

# PODIUM



Arts & Humanities  
Research Council

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Supporting world class research  
in the arts and humanities



IAN PEARSON MP, DISCUSSES  
AHRC'S CONTRIBUTION TO  
GOVERNMENT POLICY

Life on Air:  
A History of  
Radio Four.

The Emergent  
City: Making  
data in to art.

## Message from the Comms Team

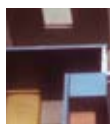
Welcome to the first Podium of 2008. In this issue Ian Pearson MP, Minister of State for Science and Innovation discusses the AHRC and how the research we fund can contribute to contemporary political, cultural and social issues and plays an important role in making government policy.

This issue also takes a look at a wide range of current or recently completed research projects including: a new novel by the author of 'The Last King of Scotland', this time taking on the issues of climate and terrorism; a project that brings together Historians, Anthropologists, Archaeologists and Palaeo-ecologists to look at how the Borneo rainforest and forest dwellers have shaped each others lives; how a British artist is analysing the patterns created from the monitoring of data from the technology that is all around us and turning it into audio visual artworks and a new book looking at the social and cultural history of Radio Four and the issues it has faced since its launch 40 years ago.

Finally we tell you where in the coming weeks you can see outputs of AHRC funded research, from exhibitions to concerts and book launches.

*The Comms Team*

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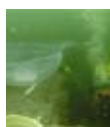
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*The views expressed in articles in **Podium** are those of the authors, and do not necessarily represent the views of the Arts and Humanities Research Council.*

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**AHRC Email newsletter:** For more up to date news on the AHRC, on award programme closing dates and on forthcoming AHRC strategic initiatives why not sign up to our monthly email newsletter. Sign up at [www.ahrc.ac.uk/news](http://www.ahrc.ac.uk/news).

The Department for Innovation, Universities and Skills have appointed Sir Alan Wilson, former Director-General for Higher Education to the Department for Education & Skills, as the new Chair of the AHRC.



## AHRC welcomes new Chair

THE DEPARTMENT FOR Innovation, Universities and Skills (DIUS) have appointed Professor Sir Alan Wilson as the new Chair of the AHRC. Sir Alan, formerly Director-General for Higher Education to the Department for Education & Skills, originally trained as a mathematician but converted in the 1960s from theoretical physics to the social sciences through research on the mathematical modelling of cities. Sir Alan has held research posts in Oxford and London before being appointed as Professor of Urban & Regional Geography at the University of Leeds in 1970, becoming Vice-Chancellor of Leeds from

1991–2004. Sir Alan is a Fellow of the British Academy and a Fellow of the Royal Society and currently works at the UCL Centre for Advanced Spatial Analysis (CASA) as Professor of Urban & Regional Systems.

Sir Alan replaces Sir Brian Follett as Chair after 6 years. Sir Brian led the AHRC through an exciting time, including the transition from AHRB to AHRC in 2005. We would like to thank Sir Brian for all his hard work over the last 6 years and wish him all the best for the future.

## Religion and Society programme official launch

THE AHRC AND ESRC collaborative research programme was officially launched at St Ethelburga's in November 2007 by Programme Director Professor Linda Woodhead and AHRC Chief Executive Professor Philip Esler. The programme aims to explore the current developments in the arts and humanities and social sciences communities, concerning questions of belief, human culture, society and religion.



November also saw the first Religion and Society Programme conference in Lancaster. Award holders from the first phase of this funding initiative got together for two days of presentations on their projects. In December the Religion and Society Youth Call was made in response to interactions with stakeholders and after identifying trends in applications to the first phase of funding. The area of youth is important to current debate and research on religion and youth is essential for understanding many of the issues in modern society.

