Blog post:

Authors; Associate Professor Lucy Renton & Senior Lecturer Cathy Gale

Describing HEA funded seminar at Knights Park campus, Kingston University London on 4th April 2014.

Collecting as a form of material knowledge across Design Disciplines: a narrative research method from FE to HE to lifelong learning.

Posted on [**October 13, 2014**](http://blogs.heacademy.ac.uk/arts-and-humanities/2014/10/13/collecting-as-a-form-of-material-knowledge-across-design-disciplines-a-narrative-research-method-from-fe-to-he-to-lifelong-learning/) by [**laurana**](http://blogs.heacademy.ac.uk/arts-and-humanities/author/laurana/)

***Table showing picture credits at bottom of document***

**This blog post has been compiled by** **Cathy Gale** **and** **Lucy Renton** **from the Faculty of Art Design and Architecture at Kingston University London**

An HEA funded seminar entitled: “***Collecting*** *as a form of material knowledge across* ***Design disciplines****: a narrative research method from FE to HE to lifelong learning”* took place on 4 April 2014 at the Faculty of Art Design & Architecture at Kingston University London. The event was co-ordinated by Associate Professor Lucy Renton and Senior Lecturer in Graphic Design, Cathy Gale, with the collaboration of students from the BA Hons Graphic Design and Fashion courses.

This seminar stemmed from two perspectives, the PhD research of Cathy Gale, and her developing [Museum of X](http://www.museumofx.org) project that has also received funding from the HEA through a National Teaching Fellowship Award (2010-11), and [Lucy’s work on Open Educational Resources](http://arts.brighton.ac.uk/projects/networks/issue-18-july-2012/drawing-on-all-resources-developing-open-educational-practice-in-art%2C-design-and-media/presentations%2C-drawing-on-all-resources/getting-to-grips-the-sequel) in her role as Faculty Blended Learning Co-ordinator at Kingston through the HEA funded ‘[Practising Open Education’](http://www.adm.heacademy.ac.uk/projects/sector-projects/practicing-open-education-2013-developing-the-potential-of-open-educational-resources-in-art-design-and-media%5Dproject). The broader context of this seminar includes pedagogical work on the creative process by Dr. Natasha Mayo at Cardiff and the Share Academy at UCL.

“*We were aware that much recent focus has been placed on developing Digital Literacies in the curriculum and the internet has become a first port of call for many students. In contrast, our seminar aimed to remind us of the value of material culture as a creative resource, both in personal collections developed by the individual and more formal collections or archives*.

*We were also keen to have input for the launch of the Museum of X site, develop an online community of collectors and set up a place for some related Open Education Resources that could be used at all levels of study, and repurposed for a variety of disciplines. We aimed to share experience, knowledge and tools that can be used to integrate this approach in the curriculum.”*

The day started in our StaffSpace overlooking the Hogsmill River at our Knight’s Park Campus.

Students from Graphic Design were on hand making badges intended as ice-breaker devices to help develop the possibilities of new creative relationships. In a recent project on collective nouns, they developed names and logos for groups of Fashion Designers (MANIA), Product Designers (BEVEL), Fine Artists (WAVE) and so on, but they also then invented new collective nouns and designed new logos on the spot for additional delegate disciplines which proved very popular. These students also designed t-shirts and posters to brand the event and help the delegates navigate the site. More details of this project can be found in Cathy’s [Museum of X Powerpoint](http://www.heacademy.ac.uk/assets/documents/disciplines/Arts_Humanities/OER_museum_of_X_pages.zip). Thus identified (often with more than one badge!), delegates were welcomed to our event by our Associate Dean, Dr Angela Partington, who outlined the events and displays of the day. These included an exhibition by our Fashion students of contemporary tailoring developed by analysis of the clothing in the Benenden Historic Costume archive, which is held at Kingston. On display were original garments and interpretations that students had developed from researching the construction of these, along with sketchbooks, and a video interview from a student describing the experience of working with, and being able to handle, historic items. Fashion Student Natalie Simmonds was on hand to guide delegates through the exhibition items and answer questions.

Two of our Information Specialists Lin Downes and Rachel Pownall had also set out a fantastic display of Fashion and Graphic Design books from our Special Collection across several rooms for delegates to peruse. Staffspace boasted an enormous, limited edition copy of Vivienne Westwood’s Manifesto.

The first presentation was by Cathy Gale, which included an exploration of her research into material knowledge in the digital realm, referring to Wurman’s LATCH system of taxonomy as an analytical resource and information about student projects, after which delegates were invited to evaluate the developing Museum of X site, and make recommendations for future additions. Samples were circulated to show future Open Educational Resource potential through briefs, process examples and outcome images which we hope to post shortly on the Museum of X site.

