

CURATING  
LONDON  
programme  
(2018–2023)

LONDON  
MUSEUM



The New Museum – artistic impression of the view from the south-west





# CURATING LONDON PROGRAMME (2018-2023)

## CONTENTS

A New Museum	6
Curating London	8
<b>THEMATIC COLLECTING</b>	
Brexit Talks	12
Dub London: Bassline of a City	14
Collecting the Pandemic	18
London Eats and Feeding Black	20
<b>COLLECTING LOCAL HISTORIES</b>	
Collecting Ends	24
Weaving London Stories	26
Archaeology of Now	28
We The People	30
<b>RESEARCH</b>	
Greenwich Community Freelancer	34
Inequalities, Class and the Pandemic	36
Capital Nourishment Fund	38
Contacts	39



Artistic impression of the layered new museum

# A NEW MUSEUM

We are moving to a new home in 2026. The new museum will be situated within a historic meat market called Smithfield, in the city centre. The new museum spaces are structured around the concept of time.

There are six distinct main spaces of the new museum – West Poultry Avenue, General Market Ground Floor, General Market Basement, Poultry Market Ground floor, Poultry Market Basement and Poultry Market Upper Floor. Each area has its own specific temporal marker:

**Real Time** in West Poultry Avenue reflects London right now, in the moment. It will be the museum's main entrance and will retain the feel of the street.

**Our Time**, in the General Market, will be an experience about London now, informed by our immediate past. Our Time will be completely different from any of our galleries today, it will feel contemporary, it will regularly change, it will be driven by partnerships with Londoners and it will be very active all day and long into the night.

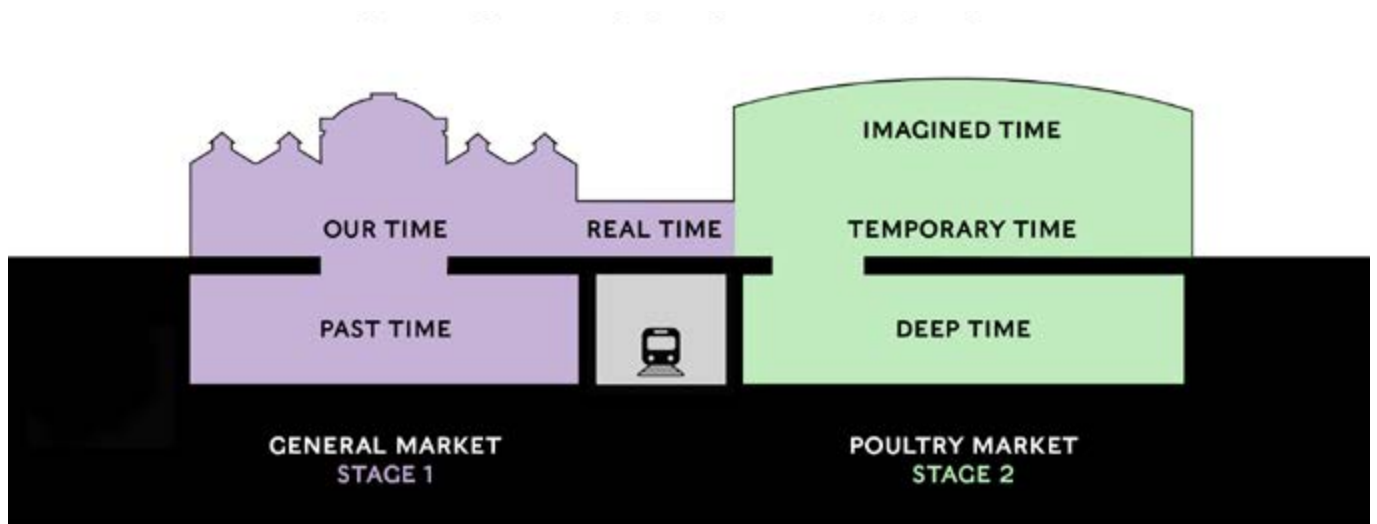


**Past Time**, beneath Our Time in an old Goods Depot & Salt Store, will explore London's history through varied perspectives. It will feature key objects from the London Collection and include immersive experiences. Visitors will be able to watch trains passing through the museum here.