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## Award holder wins 2007 RIBA President's Medal for Outstanding Research

'FLEXIBLE HOUSING', A book by Tatjana Schneider and Jeremy Till, which was the result of an AHRC Research Grant has been awarded the 2007 RIBA Presidents Medal for Outstanding Research. This prestigious prize is awarded to the best piece of University based research into architecture. Their research investigates ways of planning housing that can adapt to different uses and technologies over time. The team collected over 150 historical examples of flexible housing for their research.

For more information please see the RIBA website <http://www.architecture.com/>



*Adelaid Road Housing, London, 1979. Architects: Nabeel Hamdi and Nicholas Wilkinson for GLC Image courtesy of Nabeel Hamdi*

## Design for the 21st Century Book launch

DESIGNING FOR THE 21st Century Research Initiative, now in its fourth and penultimate year, has published a 340 page book by Gower covering findings from the twenty-one research cluster projects which operated in Phase 1 of the initiative.

Over a 12 month period each of these research networks held a series of workshops and events to explore different aspects of future design activity. Each of the projects has contributed a chapter to the book describing the context of enquiry, the journey taken by the research team and key insights generated through discourse. Editor and initiative director

Professor Tom Inns, provides an introductory chapter that suggests ways that the reader might navigate these viewpoints. Tom explains 'Each of the research clusters has been very successful in disseminating insights back to their respective research communities, this book provides an invaluable central point of dissemination for all 21 projects'. The book (ISBN 978-0-566-08737-0) is available from December 2007. A formal book launch will be held at an event chaired by Professor Philip Esler at the Design Council, London on Thursday 21st February, for more information please contact [design21@dundee.ac.uk](mailto:design21@dundee.ac.uk).





# AHRC and Government policy

The new Department for Innovation, Universities and Skills (DIUS) provides a strong voice in cabinet and across Government for effective investment in research, science and skills and innovation at all levels. It will also ensure research, further and higher education serves their wider purposes, supporting social mobility and inclusion for the disadvantaged, and cultural growth.

**I** want to ensure the door is open to your ideas and insights and we work with both the AHRC and researchers themselves especially at a time when we are discussing, at the highest levels of government, the importance of identity and belonging, place and community.



▲ **Ian Pearson, Minister of State for Science and Innovation**

IT IS BECOMING a commonplace – although this does not diminish its truth – that research is vital for future economic success. We need a sufficient supply of talented researchers to sustain future growth and prosperity. The Government recognises that Research Councils are at the core of developing current and future generations of scientists who will contribute not only to medical breakthroughs or engineering feats, but also to the culture of creativity and innovation that is going to be so crucial to the next generation economy.

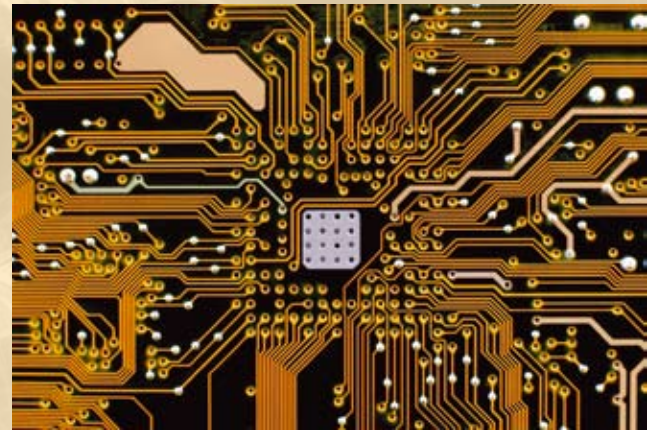
The AHRC has already impressed me with the breadth and depth of what it funds, across an expansive range of subject disciplines. It would be hard to find another funding body with such a diverse agenda. From philosophy to history, and intellectual property law to design - there is strength in this diversity, and I am very keen to see the benefits of this penetrate into policy making at all levels.

