

Symposium: Museums and Contemporary Craft

Thursday 5 March 2020

11:00 – 17:30

Auditorium, National Museum of Scotland

£20, £16 Members and Conc. Book at www.nms.ac.uk/symposium

Join us at a symposium to explore how collaboration between museums and the world of contemporary craft can help to shed new light on museum collections. The event will bring together archaeologists, conservators and curators, along with contemporary craft artists and makers, to consider how knowledge-sharing between these two fields allows us to re-evaluate the past.

The event will culminate in an exclusive preview of the new Glenmorangie Commission by silversmith Simone ten Hompel. Working directly with our early medieval collections and our *Creating Scotland* research project, Simone has created a new piece of contemporary metal artwork, which will be displayed in our Grand Gallery for the preview.

Generously supported by The Glenmorangie Company

- 10:30 Registration and morning coffee
- 11:00 Welcome from National Museums Scotland
Adrian Maldonado Glenmorangie Research Fellow
Sarah Rothwell Curator of Modern & Contemporary Design
- 11:10 **Michael Eden**, Digital Craft Artist
Opening Keynote: How contemporary artists and makers can re-evaluate how we look at museum collections

A visit to a museum has the potential to be an experience that brings the past into the present and shines a light into the future. Whether this happens depends very much on the collection, the curator's vision and the quality of the display. It also depends on how the visitor responds, whether the objects speak to them and where those encounters lead.

Taking a look at how artists and designers have engaged fruitfully with museums should provide an insight into this symbiotic relationship and perhaps help to kindle future creative outcomes.

11:50

Mhairi Maxwell Assistant Curator, V&A Dundee

Jennifer Gray Designer and Programme Director of Jewellery and Silversmithing, Edinburgh College of Art

The Glenmorangie Project Recreations: Curator and maker, the impact of shared knowledge on practice and research

Commissioned as part of the Glenmorangie Research Project in 2015, Jennifer blended her knowledge of both traditional silversmithing and current digital methods to create a fitting for a drinking horn inspired by early medieval objects in the National Museum of Scotland's collection. Four years later, we take this chance to reflect on the experience of working together on this imaginative recreation as an archaeologist and maker.

In creating something honest to the record but at the same time not shying away from embracing experimentation with modern-day techniques and technology, this process of recreation not only taught us much about how these objects may have functioned in the past, but also urged us to negotiate questions of authenticity and creativity in the present. With our gazes respectfully turned backwards and forwards in time, we confronted our situated practices as curator and maker.

12:20

Mary Davis Artefact Conservator, National Museums Scotland

The Galloway Hoard: Contemporary insights on Viking Age technologies

The nature of archaeological material and its degradation during burial often means a forensic approach is taken in order to understand artefacts and the original technologies employed for their manufacture. This talk illustrates how the expertise of a skilled contemporary silversmith contributed to an understanding of how archaeological evidence could be verified by reflecting on metalworking processes used to make both modern and ancient objects; this input became integral in pulling together knowledge to understand past practices.

12:40

Questions for the morning speakers

13:00

Lunch*

14:00

Curator led tours of archaeological, silver and contemporary collections. Confirm your place at morning registration. Meet at Auditorium.

14:45

Return to Auditorium

14:55 **Silvia Weidenbach**
Jewellery designer
*A Visual Feast: reinterpreting the Gilbert Collection,
a full sensory experience*

Internationally renowned for her hybridised jewels that are inspired by the extravagant ornamentation and exquisite craftsmanship that decorative arts have displayed throughout history, Silvia will discuss her residency, and resulting exhibition *A Visual Feast*, within the Rosalinde and Arthur Gilbert Collection at the V&A, London. Silvia will explain how she sought to challenge visitors' interaction with historic and contemporary objects within museum spaces, by exploring the human senses through different artistic mediums, and collaborations with numerous artists, performers and musicians.

15:30 **Lisa Mason** Asst. Curator of Modern & Contemporary Design,
National Museums Scotland
Naomi Robertson Master Weaver, Dovecot Studios
Archie Brennan: Sharing a Warp

In 2018 Dovecot Studios and National Museums Scotland embarked on a joint research project to examine the career of tapestry artist Archie Brennan (Edinburgh, 1931 – 2019). Archie Brennan is one of the most influential tapestry weavers of the 20th century, lauded for his iconoclastic approach to the medium and his lifelong commitment to teaching. This research has informed the creation of a new tapestry (supported by Creative Scotland) inspired by Brennan's approach to tapestry and the permanent textile collection at National Museums Scotland. We will discuss this project as a unique opportunity to re-examine the collection and pass on knowledge to a new generation of weavers.

16:00 Afternoon coffee

16:30 **Simone ten Hoppel** Glenmorangie Commission Artist
Inside the Museum, an Outsiders Point of View

Shared knowledge exchanges between contemporary craft artists, archaeologists, conservators and curators are more than just looking at how something is made. It is also about looking at what the social economic systems were like at the time of creation. Why an object was made and by whom. Each artefact has a story to tell, of its journey through time and the places it has been. These discussions shaped the way in which I as an

“outsider” looked at the artefacts within the Museum, and I will explain how they helped me to create the work I was commissioned to make.

- 17:15 Questions with the afternoon speakers
- 17:30 Final commentary and conclusion
Adrian Maldonado Glenmorangie Research Fellow
Sarah Rothwell Curator of Modern & Contemporary Design
- 17:30 Comfort break
- 18:00 **Drinks Reception and exclusive preview** of the new Glenmorangie Commission in the Grand Gallery of the National Museum of Scotland
- 19:30 Reception concludes

*Morning and afternoon coffee is provided but we ask that you make your own arrangements for lunch. The Events Space is available for you, if you wish to bring your own packed lunch. Alternatively, the Museum Brasserie serves hot and cold meals and can be found in the Entrance Hall, by the main entrance to the Museum. Our balcony café on level 3 serves home baking, sandwiches and hot home-made soup. National Museums Scotland members receive a 20% discount in both the Brasserie and balcony café.

If you have any access requirements, please contact [**info@nms.ac.uk**](mailto:info@nms.ac.uk)