**Deep Time**, in the underground of the old Poultry Market Cold Stores, will express the enormity and potency of the London Collection, inviting visitors to engage and interact with our collections.

**Temporary Time**, on the old Trading Floor of the Poultry Market, will host changing exhibitions, which highlight the latest research into London history.

**Imagined Time**, beneath The Shell roof of the Poultry Market, will create fantastical London worlds that are photogenic, inspire imagination and creative engagement.





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# **CURATING LONDON**

## **2018-2023**

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Curating London was a major five year collecting programme (2018-2023) inspired by the lived experience of Londoners and funded by Arts Council England. As part of the programme we worked with Londoners to capture the breadth and depth of 21st century life in the city, across our two sites: London Museum and London Museum Docklands.

An interest in contemporary history isn't new for museums: far-sighted curators have always tried to capture the concerns of today for posterity. London Museum's collection includes an important collection of women's uniforms acquired at the height of the First World War, when London was still under threat from German air-raids. In recent times, the growth of interest in social history has resulted in more and more museums focusing on contemporary collecting.

However, it is impossible to collect contemporary history with any rigour if the museum is divorced from everyday life. London Museum needs insight into the popular culture and everyday experience of local communities. Without that knowledge, we will not recognise the most important issues facing Londoners today, nor be able to collect the objects and stories that reflect them.



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From the 1970s onwards, many museums have recognised the need to attract audiences from across society to remain relevant to the contemporary world. When the Museum of London opened in 1976, its first Director Tom Hume told the *Evening News*: “If within five to ten years of opening we haven’t got families from Golden Lane and other parts of Islington coming in for a look, we shall have missed out.”

This desire for museums to become more accessible led to the aspiration of diversifying museum collections. Over the past thirty years, museums across the country have been developing exhibitions and collecting programmes which set out to capture the richness and diversity of their people.

The Museum of London launched the *Peopling of London* programme in 1993, exploring the long history of migration to London, which inspired a new way for museums to work with their communities. The museum also initiated *Collecting 2000*, which sought to document everyday life at the turn of the millennium, and a project around the 2012 Olympic Games to collect social media posts.

We’ve also been inspired by other London museum initiatives like Brent’s *Front Room: a Caribbean Perspective* in 1996. Curating London

is also indebted to the work developed in London by borough museums in Hackney, Croydon, and Islington, and nationwide by the 2012 *Stories of the World* programme and the more recent *Collecting Birmingham* initiative. Elsewhere in Europe similar experiences have been undertaken in Rotterdam with the *Authentic Rotterdam Heritage* initiative and The Amsterdam Museum’s digital project, *Corona in the City* which launched the city’s contemporary collecting programme.

Although the Curating London programme has grown out of this long history, it differs markedly from previous practice. London Museum will use knowledge gleaned from Londoner’s lived experience to create collections that represent aspects of everyday life. We want our collections to reflect the multiple perspectives and experiences of contemporary London. Museum collections are shaped by particular hierarchies of knowledge, which have marginalised and often excluded certain community voices and worldviews. The knowledge coming from people’s lived experience has been traditionally overlooked and deemed unworthy of museum collections.

As part of the collecting, engagement and display work undertaken, the team has grappled with fundamental questions regarding contemporary



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curatorship, from issues of ethics, polyvocality, power and knowledge to concerns surrounding value, de-centring practice, and repatriation to cite a few. A key part of Curating London's work at London Museum Docklands has focused on how we can use the London, Sugar and Slavery gallery as a launch pad from which to rethink contemporary collecting. What contemporary objects and experiences can help us understand the multiplicity of Blackness in London? How can we use contemporary collecting to re-imagine the London Sugar and Slavery gallery and Black futures in London?

The Curating London programme has translated into a number of ambitious projects which have tackled sensitive subjects, broken new curatorial grounds, and tested innovative research-led methodologies that are contributing to the museum's transformation agenda as we move towards the new museum.

