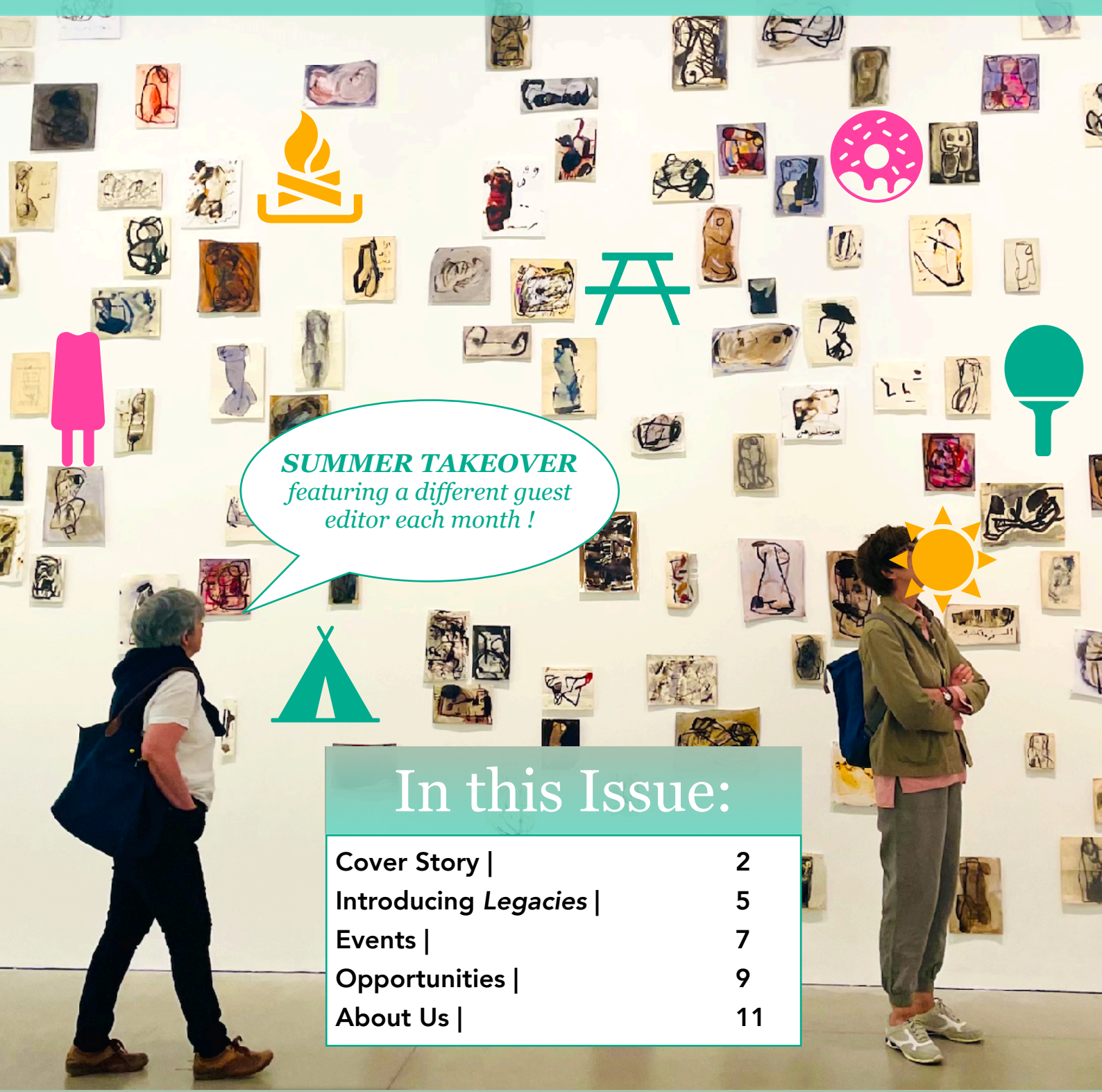


BULLETIN

16 July 2024

Cambridge Heritage Research Centre



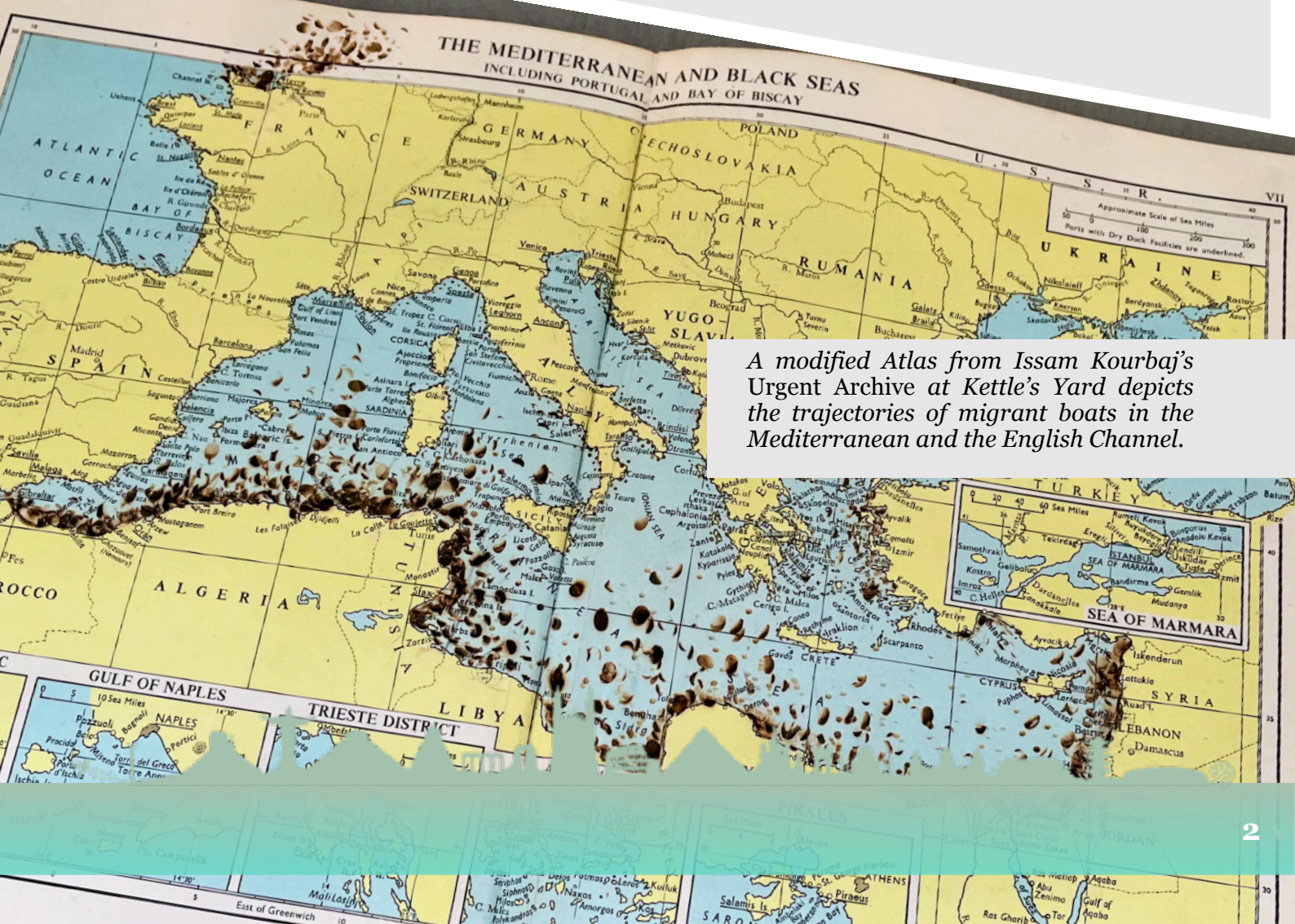
SUMMER TAKEOVER
*featuring a different guest
editor each month !*

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It is the end of a very full and tumultuous academic year, not only in Cambridge but across much of the globe. Universities from London to New Delhi, Los Angeles and Melbourne have seen their campuses roiled by sustained protests, petitions, occupations and encampments as students demand their institutions ‘disclose and divest’ their ties to Israel and global arms manufacturers. Both the demands and methods of campus activism are very far from new, part of an inheritance or ‘legacy’ which traces its roots at least as far as the student movements against the Vietnam War. Their tactics have escalated alongside the pace of destruction in Gaza; for those working in the Heritage sector especially, the targeting of mosques and churches, museums and art galleries, public archives, schools and libraries have registered, alongside the precipitous Palestinian death toll, as devastating losses.