The AHRC has already made a good case for what its researchers can contribute to contemporary political, cultural and social issues. A recent example of this has been the AHRC contribution to the upcoming strategy document on Creative Economies. Here the Council has framed notions of creativity beyond the production of widgets to user-centred approaches to technology. This is a more sustainable model of innovation that will go far beyond following the latest fad to developing an understanding of how and why we relate to technology in the way that we do. In this arena, the work that the AHRC has been doing with the BBC through its Knowledge Transfer programme is exciting – because it is helping to conceptualise the 'next generation' of media users. This more interactive model can provide important insights across not only high-tech industries, but to those of us who frame public policy as well.

Beyond the creative economy, arts and humanities researchers are proving valuable insights to colleagues in the Home Office and DCLG, amongst others – as we try to understand the complexities of our society that must accommodate a diversity of beliefs, cultural assumptions, languages and social understandings. This is a tremendously fertile and vibrant space for public policy – but one which can only be enriched by the solid underpinnings of evolving research insights. This is crucial to developing policies that really work at grassroots level. In this context I am excited by the launch of your extensive strategic investigation into the relationship between Religion and Society, with the ESRC.

I want to ensure the door is open to your ideas and insights and we work with both the AHRC and researchers themselves especially at a time when we are discussing, at the highest levels of government, the importance of identity and belonging, place and community.

In my brief tenure so far as Science Minister, I have been impressed by the degree to which the Research Councils work together but also maintain their own areas of expertise and identity. The AHRC has been a valuable addition to the community of Councils, contributing to cross Council initiatives such as the study of ageing or the digital economy and also carving out its own research agenda. Long may this interrelationship continue, as we, in DIUS help to support the very different agendas of all of the Councils, whilst recognising the collective power, and importance, of what we fund.



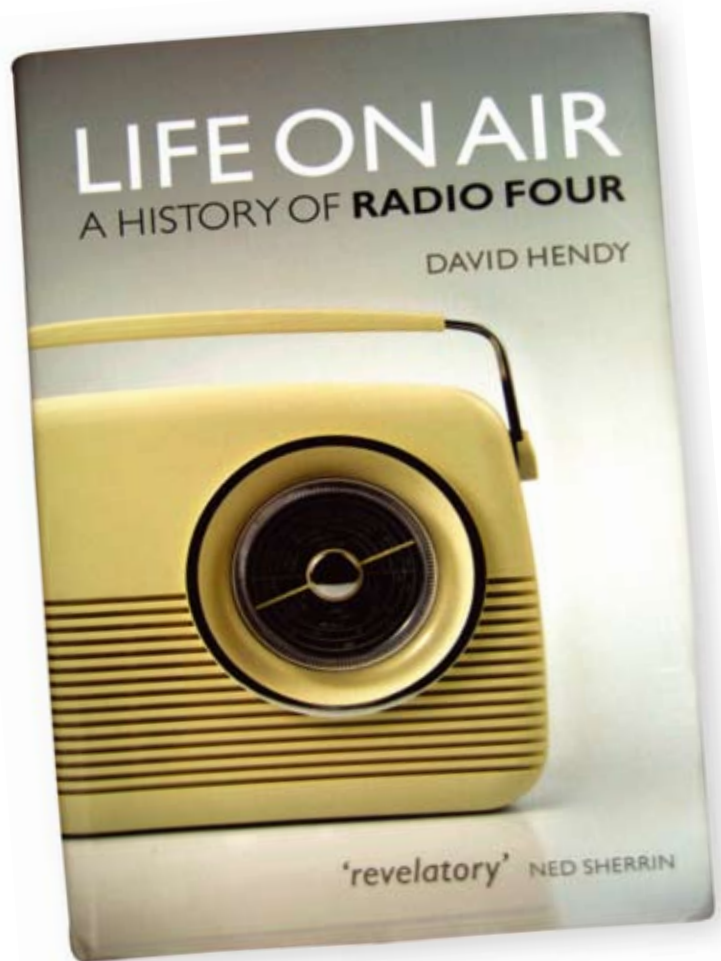
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# Life on air

## a history of radio four

Radio Four has been described as the greatest broadcasting channel in the world, the heartbeat of the BBC, and a cultural icon of Britishness.