Over the past five years the Curating London team developed new collections for the London Museum, some from across London, and some specific and local which will be the focus of the next sections. As a result, a total of over 600 acquisitions have so far been accessioned in the permanent collection, spanning from dress and textile and digital objects, to prints, photographs, oral histories, ephemera and social and working history items.

**“I hope future generations looking at our experience will ponder and reflect on their own lives, their own relationships and be grateful for the little things and find value in non-material things. That they will see that whatever life throws at them, it is important to find the silver lining. To have hope in the darkest of times and to take resilience, strength and comfort from our stories.”**

Nafisa from Waltham Forest

A woman with curly hair, wearing a black headband and a gold-colored top, is looking intently at a stack of books on a shelf. The books have blue spines, and one spine clearly shows the word "ROOTS". The background is filled with more bookshelves, creating a warm, library-like atmosphere. A large, bright blue light source is visible on the right side of the frame.

*Thematic*  
**COLLECTING**



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# BREXIT TALKS

## 2018-2019

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Brexit as a contemporary social, political and economic phenomenon is set to reconfigure London's place in the world, questioning how 21st century Londoners conceptualise their sense of identity and belonging to the city.

As the end of March 2019 was approaching (the date initially set for the United Kingdom to leave the EU), London Museum had a timely opportunity to record the impact of Brexit on Londoners' lived experience.

**Brexit Talks** sought to capture this complexity by collecting the most discussed topic in town, with the aim to build an interest base for the wider Curating London project.

*Brexit Talks* was an oral history collecting project. We conducted our fieldwork across five boroughs which we felt best represented Londoners' opinions on Brexit. These were Havering and Hillingdon (both voted to leave the EU), Hackney and Bromley (both voted to remain) and Newham (which voted to remain in the EU by a close margin, scoring the highest leave vote within inner London boroughs).



© London Museum

Background research was undertaken in each borough in order to identify local organisations to potentially partner with. We also selected 3 locations to take a double-decker London Museum branded bus with the slogan 'London Talks Brexit'.

A total of 157 Vox pops were recorded, 54 of which were acquired into the London collection.

A year later, we went back to some of the people we first interviewed to ascertain potential change of perspective. This resulted in the recording of 7 additional full-length oral histories which are now also part of the permanent collection.



© London Museum



photo: Chris Bethell

# DUB LONDON: BASSLINE OF A CITY 2019-2020

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Dub is both a genre of music and a form of musical production. Born out of Jamaican Reggae, Dub can most simply be described as a way of making music by using the recording studio itself as an instrument.

This project looked at the socio-political relationship between Dub and London. Music breaking out of Jamaica collided with London's Black youth of the 1970's eager to embrace their roots. Today, London still has the highest concentration of specialist reggae record shops outside of Kingston, Jamaica. These shops have been the centre of dub culture and a community hub where Black Londoners embraced the creativity of dub, shaped it as a genre, using their own voices to translate their experiences into rhythmic socio-political poetry. Sound systems developed, exploding in both popularity and rivalry at house parties, dance halls, community centres

and out onto the street. London became a centre of production, with recording studios, record labels, record shops, radio stations and clubs influencing the culturally diverse landscape of this city.

## **“Holding on to the African Vibration of the Drum**

Dub music is an expression of the African spirit, freedom and rhythm, passed on through generations. In '70s London youngsters whose parents and grandparents came to rebuild the 'motherland' embraced Black music. This included reggae, which comprises dub music.



photo: Chris Bethell

Young Black Londoners embraced dub music with a passion. Why? When Africans from the Caribbean arrived in the UK, they were faced with racism and bigotry. Immigrants endured tensions and hardships. Relationships between parents and youths were affected. The young generation aspired to re-connect with their African heritage and to free up their minds. Music from Jamaica, and dub in particular, fed this quest. Dub music in London at the time created a sense of community amongst black youths who were excluded from mainstream society. They were interested in the cultural heritage of their ancestors and the literature of Black academics and historians.