At the CHRC we talk a fair deal about Difficult Heritage—the public acknowledgment and commemoration of past atrocities. But this year I have found myself asking, with increasing urgency, *What of Heritage in Difficult Times?* What is the role of Heritage *in the midst* of terrible crises and ongoing atrocities? Is it only humans who work to safeguard sites, monuments and artefacts at risk...or is there a level at which Heritage itself might rescue us in turn?

Issam Kourbaj’s recent exhibition, *Urgent Archive*, at Kettle’s Yard here in Cambridge seemed to be grappling with similar questions and possibilities.



A modified Atlas from Issam Kourbaj’s Urgent Archive at Kettle’s Yard depicts the trajectories of migrant boats in the Mediterranean and the English Channel.

Since the beginning of the Syrian uprising against the authoritarian regime of Bashar al-Assad in 2011, Kurbaj's practice has honed in on the plight of ordinary people caught in the trap of cataclysmic state violence. His previous, acclaimed works have included tiny boats carrying cargoes of burnt matchsticks—the refugees whose lives are already irreparably altered by the time they attempt to flee.

In *Urgent Archive*, works responding to the specific circumstances of political prisoners and other victims of the long, brutal Syrian Civil War sit seamlessly alongside installations addressing the current plight of Gazans. For Kurbaj there was no need to distinguish between the razing of Syrian and Palestinian cities; in his exhibit the suffering of ordinary people at the hands of the state tends to erase other national, temporal and political boundaries, drawing attention instead to the specificity of individual human beings and their lived experiences, while gesturing towards the terrible sameness which characterise state policies of oppression, dehumanisation and erasure.



A major theme of Kurbaj's exhibition was the creation of records and artefacts to document the stories & losses of war—a role left to artists faced with the states' abdication and obstruction of efforts in this direction.

Syrians were among the earliest and most vocal protesters against Russia's invasion of Ukraine, a point frequently overlooked but perfectly understandable, given the Syrian people's subjection to ten years of ruthless Russian bombardment. In the immediate wake of the 2022 invasion, we witnessed a veritable explosion of Ukrainian cultural production on the global stage: folk music and traditional costumes, literature and food—all part of a concerted and self-conscious effort to counter Moscow's official denial that there was such a thing as Ukrainian culture, history, or national identity.

Similarly throughout Israel's assault on Gaza, and as efforts to reject and suppress Palestinian history, culture and identity continue, there has been a corresponding surge in the popularity of traditional Palestinian songs and handicrafts, notably *tatreez* (embroidery) and the *keffiyeh*, whose various stitches are laden with cultural significance—from fishnets evoking the Palestinians' symbiotic relationship with the Mediterranean Sea to thick straight lines symbolising the ancient trade routes tying the peoples of the Levant to Asia and Arabia.

The connection between the destruction of Syria and Palestine, the suffering of ordinary people at the hands of the mechanised state, and the ghoulish logic of dehumanisation which underwrites mass death were also prominent themes at an event held at the Royal Academy of Art in London, featuring the poet Ghayath Almadhoun, the child of Palestinian refugees in Syria now exiled in Sweden, and the Gazan fine artist Malak Mattar. For Almadhoun and Mattar no less than Kourbaj, watching from afar the physical destruction of their homes spurred them to produce new art and artefacts: to record for posterity what has and is happening; to replace or compensate for what is being destroyed—whether in terms of stories or memories, songs, visual art, or other cultural material; to communicate with audiences in a language which news reports do not (or perhaps cannot) speak; and to reach back across the miles, to the homes and loved ones whose losses are intensely felt and deeply grieved.