The book tells the story of these struggles and is about more than the survival of one radio network: Radio Four has been a lightning rod for all sorts of wider social anxieties over the past forty years

DEFINED BY ITS rich mix, encompassing everything from journalism and drama to comedy, quizzes, and short-stories, its programmes - such as *Today*, *the Archers*, *Woman's Hour*, *Gardeners' Question Time*, and *The Shipping Forecast* - have been part of British life for more than four decades.

A recent AHRC funded project allowed David Hendy, a Reader in Media and Communications at the University of Westminster, to research the 'Social and Cultural History of BBC Radio Four.' He drew on privileged access to the BBC's own archives to illuminate the arguments and controversies behind the creation of some of Radio Four's most popular programmes. He also examined the central challenge faced by the station - how to change with the times, while trying not to lose faith with those who see it as a standard-bearer for quality, authoritativeness, or simply 'old-fashioned' BBC values.

Radio Four first went on air in 1967 when it took over from the Home Service. Launched in the same year as the much trendier music station, BBC Radio One, it was at first questioned whether there was indeed a need for this seemingly old fashioned, speech radio. Radio Four faced a difficult period transition where it wanted to update and be modern, but without losing the loyal support of those listeners who had liked the Home Service just as it was before the launch of Radio Four. David Hendy researched

these questions and looked at how the choices made by the station have contributed to making Radio Four the huge success that it is today.

Hendy's two year research project culminated in the publication of a new book, *Life on Air – A History of Radio Four*. The book was published in September 2007, to coincide with the 40th anniversary of the famous broadcasting station and went on to win the *History Today* - Longman Book of the Year Award 2008. It is the first major behind-the-scenes account of the station's history. The book includes new interviews with key personnel and reveals the station's struggle to justify itself in a television age, favouring clear branding and tightly-targeted audiences, with bitter disputes between the BBC and its fiercely loyal listeners.

The book tells the story of these struggles and is about more than the survival of one radio network: Radio Four has been a lightning rod for all sorts of wider social anxieties over the past forty years. A kaleidoscopic view of the changing nature of the BBC, the book provides a gripping insight into the very nature of British life and culture in the last decades of the twentieth century.

David Hendy, *Life on Air – A History of Radio Four*: ISBN: 978-0-19-924881-0

▲ *Life on Air – A History of Radio Four*, David Hendy



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## 'The Cultured Rainforest': Long-term human ecological histories in the highlands of Borneo

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AS PART OF the AHRC 'Landscape and Environment' strategic research programme, this project is allowing academics from the McDonald Institute for Archaeological Research at the University of Cambridge, the National Resources Institute at the University of Greenwich, the School of Archaeology and Ancient History at the University of Leicester, the School of Geography, Archaeology and Palaeocology at Queen's University Belfast, and the Department of Archaeology at the University of Oxford to look at how the rainforest has shaped the lives of forest-dwellers, and how forest-dwellers have shaped the rainforests of Southeast Asia.

The area in which the study takes place, the Kelabit highlands of Sarawak in Borneo, is unique because it is inhabited by both Kelabit rice farmers and Penan hunter-gatherers. The antiquity of crop farming in the area is entirely unknown but the potential antiquity of forest habitation is indicated by a range of archaeological monuments which can be found in the area.

This project is of particular importance because, in the face of logging and other forces of globalization, the forest, the

lives of its inhabitants, and the archeological evidence for their history are unlikely to survive in their present form beyond a few more years.

The project will study the history of recorded migrations, and the effects of colonial encounters on the Penan and Kelabit as well as collect information on present day forest life and the past as people remember or imagine it.

Selected monuments will be excavated to help establish the life ways of past forest-dwellers, from prehistoric to recent times and fossil pollen will be studied to document the long term history of the forest and people's impacts on it.

