



Press Release | Monday 2 November 2015: Leominster Museum Gets Creative!

Leominster Museum has been selected to join Creative Museums, an eighteen-month programme of experimentation for six small museums from across England and a wider cohort of peer museums. The six participating museums: Brent Museum and Archives, Leominster Museum, Manchester Jewish Museum, Nuneaton Museum & Art Gallery, Scarborough Museums Trust and Swindon Museum and Art Gallery, will use a process called Scratch to build lively programmes and venues that enrich the experience for visitors, directly and creatively involve their audiences, tackle challenges and generate new business opportunities.

Creative Museums is a unique practical programme of collaborative learning and testing. It will feature workshops and master classes with a range of heritage, performance and arts specialists. Over the course of the programme the six museums will be partnered with a producer from Battersea Arts Centre to plan collaborative creative projects for their venues, potentially commissioning an artist from a theatre-making background to help realise their ideas. The group will share learning by exchanging skills, ideas and processes.

Creative Museums is run by Battersea Arts Centre in partnership with independent consultant Gaby Porter who brings a wealth of experience in the museums and heritage sector, especially around innovative approaches to interpretation, audience development and organisational learning. The volunteers at Leominster Museum are especially interested in thinking firstly about the future of their building, and how to improve it; and secondly about making much deeper and more sustainable links with the whole population of the town, both young and old.

Creative Museums is supported using public funding by Arts Council England through the Museum Resilience Fund.

John Orna-Ornstein, Director, Museums, Arts Council England, said:

"Museums need to find ways to be increasingly relevant and important to their different audiences at a time when the world is changing fast. Our museums are full of creative, talented and enterprising staff. Battersea Arts Centre's Creative Museums project is a flexible, fun way of connecting these staff to their communities and stakeholders. It should help museums to be better, more imaginative, more responsive and more able to try new things. I'm really pleased that we have been able to support this exciting project and look forward to seeing the results!"

David Jubb, Artistic Director & CEO, Battersea Arts Centre, said:

"Battersea Arts Centre has used Scratch over the last fifteen years to develop new ways of doing things, working with theatre-makers, architects, school teachers and young entrepreneurs. Creative Museums will test out Scratch in a museum environment. We hope that the Scratch process will be a useful tool for all of the Creative Museums who are part this programme, enabling them to undertake experiments and explore new ways of working. We also have lots to learn from a group of ambitious colleagues in each of these great museums. It promises to be a shared adventure which I hope will have good benefits for all those who are passionate about the role heritage can play in building stronger communities."

Gaby Porter, Independent Consultant, Creative Museums, said:

"The Creative Museums programme will be genuinely participative and creative in its approach, generating more personal and immediate ways of connecting museums with people. We hope that it will enable museums to create value for and with others, thus strengthening or redefining their sense of purpose and their role. We are delighted that the selected museums will be using Scratch – or agile working, as other sectors and industries often call it – to address organisational change and governance; shape building extensions or move to different premises which are fit for people, purpose and the future; create a dialogue and build a stronger relationship with local people and their stories; change roles and perceptions of volunteering. The six Creative Museums encompass a fantastic range of independent, local authority and volunteer-run museums across England."

Editorial Notes:

LEOMINSTER MUSEUM

Leominster Museum was founded in the early 1970s, by a group of local people who wanted to save and preserve the heritage of the town. Housed in an old Mission Hall and neighbouring outbuildings, it has built up a wide collection of books, photos, documents and objects relating to the 1400 year history of Leominster. As well as a large permanent display, the Museum offers at least one new temporary exhibition each year. Recent subjects have included the histories of two local businesses, and the story of Morris dancing in the town. In 2014, the Museum succeeded in obtaining funding for a very successful First World War commemoration project, entitled 'Rifles & Spades'. Although supported by Herefordshire Museum Service, Leominster Museum is independent and wholly volunteer run. It is an Accredited Museum, and a member of AIM – the Association of Independent Museums. Because of the constraints of the present building, it is currently open from Easter until the end of October each year.

www.leominstermuseum.org.uk

BATTERSEA ARTS CENTRE

Battersea Arts Centre is a public space where people come together to be creative, see a show, explore the local heritage, play or relax. The organisation's mission is to inspire people to take creative risks to shape the future.

Battersea Arts Centre encourages people to test and develop new ideas with members of the public – a process called Scratch. Scratch is used by artists to make theatre, by young people to develop entrepreneurial ideas and as a helpful process for anyone who wants to get creative.

The area of South West London and the old town hall in which Battersea Arts Centre is based, are rich in heritage. In April 2016 the organisation will become custodian of the Wandsworth Museum Collection, using creativity to explore the past and imagine the future.

Scratch has been adopted as far afield as Sydney and New York and shows and projects developed by people at Battersea Arts Centre travel across the UK and the world. The organisation has successfully sparked new approaches to creativity across the globe.

Each year Battersea Arts Centre

- Welcomes over 160,000 people to its building
- Inspires the local community to get creative including 3000 young people
- Works with over 400 artists to put on over 800 performances and tour at least 10 shows and projects

bac.org.uk | [@battersea_arts](https://twitter.com/battersea_arts)

Watch a [Video About Battersea Arts Centre](#)

SCRATCH

Battersea Arts Centre is the birthplace of Scratch, a process to develop new ideas or ways of doing things that started life in February 2000.

Scratch involves sharing an idea in the early stages of its development with the people it is aimed at. Questions may be asked about the idea with responses written down or shared informally over a drink, or the person sharing an idea live may simply assess in the moment how their idea is being received and understood – what works and what doesn't. This process of sharing and gathering feedback through different creative approaches is repeated over time to allow ideas to become stronger and informed by a wide-range of responses.

Scratch involves taking risks. Whether ideas fly or fail Scratch helps people to recognise that there is often great

learning to be had. This learning may lead people to adapt their idea, change the way it is presented or alter it completely and it can also help people to become more flexible and better adapt to change.

Scratch is used in a variety of ways at Battersea Arts Centre:

- **Artists use Scratch to develop new ideas for shows**, such as *Orpheus* by Little Bulb Theatre, *Brand New Ancients* by Kate Tempest and *The Paper Cinema's Odyssey*.
- **Young people use Scratch to develop entrepreneurial ideas** with The Agency, a project founded in Brazil that supports young people to create projects or enterprises for their communities.
- **Architects use Scratch to develop Battersea Arts Centre's building** by trying ideas out on a small scale with temporary structures that are user-tested with feedback incorporated into final designs.
- **Digital Programmers use Scratch to create artworks for the internet** in collaboration with artists, such as Rhiannon Armstrong's *The International Archive of Things Left Unsaid* (unsaidarchive.com).
- **Staff use Scratch to develop new ideas for culture and heritage** working towards spring 2016 when the organisation will become custodian of the Wandsworth Borough Collection of paintings and artefacts.

Watch a [Video About Scratch](#)

Visit the Google Cultural Institute [Scratch 15 Exhibition](#)

ARTS COUNCIL ENGLAND

Arts Council England champions, develops and invests in artistic and cultural experiences that enrich people's lives. We support a range of activities across the arts, museums and libraries – from theatre to digital art, reading to dance, music to literature, and crafts to collections. Great art and culture inspires us, brings us together and teaches us about ourselves and the world around us. In short, it makes life better. Between 2015 and 2018, we plan to invest £1.1 billion of public money from government and an estimated £700 million from the National Lottery to help create these experiences for as many people as possible across the country.

www.artscouncil.org.uk

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