

# Engaging with the Cultural Olympiad to transform the experience of museum, library and archive collections

Isobel Siddons  
Programme Manager for 2012  
Museums, Libraries and Archives Council



# The Cultural Olympiad



# What is the Cultural Olympiad?

- “The wedding of sport and art”, Pierre de Coubertin
- The London 2012 Games are not just about sport. They will also celebrate cultures, people and languages – in London, the UK and around the world.

# Values of the Cultural Olympiad

The Cultural Olympiad is for everyone. It will:

- celebrate London and the whole of the UK welcoming the world
- inspire and involve young people; and
- generate a positive legacy

# Structure of the Cultural Olympiad

The Cultural Olympiad divides into four sections:

1. [Ceremonies](#) – extraordinary live spectacles watched on television by one in three people around the world.
2. [Major projects](#) – A number of major cultural projects featured in the London 2012 bid, forming the backbone of the Cultural Olympiad.
3. [Inspire mark projects](#) – local and regional events featuring in our UK-wide celebration.
4. [Open Weekend](#) – festival of public events as a count down to the Games.

# MLA's programme



# MLA's programme

MLA's programme to lead and coordinate involvement of museums, libraries and archives in the Cultural Olympiad

Developed after a year's consultation with our sector, key stakeholders and potential partners

Delivered through our national and regional structure

# MLA's programme

Development programme for our sector

MLA core areas of work, including learning, community engagement, digital, collections, sustainability, improvement

Opportunities for whole breadth of our sector

Partnerships with wider culture sector





# MLA's programme

MLA's programme has five strands:

1. Stories of the World
2. The People's Record
3. The Record
4. Literature & Storytelling
5. Other activities



# stories of the world

One of the major projects of  
London 2012's Cultural Olympiad

Brought to you by:



# Stories of the World

One of the ten major projects of the Cultural Olympiad

Unique opportunity to showcase collections and best practice – a series of ground-breaking exhibitions

Over 50 museums, libraries and archives involved UK-wide.

# Stories of the World

## “Welcoming the World”

Nowhere can the cultural heritage of the world be seen so completely in one place as in the UK.

Fresh look at our collections through the eyes of the communities from which they originated.

# Stories of the World

Reinterpretation programme in partnership with:

- relevant communities
- creative and other voices: artists, story tellers, scholars from the UK and the source cultures

A series of exhibitions in 2011-12 will showcase the collections and their fresh stories

Programme enhanced by local public events and displays, learning programmes, talks and performances



# Stories of the World

## Three lasting effects

- the UK's treasures will acquire a richer meaning for everyone who sees them in future;
- new thinking will be applied to traditional museum display;
- a young generation will connect in a new and deeper way with their own and their neighbours' heritage.

1. Just Bling?: Wales
2. Fiesta!: Scotland
3. Rhythms of the Year: Northern Ireland
4. Seven Stories: British Library + public libraries
5. Fashioning Identity: East Midlands
6. World City: London
7. Style Africa: Birmingham
8. Precious Cargo: Yorkshire
9. Global Threads: North West
10. Sex and Histiry: South West + Wellcome Collection
11. East Meets East: East of England
12. Masquerade: Liverpool
13. Journeys of Discovery: North East
14. Local Global: South East

# Stories of the World

28 Apr 2009: Press launch of programme

Apr-Dec 2009: Development phase

- youth and community participation
- business planning
- develop the Project Board