In the same room as the presentation graphics students also presented a series of posters visually capturing the creative process of developing research through their recent collections project. The students have agreed to share these posters as research resources on the Museum of X site.

Richard Lumb and Maggie Wood from the MoDA archive at Middlesex University gave delegates a taste of using an object analysis questionnaire they have developed to increase student engagement with the objects they look after. They kindly brought some precious items from the collection which delegates were able to examine at close quarters {[pic 11](http://www.heacademy.ac.uk/assets/documents/disciplines/Arts_Humanities/pic11_0420-HEA_Seminars-Ezzidin_Alwan-WEB.jpg)}.

A student project examining the [Stanley Kubrick archive](http://www.arts.ac.uk/study-at-ual/library-services/collections-and-archives/archives-and-special-collections-centre/stanley-kubrick-archive) housed at the London College of Communication was the subject of Jacky Blake’s (year leader, BA (Hons) Graphic Media Design) presentation. Although situated within the Elephant and Castle site in London, the archive is rarely accessed by students studying there. This opportunity enabled students to have a rare insight into Kubrick’s working methods through his extensive and detailed notes, script changes, letters, and costume samples.

Chris Draper, Course Leader BA (Hons) Illustration from Anglia Ruskin (UEA), illustrator and avid lifelong collector gave us an insight into his personal and professional world of collecting, with some fascinating glimpses into his shelves of multiple collections ranging from ancient stone axes to clock parts. He illuminated the difference between a “closed collection, which seeks to make a complete set, and an “open” collection which can be endlessly re-categorised and reordered for creative purposes. He showed some great examples of how he has integrated his enthusiasm for collecting into the curriculum for his students with some wonderful results.

A short session on the taxonomy of biscuits was the precursor to our tea break with delegates invited to re-examine their previous categorisations over tea in physical contact with the real biscuits and certainly got everyone talking.

Suitably refreshed, we heard from Leanne Manfredi, from the Victoria and Albert Museum, who described the move of the Fashion & Textile Archive the Clothworkers Centre at Blythe House. Leanne outlined the interesting history of that building, where men and women were separated at work, leaving a mark on the architecture. She described a three tier system of support for academics wanting to work with the V & A collections, from a completely redesigned [online channel](http://www.vam.ac.uk/channel), through displays in the main museum to preparation for, and expectations of a request visit to the Blythe House Archive.

Delegates with energy left after this busy day were welcomed back to the Elizabeth Esteve- Coll Learning Centre (recent recipient of a SCONUL award) for more browsing of our Special Collections or over the Hogsmill Stream to the Stanley Picker Gallery where a new show by Nicole Wermers. Entitled [*The London Shape*](http://www.stanleypickergallery.org/programme) had just opened.

Although it was a very busy time of year, leading up to the Easter break, we were glad to have a good range of expertise and experience amongst our delegates with really lively debate, and are grateful for their input into the development of the Museum of X site. We hope that they will form the base for our growing membership of a community of collectors. We were excited to welcome some of our current PhD students to take part as delegates, as well as the fantastic contribution from our undergraduate students from Graphic Design and Fashion who put so much professional effort into making it a great day :Natalie Simmonds, Beth Heald, Mary Graham, Noni Braithwaite, Hannah Lee, Karolina Cialkate, Alice Blencowe, Xanthe Simmans.

Information specialist staff tell us they achieved some aims of considering how to promote the Special Collection and how to engage students with it.

We had a lot of positive feedback verbally on the day, and later received this email from Dr Sarah Taylor from Leeds College of Art:

“*I just wanted to thank Lucy Renton, Cathy Gale, and the team at Kingston University for creating and hosting this excellent event. As part of a small group it was exciting to consider collecting as a diverse yet egalitarian activity.”*

The HEA are thanked for their support that made this event possible, and to our Associate Dean, Dr. Angela Partington who provided additional funding to support the student contribution which so enriched the event.

This entry was posted in [Art & Design](http://blogs.heacademy.ac.uk/arts-and-humanities/category/art-design/), [Uncategorized](http://blogs.heacademy.ac.uk/arts-and-humanities/category/uncategorized/) and tagged [interdisciplinarity](http://blogs.heacademy.ac.uk/arts-and-humanities/tag/interdisciplinarity/), [lifelong learning](http://blogs.heacademy.ac.uk/arts-and-humanities/tag/lifelong-learning/), [material knowledge](http://blogs.heacademy.ac.uk/arts-and-humanities/tag/material-knowledge/), [narrative](http://blogs.heacademy.ac.uk/arts-and-humanities/tag/narrative/), [research method](http://blogs.heacademy.ac.uk/arts-and-humanities/tag/research-method/) by [laurana](http://blogs.heacademy.ac.uk/arts-and-humanities/author/laurana/).