It is intended that the landscape history which will result from this project will help directly inform management and conservation strategies for the future of the Kelabit highlands, and in turn, have a beneficial impact on the Kelabit highlands its forest and forest-dwellers.

To find out more about the AHRC's Landscape and Environment Research Programme go to: [www.landscape.ac.uk](http://www.landscape.ac.uk)

## The Emergent City



PROJECT 'THE EMERGENT City: Access and analyze data relating to urban spaces to make informed, interpretive media artworks, was awarded £222,602 under the AHRC Fellowships in the Creative and Performing Arts Scheme. This project is in collaboration with and promoted by the Watershed Media Centre.

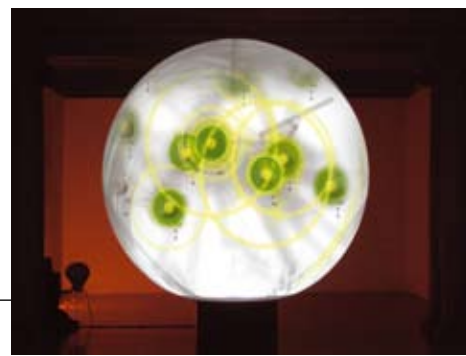
The increase of a technology infrastructure in the daily existence of a city means that technology will more than ever be everywhere in our environment. From CCTV to car sensors and tracking inside our phones the contemporary global city landscape is one of data. This project aims to analyse the patterns created from the monitoring of this

technology and turn it into audio visual artworks which provide new ways of seeing.

Stanza is a London based British artist who specialises in net art, networked spaces, installations and performances. In this project he incorporates many areas and encompasses the entire process from collecting the data, to visualizing the data, and then displaying the data.

Data collection begins by using existing online data such as weather, surveillance and news feeds as a start. Then through developments of localised wireless sensor networks gathering data on things such as temperature, humidity, barometric pressure, noise and proximity measuring generative artworks have been created like the Inner City and Biocity touch screens as exhibited at the Venice Biennale in July 2007. These sensors have been developed with help from Goldsmiths Digital Studios with whom Stanza has been working closely to focus and test his work as well as inspire a new generation of artist/technologists/researchers.

While some digital or net art can be quite unapproachable this project has created and continues to create participatory digital artworks that invite viewers to guide data



flows or to simply observe self-generating compositions. Stanza's work has already been presented as part of many exhibitions, at the Share Festival 2007 in Italy, the Digitally Yours exhibition in Finland and was selected for the 12th International Media Art Biennale WRO 07.

Another one of the key outputs of the project so far includes Sensity, a wireless sensor network around the artist's house in London which visualizes the dynamic data in the environment as an audio visual artwork. The city is made up of bits of data that change. This artwork captures this change to try to understand the underlying fabric of city space. The artwork monitors the environment for change and relays these changes via the sensors. Included in this is a special visit to Sao Paulo Brazil to set up a version of Sensity for a special exhibition. Extending this work further the artist made a visualization of his House as a data sculpture online. The finale of this project aims to be a public audio visual sculpture integrating his findings and a solo show in collaboration with the Watershed Media Centre of many digital artworks under the Emergent City umbrella.

Stanza: [www.stanza.co.uk](http://www.stanza.co.uk)

## The Climate of London

Giles Foden is a novelist with a growing reputation. In his writing Foden has tackled issues of race and post-colonialism in relation to African former territories of the European empires.

HE CAME TO public attention with his novel 'The Last King of Scotland' (in the film adaptation Forest Whitaker won an Oscar for his portrayal of Idi Amin) and followed this up with *Ladysmith, Zanzibar, Mimi and Toutou Go Forth*. Foden has also been deputy editor of the Guardian book pages and worked at the *Times Literary Supplement*.

