

Abstracta in Concreta: Engaging Museum Collections in PRS Research

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Provision of a one day seminar, providing research students in philosophy and religious studies with the tools to engage critically with museum collections, such as those held by Glasgow Museums.

The seminar explores the potential of museum collections for contributing to postgraduate research in philosophy and religious studies. The legacy of this seminar will be secured by facilitating the formation of a network of research students working in philosophy and religious studies with reference to museum collections. Resources for this research community will be provided on a longer term basis on a website.

For further details of this project see:

<http://www.gla.ac.uk/departments/philosophy/cpr/events/abstractainconcreta/>.

Abstracta in Concreta: Engaging Museum Collections in Philosophy, Theology and Religious Studies Research



Workshop: Glasgow Museums Resource Centre, Glasgow, 21st May 2009

A one day research training event jointly hosted by the Department of Philosophy, University of Glasgow and Glasgow Museums. Funded by a grant from the Higher Education Academy, Subject Centre for Philosophical and Religious Studies.

Event Report

Abstracta in Concreta was held on the 21st of May 2009. It was a collaborative research-training seminar that provided research students in philosophy and religious studies with the tools required to engage critically with museum collections, such as those held by Glasgow Museums.

Abstracta in Concreta explored the potential of museum collections for contributing to postgraduate research in philosophy and religious studies. It addressed the space between support for research students provided by supervisors and by the wider university by bringing together students from the disciplines of philosophy and religious studies from around the UK. Through lectures, discussion and demonstration speakers explored how the abstract concerns of philosophy and religious studies can be approached through the concreta offered by material culture and museum collections.

The delegates who attended the event found it very useful and provided positive feedback and constructive criticism. For example:

- Very interesting, great to see how the museums are developing links in the community.
- The aim/focus of this event appeals to a wide audience and there is great potential for expanding this. I hope you will try and get more archaeologists to come next year.
- Useful for making contacts.
- I'd like to come and work/research the collection more.
- Presenters could have given concrete examples of how their research / involvement in religious events / topics, affects (has affected) their work.
- Excellent practical exploration of concepts.
- Tour was excellent - very good insight into the work of Glasgow Museums.
- The theoretical background about using material culture will be most helpful.
- Great job, very interesting, informative and useful.

Programme

09.30-10:00 Registration: Tea/Coffee

10.00-10:35 Welcome: Philip Tonner (Research Support Officer, Glasgow Museums): 'Museum Collections and the Archaeology of Religion: a philosophical reflection'.

10.35-11.15 Ellen McAdam (Collections Services Manager, Glasgow Museums): 'Figurines in ancient Mesopotamia: public performance and private belief'.

11.15-11.30 Tea/Coffee

11.30-12.15 Leon Robinson (University Teacher, Department of Religious Education, The University of Glasgow): 'Meanings, objects, and where the truth lies'.

12.15-12.40 Rebecca O'Loughlin, Subject Centre for Philosophical and Religious Studies, Subject Centre Contribution. Victoria Harrison (Reader, Departments of Philosophy and Religious Education, The University of Glasgow): 'Expanding your research skills: Mind Mapping'.

12.40-13.40 Lunch

13.40-14.40 Martin Bellamy (Research and Major Projects Manager, Glasgow Museums): Tour of Glasgow Museums Resource Centre.

14.40-15.25 Elisabeth Schulte (Curator of World Religions, Glasgow Museums): 'Making the most of Museum Collections in Philosophy and Religious Studies'. This session included a workshop demonstration entitled 'Bigot Busters' conducted by Kirsty Hood, (Learning Assistant, Glasgow Museums).

15.25-15.40 Tea/Coffee

15.40-16.25 William Kilbride (Executive Director, Digital Preservation Coalition): 'Understanding the archaeology of religious conversion'.

16.45-17.00 Plenary discussion, evaluation and Closing Remarks: Victoria Harrison and Philip Tonner.