of the Western Section of the Library's Sacred Traditions Gallery.

Dr Jill Unkel, Curator of the Western Collections, received her doctorate from the Department of the History of Art and Architecture at Trinity College Dublin. Jill also has an MPhil in Irish Art History from Trinity College Dublin and an MSc in Art Education from the University of Long Island. She has been with the Chester Beatty for over ten years working with both the Islamic and Western Collections and was appointed curator in 2013.

Dr Unkel's research interests include medieval European book illumination and European print production. She has curated a number of temporary exhibitions including, *The Art Books of Henri Matisse* (2011), *Costumes Parisiens: fashion plates from 1912-1914* (2012-13), and, most recently, *Wicked Wit: Darly's Comic Prints* (2015-16), for which she produced the accompanying catalogue.

Andrew Moore, Library assistant, National Gallery of Ireland

Rare auction catalogues in the National Gallery of Ireland

This paper is a review of the rare auction catalogues held in the library of the National Gallery of Ireland, the earliest dating from 1758. Sales catalogues provide important information about the financial transactions of artworks and almost always include the lists of buyers, annotated by the auctioneers in the margins. This information then provides a history of ownership and a socio-demographic profile of buyers. This talk will focus on the catalogues held in the library from the mid-18th century until the 1860s. The earliest catalogue is a sale of prints and the popularity of this medium, before paintings were popular in Dublin, will be discussed before looking at catalogues from 1805 and into the 19th century showing how attributions of paintings were vague. The talk concludes with the role of the Irish born female connoisseur, Anna Jameson who railed against poor descriptions in auction catalogues which she referred to as demonstrating 'a want of knowledge'.

Andrew Moore is a Library assistant at the National Gallery of Ireland since 2007. He has a BA in Fine Art and completed his MA in Dutch 17th century art history from the University of East Anglia in 1996. Since then he has worked at Bonhams auctioneers, the Hugh Lane gallery (Francis Bacon Studio) and also as editorial assistant in Italy before joining the gallery in 2004. His research interests included the crossover of art, ephemera and print production, particular early auction catalogues, as well as 19th century journals and newspapers. He has talked at conferences and published in peer reviewed journals on these themes with regards to the First World War and 19th century Arctic expeditions.

Mark Reynolds, Archivist GAA Museum

The GAA Museum's library and archive collections.

In 2007, and in response to user needs, the GAA Museum established a professional library and archive service. Over the last decade the library and archive collections have grown substantially and they now form an integral part of the overall GAA Museum collection.

This presentation will provide the audience with an overview of the GAA Museum's library and archive collections. The breadth of the collections will be discussed, as will their everyday management, use and specific requirements (storage and preservation) within the museum environment. In addition to providing a general overview of the collections, the use of these materials in individual projects will be discussed including their use in museum exhibitions; museum publications, events and resources, and the recent digital archive created by the GAA to mark the centenary of the 1916 Rising.

Mark Reynolds is a professionally qualified archivist who has worked with the GAA Museum since 2007. In addition to the day-to-day management of the GAA Museum's library and archive facility, Mark is the documentation officer for the museum and is responsible for cataloguing the collection in its entirety – archives, publications and artefacts. Mark has a keen interest in the history of the GAA and has completed a Research Master's Degree on the subject. He has recently contributed to two publications – *The GAA and Revolution in Ireland, 1913-1923* and *The Pocket Book of the GAA*.

Jennifer Greiner

Risking the Work of Angels: the loan and exhibition of iconic manuscripts

This paper, based on Greiner's recent MLitt dissertation in Museum and Gallery Studies, discusses the loan and exhibition of iconic manuscripts, namely the *Book of Kells* and the *Lindisfarne Gospels*. This is undertaken by looking at the motivations and perceived benefits of loans, in comparison to the physical dangers endured by the objects. The objective is to conclude whether or not the benefits of iconic manuscript loans outweigh the risks through the use of specific exhibition case studies.