© Malak Mattar, *No Words* (2024)

Malak Mattar's monochrome exhibit, *The Horse Fell off the Poem*, appeared alongside the opening of the Venice Biennale this spring. The exhibit features the enormous greyscale *No Words*, whose many visual references to Picasso's *Guernica* include a horse at centre canvas, teeth and tongue exposed in a cry of distress. In Mattar's iteration the horse is pulling a nightmare-laden cart steered by a terrified child. As I elaborate in my [postdoctoral project](#) on the entangled legacies of Gernika, *Guernica* and colonial violence in the Middle East, *Last Breath* places Mattar within a powerful transnational lineage of Arab artists drawing on the visual vocabulary of *Guernica* to paint against the machines of war. In an intensely difficult time, it is these works of art—some close to a century old, others barely dry on the canvas—which have, in a way, rescued me. They are simultaneously the carriers of legacies from the past and testaments to their own unique historical circumstances; above all they are overwhelmingly human, and evidence of the awesome human capacity to bring forth light in even the darkest of times.

Dr Erin O'Halloran is Marie Sklodowska Curie European Research Fellow at the CHRC & Guest Editor of this issue of the Centre's Bulletin.

INTRODUCING *LEGACIES*

a new feature of the CHRC Bulletin for 2024/5

This June, the McDonald Institute for Archaeological Research hosted a workshop on *Researching Legacies of the Past*, the first in a series of events connected to the CHRC project of the same name, funded by the University of Cambridge's School of Humanities and Social Sciences as part of their Research Framework. The project is directed by Professor Dacia Viejo Rose, PI.

The June workshop provided a platform for Cambridge academics from different backgrounds to come together and share how they approach legacies in their work, both in terms of theory and method. The discussion helped us gain a fuller perspective of the wide research landscape covering legacies, and established the foundations for fruitful collaborations which will enrich participants' own work and communicate to non-academic communities what is being done about the past and for the future.

The interdisciplinary discussions which began at the workshop have inspired some of our early career researchers to write interventions on how they research legacies of the past in their ongoing projects. In this new section of the bulletin, we are happy to share them with our readers. In this edition, the spotlight is on Oliver Antczak, Teaching Associate in Heritage Studies.

What are Legacies?

A Provocation by Oliver Antczak

From the Author: *"The ideas below resulted out of discussions and reflections from the Legacies of the Past Workshop on the 4th of June 2024. They are an invitation for further discussion; please write to me at oa273@cam.ac.uk with any thoughts!"*

Legacies are elements of a different time to our own that puncture through to our time, making themselves relevant. It is in recognising the link that something has with the past that it becomes a legacy, otherwise it escapes unnoticed as an inheritance. Many inheritances remain as such: furniture, buildings, ideas; but when they gain significance as representatives of a different time, they become legacies. This significance can appear in diverse, often overlapping, forms: economic value, memorial attachment, educational importance, historical eminence, to name a few.



INTRODUCING *LEGACIES*

a new feature of the CHRC Bulletin for 2024/5

Legacies hold agency, as I think the name suggests, they impart changes unto the present based on their characteristics that are recognised as being derived from the past. The legacy of your parents may affect your chances at a career, the legacy of a politician may lead you to a war, the legacy of a jagged rock in your pocket is a hole in your jeans. Through their agentic power, legacies convert present day elements to be their apostles. A scar appears in pictures, an ideology acquires followers. These elements announce the legacies link to the past and multiply the impact of the legacy in the present. Legacies and the complex of things it entangles come together to also mean the 'legacy'; the legacy grows exponentially.

Legacies often are associated with our own categorisations of past time – they carry links with denoted periods and they often exhibit noticeable features that are considered to be characteristic of that period: a Victorian garden, Ancient Greek philosophy, or your grandfather's stoicism, all refer to legacies that encapsulate more than just one moment in time.

Both the mundane and the extraordinary are legacies, inasmuch as they are significant in the present. Legacies do not have to be exciting, profound, or omnipresent – such legacies are greatly outnumbered by little legacies we need to step around and adjust our lives to, almost imperceptibly, every day. A sore ankle, increased temperatures, a CAPTCHA, a pedestrian barrier. But a lack of a legacy is not a legacy.

