

## Opening Statement

### 14th International Illustration Research Symposium

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Illustration and heritage, heritage and illustration, heritage illustration, illustrating heritage.

Since preparing for this symposium, and finishing my book of the same name, the title Illustration and Heritage has played on my mind.

Often, language can be used to create divisions: 'this is heritage' and 'this is illustration'. The conjunction 'and' between 'Illustration' and 'Heritage' creates a separation. It suggests that one is like or in comparison with the other, but, crucially, they're not the same thing.

Illustration is, arguably, very much part of the heritage process. Labelling it and separating it, can make it appear as if illustration has been added in or added onto heritage.

Heritage can be an illustration and vice versa. Heritage can act illustratively. The lines between the two are blurred and, what's more, there can be an overlap.

To open this event, and for the sake of speakers and attendees from outside of the discipline of illustration, I want to encourage you all to consider illustration as we do in the Illustration Programme at Camberwell College of Arts.

Illustration is a noun – it can be a tangible outcome, but its meaning is not limited to this. We also consider it as a verb. It can be an intangible process that can take place within multiple disciplines and practices. An artwork, design, photograph, performance, image, or object can act illustratively. When considered in this way, we view illustration as an act that is not defined by a medium.

To 'illustrate' suggests an ongoing action or process, not simply the final work, and this perspective can open up the discipline.

Heritage is also an action, one that we undertake in the present, to preserve the past, and it is for the future. We engage with it, rework it, appropriate it. Through the process of heritage, we are assembling future worlds.

Heritage, too, can be thought of as both tangible and intangible. Tangible heritage includes artefacts, archaeological sites, monuments – objects we can touch. Intangible heritage consists of folklore, skills, stories, rituals – things that do not necessarily have a physical presence.

Museums assemble and curate stories with tangible fragments of the past. These selected objects – ceramic pots, metal coins, or stone sculptures, for example – are placed alongside museum captions or audio guides. The curation relies on the relationship between text and image, which communicates a story, enabling us to imagine a specific past that has been

constructed by the institution. This is comparable to how illustrations can function. Heritage can illustrate an idea or an image of the past.

To prepare for my role as chair for our first keynote speaker, Dan Hicks, as well as reading his book *The Brutish Museums* (2020), I read his work *Archaeology and Photography* (2020). In the book, Hicks discusses the conjunction ‘and’ in the book’s title. Referencing Eduardo Viveiros de Castro, the ‘and’ becomes a ‘zero-relator, a relational mana of sorts – the floating signifier of the class of connectives’. The ‘and’ suggests a comparison between ‘archaeology’ and ‘photography’, pointing towards what is shared between the two disciplines ‘in history, in process, and cultural disposition’, he writes.

We could also ask the same of illustration and heritage. On what terms can we compare illustration and heritage? Rather than using the conjunction ‘and’, which can form a superficial association, I encourage you to examine deeper associations.

[Pause]

When writing *Illustration and Heritage*, I was aware that the research was limited, as it requires more voices in the discussion, more diverse historical and social contexts, and I hope that this symposium enables us to open out the conversation.

In our Call for Papers, the symposium team invited presenters to respond to a series of prompts and provocations. We posed the questions, such as:

In what ways can contemporary illustrators participate in historical narratives and ‘give voice’ to people and communities celebrated and forgotten? through their work?

How are historical relics, places, and events represented through illustrative processes?

How do researchers and practitioners in heritage utilise the practices, research methods and processes of illustration?

How do illustrative processes — and the shared languages of categorising, curating, conserving, and communicating heritage<sup>1</sup> — bring illustration into the realms of archaeology, museology, curation, and other heritage practices?

Do illustrators who engage with heritage-making as part of their practice communicate and reflect what Stuart Hall described as a ‘collective social memory’?<sup>2</sup>

Who should be making the images that shape the future histories of culture and identity?

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<sup>1</sup> Harrison, Rodney (2005) ‘Beyond “Natural” and “Cultural” Heritage: Toward an Ontological Politics of Heritage in the Age of Anthropocene’, *Heritage & Society*, 8(1). 24–42.

<sup>2</sup> Hall, Stuart (1999) ‘Whose Heritage? Un-settling the Heritage, Re-imaging the Post-Nation’, *Third Text*, 13(49). 3–13.

Now, I want to draw your attention to the Programme.

Over the next two days, important issues such as resistance, inheritance, displacement, collective memory, ventriloquy, subjectivity, and plurality will be discussed, as well as the roles played by technology, education, and the media. We will have parallel sessions taking place in both this room, the Banqueting Hall, and the Red Room, which is next door. There is a map on the printed pack you received at registration. There is a disabled toilet on this floor next to the Green Room, and we have further toilets downstairs. If you need to have time away from the talks, drink some water, or have a 'break out' space, we encourage you to use the Green Room, the meetings pods, or, there is Tate Britain next door.

When you join a session, please resist the urge to then move between panels as they are taking place; and be respectful and mindful of the presenters.

We are documenting sessions, through photography, note-taking, and audio recording. With that in mind, please be aware that you might be photographed and any discussions might also be recorded, if you choose to participate with questions. If you would prefer not to be photographed, please inform a member of staff or the photographer.

I also want to highlight the poster exhibition in the Triangle Space, which has been curated by graphic and interactive designer Abbie Vickress, will be open today and tomorrow. It is worth repeated visits during the symposium, as it is rich with ideas, questions, and research. I encourage you to visit it on our lunch break today, to prepare for the Poster Session taking place later this afternoon. During the session, the exhibitors will be present by their work for a discussion on their research and to answer questions.

This symposium is the 14<sup>th</sup> International Illustration Research Symposium, and it is a pleasure for the Illustration Programme at Camberwell College of Arts to host the event. Illustration Research is a network of academics and practitioners with the purpose of promoting the cultural significance of illustration, and to create opportunities to share research into and through illustration. Their peer-reviewed publication, *Journal of Illustration*, is published by Intellect, and we encourage symposium presenters to submit their research for a forth-coming issue on heritage. Nanette Hoogslag, the Principle Editor will open the day tomorrow and we will expand on the publication deadlines in the Closing Statement.

Now, I will introduce our first keynote speaker, Dan Hicks. He is Professor of Contemporary Archaeology at the University of Oxford, Curator of World Archaeology at Pitt Rivers Museum, and a Fellow of St Cross College, Oxford. He has published widely on material and visual culture from the recent past and the near present. His most recent books are *The Brutish Museums* (Pluto 2020), *Lande: the Calais 'Jungle' and Beyond* (with Sarah Mallet, Bristol University Press 2019), *Archaeology and Photography* (edited with Lesley McFadyen, Bloomsbury 2019) and *Isle of Rust* (with Alex Boyd and Jonathan Meades, Luath Press 2019). His next book, *Every Monument Will Fall*, will be published in 2025.

Welcome, Dan -