Jennifer Greiner recently graduated with distinction from the University of St Andrews with an MLitt in Museum and Gallery Studies. Prior to this Greiner worked as Education and Outreach Assistant in Marsh's Library and as a Preservation Assistant in Trinity College Long Room Library and in the National Archives. Since her previous MA in Medieval Literature she has been interested in working with rare books and manuscripts, with a strong focus on collections care as well as research and display.

Evelyn Flanagan, Special Collections Librarian, University College Dublin

Creating Exhibitions in Special Collections UCD Library

This presentation will give an overview of the exhibitions in UCD Library over the past few years, the reasons for having these exhibitions and the impact that they have had on promoting the collections within the university and beyond.

To date, several exhibitions have been linked to the launch and reception to mark a specific donation. Others have been linked to conferences and symposia. The issue of curation will be addressed especially in terms of liaising with academics and relying on their good will in this regard. Also, working with graphic designers and the lessons learnt through this process.

This paper will also address the thorny issue of raising funding for exhibition both internally from library budgets and externally from donors, or from fundraising. Though viewed as a good idea, the costs involved can come as a shock and it can be difficult to convince those in control of the purse strings that the impact is worthwhile.

In the past, this work would have been viewed as ancillary but it is becoming a core part of the functions in recent years. The implications of this will be discussed.

Evelyn Flanagan has worked as the Special Collections librarian in UCD for the past nine years. This role has involved promoting the rare book and archival collections in to the UCD community primarily and also nationally. Prior to this she worked in a similar role in NUI Galway and as an intern in the European University Institute in Florence.

Brian Crowley, Curator, Pearse Museum – The Office of Public Works

'Knowing I loved my books': Exhibiting Shakespeare at the Pearse Museum

The 1916 Rising was the defining event in the life of Patrick Pearse, so it is hardly surprising that the centenary of that event dominated 2016 in the Pearse Museum. However this year also marked the 400th anniversary of the death of William Shakespeare, one of Pearse's favourite authors and a significant literary influence on him. Shakespeare played a central role in the cultural and imaginative life of the Pearse Family and this is reflected in the Pearse Museum's collection which contains many fine editions of his works. Shakespeare also occupied a prominent position in the curriculum of Scoil Éanna, the school Pearse ran between 1908 and 1916. In a year in which Pearse's role as a revolutionary was to the fore, the 'Pearse and Shakespeare' exhibition offered a different and unexpected perspective on his personality. This presentation will look at the interpretative strategy behind this exhibition and explore some of the challenges involved in mounting a book-based museum display.

Brian Crowley is the curator of the Pearse Museum in St Enda's in Rathfarnham in Dublin. He is the author of Patrick Pearse – A Life in Pictures. He studied English and History in Trinity College and completed a Masters in Museology in the University of East Anglia. Brian has been working at the Pearse Museum (OPW) since 2001 and is Chair of the Board of the Irish Museums Association.

Nicola Ralston, Assistant Keeper, Education and Outreach Department, National Library of Ireland

Evolving through Evaluation: Learning lessons at the National Library of Ireland

During 2016, the National Library of Ireland undertook a comprehensive exhibition evaluation. This paper will firstly examine why and how the project was implemented by outlining its aims and the varied means employed to gather data from our visitors, colleagues and peers. Practical logistical lessons, as learnt first hand by the exhibition team, will then be discussed, as will a sample of key results. Finally, the implications of the project's findings will be considered and suggestions made as to how these will shape future National Library of Ireland exhibitions.

Nicola Ralston is an Assistant Keeper within the Education and Outreach Department of the National Library of Ireland, Dublin. Her undergraduate degree in Design at Glasgow School of Art preceded the award of a first-class Masters in the Conservation of Fine Art, by the University of Northumbria. More recently, she graduated with distinction from the University of Leicester's Masters programme in Museum Studies.