

Developing successful exhibitions

Best practices to develop interactive exhibitions with hands on exhibits, multimedia, video installations and other new technologies and approaches

Adriatico Guesthouse, ICTP (Trieste) 15-19 September 2014

- The course aims at empowering practitioners, scientists and managers of cultural institutions and public organisations who want to plan and develop permanent and temporary exhibitions for science centres, museums and visitor centres, etc.
- The course will last 5 days and include theoretical presentations and practical workshops, following international best practice.
- Gordon Rankmore and Paola Rodari (course leaders) are professionals with an international experience in the field and in training; they will be present during the whole course to present, facilitate workshops and assist participants.
- Laura Miotto and Peter Higgins (invited speakers) are leading professionals in field; they will stay with participants several days, giving presentations and leading practical workshops.
- Peer-to-peer learning will also be facilitated since it is expected attendees will come from different parts of the world and have interesting and varied profiles.

Course leaders

Gordon Rankmore, Museum and Heritage Consultant, London (United Kingdom)

Paola Rodari, Project Manager, SISSA Medialab, Trieste (Italy)

Invited speakers

Peter Higgins, Creative Director Land Design Studio, London (United Kingdom)

Laura Miotto, Design Director Gsmprjct, Singapore



Day 1 – Monday 15 September 2014

Introduction to the course		
Facilitators: Laura Miotto, Gordon Rankmore, Paola Rodari		
09.30-11.00	Course introduction	Participants presentations and introduction by Gordon Rankmore and Paola Rodari
11.00-11.30	Coffee break	
11.30-13.00	Telling stories, disseminating knowledge - A personal perspective on exhibition development The diversity of organizations, exhibitions and public	Presentation by Laura Miotto
13.00-14.00	Lunch	
14.00-14.30	What is a “good” and what is a “bad” exhibition? Workshop 1: Participants working in groups reflect on the features that can produce the success or failure of various exhibits	Workshop led by Laura Miotto, Gordon Rankmore and Paola Rodari
Part 1: To whom?		
Facilitators: Laura Miotto, Gordon Rankmore, Paola Rodari		
14.30-15.15	Understanding Visitors Learning in informal contexts and other results from visitor studies that have to be taken into account when developing an exhibition	Presentation by Paola Rodari
15.15-16.30	Understanding Organizations Workshop 2: Participants work in groups on given scenarios to reflect on organization’s missions, strategies, objectives and assets	Workshop led by Gordon Rankmore
16.30-17.30	Understanding Audiences Workshop 3: Participants continue to work on given scenarios defining potential audiences (public and stake-holders) for organizations and projects	Workshop led by Paola Rodari
Coffee break is available during the workshop		
17.30-18.00	Wrap up of the day	

Day 2 – Tuesday 16 September 2014

Part 2: What and how?		
Facilitators: Peter Higgins, Laura Miotto, Gordon Rankmore, Paola Rodari		
09.30-11.00	<p>Exhibitions as story telling</p> <p>Workshop 4: Participants experience how a simple object can be used to tell a wide variety of stories related to many different topics</p> <p>Workshop 5: Participants draw a conceptual map to register all topics that can be tackled speaking about an object. The exercise will lead to the identification of an exhibition case study to be used in following workshops</p>	Workshops led by Gordon Rankmore and Paola Rodari
11.00-11.30	Coffee break	
11.30-12.15	<p>Developing learning objectives</p> <p>How to define learning objectives and their role in exhibition development</p> <p>Workshop 6: Participants are guided to identify learning objectives on the chosen case study</p>	Presentation and workshop led by Paola Rodari
12.15-13.00	<p>Themes, topics, stories and narrative. Creating environment and moods</p> <p>Basics on content development</p>	Presentation by Peter Higgins, Laura Miotto and Gordon Rankmore
13.00-14.00	Lunch	
14.00-16.00	<p>Themes, topics, stories and narrative. Circulation and spaces</p> <p>Workshop 7: Participants are given a plan of a small exhibition area and are guided to develop a narrative related to the case study</p>	Presentation and workshop led by Peter Higgins
Coffee break available during the workshop		
16.00-17.00	Workshop 7 continues	Workshop led by Peter Higgins
17.00-17.30	<p>Can visitors contribute to exhibitions?</p> <p>Exploring benefits and opportunities to engage visitors as content producers during the visit to exhibition</p>	Presentation by Paola Rodari
17.30-18.00	Wrap up of the day	

Day 3 – Wednesday 17 September 2014

Part 3: Which media?		
Facilitators: Peter Higgins, Laura Miotto, Gordon Rankmore, Paola Rodari		
09.30-10.30	Current design, media opportunities, technology trends A personal perspective on the international panorama of exhibition development	Presentation by Peter Higgins
10.30-11.30	Objects, interactives, media, multimedia and new technologies Workshop 8: Which media is suitable for what?	Introduction, workshop and discussion led by Peter Higgins, Laura Miotto, Gordon Rankmore and Paola Rodari
Coffee break available during workshop		
Part 4: Planning and briefing		
Facilitators: Peter Higgins, Laura Miotto, Gordon Rankmore, Paola Rodari		
11.30-13.00	Exhibition development: phases and roles What an Exhibition Design Brief should cover Workshop 9: Participants prepare a brief on the case study they worked on in the last days.	Presentation and workshop led by Gordon Rankmore
13.00-14.00	Lunch	
14.00-17.30	Exhibition development: preparing a brief What an Exhibition Design Brief should cover Workshop 9: Participants prepare a brief on the case study they worked on in the last days.	Presentation and workshop led by Gordon Rankmore
Coffee break available during workshop		
17.30-18.00	Wrap up of the day	
Course dinner		