2009-2011: Reinterpretation programme

2011-2012: Exhibitions

2012-2013: Close of programme and evaluation



# Youth participation



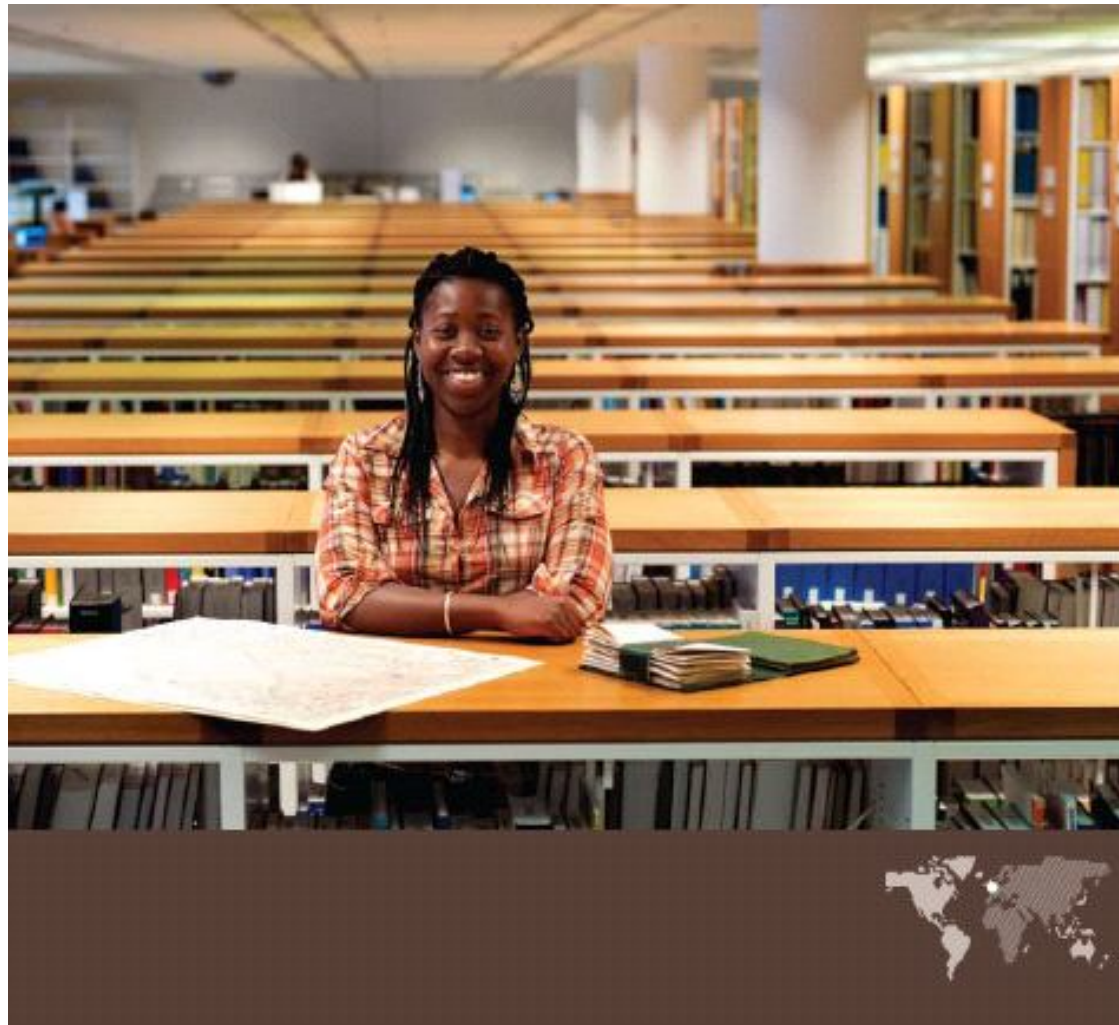
# Youth participation

- Young people at the heart of 2012
- Engaging young people one of MLA's strategic priorities

## Work with National Youth Agency:

- Consultation to help develop programme criteria – how do young people want to be involved
- Development phase: support youth participation capacities
- Delivery stage: range of roles for young people

# Reinterpretation



# Reinterpretation

- Reinterpretation of collections from other parts of the world

“Objects once by-passed for being reminders of our imperial past will now be examined and given more relevance to contemporary Britain”

# Reinterpretation

Work with the Collections Trust to:

- Share best practice between partners – eg
  - *London, Sugar & Slavery*, Museum of Docklands
  - *Collective Conversations*, The Manchester Museum
- Embed use of *Revisiting Collections* methodology

# Creative responses



# Creative responses

Artists, story tellers, writers, musicians, designers, performers, film makers ...

Creative responses to:

- to tell the new stories from the collections
- take collections and their stories out of the museum
- attract new audiences

# Creative responses

*Omai*, pantomime in the North East

Decorated taxi from Pakistan for the Luton Carnival

Commissions of international artists and designers  
at the Whitworth

Musical events and performance in Edinburgh and  
Glasgow



[www.london2012.com/storiesoftheworld](http://www.london2012.com/storiesoftheworld)

Isobel Siddons  
Programme Manager

020 7273 8285

[isobel.siddons@mla.gov.uk](mailto:isobel.siddons@mla.gov.uk)

