

NaMu
Making National Museums

| A series of Marie Curie-funded international workshops - comparing institutional arrangements, narrative scope and cultural integration

Call for participation for Workshop 2

National museum narratives

University of Leicester, UK, 18-20 June 2007

In the second of a series of 6 workshops examining facets of national museums, organised by the Universities of Linköping, Oslo and Leicester, this workshop will explore the explicit and implicit narratives of nation to be found in national museums. The workshop provides 30 funded places for existing PhD students and 10 for post-doctoral students with no more than 6 years research experience. The meeting will also fund a number of internationally renowned keynote speakers. Participants from the first workshop may apply for a place at this meeting. Applicants should be able to demonstrate that they can contribute to the central debate of this conference series which concerns the place of the national museum in society and nation. It is not essential that attendees are specifically researching national museums but they must be able to demonstrate that they can contribute to the aims of this workshop and will benefit from engagement with the wider delegate group. Full details of the programme for Making National Museums are presented at www.namu.se.

The aims of the Leicester workshop are two fold. Firstly, it is an opportunity for those in the early stages of their research careers to engage in an exchange of ideas with their peers. Participants will achieve this through structured discussion sessions and small group work centred on fieldwork at the major national museums in London. To facilitate these conversations, participants will contribute a poster paper which outlines their research, its theoretical influences, its research context and methodologies, and any research outputs already achieved. The posters should indicate how this work might contribute ideas, approaches, framing questions and so on, for the study of national museums. The posters will be exhibited at the meeting and will form the basis for individual conversations on the first day which will provide direct benefits to individual participants in terms of enriching their research outlook and approach.

The second aspect of the meeting is rather more experimental, and will explore how a group of individuals – the delegates themselves – locate narratives of nation in these museums. Both as individuals and in small multidisciplinary and multinational groups, delegates will attempt to locate the nation within the museum. Through structured explorations and conversations both in the museums themselves and subsequently, delegates will unravel the narratives and semiotics of these important institutions. Are these just great museums or do they really say something to – or about – the British?

In the first meeting of the series, held in Norrköping, Sweden, we explored the range of studies currently being undertaken by researchers in Europe. These raised a large number of potential research themes, topics, methodologies and questions which will be pursued in greater detail at this and other meetings in the series. Each meeting focuses on a different perspective and each will have a different complexion in terms of the kinds of sessions, topics, and debates. The workshops themselves will evolve as the series progresses. The Leicester conference is centred very much on narratives, individual and group interaction, and on information exchange which aims to support research development. It will permit researchers at various stages in their research careers to discuss their research and its applicability.

CLOSING DATE FOR THIS CALL: 30TH APRIL 2007

Venue: The Coppice and Stamford Hall, University of Leicester

Programme in Outline

18th June 2007

12.00 Registration and posters submitted and hung

12.30 Lunch

13.30 Welcome and introduction

13.40 Keynote: Donald Preziosi

14.20 Keynote: Chris Whitehead

15.00 Discussion

15.20 Tea and opportunity to see posters

15.50 Keynote: Peter van Mensch

16.30 Keynote: Eilean Hooper-Greenhill

17.10 Discussion

17.30 Poster session, ideas exchange and refreshments

19.30 Poster session ends

20.00 Dinner

19th June 2007

8.30 Depart for London

Small group research work at the following London nationals:

The Victoria & Albert Museum

The Natural History Museum

The Science Museum

The British Museum

The National Gallery

The National Portrait Gallery

Tate Modern

Tate Britain

The National Maritime Museum

17.00 Depart for Leicester

20.00 Conference Dinner

20th June 2007

9.00 Introduction to debate.

9.10 Mixed group workshops

10.30 Coffee

11.00 Plenary session: National museum narratives

12.30 Lunch and departure

Details of poster session

The first workshop privileged short communications and longer written submissions. This second workshop requires a rather different kind of effort on the part of delegates and, indeed, attendees from the first meeting will generally be able to distil information from their original presentations for these posters. The poster presentations will be used to tell other attendees about the research an individual is undertaking. Specifically: the research context (the intellectual background from which the research questions emerge), the research questions, theoretical shaping, methods and results or preliminary results if known. The research described may not specifically discuss national museums but it should have some applicability to this topic. By this means it is hoped that participants at the conference will have their horizons extended. Posters should be A1 in size and also carry title of research project/thesis work; author; author location. Further details will be placed on the NaMu website.

