

**EXETER CITY COUNCIL**  
**SCRUTINY COMMITTEE - COMMUNITY**  
**7 JUNE 2011**

**RAMM'S TEMPORARY EXHIBITION PROGRAMME 2011-2012**

**1. PURPOSE OF THE REPORT**

- 1.1 To inform Members of the importance of exhibition programming and for the upcoming programme for 2011 - 2012 to be noted.

**2. BACKGROUND**

- 2.1 Before its closure for redevelopment at the end of 2007, RAMM was attracting approximately 250,000 visitors a year. Visitor Studies indicated that the exhibitions and events programme were key to delivering these high numbers. The recognition of this track record was important to the HLF's decision to invest in RAMM's redevelopment and their setting of a new performance measure for the project which unusually focussed on duration of visitor stay (i.e. the quality of the experience) rather than a large increase in already high visitor numbers.
- 2.2 Programming of exhibitions will be critical to the visitor experience and delivery of this performance measure.
- 2.3 In shaping its audience development strategy which seeks to maintain existing users as well as securing first time visitors RAMM uses a planning tool called Acorn Segmentation widely used in the commercial world. Acorn Segmentation studies undertaken before RAMM's closure indicated that the socio-economic profile of museum visitors almost exactly matched that of the base population (as derived from census data). This finding is unusual for museums and is a result of the planned audience development undertaken by the museum. Acorn Segmentation allows the team to identify potential areas of audience growth and to shape and balance the exhibitions and events programme accordingly. This provides a guiding rationale which helps make the museum more accessible to more people ensuring RAMM serves all parts of the community and not just existing cultural consumers.
- 2.4 Active museums like RAMM provide important civic space, where a mix of people, of all backgrounds, ages and needs can come together to share a common experience. This is quite rare and very valuable in a time where communities are increasingly fragmented and often struggle to find a collective sense of identity for which museums can provide a focus. RAMM's new facilities have been designed to offer increased flexibility enabling the museum to provide a venue and backdrop for a wide range of events ranging from community occasions to conferences and meetings
- 2.5 The national context for museum and galleries is also changing with the abolition of the Museums, Libraries and Archives Council providers of the Renaissance Programme which has for the last nine years provided significant revenue investment for RAMM. MLA's responsibilities will be taken up by the Arts Council of England and this is likely to lead to closer integration of the museum sector with other areas of culture in particular contemporary arts practice. Broadening museums role in this way creates new opportunities which may well link to sources of future external funding. RAMM needs to ensure that its programming; audience development plans and partnerships reflect this new operating background.

### **3. RAMM'S VISITORS**

- 3.1 RAMM attracts a wide range of audiences that interact with the museum in many different ways. They have different reasons for visiting and different interests and needs, and each is looking for a rewarding experience every time they visit.
- 3.2 To keep visitor satisfaction levels high for the quarter of a million visitors that RAMM attracts each year, it needs to offer a wide range of experiences both throughout the museum and throughout the year.
- 3.3 RAMM's temporary exhibition programme is a major contribution to this mixture of experiences. The busy schedule of exhibitions and displays, together with the range of topics, interpretation, partners and related events, enables RAMM to keep attracting its regular visitors while also involving new ones.
- 3.4 RAMM's temporary exhibition programme aims to:
- provide a mixture of accessible, high quality exhibitions and displays throughout the year. These exhibitions need to balance RAMM's role as a museum and art gallery; its responsibilities to its own collections as well as and showcasing the best of contemporary practice; its role in national, regional and local settings.
  - balance the provision for different types of visitors across the year's programme;
  - provide a firm foundation for a diverse programme of participation and learning opportunities both inside and outside the museum for example: talks, tours and debates; family activities; special projects, activities and events with partners and community groups; on line and digital interaction;
  - raise the profile of RAMM, the City Council and Exeter by attracting to the South West significant loans and exhibitions from prestigious national partners for example, the British Museum, Royal Collection, National Portrait Gallery;
  - stimulate new and repeat visits to RAMM and to the city contributing to Exeter's offer to day visitors;
  - contribute significantly to Exeter's offer as a tourist destination.
  - create longer term strategic partnerships which enhance the reputation of RAMM, the City Council and Exeter by developing new and innovative exhibitions that attract external funding and national acclaim;
  - maximize the use of resources by programming a range of touring; self generated; one-off collaborative shows which support RAMM's audience development strategy. Where possible secure external funding to assist delivery.

