

10:30 am

Joachim Baur

Technical University Dortmund

Reevaluating Blumenbach's skulls. Curatorial strategies at Forum Wissen Göttingen

11:15 am

short break

11:30 am

The future of the past

Katie Eagleton

St Andrews University
Collections

Re-Collecting Empire:
rethinking digital engagement
with objects and collections

12:15-12:30 am

Closing remarks

Coordinated by the Whipple Museum of the History of Science and the Department of History and Philosophy of Science (working with University of Cambridge Museums & Botanic Garden) and the Leibniz Research Alliance 'Value of the Past', including the Research Museums of the Leibniz Association. With support from the DAAD-University of Cambridge Research Hub for German Studies with funds from the German Federal Foreign Office (FFO), and from the Leibniz Research Alliance "Value of the Past".

Organizers:

Liba Taub and Joshua Nail

Whipple Museum of the History of Science, Cambridge

Achim Saupe

Leibniz-Research Alliance Value of the Past -
Leibniz Centre for Contemporary History Potsdam

with support from

Ulf Hashagen

Deutsches Museum, Munich & LMU, Munich

Project partners:

The Leibniz Research Alliance 'Value of the Past' including the Research Museums of the Leibniz Association, and the University of Cambridge Museums & Botanic Garden explore contemporary conceptions of valuing the past and how we deal with our cultural heritage. The eight Leibniz research museums collect objects, conduct research and transfer knowledge. Their archives contain over 100 million objects, used for research into the history of the Earth, biodiversity, cultural history and history of technology, and conservation of our scientific and cultural heritage. The University of Cambridge Museums is a consortium of eight museums and the Cambridge University Botanic Garden, representing the UK's highest concentration of internationally important collections outside London, with more than five million works of art, artefacts, and specimens.

The partnership is supported by the DAAD-University of Cambridge Research Hub for German Studies with funds from the German Federal Foreign Office (FFO); and by the Leibniz Association and the Leibniz Research Alliance "Value of the Past".



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Values of the Pasts

Museums and
Collections as a
Resource of Knowledge
and Reflexive
Self-Understanding

Cambridge

November 30 – December 2, 2023

Department of History and
Philosophy of Science
Free School Lane
Cambridge CB2 3RH

Conference Programme

Toppled monuments, conflicts over the restitution of objects, debates about the epochal nature of the Anthropocene or the fundamentals of biodiversity research: All of these subjects share common questions about how societies value the past and how they use material relics to assign and compete over these values. This conference focusses on the values that museums and collections attach to the past, to their institution, their collections and exhibitions.

Museums, collections and their objects always have changing and persisting symbolic, aesthetic, scientific, historical, cultural, societal, and economic values. The conference will examine processes of value creation as well as competing values in order to gain a deeper understanding of the historicity of values. It seeks to gain an understanding of past and current practices of assessing, rethinking, resituating and harnessing the values of the past in all their complexity.

Thursday, 30 November

1:30 pm

Welcome and Introduction

Liba Taub

Whipple Museum of the History of Science Cambridge

Achim Saupe

Leibniz Research Alliance Value of the Past/Leibniz Centre for Contemporary History Potsdam

2:00-3:30 pm

Fundamental questions concerning Museum Values of the Past

Sunhild Kleingärtner

German Mining Museum Bochum - Leibniz Research Museum for Georesources

Trust in museums. The value of an institution's past

3:30-4:00 pm

Ruth Schilling

German Maritime Museum Bremerhaven

Beyond Description: Practicalities of Museum Artefacts

4:00 pm

Coffee & tea

Tour of Whipple Museum

7:00 pm

Dinner: Cote Brasserie (for speakers and chairs)

Friday, 1 December

10:00 am

Welcome

Leila Mukhida

Deputy Director, DAAD Cambridge Research Hub for German Studies, University of Cambridge

10:30 am – 12:00 noon

Thinking about Values of the Past for the future

Luke Syson

Fitzwilliam Museum Cambridge:

The Fitzwilliam Museum: history and future

Daniel Hess

Germanisches Nationalmuseum Nuremberg

Museum Collections under New Perspectives. From the Germanic to a European Museum

12:00 – 1:00 pm

Lunch: in HPS (for registered participants)

1:30 – 3:00 pm

Natural History collections

Willi Xylander

Senckenberg Görlitz

Natural history collections: resource for answers on questions of the past, presence and future

Jack Ashby

Cambridge University Museum of Zoology

Adding values: social, environmental and scientific relevance in natural history museums

3:00 pm – 5:00 pm

Museum visits:

Sedgwick Museum Polar Museum

7:00 pm

Dinner: The Pint Shop (for speakers and chairs)

Saturday, 2 December

9:45 – 11:15 am

Anthropological and Archaeological Collections

9:45 am

Jimena Guerrero Arenas

MAA, University of Cambridge

Collective Voices: Rethinking and Reshaping Museum Archaeology Collections' Values