

British Museum International Training Programme 2019: Final Report

By Buket Babataş Aydın

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I'm Buket Babataş Aydın from Ankara, Turkey. I'm an independent researcher and also a PhD student at Ankara University in the department of Prehistory.

First of all I need to say that it was a great opportunity to be a part of the ITP. It is a lifelong experience to have. I am not actively working in a museum at the moment, and also I can not say that I had a clear target from the programme before. I thought quite a lot about what I should learn and focus on and finally I decided to gain as much as I can, which I found very exhausting but I think I made it.

My primary expectation from the ITP was to understand the concept of museum management from a full perspective and especially the methods and techniques of visitor participation through various events. My second and most important expectation was to look for opportunities to collaborate with various international colleagues and experts, and to see the resources around the British Museum collection for future research. I can clearly say that I have achieved all my goals.



Before joining ITP, I was familiar with the programme because of my colleague Leyla Zoroğlu, who was a member of the ITP in 2016. I had an idea about the content of the programme and what was waiting for me. Thanks to my long effort and stubbornness, I had the opportunity to participate in the British Museum ITP in 2019.

Even though I had knowledge of the programme before joining, I must say that I did not imagine the programme being so intense. It was very satisfying. Before starting the ITP, I learned about the qualifications of both the British Museum and the programme partners but I didn't think the programme would be very comprehensive, professional and well organized.

It was among my priorities to focus on exhibition techniques when I joined the ITP because I'm working on independent exhibitions and presentations rather than being responsible for a museum. I was able to gain very important observations about the priority exhibitions both in the programme and in the museums we visited in London and around the United Kingdom. In addition, I found great opportunities to see many collections management techniques and themed exhibitions that interest me like *Manga* and *Edvard Munch: love and angst*, and to understand how these exhibitions were organised. What I have learned will help me to develop in my career. All the educational activities in the ITP programme, such as exhibitions, conservation, restoration, communication, scientific research, development, marketing, security and more became the main source of my future teachings. It was truly impressive to see museums that cater to the needs of children, instead of being academic places visited by adults, allowing them to be fun and full of life; going beyond classical exhibition techniques to exhibit emotional and cheerful museum exhibitions. Although there are some training practices in some museums in Turkey, the implementation of educational activities and public museums in the British Museum is impossible not to admire the compliance with the national curriculum and social life integration. Therefore, even if not in a short time, I have plans to implement these applications that I have seen and experienced in these modules. Despite its special nature, I wish for the chance to implement this application and give a cultural message to the community; to launch an initiative for the popularization and professionalization in Turkey.

And also I don't want to forget about the department times. Starting with Ian Jenkins , Ross Thomas and Thomas Kiely, all the members of the Greece and Rome Department have been very supportive and wonderfully kind to us, like all the British Museum staff. Face to face conversations during our time in this department was very educational for us. I want to thank them very much for everything. They were always ready to help us, show us what they have and share their knowledge with us. And I want to add that they were very open to all the different feedback from us.

Above all, the educational activities in the British Museum and in the partner museums were personally a very effective part in the programme for me. I would like to thank to Sarah Gore (Teaching Museum Manager, Norfolk Museums Service) who welcomed us to Norwich Castle Museum & Art Gallery for my 10-day placement in the UK and also my partners who came with me to the Norwich throughout these days. The ITP has been one of the most important experiences that I have learned and lived. It will affect my life in the future and I hope to be in touch with ITP and my friends there. Our programme was very busy - every day we tried to explore the city and other museums in Norfolk. We had workshops and talks and I would like to say that the experience was quite mind-opening and instructive. And we

also had the chance to be on BBC Radio! We made a short live broadcast there. In brief, the partner museum trip provided us with a different perspective.



The most interesting thing I should endorse about the ITP is the entire exercise of *Object in Focus*. This process in fact required almost all dimensions of the ITP learning and participants are encouraged to use that learning skilfully to prepare for the final presentation. The new elements which were added this year made it truly an experience which started from knowing nothing about an object to preparing a presentation with confidence. This experience encouraged the participants to think, coordinate, design, develop and finally present. I personally like the suspense, the risk and the challenges associated with it. I think this experience is my prize to take from the ITP and I also believe that the success of the ITP rests on the effective implementation of this project.

The ITP also gave me the opportunity to interact with international colleagues from different cultures which made me gain fantastic results by improving my social skills and helped build deeper connections between us for contacting and sharing our resources, books, and academic papers. I also want to add that I think I have had the opportunity to work together with the most compatible group that has come to this programme since its inception. I would also like to say how lucky I am to meet the most creative, extroverted, entertaining and intelligent international participants and have the opportunity to work with them. Even though we were together for 43 days and nights, we were never bored and we always tried to spend more time together, so it was the hardest part of this programme to leave each other.



Finally, I am very grateful to ITP's organisation and team, Claire, George, Emily and ITP senior fellow Mohamed. They made a lot of effort to organise the programme and offered a lot of courtesy, help and support. The programme was well organised, specialised and focused on what I really look forward to developing, as well as weekend trips that allowed ITP members to get closer and build a great bond. We had a lot of fun together with all the fellows of 2019 and we had unforgettable memories. I'm very grateful for everything. ITP was a big thing in my career and it was a great opportunity to guide my future development.

Thank you for everything.

Her şey için teşekkürler.