



School: School of Creative Industries

Researcher: Coral Manton

Project Title: Shared Pasts: Decoding Complexity

UOA 34: Communication, Cultural and Media Studies, Library and Information Management

300-Word Statement

This e-portfolio spans two prototypes 'The Museum Collection Engine' (2018) and 'Shared Pasts: Decoding Complexity' (2019) - both projects are devised and led by Coral Manton and in collaboration with historians, curators, writers, and technologists. Coral Manton is in a unique position as a qualified museum curator and a creative technologist with a specialism in immersive and games technologies. The projects are collaboration with Birmingham Museums Trust, Bristol Museums, and supported through a Research Affiliate programme by The British Library. The research was supported by an academic fellowship and prototyping grant by the SWCTN (£45,000).

This practice based research investigates how spatial computing, data visualisation, and augmented reality can be used to tell multiple complex narratives around historic artefacts and places. The research applies narrative theory and history to data visualisation methods made possible by spatial computing and game engine technologies, to virtually imprint multiple narratives around historic artefacts and locations.

The Museum Collection Engine is a searchable visualisation tool, made in collaboration with Birmingham Museums Trust, using its collections database and image library. The application allows the user to make a keyword search which creates a constellation of related artefacts. Images can be expanded to reveal further layers of information, and can link to other constellations. This can be experienced onscreen, in VR, AR, or in an immersive cinema.

Shared Pasts: Decoding Complexity uses augmented reality technology as a mechanism to reveal layers of narratives built on historic artefacts and places. The project aims to give a 360 degree view of the past revealing the complexity surrounding cultural collections and landmarks, showing that meaning-making is dependent on the lens through which you see the past. This is a new platform to allow the retelling of history; showcasing, enabling and enhancing narratives from many more points of view.