For his latest project, Foden, supported by an AHRC Creative and Performing Arts Fellowship, is turning his attention to London fiction. The novel, provisionally entitled *The Climate of London* will focus on post-colonial issues in London fiction as seen through climate and terrorism. Unlike most London novel's, such as *Oliver Twist* or *Princess Casamassima*, which split their characters by class and geography,

Foden wanted to use the weather as a means of bringing people together.

In the process of writing the novel Foden will look at authors such as Joseph Conrad and Henry James who have given fictional accounts of 1880's anarchism in the city, as well as the ethnicity-aware accounts of London by authors such as Samuel Selvon, Zadie Smith and Andrea Levy. From his research Foden hopes to produce a novel that not only provides readers with an insight in to conditions in London at the start of the twenty-first century, as well as an understanding of the historical and literary background to the current situation, but also avoids the fixed point of view and corresponding impasse often associated with identity politics

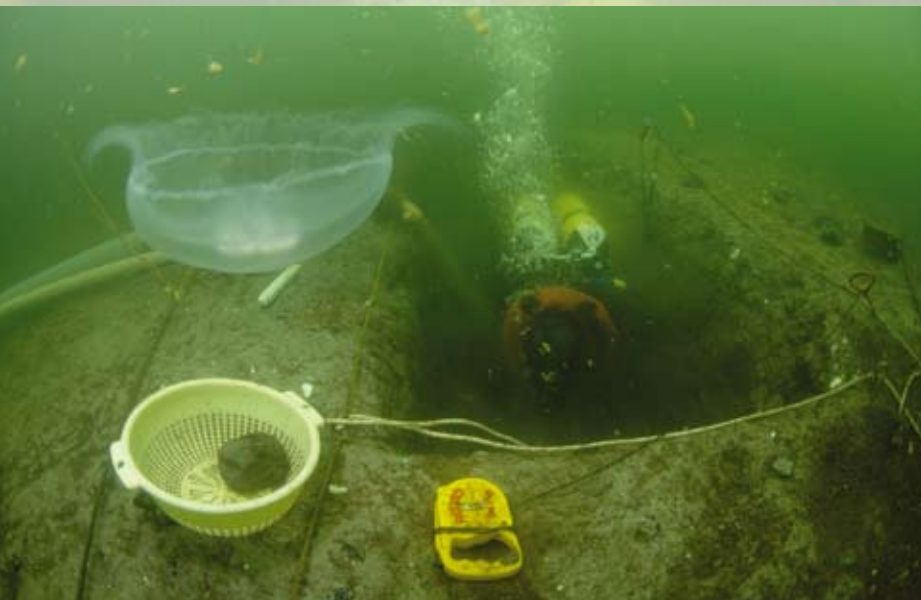


by looking at London as a micro-climate to which all inhabitants were equally subject.

Foden will be based at the Royal Holloway English Department, enabling him to not only use the expertise of his colleagues but also to teach a course of fiction-writing as well as running fiction workshops. Foden's own creativity as a student was enhanced by the presence of the poet Paul Muldoon at Cambridge and he is keen to assist today's students as Muldoon did for him.

# Pottery use by late Foragers and early Farmers in the Baltic

A new project has received standard Research Grant funding of £387,000 from the Arts and Humanities Research Council to study the transition from hunting and gathering to farming in northern Europe.



▲ Archäologisches Landesmuseum Schleswig.

THE PROJECT BRINGS together a research team led by Carl Heron at the University of Bradford and Oliver Craig at the University of York in collaboration with a team of Danish and German archaeologists. Excavations in the Baltic have uncovered superb preservation of organic remains and a long history of pottery manufacture by both hunter-gatherers and farmers. Due to sea-level changes, some of these sites lie in submerged locations off the present-day coast necessitating very careful and demanding recovery techniques during excavation. The site of Neustadt, for example, has revealed hundreds of pots dating to the transition from hunting and gathering to farming. Other sites are located inland and this provides new opportunities for comparing food resources and food preparation in different ecological zones.