### **4. PROGRAMME**

#### **Balancing the Programme**

- 4.1 Viewed across several years the balance within the programme will vary depending on the availability of opportunities, resources and staffing capacity. In this first year the programme was very consciously aimed at exploiting nationally the high publicity

profile which the opening will generate, as well as fulfilling our promises to bring exhibitions from the national museums to Exeter: hence our collaborations with the Victoria and Albert Museum, the British Museum and the Royal Collection. The programme doesn't neglect however to offer a regional showcase and to build on RAMM's work in the community over the last four years – notably the exhibition of life in Exeter in the 50s and 60s. Some recently acquired objects also find an important place in the exhibitions derived from our own collection. In particular however we have focused very clearly on working with young people in Exeter to create several exhibitions – notably Life Through the Lens and the yet to be titled Children's Art Show – which will offer more than just the opportunity to exhibit work, but give them a chance to work with each other, with artists and with museum staff to develop their ideas and their skills before displaying them.

- 4.2 A detailed description of planned exhibitions 2011-12 follow in section B with the first year's schedule breakdown across categories shaped as follows. Although these categories illustrate the origin of the subject matter it is worth emphasising that every show is meant for "local consumption" and every show will bring with it a range of activities and events for the people of Exeter, complementary to the exhibition itself – and these will be particularly focused on children and families

<u>Local Focus</u>	<u>Regional Focus</u>	<u>National Focus</u>
How We Were. Digital exhibition featuring Exeter life in the 1950's/60's	Road to Rome: Artist and Travellers on the Grand Tour (exhibition based around key works from <b>RAMM's Collection</b> )	Into The Light: French and British paintings from Impressionism to the 1920's ( <b>RAMM originated exhibition</b> )
A Symphony of Curves. Geoffrey Preston – A tradition in plaster. (Exeter based architectural sculptor)	Ravillious Revisited: Focussing on the <b>North Devon Biosphere Reserve</b>	Roger Fenton and Julia Margaret Cameron: Early British Photographs from the <b>Royal Collection</b>
Life Through the Lens: Edwardian endeavour to modern media. Exeter young people capture their daily lives	Home. Local artist Gary Fabian Miller highlights his personal views and experiences living on <b>Dartmoor</b>	International Garden Photographer of the Year
Children's Art Show (title tbc) Display of work by local children. This will be created from interactive work with children as part of the activities programmes of the other big exhibitions, leading on to the exhibition.		Selling Dreams: 100 years of Fashion Photography ( <b>V&amp;A</b> )
		Warriors of the Plains. 200 years of N. American honour and ritual ( <b>BM</b> )

## **Contemporary Practice**

- 4.3 In addition to heritage topics, RAMM's programme also includes the work of living artists, or craftspeople (in 11/12 Gary Fabian Miller and Geoffrey Preston). Moving forward and at the same time maintaining the balance with heritage topics the programme will include a number of designated slots for showing the work of practicing artists. Each year there will be an open invitation and fixed date for artists and artist groups to send in their proposals which will be considered by RAMM's programming group supported by an external panel of advisors. The advisory group (rotating membership) will assist RAMM in three ways 1) through specialist experience, 2) helping to promote wider awareness within the arts community of the opportunity to collaborate with the museum and 3) by increasing the transparency of the selection process. RAMM will remain responsible for ensuring that accepted proposals match the museum's audience development strategy.
- 4.4 Children and young people will continue to be an important part of RAMM's Audience Development Strategy (based on Acorn Segmentation data) and this is reflected in their leading involvement in Life Through The Lens. We will continue to ensure that they participate through a varied range of opportunities including engagement with key exhibitions and collections along with chances to showcase the results of their creative work.
- 4.5 Plans include activities and family areas in the Road to Rome and Into the Light exhibitions and a series of family and children's activities complement the programme in all holidays throughout the year. Permanent provision includes 'beebags on wheels' and activity boxes packed with things to do. Children's artworks will be shown in the café and digital media is allowing RAMM to expand its relationships with all audiences, particularly the young.

## **About new RAMM**

- 4.5 RAMM and its programme aims to be open, collaborative and inclusive with different voices, personal interpretations and new perspectives. RAMM will be using its collections and its exhibitions to explore meaning, connections and concepts from local ideas to global issues.
- 4.6 RAMM aims to be a thought-provoking and challenging museum informed by its rich history but also excited by the culture around it in Exeter today. RAMM aims to be open to people, ideas and conversations – a home to a million thoughts.
- 4.7 The exhibition programme and its associated activities is a vital part of this vision providing rich and varied subjects to engage people of all ages and from all walks of life.