Day 4 – Thursday 18 September 2014

Part 5: Commissioning and developing the exhibition		
Facilitators: Peter Higgins, Laura Miotto, Gordon Rankmore, Paola Rodari		
09.30-10.30	Clients, commissions and professionals Speakers discussion forum	Speakers: Peter Higgins, Laura Miotto and Gordon Rankmore Moderator: Paola Rodari
10.30-11.00	Coffee break	
11.00-12.00	The exhibition development Key development phases – what needs to be developed and agreed. Case studies	Presentations and discussion led by Peter Higgins and Gordon Rankmore
12.00-13.00	The exhibition development The project team – skills and responsibilities at each development phase	Presentations and discussion led by Peter Higgins and Gordon Rankmore
13.00-14.00	Lunch	
14.00-15.30	Exhibition development role play Workshop 10: Using scenarios, participants are attributed different roles in project teams. They have to identify their responsibilities and how they will input into the team to deliver the project.	Presentations and discussion led by Peter Higgins and Gordon Rankmore
15.30-17.30	Developing a Content and Design Brief Workshop 11: Participants working in group revise/ amend previous Exhibition Design Briefs from Workshop 9. Plenary discussion on group works	Presentations and discussion led by Peter Higgins and Gordon Rankmore
17.30-18.00	Wrap up of the day	

Day 5 – Friday 19 September 2014

Part 6: Evaluation and audience research

Facilitators: Peter Higgins, Gordon Rankmore, Paola Rodari

09.30-10.30	Evaluation and audience research: steps and methods How listening visitors' voices can help us to develop successful exhibitions	Presentation by Paola Rodari
10.30-11.00	Coffee break	
11.00-13.00	What you know and what you would like to know about your audiences? Workshop 12: Participants reflect on their needs and report; trainers suggest solutions	Workshop led by Paola Rodari
13.00-14.00	Lunch	

1-1 problem solving

Facilitators: Peter Higgins, Laura Miotto, Gordon Rankmore, Paola Rodari

14.00-17.00	Participants' projects and issues Workshop 13: A session on demand to tackle specific issues related to participants' contexts and projects	Workshop led by Peter Higgins, Gordon Rankmore and Paola Rodari
	Coffee break available during workshop	
17.00-18.00	Course summary and course evaluation	

Peter Higgins is Creative Director at the Land Design Studio in London. He trained at the Architectural Association and has worked as a designer for the BBC and in London's West End Theatre. In 1992 he formed Land Design Studio who have built a reputation in integrating architecture, narrative design and communication media for museums, science centres, visitor attractions and commercial environments. For many years Peter's interest in the crossover of design disciplines has encouraged Land's collaboration with many leading architects and media practitioners such as Ars Electronica. Peter is committed to design education and is visiting professor of interpretation at Central St Martins London. In 2009 he was awarded an RDI (Royal Designer for Industry). Land's holistic approach to place making and experiential design is reflected in the range of clients that include; Foreign & Commonwealth Office, Anschutz Entertainment Group, Miraikan Tokyo, National Parks Singapore, V&A, Natural History Museum and The British Museum, where in 2013 they designed Pompeii & Herculaneum.

Laura Miotto *b arch. Hons*, is Design Director at the Gsmprjct Singapore. With 15 years of experience in the field of design both as a creative director and an architectural designer, Laura has worked on the creation of a multitude of permanent and temporary exhibitions. Graduated from the Milan School of Architecture, she was involved on various commercial and cultural projects in Italy prior to moving to Singapore. She has been living and working in Singapore since 2000, where she has designed over 40 exhibitions. Her focus has mainly been on heritage interpretation and design strategies that involve the sensorial experience in the context of museums, thematic galleries and public spaces. Inspired by local cultures and multidisciplinary collaborations she created innovative concepts and designed spaces that engage with visitors. Among her projects, the Living Galleries at the National Museum of Singapore were awarded the Design Exchange Award in Canada in 2007 and Quest for Immortality: The World of Ancient Egypt was awarded Design of the Year 2010 in Singapore (President Design Award). Laura is currently the Design Director of Gsmprjct in Singapore, an international firm specialized in experience and exhibition design originated in Montréal, Canada.

Gordon Rankmore has more than 35 years of experience in interpretation, design and project management in heritage, museum and tourism environments. He has led interpretation, design and project management teams and developed feasibility studies and interpretative, management and business plans across these sectors, nationally and internationally. He is also a lecturer and trainer in interpretation, exhibition design and interpretative writing. He worked for nearly 20 years at the Natural History Museum of London. He was Head of Interpretation and Design, being responsible for the policy and implementation of interpretative exhibitions. He directed the Museum's public offer programmes, including Darwin Centre Phase 2 (opened 2009), the annual special touring exhibitions programme, the redevelopment of permanent exhibition galleries, brand development and corporate design. During this time, he established the Museum's professional consultancy team, acting as its Creative Director for projects in Saudi Arabia, Singapore, Dubai, Japan, Kenya, Qatar and others.

Paola Rodari is project manager and content developer for the development of new science centres and museums for SISSA Medialab. She has been the project leader for the realisation of Italian science centres where she also worked as leader of educational services and scientific leader for the development of new projects. She has been funder and spokesman of THE group, the Thematic Human Interface and Explainers group of Ecsite (the European network of science museums and science centres), dedicated to the professional development of museums educators. She teaches Museums Studies at the SISSA Masters in Science Communication and has been organizer, speaker and tutor of many international courses. She is involved in many European action/research projects aiming to develop new programmes and tools for the communication of sciences. She is author of many papers and books on the science communication of science, and works have been translated in English, Spanish and Portuguese.