In the Baltic, pottery was manufactured and used by hunter-gatherers at least 700 years before the earliest evidence of farming when completely different pottery

styles were introduced. The excellent preservation at these sites is underlined by the fact that interior surfaces of pottery fragments retain burnt food remains and exterior surfaces are sooted from fires. Although the pottery is around 7000 years old, traces of fats, oils and waxes are preserved in the charred deposits or seep into the permeable ceramic matrix and become trapped in tiny pores. Although some degradation does occur during food preparation and burial, molecular and isotopic analysis enables these food remains to be associated with terrestrial, marine and freshwater resources.

The project will apply established methods to identify foods associated with hundreds of pottery vessels from coastal and inland locations before, during and after the transition to agriculture. Identification of the precise location of the food debris and sooting on the pottery vessels will help to understand how foodstuffs were prepared. The team will also look for microscopic traces of plants and animal bone preserved in the food crusts. Radiocarbon dating of the deposits will provide dates covering the use-life of the pots and experiments will also be conducted to test ideas about how the food was prepared.

This period is particularly important, as it is when the whole of northern Europe witnessed major economic, social and ideological changes, often directly associated with the transition from hunting-gathering-fishing to agriculture and pastoralism. In particular the project examines the uses to which the very earliest pots made by hunter-gatherers were put to and explores how changes in the use of pots and the introduction of new forms of pottery relate to wider cultural changes as domesticated plants and animals appear in the sequence. The project will also provide new insights into certain activities, such as dairying, which are not often detectable using other methods.

It is also hoped that the collaboration between the interdisciplinary research team working in several countries will provide a benchmark for the study of early pottery use in other areas of the world.

► AHRC award holder  
Adrian Chandler



### Patrick Keiller- The City of the Future Exhibition

The BFI Southbank, Waterloo, London, SE1 8XT  
**22nd November 07 - 3rd February 08**

Award holder Patrick Keiller, Royal College of Art

This exhibit is the first major gallery installation by the acclaimed film-maker and director of London and Robinson in Space. The City of the Future is an exploration of urban space at the turn of the 20th century, a virtual landscape composed of 68 early actuality films from the years 1896-1909, arranged on a network of maps from the period.

For more information please see the BFI website [http://www.bfi.org.uk/whatson/bfi\\_southbank/exhibitions/bfi\\_southbank\\_gallery](http://www.bfi.org.uk/whatson/bfi_southbank/exhibitions/bfi_southbank_gallery)

### Discoveries: New Research into British Collections Exhibition

National Gallery, Trafalgar Square, London, WC2N 5DN

**21st November 07 - 10th February 08**

Award holder Francis Ames-Lewis, University of London (Birkbeck)

Discoveries brings together paintings from across the country, spanning 500 years, some of which have never been seen in public before. It will demonstrate the astonishing range and quality of our UK public collections and illustrate the wide variety of work that has been done by the National Inventory Research Project. The National Gallery has been part of this project over the last three years. The project team has gone into regional museums to shed new light on European paintings from 1200 to 1900 - discovering a rich variety of stories, interpreting symbolism, giving attributions and enhancing understanding of these little-known pictures. The exhibition coincides with the launch of the project's online database of nearly 8,000 paintings in over 200 UK museums and galleries, providing public access to information discovered as a result of the National Inventory Research Project - information which has already resulted in many new collection displays and educational initiatives in the institutions involved.

For more information on the Exhibition please see <http://www.nationalgallery.org.uk/exhibitions/current.htm>

For a link to the online database <http://vads.ahds.ac.uk/collections/NIRP/index.php>

### Vivaldi and his contemporaries Tuesday 12 February at 8pm

La Serenissima

Director and award holder Adrian Chandler, University of Southampton

Vivaldi Concerto for violin in F, RV 569  
Locatelli Concerto da chiesa in C minor, Op 4/11  
Locatelli Concerto for 4 violins in F, Op 4/12  
Tartini Concerto for violin in Bb, D.117  
Visconti Concerto for 2 violins in F  
Vivaldi Concerto for violin in D, RV 562a

