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Curating Cambridge: our city, our stories, our stuff

20 October – 23 November 2014

Five weeks of fun and culture in Cambridge

This autumn Cambridge comes alive with a five week festival of fun and creativity across the city. Presented by the University of Cambridge Museums with the Festival of Ideas, cultural partners and community organisations, Curating Cambridge is a city wide cultural celebration with an exciting mix of exhibitions, workshops, music, talks and performances for all to enjoy.

There will be a range of opportunities for members of the public to connect their own stories with those found in the museum collections, to join a celebration of our culture and heritage and to take part in an original programme of events, which goes live online on 26 August with bookings opening on 22 September.

At The Polar Museum visitors will be invited to contribute to the curatorial process using innovative touch screen technology in the exhibition The Thing Is... (24 September – 20 December 2014). An object on loan from each of the other University of Cambridge Museums and Botanic Garden will be paired with an item from The Polar Museum’s collections, raising questions about the nature of curating, collecting and the stories objects can tell us. At the same time, an intervention in the main gallery spaces, called The Polar Muse, examines how poetry can shed new light on museum objects. Silent Partners: Artist & Mannequin from Function to Fetish (14 October 2014 – 25 January 2015) sees the Fitzwilliam Museum address the multiple purposes of the mannequin in the world of the artist and at Kettle’s Yard visitors can follow the work of video artists Nina Pope and Karen Guthrie in a specially constructed gallery cinema (Past, Present, Somewhere: films and projects by Nina Pope & Karen Guthrie; 13 September – 23 November 2014).

In the Grand Arcade the Museum of Water (1 & 2 November 2014), presented by Cambridge Junction and previously on display at Somerset House in London, will ask people to ponder our precious liquid and how we use it. Publicly donated water will be on display; donate your own and your story; see, touch and uncover the existing water already accumulated; marvel at the collection in lit cabinets. And if all that water makes you thirsty, in celebration of our ready access to fresh water in the UK, grab a drink at Water Bar, a free pop-up bar serving only tap water.

There’s plenty for families with a two day extravaganza during half term when The Campsite takes over Christ’s Pieces on 25 & 26 October – a pop-up venue with a difference – a collection of vintage campervans, caravans and
tents all of which become venues for theatre, music, poetry and art installations showcasing performances and activities created by artists in collaboration with each of the University’s museums and Botanic Garden. Hear a story in a vintage campervan, relax and play some camping games or discover live music in a 1980s caravan!

“Curating Cambridge is a fantastic opportunity for visitors to the city, and for local people looking for fun on their doorstep, to question, discover and explore all that this vibrant city has to offer. Working with cultural organisations and community groups, the University of Cambridge Museums are able to offer a wide ranging programme that celebrates everything that makes Cambridge a great place to be – the people, the tales and the triumphs,” said Heather Lane, Keeper of Collections at The Polar Museum and chair of Cambridge Museums Steering Group.

Funded by Arts Council England through its Major Partner Museums programme, with support from Cambridge City Council, Curating Cambridge has been developed by the University of Cambridge Museums as a celebration of our work with cultural partners and community organisations across the city.

Curating Cambridge: our city, our stories, our stuff – join us on a journey of exploration into the culture, community and individuality that is Cambridge.

Notes to Editors:

Curating Cambridge launches as part of the Festival of Ideas (20 October – 2 November), the Festival that unleashes the research and inspiration behind the Arts, Humanities and Social Sciences within the University of Cambridge. We’ve worked closely with the Festival team to develop a programme that is exciting, intriguing and varied, and you’ll see that many events appear in both programmes. Check out the full Festival of Ideas programme at www.festivalofideas.cam.ac.uk

University of Cambridge Museums
University of Cambridge Museums is a consortium of the eight University Museums, which works in partnership with Cambridge University Botanic Garden. The University’s collections are a world-class resource for researchers, students and members of the public representing the country’s highest concentration of internationally important collections, all within walking distance of the City Centre.

In April 2012 the University of Cambridge Museums were awarded Major Partnership Funding from Arts Council England to support its ambitious three-year Connecting Collections programme. The programme focuses on unlocking the University’s collections, and the research activities which underpin them, for a larger and more diverse audience.

Arts Council England recently announced its continuing support for the University of Cambridge Museums as a Major Partner Museum with indicative funding of nearly £4.5 million for the period 2015-18.

For more information please contact Verity Sanderson, Marketing and Press Coordinator, University of Cambridge Museums on 07872 410663 or vcs25@cam.ac.uk or Stuart Roberts in the Office of External Affairs and Communications on Stuart.J.Roberts@admin.cam.ac.uk