The Rastafari way of life offered the way forward to a huge number of young adults and the drum and bass of dub music connected with Africa and Nyabinghi (Rwanda-born drumming style used in religious practices). For a generation seeking to free themselves from colonial violence, dub music provided an excellent means to express full enjoyment, reasoning and irie sounds for creation steppers. Dub music is an important part of the history of Black Londoners. It's a piece of home that is well-needed in the wilderness years of insecurity and trauma.

Dub music is an acknowledgement and a celebration of our creativity and our African sense of freedom, rhythm and spirituality.”

**Sistah Sheeba Levi-Stuart, community partner from Rastafari Movement UK** (Designed as spoken word audio to greet visitors into the display space of Dub London: Bassline of a City.)

#### **AS PART OF THIS PROJECT THE MUSEUM WORKED WITH SEVERAL COMMUNITY PARTNERS**

- 15 specialist London reggae record shops: research, oral histories, main narrative of dub London
- Papa Face from Dub Vendor record shop: design consultant and co-producer running the record shop during the exhibition run
- Rastafari Movement UK: research on the social political impact of dub
- Mykaell Riley: academic mentor and supporter
- Channel One Sound System: research and sound system specialist
- Nzinga Sounds: research and guidance on women and dub
- Mad Professor: research on dub producing
- Dub fans: their knowledge and personal stories



photo: Chris Bethell

## WHAT WE ACHIEVED

- A six month immersive exhibition at the Museum of London
- Collection of 20 oral histories; some were pressed onto vinyl to be played in the display
- Key photographs acquired in the museum collection by prominent Black photographers
- Soundscape of Notting Hill carnival with commissioned photographs of a day in life of Channel One Sound System at Notting Hill Carnival
- Acquisition of 150 records of dub chosen by the 15 record shops
- Increase in visitor numbers from the Black community
- A continued relationship with many of our community partners from Dub London
- Trained visitor hosts to run the dub London record shop
- Map illustration of all the record shop locations – posters and t-shirts produced enabling visitors to support and visit the record shops across London

If you are interested in knowing more about dub here are some suggested listenings:

### **Slingshot in Shepherds Bush (2014) from Inna London Dub by Tuff Scout All Stars**

Jake Travis and Gil Cang's label set dub in the grand tradition. Mixed by Gil and Deemus appealing to the new dub crowd and with a flavour of the old school classics

### **Shashamane I (1979), a single by Sister Rasheda**

The producer Ras Muffet mix (2011) is recommended

### **Forces of Victory (1979) from Forces of Victory by Linton Kwesi Johnson**

The second album with Dennis Bovell's Band, a calmer, more measured work, packed with both wry observation and political conviction

### **Under Me Sleng Teng (1986) from Greensleeves Disco 45 by Wayne Smith**

The riddim, which was created by the collaboration between King Jammy and Wayne Smith, was titled 'Under Mi Sleng Teng' in 1984 and represents the start of digital age reggae music genre that changed the island culture of Jamaica, and the use of the bass-line by hip-hop producers in the United States



photo: Chris Bethell

### Further listening: PAPA FACE's top ten influential tracks

- 1 - Declaration of Rights - Abyssinians
- 2 - Prophecy - Fabian
- 3 - Wolf and Leopards - Dennis Brown
- 4 - Survival - Marcia Griffiths
- 5 - Row Fisherman - Wailing Souls
- 6 - Warrior Charge - Aswad
- 7 - Rock the Rhythm - Janet Kay
- 8 - Here I Come - Barrington Levy
- 9 - 54 - 46 Toots & the Maytals
- 10 - Who the Cap Fits - Bob Marley