## **5. EXHIBITIONS 2011 TO 2012**

### **Into the Light:**

#### **French and British paintings from Impressionism to the 1920s**

**15 December 2011 to 10 March 2012**

#### **Galleries 3 & 4**

Celebrating the re-opening of RAMM and showcasing its state of the art temporary exhibition galleries Into the Light brings together paintings by some of the most famous and instantly recognisable names in art history: Monet, Renoir, Stanhope Forbes, Pissarro. Made possible by generous loans from national and regional institutions the majority of these will be seen for the first time in Exeter in a show

specially curated for RAMM by Professor Sam Smiles, Emeritus Professor of Art History at the University of Plymouth and Tate Research Fellow 2009-11. After its launch the exhibition will move to Compton Verney in Warwickshire with whom we are sharing costs. This stunning show focuses on British and French impressionism and chiming with the distinctive character of the South West takes as its theme Coast and Countryside exploring the topic through a collection of beautiful and important paintings that make a very special occasion.

### **How We Were**

**15 December – end May 2012**

#### **Devon & Exeter Galleries**

Providing a local focus our opening Digital Exhibition will show an evocative and looping film collage featuring stock footage and home video from the 1950's and 1960's showing the way people's lives have changed in the last 50 years. The exhibition will feature news stories from the 1960's' such as Exeter's football match with Manchester United, as well as city centre shops and shopping.

This pilot exhibition is intended to inspire further thematic based digital exhibitions based on content offered by visitors. This project model will also be developed with community groups to create digital exhibitions that have wider dissemination and have much longer shelf life than conventional shows.

### **Roger Fenton & Julia Margaret Cameron:**

#### **Early British Photographs from the Royal Collection**

**15 December 2011 to end March 2012**

#### **Gallery 1**

Following the success of the last Royal Collection exhibition at RAMM (Leonardo Drawings in 2006), RAMM has been chosen again to be one of a handful of venues for the latest Royal Collection show. Roger Fenton (1819-69) and Julia Margaret Cameron (1815-79) are two of Britain's most accomplished photographers of the 19th century. Their photographs were collected by Queen Victoria and Prince Albert, who lent their enthusiastic support to the new medium of photography and its pioneering practitioners.

### **Road to Rome:**

#### **Artists and Travellers on the Grand Tour**

**14 December 2011 to end May 2012**

#### **Gallery 2**

An exhibition exploring the history of the 18th-century grand tour from a personal, regional and national perspective.

The catalyst for the exhibition was RAMM's recent acquisition of a painting of long-serving Exeter MP John Rolle Walters by Pompeo Batoni. The portrait was painted in Rome on 1753 while John Rolle Walters was on the Grand Tour.

In this exhibition works from RAMM's collection will be shown alongside loans of important paintings from the Royal Collection, the Tate, the National Gallery and National Museum Cardiff. Artists include Canaletto, Thomas Patch, Frances Towne, Richard Wilson, John Wootton, Joseph Wright and Pompeo Batoni.

Fascinating documents relating the Grand Tour, such as the letters of Joseph Spence and maps and guidebooks from the British Library and regional archives, will be included in the exhibition.

- RAMM acquired a portrait of John Rolle Walter by Pompeo Batoni in 2008 with support from the Heritage Lottery Fund; The Art Fund; Museums, Libraries and Archives/V&A Purchase Grant Fund and RAMM's Friends. A portion of the HLF funding also provides support for this exhibition and its associated learning programme.

**Home** (title tbc)

**End March 2012 to end June 2012**

**Gallery 3**

This is an exhibition of new work by internationally renowned artist Garry Fabian Miller, one of the most progressive figures in fine art photography, who has lived on Dartmoor for 23 years.

Garry Fabian Miller has made 'camera-less' photographs since the mid 1980s and in this show he highlights his personal views and experiences of living on Dartmoor.

His work can be seen in London, Berlin and New York. He is currently exhibiting at the V&A in 'Shadow Catchers' and in 2012/13 will be at Turner Contemporary and Tate Britain.

- An application for funding for this exhibition has been made to Grants for the Arts, Arts Council England.

**Ravilious Revisited** (title tbc)

**End March 2012 to mid May 2012**

**Gallery 4**

RAMM is the first venue for this touring exhibition presenting images not previously known to the public from the James Ravilious Photographic Archive (1972–89).

The ecosystem he documented in North Devon is recognised by UNESCO as a Biosphere Reserve. It is the only one of its kind in England and one of fewer than 600 such places on the planet, on a par with Mount Kenya, Ayers Rock, and the Niagara Escarpment.

