



### **Who are you, where are you based and what do you do?**

Hi, I'm Dr Laura MacCulloch and I am the College Curator at Royal Holloway, University of London. I look after the art collections here at the College ranging from the internationally important collection of Victorian paintings given to the College by its founder Thomas Holloway to the less well-known but significant collection of art created and collected by the female artist Christiana Herringham. We have a wonderful collection of twentieth-century art including works by John Nash and Dame Laura Knight and I look after 3D items related to the college's history such as the umbrella held in 1886 by Queen Victoria as she opened Royal Holloway, one of the two colleges which merged in 1985 with Bedford College to form the present university.

### **What do you most enjoy about your job?**

The variety! I am a bit of a 'jack of all trades' and I act as curator, registrar, documentation manager, education officer and lecturer. Most recently I have been focusing on going digital and have learnt to run social media accounts and create digital events and resources. It's been satisfying building up that part of our website and I've enjoyed learning new skills. I also love the teaching elements of my job and being able to pass on my curatorial skills to the next generation through teaching, running workshops and supervising our great team of student volunteers.

### **What motivates you in your work?**

Being a curator is a vocation for me. The need to look after historical objects and works of art and to find ways to get people to engage with them is a very strong urge which I have had since I was a teenager. I took a slight detour after university but the pull to work with objects was too strong and I realized being a curator is what I really wanted to do.

### **How has/can the M25 Consortium support you in your career?**

I am very keen to get to know other curators working in the M25 Consortium libraries and to create a network to share experiences and knowledge. Working within bigger institutions can have its challenges especially if you are part of a small department so knowing that there was a network of curators out there who might be working on something similar or have found a new way to get visitors engaged would be wonderful.

### **What would it surprise people to know about you?**

I lived in Japan for two years after graduating from university. I taught English in a variety of Japanese state schools and found a real love for Japanese onsen, hot springs. Every winter my bones ache for them!

### **Complete the sentence:**

**If I wasn't working in a library I would be...** a post-natal doula **because...** of my experiences having my daughter I am passionate about helping to support mothers in the early days. I am looking

forward to starting to volunteer again at a breastfeeding drop-in once it reopens this month because I remember what a tough time it can be at the start.

Laura MacCulloch, RHUL, May 2021