



Early Career Fellowships in Cultural and Heritage Institutions – Round 2 Imperial War Museums Priorities

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Who We Are

- Founded in 1917 to collect the record of the First World War and then subsequent wars and conflicts where Britain and the Commonwealth had been involved
- Family of 5 museums: IWM London, IWM Duxford (Cambridgeshire), HMS Belfast, Churchill War Rooms and IWM North
- 33.5 million items in the collection and growing – a multimedia collection
- Continuous collecting – contemporary and 21st Century conflict
- Public engagement, exhibitions, learning and engagement programmes, community engagement
- Independent Research Organisation and CDP Award holder
- ECR Fellowships Round 1 – Dr Ann-Marie Foster (*Accessible Pasts, Equitable Futures*)

ECR Fellowship Research Priority 1 – Second World War Centenary

We would like to prioritise research that enables us to better understand and share the richness and global reach of IWM's SWW collections ahead of the centenary in 14 years' time, anticipating and shaping the level of public interest.

- Relationship between history, memory and identity, as well as how public perceptions of the conflict have evolved
- How does Second World War memory shift or morph between regional, national and global level?
- What are the resonant stories for today's generation?
- How do we connect the people of the past with the world 100 years on?
- We are interested in expanding our research around diverse stories and polyvocality in museum exhibitions.



Children's street party on VE Day 1945, ©
IWM HU 49482

ECR Fellowship Research Priority 2 – 21st Century Conflict Representation in Museum Collections and Displays

For this area we are interested in projects that explore how the wars of the 21st century are represented in archive and museum collections as they are formed, displayed and reformed.

- What trends are emerging?
- How is rapid reactionary collecting shaping or challenging museum and archival practice compared to more historic conflict?



ECR Fellowship Research Priority 3 – AI and Learning

Under this theme we are interested in research projects that create the legal, ethical and moral frameworks to empower the museum to use AI with its collections and the outputs that use these, such as learning programmes.

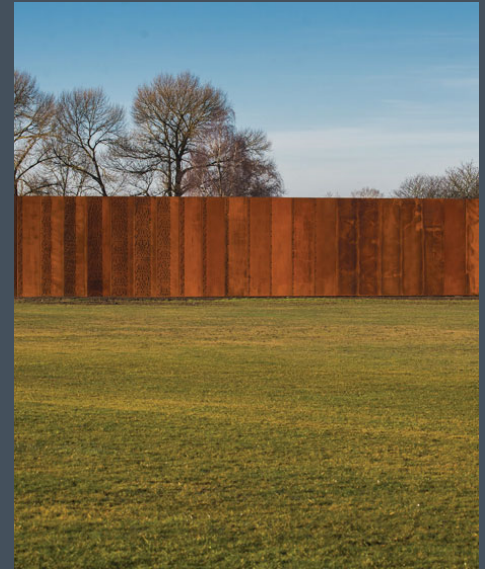
- AI avatars (for example) offer transformative potential for connecting younger, non-traditional museum audiences, with stories from within collections and archives, but there are critical concerns around bias replication, reinforcing dominant narratives, authenticity and consent leading to misrepresenting marginalised voices.
- AI represents a new tool. Is it a benefit or a scourge? How is it used already in the sector, and how is it used elsewhere? How do audience expectations impact museums' editorial choices when it comes to using this tool?



ECR Fellowship Research Priority 4 – Rethinking ‘Permanence’ in Museums Collections Management

For this area we are interested in projects that offer a critical examination of the tensions between the traditional museum ethos of ‘permanence’, where collections are preserved indefinitely for posterity, and sustainable practices that meet the needs of the present without compromising the ability of future generations to meet their own needs.

- How can these principles be legally, morally, and ethically reconciled in contemporary collections management?
- How can international heritage conventions, museum ethics codes, and environmental mandates converge to guide museums towards practices that are ecologically sound, socially responsible, and economically viable, ensuring that collections remain an asset rather than a liability for the future?



The paper store at IWM Duxford

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