This reserve is a globally-critical area for conservation, learning, and research and its work focuses on sustainable ecosystem development. Inevitably, this provokes debate. Through this exhibition and its associated activities RAMM and Beaford Arts aim to open up the debate and explore global issues by re-examining the photographic archive in this context.

- RAMM is working with Beaford Arts and the University of Plymouth Department of Photography.

**International Garden Photographer of the Year**

**May 2012 to August 2012**

**Gallery 2**

This exhibition displays the winners from the world's premier garden and plant photographic competition organised in association with the Royal Botanic Gardens at Kew. The fantastic and sometimes surprising images capture the beauty and detail of all kinds of garden plants, environments and wildlife.

**Selling Dreams:  
100 Years of Fashion Photography  
June 2012 to August 2012  
Gallery 3**

With sixty stunning images by twenty international fashion photographers this exhibition explores the range of approaches to fashion photography from 1911 to today. Photographers include Edward Steichen, Irving Penn, David Bailey, Corinne Day and Tim Walker.

This is the first touring exhibition from the collection at the V&A to draw together such a broad range of important historical and contemporary fashion images and it includes many rarely exhibited and recently acquired works.

**A Symphony of Curves:  
Geoffrey Preston – a tradition in plaster (title tbc)  
August 2012 to December 2012  
Gallery 2**

This exhibition tells the story of the art of hand-modelled decorative architectural plasterwork (stucco) in Britain, through one of its leading modern practitioners: Exeter-based architectural sculptor, Geoffrey Preston.

The art of stucco has a long and interesting history and Devon has a wealth of examples. It was used in the 16th century for decorating the houses of wealthy merchants and came to full prominence in the second half of the 17th century. The art gradually died out in the 19th and 20th centuries, but has been revived in the 21st century by a handful of practitioners, the most prominent being Geoffrey Preston.

This exhibition also includes stunning examples of historical work by John Abbott from RAMM's collection.

**Warriors of the Plains:  
200 years of Native North American honour and ritual  
Beginning September 2012 to January 2013  
Gallery 3**

This is a rare opportunity to explore the fascinating world of Native North American warfare and ritual. The exhibition explores the world of the Plains Indians through exceptional examples of feather head dresses, shields, moccasins, painted hides, scalps, pipes, tomahawks, and traditional and contemporary dress from the collections at the British Museum and RAMM. A selection of photographs shows the objects being used in their society. The legacy of the warrior societies is also examined, revealing how crucial they are in the maintenance of tribal identity among Plains Indians today.

- RAMM is part of the British Museum's national partnership programme and this exhibition is financially supported by the British Museum.

**Life through the Lens:  
Edwardian endeavour to modern media  
September 2012 to December 2012  
Gallery 4**

A selection of current images by young people living in Exeter contrasts the early use of photography with its ubiquitous use today and aims to stimulate debate.

The exhibition includes fascinating prints from early 20th century glass negatives in RAMM's collection, captivating photographs of people in their daily life and

surroundings and evocative home cine movies showing the high days and holidays celebrated by local families.

With the mass availability of portable photographic equipment just about every aspect of life is now being photographed and made instantly accessible on social media websites such as flickr, YouTube and Facebook. This development has prompted many questions - does this proliferation and ease of access suggest modern imagery is valued less than those that survive from the past? How permanent are the records from a hundred years ago compared to modern images? Should we as a society be actively collecting and curating contemporary imagery? This exhibition and its associated activities and events aim to explore these topics.

## **6. CONCLUSION**

- 6.1 This is an exhibition programme which has been assembled with the intention of appealing to a wide selection of RAMM's visitors, while at the same time showing off the fantastic new facilities which the museum has at its disposal. It has one eye very much on the regional and national audiences to ensure that RAMM's image is fully stamped on the national consciousness during the public relations opportunity of a stunningly refurbished museum returning to public use. The commitment of the Heritage Lottery Fund and other national funders corresponds to their view of RAMM's importance to the city as a cultural capital to the sub region: this ambitious and far reaching programme reflects this aspiration and the investment the City and others have made. Major programming areas are yet to be explored of course, but scheduling the first two years has been intensely difficult while the precise date of opening has been constantly shifting and has remained so uncertain for so long. Despite these difficulties this is an exciting and wide-ranging programme which will undoubtedly appeal to huge audiences and put Exeter on the map for some time to come.

## **7. RECOMMENDED**

- 1) That the report be noted.

HEAD OF LEISURE & MUSEUMS

S:PA/LP/ Committee/611SCC14 V2  
Date 13.5.11

COMMUNITY & ENVIRONMENT DIRECTORATE

**Local Government (Access to Information) Act 1985 (as amended)**  
**Background papers used in compiling this report:**