Because this is such a broad and inclusive definition, it may be helpful to think, what is NOT a legacy? That which does not derive any significance due to its association with the past is not recognised as a legacy, but instead is just an inheritance. We are surrounded by such inheritances that affect our lives and hold many of the characteristics of a legacy, but do not announce their link to the past in the same way a legacy does. Any chair you sit on is an inheritance of the past, even if you just finished making it, but it's the stiff wooden back of a medieval church pew that makes you aware of its legacy.

The next Legacies of the Past Workshop, entitled "A Sense of Place", is scheduled for September, in collaboration with Dr Paolo di Franco of the University of Essex. To learn more about the project and the full schedule of forthcoming events write to us at LegaciesofthePast@hsps.cam.ac.uk



EVENTS



Date: Mondays, 23 Sept - 21 Oct 2024
Time: 14.00 - 16.00 (UK time)
Format: Virtual

Course outline

This course will offer an introduction to cultural heritage as an international legal concept. It will include discussions of the key threats to cultural heritage at present, including trafficking, armed conflicts, and development. In doing so, it will also cover international instruments that have been adopted over the past decades to protect cultural heritage. Finally, the course will conclude with a special session focused on restitution matters, considering past return processes and what can be learnt from them.

Course topics

- Cultural Heritage as a Global Concept
- Cultural Heritage within the International Human Rights Framework
- Combatting the Trafficking of Cultural Objects
- An economic perspective on cultural heritage: Cultural Objects as

Goods

- The protection of cultural heritage in armed conflict
- Prosecuting and redressing crimes against cultural heritage
- World Cultural Heritage
- Intangible Cultural Heritage
- The Settlement of Inter-State disputes concerned with Cultural Heritage
- The Restitution of Cultural Heritage

[Download the Programme](#)

Course format

The virtual course format will consist of a series of 5 sessions (total of 10 hours) in which live teaching is offered via Zoom. Participants will be able to interact with the tutors and amongst themselves on screen.

Pricing and registration

The course cost is **£300 per person**. Discounts for group bookings and individual members of BIICL are available. A limited number of scholarships are also available.

EVENTS



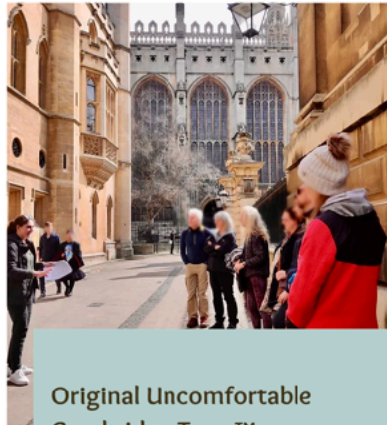
**uncomfortable
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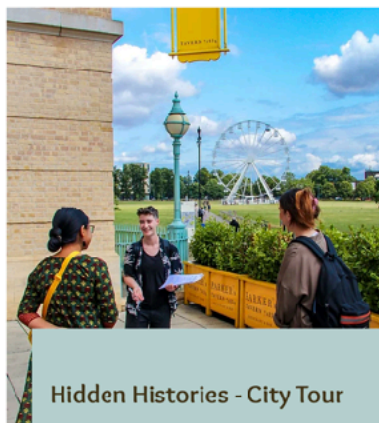
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Hidden Histories - City Tour

Discover the diverse heritage of the city and University.



Whipple Museum Tour

Explore the 'uncomfortable' side of Science at the Whipple Museum



OPPORTUNITIES

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Publications
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Apply by
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Available **Remote Work Positions** with
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APPLY BY 22 JULY 2024

Publications & Research Program Associate

Responsible for conducting in-depth research, producing high-quality publications, and supporting our educational and informational initiatives. Requires strong research skills, attention to detail, and the ability to collaborate effectively with other team members. This is a three-year appointment.

[Learn More & Apply](#)

Media & Marketing Program Associate

Responsible for managing our online presence, including website maintenance, social media strategy and implementation, and podcast research and development. This role requires a blend of technical skills, creativity, and analytical abilities to effectively engage our audience and promote the Monuments Toolkit Project. This is a three-year appointment.