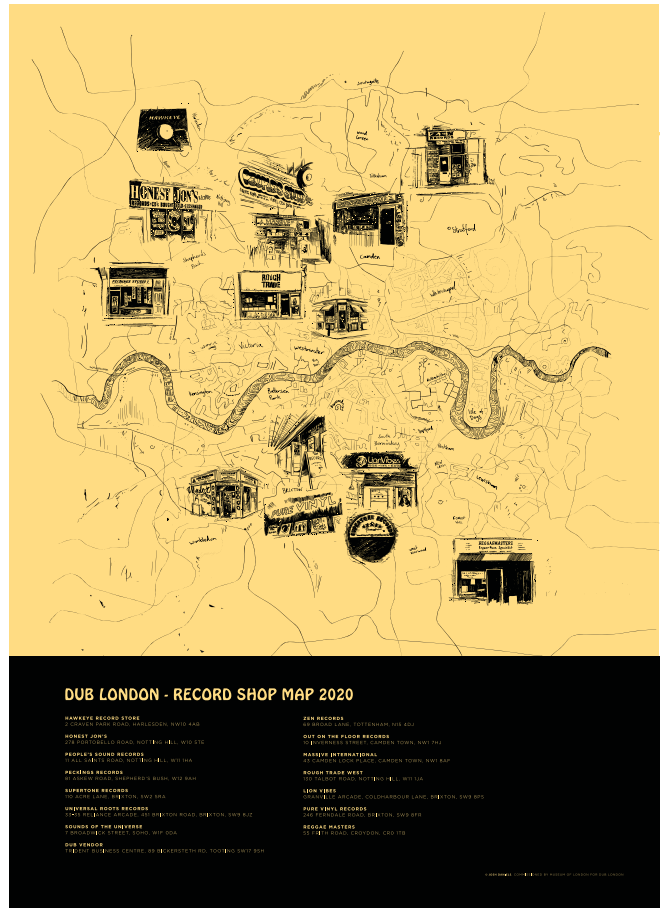


Illustration: Josh Daniels © London Museum





© Rosalind McCarthy

- Two collecting projects attempted to document the impact of lockdown on 2020 Ramadan celebrations.

**Families** were given a booklet of suggested activities which included interviewing a family member, taking a photograph and choosing an object that represented their experiences. Families were also encouraged to get creative and share their experiences in the ways that suited them, with entries including a podcast series, diaries and a poem. Twenty five items were acquired as a result. These objects offer an in-depth account of family life more generally, and of religious practice in particular, during lockdown.

**Young people:** we invited 5 Muslim women from West London to join a WhatsApp group. For 30 days, the group used the platform to share reflections on Ramadan during lockdown. Thousands of messages and nearly 500 videos, voice notes and photos were shared. Content covered a number of topics, from the 'ups and downs' of Ramadan to mosques' closure and inventive ways of staying connected to family and friends through TikTok, Zoom khutbas and COVID memes. We collected the Whatsapp conversation as a record of this moment.

- In **Inner rooms, inner minds**, the museum commissioned Applied Live Art Studio (ALAS) to produce a work of art responding to London's mental health during the pandemic. The studio partnered with Portugal Prints (a non-clinical but therapeutic collective for artists with mental health issues and part of Mind UK), and Studio Upstairs (an arts and health charity that fosters creative communities). The collaboration resulted in a series of social drawing workshops where people explored expressive mark-making on scraperboards. The resulting artwork is a collation of drawings composed to form a wallpaper, accompanied by audio notes produced by participants. The individual scraperboards, wallpaper and audio notes are now part of the London collection.



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# LONDON EATS 2021-2022

Staff from our curatorial and engagement teams worked together to understand and reflect upon Londoners' relationship with food and drink.

We wanted to know from the outset what our target audiences thought about food, its relevance and resonance with them today, and what they thought we should collect. Together with our colleagues in Engagement, we developed and supported 7 community consultation events, and one secondary schools survey for a total of 561 people consulted. These sessions aimed to gauge interest in collection items related to food, test interest in and understanding of our initial strands of enquiry, and garner suggested food related items for collecting.

We also researched in more detail food items in our collection to understand which objects we had, which stories they tell, and what is their relevance to Londoners today.

Building upon this research and consultation work, we distilled the broad overarching theme of food into three collecting themes which we believe speak more closely to the London Collection and our audiences' interests: Spaces and places; Food for thought; Food cultures. We undertook a number of collecting projects responding to each one of these themes, including four community-led collecting projects delivered across the programme with adults, families and young people.

