

Extreme Collecting - AHRC Research Workshop Series

Date : October 21, 2007

Extreme Collecting explores the process of collecting that challenges the bounds of normally acceptable practice. It consists of a series of four workshops aimed at addressing the social, political, material and ethical debates surrounding the controversial practice of extreme collecting in the twenty-first century. Its aim is to apply a critical approach towards the rigidity of museums in maintaining essentially nineteenth century ideas of collecting and move towards identifying priorities for collection policies in UK museums which are inclusive of acquiring 'difficult' objects. Much of this will look at the question of acceptable boundaries for the practice of collecting and the implementation of new strategies in collecting.

Extreme Collecting may apply to the collection of those objects that appear so mundane and mass-produced as to appear uninteresting. Alternatively, it also applies to the collecting of many other objects that have physical characteristics – of ephemeral substance, size and scale – that make it impossible to acquire and exhibit or are prone to rapid decay. Sustainability of collections is a vital consideration in a world where institutions are dominated by audit culture and by tick box compliance.

A series of four workshops will address these issues so that we may begin to plan for and manage the museum collections of the future.

The series is a collaboration between UCL and the British Museum and supported by the AHRC. Workshops are hosted at the British Museum.

Workshop 1

Extreme Collecting: Intellectual Foundations to 'Difficult' Objects (Friday, 14 December 2007, 1-6pm)

Workshop 2

Ethnography of the Ordinary (Thursday, 31 January 2008, 1-6pm)

Workshop 3

Scale, Size and the Ephemeral (Thursday, 28 February 2008, 1-6pm)

Workshop 4

Material World

A Global Hub for Thinking About Things

<http://www.materialworldblog.com>

Collecting and Source Communities (Monday, 31 March 2008, 1-6pm)

For more details, and to register, visit:

<http://www.ucl.ac.uk/extreme-collecting>