[Learn More & Apply](#)

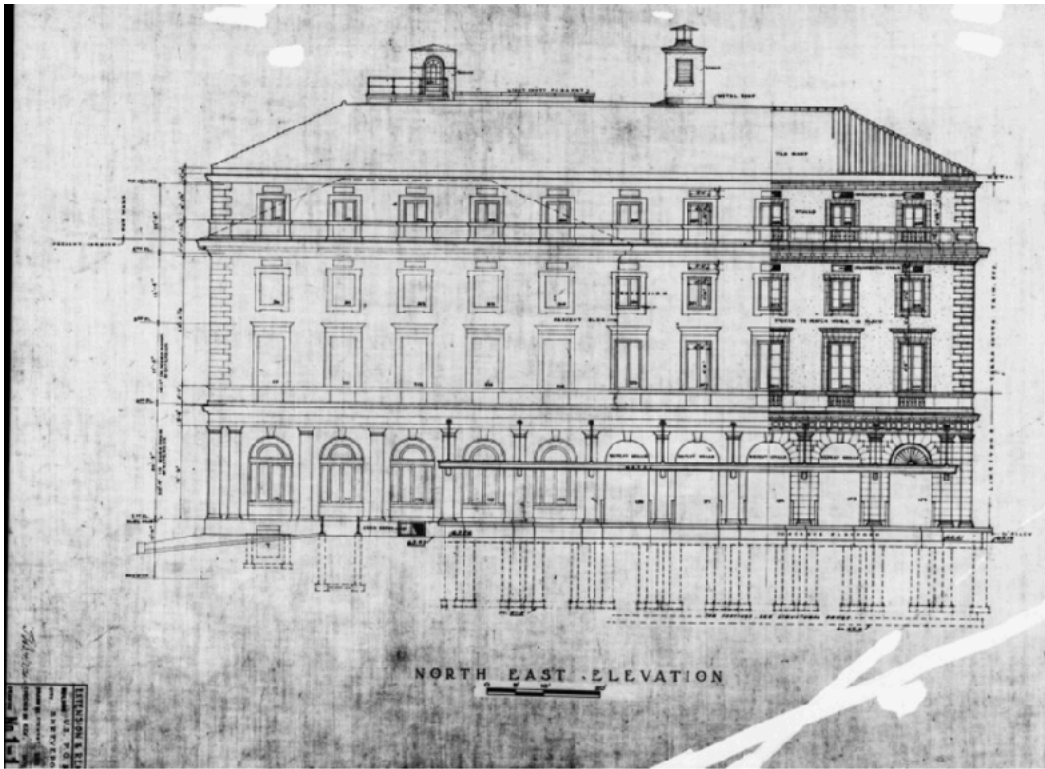
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OPPORTUNITIES



ORGANISING ARCHITECTURES

The DFG Research Training Group ORGANISING ARCHITECTURES (Frankfurt/Darmstadt/Kassel, Germany) has put out a call for multiple positions at the doctoral and post-doctoral level, for appointments starting November 2024.

A detailed description of The DFG Research Training Group & its project can be found [here](#).

Available Positions:

11 Doctoral Studentships

Applications from the fields of architecture and art history, media and history studies, law, sociology, heritage, human geography and political science as well as architecture and urban planning are welcomed. [Read the full Call for Applications here.](#)

2 Postdoctoral Associateships

Applications with a profile in design and planning science and/or social and cultural sciences, which show potential for connection primarily to architectural history or sociology, and from there to at least one of the other disciplines represented in the college: media, law, political science, heritage and history, human geography, architecture or urban planning. [Read the full Call for Applications here.](#)



ABOUT US



CONTRIBUTE

We would be especially interested in hearing from you about events and opportunities. Contributions in the form of short reviews of conferences, exhibitions, publications or other events/material that you have attended/read are also welcome. Please note that advertisements for any non-CHRC events, jobs, or programs do not imply endorsement of them.

BULLETIN GUEST EDITOR

Dr. Erin M.B. O'Halloran
MSCA European Research Fellow
MIAR / CHRC

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