# WHAT DO YOU KNOW ABOUT THE PEOPLE WORKING IN YOUR FAVOURITE RESTAURANT?

We ran a total of 16 projects involving 10 curators and collected around 150 physical and digital objects. A critical reflection on the project was published on the Social History in Museum Journal.\*

- The 'Spaces and Places' strands looked at the strong relation between food and the built environment. In response to this strand we collected a number of objects such as a shop sign from the award-winning Chinese restaurant YMing, which closed down in Soho in spring 2021.
- The 'Food for thought' theme explored the political issues which permeate food and drink. Examples of collecting undertaken include a zine produced by an artist working in collaboration with prisoners from HMP Pentonville, collected together with a number of other objects looking at prisoners' relationship with food.
- The 'Food cultures' strand recognised that what people eat is influenced not only by their cooking traditions, but also by the encounters with other culinary habits and ingredients. Examples of collecting projects undertaken include work on the lived experience of students at special educational needs school exploring how neurodiversity impact food choices. We also captured the emerging trend of luxury halal restaurant by collecting an Instagram reel (short, entertaining videos) from a halal food influencer.

## FEEDING BLACK: COMMUNITY, POWER & PLACE

As part of our food season we also opened a new display at London Museum Docklands Feeding Black: Community, Power & Place (July 2021 – July 2022). The display explored the central role food plays in Black enterprise and identity in South East London. The project as a whole, and the physical exhibit's location in London Museum Docklands' London, Sugar & Slavery gallery provided an important and unique opportunity to reflected on modern food culture and existing legacies of London's involvement in the transatlantic slave trade.

London's African and Caribbean food businesses are not just about buying or selling. They are vitally important spaces – untangling questions around politics, culture, heritage and resistance in an ever-changing city. From shopping centres to street corners, from market spaces to living rooms, entrepreneurial food businesses have thrived across South East London.

The display spotlighted four African and Caribbean businesses and their owners, including recipes, objects and recorded stories, along with TikTok and Instagram cooking videos of traditional African and Caribbean dishes with a contemporary twist. The display also showcased newly commissioned photography and an original soundscape.

\* Sergi, Domenico, and Vyki Sparkes. 2023. "London Eats: Embedding Community-Led Thematic Collecting in the Museum Through the Curating London Programme." *Social History in Museums* 47: 49–59





**COLLECTING**  
*local histories*



© London Museum

# COLLECTING ENDS

## 2019-2020

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Who and what are the people, places and projects that define West London? How best can we record and celebrate these West London icons?

Throughout November and December 2019, a shop front in the iconic Portobello Arcade was transformed into a West London living room and live collecting space curated by local young people in collaboration with FerArts (an artist-led non-profit arts organisation).

Each young person working on the project came together to bring objects from their own homes, as well as sourcing items bought at Portobello and Golborne markets, to dress the living room as a West London home.

Friends, family and residents from the community were then invited to the living room to record their West London stories from the Curating London sofa.

To prepare for the launch of the living room space, young people embarked on workshops to explore how they could become curators in their neighbourhoods and authentically document their own 'ends'.



© London Museum

The project also experimented with giving small grants to young people to develop their own collecting initiatives. Three such micro-projects emerged out of this process: Beauty Treatment by Alia Hassan, Alyssa-Victoria Isip and Sam Campbell; West Side Stories by Prime Isaac; and the Living Rooms Project by Rajaa Bouchab and Azhar Benalhachmi. Each of these aimed to record and document contemporary West London life from the perspectives of young residents.

At the end of the project, collected items were showcased in a week-long exhibition at the FerArts studio, which became a pop-up **Museum of (West) London.**



© London Museum



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# WEAVING LONDON'S STORIES 2019-2020

Weaving London's Stories explored the relationship between dress and identity within the British-Bangladeshi community in Tower Hamlets, in partnership with the Osmani Trust, a local youth and community organisation.

Working with a group of young women between the ages of 12 and 19, as well as members of the wider British-Bangladeshi community, it explored how different generations of women negotiate, resist and re-invent their relationship with traditional Bangladeshi clothing through a number of workshops and events.