An exciting programme of rare concertos by the greatest masters. In the last of their programmes exploring the north Italian violin concerto, La Serenissima and their director Adrian Chandler examine the influence of Vivaldi on his younger contemporaries. Included are works by Visconti, allegedly a teacher of Tartini; Tartini, whose consolidation of violin technique bridged the gap between the baroque and classical styles and Locatelli, who continued to write in an Italian style even after his move to Amsterdam. There are also festive concerti by Vivaldi which use lavish scoring including his only concerto to use obbligato timpani.

Tickets - £20 (£19 concessions, £18 Friends, £10 students)

Box Office - (023) 8059 5151

Website - [www.turnersims.co.uk](http://www.turnersims.co.uk)

### Do Not ReFreeze Exhibition

Focal Point Gallery Southend on Sea  
**25th January 08 - 8th March 08**

Wolverhampton Art Gallery  
**22nd May 08 - 28th June 08**

Award holder Matthew Shaul, University of Hertfordshire

This exhibition brings together a group of photographers whose extraordinary contribution to European photography has been 'frozen out' by the Cold War. Almost completely unknown in Britain, these artists developed their practice in the former East Germany negotiating the omnipresent secret police to create imagery which is increasingly being compared to luminaries such as Henri Cartier-Bresson, Dorothea Lange and Robert Frank. Disparate in background and experience, their works use an unforgiving documentary aesthetic to convey both the harsh realities and remarkable richness of life behind the Iron Curtain. These stunning images give a glimpse of day-to day life and evoke the claustrophobia, rage, envy and ideological pomp of the Communist era as well as the unexpected personal warmth, tenderness and exoticism to be found throughout the socialist commonwealth.

For more information Focal Point Gallery has a substantial webfeature on their site, [www.focalpoint.org.uk](http://www.focalpoint.org.uk)

The exhibition is also prominently featured on the website of the prominent New York

photographic gallery and publishing house Aperture and includes a substantial interview with the curator Matthew Shaul.

[www.aperture.org/donotrefreeze](http://www.aperture.org/donotrefreeze)

The catalogue (published and distributed by Cornerhouse) has sold now over 500 copies and is stocked in all the major photography bookshops in the UK and in Aperture's store in New York. There are also moves afoot to take the show back to Germany and possibly to New York.

### Froissart's Chronicles, Royal Armouries Exhibition

Royal Armouries Museum, Armouries Drive, Leeds, West Yorkshire. LS10 1LT

**8th December 07 - 6th April 08**

Award holder Peter Ainsworth, University of Sheffield

The Chronicles of Froissart which opens a window onto the colourful and turbulent world of the Hundred Years' war between France and England from 1337 to 1453 and on an ongoing basis over the web for the Online Froissart, a fascinating exhibition that uses digital technology to reveal the secrets of exquisite medieval manuscripts in vivid, colourful details. Normally the £3m+ rare and valuable manuscripts are only available on special request to researchers and not usually accessible to the general public, as the original manuscripts have to be preserved in special storage conditions requiring humidity, light and temperature control.

For any other information <http://www.royalarmouries.org/>

### History of British Visual Culture in the 1970's conference

University of Portsmouth  
**1st-3rd July 2008**

Award holder Sue Harper, University of Portsmouth

The School of Creative Arts, Film and Media at the University of Portsmouth have been awarded a large research grant from the AHRC to write the history of British visual culture in the 1970s. This is headed by Professor Sue Harper. Part of the project is to run an interdisciplinary conference in the 1970s exploring the relation between the society of the period and its culture in the broadest sense.

For information on the project and call for papers see [www.1970sproject.co.uk](http://www.1970sproject.co.uk)

*If you are an AHRC award holder and have an event, exhibition etc that you would like included in Podium please contact [communications@ahrc.ac.uk](mailto:communications@ahrc.ac.uk).*

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