

About Research and Cultural Collections

Research and Cultural Collections is managed by the curatorial team, with support and advice from academic experts in relevant departments, and a team of volunteers.

Exhibition and Display

Objects from the permanent collections are displayed throughout the campus. Museum cases show objects which form a narrative through relationships with each other, and interpretation panels and labels offer further information. We work with colleagues from the University's five Colleges in commissioning or investing in works of art to enhance their environment. Objects are also loaned in and out from other collections for exhibitions.

There is a popular programme of **temporary exhibitions** (<http://www.birmingham.ac.uk/oncampus/exhibitions/James-Byrne-Painting-and-Process.aspx>) which are held in the Rotunda of the Aston Webb building. These renew and refresh interest in the permanent collections, relate to different subject areas and introduce the work of contemporary artists to the campus. We also host events relating to the exhibitions such as guest lectures, poetry readings and art 'happenings'.

Collections Management

There is a careful balance between use and care of the collections. Preventative conservation in the form of cleaning and monitoring prolongs the life of an artefact, and in consideration of this we work with conservators for specialist treatments. The Collections are documented on the museum management system MIMSY XG, which is shared with the Barber Institute of Fine Arts and the Lapworth Museum of Geology. Research and Cultural Collections are fully accredited as a museum with **Arts Council England** (<http://www.artscouncil.org.uk/what-we-do/supporting-museums/accreditation-scheme/>).

Interpretation and Accessibility

Those parts of the Research and Cultural Collections that are housed within teaching rooms and departments are open to the public by appointment only. However, in order to give access to a wider audience, the majority of the collections are available to view through our **collections database** (<http://mimsy.bham.ac.uk/info.php?f=option3&type=browse&t=objects&s=Research+and+Cultural+Collections>), whilst object highlights and online exhibitions introduce themes and individual objects. There are a number of campus trails including a **Sculpture trail** (</culture/collections/sculpturetrail.aspx>), the **Blue Plaque trail** (</culture/collections/blueplaque.aspx>) and an Eduardo Paolozzi trail. We also offer guided tours and 'behind the scenes' talks.

While some collections on campus are of a specialist nature, all displays are organised to be engaging to all, with informative labels.

Artists in residence (</culture/artists-in-res.aspx>) are also invited to respond to the collections and offer alternative ways of interpreting them.

Education and Outreach

The Research and Cultural Collections are used for current teaching modules and form the basis and inspiration for academic research. Staff of Research and Cultural Collections can also provide lectures and seminars on aspects of museum studies for different departments and provide support and guidance for students studying aspects of the collections.

We host school and family workshops each year, featuring different aspects of the Collections and regularly take place in The Big Draw, in conjunction with the Barber Institute of Fine Arts Education department.

The Research and Cultural Collections provide a tangible example of the high quality of life, learning and environment that the University offers and provide an accessible way for Outreach programmes to encourage local school groups and communities to interact with the University.

Student Project programme

We host an active **volunteer programme** (</facilities/rcc/volunteering/Volunteering-and-Student-Projects.aspx>) involving students from different disciplines across and outside the University, developing projects which are mutually beneficial. The students work on solo projects and in groups to gain valuable work experience for developing careers in the heritage sector.