Events included a workshop in partnership with arts centre Rich Mix, a 'show and tell' community story sharing event, and a weekend festival developed

by the young women and held at London Museum Docklands to celebrate the end of the project.

The project recorded a number of oral histories, giving a snapshot into the lives and experiences of British-Bangladeshi women in the area, and also led to the collecting of a full sari donated by one of the participants and other personal objects.





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# ARCHAEOLOGY OF NOW

## 2019-2020

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In an increasingly busy and bounded city, our public parks are oases not only of green space but of free space. The rubbish and objects left behind in London parks are a testament to contemporary city life.

Over the course of a year, we used archaeological methods to document, research and collect changes in the social life of Finsbury Park, a major park in the North of the city. During the project, we worked in partnership with Furtherfield Gallery and local schools in the Finsbury Park area.

We worked with park users and neighbours to collect discarded objects from the surface of the park. What do these objects and stories tell us about the use of London parks and should these be preserved by the museum for the future?

We decided to look at rubbish that is being created today, using the same archaeological techniques as we would with thousand-year-old debris. We've found cigarettes butts, plastic bags and sweet wrappers. We've found tea bags, orange peel and ice cream sticks. We've found beer bottle tops and gas canisters. We've found balloons, confetti and streamers. In some places, we've found condoms and discarded clothing. In others, needles and wet wipes. In summer we found the remains of barbecues. In early January the remnants of NYE fireworks.





© London Museum

# WE THE PEOPLE

## 2019-2020

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The London Borough of Lambeth has a strong legacy of grassroots activism. But what makes Brixton, at Lambeth's heart, one of London's most socially active community?

We commissioned two local artists, Virginia Nimarkoh and Fan Sissoko, to work with a group of young people to create a short film exploring active citizenship. The film is now part of the permanent collection. Filmed over the summer of 2019, *We The People* explores themes of activism and community, past and present. The film follows six inspiring conversations between activists and grassroots organisers, young and less young, making positive change at a local level. Made in partnership with The Advocacy Academy, the UK's first campus for young activists, based in Brixton.

The conversations take us on a journey down Railton Road through the legacy of Brixton's radical activist history: from the well documented Brixton Uprising to the lesser known histories of local queer activism and squatting. One of the inspirations behind this film is Olive Morris, a British community leader and activist in the feminist, Black, and squatters' rights campaigns of the 1970s. The film explores her legacy alongside that of other activists now in their later years. It is motivated by a desire to record the unwritten stories of a neighbourhood that has resistance in its DNA.



© London Museum

The activists in the film also reflect on the changing face of Brixton. As the neighbourhood attracts more affluent and less diverse communities, the spaces where people could come together, dream together and change the world together are threatened. What will remain of Brixton’s activist heritage in the face of gentrification and Brexit?

**“You can be whoever you want and embrace any culture or religion and you will always be welcomed. I love the mind-set that Londoners have, which I feel is that ‘change is always a possibility’ and that we are constantly looking for solutions to any problems.”**

Young person, aged 17, from *We are the Youth of Today* report



© Museum of London





RESEARCH



photo: Jonas Martinez

# GREENWICH COMMUNITY FREELANCER 2019

In 2019 we asked residents in the Royal Borough of Greenwich (South London) to capture Black experiences in their neighborhood. The main aim of the research project was to develop creative insights that mapped out contemporary debates, experiences, objects and locations for a future contemporary collecting project in area.

This community research commission wasn't about academic qualifications or knowledge. The aim was to harness local lived experience so we asked people to come forward with proposals that were able to think creatively and critically about Black lives in Greenwich today.

We sent a call-out for community researchers asking them to think about:

- the key local places (from a street to a shop, to someone's living room) that could contribute to our understanding of contemporary Black experiences and why they are important.



photo: Jonas Martinez

- the key local organisations and/or individuals who could help understanding contemporary Black experiences. Being these formal or informal activist groups, a school, a shop owner, a social media collective.
- objects and/or experiences that tell the story of Black people in Greenwich today and why. This could be anything, from a particular event that happened more or less recently, to a collection of objects in someone's attic to an Instagram feed.