Participation

Funding covers two nights accommodation, a contribution to travel expenses and all meals whilst at the conference. In order to apply please visit the NaMu website (www.namu.se) and register (or update your personal details if necessary) and also email Amy Barnes directly at ajb108@leicester.ac.uk stating how you believe you could contribute to the proposed meeting. You will also need to supply Amy with details of your likely travel costs (see below). Final selection will be made to ensure a rich disciplinary and national mix of delegates.

Travelling to Leicester

Travelling within the UK: Leicester is just over an hour north of London by train leaving from St. Pancras station. Midland Mainline operates this train service. For tickets and times try thetrainline.com. Leicester is centrally placed in England and thus fairly easy to get to from other parts of the country as well. It is on the east-west train line which passes through Birmingham, Peterborough, Norwich. If travelling from Scotland, flying can be cheaper. There are numerous cheap train tickets available on the web. Full price tickets can be very expensive but it is usually possible to avoid them

Travelling to Britain: The most convenient airports for Leicester are London Luton and Birmingham International. London Luton is less than an hour from Leicester by train and is home to low cost airlines Easyjet and Ryanair. Free bus service from outside the airport terminal takes you to Luton Airport Parkway station a few minutes away. Catch the train north from there. You may need to change at Luton town station. This latter station is not particularly helpful in terms of information but screens on the bridge/entrance will say which platform. Alternatively, Birmingham International Airport is also very easy. Catch the train from there northwards to Birmingham New Street Station, then take the train to Leicester. From East Midlands Airport catch a bus to Leicester – this airport is a little less convenient because it lacks a train connection. Of the other London airports: from Heathrow catch the Heathrow Express (expensive but fast) to Paddington, Circle line tube around to St Pancras Station, and train north. From Stansted Airport take the train into London (unless advised otherwise) and make your way to St Pancras. From Gatwick Airport, again head north across London to St Pancras. London City Airport is a tiny airport in the centre of the capital. It is often quite useful for that hop across the Channel. Alternatively, you can catch the Eurostar train from Paris or Brussels.

Useful weblinks:

<http://www.midlandmainline.com/>
<http://www.thetrainline.com/>
<http://www.london-luton.co.uk/en/> (Luton Airport)
<http://www.bhx.co.uk/> (Birmingham International Airport)
<http://www.heathrowairport.com/>
<http://www.eastmidlandsairport.com/cms/1/home.html>
<http://www.stanstedairport.com/>
<http://www.gatwickairport.com/>
<http://www.londoncityairport.com/>
<http://www.eurostar.com/>
<http://www.ryanair.com/>
<http://www.easyjet.com/>

Past, present and future meetings in the NaMu series (specific titles to be confirmed in some cases):

- **Workshop 1: *Setting the frames***, Cultural Studies, Linköpings universitet, Norrköping, Sweden, 26-28 February 2007.
- **Workshop 2: *National museum narratives***, Department of Museum Studies, University of Leicester, UK, 18-20 June 2007
- **Workshop 3: *European national museums in a global world***, Department of culture studies and oriental languages, University of Oslo, Norway, 12-14 November 2007
- **Workshop 4: *Comparing European national museums: territories, nation-building and change***, Cultural Studies, Linköping University, Sweden, 18-20 February 2008
- **Workshop 5. *National museums in a technological Europe***, Department of Museum Studies, University of Leicester, 16-18 June 2008
- **Workshop 6. *Concluding conference: European national museums encountering a globalized culture***, Department of culture studies and oriental languages, University of Oslo, Norway, 17-19 November 2008

Organising Committee

Professor Peter Aronsson, Culture Studies, Linköpings universitet, Sweden.

Professor Arne Bugge Amundsen, Cultural history, Oslo University, Norway.

Professor Simon Knell, Museum Studies, University of Leicester, UK.