

Reflections on the AEJM Curatorial Education Programme 2011

Report by Joanne Rosenthal, Jewish Museum London

Coinciding neatly with the one-year anniversary of the Jewish Museum London's reopening, the CEP offered an interesting opportunity to reflect on the work we had been doing in the wider context of Jewish Museums across Europe.

I arrived in Berlin the night before the formal programme began, which offered a nice opportunity to meet for dinner with the other participants as well as some of the workshop leaders and presenters that we would be hearing from that week. It was interesting to see the diversity of organisations represented – from all corners of Europe, and of differing sizes and histories. In the conversations that followed it became clear before the programme had even begun how valuable it was simply to come together and share in this way.

The programme itself was an intensive five-day series of lectures, workshops and field trips. And whilst the schedule was fairly rigorous, it was a real luxury to be able to take a step back from the pressures of work and engage in the simple act of learning – almost like being back at school! Highlights included a fantastic illustrated talk on Hebrew Manuscripts, a workshop looking at how to identify Judaica, an exploration of techniques of graphic art, and a challenging critical look at the 'burden' of collecting from a museological point of view. A personal highlight would also have to be the venue itself. The opportunity to have a tour of the stores of the Jewish Museum Berlin offered a fascinating look at how a museum of that size and scale manages such diverse and complex collections.

The programme offered a wonderful springboard from which to reflect on our own practice. It was a great learning experience to debate the many issues that arose from the sessions - museological, political, and ethical – with museum professionals who all work in the area of Jewish heritage, but in such widely differing contexts.

My thanks go to all who were involved in the organisation and delivery of the programme. We look forward very much to welcoming you to London for the AEJM conference in November.

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