We received a number of proposals from all walks of life and experiences and we decided to commission a local activist to research black owned businesses in the area. The learnings, networks and experiences highlighted by the community researcher became the backbone of the curatorial concept of Feeding Black: Community, Power & Place (see page 22).



photo: Spencer Murphy

# INEQUALITIES, CLASS AND THE PANDEMIC 2021

The COVID pandemic has shone a harsh light on issues of social inequality in our contemporary, neoliberal societies, particularly around class divisions. Such an impact has been especially felt in the UK where the class system has historically been, and arguably continues to be, deeply entrenched.

In British museums, issues of class have received limited attention, perhaps due to the sensitivities surrounding class in the UK; museums have been even accused of obscuring and ignoring social class differences. London Museum Collecting COVID programme offered the unprecedented opportunity to examine how issues of class might be reflected in museum collections.

The museum holds thousands of physical objects related to the social and working history of London. Its world-class social and working history collections reflects the everyday lives of millions of workers. London Museum decided to partner with King's College London (a university) to document and collect the stories and experiences of working-class Londoners during the pandemic.



photo: Spencer Murphy

**Inequalities, Class and the Pandemic** was a research project which ran from spring to summer 2021. We contracted five research assistants, including people with lived experience, to produce background research and to undertake fieldwork across the city. The project adopted a range of different research methods. The research team captured the experiences of 15 working-class professionals in London, with a particular focus on working-class food delivery couriers, the study's larger sample. Additionally, social media mining was used to analyse 672 tweets concerning working-class experiences of the pandemic. Furthermore, in autumn 2021 we run a workshop with a group of working-class professionals to test the project's interim findings.

As a result, 9 oral histories recorded with London working-class professionals are now part of the museum permanent collection. A full project report was launched in January, followed by a peer-reviewed publication.\* In addition, the project enabled London Museum and King's College London to successfully secure funding for a Collaborative Doctoral Award which will enable a working-class PhD student to investigate questions surrounding the representation of 21st century working-class people in museums more broadly.

\* Iervolino, S. and Sergi, D. (2023). 'We Need to Talk about Class Towards a Class-Based Approach in Contemporary Museum Theory and Practice', *Museum Worlds: Advances in Research* 11: 51-63

# CAPITAL NOURISHMENT FUND 2022

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As part of London Eats collecting and engagement programme we launched the Capital Nourishment Fund, where we provided four micro-grants of £1,000 each to young people age 16-25 to research and develop collecting ideas in response to food and drink culture in London.

We were interested in understanding the role of food and drink places as hubs of community and nourishment through young people's own lived experience. The brief was very open, these spaces could be anything from a local pub, a shisha lounge, chicken or a corner shop that hold some meaning to its local community.

No specialist skills were needed to apply – as long as people had an important story to tell, we were open to hear that.

We used London Museum social media channel to advertise the call-out and attracted 45 strong applications. We decided to take forward four of these proposals and helped young people to shape their projects and produce high quality collecting outcomes.

As part of the process we have trained young people in research, project management, writing a collecting proposal, and provided one-to-one curatorial support through the process.

## **Featured projects include:**

- An audio-visual collection exploring the sights, sounds and memories of an iconic east London café set up by Italian migrants in 1900.
- A documentary about eating and drinking traditions in South London's Vietnamese community.
- A collection of objects and ephemera documenting the history of a landmark bear gay bar in Soho. The collection also include a film hosting interviews with regulars and scenes from karaoke performances.
- A short documentary style film on Drummond Street, a largely gentrified area near a main train station in the centre of London. The documentary explores the precarious nature of these local, family-run businesses across the city.

For enquiries about Curating London please contact:  
[enquiry@londonmuseum.org.uk](mailto:enquiry@londonmuseum.org.uk)

**“In these extraordinary and challenging times, we believe it is now more important than ever to create a shared space for Londoners and visitors to come together to explore the people, places and moments that made this city what it is, as well as understanding what matters to us today.”**

Sharon Ament, Director of London Museum



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**ARTS COUNCIL  
ENGLAND**